

## Blog for Unit “Who Controls Information?”

### Introduction

This week’s readings offer three different perspectives on “who controls information” in the digital age. It is important to keep in mind that no perspective is “wrong” or “right” – but you can think one is a better choice than the others!

The perspectives are as follows: 1) Croteau & Hoynes outline how media ownership can control and in many cases limit access to information; 2) Benkler describes his theory that the shift to digital information has opened up “a new set of social and political opportunities” for information-seekers across the globe (p. 34); 3) In “Mashable,” Silverman highlights the tensions between Reddit’s community of users (and their definition of relevant “information”) and corporate interests.

*Choose one of the following questions to respond to on this week’s blog. As always, you can refer to the rubric under the document share to guide your response and interaction with others.*

1) Part A: In “The Media Industry: Structure, Strategy and Debates” Croteau & Hoynes help us understand the corporate interests that control access to media and information. They explain the concepts of “synergy” (p. 40) and “audience segmentation” (p. 41.) In your own words, what does this mean?

Part B: Using the answers to Part A to help you, talk about the ownership of an entertainment source you use. First, choose a TV show OR film that you have watched in the last month. Trace the ownership of that particular TV show OR film. (In the case of TV, what network is it on? Who owns that network? What other networks are owned by that same company? In the case of film, what is the production company that paid for the film? What other movies have they recently produced? What other media companies does the production company own? For both, do you notice anything interesting once you look at this?)

Second, think about that TV show OR film and their audience. What are the age or gender do you think that show/film is targeting? Why do you think that?

2) In “Reddit: A Beginner’s Guide,” Matt Silverman explains how Reddit is organized and managed to share information within the online community. What are some key points Silverman discusses?

The Woody Harrelson AMA is a considered an important example of how the Reddit community protects Reddit from “outside” interests. Explain this AMA in your own words. What happened? Do you agree or disagree with the Reddit users?

Find a quote from one of the users that you like and explain why you think it is important.