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Commercial Culture: The Media System and the Public Interest

Leo Bogart

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Commercial Culture: The Media System and the Public Interest Leo Bogart
American mass media are the world's most diverse, rich and free. But their dazzling resources, variety, and influence cannot be rated by the envy they arouse in other countries. Their failures are commonly excused on the grounds that they are creatures of the market, that they give people what they want. This book focusses not on the glories of the media, but on what is wrong with them and why, and how they may be made better. *This powerful critique of American mass communications highlights four trends that together sound an urgent call for reform: the blurring of distinctions among traditional media and between individual and mass communication; the increasing concentration of media control in a disturbingly small number of powerful organizations; the shift from advertisers to consumers as the source of media revenues; and the growing confusion of information and entertainment, of the real and the imaginary. The future direction of the media, Bogart contends, should not be left to market forces alone. He shows how the public's appetite for media differs from other demands the market is left to satisfy because of how profoundly the media shapes the public's character and values. In conclusion, Bogart asserts that a world of new communications technology requires a coherent national media policy, respectful of the American tradition of free expression and subject to vigorous public scrutiny and debate.*
Commercial Culture is the most comprehensive analysis of the media as they evolve in a technological age. It will be of great appeal to general readers interested in mass communications, as well as professionals and scholars studying American mass media.

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