**British Media**



The term “media” may include any communication system by which people are informed, educated or entertained. In Britain it generally refers to the print industries (the press or newspapers and magazines) and broadcasting (cable and satellite television, radio and video). These systems overlap with each other and with books, film and the Internet They cover homes, places of business and leisure activities and their influence is very powerful and an inevitable part of daily life.

The print media (newspapers and magazines) began to develop in the 18PthP century. The ﬁrst British newspapers with a limited national circulation appeared in the early eighteenth century and were followed by others, such as “The Times” (1785), “the Observer” (1791) and “the Sunday Times” (1822).

Initially, a wide circulation was hindered by transportation and distribution problems, illiteracy and government licensing or censorship restrictions. But over the last two hundred years, an expanded educational system, new print inventions and Britain’s small area have eliminated these difficulties and created allegedly free print media.

The growth of literacy after 1870 provided the owners of the print media with an increased market. Newspapers and magazines, which had previously been limited to the middle and upper classes, were popularized. They were used for news and information, but also for proﬁt and entertainment. New types of print media and ﬁnancially rewarding advertising increased in the competitive atmosphere of the late 19th and early 20th centuries.

.In the 19th century, the growth and composition of the population conditioned the types of newspaper which were produced. The ﬁrst popular national papers were deliberately printed on Sundays, such as “the News of the World “(1843) and “the People” (1881). They were inexpensive and aimed at the expanding and increasingly literate working class. In 1896, “The Daily Mail” was produced, which was targeted at the lower-middle class. In 1903 it was added by “ The Daily Mirror” for the working-class popular market. Both the Mail and the Mirror were soon selling more than a million copies a day.

The early twentieth century was the era of mass-circulation papers. “The Morning Herald” (later “the Daily Express”) was created in 1900. Both “The Daily Mirror” and “The Daily Herald (1911) supported the Labour Party and were the largest selling national daily in the early twentieth century.. Battles are still fought between owners, since newspaper-ownership is concentrated in a few large publishing groups, such as **Rupert Murdoch’s News International** (which has large media holdings in Britain, Australia and the USA). **National newspapers**

National newspapers are those which are mostly published from London and are available in all parts of Britain on the same day, including Sundays. Many are delivered directly to the home from local newsagents by newsboys and girls. The good internal distribution systems of a compact country enabled a national press to develop, and Internet online copies now offer updated and immediate availability

The circulation of national papers rose rapidly, but newspapers had to cope ﬁrst with the competition of radio and ﬁlms and later with television internet.. Although they have survived, there has, since the 1970s, been a decline in sales and in the number of national and other newspapers.

The national press in Britain today consists of **10** **daily morning papers and 9 Sunday** **papers**. Most national newspapers have their bases and printing facilities in London, although editions of some nationals are now published in Europe and the USA. Most of them used to be located in **Fleet Street in central** London. But all have now left the street and moved to other parts of the capital. The reasons for these moves were high property rents, ﬁerce competition and opposition from trade unions to the introduction of new printing technology.New technology meant that journalists’ ‘copy’ could be printed directly through computers. But it also resulted in job reductions, trade union opposition and bitter industrial action such as picketing.

New technology, improved distribution methods and cuts in labour and production costs have increased the proﬁtability of print industries. Although sales are declining they still have a considerable presence on the market.Surveys ﬁnd that Britons buy more papers than any other Europeans. Some 50 per cent of people over ﬁfteen read a national daily paper and 70 per cent read a national Sunday newspaper.

**National papers are usually termed ‘quality’ or ‘popular’ depending on their differences in content and format (tabloid or broadsheet). Others are called ‘mid-market’ and are between these two extremes.**

The ‘qualities’ (such as “The Times”) are broadsheets (large-sheet), report national and international news in depth and analyse current events and the arts in editorials and articles. The populars (such as “The Sun”) are mostly tabloid (small-sheet), deal with relatively few ‘hard news’stories, tend to be superﬁcial in the material is sensationalized and trivialized. ‘Mid-market’ papers, such as “The Mail and Express”, cater for intermediate groups. ‘Qualities’ are more expensive than populars and carry up-market advertising that generates essential ﬁnance. There is no legal state control or censorship of the British press, although it is subject to laws of publication and expression and there are forms of self-censorship, by which it regulates its own conduct. Papers may have a political bias and support a speciﬁc party, particularly at election times.

The press is dependent for its survival upon circulation ﬁgures; upon the advertising that it can attract; and upon ﬁnancial help from its owners. A paper may face difficulties and fail if advertisers remove their business. A number of newspapers in the 20th century ceased publication because of reduced circulation, loss of advertising revenue or refusals of further ﬁnancial aid. Most national newspapers now have online Internet publication. This provides an additional medium for information and communication, as well as continuously updated news.

**Regional newspapers**

Some 1,300 regional newspapers are published in towns and cities throughout Britain. They contain a mixture of local and national news and are supported ﬁnancially by regional advertising; They may be daily morning or evening papers, Sundays or weekly. Some nine out of ten adults read a regional or local paper every week and 75 per cent of local and regional newspapers also operate an Internet website.

Britain’s ethnic communities also produce their own newspapers and magazines, which are increasing in numbers, are available nationally in the larger cities and are improving in quality. There is a wide range of publications for Jewish, Asian, Afro-Caribbean, Chinese and Arabic readers, published on a daily or (more commonly) periodic basis.

