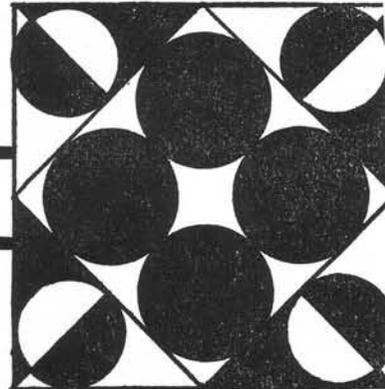


Idea Corner



CATV—Another Communication Tool for Extension

How can CATV or cable television be used successfully by Extension? This is a timely question in light of the Federal Communication Commission's new rules for CATV issued in February. The rules, which became effective March 31, 1972, provide a public access channel, an education channel, and a local government channel at no cost to the user. Expansion of communication technology, like CATV, can bring about sudden changes in the way we try to communicate with our clients. To assess the impact of CATV on our communication efforts a survey of the state Extension communication specialists was completed in June, 1972.

Getting CATV Experience

Out of 44 responses from the 50-state survey, 64 percent indicated that CATV had served as a channel for Extension communications in their state before March, 1972. An additional seven percent

were trying CATV this year. By March, 1973, a total of 31 states will have made some use of CATV.

CATV is a locally oriented medium. This was strongly indicated by the fact that local county staff used CATV more than multicounty and state staff. No federal effort was indicated nor anticipated.

Access and work relations with CATV varies with the community. The local Extension staff usually provides the vital connection between local CATV management and the educational programming resources of Extension. Local systems vary immensely in their capacity to do local programming. Locally produced material appears to be desired by both the CATV management and the CATV audience. Success appears to hinge on adequate promotion to let people know you're on a certain CATV channel.

Advantages and Disadvantages

A broad spectrum of advantages for CATV was cited. Ranking first was the ability of CATV to reach select, known audiences with

Extension communications. Ranking second was the future availability of CATV for programming efforts. The potential for two-way communications with Extension clientele ranked third. Several respondents thought the audiences would watch CATV for content so Extension communications efforts wouldn't have to match the entertainment fare. Others had doubts about this assumption.

A limited audience in numbers and all urban with no rural participants was perceived as the major disadvantage. It was assumed by a majority that CATV wouldn't reach the rural audience because of the cable cost. Several cited the lack of local CATV programming equipment. The technology is available, but it doesn't exist at the local level.

One respondent gave this pertinent observation: users will tend to use it as if they're in the physical presence of a group. Static charts and chalkboard drawings will monopolize the video, while the audio will carry the major part of the information. With a static video and a boring commentary, the learner won't become significantly involved. Competition with big-time show biz programs hasn't been eliminated . . . you just don't have to fight with them on the same channel you're on. This would take promotion. However, with specialized audiences, you might be able to assemble them easier than a general audience.

CATV for a Specific Audience

There was agreement that specific Extension clientele should be the primary audience of Extension efforts via CATV with local county staffs being in the best position to gain access to CATV and to program for this audience. Effective backstopping is needed from multi-county and state staffs.

Without hesitancy, a majority of the states are acquiring CATV experience. Most Extension communication specialists view CATV as another tool in the communication technology arsenal by which Extension can do its work. They perceive the local Extension staff as the best Extension source to work with CATV.

Some Extension efforts with CATV haven't been successful. The results haven't warranted the effort. As with any new communication channel, we have to learn when not to use it as well as when to use it. Vast differences are evident in CATV systems. Successful use of CATV will depend on adequate analysis, appropriate planning, and careful allocation of resources to backstop Extension communications via this channel.

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Metropolitan Population by State

The entire territory of the United States has been classified by the Office of Management and Budget as "metropolitan" and "nonmetropolitan." A Standard Metropolitan Statistical Area (SMSA) contains at least one central city of 50,000 inhabitants or more. Other contiguous counties are included in an SMSA if they are "essentially metropolitan in character and socially and economically integrated with the central city."

The following table indicates the high level and rapid pace of metropolitan development in many states. The data are arranged from the *Statistical Abstract of the United States 1971*, U.S. Department of Commerce, Bureau of the Census, pp. 12 and 18.

