

MEDIA ECONOMICS PAPER

MASS COMMUNICATION PROCESS – SPRING 2004

Date Due: 23 Feb 2004, at the beginning of lecture

Purpose: For you to 1) demonstrate an understanding of key concepts from the lectures and readings on media economics and 2) to apply those concepts out to the real world.

Product: A typed paper of 3 pages, double spaced. Typeface should be Times or Times New Roman, 12 pt. font, 1” margins. Pages should be numbered, and your name, day and time of recitation, name of your TA, and social security number should be in the upper right hand corner. You do not need a separate title page. The paper should meet the standards of academic style. Keep a backup copy of your paper for your records.

Collaboration: you may choose to collaborate with one other person currently enrolled in MassComm. If you do so, make sure both your names and recitation times/days appear on the first page of the paper. A collaborative paper is subject to the same requirements as a paper you write by yourself, but you get to work with one other person and you will both receive the same grade. You need only submit ONE copy of your paper.

YOUR TASK is to pick a single piece of media content that you recently enjoyed (or didn't enjoy, if you prefer!) – for instance, a CD, a movie, a television show, a magazine. We'll call it a media artifact. Using the concepts from the lectures and readings on media economics (Part I of the course), you should be able to answer the following questions. Be sure you answer the “how” and “why” questions and not just “who, what, when and where.”

1. **Production:** What concepts from lecture or the reading help you understand the production of your artifact? *How* do they help you understand it? Explain the different roles that people and organizations played in producing your artifact. Who did what and why? What kinds of organizations stand to profit from the production of your media artifact? Did synergy play a role in the making of your artifact?
2. **Marketing:** How was the media content marketed and to whom? What kind of audiences were targeted? What other marketing-related concerns impacted your artifact? Who stands to make money from the marketing of your media artifact? Are there other economic concerns that affect your artifact? How do they affect it? What concepts from lecture or the reading help you understand the marketing of your artifact? *How* do they help you understand it?
3. **Profit (or Mainstream vs. Alternative):** This question requires a little more thought, but it's important: In what ways has the need for media corporations to make a profit (or the lack thereof) affected the production, marketing, or even the look and feel of your artifact? If your media artifact was *not* produced for profit, how does freedom from profit imperatives affect the production, marketing, or look and feel of your artifact? How would it be different if it had been produced for profit? Would it be significantly different? How? Would it have been made at all? Why?

If your media artifact was produced for profit, how would it be different if it hadn't been produced for profit? Would it be significantly different? How? Would it have been made at all? Why? How do issues of “mainstream” vs. “alternative” media play out in your artifact?

Good luck, and have fun!