An Introduction to the Uses and Diffusion of the News

An Introduction to the Uses and Diffusion of the News:

Innovations and Cultivation of the Mass Media

By

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To Michael and Patrick

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CHAPTER ONE

THE USES AND GRATIFICATIONS
OF THE MASS MEDIA

Television's effects are the result of an interactive process between the characteristics of television and the characteristics of its users. Different children could watch the same television content and the effects could be different (**Lowery & DeFleur**, 1995, p. 257).

It has long been recognized that different individuals use the mass media differently. Most rely on television for their news, but others rely on newspapers. Some choose to watch frightening films but others avoid them. Many use media to escape stress; others use media to seek information. We all use different media at different times for different reasons.

Several theorists have argued that it is not the attributes of the medium that determines use, but the needs of the user (**Fulk, et al.,** 1990; **Walther,** (1994). There are different functions that the mass media serve and different motivations for using the media. This orientation toward media use first recognized that media serve different functions and then investigated the motives for using the media. An individual's media use and the effects of that media use are largely a function of the individual's purpose for using the media. For example, we would expect greater knowledge gain for someone watching television to gain information during a political campaign than for someone watching to pass time. *Uses and Gratifications Theory* posits that users select a medium and specific content over others to gratify specific needs and purposes (**Levy & Windahl**, 1984).

Functions of the Mass Media

Once the extent of media use is known, an immediate question that arises is *why* people use the media. What purpose does mass media use

serve? **Harold Lasswell** (1948) asked this question early on and identified three *functions* of use.

First, media help individuals keep abreast of what is happening in the world around them. This is the ***surveillance,*** or ***watchdog function***. Information is collected and distributed concerning the events in the environment, both within and outside a particular community. By watching over the environment, the mass media can warn individuals about impending dangers and threats in the world, such as dangerous weather conditions or a threatening military situation. There are *inconvenient truths* that journalists need to cover if they are to fully satisfy their *watchdog function*, recognizing that journalism is a *public practice housed within a media industry devoted to private gain* (**Rosen**, 1994, p. 372).

Surveillance can also be *dysfunctional* through what **Toffler** (1970) termed *future shock* and *information overload.* Warnings might lead to overreactions and fear or panic, as in some cases after the *War of the Worlds* radio broadcast in 1938. Others might *mistake 'knowing' about problems of the day for 'doing 'something about them* (**Lazarsfeld & Merton**, 1948, p. 106). Still others might become apathetic and ignore the warnings, as in some cases when *Katrina* hit New Orleans in August of 2005, the 6th strongest in US recorded history and one of the most deadly.

Second, the media help make sense of what is going on by providing an overview and explanation of various components of what was happening. This is the ***correlation function***. Information overload can be reduced by synthesizing information and providing perspective. A dysfunctional aspect of the correlation function is that it can lead to adopting the stereotypical views sometimes presented by the media and receivers can lose their own critical abilities in selecting and digesting information.

Third, the media help *socialize* individuals to the social norms, values, and customs of the society from one generation to another or from members of a group to newcomers. This is the ***transmission of the cultural heritage function*** of the mass media. Individuals learn the norms, values, cultural truisms, etc. among groups important to society to keep it functioning and cohesive. Dysfunctionally, subgroups of society might be ignored, slanted presentations of values might be presented, and values of the dominant ruling class tend to be emphasized.

There can also be a ***status conferral*** side effect such that people covered extensively in the news achieve status in society (**Lazarsfeld & Merton**, 1948).

Recognition by the press or radio or magazines or newsreels testifies that one has arrived... That one is important enough to have been singled out from the large anonymous masses, that one's behavior and opinions are significant enough to require public notice (p. 498).

There is a humorous anecdotal story concerning Scotty Reston, long-time editor of the *NYTimes,* who said that he finally achieved status in the eyes of his children when interviewed on television by Walter Cronkite. Just as media can create celebrity, however, it can also generate cynicism through exposés and public disputes (**Simonson**, 1999).