State	Total pop. (1,000)	Urban (1,000)	Rural (1,000)	Metro. (1,000)	% Metro.	% Metro. change, 1960-1970
<u>New England</u>	11,842	9,044	2,798	8,540	72.1	11.1
Maine	992	504	488	214	21.6	2.2
New Hampshire	738	416	322	202	27.3	25.0
Vermont	444	143	301	None	None	None
Massachusetts	5,689	4,810	879	4,818	84.7	8.5
Rhode Island	947	825	122	802	84.7	8.2
Connecticut	3,032	2,345	687	2,505	82.6	17.4
<u>Middle Atlantic</u>	37,199	30,406	6,792	30,648	82.4	8.1
New York	18,237	15,602	2,634	15,771	86.5	8.5
New Jersey	7,168	6,373	795	5,511	76.9	12.6
Pennsylvania	11,794	8,430	3,363	9,366	79.4	4.9
<u>East North Central</u>	40,252	30,092	10,161	29,738	73.9	12.6
Ohio	10,652	8,026	2,626	8,273	77.7	11.0
Indiana	5,194	3,372	1,822	3,214	61.9	12.7
Illinois	11,114	9,230	1,884	8,903	80.1	12.2
Michigan	8,875	6,554	2,321	6,806	76.7	14.2
Wisconsin	4,418	2,910	1,507	2,543	57.6	14.7
<u>West North Central</u>	16,319	10,389	5,930	7,920	48.5	14.2
Minnesota	3,805	2,527	1,278	2,165	56.9	19.1
Iowa	2,825	1,616	1,208	1,006	35.6	9.8
Missouri	4,677	3,278	1,399	2,997	64.1	13.0
North Dakota	618	273	344	74	11.9	10.0
South Dakota	666	297	369	95	14.3	10.0
Nebraska	1,483	913	571	634	42.8	17.0
Kansas	2,247	1,485	762	949	42.3	11.4

State	Total pop. (1,000)	Urban (1,000)	Rural (1,000)	Metro. (1,000)	% Metro.	% Metro. change, 1960- 1970
<u>South Atlantic</u>	30,671	19,524	11,147	17,692	57.7	26.2
Delaware	548	396	153	386	70.4	25.5
Maryland	3,922	3,004	918	3,307	84.3	29.7
Washington, D.C.	757	757	None	757	100.0	-1.0
Virginia	4,648	2,935	1,714	2,846	61.2	27.6
West Virginia	1,744	679	1,065	545	31.3	-5.2
North Carolina	5,082	2,285	2,797	1,896	37.3	23.8
South Carolina	2,591	1,232	1,358	1,017	39.3	19.4
Georgia	4,590	2,768	1,822	2,280	49.7	25.7
Florida	6,789	5,468	1,321	4,657	68.6	37.2
<u>East South Central</u>	12,803	6,988	5,816	5,400	42.2	11.2
Kentucky	3,219	1,684	1,535	1,288	40.0	14.1
Tennessee	3,924	2,305	1,618	1,918	48.9	13.0
Alabama	3,444	2,012	1,432	1,801	52.3	6.5
Mississippi	2,217	987	1,230	393	17.7	15.4
<u>West South Central</u>	19,321	14,028	5,292	12,107	62.7	21.1
Arkansas	1,923	961	962	595	30.9	14.3
Louisiana	3,641	2,406	1,235	1,996	54.8	14.0
Oklahoma	2,559	1,740	819	1,281	50.1	19.9
Texas	11,197	8,921	2,276	8,234	73.5	23.7
<u>Mountain</u>	8,282	6,055	2,227	4,714	56.9	34.4
Montana	694	371	324	169	24.4	11.0
Idaho	713	385	327	112	15.8	20.1
Wyoming	332	201	131	None	None	None
Colorado	2,207	1,733	474	1,582	71.7	32.7
New Mexico	1,016	709	307	316	31.1	20.4
Arizona	1,771	1,409	362	1,319	74.5	42.0
Utah	1,059	851	208	822	77.6	23.5
Nevada	489	395	93	394	80.7	86.2
<u>Pacific</u>	26,523	22,799	3,723	22,659	85.4	27.1
Washington	3,409	2,476	933	2,249	66.0	24.9
Oregon	2,091	1,403	689	1,281	61.2	23.3
California	19,953	18,136	1,817	18,500	92.7	27.7
Alaska	300	146	155	None	None	None
Hawaii	769	639	130	629	81.9	25.7

Statement on urban Extension work by Edwin L. Kirby,
administrator, Extension Service-USDA, Washington, D.C.

“From a Cooperative Extension situation, the authority to do urban work has always been available to the states because of the broad scope in interpretation of the Smith-Lever Act. For this reason, the policy at the national level has been to provide wide latitude to the individual states for deciding on the priority and emphasis in how they use their available financial resources. Under such a broad policy, there is considerable variation among the states with reference to how they deal with Cooperative Extension programs in urban situations. The national influence in this regard has been primarily to earmark funds such as the Expanded Food and Nutrition Educational Program funded by Congress with congressional intent that a major portion of these funds be used in the more urban and metropolitan centers.

“Efforts are being made and consideration being given within Congress relative to the proposed reorganization of federal government and to revenue sharing, both general and special revenue sharing. Until these two major considerations have been effectively resolved at the national level, it is almost impossible or would be very difficult to project long-time policy considerations that would specifically influence program directions for Cooperative Extension.”