

ABSTRACT

Title of Dissertation: DISABILITY MAGAZINE AND  
NEWSLETTER EDITORS:  
PERCEPTIONS OF THE DISABILITY  
PRESS, COMMUNITY, ADVOCACY,  
MAINSTREAMING, AND DIVERSITY

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There is a growing body of scholarly information about media and disability. To date, the majority of this information discusses how people with disabilities have been portrayed in mainstream media. Very few scholars have studied media produced by and for people with disabilities. This dissertation is one of the first attempts to do so, and to analyze how these publications may help forge group identity. The study examines the tensions of liberal-pluralism and Marxist theories and their ability to explain the function of disability publications in American society.

The researcher explored disability publication editors' perceptions about disability related issues, and examined how disability related publications are similar to feminist and African American publications.

## Methodology

A mail survey was used to ascertain 56 editors' perceptions about circulation, target audience demographics, staff demographics, advertising, and other publication revenue. In addition, a random subset of 12 editors were interviewed regarding the "disability community", "disability movement", representation of people with disabilities in mainstream media, and diversity.

## Conclusions

Both liberal pluralism and Marxist theories explain some aspects of disability publications.

Similarities to African American and feminist publications:

- shared belief that mainstream coverage of the representative group was limited in quality and quantity
- publications were started as a tool for the representative group to communicate among themselves
- publications were targeted to audience members who share at least one major characteristic (i.e. interest in African American issues, interest in feminist issues, interest in disability issues)

Differences from two comparison groups:

- less likely to chronicle the social movement of the disability community
- more likely than the African American and feminist publications to have editors who were not members of the target group
- not as likely as two other groups to hire or provide internship opportunities for members of their own group

The disability publications fit into Clogston's (1990) progressive/civil rights model of disability coverage. In spite of this feature, there were differences in how editors perceived the "disability movement", the "disability community", and their own function. These differences yielded three models of disability publications: activist/political publications; assimilationist/mainstreaming; and special interest publications.

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COMMUNITY, ADVOCACY,  
MAINSTREAMING AND  
DIVERSITY

by

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## Preface

The dissertation you are about to read is the product of years of interest, interaction, and contemplation about "difference". In this case, the aspect of "difference" I have focused on is disability in the contemporary United States society. I define disability more specifically in the first chapter of the dissertation.

### Family Background and Social Location

My interest in difference, defined simply as "other than the mainstream", or "out of the ordinary" goes back as far as I can remember. As a young child, I found a left-handed classmate fascinating in a context where almost everyone was right-handed and being taught to write in ways that privileged right-handed people over left-handed ones. I noticed how awkward it was for Gwen, my left-handed classmate to write and achieve the slant and style that would win praises from our teacher. While not protesting openly, I thought it was unfair for her to have to work so hard to conform to right-handed standards.

Another detail which influenced my interest in difference comes from my family background. My Mom was always identified by her siblings as the "odd" one because she loved school, books, and preferred to stay close to her mother and learn to cook and sew, while the others were out exploring the world. My Dad has never explicitly used the term different to describe himself but he certainly wouldn't deny having a unique world perspective that often leaves him standing alone rather than jovially affiliated with large groups of people or following popular beliefs. In addition, my parents desired children who would withstand peer pressure and popularity while being independent and self-sufficient--to a point.

Into this environment, I was born--the oldest of five children. It was my fate to "set the example", set the pace for my siblings. This awesome responsibility was placed upon me and I pretty much had nothing to say about it. Therefore, I decided I should tow the line and work hard to set a good example, rather than struggle against this imposed role.

I think my early decision to try to please my parents by obeying them and resisting peer pressure, thereby, missing a certain amount of comraderie with my friends, made me different. I believe I was particularly unusual regarding the length of time I thought it was possible to totally please my parents. I was well into my twenties before I started asking myself what I wanted apart from them.

I suspect those lifelong tensions-- about pleasing my parents (and teachers), desiring affirmation from friends, and wanting the freedom to be myself--are connected to my deep fascination with those who do not neatly fit into parents' and/or the larger society's definitions about how they should function and behave. It is important to me to learn how individuals and groups, who are not part of the mainstream, negotiate their way, resist pressures to conform, and communicate their experiences when they can't conform exactly to society's (parents'/ teachers', religious institutions', media's) expectations.

Additionally, I happen to be a good communicator, facilitator, mediator, and interpreter. Most of the



experiences in which I have done well and received the most fulfillment have somehow involved extensive use of these abilities and characteristics. My fascination with difference and my interest in communication has taken me in several directions; however, only one seems uniquely relevant to this dissertation. I will explain it now.

### Introduction to American Sign Language and the Deaf Community

My most pertinent example of exploring communication and difference comes from a myriad of experiences in the deaf community at Gallaudet University. Deaf people say they are like everyone else "except they can't hear." (I. King Jordan, first deaf president of Gallaudet University coined this phrase after the successful "Deaf President Now" protest in March 1988). The fact that they do not hear influences language acquisition and communication in a society dominated by speech and auditory stimulation. The inability to hear (linked with the inability to acquire speech skills) is the source of disappointment for many parents, relatives, and teachers of deaf children, so that many deaf children

grow up in an environment that challenges and sometimes damages their self-esteem. Some of these children grow up to be youth and young adults who resist our culture's over-emphasis on speech and hearing aids. Instead, they embrace American Sign Language and deaf culture, which has norms more in conjunction with their actual strengths and abilities rather than norms based on aspects of human interaction that will always be beyond the reach of most people who cannot hear.

There are numerous books and articles about the history of deaf people and deaf education in the United States. I will not recount that information here. Instead, I will focus on my experiences at Gallaudet University, the world's largest university devoted exclusively to providing four-year liberal arts and graduate degrees to deaf students (and to some hearing students interested in working with deaf people in education, audiology, counseling, and administrative fields).

Gallaudet University is located in Washington, D.C., and was legislated into existence by Congress and President Abraham Lincoln in 1864. Since that

time, the federal government has provided the lions' share of funding for all of the University's programs. Gallaudet University is the place where the "cream of the crop," or deaf people who have overcome early struggles with self-esteem and issues related to achieving academically, come together to build a community based on their values. First and foremost, Gallaudet is a world where visual stimulation is more important than auditory stimulation and American Sign Language is valued as much as English. This very special place is where I learned about issues related to deafness and other disabilities.

Deafness, however, was not completely new to me. I began learning American Sign Language (ASL) in my Junior year at Oberlin College in Ohio when I participated in a three-week intensive ASL workshop. The ASL instructor (a hearing Gallaudet faculty member who had deaf parents) was impressed with my signing aptitude and receptivity to cultural information about the deaf--especially in light of my own minority status. You see, at that time, and for the most part even now, there were precious few professional African Americans working in the deaf community. (In this

dissertation, I ask editors to define "community" and do not offer them a definition of the term. However, for the readers' information, "community" usually means a group of people who share language, values, and ideals about their place, history and identity in the context of a larger [American] society.)

After the ASL workshop, I applied for and was accepted into an Exchange Program at Gallaudet. That semester remains one of the most intriguing periods in my life. I literally immersed myself in the deaf world. My direct contact with hearing people was limited to phone calls and letters to family (in Ohio) and occasional activities with hearing people also working or studying on Gallaudet's campus.

The immersion did wonders for my signing skills, and I was accepted almost universally by students and faculty at Gallaudet. For the record, the Gallaudet community was more receptive in general to curious hearing "interlopers" in the 1970s than in the current post "Deaf President Now"/deaf pride era.

It became apparent, however, that my status as an African American female enhanced my ability to enter this world. My deaf classmates assumed I wouldn't be

a typical hearing person who wanted to impose my wishes upon them since I was a member of a "subservient" group. My classmates were not shy about letting me know that they thought I was "smart" and "level-headed" for a Black person. They "hadn't met anyone like me," ...the other Blacks they *knew* were dorm parents, poor people in the nearby neighborhood, or non-signers working as custodians or in the college cafeteria. More than one of these deaf students were hurt when I confronted their racist assumptions about me and other Black people. But they accepted my questions and concerns, and I encouraged their bluntness because I wanted to know exactly what kinds of bias I was confronting. Their directness was refreshing even though it caught me off-guard a number of times.

My deaf classmates and I were able to establish relationships based on honesty, respect and shared experiences of oppression and misunderstandings by dominant groups (e.g. patronizing hearing people or patronizing white people) who thought they knew what was best for the rest of us. That semester seemed to have an incredibly fleeting quality.

Many people thought the Gallaudet campus would be an unusually quiet campus. To the contrary, it was often noisy. Many of the hard-of-hearing students enjoyed music and owned stereo systems which they played at high volumes so they could feel the vibrations coming from the bass sounds. All of the dorm room doors were equipped with metal plates at the bottom of the doors to accommodate the students' tendency to kick the doors (rather than knock) to get the attention of the deaf residents inside. The kicking startled me out of my sleep a number of times until the women on our floor realized there was a "hearie" in our room! Currently, all the doors have extra light switches next to them so that a visitor can flash the lights inside the room and, thus, alert the residents of their presence and desire to gain entry.

When special programs came on television or students needed to make a phone call but the (usually hearing) resident assistant was not available, I did my share of "interpreting." These experiences provided the basis for my passing an interpreting certification exam with some ease several years later.

(By the way, I enrolled in fifteen credits which were transferred back to Oberlin College, but the course content paled in comparison to the things I learned about deaf people and myself.)

When I re-entered the hearing world it took a couple of months for me to re-learn a communication habit that had been second nature before Gallaudet. I would stop talking when my parent, sibling, or hearing friends left the room; they kept reminding me to continue what I was saying, they could hear me. In the deaf world, there is no communication when eye-contact ceases. I had unconsciously learned that lesson so well that I was imposing it on hearing interactions too.

After one and one-half years back in Ohio, I returned to Gallaudet University as a master's student and employee. All told, I spent seven years of my life on that campus. During those years, I learned about deaf people, American Sign Language, America and myself. I also learned a great deal about the meaning of disability in American society and the various nuances of the term when it is used to describe the condition of deaf people. "Disability" will be more

clearly defined and elaborated on in the first chapter of the dissertation.

While the most vocal segment of the deaf community will denounce the term disability and promptly inform the rest of us that they are a cultural minority such as Blacks or Jews, there is a significant number of deaf people who view themselves as people with a disability. Those who hold this view have less access to media than culturally deaf people do. Consequently, many "enlightened" hearing people misunderstand and think that the cultural view of deafness is universally shared by all deaf people. It isn't, but I would be dishonest if I didn't acknowledge that the cultural view of deafness had a greater influence on my attitudes about deafness and disability than did the view of deafness as a disability.

Because deaf faculty, staff, and students at Gallaudet were empowered in many ways by their numbers and proximity to one another, it would be easy to forget that this empowerment was not shared by all deaf people or all people with disabilities. In fact, while I had an intellectual understanding of this



distinction, I still approached this dissertation hoping to find evidence of this type of empowerment throughout the various disability groups.

I found hierarchies in the deaf community; the hierarchies roughly corresponded to signing ability, but had other features as well. Folks from deaf families and/or those who attended schools for the deaf since early childhood seemed to be valued over and above people deafened later in life or people from mainstream and/or oral programs. Deaf students with other disabilities (e.g. cerebral palsy, blindness) were not as well integrated into the broader deaf community as others. And, yes, there was also sexism in the deaf community.

These observations troubled me. On the one hand, it is quite understandable that a group of people who experienced discrimination daily would do as much as possible to emulate the mainstream community and emphasize their similarities to them, even down to sharing their biases. On the other hand, it seemed to me that oppressed people could and should have had greater sensitivity and understanding about difference

than most. Both of these tendencies were demonstrated during my years at Gallaudet University.

### General Disabilities

My first encounter with other disabilities was purely academic. An overview of other disabilities was part of a required course in Gallaudet's Deaf Education program. Things I learned in that course led me to observe, on campus and off campus, discrimination against people who used wheelchairs, people who were blind or people who had cerebral palsy, for example. I was not sure how I could be a true advocate of difference, or of the deaf community without understanding discrimination against disability in more general terms. In many ways, the treatment of and expectations for deaf people in America was and will continue to be tied to Americans' perceptions about disability in general. I, therefore decided to broaden my knowledge about other people with disabilities, too.

Currently, and historically, politically active deaf people have combined resources with other people with disabilities when requesting or advocating for accommodations or opportunities that will alleviate

discrimination in education, the work place or other aspects of life. This discrimination will be elaborated on more in the first chapter.

I am sure that my fluency in American Sign Language and continued acceptance by important people in the deaf community have served as a major advantage as I have studied and requested information from people with disabilities for this dissertation. Those experiences as a student and employee at Gallaudet University honed my sensitivity and sensibilities about deafness and about various nuances among people with disabilities and people who work with them.

#### The Ethics of Insider/Outsider Status

The years at Gallaudet University developed my abilities to utilize a unique insider/outsider status. The insider/outsider status of African American women in America has been discussed by Patricia Hill Collins in Black Feminist Thought (1990). She described the unique ways in which African American women have been allowed to experience and participate in White culture and opportunities, and our special skills at using these opportunities to benefit our families and the African American

community. These experiences began in slavery and were a mixed blessing, at best. While there was undisputed access to some of the resources that could make life easier for Black slave families, there was also increased exposure to the dangers of rape and other types of mistreatment that individuals more isolated from the "big house" might escape. The ambivalence experienced by many African American women about this mixed status persists today. In my case, my culturally learned ability to handle ambivalence and the insider/outsider status gave me special skills to deal with the deaf community and Gallaudet "norms".

While technically an outsider, because I am neither deaf, disabled, or a native signer--neither affiliated with the deaf community through birth or early childhood connection--and because I can hear, and I experience hearing privilege every day of my life--I am accepted on a level that is greater than most hearing/able bodied people would be. I presently serve as the President of the Board of Trustees of the Maryland School for the Deaf. Half of the Trustees are deaf. I know, and they know, I am not deaf, but to the extent that deaf and hearing people want to and

can work together on various issues, I represent a unique bridge between the worlds, attitudes, and values. I am also an outsider when it comes to disability in America because I am able-bodied. I do not experience the challenges, discrimination, or unique passion, and potential bonding that takes place among some people with disabilities. Had I not had my positive experiences at Gallaudet University, I very likely would never have embarked upon or successfully completed this dissertation.

For those who believe outsiders cannot do valid research on groups of which they are not part, I say, insiders also have research limitations. For example, an insider who has cerebral palsy or another mobility impairment may not adequately address issues for persons with mental disabilities. Another possible limitation of insider status is misunderstandings about able-bodiedness and how it is experienced by various individuals and groups.

An example from my time at Gallaudet will serve the point here. Several deaf people have admitted to me that they assumed hearing people hear "everything", including conversations on the other side of a room.

They recount the surprise they experienced when they first realized that being hearing is not equal to being omniscient.

In closing, I want to point out that there is always the danger of over-generalizing our observations, experiences, or findings, and that insiders are no more exempt from this tendency than are outsiders. Outsiders who acknowledge their social location, and openly state their biases may have something to offer to the world of research that an insider might never see or acknowledge.

In addition, as more people with disabilities enter higher education and become interested in disability-related research there will be a better balance of insider/outsider research and articles about these subjects. Because of some of my experiences and observations, I believe I have something to contribute to this relatively new area of research, and to the realm of knowledge about disability and mass media.

I approached this dissertation with the same expectation I had when I approached that exchange semester at Gallaudet: I wanted to learn new things,

develop new skills, offer any insights I could, and provide another space on a bridge for people to walk back and forth across to get what they need, and give what they choose to give.

I know on some level that the world of disability is more varied and disjointed than the deaf community at Gallaudet University where I first became acquainted with this subject. Yet, I hope and expect to find some of the themes of pride and unity of purpose I encountered at Gallaudet University, reflected in the attitudes of the editors who participated in this study. I will assess in the Conclusion chapter whether or not this expectation was met. I can assure the reader that I learned a great deal researching this project, and hope your reading will be a learning experience as well.

DEDICATION

To my "running buddy", my family and the  
memory of John Clogston, a fine colleague in  
disability studies.



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## Chapter I Introduction and Background

## Overview

This study is based on the conception of people with disabilities as an emerging group in the United States and on Kessler's (1990) notion that emerging groups in the United States tend to develop their own media. This study of media by and for people with disabilities and some of the perceptions of people who shape these media is a unique way to learn about this growing group of Americans and about the role of mass media in developing and fostering group identity.

The United States society consists of numerous diverse groups of people. Americans regularly affiliate themselves with organizations and groups ([de Tocqueville, 1835]: Heffner, 1984). Groups serve as sources of identity, vehicles for social change, and places of fellowship/comraderie, to name a few of their functions. One such group can be loosely defined as "people" or "persons with disabilities".

Funk and Wagnall's Standard College Dictionary defines disability this way:

1. That which disables.
2. Lack of ability; inability.
3. Legal incapacity or inability to act.

Unfortunately, this definition focuses the reader on some thing or aspect that is not functioning; however

"disability" is viewed as an improvement over older terms such as "the handicapped", "crippled", "deaf and dumb", "a little off", "wheelchair bound", and the like.

### People with Disabilities

"Persons" or "people with disabilities" is the current term preferred by many people in the United States to describe individuals with one or more conditions of being physically, sensorially or mentally impaired. This is called "people first" language. "People first" language lessens the emphasis on the condition(s) people experience, and attempts instead to refocus the user and audience on the person or individuals who are the subjects of discussion, actors in a debate, or--in the case of the present research--persons producing the publications that are part of a research analysis. Additional examples of people first language are the following: "persons with mental retardation" rather than "the mentally retarded"; "people with cerebral palsy" is preferred over "they have cerebral palsy"; and persons who use wheelchairs instead of "the wheelchair bound".

Though an improvement over older terms, the term "persons with disabilities" masks the fact that there are a large variety of disabilities within the group encompassed by this term and that even the seemingly

same disability (e.g. visual impairment) can vary in degree among as well as between individuals. For example, one individual can have differing degrees of hearing loss at two or more stages in his/her life. An individual might be hard-of-hearing at age 12 and profoundly deaf by age 30 or, perhaps more commonly, someone might have normal hearing during most of life and become severely hearing impaired during the senior years.

The significance of these variations among persons with disabilities is that they explain why many persons with disabilities do not view themselves as members of a larger disability community. For example, the person with a mobility impairment which occurred at age 50 is less likely to join a wheelchair sports team than a person who develops or has a mobility impairment earlier in life (e.g. adolescence or young adulthood). Wheelchair sports is one arena where bonding and group identity can be developed. Schools for the deaf are another place where group identity is nurtured. Therefore, late deafened adults have little or no access to the community building opportunities Schools for the deaf provide.

Accidents, birth traumas and aging are common precipitating factors for disability, yet many disabilities are not associated with any of these

factors. Until relatively recent times, only a few people survived birth traumas or accidents, or lived long enough to experience disability to any significant degree. In the not very distant past, many of the persons fortunate enough to survive were hidden in their family homes or sent away to institutions. Consequently, it was quite possible for many Americans to go about their daily routines without encountering persons with disabilities. Certain factors combined to increase Americans' awareness of persons with disabilities. For example, people with disabilities are more mainstreamed into schools and society generally than they used to be, many Americans are living longer, and medical and technological advances have increased the chances for survival with a disability. This heightened opportunity for able bodied citizens to encounter persons with disability has been accompanied by more conscious and self-conscious examination of attitudes toward people with disabilities.

### Culture and Disability

There are a number of ways to examine the American society's or culture's attitudes about disability. A common method for communication scholars to explore these attitudes has been to examine mainstream literary, film, and press



representations of disability (e.g. Clogston, 1990; Schucman, 1988; Biklen, 1987; and Haller, 1992). A summary of this type of scholarship is provided in Chapter II. Relatively little material however, exists in other aspects of scholarship geared to the field of mass communication. An examination of tables of content, indexes, and glossaries in general mass communication literature, including current reporting textbooks, media history texts, and style manuals turned up only a very few references to people with disabilities, disabled people, handicapped people or any other terms that might be used to describe the individuals and publications which are the objects of this study.

In short, little information about people with disabilities or mass media targeted to people with disabilities exists in most media texts and journals. Thomas and Carpenter's, Handbook on Mass Media in the United States: The Industry and Its Audiences, (1994) is a notable exception; one of its articles discusses people with disabilities as media audience members, repeating the common observations critiquing mass media portrayal of people with disabilities and making the new point that children with disabilities consume television and film products at a higher rate than nondisabled audience members.

The aim of the current study is to fill this void in communication research by exploring perceptions of editors who work for publications targeted to people living with disability, seeking to understand the roles of their publications, demographic information about the publications, how these media communicate about disability related issues and concepts, and how they might encourage disability group identity.