Charles Wright (1960, 1974) added the function of ***entertainment*** and pointed out that there are both *manifest* (intended and observed) and *latent* (hidden) functions. *Manifest functions* of the media include information gain, persuasion, and entertainment. *Latent functions* include such non-intended effects as becoming more aggressive after viewing violent content, and incidental learning of false or misleading information from entertainment programs, including learning negative stereotypes of minority groups or negative health practices, etc. Using the media for entertainment can lead to a form of addiction where we are spending far too much time in watching television, playing video games or using the Internet. Thus, there are potential dysfunctions associated with each of the functions of media use:

Table 3 1 1: Functions and Dysfunctions of Media Use

Functions	Dysfunctions
1. Surveillance – news, information	Media heroes Pseudo-events Fake news
2. Correlation – Selecting and interpreting the news, editorials	Stereotypes, Conformity, Media bias
3. Transmitters of Cultural Heritage, Socialization	Less cultural diversity
4. Entertainment – reduction of stress	Narcotizing effect.

Other researchers have added the function of *parasocial interaction*, what **Perse** (1990) refers to as *affective interpersonal involvement*, where viewers feel they know the sources, subjects, characters, and actors, because they see and hear them so often and interact with them vicariously. **Horton & Wohl**, (1956. 215) defined parasocial interaction

as a *seeming face-to-face relationship between spectator and performer*. **Rubin & McHugh** (1987) defined parasocial interaction as a *one-sided interpersonal relationship that television viewers establish with media characters* (p. 280).

Hartmann & Goldhoorn (2011) defined the concept as:

> *an immediate feeling or impression that results from a user's automatic mind reading activities. The experience is characterized by a felt reciprocity with the TV performer that comprises a sense of mutual awareness, attention, and adjustment* (p. 1107). They found that *the intensity of the parasocial experience depended on the way TV performers bodily address their viewers, on the perceived attractiveness of the TV performer, and the user's perspective-taking ability* (p. 1118).

Receivers have been known to form social relationships with fictional characters, newscasters, talk radio hosts, and celebrities as part of their social world (**Giles**, 2002).

Other functions that have been added include *escapism* (**Pearlin**, 1959), *anxiety reduction* (**Mendelsohn**, 1963) and *play* (**Stephenson**, 1967), where the stresses of life can be reduced or ignored by focusing on fantasy entertainment content.

While various functions of the media might adequately indicate the various aims or goals of the mass media, they do not necessarily indicate the functions or uses the media serves for the audience. Focusing on the purposes intended by media producers can lead to potential *unintended* effects of media content.

The functional approach to the specific use of television was also investigated as part of the studies on *Television in the Lives of Our Children* (**Schramm, et al**., 1961). Three primary reasons, or functions, as to *why* children watch television were formulated: *Entertainment, Information Gain*, and *Social Utility*.

Entertainment is concerned with escaping from problems and boredom, and identifying with exciting and attractive people. Since it is concerned with escape from problems, rather than solving them, it is viewed as a passive activity.

Information Gain among children is primarily incidental but clearly takes place. In surveys collected by the researchers, girls often said they learned something about personal grooming and manners. Boys said they learned a great deal about sports performance by watching good athletes compete. Many children reported that watching television helped them in school by giving them ideas for topics to discuss.

Social Utility was a third common reason for why children said they watched television. Watching, especially among teenagers, was often a social occasion. It provided a convenient reason to share each other's company. It also gave them something to talk about when outside the home.

Watching television can serve all three needs, depending on what the child brings to the viewing experience. Different children can watch a crime story for escape, to learn something, or to converse about with their friends, for example.

Radio Soap Operas

Herta Herzog (1944), a graduate student of Lazarsfeld in Austria who followed him to Columbia University and eventually married him, is often credited as the originator of the uses and gratifications approach. Her concern was not so much with the functions, or *aims* of message producers, but with the functions or *uses* of media receivers. The media might be very good at providing information about issue positions of political candidates, for example, but the audience might be more interested in how the candidate is doing in the campaign, the so-called *horse race*. Hence, the *function* of the media might not be met due to the *uses* of the receiver.

Herzog interviewed 100 heavy users of radio soap operas to determine what uses or *reasons* they had for their involvement. Three major reasons why they listened to soap operas on a regular basis were identified. The first reason provided was *emotional release.* This referred to the notions of *entertainment, escape, and passing the time*. Second was *wishful thinking*. This referred to the idea of putting oneself into the life circumstance of the character(s) depicted in the program. Third was the notion of *receiving advice*. People indicated they listened often to get advice on how to solve their own problems by listening to the depiction of characters solving problems in their soap opera lives.

Later research on television soap opera viewing found that character development and cumulative interest resulting from a serial format are additional motivations for viewing (**Whetmore & Kielwasser**, 1983). Dramatic serial programming has the advantage of not only more developed characterizations but also sex and romance themes to increases audience interest.

