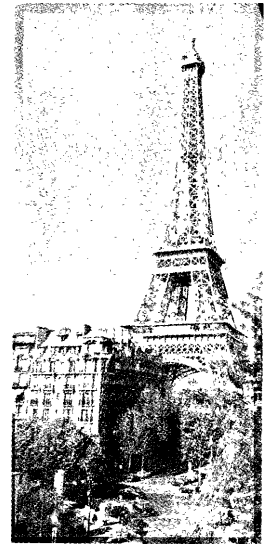


The ABA was a major supporter of and participant in the UNESCO sponsored international conference for children's media researchers, 'Youth and the Media, Tomorrow', held in Paris, 21-25 April 1997.



'Youth and the Media, Tomorrow'

First world forum of international researchers on youth and the media

The ABA was a major participant in the First World Forum of International Researchers on Youth and the Media held in Paris from 21 to 25 April 1997. The theme of the Forum was 'Youth and the Media, Tomorrow' and was organised by France's Groupe de Recherche sur la Relation Enfants Medias (GRREM) which is overseen by the International Scientific Committee chaired by Madame Elisabeth Auclair. Gareth Grainger, ABA General Manager Policy and Programs, represents the ABA on that committee.

The Forum attracted strong support by 350 researchers, regulators, policy makers and journalists from 33 countries.

The conference was opened by His Excellency Mr Federico Mayor, Director General of UNESCO, in the Main Hall of the UNESCO Headquarters. Mr Mayor made particular reference to Article 19 of the Universal Declaration of Human Rights:

Everyone has the right to freedom of opinions and expression; this right includes freedom to hold opinions without interference and to seek, receive and input information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers.

Mr Mayor pointed out that based upon this fundamental right, Article 13 of the

Convention on the Rights of the Child provides that:

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and input information of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either overtly in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice ...

Mr Mayor expressed his concern about the too easy access by the young to films and programs portraying gratuitous violence. He spoke of the need to balance the rights of the young to access to information through the media with the need to protect children and young people from the dangers of violence on television, in films and video games and on-line services, notably the Internet. The debate over the violence issue generated considerable discussion during the Forum.

ABA representatives made key presentations at the Forum. Peter Webb, ABA Chairman and member of the Committee of Patrons of the Forum, participated in a roundtable of heads of broadcasting regulatory agencies. Debra Richards, Director Program Services, addressed a plenary session on research perspectives in Australia. Mr Grainger presented the final report at the closing session. Steven Nugent,

ABA Research Manager, spoke about the International Research Network at the roundtable, 'Communications Between Researchers' chaired by Mr Grainger. (Summaries of these presentations follow.)

There were a number of other Australian participants. Wendy Keys of the Key Centre for Cultural and Media Studies gave a poster session on children's television industry development in Australia. Ms Pauline Griffiths, Canberra University, addressed a workshop on 'Teenage Viewers of Popular TV: the viewing culture of 14 year olds Canberrans'. Ms Toni Downes, University of Western Sydney, spoke at the 'new media, new research' workshop on 'playing with computing technologies in the home'. Ms Robyn Quinn and Mr Barrie McMahon, Edith Coven University, spoke in a plenary session about 'research and development of a new theoretical and pedagogical framework'.

The Forum concluded with a recommendation that the next Forum be held in 1999 or 2000, possibly in Sydney. The International Scientific Committee adopted the findings of the Forum and invited Mr Grainger to succeed Madame Elisabeth Auclair as Chairman of that committee from early 1998. 