Disabled Americans--in similar fashion to African Americans, immigrant groups, feminists, and numerous other individuals with common interests--have developed a variety of publications to communicate among themselves, promote their causes, counter negative portrayal in the mainstream media, and advocate for accurate and balanced images in the United States media and in society at large. Lauren Kessler (1990) demonstrated that the United States has always had a tradition in which disenfranchised and misrepresented groups created their own presses to counter and/or expand mainstream coverage of their issues and members of their groups. In The Dissident Press, Kessler described the development of the feminist press, African American press, foreign language press, radical press, and utopian societies' press. Kessler included divergence from mainstream society and lack of access to popular media as

characteristics shared by groups who eventually form their own media.

These groups share a number of traits. They were the underdogs of their time. All held views or believed in ideas that diverged from the mainstream political, economic, social and cultural climate of their times. All wanted, to some degree, to effect social change. All wanted access to the popular media marketplace for their ideas, or sometimes merely for their existence as a group. All were excluded from the conventional marketplace, although the extent and type of exclusion (denial of access) varied from group to group and over time (Kessler, 1990, p. 60).

People with disabilities meet all of the criteria Kessler outlined above. Having said that, it is important to point out that the groups compared in Kessler's research and this research are not automatically interchangeable. Their assumed interchangeability is used as a device in this research for the following reasons: race, gender,

and disability are all contested concepts. Each is a marked characteristic that makes a difference in how persons are perceived and interacted with in American culture and society; people embodying these concepts are treated differently than persons in the unmarked categories, i.e. non-raced (white), non-gendered (male), and able-bodied persons. In reality, all people possess race, gender, and physical/body characteristics. In other words, whiteness, able-bodiedness, and maleness are marked categories also, and should not be allowed to represent the unspoken or assumed "norm"; by making this explicit it is possible to have deeper analysis about and discussion about a particular category, e.g. race (Frankenberg, 1993).

Admittedly, it is an oversimplification to accept race, gender, and disability as interchangeable pieces. However, persons in the traditionally marked categories (e.g. African Americans, women, people with disabilities) experience similar discrimination and treatment. A qualified acceptance of the common aspects of disability, race, and gender allows the researcher and reader to do an analysis of disability publications that might otherwise be less connected to previous mass media studies and theories.

According to experts, there are two conflicting views of disability in American society. The prevailing view in the middle of the twentieth century was that people with disabilities needed to be "fixed" so they could perform in the working world (Hahn in Gartner and Joe, 1987). This attitude derived from the pathological, medical or rehabilitative view of disability. Persons holding this view focus on the disability rather than on the person with the disability. The combination of society treating people as if they are practically invisible and holding the medical/pathological view of disability when it is addressed (i.e. attempts to compensate for or repair the "broken" limb(s), eyes, ears, or tongues), contributes to a history of people with disabilities being ignored, discriminated against, and misunderstood. In Kessler's terms, people with disabilities are "excluded" or "underdogs".

An alternative view of disability is the perception of disability as a civil rights issue. This view posits that the negative and limiting attitudes of the general public and people in power are the source of the "problems" or barriers people with disabilities encounter. Changing attitudes rather than fixing people becomes the focus in the civil rights view. Persons holding the civil rights

view have been instrumental in developing organizations and introducing legislation geared toward mainstreaming and fuller inclusion of people with disabilities into the general society. At the same time this trend is occurring, however, some social service agencies, educational institutions, employers, and other institutions and policy makers continue to challenge the rights of people with disabilities to attend schools or training programs of their choice, compete for jobs for which they qualify, and exercise their right to parent (Matthews, 1992).

Therefore, people with disabilities continue to face a great deal of discrimination in the United States and are still commonly thought of as less than human. According to Hahn (1987)--a disability scholar and someone who also has a disability--people with disabilities want to be accepted and fully integrated into the American society. People with disabilities and advocates of disability rights see the disability issue as primarily one of civil rights and equal treatment under the law, not as a medical or rehabilitation concern. "The Disabled", as a group are the only "open minority" because an accident, birth trauma, or the aging process can produce new members immediately.

## Disability Movement

There is something happening in the world of disability. Most nondisabled people know nothing of these phenomena. Many people with disabilities are oblivious to the rumblings too, or simply choose to have nothing to do with the issues I am about to describe because they feel they get along "fine" and do not see a need for activism. -

In one way or another, for the past twenty-five years or so, people with disabilities and their families have made growing demands for equality in education, employment, sexuality, relationships, and recreation. As mentioned earlier, Hahn, 1987 describes persons involved in these activities as having a civil rights orientation to disability. Joseph Shapiro (1993), comfortably and without apology labels these changing attitudes, individual and collective incidents, and political activities as the "disability movement".

A factor which Shapiro used to delineate the movement was that groups and individuals documented their histories of oppression and exclusion.

"No other group of citizens was so insulated or so removed from the American mainstream....The disability rights victories of the

previous decade--a law guaranteeing public education and Section 504-- had not been nearly enough to end the isolation. That was why disability activists now turned their attention to winning passage of a broad civil rights bill.

(Shapiro, 1993, p.106)

Shapiro continued to describe the movement and its importance when he discussed the *ADAPT* (American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today) March for Justice in Washington, DC in 1990.

Some 475 people, many in wheelchairs, spread across the sidewalk in front of the White House for the start of the protest march. Another 250 people joined them at the Capitol. (pp. 130-131)

Shapiro admitted that, in the scheme of Washington demonstrations, this was a pitifully small number of protesters. He pointed out, however, that the March for Justice brought together the largest number of people on civil rights issues for people with



disabilities, and from the largest variety of organizations to date. That was a significant event.

Shapiro also wrote that the ADA (Americans with Disabilities Act) brought the usually fragmented disability population together in such a way that 180 national organizations endorsed the bill.

This dissertation is based philosophically on the belief that a disability movement exists in some form, and that it is important that scholars study and analyze the related issues. Disability issues may seem small, the people with disabilities may be splintered, and their issues may be relatively unrecognized by most mainstream scholars, but the issues are real and relevant. It happens that an academic organization based in Massachusetts, *The Society for Disability Studies*, through the efforts of Paul K. Longmore, is currently trying to get some handle on how many scholars are doing research on disability related issues and/or incorporating these issues into their course work. This information will not be available in time to write about here.

This researcher thought it very important to learn how and if the editors participating in this

study have some sense of the "disability movement" and whether they consider their publications part of this movement.

### A Profile of Americans with Disabilities

According to the Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), a comprehensive civil rights law passed in 1990, there are approximately 43 million Americans with some form of disability. This represents slightly more than 17 percent of the total population (249 million) reported in the 1990 United States Census. In the ADA, the term disability is defined as: "any physical or mental impairment which limits one or more life functions." The ADA was designed to ensure accessibility and equal treatment in employment, public accommodations, and telecommunications for all persons in the United States with disabilities. (Americans with Disabilities Act, 1990). This piece of legislation will be elaborated on more fully in the latter part of this chapter. The actual number of people with disabilities in the United States is a debatable

topic.<sup>1</sup> Definitions of disability vary over time and at any given time among various agencies and groups. For example, the 1990 U.S. Census figures indicate that there are approximately 187 million Americans identified in the Disability Status category! This number includes individuals 75 years old and older and those who identify themselves as having some type of mobility or self-care limitation. (If the researcher subtracts the number of individuals under 16 years old and over 75 years old from the census figures, the figure is closer to the ADA numbers. One reason these individuals may be excluded from some counts is because they presumably will not require or be eligible for work related accommodations.) Some of the instructions on the 1990 Census for items concerning "disability" are as follows:

19. Consider a person to have difficulty with these activities if any of the following situations apply. (1) it takes extra time or

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Various publications report higher figures, for example a census document, McNeil, John M., "Americans with Disabilities: 1991/1992", Washington, DC, U.S. Department of Commerce, Economics and Statistics Administration Bureau of the Census reported the figure as 49 million.

extra effort for the persons to perform one or more of the activities, (20 there are times when the person cannot perform one or more of the activities, or (30 the person is completely unable to perform one or more of the activities.<sup>2</sup>

Clearly, the census takers measured disability differently than did persons drafting the Americans with Disabilities Act. For instance, the language in question 19 (1) could apply to young children or elderly people who function within the normal range for their age groups.

It is also important to note that the percentage of Americans with disabilities from various racial/ethnic groups and in both sexes does approximate the proportions of these groups in the general population. Specifically, Census Table 40 of the United States Summary (Census Summary) indicates that 82 percent of the population of people with

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<sup>2</sup>

1990 U.S. Census Instructions for Questions 14a through 19, Facsimiles of Respondent Instructions and Questionnaire Pages, p. 55.

disabilities is White (non-Hispanic), 11 percent African American/Black and the remaining numbers come from the following racial/ethnic groups: Hispanic, American Indian, Eskimo, Asian and Pacific Islander, and "other". Fifty-two percent of those reported in Table 40 "disability status" are female and 48 percent male. The breakdown of these percentages substantiates the claims that disability is an "open minority" group and that the individuals within the category "people with disabilities" are from diverse racial/ethnic groups and from both sexes.

Whether one relies on the more conservative estimate of 43 million Americans with disabilities or the larger numbers in census reports, it is generally agreed that people with disabilities have been a part of human society since the beginning of time. Different cultures and societies respond to disability in a variety of ways.

This study, however, is based in contemporary disability conceptions and issues in the United States of America in the late twentieth century. Legislative policy or history is one means of exploring a society's evolving attitudes about various issues. To

that end, the next section of this chapter provides an overview of five key pieces of twentieth century federal legislation that set the legal foundations and parameters for the nation's public stance concerning people with disabilities. This legislative overview will provide further context for the discussion of publications for and by people with disabilities in the United States, an environment of competing world views (i.e. rehabilitative/medical/pathological or civil rights) concerning people with disabilities.. The representative pieces of legislation are the G.I. Bill, Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, Education of All Children Act (P.L. 94-142), the 1990 American Disabilities Act (ADA), and the Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA).

## Disability Legislation

### The G.I. Bill:

#### Servicemen's Readjustment Act of 1944

The G.I. Bill was designed by the U.S. Congress and signed into law in 1944. The G. I. Bill's main purpose was to assist veterans of World War II as they returned to the United States and readjusted to civilian life. The law provided educational and general benefits to Americans for World War II servicemen. President Roosevelt and others were aware of the potentially detrimental effects on the American economy and culture if millions of servicemen were allowed to return to civilian life without job prospects. This thinking was combined with a sense of appreciation for men (and women) who had served the country during WWII to make the G.I. Bill popular with the Congress and American public. The legislation provided educational assistance in the form of financial resources and inducements for colleges and universities to admit veterans. The legislation also included loans for homes and businesses and unemployment compensation.

In spite of public support, debates about how or if a bill such as this was part of a "socialized education" system or a free enterprise system ensued. President Roosevelt wisely involved many committees in the recommending and drafting phases of the G.I. Bill. The American Legion was the veteran's organization most actively involved in designing and lobbying for the G.I. Bill.

Interestingly, one of the groups that went on record with serious concerns about the G.I. legislation, as it was being proposed, was the Disabled Veterans of America. This group was concerned that the legislation, as proposed, was too far reaching and would potentially threaten the services that many had come to assume were the rights and entitlement of persons who had become disabled during combat. Other groups going on record with these same concerns were (1) the Veterans of Foreign Wars, (2) the Military Order of the Purple Heart, and (3) the Veteran's Association (Mosch, 1975 and Olson, 1974).

It had long been part of American tradition to ensure that disabled veterans had access to proper



medical and rehabilitative care. As one authority put it:

Often the degree of generosity of the benefits resulted from the successful activity of post war veterans pressure groups...Since few persons ever have opposed medical care and pensions for disabled servicemen, the enduring political controversy in American history over veteran benefits has been concerned essentially with the rewards demanded for healthy veterans.

(Olson, 1974, p.3)

It seems that at the time of Olson's statement and before, most veterans, Congress, and members of the general public were not particularly concerned with large scale integration of disabled veterans into the workforce or mainstream American life. This supports the premise that Americans and people with disabilities were preoccupied with a medical/rehabilitation view of disability during the 1940s, 50s, 60s, and possibly well into the 1970s.

The G.I. Bill was amended several times, and similar bills were passed for veterans of the Korean Conflict and the Viet Nam War. The later bills and the original amendments did not alter America's basic commitment to provide benefits to men and women who served the country during war time.

Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act of 1973

The next important piece of disability-related legislation passed in 1973. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act was drafted and targeted to resolve employment and access issues facing Americans with disabilities. Section 504 greatly influenced the way federally funded vocational rehabilitation programs and counselors did their jobs and was intended to require public sector employers to hire and train people with disabilities. The law reads:

No otherwise qualified handicapped individual...shall, solely by reason of his handicap, be excluded from the participation in, be denied the benefits of, or be subjected to discrimination under any program or

activity receiving federal financial  
assistance (29 U.S.C. S 794).

This language is nearly identical to the language found in Section VI of the 1964 Civil Rights Act. The people who shaped and supported the 1973 Rehabilitation Law intended for the rights of handicapped people [sic] to be codified and handled similarly to the rights of Blacks. Thus, one sees in the language of this legislation a movement toward civil rights issues for people with disabilities. Joseph Shapiro (1993) points out in his history of the civil rights movement that in terms of people with disabilities, that no one has determined exactly how and who made the decision to use the civil rights language. People with disabilities, however, were savvy about taking advantage of the language once it was put into the law.

President Ford also recognized the civil rights factor in 1976 when he issued an Executive Order concerning the Rehabilitation Act. It said:

Section 504 is the first federal  
civil rights law protecting the  
handicapped. The preamble to the  
HEW regulations states that section  
`established a mandate to end

discrimination and to bring  
handicapped persons into the  
mainstream of American  
life' (Executive Order No. 11914, 41  
F.R. 17871, April, 28, 1976 at  
section 3(c)).

The 504 legislation defined discrimination against people with disabilities to include denying services, providing services that are not equal, providing services that are equal but not effective with people with certain disabilities, or providing services in a manner that limits the participation of people with disabilities. A number of cases were brought to court under this legislation. The Rehabilitation Act undoubtedly improved employment opportunities and access for some people with disabilities, while not obliterating all discrimination against persons with disabilities or resolving all issues associated with enhancing opportunities for people with disabilities. Seldom, if ever, will one piece of legislation resolve all of the issues surrounding particular societal attitudes, behaviors, or other concerns related to large groups

of persons. Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act, however, seemed to be a step in the right direction because it included employment opportunities as a major factor in the lives of people with disabilities.

Public Law 94-142

Education of All Handicapped Children Act

In 1975, two years after the passage of Section 504, Congress passed the Education of All Handicapped Children Act (P.L.94-142). This law was designed to ensure that children with disabilities would have free and appropriate access to public education in the least restrictive environment. The radical change in attitude this law represented was the notion that parents could legally demand and expect local school systems to provide appropriate educational opportunities for their children with disabilities.

P.L. 94-142 coincided with and provided impetus to the growing desire of the federal government and other sectors of society to de-institutionalize people with disabilities and place them into their communities of origin. P.L. 94-142 made it legal and a regular expectation that children with disabilities or "special needs" be mainstreamed into regular

schools and classrooms rather than sent away to institutions. P.L.94-142 laid much of the groundwork for and foreshadowed the inclusion debate going on today.

Briefly stated, the proponents of inclusion argue that children (able-bodied and disabled) are better off when all students are educated together. The opponents of inclusion point out that teachers without special education training and/or background in disability issues are not adequately prepared to educate children with disabilities in classrooms that are often already overcrowded and understaffed.

There are various degrees of support for and disagreement with inclusion concepts among persons with disabilities just as there are in the general population. For example, many culturally Deaf adults advocate that Schools for the Deaf are the appropriate place for most deaf children to receive a public education rather than in mainstream schools or classrooms. The capitalized "d" in deaf above and other places in this dissertation follows Padden's and Humphries' convention to distinguish culturally Deaf individuals from the generic term "deaf" meaning "not

able to hear" (Padden and Humphries, 1988). The lower case "d" is used when referring to the general group of people who do not hear. Padden and Humphries explain that culturally Deaf people are persons whose center is deafness--not hearing, American Sign Language is their primary mode of communication, and they share norms and values based on a visual rather than auditory world (1988). Culturally Deaf people take a position on the inclusion issue that a least restrictive environment for a deaf child would be one where American Sign Language is the primary language of instruction and where the deaf child has access to a community of signers. It is more likely that this requirement will be met in a School for the Deaf than in a mainstream classroom or school setting.

It is important to point out that many people who are culturally Deaf do not consider themselves part of the category earlier defined and described as "people with disabilities" and would not expect to be addressed in a study using this all encompassing term.

On the other hand, culturally Deaf individuals have often banded together with members of disability groups to lobby Congress on certain issues or to enact

various pieces of legislation. Deaf people are also often perceived and portrayed with the same stereotypes as people with disabilities and therefore meet Kessler's criteria for being part of a non-mainstream group. Therefore, their publications were also targeted for this study.

The American with Disabilities Act (ADA)

Testimony in a field hearing prior to adoption of the act describes it aptly:

I believe that the goal of the legislation should be to prohibit discrimination, should be to provide remedies for people and should not be to invite lawsuits or class actions or other kinds of damages, but simply to allow people to be independent to get jobs, to go to a restaurant, to go to movies, to have transportation, and to have housing (Field Hearing, 1989).

Senator Steve Bartlett (R-Texas), in the preceding statement, calls attention to the comprehensive nature of the ADA legislation. This bill, unlike the



legislation that preceded it, went beyond employment and educational issues to address other aspects (e.g. social, recreational, and transportation) of lives of persons with disabilities. Therefore, the ADA is referred to by lawyers and people knowledgeable about disability rights issues as the most comprehensive civil rights law ever passed for people with disabilities. The ADA was developed and based on the premise that most Americans with disabilities want to work and to be productive members of the American society.

The ADA was passed in 1990, but had a variety of phase-in periods for different parts of the legislation and for the variety of organizations, businesses, and agencies to whom it is targeted. It is important to note that the ADA duplicates all of the provisions in Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act but goes further by including private businesses and organizations as part of the legislation. The following list of employment-related issues provides an example of how far-reaching the ADA legislation was intended to be: The ADA prohibits discrimination in recruitment, advertising, processing of applications,

hiring, updating, promotion, award of tenure, demotion, transfer, lay-off, termination, right or return from lay-off and rehiring, rates of pay, job assignments, classifications, organizational structures, position descriptions, lines of progression, seniority lists, leaves of absence, sick leave, or any other leave, fringe benefits available, selection and financial support for training, employer sponsored activities--including social or recreational programs (Commerce Clearinghouse, Inc., 1990). Some have argued that under ADA almost anyone can demand services or claim unfair discrimination, but this is not the case. For example, ADA does not cover smokers, persons with behavioral addictions such as gambling, or senior citizens. The passage of ADA was a strong indication that Americans were including people with disabilities in their thinking about building a more inclusive nation.

ADA had its critics, as did each of the pieces of legislation discussed thus far. Most of the criticisms come from members of the business community and private sector who believe the reasonable accommodations called for by ADA are not cost

effective (Weaver, 1991). Several editors of disability publications have expressed concerns that the November 1994 general election results (Republican majorities in the House of Representatives and Senate) may be a precursor to the repeal of ADA or at least a precursor of some efforts to reduce ADA's scope and effectiveness (Interview Transcripts, 1994).

#### Individuals with Disabilities Education Act (IDEA)

In its broadest sense IDEA legislation, which was also passed in 1990, was built in its language and purpose around the P.L. 94-142 legislation, as the ADA borrowed from and relied on Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. Both IDEA and P.L. 94-142 intended to expand the amount of and improve the quality of free appropriate education and opportunities for people with disabilities.

The numbers of children in non-white racial/ethnic groups labelled "disabled" or placed in special education classrooms are greater than their numbers in the general population. In addition, there is a severe under-representation of teachers and administrators from non-white racial/ethnic groups in special education (IDEA, 1990). IDEA, unlike previous

legislation attempts to address these conditions by targeting historically black colleges and universities (HBCU's) for some of its training grants. Teacher training and special education material development are important aspects of P.L. 94-142 and IDEA.

IDEA eligibility areas include the Virgin Islands, the Commonwealth of Puerto Rico, Guam, American Samoa, and the Commonwealth of the Northern Marianna Islands. It addresses the fact that P.L. 94-142 legislation did not include these locations in its definition of "state". In addition, the IDEA legislation outlines some of the special needs of Native Americans or American Indians. The IDEA legislation also describes how some of these needs ought to be addressed.