A popular format of radio is talk shows. Hosts provide their opinions on a variety of subjects and listeners are invited to call in to agree or disagree and add their own viewpoints. **Turow** (1974) concluded that they

were a form of "interpersonal communication" that allowed listeners to seek gratifications from interacting with the host. **Tramer & Jeffres** (1983) supported this with their finding that the main reason for calling was *companionship seeking*. **Lichtenstein & Rosenfeld** (1984) found that the main motivation of college students to listen to radio was to kill time. **Towers** (1987) found that radio listeners in general did so for diversion, surveillance (information), and interaction.

Lin (2006) conducted a national telephone survey of 568 respondents. She found *diversion* (temporary relaxation, emotional escape) was a primary factor in listening to satellite radio followed by *habit*. Those who subscribed to satellite radio were also inclined to download music on the Internet and be willing to pay for it. These were primarily younger members of the radio listening audience.

Television Soap Operas

Rubin (1985) interviewed 1,023 students at 11 U.S. universities. Four primary motives for watching daytime television soap operas were found in a factor analysis: *Orientation, Avoidance, Diversion*, and *Social Utility*. Involvement was a significant predictor of all viewing motives, especially orientation use of soap operas. Life satisfaction and soap opera affinity contributed to nonescapist, diversionary use of the programs.

Spitzberg & Canary (1985) distinguished between chronically lonely and situationally lonely individuals. At times, we all feel situationally lonely. Chronically lonely individuals experience persistent loneliness and are more likely to use socially dysfunctional coping strategies. **Perse & Rubin** (1990) surveyed 380 nontraditional undergraduates on their local TV news use and 460 additional undergraduates on their daytime serial use. They found that chronic lonely nontraditional students used radio significantly more than the non-lonely and were less active news viewers, watching to pass time more than for surveillance. The traditional students who were chronically lonely were more likely to watch soap operas to pass the time as well and were less likely to watch for social utility reasons. The chronically lonely tended to react with greater passivity and withdrawal. Primarily, they used television to fill idle time.

Uses and Gratifications

Katz, et al. (1973) and **Blumer & McQuail** (1969) argued that people are motivated to meet certain needs when they use the media, hence uses and gratifications. *Gratifications* are defined as *perceived fulfillment of needs*

through media use (**Palmgreen**, 1984, p. 22). They are the pleasurable emotional responses to the fulfillment of a need. The approach focuses on the motivations individuals have for using the mass media. Research generally has users rate a typology of 6 to 11 media motives, including such motivations as *to gain information, passing time, companionship, escape, arousal,* and *relaxation* (**Armstrong & Rubin**, 1989; **Rubin, et al.**, 1985).

Katz, et al., (1973, pp. 517-517) defined *needs* as:

the combined product of psychological dispositions, sociological factors, and environmental conditions that motivate media consumption or exposure.

They classified 35 media-related needs with a possible 84 possible combinations. These were then reduced to 14 orientations and included such needs as *arousal or excitement, companionship, habit, passing time, personal identity, reinforcement, and stimulation*. They were then put into five categories:

- **Cognitive Needs**-Acquiring information, knowledge, and understanding of one's environment;
- **Affective Needs**-Emotions, pleasures, feelings, or aesthetic experiences;
- **Personal Integrative Needs**-Desire for self-esteem, credibility, confidence, and status;
- **Social Integrative Needs**-Desire for affiliation, relationships with family, friends, and the world;
- **Tension Release Needs**-Escape, diversion, boredom.

Assumptions of Uses and Gratifications Research

Katz, et al. (1974) presented five assumptions of the uses and gratifications model:

1. **The audience is active and media use is goal-oriented**. Different receivers have varying levels of activity at different times, but even when they use media to relax, they are satisfying a need. Receivers have been found to be less active when they use the media for diversion but more active when they use the media to seek information (**Levy**, 1983; **Levy & Windahl**, 1984).
2. **Audience members choose which medium to use for a particular need satisfaction**. Different users will use different

media at different times to satisfy their different and varying needs. Their social situation can affect user needs and influence media choices. Users in this regard can be described as *proactive* or *passive* (**Finn**, 1982).

3. **Media compete with other sources for need satisfaction**. Family, friends, churches, and schools, sleep, and drugs also can satisfy particular needs at particular times. Illegal drug use, for example, is unlikely to be curtailed unless it is recognized that it is not only addictive but satisfies some need.

