

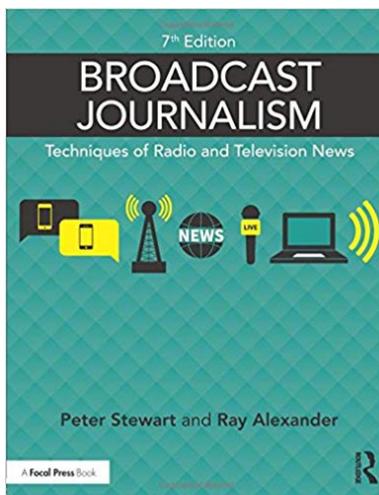
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BOOK REVIEW: A BOOK ABOUT THE MOST EFFICIENT TECHNIQUES OF BROADCAST JOURNALISM

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One of the most popular and useful series of books on broadcasting journalism, *Broadcast Journalism: Techniques of Radio and Television News*, keeps on improving by bringing the information up to date in the wide and complex context of social media and Web 2.0. The first edition, written by

Andrew Boyd alone, was followed by six more updated issues, the fifth and the sixth editions being co-authored by Peter Stewart and Ray Alexander.

The latest reissue dates from 2016 and for the first time Boyd's name is missing from the cover of the book. This revision is realized only by Stewart and Alexander and, without neglecting at all the traditional principles, notions and techniques of media coverage, focuses also on those new changes of journalistic paradigm triggered by the online revolution. The authors are highly respected as they benefit of a long and prodigious experience in theoretical and especially applied journalism. Peter Stewart was Head of News at Essex Radio Group's nine stations for a long period of time. He was morning news editor and has worked in the BBC's newsrooms. He was also anchorman of various programmes on both commercial and BBC radio. Stewart published a worldwide praised book about radio, *Essential Radio Journalism* (2006, 2010), which is appreciated by both public and commercial radio presenters and managers. Peter Stewart was awarded the New York Radio prize for news presentation and he has trained radio news staff in the UK and abroad. On the other side, Ray Alexander is a specialist in broadcast techniques, training in his career of over 25 years more than 3000 journalists and presenters at the BBC and many other broadcasting organizations. He is also a specialist in training sport professionals and other clients from the private/corporate and public sectors in using broadcast techniques in their activities.

The authors review in their book the most important techniques of broadcast journalism, they clearly explain the writing skills for radio and TV, the multi-tasking approaches, and the principles of ethics involved in media coverage. The manual also integrates concepts about social media, user-generated content and the usage of mobile technology for radio and TV broadcast. Stewart and Alexander reveal the way in which sources can be obtained and maintained for a long period of time, the differences between the

conversational discourse and the news writing, as well as between hard news and soft news, They present the golden rules of making an interview, from building bridges between the reporter and the interviewee to the ways in which the questions are kept relevant, and how to strongly finish the interview. The online environment is now of significant interest for Peter Stewart and Ray Alexander. The two specialists reveal the way in which citizen journalism can influence nowadays the mainstream, institutionalized media channels. The tips for journalists are useful, evocative, and attractive. The words are cleverly chosen so that they can shed significant light on different aspects of journalistic writing which might be at first puzzling for some (especially young) broadcasters. And Stewart and Alexander want to present the modalities of developing media writing skills, and also of increasing or restoring self-confidence when needed: “Writing for broadcasting is not a natural process in which you just write sentences in your usual way. For The Job you will obviously have done a lot of writing and enjoy the power of words. You read lots of news, books, maybe poetry. Sometimes you read something and you can think: I love that sentence and I wish I’d written a sentence like that. And one day, you will”.¹

Peter Stewart and Ray Alexander warn their readers that they shouldn’t expect to deal with an academic book in the true sense of the word, but rather with a comprehensive collection of guidelines useful for media professionals, on one hand, and for journalism students and even teachers, trainers and professors, on the other hand. It is a volume that pragmatically depicts radio and TV techniques, rigors, notions and principles that can be used in both theoretical and applied journalism, but which doesn’t claim to be a proper scientific work. This doesn’t diminish the importance of the book, it just

¹ Stewart, Peter; Alexander, Ray, *Broadcast Journalism: Techniques of Radio and Television News*, 7th edition, p.5, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York and London, 2016

outlines the paradigmatic landscape in which the structure, the background and the consisting elements function and develop: “This is not a sociological or academic study. The aim has been to produce a comprehensive manual for students, teachers, trainers, lecturers and anyone who wants to learn more about broadcast journalism”.²

The authors stress the qualities needed to have a real chance to succeed in journalism, the difficulties of this job, also the risks implied, but they also highlight the remarkable satisfaction one can get just by having their job done properly, no matter how demanding the process of fulfilling it can be: “Demanded skills include finding stories, crisp, concise fast writing, packaging together scripts, sound, interviews, pictures, maps or graphics, reporting live, reading news, multimedia skills, understanding media law and social media hazards, versioning texts to be seen on mobile devices, knowing the names of people in the news, people about to be news, people who once were news, getting wet, hot, cold, being alert at three in the morning or standing outside a building for hours waiting for a moment that will last seconds. The good news? You will never be bored”.³

The 7th edition of *Broadcast Journalism: Techniques of Radio and Television News* is a compelling book which can be used as guidelines for media organizations, and also as course support. Following the instructions delivered in this volume by Peter Stewart and Ray Alexander, the professionals, citizen journalists or students can hope achieving the most relevant and efficient skills needed in order to succeed in the difficult and demanding, yet fascinating activity that journalism is. It is a must-have book for everyone interested in an ongoing evolution of their capability of understanding and reflecting the events

²Stewart, Peter; Alexander, Ray, *Broadcast Journalism: Techniques of Radio and Television News*, 7th edition, p.xiv, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York and London, 2016

³ Stewart, Peter; Alexander, Ray, *Broadcast Journalism: Techniques of Radio and Television News*, 7th edition, p.5, Routledge, Taylor & Francis Group, New York and London, 2016

around them. In other words, for anyone aiming to become a journalist. Or a better one.