NW-ARM NEWS

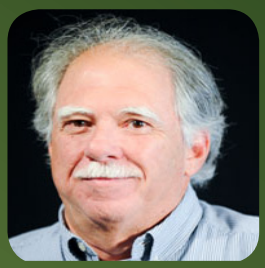
Spring 2013

A Regional Center for Excellence in Media Literacy and Partnership of Gonzaga University, the Gonzaga University Master's Program in Communication and Leadership Studies , and the University of Washington

Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media

GONZAGA UNIVERSITY

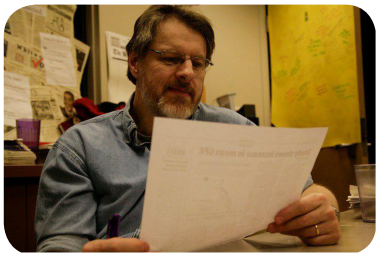
Note from Director Dr. John Caputo



The influence of communication media is as powerful as ever. Our relationship with media takes up a large part of our everyday activities and shapes the culture in which we live. From a media ecology perspective it is important that we find balance in our media culture. Clearly in our society we are attracted by spectacle in an event like the Super Bowl, the announcement of a new technology, or the breaking news of the shooting tragedy at Sandy Hook Elementary School in Newtown, Connecticut. Media Literacy teaches us that when trying to understand the impact of media on our culture we need to frame the right questions, in order to understand if we are shaping the media or they are shaping us. The Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media has always focused on the concept of responsibility in which each of us has a role and obligation to advocate for the kind of media we need in a pluralistic society like ours. What is the common good in which media can help us not only meet our need for entertainment, but also provide fair, accurate and unbiased news coverage? When do we point out that media is actually serving to fragment us with privatization and loneliness, substituting mediated for real companionship. When do we point out that media is promoting diversity and providing opportunities for personal growth? Examining the media world we live in can only help us become more informed. I do hope if you are not a member of the NW-ARM, you join.

A Journey to Media Literacy

James McPherson, NW-ARM Executive Board Member



When I began work as a newspaper reporter, the town in which I lived had one television station. (People in bigger cities or in cities with cable TV could watch up to three networks, maybe four if they had PBS.) A typical town had a few radio stations, a daily newspaper, a movie theater or two, and a few places you might be able to play Pac Man or Space Invaders. Some people owned video cassette recorders, but home video games, the Internet and cell phones were years in the future.

Notably, many people were already concerned about the influence of media on society and in their lives.

Three decades later, we live in the most media-saturated culture in the history of the world. Thanks to Facebook, Pinterest, Twitter, YouTube, blogs, cell phone cameras and other innovations that did not exist just a decade ago, many of us (and most of our kids) have become "producers" of media, as well as media users.

And today, people express many of the same media-related concerns that they did in the early 1980s: concerns about sex, violence, gender roles, corporate control, the influence of advertising, etc.
Yet, like 30 years ago, we typically still do not require our children to learn much about the media that surround them. We naturally expect students to be able to read and write, yet for some reason we tend to worry less about their literacy regarding the media that they will probably use most--and which will likely most influence their lives.

It has long struck me as odd that even people working in media often seem fairly clueless about issues of historical, political and social context that might influence their own efforts. A desire to better understand those issues helped prompt my return to school in the 1990s.

Learning more about media literacy only reinforced its importance, prompting me to become an evangelist of sorts. I began teaching a media criticism class at Whitworth University shortly after I arrived there in 2000. I eventually started a blog about media and politics (the two often go hand in hand), for which I've now written more than 450 posts, and began giving presentations to school, church and civic groups.

Most importantly, I was thrilled to find out that my new home town already boasted an organization devoted to the issue that had become the focus of much of my teaching and research--the Northwest Alliance for Responsible Media--an organization that was already providing the community with excellent media literacy tools and training. I encourage you to join me in supporting the important work of NW-ARM, and media literacy in general.

NW-ARM New Chair!

Dawn Bayman

Dawn Wiley Bayman has been working in Spokane television stations since she was a high school intern at KSPS Public Television. After getting her Radio-Television degree at Eastern, she worked at area commercial television stations, making her way through management positions in News, Promotion and Production. After 15 years in commercial TV, she made the choice to return to KSPS and its Public Television mission. She is now Director of Member Services for the Friends of KSPS, responsible for raising the majority of the dollars that support the station.

Dawn says she is happy to be on the board of NW-ARM because it's a chance to call attention to the need for more critical use of media, and to teach that to children. "Like any tools, television and the internet are wonderful if you know how to properly use them. We need to teach that to our young people: don't just watch and believe—evaluate and question everything."

Meet NW-ARM's Intern

Alex Golikov



Hi! My name is Alex Golikov. I'm a senior at Lewis and Clark High School and a student in Mr. John Hagney's "PICI" (Practicum in Community Involvement) class. In PICI, we are required to intern at a community non-profit organization, develop a research question, and write a cumulative research paper.