4. **People tend to be aware of their own media use, interests, and motives**. Receivers can provide reliable information about how they use they media, when, and why.

5. **Value judgments concerning media use should be suspended**. Once the motivation or purpose of media use is understood, that use becomes more understandable. Harmful use can then be more effectively redirected.

The uses and gratifications paradigm advanced by **Rosengren** (1974) provided a theoretical explanation for the study of media effects from a systems perspective. Essentially, basic needs, individual differences, and contextual societal factors combine to result in a variety of perceived problems and motivations. Gratifications are sought from the media and elsewhere leading to differential patterns of media effects on both the individual and societal levels.

Uses and Gratifications Taxonomies

Further development of *why* people use the mass media recognized the active role the receiver plays in the selection of content and relied on the audience member to generate the reasons for doing so. In this sense, *Uses and Gratifications* research is unique in that it takes the perspective of the receiver rather than that of the source or the message. It is concerned with what people do *with* the media rather than what the media do *to* people. It recognizes the receiver as an active, selective, goal-directed, heterogeneous user of mass media content.

Uses and Gratifications research is also one of the most researched areas of mass communication research. **Bryant & Miron** (2004) content analyzed three prominent journals publishing mass communication research for over 50 years: *Journalism & Mass Communication Quarterly,* the *Journal of Communication,* and the *Journal of Broadcasting & Electronic Media* from 1956 through 2000. They found that Uses and

Gratifications research was tied with the most publications at 61 along with agenda-setting research. That amounted to approximately 1 and 1/3 articles per year.

Historically, empirical research in the uses and gratifications tradition began with the identification of the traits and motivations related to media use. A number of taxonomies of these traits and motivations emerged, sorting uses and gratifications according to needs such as entertainment, etc. (**Abelman**, 1987; **Gantz**, 1996), differences by media type (**Greenberg & Hnilo**, 1996; **Selnow**, 1984); and differences by culture of respondents (**Greenberg, Li, Ku, & Tokinoya**, 1991; **Tokinoya**, 1996; **Youichi**, 1996). One of the lessons of these studies is that there are no universal sets of reason`s for using media: Motivations vary across media, genres, and cultures.

In the late 1960s and early 1970s several empirical studies were done to further investigate the motives people had for their use of the mass media, both in the U. S. and England. The lists generated are remarkably similar and added to the categories originally formulated by **Herzog** (1944) and **Schramm, et al**. (1961).

McQuail, et al., (1972), for example, found that people used television to be *diverted*, to fulfill the need for *personal relationships*, to *know about themselves*, and to be more *informed*. **Katz, et al**. (1974) found that people used the media to help *gain understanding about themselves or society*, to *increase personal status* or to *strengthen personal relationships*. Some used the media to *survey the environment*, others for *entertainment*.

Blumer & Katz (1974) formulated motives such as *surveillance, entertainment, social utility, personal identity*, and *parasocial interaction*. People may be governed by more than one motive at a time. Exposure to television news, for example, may be guided primarily by a need for information (*surveillance*), but at the same time may be motivated by a desire for *parasocial interaction*, and/or a desire for *entertainment*. Which motive(s) dominate at any one time will depend on the individual, the situation, the medium, and the type of content.

Studies conducted in Philadelphia among 10th and 11th graders and in Cleveland among 4th and 5th graders had lower and middle-class students write essays on *Why I watch television* (**Dominick & Greenberg**, 1970; **Greenberg & Dominick**, 1970). Thirty-four motivations were derived from the essays. Race and class made a difference. Black teenagers were more likely to watch for *school of life* reasons. Those from a low-income background were more likely to watch for the excitement and thrill of television.

Greenberg (1974) collected essays on *Why I Like to Watch Television* from 180 9-, 12-, and 15-year-olds from a London school district. The essays were content-analyzed to determine reasons for watching television. Eight clusters resulted:

- to **Pass Time**;
- to **Forget**;
- to **Learn about Things**;
- to **Learn about Oneself**;
- for **Arousal**;
- for **Relaxation**;
- for **Companionship**, and
- as a **Habit**.