Consequently, there was more inclusive language and awareness of a diverse and multicultural society in the IDEA legislation than in the previous law. IDEA also distinguished itself from P.L. 94-142 by targeting transition services for students leaving the public school system either by graduation or becoming too old for public schooling. As described earlier in the P.L. 94-142 section of this chapter,

there is some tension between culturally Deaf groups and others who believe children with disabilities need to be educated with children who do not have disabilities (Maryland School for the Deaf Mission Statement, 1994).

In addition, there are parents and educators of children with and without disabilities who are concerned about the implications of putting all children in regular classrooms. Presumably, classroom dynamics will change, as a result, since teachers have varying degrees of training and administrative support and varying temperaments. These factors certainly will influence how special education and regular students benefit from inclusion.

Another aspect of the debate between proponents of inclusion and naysayers is deciding what will become of special educators. Will this brand of teacher become a dinosaur and/or will "regular" teachers become the outdated phenomena? Addressing these and related questions is beyond the scope of a dissertation about disability publications. Awareness of these issues, however, may provide insights into some of the information editors gave during this

study. In summary, twentieth century American legislation history relating to disabilities shows movement, in spite of numerous starts and stops, from a general attitude of omission, then exclusiveness, toward people with disabilities into a more inclusive and aware posture on behalf of people and issues related to disability. While the legislative movement has been generally in this progressive direction, many persons who are disabled or working with people with disabilities agree that the country still has quite a distance to go before being truly accessible, inclusive and accepting of its citizens with disabilities (Interview Transcripts, 1994). Following is a general and brief explanation of twentieth century organizations developed by and for people with disabilities.

## Overview of Organizations for the Disabled

There are at least 139<sup>3</sup> organizations throughout the United States established by or for people with disabilities. These organizations range from agencies such as the *Division of Vocational Rehabilitation (DVR)* designed as a federal agency with the primary task of providing employment training and rehabilitation for Americans with disabilities to independent organizations such as *ADAPT*--formerly *American Disabled for Accessible Public Transportation*, now *American Disabled for Attendant Programs Today* (Ragged Edge, 1994). *ADAPT* is an advocacy group established in 1983 (Shapiro, 1993).

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Encyclopedia of Associations. 1996. 30th Edition. This figure was obtained by a casual count of listings of Public Affairs, Social Welfare organizations listed under the subheading: "disabled". If one were to add other specific terms, e.g. visually impaired, hearing impaired, deaf, cerebral palsy, mental disabilities, learning disabilities, travel, veterans, athletics and sports, etc. the number would grow to 289. The number would expand further if health and medical organizations and international organizations were included in the count.

Somewhere between these two types of organizations, i.e. government sponsored and radical/agitating organizations, are membership organizations such as the *Multiple Sclerosis Society*, *Easter Seal*, the *National Federation of the Blind* and the *National Association of the Deaf* that participate in educational, legislative, and advocacy functions, as well as provide opportunities for people living with particular disabilities to come together and carry on dialogues about concerns specific to their disability group. Other membership organizations such as the *Learning Disabilities Association*, the *United Cerebral Palsy Association*, and the *Coalition of Citizens with Disabilities* are also among the list of organizations providing names of publications and editors for this study.

Most of the disability publications and affiliated organizations studied in this dissertation are relatively new. Prior to the 1970s and 1980s, many people with disabilities were institutionalized and cared for apart from mainstream society. Often, the people in these institutions were considered incapable of learning or unworthy of education



efforts. Therefore, it is only recently that there has been a substantial number of people with disabilities interested in and capable of reading and supporting publications that focus on disability issues.

#### Climate for Disability Publications

There has been a growth in the number of organizations serving people with disabilities and an improved legislative climate for people with disabilities during the last half of the twentieth century. The legislation ensures that more people with disabilities are receiving at least k-12 educational opportunities. And the organizational activities encourage people with disabilities and those who advocate with them or on their behalf to demand employment training and opportunities, and reasonable accommodations in all aspects of their lives. These factors combine to produce audience members with a growing need for information and an expanded availability of services about which to learn and inform others. This produces a ripe climate for media targeted to persons with disabilities.

### Parameters of the Study

The purpose of the current study is to document and analyze perceptions of editors who work for publications targeted to people living with disability. Their perceptions about the publications' circulation size, targeted audiences, content, staff demographics, advertisements, subscription fees, the disability community, the disability movement, diversity, and mainstream media portrayal of people with disabilities have never been explored. These media should be studied, however, because they are an important part of American mass media. Their existence provides a means to explore the health and resilience of American democratic ideals and to further challenge mainstream media to be more inclusive and accurate in its representation of people with disabilities and the issues that affect them.

To this end, this dissertation is a study of print media written by and for people with disabilities in the United States. It is based on a survey of editors of periodic publications identified as being for people with disabilities and about issues related to disability. Interviews were also conducted

with 12 of the editors completing and returning questionnaires.

For this dissertation, some fifty-six (56) newsletters, magazines, and newspapers with national circulation were studied, and all were targeted to a general audience of people who live with disability. Fifty-six editors responded to the survey; however over one hundred publications were identified by contacting the National Federation of the Blind, the National Association of the Deaf, and reading material in the Gallaudet Archives, reading the Gale Publication Guide, and the Alternative Press Index, and by word of mouth.

The term "people who live with disability," encompasses parents, partners, and other family members of persons with disability as well as the disabled individual him or herself. This study focused on the disability publications that are accessible to a general audience rather than publications addressed to scholars, doctors, rehabilitation personnel or employers. In order to maintain rigor and a clear focus, publications produced at educational facilities (e.g. each school

for the deaf has a newspaper), and federal agencies (e.g. guidelines for employing and accommodating disabled employees in the IRS) or what might be known as in-house publications were excluded. Academic and medical/rehabilitation journals were also not part of this analysis of the disability publications because they historically represent a point-of-view about disability that is antithetical to the disability rights/civil rights view outlined above.

Many of the 56 publications whose editors participated in this study are affiliated with organizations of or for people with disabilities. Therefore, it is appropriate to provide some general and brief information about these organizations.

The decision to eliminate the study of other forms of media for people with disabilities was influenced by several factors: (1) There is more print material available for analysis than broadcast or cable material and the print media has a longer track record than electronic media produced for and by people with disabilities; (2) Print media has traditionally set the agenda for other forms of media; (3) The inclusion of video and/or audio materials in

the analysis would have greatly increased the expense of conducting this study; (4) Video and audio materials are processed and distributed differently from print media; (5) Video and audio materials are accessible to fewer people than print material;<sup>4</sup> and (6) The inclusion of publications from other countries will broaden the research too much for a viable project of this nature.

This study does not include publication content or audience analyses. Instead, it will attempt to further research by providing information about the philosophical bases and perceptions. This provides new information that is not currently available in mass media literature. It also potentially provides more bases for communication process theory building, shaping, or challenging than content analyses do. The information for this dissertation comes from questionnaire content and textual analysis of 56

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It is noted that visually impaired and non-readers are potentially excluded from print media too. Publications from the National Federation of the Blind are available in print and audio versions. As unfortunate as it is to exclude non-readers, we must note the non-reading segment of people living with disabilities are not likely to be directly affected by the publications addressed in the research.

editors' responses to a mail questionnaire about their publications and 12 editors' responses and comments during phone interviews.

The analyses of questionnaire responses and interviews with editors of disability publications will provide the first collective insight about how people with disabilities view their own publications, target audiences, and various disability concepts. Their responses were sought with many questions in mind, for example: Does your publication use paid advertising to supplement costs? If yes, which advertisers? What are your opinions about mainstream coverage (e.g. movies, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.) of people with disabilities? How does this [mainstream coverage] correspond with or compare with the coverage in (name of publication)? How is your publication unique in the context of disability publications? The answers to these and other questions will shed light on how editors perceive the communication process taking place in their publications, between themselves and their target audiences.

In the next chapter, the reader will find a review of the relevant scholarly literature. The review will provide more context for the subsequent analyses of disability publication editors' perceptions.

## Chapter II Review of the Literature



## Theoretical Framework

The theoretical considerations which drive this study are the long standing debates and tensions in mass communication theory between Marxist theorists and liberal-pluralism theorists.

### Liberal Pluralism in Mass Communication

Liberal-pluralism begins with the premise that the United States society is comprised of various groups. According to the liberal-pluralism theory, these groups compete with one another for access to media and for opportunities to influence media messages. The liberal-pluralism theory relies on the assumptions of media as neutral, having no agenda of their own, and of media as being fairly equally accessible to all members of society.

The liberal-pluralism theory is consistent with the marketplace of ideas metaphor (McQuail, 1989), which suggests that newspapers, magazines, television and cable networks, and radio stations are open, free, accessible forums for all United States citizens to use for expression of various points of view.

Liberal-pluralism also posits media as tools for other institutions rather than as independent

institutions themselves. The liberal-pluralism or consensus theory about how media operate in the United States, like many theories, is an ideal. Some media scholars, trade papers, conferences, and organizations (e.g. The Freedom Forum) devote themselves to keeping the First Amendment ideals meaningful and true for all American citizens. The First Amendment of the United States Constitution states:

Congress shall make no law respecting an establishment of religion, or prohibiting the free exercise thereof; or abridging the freedom of speech, or of the press; or the right of the people peaceably to assemble, and to petition the Government for a redress of grievances (quoted in Kaplin, 1986, p. 583).

The Freedom Forum and other First Amendment advocates and groups view the media as a marketplace of ideas as essential and fundamental to our society; that if there is no marketplace of competing ideas, the liberal pluralists and

First Amendment advocates argue, then democracy is compromised.

In reality, the liberal-pluralism theory of mass media has many limitations. One such limitation is that the theory does not predict or explain why and how more and more outlets are owned by fewer and fewer corporations, e.g. Disney/ABC and Time Warner/Turner mergers in Summer 1995. The limitation most relevant to this study is the notion of media as neutral institutions accessible to all Americans. It seems that if mainstream U.S. media were really neutral, accessible and not biased toward some dominant or mainstream view of the world, there would be less evidence of mainstream paradigms, and ways of covering stories than there is. In addition, there would likely be less documented evidence of exclusion and distorted portrayals and representations of groups who are not in power. The subsequent literature review documents many of the critiques, examples of exclusion, and distorted portrayals of women, African Americans, and people with disabilities.

### Marxist Theory

An alternative theory or explanation about how media work in the United States is the Marxist theory. Marxist theorists discuss media more in terms of ownership. Their basic assumption is that media are instruments of the ruling class.

Far from being neutral, according to the Marxist analysis, media are used to keep the working class majority functioning in ways useful to the ruling class. The following classic quotation summarizes the philosophy and assumptions of Marxists:

The class which has the means of material production has control at the same time over the means of mental production so that, thereby, generally speaking, the ideas of those who lack the means of mental production are subject to it [mental production /ideas]..." (Marx and Engels in The German Ideology, 1845/46: 1964, p. 60).

Marx and Engels expounded further, saying that because members of the ruling class control everything, their ideas become the ruling or prominent ideas. Marxist or conflict theory, as it is occasionally referred to, is an ideal too. It is appealing to many, but it fails to explain completely all of the dynamics observed by scholars. For example, there is a growing body of mass communication

research and literature devoted to explaining how and why audiences respond differently to mass media messages. Many feminist scholars critique Marxism because it does not adequately explain systemic oppression of women in many societies. Furthermore, it does not explain how and why women might have differing interpretations of media messages than the messages intended or assumed by the message producers or dominant class.

People with disabilities are present in what the Marxists would call the proletariat, bourgeoisie, and ruling classes. Social class, however, seems to influence how disability is viewed and dealt with. Former President Franklin D. Roosevelt provides an excellent example of how disability was hidden, overlooked or otherwise erased when the individual with the disability was part of the ruling class. In contrast, many news headlines refer to criminals (often assumed to be members of the working or under-class) as "one armed bank robbers" or "crippled rapists...."

Marxist scholars also argue and debate among themselves and with other mass communication theorists

about the accuracy of the simplistic ruling class/working class explanation for very complex phenomena. Early Marxists predicted that the proletariat in each society would rise up and overthrow the ruling class/elite. In most cases, this did not happen. Concepts such as hegemony and political economy developed during these debates to describe the lack of revolution and explain how the status quo is maintained. Persons who apply Marxist theories about ruling class and working class relations to institutions, such as the media, are sometimes called political economists. Hegemony describes a system of ideological control so pervasive and effective that proletariat and bourgeoisie people struggle with one another for limited material goods but do not seek to overthrow the ruling class.

A group of scholars known as the Frankfurt School expounded on the concept of hegemony with examples from United States media. The Frankfurt School theorists explained and described media as instruments that perpetuated cultural norms for the masses. According to their analyses, these norms cover everything from the definition of a currently

contested concept such as "family" to which products one should buy and use (McQuail, 1989).

Neither the liberal-pluralism nor Marxist theories perfectly describe the role and functions of media in U.S. society. More adequate explanations of how media develop and function in the United States should take into account aspects from both traditions and offer new insights where possible. Therefore, this study will borrow freely from and challenge the liberal-pluralism and Marxist models in its attempts to describe and explain the philosophies and goals of editors of disability publications in the United States. Tracing the development and philosophies of editors of disability publications seems to be a meaningful way to see how well the liberal-pluralism and/or Marxist theories explain, predict, or otherwise shed light on disability publications in the United States.

## Review of the Literature

The literature review for this dissertation will be drawn from three main topic areas: (1)the media portrayal of people with disability, (2)the history of the African American press in the United States and (3)the history of the feminist press. Materials on African American and feminist presses are included because they are examples of alternative and advocacy presses in the United States.

The literature on the portrayal of persons with disabilities provides solid documentation of the dissatisfaction of members of the disability community with mainstream coverage. The histories of the African American and feminist presses contribute comparative information for analysis of the disability press in the United States. Other alternative publications might serve this comparative function as well (.e.g. foreign language press and the gay and lesbian presses) but will not be examined here. Alternative publications in general provide a way for people to cultivate group identity by portraying themselves and protecting themselves from inadequate treatment in the mainstream press.



### Media Portrayal of People with Disabilities

A look at the literature concerning print media shows that tendencies to portray disability in unrealistic and negative terms are prevalent. Deborah Kent posited a correlation or co-influence of media images and reality in her 1987 study of portraits of disabled women in fiction and drama. "An assessment of the disabled woman's place in literature may serve as a barometer to measure how she is perceived by society" (in Gartner and Joe, 1987, p. 48).

Kent also stated that women with disabilities are often judged in real life by the images presented in literature. Douglas Biklen (also in Gartner and Joe, 1987) notes that news writers have a more or less "stock" way of presenting news stories. Those stock formulas result in stories about heroic people with disabilities overcoming the odds, seeming particularly spirited and full of heart. Though Biklen wrote the following critique in response to the press coverage of a particular story ("Baby Jane Doe"), the comments are appropriate to many stories about disability.

"...often print journalism simply does not consider the disability rights movement's, or for that matter

the individual disabled person's perspective on independent living" (p. 88). He noted that reporters operate within a prevailing framework for covering disability and have a difficult time covering stories that do not fit this framework. In the same article Biklen made a case for the role of disability publications when he writes:

The central difficulty of the popular press, indeed of society at large, was and is a failure of perspective. Again, and finally, we turn to the disability rights press for an analysis of the "central issue": (p. 93)

In this case, the "central issue" was how, indeed if, the quality of "Baby Jane Doe's" life was adequately debated in the press. Biklen goes on to quote a passage from the 1984 Disability Rag to emphasize his disappointment with mainstream coverage of disability.

In their studies of mainstream newspaper coverage of disability in general and the "Deaf President Now" movement, Clogston (1990) and Haller (1992) respectively noted the attempts of reporters to incorporate the civil rights/minority

framework for reporting stories about people with disabilities. "Deaf President Now" was a student-led protest at Gallaudet University in Washington, D.C. In March 1988, students closed the Gallaudet campus for one week to demonstrate their displeasure with the Board of Trustees' decision to hire another hearing president for the university. This protest received coverage on ABC, CBS, and NBC evening news programs, and in The Washington Post and The New York Times, as well as in many local and disability media.

Clogston (1990) examined newspapers and news magazines and compared their coverage of disability over a four month period. He identified five prominent types of disability coverage in these papers. Clogston models were the medical, social pathology, supercrip, minority/civil rights, and cultural pluralism models. Clogston categorized the first three as traditional coverage models and the last two as progressive coverage models. Included in the traditional coverage are stories that stress an individual's economic or physical shortcomings or stories about "supercrips" who overcame many obstacles to achieve various accomplishments. On the other hand, progressive stories focus more on the obstacles society presents to individuals with disabilities and the rights of persons with disabilities to have access to

education, employment and other rights most Americans take for granted. Clogston found an increase in progressive related coverage and a decrease in traditional coverage over time. Haller's examination of the New York Times and Washington Post coverage of the 1988 "Deaf President Now" protest noted a focus in stories that stressed the civil rights issues of deaf students and deaf Americans rather than a focus on the inability to hear amongst the participants.

Carmen Manning-Miller's (1993) pioneer study of the disability press indicated that disability publications provide an excellent source of material about people with disabilities for mainstream media. Her descriptive study of disability publications noted that these publications "inform their readers and promote ideas concerning the quality of life and lifestyles." (p. 9) This study also noted the disability rights coverage in these publications had a strong advocacy and analysis function. The publications Manning-Miller examined were also critical of charity and fund-raising events that promote the notion of people with disabilities as dependent on charity and unable to determine their own lives.

Manning-Miller concluded her study by suggesting that "there is an even greater need to rely upon the disability press for guidance in public education and information,..."

(p. 15) According to Manning-Miller, mainstream media was not relying on the disability press for information about people with disabilities. She identified 15 publications for and about disability. Her study was a good beginning for bringing disability publications into scholarly discourse. Manning-Miller's study was descriptive and focused on the content of the publications she studied. Studies examining disability coverage in other media demonstrate how widespread negative and limited coverage and portrayal patterns are. Cumberbatch and Negrine (1992) examined television programs in the United Kingdom during the 1980s and found that there was very little representation of disability on television. In the few instances where disability was represented, many of the characters were slotted in stereotypical roles as villains, monsters, or other undesirable characters. Virtually none of the disabled characters in this sample had love/romantic interests or roles that viewers wanted to emulate.

John Schucman's examination (1988) of Hollywood and television movies which covered films from the silent movie era through the 1980s, identified five recurring images of deaf people. Schucman entitled the five recurrent images: the dummy, the fake deaf person, the deaf person as object of humor, the unhappy deaf person, and the expert lip-reader.

The image of deaf person as dummy focuses on a deaf individual's inability to hear and speak, and the second image of the deaf person as a fake portrays deafness as an unreality or make-believe situation rather than an actual aspect of some individual lives. The third, fourth and fifth images are somewhat self-explanatory: Deaf people are to be made fun of, laughed at (object of humor) or, in contrast, to be pitied because their lives are tragic and unhappy, but one almost never sees a deaf person treated with dignity and respect. Finally, Schucman notes that Hollywood often portrays deaf people as expert lipreaders. In reality, only about thirty percent of the English language is visible on the lips. This means even the best lipreaders are guessing and using contextual clues--not lipreading skills--to discern what is spoken. This stereotype also ignores the fact that a vast amount of verbal communication happens when people are off camera (e.g. voice overs) or simply have their faces turned away from the deaf character.

None of these images gives a realistic or balanced portrayal of deafness as it is experienced by the individuals who live daily as deaf people. Unfortunately, these images still occur more often than not. For example, NBC's "Reasonable Doubts", starring Marlee Matlin as a deaf lawyer

portrayed her as an expert lip reader with little or no contact with other members of the deaf community. As one authority said, "An immense chasm exists between disabled people and their screen counterparts" (Klobas, 1988, p. xii).

Paul Longmore (1987) noted filmmakers' and writers' tendencies to associate disability with villainous characteristics.

Closely related to the criminal characterization but distinct from it, is the depiction in horror stories of the disabled person as "monster." The subtext of many horror films is fear and loathing of people with disabilities (in Gartner and Joe, 1987, p. 68).

"The Golden Child", a popular Hollywood movie starring Eddie Murphy, provides another contemporary example of the classic reliance on disability and/or deformity to connote evil. All of the side-kicks of the main antagonist/bad guy have one or another physical disability.

Ronald Meyer (1993), a writer for Braille Monitor, critiqued "Scent of a Woman" starring Al

Pacino as an unrealistic portrayal of blindness. Meyer stated that because blind people are not well integrated into larger society, Hollywood should have higher standards.