**Periodicals and magazines**

There are 9,000 different periodicals and magazines in Britain, which are of a weekly, monthly or quarterly nature and are dependent upon sales and advertising to survive. They are aimed at different markets and levels of professions and business or are dealing with sports, hobbies and interests (read by 80 per cent of adults).

The teenage and youth magazine market has suffered large sales losses recently. This is attributed to greater Internet and mobile phone usage. Women’s periodicals, such as Take a Break, Woman and Woman’s Own, have large and wide circulations. But the bestselling publications are the weekly Radio Times and What’s on TV, which contain feature stories and programmes for BBC and independent television. Other magazines cover interests such as computers, rural pastimes, gardening, railways, cooking, architecture, do-it-yourself skills and sports.

Among the serious weekly journals are The **New Statesman and Society , the Economist** (dealing with economic and political matters); T**he Spectator** (a conservative journal); and **The New Scientist**. The Times publishes inﬂuential weekly magazines, such as the **Educational Supplement**, **the Higher Education Supplement) and the Literary Supplement**.

**The broadcasting media**

The broadcasting media consist of radio, terrestrial television and cable/satellite television. Three authorities oversee these services: **the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC), the Independent Television Commission (ITC) and the Radio Authority**.

**The BBC** is based at Broadcasting House in London, but has stations throughout the country, which provide regional networks for radio and television. It was created by Royal Charter and has a board of governors who are responsible for supervising its programmes. They are appointed by the Crown on the advice of government ministers and are supposed to constitute an independent element in the organization of the BBC.

The BBC is ﬁnanced by a grant from Parliament, which comes from the sale of television licences (Ј1.6 billion per year). These **are payable by anyone** who owns a television set and are relatively cheap in international terms (Ј104 annually for a colour set). The BBC also generates considerable income from selling its programmes abroad and from the sale of a programme guide (Radio Times), books, magazines and videos.

**The BBC’s external services**, which consist of radio broadcasts in English (the World Service) and **42** other languages abroad, were founded in 1932 and are funded by **the Foreign** **Ofﬁce.** These have a reputation for objective news reporting and programmes. The BBC also began commercially funded television programmes in 1991 by cable to Europe and by satellite links to Africa and Asia; BBC World (news) – now merged with the World Service.

The BBC is not a state organization, but it is not as independent on political pressures as many in Britain and overseas assume. Its charter has to be renewed by Parliament and by its terms government can, and does, intervene in the showing of programmes.. The BBC governors are in fact government appointees. Governments can also exert pressure upon the BBC when the licence fee comes up for renewal by Parliament.

The BBC does try to be neutral in political matters. The major parties have equal rights to broadcast on the BBC and independent television.

There are **5 national radio channels** (to be increased by ﬁve new digital channels); **39** **local stations** serving many districts in England; and regional and community services in Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. The national channels specialize in different tastes. Radio 1 caters for pop music; Radio 2 has light music, news, and comedy; Radio 3 provides classical and modern serious music, talks, discussions and plays; Radio 4 concentrates on news reports, analysis, talks and plays; and Radio 5 Live (established 1990) has sport and news programmes.

The BBC was certainly affected by the invention of television, which changed British entertainment and news habits. The BBC now has **two television channels (BBC1 and BBC2).** **BBC1** is a mass-appeal channel with an audience share of 28 per cent. Its programmes consist of news, plays and drama series, comedy, quiz shows, variety performances, sport and documentaries**. BBC2,** with an audience share of 11 per cent, tends to show more serious items such as news analysis and discussion, documentaries, adaptations of novels into plays and series, operas, concerts and some sport. It is also provides Open University courses. The Labour government has approved (2001) the expansion of BBC television services by the creation of a **BBC4 channel (culture and the arts) and two channels for children under six and over**.

A large number of the programmes shown on television are made in Britain, although there are also many imported American series. A few programmes come from other English-speaking countries, such as Australia, New Zealand and Canada. But there are relatively few foreign-language productions on British television and these are either dubbed or subtitled.

British television has a high reputation abroad. News reports, documentaries and current-affairs analyses are generally of a high standard, as are dramatic, educational, sporting, natural history and cultural productions. But there is also a wide selection of series, soap operas, ﬁlms, quizzes and variety shows which are of doubtful quality.

Voices have been raised about the alleged levels of sex, violence and bad language on British television. The Conservative government considered that violence, sex and obscenity on television do affect viewers and was concerned to ‘clean up’ television. **A Broadcasting** **Standards Complaints Commission** monitors programmes, examines complaints, establishes codes of conduct for the broadcasting organizations.

**Reuters News Agency is an international news agency headqutered in London. It** operates in more than 200 cities and offers quick and easy access to hot news in about 200 languages.

Translate into Russian:

Circulation, Editorials To hinder Censorship

To eliminate Superficial Illiteracy Allegedly

The Foreign Office Government appointees Availability

Revenue To exert pressure

To merge updated news

To oversee Obscenity

**Answer the questions:**

**1. What does term media include?**

2. What is the reason why the British continue to buy newspapers?

3. Which categories are the national British newspapers divided into?

4. Do you know any British newspapers or magazines (journals)?

5. What are the main British t.v. channels?

6. What is the BBC service?