These traits provided the basis for a 31-item scale that was included in a survey of 726 British 9-, 12-, and 15-year-olds. Subsequent television uses and gratifications scales were built upon Greenberg's original dimensions. Similar results were found by **Rubin** (1979) in his study of American children and adolescents. Both studies found that motivations differed with age. Young people tend to prefer action/adventure shows and watch for excitement. Habitual viewers preferred comedies over news shows. Those who watched more were more likely to view as a habit and to pass the time. They also had the greatest liking of television (**Rubin**, 1981a).

Since the ground-breaking research on reasons why children watch television, additional research has found such various motivations for watching television as *passing time, relaxation, companionship, social interaction, habit, arousal,* and *escape (***Abelman, et al**., 1997). **Rubin** (1981ab) and **Rubin** (1984) found that *relaxation and entertainment* are the primary motives for watching television, along with *passing time* and *information-seeking*.

Tesser, et al. (1988) found three motivations for going to the movies: *self-escape, entertainment,* and *self-development*. Self-escape and entertainment motivations were related to attending to forget problems, to escape bad moods, and having available free time. Self-development motivations were more related to seeing how others think and feel and attending films that would produce strong emotions such as *Kramer vs. Kramer* and *Ordinary People*.

Conway & Rubin (1991) found that sensation-seeking, anxiety, creativity, parasocial interaction, and assertiveness are all related to television viewing motivations. They proposed six gratification factors in

TV use: *Passing time, Entertainment, Information, Escape, Relaxation,* and *Status Enhancement.*

In a later analysis, **Slater** (1997) found six goals in processing messages from different media genres such as novels, films, documentaries, historical fiction, instructional media, online services, advertising, etc.:

- *Entertainment;*
- *Information/Skill acquisition;*
- *Surveillance;*
- *Self-interest assessment;*
- *Value defense;*
- *Value reinforcement.*

Self-interest assessment goals refer to messages concerned with our economic or social well-being, including those which might have either a positive or negative impact on our identity. Value-defense and Value-reinforcement goals concern messages involving personal values.

Limitations

Uses and gratifications research often relies on self-reports (**Ruggiero**, 2000). Varied reasons may be lost when respondents are asked to indicate complex motivations for using the media at any one time by responding to a pre-established checklist. Other critics argue that theoretical considerations are lacking and the research is more descriptive in nature with its varied typologies (**Bracken & Lombard**, 2001; **Peters, et al**., 2006). Cognitive and affective factors may further affect media use motivations (**Wober**, 1986).

At different times individuals use the media for different reasons. For this reason, empirical work is required at the introduction of each new medium to specify the key motivations for use in understanding the use of that medium.

Gratifications of Internet Use

Like television, the Internet can fulfill a wide variety of needs (**Eighmey & McCord**, 1998; **Ferguson & Perse**, 2000; **Kaye**, 1998). Providing information as well as getting information is an important part of the new media technology. Users are taking advantage of not only email

capabilities but also personal web sites which have the capability to tweet and blog information and opinions.

One difficulty with Internet use, however, is that Internet content does not necessarily go through the same scrutiny as information presented in more traditional forms of mass communication. Verification of content is now more squarely on the shoulders of the user than the producer (**Gilster**, 1997).

Research found that Internet use was similar in function to traditional media. As **Rubin & Rubin** (1989, p. 107) put it, it appears that *technologies meet needs and not that needs meet technologies*. E-mail, for example, has become, like the telephone, a good way to keep in contact with people. Surfing the Web has become a good way to get information similar to the use of newspapers, books and magazines, and television.

They discovered three clusters of Internet use. Cluster 1 consisted of a single medium: face-to-face communication labeled *unmediated interpersonal communication*. Internet use was rated significantly better at fulfilling all needs except *entertainment* and *passing time when bored*, which were rated the same as mass media use.

Cluster 2 included Internet-conversation, telephone use, and electronic mail. It was labeled *mediated interpersonal* communication. Mediated interpersonal was rated higher than all needs except *get information, generate ideas, entertainment, learn how to do things, impress people, relax, gain insight into self,* and *pass the time when bored.* These media were used primarily for social bonding (to feel less lonely), relationship maintenance, problem-solving, and persuasion.

Cluster 3 consisted of television use, Internet information retrieval and information giving, books, magazines, and newspapers. It was labeled *mass communication*. All the media were used to gain information, but in contrast to other media, in addition to gaining information, the Internet was used primarily for learning and for leisure. Television and books and magazines were also used heavily for this need compared to other media.