...until blind people are fully integrated into society on a basis of equality with the sighted, this story can't be about one blind person. That's because movies are one of the few schools in which the general public learns about all blind people. The lesson of *Scent of a Woman* is that all blind people are angry and socially maladjusted while feeling inferior and suicidal...(Braille Monitor, 1993, p. 733).

Meyer, in similar fashion to many other scholars and critics of media portrayals of disability, realized that the general public often gets its only understanding of blindness from movies; therefore, he argued that movies must have more balanced and realistic presentations of disability.



Some indication exists that film and broadcast media, like print media, are making slight progress in their attempts to portray and report on disability. Hollywood's "What's Eating Gilbert Grape" portrayed a mental disability and obesity with more sensitivity and balance than most films. "Forrest Gump", a 1994 Hollywood film, is the story of a character with a developmental disability. The character had a knack for being at the right place at the right time and making critical choices that seem to improve his and society-at-large's overall state. The film was highly entertaining, technically fascinating and received several Academy Awards. Nevertheless, the film is somewhat ambivalent in its representation of disability.

In some ways, "Forrest Gump" fell into the "supercrip" stereotypes, i.e. the stereotypes of a person with a disability overcoming life's great odds with incredible will power, personality characteristics, or other individual efforts. In other ways, however, there seemed to be an effort to represent disability more realistically and to inform the viewers that Forrest Gump succeeded while disabled

rather than by "overcoming" in the traditional way former characters have done. The producers also introduced another character with a disability. This second character, also a man, loses his legs in combat during the Viet Nam war episode. The character was extremely angry and embittered because Forrest Gump saved him rather than allow him to die a hero, as had been the noble fate of all of his known male ancestors. This character became better adjusted and resolved his rage and bitterness after an encounter with "God", represented by nature. He did not overcome his bitterness in the stereotypical way of former Hollywood characters by becoming physically whole or being "fixed" or rehabilitated through technology and/or able bodied people's interventions. The viewer did see this character in a later scene with prostheses: however, they were featured as an afterthought and not as the means to the sergeant's adjustment.

#### The African American Press

The history of publications dealing with the lives and aspirations of American Blacks offers insight for those wishing to understand the

alternative press tradition in the United States. The African American or Black press in the United States has developed over a period of one and one half centuries. It was initiated by a group of people who were at first disenfranchised because of slavery and later disenfranchised by racist policies and attitudes which kept Blacks from participating fully in mainstream American life. In 1827, Samuel E. Cornish and John B. Russworm began Freedom's Journal--the first Black newspaper to survive several years--in New York because the New York Enquirer, a prominent White New York newspaper, would not print a letter protesting and countering misinformation about Blacks (Emery and Emery, 1988). Approximately 40 African American publications were started and discontinued prior to emancipation (1863) because of lack of resources and readers (Bryan, 1969). The same phenomenon also occurred in mainstream journalistic efforts. Only those publications with sufficient finances and audiences flourished.

Bernell Tripp (1992) in her book, Origins of the Black Press, stated that her research led her to

conclude that anti-slavery protest was much too simplistic an explanation for the Black press.

...While slavery was indeed a major concern, there were other issues besides slavery to consider during that time period prior to the Civil War (Tripp, 1992, p. 91).

Some of the issues that members of the Black race also had to contend with during the pre-Civil War period were varying levels of education, economics, and social standing among free Blacks. Race cohesiveness and improving lifestyles in the North may have been as important to early Black journalists as the abolition of slavery. Tripp wrote that the following themes were evident in the early Black newspapers: individual industriousness and diligence, cooperation and unity in the black community, education for the Black population, voting and political involvement, and fair voting laws.

Bernell Tripp also documented the belief in free expression and lack of access to other publications as factors in the development of the Black press.

Of the various factors contributing to the development of the black press, the opportunity for free expression occurred more frequently than any others--whether in the circumstances surrounding the newspapers' creation or the editors' originally stated goals (p. 73).

Blacks were regularly denied access to mainstream newspapers of the period. Therefore, if Black people were to be heard, they had to create their own vehicles of expression.

Hutton's (1993) analysis converged with Tripp's claims that the history of the Black press should not be limited to the traditional descriptions of the Black press as primarily an abolitionist press. Hutton wanted to counter the common view that the nineteenth century Black press was mostly an abolitionist press.

This book addresses three concerns that have influenced my study and teaching of the black press in America for nearly two decades. The

first is to quell the pervasive view of this press as primarily or solely abolitionist during the antebellum era, to make room for a broader understanding of this important institution (Hutton, 1993, p. ix).

Hutton's alternative description began by pointing out that Black newspapers were a product of the middle class and mostly men in the middle class. Slave holders and slaves were not the primary audiences for Black newspapers. The publishers ascribed to democracy and other American ideals, e.g. liberty, equality and high moral standards. According to Hutton, philosophical unity and disunity coexisted in the newspapers. Social responsibility was an important ideal; many of the publishers criticized the mainstream newspapers' lack of balance on various issues. Black newspapers sometimes printed contrasting viewpoints on controversial subjects. The Black newspapers also reported on national conventions of Black leaders and reported news that perpetuated the survival and success of Black people in America.

Hutton also documented the early Black press' efforts to incorporate female writers, reporters and readers. According to Hutton, the themes of social responsibility and gender equity seemed to echo in Black newspapers before they appeared in White newspapers. Editors of the Black press also gave more attention to images of a positive, genteel, and achieving people than to the horror of slavery and ills and crimes of free Blacks.

The newspapers and magazines that made up the black press permitted women to have a forum for provocative and even radical thinking on some few topics that may have been offensive to males. Even with this offensiveness, gender was not a troubling problem in the larger scheme of pre-Civil War American life (p. xvi).

Hutton's research found that the Black press had a feminist bent before it was popular for mainstream publications to actively incorporate women's points of view in their columns. Fredrick Douglass' North Star

was an example of a Black newspaper that promoted feminism. The work of Ida B. Wells provides another example. She edited and published a nineteenth century newspaper concerned with anti-lynching and other social issues affecting Blacks. Wells' columns focused on issues considered feminist as well as African American.

Enoch Waters' American Diary (1987) is a different kind of history of the Black press from those described above. This narrative about the Black press is actually a personal diary of Waters' experiences as a reporter for the Chicago Defender, a prominent Black newspaper. The reader learns which childhood experiences prepared Waters for a career in journalism, who was who in Black journalism, how the Chicago Defender contributed to and challenged dialogue on race issues nationally and in Chicago. Waters made a claim to the pioneering spirit of the Black press in the introduction of his book:

The full significance of the birth of the black press in 1827 has been overlooked. Freedom's Journal was the first American publication



devoted to the interests of an ethnic group within the country, and chronologically at least, its founders were among the pioneers of American newspaper journalism (Waters, 1987, p. xx).

It is evident from this statement that Waters felt the magnitude of the Black press had been underplayed and that he hoped to augment and elaborate on the significance of the Black press. One of the perspectives Waters' book contributed to the history of the Black press is that it was autobiographical in nature. He viewed the Black press as "a record of a people written by themselves" (p.xx).

Patrick Washburn (1986) studied various attempts by agencies of the United States government to suppress the Black press during World Wars I and II. Though Washburn studied policies relating to censorship and sedition in relation to the Black press rather than the Black press itself, he described the Black press as outspoken and a source of pride for Black readers in the early twentieth century.

Before the mid-1910s, the black press was small and relatively uninfluential because it lacked a large urban audience...The growing number of new urban subscribers resulted in a striking change in the editorial content of the Northern black press...mainly as a result of its outspokenness, the black press became an object of intense pride and interest among blacks (Washburn, 1986, p.15).

Overall, the black press was more critical of the government than most of the white press, but few of the publications approached the strident views expressed by ultra radicals (p.5).

Carolyn Martindale (1986) documented the initial lack of accessibility to and later inadequacy of mainstream press coverage of African Americans and related issues. Martindale compared four newspapers' coverage of Blacks in the 1950s, 1960s, 1970s, and

1980s. She listed the following deficiencies in mainstream coverage: stereotypical coverage, lack of attention to complexity of problems facing Blacks in America, a failure to adequately articulate conditions underlying the civil rights revolution and causes of racial conflict, and the tendency for newspapers to ignore local injustices in favor of discussing situations afar. Martindale's comparative study noted some improvement over time in mainstream newspapers' efforts to cover African Americans.

Mainstream media's improved coverage of African Americans has not eliminated the need for a Black press in America. People will always want to speak for themselves. According to one historian:

The perpetuation of the black press is desirable for these reasons: to help preserve the culture and heritage of the black race, and to assist in fighting for justice for a still often unjustly treated human group, even in the free society we know as the United States of America (Wolseley, 1990, p. xv).

There are currently specialty publications (e.g. Black Enterprise, Essence and Ebony) devoted to the varied interests of African Americans. As a leading African American publisher expressed it:

Until the two races are meshed or merged or integrated, you will need both "white" and "black" media... If we somehow reach a point in this country when race will no longer be a factor, then Ebony will simply serve all the people (James H. Johnson interview quoted in Hall, Baltimore Sun, 1994).

As mentioned in the section on portrayal of people with disabilities, persons with disabilities, in the same fashion as Black Americans, also complain of lack of accessibility to mainstream media and lack of sensitivity of reporters, producers, and editors that often leads to stereotypical and overly simplistic coverage in mainstream media. Developing publications by and for persons with disabilities is one way to counter, challenge, critique and expand mainstream coverage of persons with disabilities.

### The Feminist Press

In similar fashion as the Black press and other forms of alternative media, feminist publications developed because feminists were convinced that they could not rely on the mainstream media to accurately present their issues to the public. In their book Taking Their Place: A Documentary History of Women and Journalism, Maurine Beasley and Sheila Gibbons described attacks on the media during the women's movement.

No other institution of American life came under greater criticism during the women's liberation movement of the 1960s and the 1970s than the mass media...Movement adherents, who ranged from radical separatists to moderate liberals agreed on one point: The mass media were unfair to women, who made up more than half of the population (1993, p. 1).

More specifically, mainstream media's portrayal of women gave audiences the impression that women have

very limited roles in society. According to Beasley and Gibbons, women were depicted as "wives, mothers, sex objects or--even more significantly--not at all, women were not portrayed as individuals capable of independent contributions to the world" (Ibid: 4)

Other scholars also indicated the inadequacy of mainstream coverage and the importance of groups understanding the impact that mainstream coverage has on self identification and social perceptions of the group. "For women, blacks, chicanos, and others, the issues of self-definitions and societal perceptions of their group were directly tied to the mass media's messages" (Turner, 1980, p. 106).

Activist women in the late 20th century developed their own publications as one of several strategies to combat the misrepresentation prevalent in mainstream media. This strategy was not new for women. In the nineteenth century, Amelia Bloomer, Elizabeth Cady Stanton, Lucy Stone and other famous suffragists edited publications (e.g. The Dial, The Lily, and the national suffragists' newspapers) in which they discussed the state of affairs for women and, more importantly, proposed various strategies for changing

the condition of women. Women gaining the right to vote was an important theme during this period, but so were themes such as married women gaining the right to buy and sell property and challenges to the roles ascribed to women in organized religion. As one scholar put it: "Women, like other groups of Americans, have long recognized the need to communicate with each other and with the general public and to directly put forth their own views for themselves" (Allen, 1988, p. 13).

There is considerable debate in the literature about what distinguishes feminist publications from other publications written for or by women. The sources cited in this review generally agree that feminist publications are those which are primarily owned, edited, and written by women interested in women's issues. The audiences for these publications are also primarily women with goals commensurate with those interested in women's health, childcare, temperance, and/or suffrage. Feminist publications have been crucial to the women's movement in this country.

Kessler wrote that the feminist newspapers served several functions for the women's movement. They boosted morale, raised people's consciousness, and hosted political and philosophical debates. Anne Mather suggests in her "History of the Feminist Press" that feminist publications are excellent primary documents for understanding and examining the women's movement. "From the first women's crusade of the 1840s to the current movement of the 1980s, feminist newspapers and periodicals have been the backbone of the ongoing women's movement" (Kessler, 1990, p. 74).

Mather and Allen each noted several characteristics of feminist publications that have distinguished them from mainstream publications. These unique characteristics included the following: they were run by women, possessed a collective rather than hierarchal structure among the staff, displayed a responsiveness to readers, focused on women's history, contained extensive use of poetry, had a non-competitive approach to similar periodicals, critiqued the mainstream media within the publications, and had an open forum among writers and readers.



The feminist genre is an important historical record of the status of women in the 20th Century, as well as a record of the goals and philosophies of the woman's liberation movement...Study of them [these publications] reveals what deficiencies in the traditional media caused their birth. Moreover changes they have initiated could well proved [sic] to be catalysts in changing the establishment press (Mather, 1974, p. 82).

It should be noted that Pamela Creedon, Sheryl Bowen and Nancy Wyatt have discussed the implications of feminist theory for trends in mass communication and communication studies. Creedon's introduction to her book, Women in Mass Communication stated the feminist orientation and tone of the work.

The book has first a dimension of singularity. This singularity is feminist, and thus provides an opportunity to re-vision mass

communication and its value system from an alternative viewpoint. However, the re-vision is not confined to only one feminist theoretical position (1989, p. 14).

There is no one feminist perspective or vision. There are instead a variety of feminist viewpoints. Nielson pointed out other ways that feminism and possibly feminist publications have influenced many academic areas.

the feminist perspective has generated the study of phenomena reflecting the sexual politics that had not been previously studied. For example, rape, spouse abuse, sexuality, childbirth, housework, incest, sexual harassment, pornography, and prostitution are all now studied by social scientists. Other examples of newly studied topics include the gendered nature of language, environmental

policy, technology, body language,  
everyday talk, and advertisements  
(Nielson in Bowen and Wyatt, 1990,  
p. 3).

This chapter has reviewed the literature in three areas: the media portrayal of people with disabilities and the African American and feminist presses. It shows that people with disabilities share some of the same complaints of misrepresentation as people in the African American and feminist communities, and that these groups have developed their own publications for somewhat similar reasons.

### Conceptualization for the Present Study

Considering previous theory and research about media produced by "minority" groups, the present study will examine what editors think is going on in disability related publications. I think that disability publications, like African American and feminist publications, and other groups cited in Kessler, 1990 are tools for forging a group identity for people with disabilities, and that they are also a means of critiquing mainstream coverage of people with disabilities. The current study will test this hypothesis and go beyond Manning-Miller's (1993) efforts by addressing the following research questions:

1. Who runs these disability publications?
2. Are there models or patterns which describe how these publication editors communicate about disability?
3. Do editors perceive that disability publications contribute to or reflect other types of diversity in the United States?

4. How are disability publications similar to or different from the Black press or feminist press in the U.S.?

5. Do disability publications represent untapped resources for internships and entry level positions for undergraduates in communications, journalism, and mass communication programs?

6. What theory or theories best explain the functions of the disability publications in this study?

The next chapter will discuss very specifically the methodologies utilized to conduct the analyses of disability editors' perceptions about disability group identity and about the communication processes happening in their publications. In addition, the researcher provides her own social location and how she believes this influenced the choices of methodologies and presentation style.

## Chapter III Methodology

## Factors in Choice of Methodologies

### Previous Study

Carmen Manning-Miller's descriptive study of the disability press (discussed in the Literature Review Chapter) presented at the 1993 Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication Convention was the first effort to document disability publications. Manning-Miller's efforts focused on the content of the publications she discussed. It made no attempt to find out about the people responsible for the publications or their attitudes and perceptions about subjects e.g. civil rights issues for people with disabilities, debates about the existence of a disability community, debates about diversity and representation in the community. This dissertation attempts to do this. Specifically this study is an analysis of disability editors' perceptions about their publications and various concepts associated with disability.

For this study, I chose to combine the long interview and survey methodology. Both methodologies lend themselves to the type of research questions I have. Surveys allow the researcher to collect

standardized information from a large number of people while interviews allow for more subtle and nuanced discussion of ideas of interest to the researcher. In traditional scientific research, one tightly operationalizes all of the terms of debate. There is some merit to this method but this strategy often prevents researchers from "hearing" the real messages participants are sending in their studies. This tendency is greater when the researcher is outside of the group she is studying.

#### Personal Factors

I am not a person with a disability and I do not edit a disability related publication. Therefore, I am effectively "outside" of the phenomena I want to study. In addition, I am a member of several groups (i.e. women, African Americans, working class) that have limited power and influence in scholarly research. These factors encouraged my decision to use two methodologies for this research. The use of the long interview enhances the opportunities for participants in this study to share what is important to them. Therefore, a conscious and deliberate decision was made to expose the reader to the exact



words and thoughts of the editors I interviewed, rather than alter their voices with an abundance of interpretation and paraphrasing, as is more common in journalism/mass communication research.

### Survey Methodology

Survey research has a long history in the social sciences, especially in sociology. Government agencies, private industry and media also use survey research for a great portion of their information gathering. The Gallup Poll and similar survey instruments are commonplace among the American public. "The importance of survey research to the public at large is confirmed by the frequent reporting of survey results in the popular media" (Wimmer and Dominick, 1991, p.107).

Some researchers have devoted their entire careers to studying survey methodology or one aspect of it. The American Sociological Review, Journalism Abstracts, Journalism Quarterly and Public Opinion Quarterly provided volumes of studies using survey methodology and numerous articles outlining the weaknesses of or offering suggestions for improving survey methodology.

It is not appropriate for this study to thoroughly examine the survey methodology literature. However, the articles selected for this discussion demonstrate the researcher's awareness of the general strengths and limitations of survey methodology for the current analysis of disability publications.

Survey methodology allows the researcher to obtain specific information from large numbers of individuals. Surveys can be conducted via face-to-face interviews, phone interviews, through electronic communication, or the mail. Each of these types of surveys has its own strengths and weaknesses (Babbie, 1992). Considering that no single survey method is ideal, I have conducted this survey in two phases. The first phase involved sending a printed or taped questionnaire through the mail to editors of disability publications. See sample pilot questionnaire, Appendix A, A3. This questionnaire was designed to collect basic demographic information about the publications in this study. The questionnaire responses addressed such questions as who controls the relevant publications, who works for

these publications and who subscribes to and advertises in these publications.

The second phase of the survey was long interviews with a sub-set of respondents to the initial questionnaire. The long interview is described in detail in the next part of this chapter. The purpose of these interviews was to get qualitative information about the perception of these editors on topics that cannot be measured in a purely quantitative way. These topics included "disability community"; "disability movement", "diversity", perceptions of content; perceptions of comparisons to feminist and African American publications; and additional involvement in disability activities. Long interviews permitted time for editors to define and explain their philosophies as well as discuss their reactions to the concepts mentioned immediately above.

The most prevalent general critique of survey methodology uncovered by this researcher was one concerning the sample selection. In its purest form, survey methodology should be used with random samples that share relevant characteristics with the target or hypothetical population. If this basic requirement is

overlooked and randomization is inadequate, the survey results are not generalizable. This potential pitfall is avoided in the current study because no claims of generalizability are being made. The results will not be generalized beyond the actual editors and publications participating in the study. In fact, the results of the survey will be used to direct the researcher to editors and publications that may warrant more in-depth study and analysis. This analysis is intended to be exploratory and descriptive, not predictive or definitive. It will open up the area of media and disability and be helpful to people wishing to do research in these areas.

Other critiques of survey methodology focus on interviewer variability, (Carpenter, 1974/75) and item order/wording, (Carr-Hill, 1984 and McClendon, 1991). Alwin (1977) elaborates on the possibility for response errors in survey methodology. These errors range from complete non-responses to item non-responses. Alwin mentioned some specific strategies, e.g. weighting to adjust coverage and response bias,

but concluded with the following thought about efforts to deal with these factors:

"...the consensus among survey methodologists seems to be that the use of methods to achieve high completion rates is of much greater importance than the use of methods to adjust data for potential bias (U.S. Bureau of the Census, 1963: 53)" (Alwin, 1977, p. 139).

Therefore, I focused more on high completion rates than on adjusting and weighting data. To encourage high completion rates, this study incorporated Carpenter's (1974/75) suggestions about personalizing mail surveys. Carpenter's study demonstrated a difference in response rates when the dependent variable was degree of personalization of the survey. Following his suggestions to personalize the envelopes and cover letters and do follow-up mailings had mixed effects on the completion rates of this mail questionnaire. More detail about the mailing process for this study will be provided in the next section.

Mail surveys have been used effectively by Rumble (1992), Hon (1992), Davenport (1987), Grusin (1987),



Onyedike (1985), Morah (1987) and others studying editors', journalism practitioners', and others' attitudes about publications and/or experiences and concepts related to journalism. Two of these studies also utilized interviews to increase the depth of information acquired. The interview methodology will be discussed more thoroughly in the next section.