I chose to intern with the NW-ARM because I truly believe that being able to process our media in a literate fashion is essential in our media-based society. We are constantly consuming media of all kinds, from social media to advertising. My research question examines the effect this media (specifically advertising) has on gender relations - setting us up for false expectations and dissatisfaction in our relationships. Through my studies, I have come to believe that modern media is so ubiquitous and so skilled at exploiting our primitive sexual instincts that it is creating a dissonance between our animal needs and our human potential, which is taking a huge toll on our relations with one another. We are so lucky to have the NW-ARM in our backyard to responsibly promote media literacy and address important media issues. It has been a great year so far, and with our video contest and film screening of Half the Sky coming up in March, I am excited for the months to come!

Beyond Violent Video Games: The Importance of Gender

by Carolyn Cunningham, Assistant Professor, MA Communication and Leadership Studies Program at Gonzaga University



After the recent shootings in Newtown, CT, much media attention has focused on the impact of violent videogames on our children. Violence is a serious issue, but we also need to pay attention to how gender is portrayed in videogames. A recent study titled "The Virtual Census" found that 89% of the top-selling videogames feature male protagonists (Williams, Consalvo & Ivory, 2009). When female characters do appear, they tend to be "hyper-sexualized" and play passive roles in games, such as being victims of violence or damsels in distress.

These gender representations can have a negative impact on girls' self-image and motivation to play videogames. Girls tend to play videogames less than boys and report that they prefer different content than is available in most mainstream games.

Why do these differences matter? While news media tend to focus on the anti-social impacts of videogame playing, educators suggest that videogame playing can help children to develop important skills that are necessary for 21st century learning (see for example Gee, 2005; Prensky, 2006). Videogame playing may encourage children to become producers, rather than just consumers, of media content and may encourage their pursuit in science, technology, engineering, and mathematics (STEM) fields. Since women only comprise 20% of STEM fields and are only 10% of game designers are women, we need to pay attention to these gender differences.

Many organizations are addressing these gender differences through offering girl-only programs, like those provided by the Girl Scouts and TINCAN (http://www.tincan.org/). These programs offer girls opportunities to increase their tech-savviness. According to the American University of University Women (AAUW), girls begin to lose confidence in math and science in middle school because of their increased awareness of messages that show that we value girls' beauty over their intellect.

Additionally, there is an increase in videogames marketed toward girls. While this is a step in the right direction, we need to pay attention to the messages that are being sent to girls in these games. In my research on girls' videogames, I found that games marketed toward girls still rely on sexist stereotypes and limited notions of femininity. For example, in the Nintendo DS game Nancy Drew: Model Mysteries, Nancy Drew solves the mystery of a wedding gone wrong. However, much of the dialogue in the game focuses on the appearances of the characters (one girl asks is she looks fat in her bridesmaid dress). These types of messages also were present in We Cheer, a cheerleading game for the Wii. The goal of the game is to simulate and perform cheers. Yet, the characters have been described as "sexed-up avatars".

These two initiatives-all-girl education and videogames for girls-are a step in the right direction. As parents, we need to be better consumers for our children. Check out some of the game reviews from Commonsense media (http://www.commonsensemedia.org/game-reviews) to see how what games may be educational while also sending a positive message to girls. Encourage your daughters to excel in STEM classes. Sign your girl up for a class at TINCAN or check out opportunities at your local Girl Scouts.

Gee, J. P. (2005). What video games have to teach us about learning and literacy. New York City, NY: Palgrave MacMillan.

Prensky, M. (2006). Don't bother me Mom! I'm learning. St. Paul, MN: Paragon House.

Williams, D., Martins, N., Consalvo, M., & Ivory, J. (2009). The virtual census: Representations of gender, race and age in video games. New Media and Society, 11(5), 815-834. doi: 10.1177/1461444809105354





Film Event

March 19

6pm -8pm

Gonzaga University's Foley Teleconference Room



The NW-ARM will be sponsoring Half the Sky this Spring 2013 at Gonzaga Universities Foley Teleconference Room, Tuesday March 19, 6pm - 9pm. The Documentary was filmed in 10 countries: Cambodia, Kenya, India, Sierra Leone, Somaliland, Vietnam, Afghanistan, Pakistan, Liberia and the U.S. It is inspired by Nicholas Kristof and Sheryl WuDunn's book. It introduces women and girls who are living under some of the most difficult circumstances imaginable — and fighting bravely to change them. The film reflects viable and sustainable options for empowerment and offers an actionable blueprint for transformation.

NOT A MEMBER? JOIN NW-ARM!

Members of NW-ARM receive special benefits such as weekly media alerts, notification of media events, access to our library collection of media resources and more. Individual memberships begin at $25.00 annually and organizational memberships are $100.00 annually. For more information regarding membership and benefits please visit, call or email us.