Papacharissi & Rubin (2000) proposed interpersonal gratifications in that e-mail and chat rooms function like interpersonal communication. They found that the Internet is often used to pass time, for interpersonal utility, information seeking, convenience, and entertainment.

Perse, et al. (1998) investigated the uses and gratifications perspective to home computer use in a national telephone survey of 1,071 adults. Users found modest utility in home computers for *entertainment, escape, habit*, and *to pass time*. CD-ROM ownership was linked to learning and escape utility. Using computers for entertainment and to pass time led to higher levels of connectivity to the Internet.

Stafford, et al. (1999) found in a telephone survey of 881 adults that 112 of them used electronic mail. Four reasons for home e-mail use were found: *interpersonal relationships; personal gain; business*; and *gratification opportunities*. Overwhelmingly, home e-mail was used for interpersonal relationship reasons, regardless of user demographics.

D'Ambra & Rice (2001) summarized Internet uses as *information seeking, entertainment, escape*, and *social interaction*, similar to the motivations for watching television. **Song, et al**. (2004) found seven gratifications related to Internet use. *Virtual Community* might be termed a "new" gratification. In addition, *Information Seeking, Aesthetic Experience, Monetary Compensation, Diversion, Personal Status*, and *Relationship Maintenance*. Virtual Community, Monetary Compensation, Diversion, and Personal Status gratifications accounted for 28% of the variance in Internet Addiction Tendency.

Stafford & Stafford (2001) added the search function through search engines as a factor, adding 21% to the variance explained in Internet usage. **Charney & Greenberg** (2002) found the primary uses of the Internet are *needs for information, social interaction*, and *entertainment*. Similarly, **Wei** (2008) found that cell phone use was for both *social utility* and *information seeking*, although the primary use for many is connecting with social networks (**Campbell & Park**, 2008; **Ling**, 2004, 2008). This can lead to *telecocoons* of like-minded individuals (**Habuchi**, 2005) and resultant selectivity in political matters, due to what is referred to as *monadic clustering* (**Gergen**, 2008).

Kaye & Johnson (2002) conducted an online survey of 308 respondents two weeks before and two weeks after the 1996 presidential election on their agreement with 18 statements for using political information on the Internet. A factor analysis revealed four primary motivations: (political) *guidance, information-seeking/surveillance, entertainment*, and *social utility*. Entertainment was the least cited motivation for seeking political information on the Internet. Social utility and information-seeking/surveillance were more likely motivations for those with greater political interest. People motivated by social utility sought political information to share with family and friends.

The Internet is not only a source of information, especially through various search engines, but also is a means for social interaction. **Ancu & Cozma** (2009) examined the uses and gratifications of accessing political candidate profiles on social network Web sites. Visitors were drawn to the site for social interaction with other like-minded supporters (what could be termed *social utility*), followed by *information-seeking*, and *entertainment*. **Hollenbaugh** (2011) surveyed online bloggers' motives for maintaining

personal journal blogs. Seven motives emerged: *helping/informing, social connections, passing time, exhibitionism, archiving/organizing, professionalism*, and *getting feedback*.

Chen (2011), in a survey of 317 *Twitter* users, found that the more time a person spent on *Twitter*, the more a need for a sense of camaraderie (*social interaction*) is satisfied. **Kim, et al** (2011), in a comparative study of American and Korean college students, identified *seeking information, seeking friends/social support, entertainment*, and *convenience* as the primary motivations for using Twitter.

Weaver (1980) defined the *Need for Orientation* as the desire to monitor and be familiar with one's surroundings. It varies from person to person. Some have a high need for orientation in any situation whereas others feel little or no such need at all.

Lee & Oh (2013) conducted a Web-based survey with 306 respondents in South Korea concerning their use of *Twitter* and their *Need for Orientation*. A factor analysis found four factors for using *Twitter*: *self-expression, information-seeking, socializing,* and *diversion*. The longer the respondents had been using *Twitter*, the better informed they were of public affairs, but only among *high Need for Orientation* respondents. Greater *Twitter* use, however, was not related to greater knowledge of *soft news* (entertainment, sports, and celebrity news). *High Need for Orientation* individuals were more likely to use Twitter for information-seeking, but this was not related to increased knowledge gain.