Survey research is also used frequently in the private sector; e.g. Arbitron Neilson measure television viewing during sweeps weeks to determine ratings.

Carr-Hill's (1984) and McClendon's (1991) studies demonstrated that participants' responses are influenced by how a question is worded and the order in which the questions are placed. The item selection and ordering critiques in survey methodology were addressed in this study by (1) reviewing many questionnaires utilized in actual research, (2) giving careful attention to wording and sentence clarity, (3) getting input on questionnaire items from experienced researchers--feedback about item clarity, ordering, and other areas were documented and incorporated before the questionnaire was mailed to the targeted

editors--and (4) conducting a pilot survey with editors such as those in the targeted population.

#### Interviewing Methodologies

Interviews are conducted in many realms in this society. For example, reporters conduct interviews with sources; employers and prospective employees utilize interviews to supplement written information about one another; and some parents conduct interviews with teachers and staff at the educational facility they are considering for their children. Interviews are usually conversational in nature and always a means of gathering information.

The interview process seems to be an essential way to gain insight into the experiences of people with disabilities and editors of disability publications. Since the researcher does not have a disability, nor is she an editor of a publication for people living with disability, it would be presumptuous to generalize from her own experiences. For example, because I have spent many years working with the Deaf community it is tempting for me to assume that their sense of community and culture translates to other groups with disabilities.

However, this assumption can only be tested, challenged, reinforced or discarded by learning what the editors actually think about themselves and members of their target audiences.

For the "editors' perceptions study", I actually relied on the McCracken's (1988) "long interview" format which compares and contrasts itself freely to ethnographic techniques utilized when a researcher becomes a participant-observer in a different culture.

The long interview methodology is outlined by McCracken as less obtrusive, more intense and quicker than ethnographic interviews. He said:

It [the long interview] departs from the unstructured "ethnographic" interview insofar as it adapts a deliberately more efficient and less obtrusive format. It is a sharply focused, rapid, highly intensive interview process that seeks to diminish the indeterminacy and redundancy that attends more unstructured research processes (1988, p. 7).



An open-ended interview script helped ensure that the researcher covered the same terrain with all respondents. See Appendix B, B2 "Long Interview Script for Disability Editors" for a verbatim copy of the questions asked during the interviews. Prompts and question order were planned in advance, as McCracken advised.

The long interview also allows analytic categories to change throughout the process. It challenges the more scientific tendency to operationalize concepts and tightly define what each concept means in the context of the study.

McCracken reminded researchers that the tendency to see everything as confirming what is already familiar is one of the limitations of the long or ethnographic interview methodologies when it is used within the same culture in which the researcher is a member. McCracken strongly warned the researcher to avoid the temptation to impose her own meanings on the information discovered.

...active listening strategies must not be used by the qualitative researcher. They are obtrusive in

precisely the manner that this research wishes to avoid, and they are likely to be almost completely destructive of good data, ... (p. 21).

According to McCracken, the interviewer must avoid filling in and hearing in the answers her own expectations. The interview procedure in this study was an effort to uncover cultural and personal meanings and underlying assumptions of the editors involved in producing the publications for and by people with disabilities--not an effort to confirm the researcher's preconceived notions about the phenomenon being studied.

I noted, as McCracken advised, that when I was surprised by an answer it might have been an indication that some cultural expectation was defied. Surprise can often be a point of insight into another culture's or individual's ways of thinking and viewing the world.

McCracken also discussed the impact the respondent's perceptions of the interviewer and institution may have on the interview. He suggested a balance between formality and informality in speech,

dress, and project description. These suggestions complemented the researcher's previous experiences as a focus group moderator, reporter, and interviewer on other projects.

Finally, the use of more than one methodology (i.e. questionnaires and long interviews) for collecting data strengthened the research design and offset the potential limitations of either the mail questionnaire or interviewing alone.

The following sections of this chapter will describe exactly how the long interview and survey methodologies were applied in this study. The reader will be given a step by step explanation of the methods and processes I undertook to conduct the analysis of disability publications editors' perceptions. I used a mail questionnaire and conducted 12 long interviews to obtain demographic and qualitative information about 56 disability publications in the United States.

Editors and publications for this study were found in The Gale Guide to Publications, The Oxford/Cambridge Publication Directory, the Alternative Press Index, the 1993 Manning-Miller

"Descriptive Study of Disability Publications" and from individuals active in disability issues. Over one hundred publications were identified this way.

The researcher designed and sent questionnaires to one hundred and thirty-seven (137) editors of disability publications in the United States. The questionnaire was mailed in three phases.

#### Questionnaire Design and Mailing Procedures

##### Pilot Questionnaire Mailing

The first mailing occurred on June 30, 1994. It included the mailing of 14 pilot questionnaires to randomly selected editors. Cover letters explaining the project were mailed with the questionnaires. See Appendix A, A1 "General Cover Letter" and A2 "Cover Letter for Deaf Publications". A seventy-eight percent return rate or eleven usable questionnaires were returned. One questionnaire came back marked "undeliverable". See Appendix A, A5 "Return Rate for Pilot Questionnaire" for an illustration of return questionnaire information. None of the editors completing the questionnaire suggested changes in questionnaire format, wording or items in spite of an explicit request for suggestions and feedback.

Consequently, the subsequent questionnaire reflected only minor changes that resulted when the researcher noted that the questionnaire items for target audience age, editor age, and staff age were coded inconsistently. Coding changes were made to ensure consistency across all questionnaire items requesting information about the age variable. Since the check-off options available for these age-specific items differed slightly between the pilot and subsequent questionnaires, the researcher took this into account whenever any analysis was done using the age-variable information.

#### General Questionnaire Mailing

The subsequent questionnaire was mailed in two phases. Phase two (or the first part of the general mailing) took place on October 10, 1994. This mailing totaled 101 questionnaires--the largest group in this study. A small number of these questionnaires and cover letters were read onto cassette tapes in order to be accessible to visually impaired or blind editors. Twelve of the cover letters targeting publications affiliated with the National Association of the Deaf and other Deaf organizations were revised

slightly to address the presumed sensitivity to being identified as a publication for people with disabilities. As explained in Chapter I, many culturally Deaf people do not consider themselves disabled. Therefore, I accommodated this perspective by not referring to their publications as publications for people with disabilities. Appendix A, A2 is a copy of the revised cover letter for editors of deaf publications.

Two post card reminders were mailed, one on November 1 and the second on November 15, in order to increase the rate of response. The number of usable questionnaires returned was 39 or roughly 39 percent of the 101 questionnaires in this mailing. This is lower than the return rate for the pilot questionnaire. In addition, eight undeliverable questionnaires were returned unopened, and three uncompleted questionnaires were mailed back to the researcher. Therefore, a total of 50 or half of the questionnaires in phase two are accounted for. See Appendix A, A6 "General Questionnaire Return Rate: Phases Two and Three".

The researcher speculates that the significantly lower return rate of the general questionnaire than return rate for the pilot questionnaire is partially explained by a loss of the momentum and excitement demonstrated by the editors in the pilot study, during the time the researcher searched futilely for a nationally known person in disability issues to co-sign the cover letter. The search included conversations with three persons involved in the Clinton Administration, electronic mail correspondence and unanswered letters to another individual with a national reputation in disability issues. These contacts took place over a two-month period. Editors may have also been more available during the summer months than they were in the fall. Another possible explanation for the lower response rate is the fact that the researcher received two other questionnaires directed to persons involved in disability issues in the mail during the Fall of 1994. If any of the editors targeted by this study were also on those mailing lists, one more questionnaire might have seemed easy to ignore.



The third phase of the questionnaire and cover letter mailing happened on December 1, 1994 and included 21 "new" editors and publications identified by people returning the questionnaire in October and November. Questionnaire Item 32 requested the names and addresses of other disability related publications with which the respondent was familiar. A post card reminder was mailed to the twenty-one editors on December 16, 1994 before the holiday season ensued. Ten questionnaires were completed and returned in December. Five of the ten responses received in December were a direct response to the December 1 (phase three) mailing. This represents a twenty-four percent return rate. Three came back unable to be delivered and one was returned but not completed. December information (phase three) is also included in Appendix A, A6.

Two completed and returned questionnaires during December were eliminated from this analysis because one dealt with a publication that was a book rather than a periodical, the other was a duplicate of a publication questionnaire completed earlier by another staff person at the same publication. The average



return rate for the three phases is forty-seven percent.

Shortly after the phase three mailing, the researcher examined the completed questionnaires and realized that none of them came from those explicitly interested in people with learning disabilities. Subsequent contact with the Lab School in Washington and the Learning Disabilities Association in Philadelphia, PA as well as conversations with some knowledgeable individuals led the researcher to the Orton Dyslexia Society-- one of the main organizations involved with learning disabilities issues in the United States.

The researcher phoned the Society and spoke with the editor of its publication. The editor agreed to complete the questionnaire and it was faxed to her on the next day. She returned a partially completed questionnaire two days later.

Therefore, the data reported in this study comes from 56 completed questionnaires and 12 interviews. Please note again that the population of editors in this study is not intended to be a random and representative sample of all disability publications

in the United States. As was noted in Chapter II, there has been only one other documented attempt to research what disability publications exist and how many there are. One can only do a genuine random and representative sample when there is some understanding of the hypothetical universe of disability publications. At this time, no such understanding exists, or at least, it has not been communicated in scholarly journals and presentations. An alphabetized list of the 56 publications discussed in this study is Appendix A, A7, "Publications Participating in the Study".

Many of the questionnaire item responses have been converted to quantitative data for ease of reporting. Since this is not a random, representative sample as is the case with many surveys, there will not be a sophisticated statistical analysis of the variables. Instead, the researcher reports simple descriptive statistics, e.g. the frequency of occurrence of certain variables.

The descriptive statistics essentially provide details about response rate, publication circulation, targeted audiences of the publications in this study,

frequency of publication, subscription rates, and advertisers for these publications. The remaining analysis of the publications and research questions was based on the qualitative information provided in the long interviews with 12 randomly selected editors. This portion of the analysis examines and compares the perceptions and philosophies among the 56 editors responding to the questionnaire.

#### Interviewing Procedures

The interviews included questions about editorial philosophy, hiring practices, views on disability advocacy, disability issues, legislation, the feminist press, the Black press, and diversity. The interview script can also be found in Appendix B, B2.

After receiving 56 usable questionnaires, the researcher randomly selected editors who had completed the questionnaire and indicated that they were willing to be contacted for additional information. Eleven of the interviews were done by phone or teletype device for the deaf during December 1994. One interview was conducted as a pilot or dry run in November. The interviewee in November is the only participant in this study who was previously known by

the researcher. Our prior acquaintance did not seem to influence the interview. The interviews, like the mailings, attempted to include a variety of disability groups and types of publications.

There were two discernible differences between the editors who answered the questionnaire and those who did not. A greater percentage of female editors responded to the questionnaire than did male editors. Of the editors whose names were known at the time of mailing, 58 percent of the names were traditionally female and 42 percent seemed to be male names. The self-identified female/male percentage for those answering the questionnaire are 62 and 29, respectively; the remaining respondents either did not identify their sex (two percent) or identified as "both" (seven percent). The "both" designation was checked when there was more than one editor for a given publication. The second difference between the returned questionnaires and those mailed out was that editors who responded to the survey were more likely to be from Maryland than editors not responding to the survey.

The publications represented by the 56 respondents were as likely to target a variety of disabilities as were publications in the larger sample. To the extent that one can determine target audience by name, the publications in the larger group seemed as likely as publications in the responding group to include non-disabled people as part of the target audience.

The completed questionnaires included publications for persons in the following categories: amputees; blind/visually impaired; deaf/hard-of-hearing; developmentally disabled; persons with polio; mobility impaired; people with cerebral palsy; and people with multiple sclerosis. As noted above, the researcher went to special lengths to ensure that she had some representation of groups or publications serving people with learning disabilities because this group did not seem to be represented in any of the directories or other sources she consulted.

Specific percentages of publications targeting particular disabilities were omitted here since many--but not all--of the 56 publications in the study target more than one disability group. However,

target audience disabilities and basic frequency charts for editors' disabilities are located in Appendix C, C1 and C7, respectively.

GEOGRAPHICAL DISTRIBUTION OF COMPLETED  
QUESTIONNAIRES

State	# Completed Questionnaires
Maryland	14
New York	6
Virginia	4
California	3
District of Columbia	3
Illinois	3
Massachusetts	3
Ohio	3
Texas	3
Arizona	2
Florida	2
Wisconsin	2
Colorado	1
Kentucky	1
Pennsylvania	1
Missouri	1
New Hampshire	1
Utah	1
West Virginia	1
	55*

\*1 completed questionnaire did not have name or address info completed so state could not be identified.

The methodologies for this study have been explained by referring to the rich literature in survey and interviewing methodologies. The strengths and limitations of each methodology are explored and the researcher's relevant characteristics and their role in the study are acknowledged openly.

In addition, the researcher acknowledges that the participating editors may have some self-interest (e.g. promotion of publication or representing themselves as more knowledgeable of the nuances of their varied audiences than they might actually be) that influences how they respond to the questionnaire and the phone interview queries. The questionnaire responses and phone interview with the editor of the Disability Rag provide examples of this phenomenon. At no time during the interview did the Disability Rag editor voluntarily mention the controversial nature of the Rag among some people with disabilities. The researcher knows from her own experience with people with disabilities, that some people with disabilities find the Rag too militant, and therefore will not subscribe to it. In spite of this limitation, the



information provided by these editors is a valuable place to begin inquiry about disability publications.

The next chapter will provide in detail the answers to questionnaire items.

## Chapter IV Questionnaire Responses

Copies of the pilot and general questionnaires are in Appendix A, A3 and A4. This study is focused on disability related publications. This chapter includes specific information about the circulation, subscription, advertising, editor demographics and general staff characteristics for 56 disability publications. The circulation figures for the 56 publications in this study range from fewer than one thousand to 30,000; with half of the publications indicating circulation figures of less than 5,000. For a frequency distribution of circulation figures, see table on the next page.

### Publication Circulation Information

CIRCULATION	# OF PUBLICATIONS
*	5
less than 1,000	11
1,001 - 3,000	13
3,001 - 5,000	5
5,001 - 7,000	4
7,001 -10,000	4
10,001 -15,000	5
15,001 -20,000	4
20,001 -25,000	3
25,001 -30,000	2
<hr/>	
Total:	56
*Missing Cases	

One of the criteria for inclusion in this study was that the publication should be periodic, i.e. it should be produced at some regular interval. Therefore, a book about disability was not included in the study. Most of the publications described in this study were quarterly, however there were other publication schedules reported.

### Publication Frequency and Subscription Rates

Twenty-two (39 percent) of the publications in this study are published quarterly. Thirteen disability publications in this study, or 23 percent of them, are published monthly and eight (14 percent) are published bimonthly. Two publications are published semi-annually; one is published biweekly and another one, annually. Nine publications, or 16 percent of the publications in this study have other publishing schedules. Most often "other publishing schedules" meant ten times a year or six times a year --but not bimonthly.

Twenty-eight or 50 percent of the publications in this study have annual subscription or organization membership fees which include copies of the publication. Fourteen (25 percent) of the publications in this study are free and ten publications have per copy or monthly subscription costs associated with them. The four remaining publication editors did not provide information about subscription or membership fees. Editors responding to the questions about subscription fees often included information about organizational membership

fees instead of providing information about fees specifically for the publication. Consequently, I am unable to discern what, or if these publications had subscription fees. Subscription/membership fees were reported as ranging from zero--the majority of publications--to \$275 per year.

#### Advertising Information

Thirty-one, or 55 percent, of the 56 publications in this study did not accept paid advertising in their publications. Twenty-three publications, or 41 percent of the 56 editors that responded to the disability publications questionnaire, indicated that they do accept paid advertising in their publications. There is no advertising information available for two publications in the study. Of those publications that accepted paid advertising, the most prevalent type of advertising is from companies selling adaptive technology and/or equipment to people with disabilities. Adaptive technology advertisements accounted for 52 percent of the advertisements mentioned by editors of disability publications. Seventeen percent, or four of the 23 editors that accepted advertisements mentioned advertisements from

communication corporations, e.g. AT&T, MCI, Bell Atlantic, publishing companies, and computer companies. The same number of editors mentioned accepting advertisements that are geared toward the publication content. For example, some of the sports related publications accept sports advertisements and the personal introduction publication accepts paid personal advertisements. Only three, or 13 percent, of the 23 editors acknowledged acceptance of paid advertising that was more general and unrelated to publication content or disability in general.

The information available about the subscription and advertising revenue generated by these publications leads me to conclude that income production is not a priority for the publications in this study. This factor, on one hand, may contribute to the autonomy of the editors and their publications, and, on the other hand, ensure that the publications remain small and unknown to most mainstream readers (Shaw Interview, 1994). This is a mixed blessing, at best.

## Editor Characteristics

### Editor Age and Sex Distribution

Almost 36 percent of the editors participating in this study were between 41 and 50 years old. Nine editors each, or 16 percent, fell into the 31-40 years old and 51-60 years old age categories.<sup>5</sup> Slightly more than 62 percent or 35 of the publications in the study are edited by females compared to almost 29 percent or 16 publications that are edited by males; seven percent or four of the publications in this study are edited by both females and males. One editor did not respond to the questionnaire item about editor sex. (See Summary of Age, Sex, Race Data for Editors Table on p. 119).

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This age questionnaire item differed slightly on the pilot questionnaire and main questionnaire. The category for the youngest group (a) was 20 - 30 on the pilot questionnaire and 19 - 30 on the regular questionnaire. Since an insignificant number of editors were in the youngest age category, this factor did not affect the overall percentages in age categories.



### Editor Racial/Ethnic Identification

Eighty-two percent or 46 of the 56 editors responding to this study identified themselves racially/ethnically as "White". Five percent or three editors identified themselves as "African American/Black", and four editors or seven percent identified racially as "another race/ethnicity". The "another race" was included in the questionnaire for persons who do not identify as one of the following, "Hispanic", "Native American/American Indian", "Asian American", "White", "African American/Black", and "Biracial". There was under representation in each racial/ethnic category on the questionnaire except "White" and those who checked "another race". According to U.S. Census Data (1990, Table 40), slightly more than 80 percent of the general American population identified themselves as "White", approximately 12 percent identified as "African American/Black", a little less than nine percent identified as persons with "Hispanic Origin (any race)", almost three percent identified as "Asian Pacific Islanders", less than one percent identified themselves as "American Indians/Eskimos", and almost

four percent as members of the category called "other". (See Summary of Age, Sex, Race Data for Editors Table below.)

Summary of Age, Race, Sex Data for Editors

<b>Age</b>	19-30	31-40	41-50	51-60	61-70
	8	9	20	9	5
Missing Cases - 5					
<b>Sex</b>	Female	Male	Both		
	35	16	4		
Missing Cases - 1					
<b>Race</b>	White	African American	Asian American	Other	
	44	3	1	4	
Missing Cases - 4					

### Editor Disability Identification

Half or 28 of the editors publishing disability publications in this study identified themselves as having a disability and 46 percent or 26 editors did not. One publication--with more than one editor--indicated that it has editor(s) who have disabilities and editor(s) who do not have disabilities. One editor did not respond to the questionnaire item about editor disability. The type of disabilities editors identified themselves as having varied as greatly as the types of disabilities mentioned for targeted audiences. Of the group of editors that indicated some disability, the greatest number of editors (four out of 56) identified themselves as having polio/post polio disabilities only. Two more editors indicated that polio/post polio was one of several disabilities.

The following disabilities were given as sole disabilities by three editors each: amputation, blindness/visual impairment, deafness/hard-of-hearing/hearing impairment, and spinal cord injuries. Two disability publication editors indicated that they were people with cerebral palsy. The percentage (a little more than half) of editors with disabilities

seems to be a phenomenon which distinguishes disability publications from Black and feminist publications discussed earlier. The majority of--if not all-- Black publications and feminist publications are Black owned and edited, and the majority--if not all--feminist publications are female owned and edited. In fact, female ownership was one of Mather's criteria for inclusion in her 1974 study of the feminist press. If this researcher had made "disability-owned" a criterion for inclusion in this study, the study would have produced even fewer publications and editors for analysis.

#### Editor Tenure with Publication

Thirty percent or 17 of the editors participating in this survey have worked with the disability publication that they are currently affiliated with for one to three years. Twenty-one percent or 12 editors have been with their respective publication seven to nine years, and 16 percent or nine editors have been with their publication four to six years. Five editors, almost nine percent of the respondents have worked at their publications 10-12 years; four editors or seven percent worked at their publications

13-15 years; three respondents or five percent of the editors worked with their publication for less than one year, and six editors have worked at their publication for some other length of time.