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Tincan - technologies at play!
University of Washington
West Central Community Center

ANNOUNCEMENTS

VIDEO CONTEST Our Media, (Y)Our Business



One of the goals of the NW-ARM is to empower youth and young adults to become critical media citizens. As part of Our Kids, Our Business month in April, we are sponsoring a video contest for high school and college students in the Inland Northwest region.

The purpose of this video contest is based on the idea that one of the ways to learn media literacy is by actually making media. We are excited to see the student submissions this contest inspires.

The theme for the video contest is How do media impact the well-being of children and youth? The deadline for all submissions is March 29, 2013. For more details visit our blog at nwaresponsiblemedia.org .

The winners of this contest will be announced along with this year's recipient of the Bill Niggemeyer Award for Excellence in Media Literacy on April 18 at Gonzaga University, Tilford Center, 4th floor lobby, 5pm-7pm. The top three high school and top three college entries will be awarded cash prizes.

Bill Niggemeyer Award for Excellence in Media Literacy

Nominate a person you know for the Bill Niggemeyer Award for Excellence in Media Literacy. The Award will be presented in conjunction with Our Kids, (Y)our Business Video Contest Award Ceremony. The nominee must meet one or more of the following requirements:

- Organizes and educates our community (Inland Northwest) about media literacy and media responsibility
- Empowers youth and adults to become critical consumers of media
- Encourages media to act as responsible, effective stewards of this critical public trust
- Counteracts the negative effects of media on our community and culture
- Promotes and disseminates research on media effects and media literacy
- Explores positive solutions regarding the influence of media violence in the lives of our children
- Plans and develops effective resolutions to the issues of media literacy
- Works with the media to enhance the health and development of our community
- Educates about gender issues in the media

Understanding the Power of Media Literate Consumers in Controlling the Message

Media Literacy Project

by Heather Crandall, Assistant Professor, MA Communication and Leadership Studies Program at Gonzaga University



Ron Irwin, excited by the connection between George Gerbner's cultivation theory and Marshal McLuhan's idea that the "medium is the message" –whereby stories and messages have different meanings when presented in different mediums, or form of message delivery – designed a media literacy outreach project. Ron created an interactive presentation on this connection for first and second year college students.

His motivation came from the idea that if a person or population understands how and why messaging is directed at them, they are in a far better position to exercise personal responsibility in how they process or act upon that messaging.

Through his media literacy outreach project, he learned a few things. In terms of the students, he said, "while moderately engaged in the conversation, it was clear through their non-verbal interaction that they had not really considered the idea of media literacy, or how media messaging directly impacted their thoughts, ideas, buying habits and lives. It almost seemed as though the students had never considered the idea that it is stories that define our lives and our view of the world." And upon reflection, Ron says, "The problem is, with the inundation and unrelenting barrage today of motive driven storytelling, people forget that we still have the rights to approve or deny the messages we allow into our life. As a media literate consumer, who has the knowledge and tools to exercise personal responsibility over the messages we receive, we have the power and the wherewithal to enforce those consumer rights." In the end, the students who attended his presentation were reminded of some media literacy tools. They called filters by James Potter. They include:

- Examine your media exposure habits.
- Control the coding of your own mental process.
- Meaning matching – question messages memorized.
- Meaning Construction –Ask yourself are you accepting information or transforming information and as a result creating your own meaning.

If you can use these filters, you are one your way to more control over the mass mediated environment we live in.

2012: NW-ARM Features Enriching Film Presentations and New Blog Site

The NW-ARM sponsors and co-sponsors films that are relevant to social and political issues in the news and media. Films are choosen to create awareness and educate our community about the influence of media.

In 2012, the NW-ARM sponsored and co-sponsored several film events. In the spring, the NW-ARM sponsored *Generation M: Misogyny in Media and Culture* and the short film *This Place* which talks about how alcohol marketing and media impacts alcohol use.

In the fall, weeks before the presidential election, the NW-ARM sponsored the film *Rich Media, Poor Democracy*, which exposed how journalism has been compromised by massive conglomerates that produce news high on sensationalism and low on information. The documentary suggests that unless citizen activists demand more from the press, this new corporate system will be characterized by a rich media and an ever-impoverished, poor democracy.

The NW-ARM also launched a blog site to better inform its members, supporters and the community about media literacy news and events. Follow the NW-ARM's new blog at nwaresponsiblemedia.org.

Rick Steves Travels to Spokane

Throughout the year, NW-ARM supports local, responsible media outlets to be active in the community. In February, KSPS Public Television and NW-ARM joined forces to bring national travel writer Rick Steves to Spokane. In an effort to bring awareness about globalization through travel, Steves spoke to the audience abought becoming not just travelers but global citizens. A portion of the proceeds from Steves' presentation will go to the Gonzaga-in-Cagli summer study abroad program.

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