Seidman (2013) classified *Facebook* use motivations into two categories: *belongingness* and *self-presentation*. *Loneliness* (**Skues, et al.**, 2012) and *communication apprehension* (**Zhang, et al**. 2011) are related to the number of *Facebook* friends as well as gratifications obtained from its use. **Baumgartner & Morris** (2010) found that use of *Facebook* and *MySpace* did little to inform users of political knowledge**. Hughes, et al**. (2012) found that the *Need for Cognition* was positively related to the use of *Twitter* for information gain but negatively related to use of *Facebook* for information gain. They surmised that different sorts of information are found on each platform.

Needs: Gratifications Sought and Obtained

The Uses and Gratifications perspective assumes that the audience actively seeks out particular media fare to satisfy various motives using the media. Different people can have different motives for media use. At the same time, the same people can have different motives for media use at

different times. Sometimes we use the media because we want to learn something, sometimes because we want to relax or escape.

Finn (1997, pp. 508-509) argued the fundamental purpose of the uses and gratifications approach is to detect:

1. the social and psychological origins of audience needs, and
2. the different patterns of media exposure that purportedly result.

The reasons or motivations that people have for using the mass media are quite complex. People use the media for different reasons at different times. And a multitude of reasons (gratifications) have been found for different media and for different genres within a medium. One fruitful explanation for media use is that people associate particular desirable consequences with particular media use.

People have *expectations* of mass media content which lead to differential patterns of exposure. Exposure can be affected by such variables as demographic characteristics, interests, attitudes, credibility ratings toward the media, and media dependencies (**Ball-Rokeach & DeFleur**, 1976). In addition, people have motives for avoiding content as well (**Palmgreen, et al**., 1988).

Use is also dependent on effort and reward, following **Schramm**'s formulation (1954, p. 19):

The approach argues that individuals use the mass media in a purposive manner in the hopes of satisfying certain needs or gratifications expected, depending on the effort needed to obtain those gratifications. Use of the media is thus dependent on the gratifications expected from the individual's effort and the gratifications received from past usage. **Palmgreen, et al**., (1980) distinguished gratifications *sought* from gratifications *gained*. Gratifications (rewards) are in terms of those *expected* but also those *obtained*.

Palmgreen, et al., (1985) found that the gratifications sought explained individual media exposure. They argued for a reciprocal relationship such that media consumption affects perceptions of gratifications obtained, which affect expectations about media content, which determine gratifications sought, which determine media consumption. As **Schramm et al**., (1961) found, incidental learning can take place during such times as well, so that more than one motivation can be satisfied at any one time.

Different receivers have differing use of the media depending on the satisfaction anticipated or received. A variety of studies have found that different media may be used to fulfill different needs (**Cutler &**

Danowski, 1980; **Kippax & Murray**, 1980; **Perse & Courtright**, 1993). Gratifications sought can thus explain a great deal of media exposure.

Palmgreen & Rayburn (1982, 1985) proposed an *expectancy-value* model whereby a receiver's expectations and evaluation determine media use.

> *Expectancy* is *the probability that an attitude possesses a particular attribute or that a behavior will have a particular consequence. Evaluation* is *the degree of affect, positive or negative, toward an attitude or behavioral outcome* (1982, pp. 562-563).

People turn to the media with certain expectations as to what they will receive from the content. Once received the content is then evaluated according to their expectations. Subsequent attitudes and behaviors would then follow. Individuals have different expectations and gratifications for different types of media.

Television Viewing

TVs are now located most everywhere, including not only in doctor and dentist's offices, but airports, restaurants, and even some gas stations and elevators, no doubt in an effort to allow people to *pass time* while they are waiting to do something else. Perhaps TVs at gas stations are to allow people to get their minds off the high price of gas, *to forget*. Watching television allows people to distract themselves from the stresses of the day so that they can just *relax.* TV now offers an incredible array of stations *to learn*, including the *Discovery Channel, Nova, PBS* stations, and the *History Channel* to name a few. As several chapters in this text point out, both children and adults learn an incredible amount from socialization aspects to aggressive behaviors to political information from television.

Kippax & Murray (1977) found that viewers were goal-directed, selecting programs on the basis of their needs. However, despite perceptions that television best met the need for escape, they could not identify specific programs that seemed to gratify that need. In a later study, they found that needs were not always related to television use. Use could not be predicted from the perceived needs of audience members (**Kippax & Murray** (1980). They concluded that this was either due to the great variety of television programming or due to the audience not being very active after all in program selection.

Hawkins & Pingree (1981) argued that there are two types of viewing, *habitual* and *selective*, and that each is related to particular