#### Editor Experience

Almost half of the editors had no publication and/or disability organization experience before working as editors of their publications. Publication experience was defined as work as a reporter, writer, graphic or layout artist, photographer, and/or having other editorial experience. Disability organization experience was defined as "having worked in the current organization or another disability affiliated organization in any capacity". Of those listing publication and/or disability organization experience, almost 29 percent indicated previous publication experience and almost 18 percent had other responsibilities in a disability oriented organization.

The apparent lack of connection to disability and/or journalism for the other half of these editors is surprising. The varied academic background of the editors is also somewhat surprising, but to a lesser

extent. Thirty percent of the respondents indicated that they had majored in a communication-related field in undergraduate school, but almost as many (29 percent) majored in other unrelated fields. Communication related fields included Communication Studies, Communication Arts, Communication Sciences, Mass Communication, Media Studies, English, Journalism, Theater and Speech.

Twenty-three percent of the respondents majored in education, psychology, social work, sociology or other fields commonly thought of as background preparation for the "helping professions". Only slightly over five percent of the editors identified themselves as majoring in physical health related fields. Physical health fields include medicine, occupational and/or physical therapy and similar fields. Over half of the respondents (almost 52 percent) indicated they would not be interested in journalism training; a little over 30 percent said they would be interested in journalism training, and 10 of the 56 or almost 18 percent did not answer the questionnaire item about journalism training. These numbers are intriguing in light of the earlier data

indicating that half of the editors have no academic or work background that prepared them--at least in any obvious ways--for editing publications for people with disabilities.

## Internship Opportunities

At the 1993 *Association for Educators in Journalism and Mass Communication (AEJMC)* Convention, a panel was devoted to discussing employment opportunities for journalism/mass communication students with disabilities ("Status of Persons with Disabilities Panel", August 1993). Most faculty and graduate student participants agreed that internships are often the best way to gain access to this field. In light of this commonly understood phenomenon, I decided to inquire about internship opportunities at publications serving people with disabilities.

When asked during the long interview about the desire for interns, none of the twelve editors expressed a preference for interns with disabilities. Certainly, there are legitimate legal questions and considerations about preferring staff and/or interns from specific groups. It is commonly understood and expected however, that Black and feminist publications have and will continue to provide journalistic opportunities for members of their respective groups. It is not clear from the information provided in this study that disability publications are necessarily



providing similar opportunities for people with disabilities.

Specifically, the questionnaire responses indicated that the same number of editors (29) who say they are not personally interested in training indicate that they would like interns for their publications. This phenomenon, however, appears to be merely coincidental. Only six editors did not respond to the questionnaire item about interns. Names and addresses of editors and publications interested in interns, and breakout charts of the interests in training and interns are compiled in Appendix D, D2 and D3. The names of editors and publications who desire interns have been forwarded to the College of Journalism Internship Office for their review and possible use with undergraduate journalism majors. That list is also in Appendix D, D5. The researcher thanked editors involved in the long interview by putting them directly in touch with the Internship Office when the interview ended.

### Paid Staff Characteristics

Forty-nine (92 percent) of the publications in this study have at least one paid employee, three do not have paid employees and four editors did not provide information about paid employees. Fifteen of the 56 publications in the study have two paid employees, seven have one paid employee, five have six paid employees, and four have four paid employees. Three follow-up phone calls alerted the researcher that editors indicating larger numbers of paid employees were often including organizational staff who may or may not be directly involved with the publications on a full-time basis. Since there was little consistency among the editors who decided to count organizational staff rather than specific publication staff for the "number of paid staff" questionnaire item, the researcher is excluding more detailed analysis and discussion about the size of paid staff for the publications from this study.

Thirty-two of the editors responding to the questionnaire indicated that they had paid males on their staffs. Forty-three editors indicated that they had paid females on their staffs. Only 21 of the 56

editors responding to the questionnaire gave information about paid employees from racial/ethnic minority groups. Eleven of the 21 editors responding to the questionnaire item about paid employees from racial/ethnic minority groups, indicated that they have no paid racial/ethnic minorities on their staff and ten indicate that they do have paid minority members on their staff. Thirty-five editors or 62.5 percent of the respondents did not answer the question: "how many paid minorities are on [the publication] staff?" Of the small group who did provide some information about the number of minorities, their responses on the next item only account for six employees: one "Hispanic", two "African Americans/Blacks", one "Native American", one of "another race", and one "Biracial". Apparently, four of the 10 editors who said "yes, we have minorities on our paid staff" did not go on to specify which racial/ethnic categories the staff members represent. With these caveats about the paid staff data, one could tentatively surmise that disability publication staffs are not racially and ethnically diverse organizations. The diversity concept will be

discussed in more detail in the next chapter, when I examine some of the responses I received to the long interview query about diversity.

In contrast to the small number responding to queries about racial/ethnic diversity, 39 editors or 70 percent of the respondents answered the question, "how many of your paid employees have disabilities?" Thirteen editors indicated no paid staff with disabilities and 26 editors or 46 percent indicated some paid staff with disabilities. When an attempt was made however, to reconcile the numbers of editors who indicated there are staff persons with disabilities to the number of persons identified as having specific disabilities, the numbers were again inconsistent. Questionnaire items about paid staff are in the last half of the questionnaire. It seems that editors provided less information on items nearer the end of the questionnaire.

The editor and staff demographics provided by this research indicated that these disability publications represented the editorial viewpoints of persons who range in age from 30 to 60. Most of them are white. People of color, youth, and elderly people

with and without disabilities are practically absent from the staffs of the publications in this study. Males were fewer in number than female editors: however, they are represented as editors and on the staffs to a greater extent than members of the other groups listed above.

## Target Audience

Almost 34 percent or 19 of the editors in this survey indicated that their publications served people with all disabilities. Four editors or seven percent of the survey respondents identified their publications as targeted to audience members who are deaf, hard-of-hearing, or hearing impaired. Two editors each identified their publications as targeted to one of the following groups: audience members who have at least one amputated limb, blindness/visual impairments, or developmental disabilities. All of the other disability categories, e.g. polio/post-polio, learning disability, "different" disability, or a specific combination of disabilities were targeted by only one publication in the study. Eighteen editors did not provide information about disability groups targeted by the publication. A broad variety of disabilities were targeted by and represented in these publications. See Appendix C, C1 for a summary of disability type and frequency information for targeted audience members.

In addition, thirty editors or almost 54 percent of the editors indicated that their target audience



included all of the groups in the non-disabled audience categories. The categories listed on the questionnaire are: parents; spouses/partners; educators/legislators/professionals; general nondisabled population; and "other, please identify\_\_\_\_\_."

Only one editor made no attempt to address this questionnaire item. Eighteen editors left the space blank where they were asked to identify the types of disabilities their audience members had.

Three editors checked that their targeted audience members were all or mostly female; two indicated that their targeted audience members were all male; two left this item blank. The publications with all or predominantly female audience members were Echo, for people with multiple sclerosis; PWD Update, cross-disability publication of the Project on Women and Disability in Boston, Massachusetts; and WILDA, Women in Leadership Disability Activists publication. The publications identified as having all male audience members were Paraplegia News, for those with spinal cord injuries, multiple sclerosis, amputations and polio as well as non-disabled audiences and Sports

'n Spokes, with the same audience and editor as Paraplegia News. An overwhelming 86 percent of the editors or 48 indicated that they target mixed (female and male) audience members.

Information was not requested about the racial/ethnic identification of audience members. Publication staffs were so small the editors were not able to determine basic audience demographic information. For example, there were generally vague and non-specific responses to similar questionnaire items, e.g. ages of targeted audience and income of targeted audience members. It is assumed that these editors did not have the staff or financial resources to obtain specific demographics about their audiences.

The questionnaire utilized in this study yielded a great deal of useful and new information about disability publications. However, questionnaire items and responses did not provide much information about the qualitative aspects of these publications. For example, questionnaire responses did not tell me if the editors perceive the disability rights/civil rights orientation of some people with disabilities;



questionnaire responses also did not give me a sense of tone or type of articles the publications usually contain, or what, if any sense the editors had about diversity issues in America. Therefore, I randomly selected a subset of 12 editors and asked them further questions about these perceptions. The responses were varied in depth and type. Most of these editors were somewhat inarticulate about these concepts but a few were not.

The variety and nature of their answers lead me to surmise that the publications included in the study could be further delineated into three general categories or models of publications. These models, criteria, and examples of responses suggesting categorization will be identified and defined in the next chapter.

Chapter V Publication Models and Editor Perceptions  
of Diversity

## Evolution of Publication Models

This chapter will discuss three models of disability publications. They are the Activist/Political, Assimilationist/ Mainstreaming, and Special Interest models of disability publication. The Activist/Political label grew out of the terms political and activist utilized by Nancy Kensicki and Barret Shaw in their descriptions of their publications. Assimilationist/Mainstreaming and Special Interest are descriptive terms that tend to represent the goals of the editors of publications placed in this category. These three publication models emerged as I mulled over interview transcripts from the phone interviews and side comments editors made. It was possible to discern patterns in editors' tone and perceptions from their responses to interview questions about the type of articles usually printed in their publications, editors' remarks about the existence of a "disability rights movement", "disability community", and their comments about "diversity" issues in American society, and to what extent they framed disability concerns in the these terms. Only twelve long interviews were conducted,

and the criteria evolved from editors' responses during the interviews. Therefore, no attempt is made to place all 56 publications in a specific publication model. Questionnaire items did not specifically inquire about editors' perceptions of publication goals and disability or issue content because there was concern about the questionnaire being too long. It was noted earlier that answers became shorter and less precise as respondents reached the end of the questionnaire. In addition, this study is the first study of its type and as such is attempting to provide basic background information and description of editors' perceptions. The study is laying the ground work for future studies of publications about disability. Finally, the open ended nature of some of these concepts loaned themselves more readily to interviews than to a mail survey.

Activist/Political (Model I) publications are those that indicate by title, editor's questionnaire and/or interview responses, the intention to change society's attitudes about disability and to enhance the lives of audience members with disabilities.

Assimilationist/Mainstreaming (Model II) publications

are those that indicate by title, editor's questionnaire and/or interview responses, a desire to provide marketable and capable people with disabilities the opportunities to participate in employment, education/training or other activities available to American citizens; these publications often target non-disabled audiences. Publications in the third category, Special Interest Publications (Model III) could further be placed under either the Activist/Political or Assimilationist/ Mainstreaming models but there is some merit to discussing their unique topical appeal. I feel it important to reiterate that these models are an outgrowth of the research and they were not preconceived models in which the researcher tried to place the publications or editors' perceptions of the publications.

All of the editors perceived their publications as better at representing disability and people with disability than the mainstream media. Therefore, they viewed themselves as falling into Clogston's (1990) progressive/civil rights model rather than Clogston's (1990) traditional/ medical/ pathological model of covering disability. This was made plain in the

responses editors gave during the interview when they were asked to compare and contrast their coverage of people with disabilities to mainstream coverage of people with disability. [The transcript excerpts used throughout this dissertation are from the taped interviews conducted in November and December 1994. The researcher believes it is imperative to preserve and convey as much of the editors' original words as possible, therefore, quotations are used liberally.]

For example, Barret Shaw, editor of the Disability Rag and Resource said that she viewed disability issues as social and civil rights issues rather than as issues about individuals overcoming obstacles created by their disabilities.

BS Well, first of all, I have always been on this whole thing as a social issue. I mean we don't do we hardly ever do profiles. We hardly ever do stories of someone's individual life or someone's individual quote achievement. We talk about abuses, we try to discern the causes of different abuses, we

try to see how they can be  
addressed....

There were no "supercrip" images in this editor's  
perception of disability.

Similarly, Future Reflections editor Barbara  
Cheadle responded to the question which asked her how  
Future Reflections' coverage of blindness and  
disability corresponded to mainstream coverage by  
insisting on the publication's parental educational  
purpose.

BC We have a very specific focus  
and frankly...we do not intend to be  
objective...so I can't compare it in  
one sense. in one sense [mainstream  
coveragel provides an objective view  
but there's no comparison on that  
angle of it; Our goal is to educate  
parents to a different  
view/philosophy of blindness. We  
are not "objective" and do not  
pretend to be "objective."

Future Reflections is advocating and educating for a specific view of blindness, and, in this sense, is political and admits to being political rather than objective in its coverage. Fritz Rumpel, editor of In the Mainstream indicated that his publication's stories about disability differed from mainstream coverage by concentrating on employment training and accommodations rather than on "feel good" features.

FR We don't...that's a good question...we don't do features we don't run 'feel good' stories.....  
w e t a l k a b o u t  
training...accommodations.

Rumpel's goal is to get people with disabilities working effectively and productively, so he saw no benefit to the "supercrip" stories still found too often in mainstream media.

Cindy Blank-Edelman, PWD Update editor, described her newsletter's coverage of disability in strong social civil rights terms.

CBE Well, our articles start from the basic starting place that women with disabilities are fundamentally



women and that we have the whole range of emotions and interests of any other women that are non-disabled and we don't really spend a lot of time addressing either the tragedy of disability or how people could be heroic and overcome and triumph over their disabilities. It's more like we talk about disability in terms of oppression and talk about how we can change society ... women ourselves by empowering ourselves and by working with other people so that we can overcome the oppression, not the disability.

Blank-Edelman and others working with her did not believe that having a disability was the issue; instead they believed that society's lack of accommodations and limiting attitudes were the main problems needing to be addressed. This coincides with Hahn's (1987) explanation of disability issues described in Chapter I of this dissertation.

Lucienne Pisa, editor of The Arc and The Dove, criticized mainstream media for not using "people first" language. Asked how The Arc and The Dove coverage corresponded to mainstream coverage, Pisa said that she and her staff are more sensitive than mainstream media personnel because they lived daily with disability.

LP Oh, well, I think we're more sensitive I mean most of us live with someone who has mental retardation or have friends or, you know, who are very close to the issue, so we have a more personal view of things and you know that can be just as biased, I suppose, but we take a person first view. You know we don't describe people by their handicap first. We don't assume that that defines an entire person so we try to use that [people first approach] in our writing.

Ms. Pisa criticized the type of writing that uses leads such as, "one armed man robs bank..." or

"wheelchair bound woman gives birth to twins...". These leads define the individual by their disability and perpetuate negative stereotypes about disability.

There are variations among these editors and publications in their tones and related representations of people with disabilities. Some editors seemed to emphasize, what I call, the "we are people too, please accept us, (inclusive)" angles, while other editors emphasized their desire to challenge society to change and be more accepting of difference. These are the distinctions in tone and coverage among relatively progressive editors that suggested a need to further delineate the progressive/civil rights model into three new models of disability media coverage.

The twelve publications explored during the long interview are placed in charts for each model. Model I-Activist/Political, Model II- Assimilationist/Mainstreaming, and Model III Special Interest). The charts reiterate the criteria used to place publications in each model. Following each chart is additional explanation about the publications listed therein.

Model I

Activist/Political Publications

Publications in this model meet one or more of the following criteria: (a) editor expressed intention to change society's attitudes about disability; (b) editor spoke about disability in civil rights and/or minority group terms; (c) editor was aware of diversity issues and made links between the activism of other groups and people with disabilities; and (d) editor at least minimally supported the concepts of a disability rights movement, disability community, and viewed their publication playing a role in these.

Disability Rag and Resource  
Future Reflections  
MDAD News  
PWD Update

### Activist/Political Publications

The Disability Rag and Resource, Future Reflections, PWD Update, and MDAD News (Maryland Association of the Deaf News) are examples of Activist/Political publications. The Disability Rag and Resource is a bimonthly magazine that began publishing in January 1980 and has a circulation between three and five thousand. The editor seldom accepts advertising because she felt it compromises the mission of the publication. Barret Shaw, quoted earlier, felt strongly that activism and political involvement are the primary focus for Disability Rag and Resource. Grassroots activism and funding for an Independent Living Center in Louisville, Kentucky played a large role in the Rag's history.

BS It started out as a monthly newsletter. It was started by two women here in Louisville, Kentucky. Their names were Mary Johnson and Cass Irvin. They were active in some grassroots disability groups here in Louisville. One was called 'Alpha' and then Mary started, well

I think Mary started, one called 'Prime Movers' that was mostly involved with local housing issues and access issues and they started publishing it [Rag] anonymously and again just locally and Mary was instrumental among some other people here in getting federal funding towards an Independent Living Center here so by the second year that had started and Mary was the first head of that and director of the independent living center and the Rag became incorporated into the center's newsletter or actually it was the other way around. The center's newsletter was incorporated into the Rag...And by word of mouth it just started getting a national reputation and getting distributed nationally and within a couple of years, by the third year, it became

a regular monthly magazine without  
the center newsletter in it...

So, publicizing access issues and transportation issues in the city of Louisville led to a publication that is known to a variety of people concerned with disability in the United States. For example Bilken (1987), a disability scholar, referred to the Disability Rag's treatment of issues concerning euthanasia and people with disabilities in his analysis of mainstream media's coverage of the "Baby Jane Doe" story. Shapiro (1993) relied on Mary Johnson, former Disability Rag editor, for information about the disability rights community. Editors participating in this study referred to the Rag as a matter of course. Teri Terry mentioned the Rag when she was discussing the demographics of the people who contribute to her publication (The Progressive).

TT [Mary Johnson] from Disability Rag that [sic] has written for us several times. Mary [Johnson]--I pay the authors--in fact I'm looking at the Disability Rag right now...

Rumpel also mentioned the Rag when he responded to the researcher's question about comparing disability publications to feminist and African American publications.

FR Disability Rag is much more focused on advocacy, .....it has more in common with feminist publications than In the Mainstream would.

A different, but comparable example, is the Maryland Association of the Deaf News (MDAD News). This news magazine is targeted to a Deaf, hard-of-hearing and late deafened (late deafened are persons who become deaf after acquiring language and speech skills--including older adults who have had careers, raised children, etc.) audience in Maryland. Each state in the United States has its own Association of the Deaf. In addition, there is a national headquarters for this organization in Silver Spring, Maryland. MDAD News is published six times a year and has a circulation of fewer than one thousand. Many of MDAD News' advertisers are members of the local deaf



community. In Nancy Kensicki's own words, the publication is political.

NK OK, I have copies of issues dating back to 1981, from what I'm seeing it's definitely political in tone to give you an idea..in the Winter Issue 1983 there is an article about the issue of Screening Hearing Impaired Infants Bill then going through the State Legislative [sic] and there's another article on election fund raising. No there's not much of a change in approach since that time.

The Project on Women and Disability Update (PWD Update) is edited by Cindy Blank-Edelman, who described herself as feminist and activist. She also stated that, in its mission, her publication was unique:

CBE I don't know of any others that are written that come from the same perspective. I do know of a couple of other or at least one other

journal that's written by and for women with disabilities but it's not coming from an activist viewpoint. It's more like a Ladies Home Journal for women with disabilities. So I would say our perspective is very unique and the people that ... Our constituency is unique and the people that are putting it together are unique .

The acknowledgement that being female with a disability implies a different set of experiences than being male with a disability makes PWD Update a unique publication. The other editors in this study did not make references to gender differences in describing their publications.

Project on Women and Disability Update is a bimonthly newsletter of the Project on Women and Disability located in Boston, Massachusetts. PWD Update has a circulation of fewer than one thousand and PWD Update does not accept advertising. Its main function is to inform members about the Project's activities. The project recognizes that being a

woman with a disability is qualitatively different from being a man with a disability. Therefore, according to Blank-Edelman, the Project's activities focus on empowering women with disabilities for higher quality and productive lives.

The final example of an Activist/Political publication is Future Reflections. This publication is targeted to parents of blind and visually impaired children. The Future Reflections editor is one of two National Federation of the Blind (NFB) editors who responded to my questionnaire soliciting information about publications about people with disabilities. NFB is an organization run by and for blind people; it includes educational, technological, employment, and advocacy functions. NFB has affiliates throughout the United States. Future Reflections is a quarterly magazine and has the largest circulation of any of the publications in this category (10,001-15,000). Barbara Cheadle, the editor, strongly viewed the publication as an educational and advocacy tool for parents of blind children.

BC We draw our inspiration,  
information and philosophy from the

blind movement--not from agencies or  
the professionals. This is unique  
among parent organizations.

