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How To Watch TV News: Revised Edition



Synopsis

A scathing and prescient look at television news?now updated for the new tech-savvy generation
Television news : genuine information or entertainment fodder? Fifteen years ago, Neil Postman, a pioneer in media education and author of the bestselling *Amusing Ourselves to Death*, and Steve Powers, an award-winning broadcast journalist, concluded that anyone who relies exclusively on their television for accurate world news is making a big mistake. A cash cow laden with money from advertisers, so-called news shows glut viewers with celebrity coverage at the cost of things they really should know. Today, this message is still appallingly true but the problems have multiplied? along with the power of the Internet and the abundance of cable channels. A must-read for anyone concerned with the way media is manipulating our worldview, this newly revised edition addresses the evolving technology and devolving quality of America?s television news programming.

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Customer Reviews

Neil Postman (1931–2003) was chairman of the Department of Communication Arts at New York University and founder of its Media Ecology program. He wrote more than twenty books.

In his previous books, Neil Postman has made some excellent observations about society. I am particularly a fan of his book "Amusing Ourselves to Death". In this work, Postman evaluates the televised media in "How to Watch TV News". Much like his other works, he raises some important points. News programs are typically filled with a collection of tidbits for a period of time slightly longer

than fifteen minutes. The new items are chosen largely on whether they will draw viewers which in turn will draw advertising dollars. The advertising dollars pay the TV news media. So it is not really important what is covered in the news so much as what news will draw ratings. The content of the news is another issue. In reality, we get the cliff notes version of the news. We only receive part of the picture. We lack a lot of the background information necessary to make judgements. Because we lack a lot of the information, we are vulnerable to the any bias injected by the news reporter or news station. One of the main points of the book is that we need to read newspapers and magazines to stay informed. Without supplemental information or complete picture, we lack the ability to make an informed judgment. Printed news allows us to select the important stories and eliminate the irrelevant stories. This is an option we don't have with television news. Postman goes through further scenarios that TV affects. Particularly the chapter that deals with the effects of news on children is enlightening. Even though the material is somewhat dated, Channel One programming is also addressed as part of this discussion. Overall, Postman makes an informed and intelligent statement with this book.

You think you watch the news to learn of events; however, news "products" are designed to (1) sell commercials and (2) tell you what to think. There is no coherent way to present complex topics in 2 minutes. This is not a new phenomenon but was in place at its inception. Neil details this as an insider. Enjoy

Something everyone should read. Relevant to today.

How to Watch TV News is an excellent resource for the budding media theorist or the person who wants to know why New Orleans and the Iraq War do not get the same airtime as a news anchor saying "Keep \$*&* that chicken!" The argument is simple - we need to learn HOW to watch TV. The understanding and properly contextualizing media (TV or otherwise) is not a given. It is not inherent to our DNA to know why some stories are presented in certain ways and others not at all. The book exposes the danger and resulting vulnerability we all face when engaging with our televisions in an uninformed way.

I purchased this book as a textbook for a college course I was taking. It was very interesting and informative. I would have found it so even if I weren't required to read it for the course. It'll open your eyes to the world of media!

glad i bought this love it

The book was arrived on time. Bought it for to help me pass the class. It was a lot of reading though.

As some other reviewers have stated, this book is mostly about a bit dated trip around a TV newsroom. Only perhaps 20% of the content is Postman, it is quite obvious when it is, and most of that is rehashed or dated material from his other works.

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