RADIO LISTENING IN AMERICA; THE PEOPLE LOOK AT RADIO - AGAIN

Published @ 2017 Trieste Publishing Pty Ltd

ISBN 9780649079018

Radio listening in America; the people look at radio - again by Various

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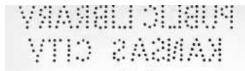
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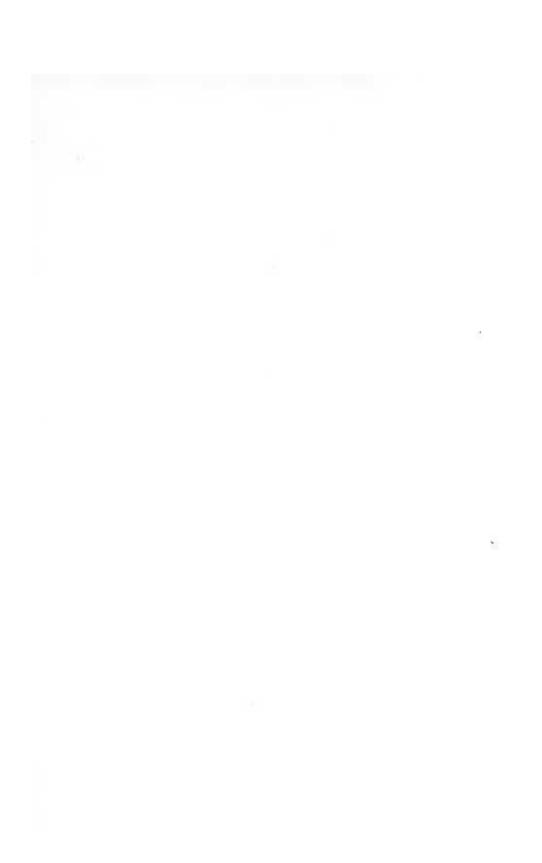
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First survey, The People Look at Radio, copyrighted 1946, by the University of North Carolina Press

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RADIO LISTENING IN AMERICA



CHAPTER I

THE COMMUNICATIONS BEHAVIOR OF THE AVERAGE AMERICAN

The mass media are a characteristic feature of presentday American life. From a few central agencies come the materials—the radio programs, the magazine stories, the films —which reach throughout the country. And for several hours of each day the average American finds himself a part of the audience for one or another of these mass media.

The present survey is essentially a study of the radio audience. However, it does provide an over-all picture of the general "communications behavior" of the American population. The nation-wide sample, reported on in these pages,1 was not asked only about radio listening: There were questions on book-reading, movie attendance, the regularity of newspaper and magazine readership. These latter questions were not intended to yield detailed information. They do enable us, however, to distinguish between the "fans," "average consumers," and "abstainers" for any of the mass media, and they do make it possible for us to characterize these different groups. As a result we can relate radio listening to other types of communications behavior. We can determine whether there is any pattern of exposure, whether a "fan" of one medium is more or less likely to be a fan of other media as well. We can also study the relative importance of the various media for different subgroups in the population.

The classification of respondents into fans, average consumers, and abstainers is, of course somewhat arbitrary. This

¹ The characteristics of the sample and the reliability of results reported in this text are discussed in Appendix B.