NFB activism in the 1960s and 1970s is what she is  
calling "the blind movement". Cheadle did not  
perceive this publication to be a mere mainstreaming  
or how to "fix" your child tool, but instead she  
viewed it as a publication to encourage parents to  
expect the most for and from their blind and visually  
impaired children--and in that sense--Future  
Reflections is challenging society's attitudes by  
shaping parents' attitudes and expectations.

## Model II

### Assimilationist/Mainstreaming Publications

Publications in this model meet one or more of the following criteria: (a) editors' questionnaire and/or interview responses indicated a desire to train (for employment) and market people with disabilities; (b) these editors primarily target non-disabled audiences; (c) editors may or may not acknowledge diversity issues, a disability rights movement, and/or a disability community but are unlikely to perceive their publications as connected to these concepts.

The Arc and the Dove  
The Forum  
In the Mainstream  
UCP Progress

### Assimilationist/Mainstreaming Publications

Again, In the Mainstream, UCP Progress, The Forum, and The Arc and The Dove are examples of the Assimilationist/Mainstreaming model. Each of these publications is, in some way, oriented toward communicating the abilities and acceptability of people with disabilities to the non-disabled public.

UCP Progress is a quarterly publication with a

circulation of 20,001-25,000. The publication is owned by United Cerebral Palsy, an organization which provides "programs to children and adults with disabilities." Most of UCP Progress' audience members are parents, spouses/partners, educators, legislators, and donors. Amy Dreyer is the editor of the publication and Communications Coordinator for United Cerebral Palsy (UCP). She described UCP Progress as greatly interested in conferences and legislation that provide education and support for clients.

AD It's usually a combination of things. ...We usually try and do some kind of client profile talking about the successes that folks in our program are achieving and [UCP Progress] also usually deals with some legislative issues....and there's usually articles, kind of fyi things, about services available in the community that people might not know about or books or different kinds of conferences--those kinds of things and that would be of interest

to our readers as well as editorials.

Dreyer's description focuses on the service oriented goals and clients served by this organization. This is an example of the "we are people too" emphasis mentioned above. There is nothing in this editor's description that gives an indication of a wish to challenge society or to be viewed as political or activist by her audience. UCP Progress does not accept advertisements, however, one should not lose sight of the fact that this publication was used until recently as a fund raising tool by United Cerebral Palsy. As a fund raising organ, the editor geared the content to current and prospective donors.

In the Mainstream, edited by Fritz Rumpel, is another example of this genre of disability publications. The editor described his relationship and his organization's relationship to the disability rights movement in the long interview. Rumpel advocated giving people with disabilities jobs so they can be tax payers, he outlined society's self interest in including people with disabilities rather than excluding them. He strongly feels that employing

people with disabilities benefits everybody. Rumpel does not perceive himself, his organization, or publication to be activist or political. In fact, he labels himself a "raging pragmatist" (In the Mainstream Interview, 12/94).

LSR Are you personally part of the disability rights movement?

FR No. I consider myself an observer. I personally was a strong opponent for the .....rights amendment. It goes back to people, society should have a self-interest in any exclusion; the costs are much higher much higher billions of dollars toward the deficit keeping people out of work.....  
.....let's give them jobs so they can pay taxes like the rest of us rather than.....so I call myself a raging pragmatist because I think society... everybody benefits...Mainstream, Inc. is not a lobbying organization. ...



those that know us realize we are  
more we're not big on rhetoric we're  
big on trying to solve problems....

Mainstream, Incorporated provides conferences, and in-house training for people with disabilities. Mainstream, Inc's, and therefore Rumpel's, *raison d'etre*, is to develop and enhance employment options for people with disabilities; his publication reports on the success of those efforts. Therefore, In the Mainstream is, as the title indicates, an Assimilationist / Mainstreaming publication, published bimonthly, and circulating to between one thousand one and three thousand individuals or organizations.

The Arc and The Dove is the publication for The Association for Retarded Citizens (ARC) of Maryland, Incorporated. This quarterly publication discusses mental retardation and developmental disabilities for parents, spouses/partners, educators, state agencies, providers, and other non-disabled members of the community. The Arc and The Dove circulates to between five thousand one and seven thousand recipients.

Luciene Pisa, assistant director of The Arc of Maryland and editor of The Arc and The Dove, described

the publication's foremost emphasis on families of people with mental retardation.

LP We feature articles about things going on in state that affect people with mental retardation and their families, ... sometimes feature local stories about you know what's happening to our families... we do stories about our volunteers.

This focus is much more public relations, mainstreaming oriented than activist or political. Public relations in this context means keeping parents, families, and others associated with the persons with retardation happy. The newsletter also a way of keeping constituents, who financially support the organization's programs and activities for persons with mental retardation or developmental disabilities, informed about ARC activities.

The Forum, edited by Eric Ries, is the final example of the Assimilationist/Mainstreaming type of publication. The Forum is published ten times a year and has a circulation between seven thousand one and 10,000. It, is, in similar fashion to each

publication in this category, published by an organization. Specifically, The Forum is the voice of Goodwill Incorporated, a national or state organization serving people with disabilities. As this portion of the interview with Ries shows, a typical issue contains information about Goodwill Industries programs, for example, in this case the desire to inform readers about the information highway.

ER ...the November [1994] issue had several articles pertaining to the information super highway and people with disabilities and, for instance, one of my colleagues was able to find something on the internet from a university professor who works in this area at the Rochester Institute of Technology. We had an article that he had written about using computers for educational purposes for people with disabilities. And there were several other articles in that

grouping along the same lines: one from our Management Information Systems Director here at Goodwill. There were a couple of other articles about programs that are going on in various Goodwills in this area. Other than the groupings we do various things. There's usually at least a few articles from the [sic] particular Goodwill--we're a membership organization of 183 Goodwill organizations across North America--and we'll have articles by some of those organizations about programs that they're involved in.

Given their popularity on radio talk shows and in mainstream newspapers and magazines, the internet and information super highway articles are among the most mainstream topics any media can focus on. Ries also commented on how Forum articles were geared toward featuring board members and keeping them interested in the organization. Providing up-to-date information on technology and involving affiliate organizations, and

including their board of directors) are significant functions for a publication desiring to be part of the mainstream and seeking to represent its constituents as members of the larger business society.

Each of the editors of the aforementioned publications were asked during the long interview, "if they believe there is a disability rights movement in the United States" and "if there is a disability community in the United States." Their definitions and senses of these concepts varied somewhat and provided insight about their orientation to disability. As noted in Chapter I of this dissertation, there are at least 43 million people in the United States with one or more disabilities. Some members of this group consider themselves to be part of a community of people with disabilities, while others view themselves as individuals who just happen to have one or more disabilities (Barnartt, 1995). Community oriented people with disabilities (e.g. Barrett Shaw, editor of Disability Rag) tend to have more activist and political orientations while persons with the latter orientation, i.e. "just happen to have a disability" are less likely to talk about a

disability community and/or movement or to perceive themselves as having some role in it.

In general, editors of Activist/Political magazines were more aware of a disability movement and/or disability community than editors in the Assimilationist/Mainstreaming genre were. There were, however, exceptions. The following were responses given by editors and publications earlier described as Activist/Political.

BS There is the beginnings [sic] of a disability community. And I think we're at a turning point and people with disabilities becoming aware of themselves as a community (Disability Rag).

BC I believe there is a disability movement that is different from the disability community and even as I say that it I believe there are many deaf persons who insist that there is a deaf community--a deaf culture. This is not true for the blind. We have a blindness movement. This is

different. The problem with the question is that it lumps all disability groups together. Each disability group has unique problems, needs, and concerns but that is not the same as a disability community... (Future Reflections).

CBE Well I would say that the disability rights movement like any other movement for social change is one that [is] based around empowering people that are victims of the oppression to fight to change their own lives and to eliminate that oppression in our society. So I would compare it to the feminist movement and the Civil Rights movement but instead of being for women or for people of color, it's for people with disabilities who also can be women or people of color (PWD Update).

NK The deaf has [sic] always made efforts for our rights ever since the President, sorry the Deaf President Now event six years ago. OK to be more specific last year we got the Governor to sign a bill for the installation of ttys [teletype machines] in shopping malls and we were successful in defeating an attempt in the State Legislative [sic] to pass a bill restricting English as the only language to be taught in Maryland Schools which means ASL will continue to be taught. Does this help (MDAD News)?

The editors and publications characterized as being in the Model I, Assimilationist/Mainstreaming category had a variety of responses to the questions about the existence of a disability rights movement and disability community. There was a greater tendency among editors in this group to doubt the validity of or necessity of a disability community and/or disability movement. Rumpel was a slight



exception to this because he believed a disability rights movement exists.

FR Yes....there are numerous publications and disability organizations advocating for the rights of people with those disabilities (In the Mainstream).

However, Rumpel was less sure that a united disability community exists.

FR There are many communities;...true for some disabilities more than others, definitely there's a deaf community/culture... around Gallaudet...[however] I don't see a lot of people with disabilities interacting with you know other people with other disabilities.

Dreyer, editor of UCP Progress hesitated quite a bit after being asked if she thought there was a disability community. She finally responded with, "what exactly do you mean by disability community?" She acknowledged a need for united efforts on

legislative and advocacy issues by people with disabilities along with hopes that people with disabilities would feel more in common with the larger community than with each other.

AD I think that people look for commonality and so, I think that because they have this thing, their disability or their whatever in common, that they do tend to work together on issues. You know we talked about legislative issues and advocacy kinds of things but I guess what I would hope is that they would just be part of some community--not the disability community

Ries challenged the notion that a united movement exists.

ER I don't perceive there as being a unified one.[sic] I'm sure there are groups that advocate for greater expression and for greater rights for one group or another but I don't really sense the kind of unity that

question would suggest where you have one group. I think you tend to have a lot of different groups and there are some groups like the President's Committee and groups that I think try to forward the cause of people with disabilities but I don't know they tend to be groups that have a very loud voice (The Forum).

Pisa recognized some possibility of a movement but clearly placed her publication and the organization she works for outside of it.

LP We try to take a lot of the ideas that are in the disability rights movement. The ARC is a very mainstream organization so that we try to play with getting a message out to every one but it's generally a more mainstream [one]. I've seen groups like ADAPT, which is another national group who in my estimation are more radical than the ARC. We

try to reach a broader audience so it's not that they don't have their use but we're a little less radical than they are but we try to get their ideas out in a way everyone can hopefully agree with (Arc and the Dove).

After these responses, my questioning of Pisa switched to editors' perceptions of the disability community. She admitted that she hoped there was not a disability community.

LP I don't, it's hard to say in some ways, I hope not. I hope people are being accepted for who they are and not having to form a community in a way that's different from an affiliation in a club or a group or people who understand them. I really don't know how to answer that.

Angela Melledy, editor of Able News, discerned some potential for a disability movement and community but did not view either as a reality. She mentioned

observing something of a disability movement when visiting Washington, DC the previous summer, but pointed out that people with disabilities did not vote as a block, did not always get along, and often did not interact with people with different disabilities. For her, these were prerequisites for a movement and/or community.

### Model III

#### Special Interest Publications

The publication in this model met one or more of the following criteria: (a) the editor describes the primary purpose of the publication as serving a specific interest or need, e.g. golfing for people with amputated limbs; (b) the disability factor is described as incidental; (c) likely to accept advertisements related to the special interest category, i.e. golfing, travel, dating.

The National Amputee Golfer

#### Special Interest Publications

Bob Wilson is editor of The National Amputee Golfer, a sports publication that represents Model III, Special Interest publications. Wilson was randomly selected to participate in the long interviews for this dissertation. While editors of other Model III publications were not randomly selected to participate in the long interviews but the

names and/or short descriptions of several publications in the study, {e.g. Sports 'n Spokes, Wheelchair Sports, USABA (United States Association of Blind Athletes) Newsletter, Kaleidoscope (an international magazine of literature, fine arts, and disability), AAAD Deaf Sports Review, SATH News (travelling information for people with disabilities), PeopleNet (introduction newsletter for singles with disabilities), and Handicapped Sport Report}, indicate there are other special interest disability publications in the sample.

The National Amputee Golfer is published once a year and sent to between seven thousand one and 10,000 addresses. It is the publication of the National Amputee Golf Association. As evident from its title, the publication is written for amputees and others who are interested in golfing for amputees.

The interview with Wilson led to the conclusion that he is man who enjoys life, wishes others to enjoy life, and that he thinks it is unproductive to pay too much attention to disability. Wilson has a bi-lateral below the knee amputation. Asked if he perceives that there is a disability rights movement in the

United States, Wilson seemed to equate a disability rights movement with people making a fuss:

BW Well, I don't know I think that there are disabled people that have an axe to grind, okay?...for whatever reason, I think a lot of it is hot air...from the standpoint that if you want to do it you can do it. There are hurdles out there for every one.

This, and other comments by Wilson, demonstrated that the purpose of this magazine was to publicize golfing activities for people who happen to be amputees, not to advocate for accommodations because of the disability. Asked to describe the types of articles, editorials, and features in the National Amputee Golfer, Wilson said that his magazine contained features about golf tournaments, championships, and occasionally about prosthetics that would help amputees adapt better.

BW Basically the articles are compiled over a year's time and the magazine is an annual one. The main



articles are the national championships, the national senior championships. We have an ongoing article of technical updates where we invite professionals from their fields in the industry to write about various or on various topics that may be necessary information to the consumer about prosthetics, aid analysis, emphasize [sic] along those lines and the other stories hopefully are about individuals or groups and we hope that they will motivate and uplift the amputee that there is life after [the amputation].

His perspective is close to the traditional/ medical/ pathological model since it focused on rehabilitative aids that the person with amputation(s) can use to enjoy golfing and life. This is surprising in light of the fact that Wilson, as well as the other editors interviewed, believed he had a more progressive view than mainstream media about amputees. As stated

earlier, one of the criticisms of mainstream media and older perspectives of disability was that they focused too much on trying to "fix" the persons with disabilities. Wilson seemed to be emphasizing the same themes.

#### Perceptions of Diversity

Another way in which editors of disability publications differ is in their perceptions of the concept of diversity in American society. Diversity is a concept discussed broadly in mainstream American society, via talk shows, print media, and educational efforts to name a few examples. Diversity is also used occasionally to explain how and why mainstream organizations should be inclusive of people with disabilities. It therefore seemed crucial to allow the editors of disability publications to weigh in on the topic of diversity while the researcher had their attention.

Responding to the researcher's basic question, "Have you felt it necessary to demonstrate racial and ethnic and gender diversity and other types of diversity within the [publication name]?" editors gave responses that were literally all over the map. Most

often, however, editors in the Model I, Activist/Political group showed some understanding of the term "diversity" and its various meanings in U.S. society. On the other hand, editors in Model II, Assimilationist/Mainstreaming publications were reluctant to or unable to discuss diversity in its varied nuances. Barrett Shaw, Disability Rag mentioned racial/ethnic diversity, sex/gender diversity, sexual orientation, as well as diversity of thought and perspective.

BS Yes we've had lots of black writers. I'm not sure how far back over the years, but I know we've had black writers we've had gay [writers] one of our regular writers is... Yeah, quite a few of our writers are very outspoken. I'm an outspoken feminist, but we have a lot of men writers too, you know, a broad diversity of outlooks and views is what we've always wanted to be about. I think people read the Rag long enough they see what our, I

don't want to say bias, but where we're coming from. Plus we also have a lot of divergent voices. For instance in this prison issue, we had a story on this abuse in the New York prisons. We had a story about a blind black prisoner in a California prison and how he was being deprived of various rights and then we had this story about a warden in a women's prison in Ohio writing about how the treatment of prisoners with disabilities can be improved by sensitizing staff to their needs and wants. And it was so, you know, rose colored glasses filled with professional optimism and 'oh we try so hard and we're being so' kind of thing...compared to these awful just horrifying abuses entailed in these other stories and some people said, 'well why are you putting that in there?'

I want people to see the whole spectrum of where people are coming from about this. They have to deal with those people in a lot of situations (Disability Rag).

Shaw's response represented a civil rights orientation to disability and a broader awareness of social movements than those of her counterparts at other publications.

Barbara Cheadle, Future Reflections editor, had a more laissez faire but accepting attitude toward the various nuances of diversity and its implications for a publication such as hers, as evidenced by the following remarks about diversity including references to degrees of visual impairment, political perspectives, ages, race/ethnicity and other dynamics.

BC Well actually it follows the policies of the NFB and The Braille Monitor. Future Reflections tries to reach all ... we address children of all ages and all ranges of visual loss and blind, multiple handicapped children... in terms of other types,

racial, ethnic that naturally occurred because we address the needs of all blind persons. We make no distinctions about this. Our leaders and members naturally reflect this diversity ... atheists and ministers, pro-choice and pro-life... more diverse than even our church.

In connection with diversity, the researcher referred to a previous comment Dreyer, UCP Progress editor by referring to her earlier comment about people with disabilities belonging to more than one community not just the disability community. The editor responded by reiterating UCP's role as a facilitator for connecting people with cerebral palsy to all of their communities.

AD I think one of the goals of our whole agency is to help I don't know if help is the right [word]...[it] is to encourage people to belong to all of their communities and so I think that's true in everything we

say. So yeah, I think that's true we use the newsletter to encourage people and to empower people to be part of the whole community (UCP Progress).

After Blank-Edelman understood that I wanted her to define diversity in the context of her publication, she provided information about PWD Update's efforts to reach broader constituencies among women. She mentioned race/ethnicity, social class, and sexual orientation.

CBE Oh, okay yes definitely have felt and continue to feel the need to reach out to different constituencies within the disabled women's community. And like the disability rights movement in general and the feminist movement in general the disabled women's movement is still primarily dominated by white middle class or previously middle class women and it's very difficult to change that.

Part of the way we try to do that is by having articles which are written by and for women of color for example and women of different social class levels. We have a lot of diversity in our organization in terms of sexual orientation so probably its about half and half in terms of people that write for our publications that are lesbian and people who are straight people [or] who are bisexual so that we haven't had to do that much work on. But in terms of racial and ethnic diversity that is a constant challenge that we are constantly working on and starting to have some success but its a long slow process and it involves addressing issues of racism within the community and within the feminist community and within the disability community and that's a very hard thing to do so



but we do consider it to be part of  
our mission to do that (PWD Update).

The following three transcript excerpts provide more examples of these varied responses. These excerpts also provide some insight into some of the strengths of the long interview methodology. In most cases, the researcher obtained useful information by encouraging editors to define "diversity" and some of the other terms used in the interview. Sometimes, though, editors gave short, unarticulate responses.

AM No ....don't really feel that  
demonstrating diversity is necessary  
(Able News).

TT We try. And once again it  
always doesn't ring true, not  
because we don't want authors. It's  
that we can't find them and once  
again I think networking is so  
important to any kind of community  
(The Progressive).

Ries stressed the efforts that The Forum makes to  
demonstrate diversity in its photographs.

ER ...we have a particular interest in depicting that in our visuals because statistically Goodwill does serve a population that really is across the spectrum and includes people of all races of both genders and like when we're soliciting photographs or shooting them ourselves we try to do our best to bear that out in the visuals which are the thing that people are going to notice first when they open up the magazine. We are serving a population that involves people who are Black, people who are Hispanic, people who are White, men, women, and we try to reflect that in our photographs and in our stories and in the copy as much as possible even though obviously in the copy we're not going out of our way to identify people as Black or White when it's

not germane to the story (The Forum).

Fritz Rumpel's answer provided another example of this type of response. Rumpel gave a one sentence response and made no attempt to elaborate or seek more information from the interviewer.

FR Well, I haven't addressed that [diversity] (In the Mainstream).

Therefore it appears that there is a tendency for the Model I, activist/political publications to have editors who were more vocal about diversity in American society. In contrast, the editors of the Model II, assimilationist/mainstreaming publications either did not provide answers or saw diversity in very different terms than the other editors.

Frankenberg (1993) discussed three paradigms of diversity that will help expound upon these editors' responses to questions about diversity. Her paradigms were discussed in connection to race/ethnicity in the United States. However, it is possible to make a comparable or have a parallel discussion about disability. It was discussed in Chapter I how race, gender, and disability are often discussed and viewed

in similar terms. Frankenberg's paradigms are: essentialist, evasiveness, and cognizance. The essentialist approach to difference focuses on and claims as most crucial the biological factors linked to the difference; the evasive approach to difference ignores difference and fundamentally assumes that every one has the same life chances and opportunities in American society; the cognizant approach notices difference, claims it is important and inherently good. This approach also outlines the aspects of society that serve to privilege some people and limit others based on difference (pp. 14-15).

