

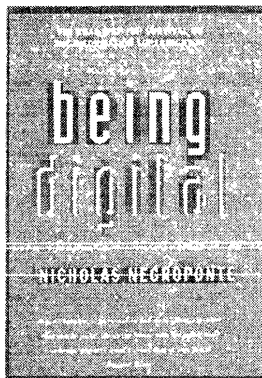
New in the library

The following books have been selected from the range of new additions. These notes are indicative of a book's subject matter, but are not intended as critical comment or review. The ABA invites the public to use the library for research purposes during normal business hours.

Being digital

Nicholas Negroponte. London: Hodder & Stoughton, 1995. ISBN 0 7336 0135 9

This book explores the impact of digital technology on the world. Negroponte explains what being digital means and how life can be enhanced by it. He describes the difference between bits and atoms, explains why all information is becoming digital, the meaning and role of virtual reality, and predicts the way being digital will affect all our lives. The author wants us to start thinking on information in terms of 'bits' and get away from living in the world confined to atoms. The book is a collection of themes touched on previously on his monthly column in the US edition of *Wired* magazine. Part One describes the principles behind digitalisation. Part



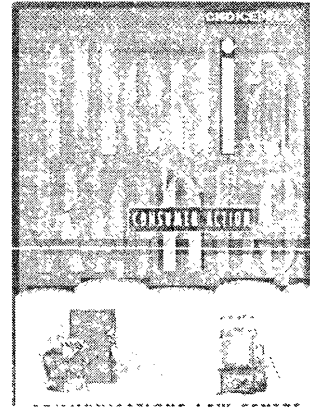
Two discusses the human interface with information technology. The final section provides a description of digital life. Digital technology removes limitations such as time, geography, age offering 'anything, anytime, anywhere' information. In the epilogue, the author offers his belief that 'digital technology can be a cultural force drawing people into greater world harmony'.

Media rights consumer action

Communications Law Centre. Marrickville: Choice Books, 1995. ISBN 0 947277 21 8

This book sets out to provide consumers with the information needed to understand and exercise their rights

concerning the media in Australia. It sets out the responsibilities of the media providers and the various regulators. With the explosion of many new services such as multimedia and pay television and the trend towards global con-

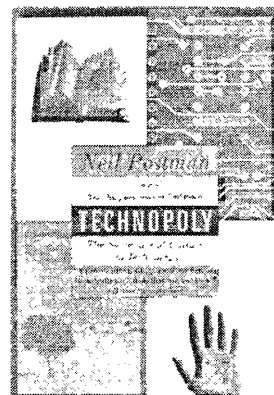


tent instead of local content, there is a pressing need for consumers to understand media regulation and how the new technology affects current law and regulation. As well as providing basic information about the structure and operations of existing and new media industries, the book contains advice on action and remedies available to consumers when they wish to make a complaint. Sample letters of complaints to relevant industry bodies and regulators are included.

Technopoly: the surrender of culture to technology

Neil Postman. New York: Vintage Books, 1992. ISBN 0 679 74540 8

This work chronicles our transformation from a society that uses technology



to one that is shaped by it. The author traces technology's effects on politics, intellect, religion history, privacy and truth. He issues a warning against the tyranny of machines over man in the late twentieth century. ie. a technopoly - a self-justifying self-perpetuating system wherein technology of every kind is granted sovereignty over social institutions and national life. However, *Technopoly: the surrender of culture to technology* also suggests that technology placed within the context of our larger human goals and social values, can be an invaluable instrument for furthering the most worthy human endeavours.

This is the Science Show: twenty years of discovery, invention, fraud, folly and fun

Robyn Williams. Sydney, ABC Books, 1995. ISBN 0 7333 0454 0

Robyn Williams has been bringing the 'Science Show' to thousands of listeners over ABC Radio National for twenty years. He set out to 'produce a science program about ideas, not simple facts or bits of boffinry'. This book is an entertaining and informative account of those years, highlighting scientific events and personalities, issues of moment, scientific fraud, discoveries and broadcasting pranks. Nevertheless, when necessary, the 'Science Show' has never been afraid to be critical of the scientific process and of its establishment. From

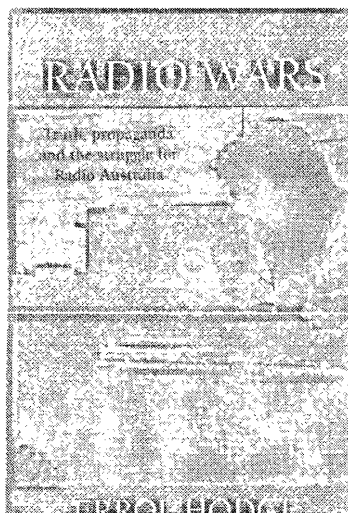


the point of view that science is a part of everyone's everyday life, it continues to treat scientific subjects in an accessible manner backed up by substantial research.

Radio Wars: truth, propaganda and the struggle for Radio Australia

Errol Hodge. Cambridge, Cambridge University Press, 1994. ISBN 0 521 47380 2

Radio Australia, the multilingual overseas radio service of the Australian Broadcasting Corporation is heard by millions of listeners in the Asia-Pacific region and also throughout the world, including USA and Britain. The service began in 1939 as a propaganda tool. From then until the Vietnam War, its news coverage and commentary was



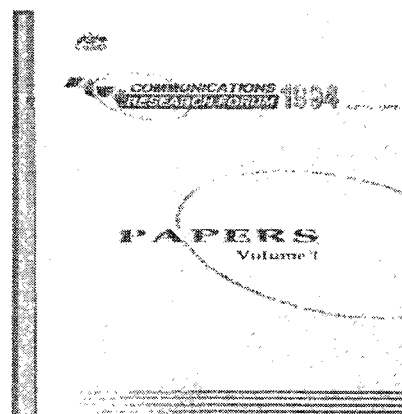
influenced by politics and internal conflict. Politicians, bureaucrats and broadcasters were all involved in the struggle for editorial control. The author suggests that by the time of the Dili massacre in 1991, forthright and factual report had taken the place of propaganda. In tracing the history of Radio Australia, the author raises questions about journalism, censorship, and foreign policy. The author questions whether Radio Australia can maintain its viability and influence in the age of satellite television.

The future of the BBC: commerce, consumers and governance

Richard Collins and James Purnell. London: Institute for Public Policy Research

1995. ISBN 1 872452 97 3

This discussion paper presents a model for change for public service broadcasting, which is being challenged across the world by new technologies and by governments eager to privatise public sector institutions. The authors argue that the BBC can find a new role. The paper suggests that to survive in the new era, the BBC will need reform - it must be accountable and it must be given commercial freedoms. Specific proposals include: disaggregating the BBC into commercial and public service units, to improve efficiency and remove conflicts of interest; giving BBC Worldwide Ltd the freedom to borrow without government-imposed limits, possibly by selling equity; maintaining licence-fee funding and free-at-the-point-of-use services, and restricting charging or advertising in the UK to



incremental programs or channels; replacing government patronage with elected governors, to make the BBC responsive to the public. These changes would help the BBC develop and exploit commercial opportunities and reshape the BBC as a genuinely independent and open institution. ■