

NEW ABA RESEARCH ON TELEVISION

The majority of commercial television viewers say they give their full attention to news and current affairs shows, while other programs have to compete with everyday household activities.

The ABA has published a research monograph, *Living With Television* (ABA Monograph 2), which explores the different ways people watch television, the impact of VCRs and attitudes to the introduction of pay TV in Australia.

Key research results based on a national telephone survey of 1,204 Australians are (in some cases, figures exceed 100% due to multiple responses):

- the programs people reported viewing with full attention were news (34%), current affairs (21%), documentaries (19%), movies (18%) and serials (18%);
- television is used as a backdrop in many Australian homes with over half (54%) of those people surveyed turning the television on without a specific program in mind; 44% indicated they turned it on and off for specific programs; 2% were undecided;

- many people report sharing television time with other activities. Nearly half (48%) said they usually ate their evening meal while watching television, while 17% said they did this sometimes; 35% claimed they hardly ever/never did this.

The VCR is changing television viewing with people taping on average two programs a week because they aired at an inconvenient time (76%) or because of clashes with other programs (29%). Other reasons included taping for children, building a tape library and re-watching a preferred program.

The programs taped most often were movies, sport, serials and documentaries.

When the ABA's survey was undertaken in July 1992, public opinion on pay TV was divided and knowledge about pay TV was limited (see below for more detail).

Those supporting the introduction of pay TV believed it would offer greater diversity and choice. Those against pay TV were concerned about cost, were satisfied with current television or video choices, or were worried pay TV would lower standards and quality of programs on free-to-air services.

RESEARCH BACKGROUND

The ABA conducts community research on a wide range of broadcasting issues. ABA research monographs make this information available to the public and industry groups in a readily accessible form.

FURTHER FINDINGS

- while 25% of people thought pay TV was a good idea, 27% thought it was a bad idea; 23% had no firm opinion and 25% had not heard of pay TV;
- knowledge of pay TV was higher among men (80%) than among women (70%);

- many people have adopted the habit of flicking between channels using the remote control. Six out of ten people report frequently doing this.

The findings are based on both a national telephone survey of 1,204 people and focus group discussions with



Australian
Broadcasting
Authority

Living with Television

Monograph 2

Office of Film and
Literature Classification



Australian
Broadcasting
Authority

Classification Issues
Film, Video & Television

Monograph 1

84 people about their attitudes towards television, conducted for the ABA by ANOP Research Services.

CLASSIFICATION ISSUES

The first ABA research monograph, *Classification Issues - Film, Video & Television*, is jointly published with the Office of Film and Literature Classification (OFLC) and contains research results of a project conducted by the OFLC and Australian Broadcasting Tribunal last year.

The joint nature of the project allowed classification issues to be examined and comparisons of the classification systems for film, video and television to be made.

This survey was done during June, 1992 in a national telephone survey and focus group discussions conducted by Frank Small & Assoc.