Rumpel's and Melledey's responses, though not detailed enough to provide unrefutable examples, might fall into the "evasive" approach to difference. Following is an example that makes the "evasive approach" to race or difference in American society clearer. The evasive view of social life assumes that discrimination based on race/ethnicity (or other types of difference) is non-existent in present day America and that it is never all right to call attention to differences in experiences and perceptions based on race/ethnicity or other types of difference (pp. 14-

15). Editors operating in this paradigm would tend to ignore, downplay or deem unimportant diversity issues, e.g. race, class, gender, sexual orientation, etc. in their publications.

Wilson, National Amputee Golfer editor had a completely different concept of diversity than some others as evidenced by his question asking me if I meant different types of amputees.

BW What do you mean? Like  
wheelchair paralysis, versus  
ambulatory amputees?

I had to prompt Wilson to discuss any other type of diversity. He shrugged off my question by saying all he was concerned about was that his golfing participants and readers were amputees.

BW We basically say if you're  
amputee you're an amputee. It  
doesn't matter race, creed, color,  
type A, issue, or whatever you  
are... men and women play together.  
We recognize women as a separate  
entity from the standpoint of  
competition, Ladies Division. If we

can get the ladies off their sofas to come on out we will probably have a Ladies Championship and so forth, we had an Open. I don't know what the women are going to think about it. We are going to have just men like the [not audible] and for Juniors which are under the age of eighteen they have to be a member paid member but they don't have to pay the ..... and that's about the only differential... We have a Seniors Championship for any body that's over fifty. Then we break that down to Seniors, Super Seniors, and Super Super Seniors, that's 50-60; 60-70; and 70 and up.

A close reading of Wilson's comments above suggests that while he wanted to operate in a color blind or race neutral manner, he was extremely aware of gender and age differences. His examples of the division of tournaments suggested he held an uncritical and unproblematized view of "inherent"

competitive differences between men and women, and between groups of differing ages. His views of gender and age seemed to be more "essentialist".

The next transcript excerpt represents a fairly common response among people intricately involved with disability. Often, they only view diversity in terms of its immediate implications for disability, i.e. diversity in degree, scope, and type of disability. Other types of diversity do not immediately enter the equation for the editors with this view of diversity.

LP Yes and no. I mean within certain guidelines we do. I mean we don't appeal to people who don't believe in inclusion. For example, I mean that's where we draw our line in the sand, but we do try to have a diversity of people contributing to it, although it's mostly people who work for our state ARC and then we have contributors, but we try to appeal to young parents, to older people who are transitioning from school to work. You know, we've had

articles about is disability a minority ethnicity, whatever, how it's different for how the experience is sometimes different for people from a different ethnic group (The Arc and the Dove).

The final diversity transcript example came from the researcher's tty conversation with Nancy Kensicki, editor of the Maryland Association of the Deaf News. She has been exposed to and felt comfortable mentioning diversity within deafness and sex/gender and racial/ethnic diversity.

NK If you mean diversity to include deaf/hard of hearing black/white female/male yes after all we re answering to all readers of MDAD News.

The varied responses to the questions about diversity seen among the editors quoted here, are not different from the ways in which Americans deal with gender, racial/ethnic, and other diversities in our general society. America has always been a diverse country. It has been, however a relatively a recent phenomenon



for mainstream American media to reflect this diversity. It seemed to important to learn how these editors who operate in specialized communication environments (publications for people with disabilities) perceive and negotiate diversity issues.

Wilson, Rumpel and Melledy seem to be operating in an evasive paradigm when answering questions about diversity. This paradigm/approach is the one that produces color blindness or the tendency to ignore difference. Persons operating in this paradigm often believe they are more fair and accepting of difference than people who make difference explicit. However, being cognizant of difference (e.g. disability, race/ethnicity, age, sexual orientation) can allow an individual or an institution to focus on the meaning of difference in particular contexts and make attempts to address policies and procedures that have discriminated against others. Frankenberg contends that color blind/race neutral or evasive approaches to difference maintain the status quo as effectively as blatant discrimination does. Frankenberg's conclusion seems to be borne out in this study analyzing

perceptions of disability publication editors about diversity. Specifically (as noted in Chapter IV), the staff of the 56 publications in this study is not very diverse. This will be discussed in more detail in the Conclusion chapter of the dissertation.

The current chapter expounded upon the three models of disability publications that were developed as a result of analyses of disability publication editors' perceptions about their goals, "diversity", "disability community", and "the disability movement". The following chapter will outline the information gleaned during the interviews about content in the disability publications.

Chapter VI Editors' Perceptions of Disability  
Publication Content and Mainstream Coverage Content

## Perceptions of Content

This chapter will explore the editors' perceptions about the content and informational portion of their publications. Though this is a general descriptive study rather than a detailed content analysis, it was important to ascertain the editors' perceptions about the content of their publications. This information was gathered during the long interview. The researcher asked each of the 12 editors participating in the long interviews the following content related questions: "what type of articles, stories, and editorials have you had in the last few issues of [publication name]?"; "how do those topics compare or differ from what has been published before?"; "Did or does [name of publication] carry anything about the passage of ADA in 1990?"; and "have you carried anything about ADA since?". The editors' responses to these questions vary: however, they do reinforce the models or categories of disability coverage introduced in the previous chapter. As stated earlier, all of the editors viewed their publications as progressive. Activist/Political publications devoted a great deal of space to activist

and political topics and angles. Assimilationist/mainstreaming publications represented persons with disabilities as employable, willing, and acceptable citizens either enjoying or seeking opportunities to contribute to the larger society. The Special Interest publication in this study focused articles and content on the special interest in question--golfing--and steered clear of being explicitly involved with a mainstreaming or activist agenda.

Barret Shaw's (editor of the Disability Rag and Resource) responses offered support for the Model I, Activist/Political category with which the researcher has associated this publication. She told the researcher that the Rag utilized themes to determine content and chose themes that were relevant, current, and would encourage activism. Some of the themes she listed were euthanasia, prison, and the Oregon law [sic]. It is not clear from the interview what Shaw meant by the "Oregon Law". (The researcher speculates that Shaw might have actually been referring to the 1992 Anti-Homosexual Rights Law passed in Colorado. That law thwarted attempts by the Gay/Lesbian

community to seek civil rights protection based on sexual orientation. It is being challenged in the courts.)

BS We've had like a major theme for each issue and several four or five main articles that are around the main theme. I don't know, there are some other articles and regular columns and some of the themes for the recent issues the current issue which is actually the January/February 1995, one is on euthanasia-assisted suicide that whole thing that's going on now, the Oregon Law, the Kivorkian law, on health care rationing and all these ways people with disabilities can sometimes get dead whether they want to or not....The last issue oh, in addition there are some other articles. There are some on multiple chemical sensitivity then there's some more in the area of

disability culture. We have a regular column we started this year on disability culture and this issue reviewed video documentary by people with disabilities and the last issue was on abuse in prisons and in the criminal justice system of people with disability, that was the main topic of that issue..

LSR Okay, how do those topics compare or differ from what has been published before 1994?

BS Well, the earlier issues from the beginning when Mary Johnson was editor, she was editor all the way through the first fourteen years since her original interest was housing, access, barrier, architectural barriers and so on. There was a lot of concern over the first several years on those issues that were very important for people getting visible and getting

involved, people needing to get integrated into their community so there was a lot on access, a lot on transportation there was some on employment there was also a main theme. Always throughout the Rag has been the depiction of people with disabilities in the media.

Barbara Cheadle, editor of Future Reflections, also exemplified the Activist/Political model when she responded to the researcher's questions about general magazine content and stories on the ADA. Cheadle outlined topics such as personal experiences, legislation, and public accommodations.

BC Our goal is to provide information about personal experiences of blind adults, blind youth, and parents of blind children; technology information, legislation impacting blind children, new resources, discrimination case and its resolution, education and



information, i.e. "making whole language work"...The White Cane Legislation that the NFB passed in the states in the 1960s and 70s. This provided blind persons the right to public accommodations-- including transportation, restaurants, etc. Pre-dates ADA.

She explained the activism NFB demonstrated on legislative issues, transportation issues, and issues helping the public to make distinctions between disabilities. Cheadle shared an example of how NFB helped to secure an amendment to ADA legislation that would allow a person with a disability the option to refuse an accessible room in a hotel, for instance. As a blind individual she would not necessarily need a room that has wheelchair accessibility.

Cindy Blank-Edelman combined her responses about content for PWD Update with what she knew about WILDA. Her answers reflect the Activist/Political orientation of both publications and the organization which houses the publications. Fritz Rumpel, editor of In the Mainstream, responded very specifically to questions

about content. Again, Rumpel offered no pretense of having a political or activist agenda. Rumpel said he wrote about employment issues because his goal is to facilitate the mainstreaming of people with disabilities into the larger employment sector of society.

FR Our scope is employment issues of people with disabilities; analysis of Legislative History, survey of EEOC guidelines...

LSR Are these articles and stories different from what is typically covered in In the Mainstream?

FR We have done information regarding employing people with specific disabilities for example, lupus... we've done accessibility technology and some success stories.

LSR Did In the Mainstream carry anything about the passage of the American Disabilities Act in 1990?

FR Yes we were one of the first to follow the issue.

LSR Have you carried any thing about ADA or other related issues since?

FR We carried something in the mid 1980s when it was first recommended...

While running stories on legislative issues might technically be viewed as a political activity, Rumpel did not appear to have the activist or advocacy orientation that Model I publication editors did.

UCP Progress, another example of the Model II, Assimilationist/Mainstreaming category of disability publications focused on client profiles and boosting the organization, UCP. Amy Dreyer, however also said she believed UCP Progress' client profiles, coverage of legislative issues and services available to people with disabilities is superior to mainstream media coverage because it is their primary focus.

AD Well I think that's [writing about disability is] our whole world, you know is interrelated so that any one that you see in our publication has a tie to our

organization, has an interest and has some level of knowledge. Therefore it's a whole different audience that we've targeted and that's receiving that information....

We write about issues that affect those people [people with cerebral palsy] and their families and issues that if are covered at all, are buried on a back page somewhere. I think we tend to bring those to the forefront.

Dreyer continued by explaining that the Executive Director has a regular column in the newsletter, that it features volunteers, and that the newsletter only recently stopped focusing on raising funds for the ARC. "UCP Progress", Dreyer said, "is more client and family oriented."

Goodwill, Incorporated was also described earlier as an example of a Model II, Assimilationist/Mainstreaming oriented organization. Eric Ries

described the content of The Forum as thematic, timely and relevant.

ER Well let's see in the last few issues, what we try to do is to have some sort of cover theme or grouping of stories in each issue that will follow one particular topic, and like for instance, the November issue had several articles pertaining to the information super highway and people with disabilities and for instance one of my colleagues was able to find something on the internet from a university professor who works in this area at the Rochester Institute of Technology we had an article that he had written about using computers for educational purposes for people with disabilities.

When asked about ADA coverage in The Forum, Ries commented that ADA is a subject that The Forum returned to periodically.

ER Yes, I was not here then, but there have been periodic stories about the ADA and as a matter of fact Goodwill out of the national office here one of the annual awards which I believe is going to be phased out after a period maybe after next year I think after five years have passed-but we have been annually presenting an ADA Excellence in Implementation Award to Goodwill Organizations that have best gotten the word out about the ADA in their community and kind of subsequently followed up with a magazine article about how they went about doing that so and there were earlier, you know, closer to the time ADA was actually passed there were informational articles about what that was all about and so on.

The Arc and The Dove published by the ARC of Maryland is also a Model II, Assimilationist/

Mainstreaming publication. The content of the publication, as described by editor Lucienne Pisa, reflects this genre. The articles featured state conferences, grants, and federal legislation.

LP We feature ... stories about best practices, conferences that are coming up innovative grants or other things that parents might be interested in, stories about federal legislation or happenings on the federal scene or interesting things that are happening in other states that parents in Maryland might be interested in, sometimes feature local stories, volunteer projects,

Pisa stressed her interest in parents/families several times throughout the long interview. This tendency to focus on others (e.g. employers, Board members, families) is prominent among the Assimilationist/Mainstreaming publications. The coverage on the ADA was also slanted toward families. This tendency (and target audience information from the questionnaire) suggests that because of the nature

of retardation, the editor expects her readership to be comprised more heavily of family members than of people with retardation.

LP Sure, I think we did you know an overall look at the law and what it entailed and what it meant for employers, and for people with disabilities, work place and public accommodations, uh, etcetera and then I think we had some local some stories on how it would affect local people you know the ability to get a job or you know or barrier free work place or day care centers that type of thing.

When giving examples of the featured articles over the years, Nancy Kensicki, MDAD News editor, emphasized the state/local orientation of her publication and its function of serving deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens of Maryland.

NK The overall purpose is always to print concerns and issues that would appeal to deaf Marylanders.



Mostly political because Harvey [Goodstein] who's the current President is very much involved in trying to get bills which would benefit the deaf passed. On the front page it's usually his article titled "Notes from the MDAD President" and the rest more or less captures the tone from article. Other articles are usually from chairs of MDAD committees. For example on the last issue there were reports from the chairs of the Education Committee, the 911 Emergency Committee, and the Youth Committee.

I asked how these topics compared to earlier issues of MDAD News because I wanted to know if the content had undergone any recent transitions. Had it (or any of the other publications) experienced recent transitions in content, this would very likely be a factor in the editors' perceptions of their publications.

Basically, she said, the publication has not undergone significant changes over the years.

NK I have copies of issues dating back to 1981, from what I'm seeing it's definitely political in tone to give you an idea--in the Winter Issue 1983 there is an article about the issue of screening hearing impaired infants bill then going through the State Legislative [sic] and there's another article on election fund raising. No there's not much of a change in approach since that time ...I scanned copies of the Summer/Fall one there's a photocopied letter from the Public Service Commission to the MDAD president discussing the newly enacted ADA and what it can do for us and affirming that there will be a Relay Service in place in every state within two years. ...Off the top of my hat [sic] I don't remember

during my three years as editor ever publishing anything on ADA. I guess it being a national and we were more concerned with State issues would be the answer.

In describing her publication, Able News editor, Angela Melledy, talked about articles covering marathons with Viet Nam veterans and internationally oriented articles. She also stated that Able News received an award from Easter Seal. The award was for Media Coverage with Dignity and Integrity (EDI Award). The award was for a four article series on the ADA.

Melledy had the same critique of mainstream coverage of disability issues as her editor peers.

AM Mainstream coverage better but [there's] always room for improvement. RE: Forrest Gump--[I] expected people to be unhappy about an amputee being played by an able bodied actor. People were not bothered...since actor had to be able bodied for part of the movie.

Angela Melledy posed a counter-scenario to disabled friends and colleagues. It was to have Hollywood use computer graphics to make an actor with a disability "appear" able bodied, but she found out this was basically a non-story with her audience.

Melledy's responses to questions about content and questions about disability community and movement indicated tendencies toward Activist/Political and Assimilationist/Mainstreaming perceptions of disability. Therefore, I could not definitively place Able News in either category. A future study, with the publication models as a starting point, might clarify which category is most appropriate for this publication.

The Progressive was not forced into a Model I, II, or III category either. The reasons for this were slightly different. Teri Terry was not the editor of The Progressive. The editor passed away shortly before the questionnaire was mailed. Since there was no way to compare Terry's perceptions of the publication to those held by the editor, there was no attempt to place this publication in one of the disability representation models either. The

following transcript excerpts were taken from the long interview conducted with Terry in December 1994. She gave her summation of the types of articles one would find in the Progressive. The last two issues were not typical because they emphasized the former editor's death and things associated with his loss. At other times, The Progressive carried human rights issues and contained regular sections, e.g. "no comments", "on the line", and "book reviews", which Terry said readers counted on.

TT Well, in our December issue, well, the last two, have had a large focus on the death of our previous editor Erwin Nowell who was a very well-known-editor around the world.

...We did a round up of the best books and we did a two page reading list for 95. We also have an "on the line" section which is written by people around the United States on just single items of interest. We have our "no comments" section which also the items in that section

are sent to us by people around the United States. Those are little excerpts mostly from other publications that catch a twinkle in our editor's eye--it's kind of like our funnies section our humor section so to speak. ...We do every thing from prison articles to human rights issues. We have a wide spectrum. This has carried over from 1909. This isn't something we've changed as a different editor comes in. It's something we carry on all the time. It is mostly done by free lance authors.

Terry continued to explain some of the philosophy and style of The Progressive.

TT I think that we try to have more first person issues brought forth versus grouping using a group of people. We would rather have it as first person issue by an author, what happened, how it affected them

and our slant is basically political and what happened, what was their experience, how they felt, how they interacted with other people, how other people interacted with them on that particular issue.

Terry expressed great admiration for radical groups, such as ADAPT, and admitted regret that The Progressive was not more involved with the types of political activity for which this organization is noted. Terry contrasted The Progressive by describing it as more focused on general politics rather than disability politics. At the same time, Terry surprised the researcher by using the outdated and offensive phrase "wheelchair bound" when describing her participation on a board serving people with disabilities!

Bob Wilson described the content of the National Amputee Golfer in the following transcript excerpt:

BW Basically the articles are compiled over a year's time and the magazine is an annual one. The main articles are the national

championships, the national senior championships, we have an ongoing article of technical updates where we invite professionals from their fields in the industry to write about various or on various topics that may be necessary information to the consumer about prosthetics, aid analysis, emphasize along those lines and the other stories hopefully are about individuals or groups and we hope that they will motivate and uplift the amputee that there is life after.

The interview turned to queries about ADA coverage and it turned out that The National Amputee Golfer did not consider that part of its mission.

BW Since most of our golfers are ambulatory we do not run into any real specific problems with golf courses or the amenities at a golf course. The couple of people that are in wheelchairs get out of their



chairs and get themselves "up" in order to putt so we really haven't that much problem with ADA enforcement .....

Wilson perceived his magazine and organization as providing a way to network with other golfing organizations--an assimilationist/mainstreaming function.

#### Critique of Mainstream Coverage of People with Disabilities

One pertinent factor that connects the perceptions of the 12 editors interviewed was their responses to "what are your opinions about mainstream coverage (e.g. movies, tv, newspapers, magazines, etc.) about people with disabilities?" The first transcript excerpt which follows was Cindy Blank-Edelman's answer to the question about mainstream coverage, which she thought was awful.

CBE It's pretty abysmal. [laughter]  
I mean I think that people are trying but that the success is very minimal because the people that are writing the articles don't have

education and personal experience with the disability rights movement and with people with disabilities so the articles and the movies and the tv shows to me come from either the "supercrip" stance where you have this person with a disability who triumphs over their disability and becomes this super person that either climbs major mountains or like Forrest Gump overcomes all of his developmental disabilities to do all of these great things but the emphasis is on overcoming your disability not learning to live with it and deal with it and accept it and then alternate proposal is someone who is bitter and mean and unhappy about their disability someone who is completely pitiful and people who end up being very sick and who the messages is their lives are not worth living its so

horrible and I think those are the two extremes that get portrayed and there's not much in between.

(chuckles)

It is clear that Blank-Edelman was unhappy with mainstream coverage of people with disabilities. She shared this disdain of mainstream coverage with all of the editors the researcher interviewed for this study. Shaw discussed the Rag's characteristic critiques of television and film portrayal of people with disabilities.

BS...there was also a main theme always throughout the Rag has been the depiction of people with disabilities in the media. So there's always a whole lot about newspaper coverage about tv coverage about film. I think has probably been the Rag's biggest single influence is the impact it has had which we can see quite dramatically over the fifteen years it has existed on the visibility of people

with disability on tv in advertising but it is still hard to overcome the stereotypes and the way the mainstream press treats it. It's still the pity stories and the hero stories -- not the issue stories.

LSR What do you think is the hurdle that's stopping mainstream media from doing more valid coverage?

BS I think there are several elements, a couple of main ones is [sic]. I think something people don't even think about and I think of it coming more from a writing and journalistic background. Some of it is simple cliché, it's those phrases that trot out automatically without thinking like "wheelchair bound". I mean how many times do you have to say to somebody, how many times do you have to educate reporters people are not bound by wheelchairs people are liberated by wheelchairs.... and

they will still say it its's a phrase that just comes out like one word. Of course, behind a cliché, there's always a mind set and that's the thing that still hasn't really changed.

The "great overcomer" or "supercrip" imagery is still one of the most common targets for complaints by people with disabilities and by these editors. Shaw suggested that there is something happening in the way journalists and writers are trained which influences them to rely on clichés --that are often inaccurate-- when writing stories about someone or something they are unfamiliar with. Shaw also acknowledged however, that there have been some improvements in the relationships between various aspects of media and people with disabilities. Following is her example of one area of improved coverage:

BS...So I think there has been a great improvement. I mean I think probably the fact that people with disabilities have such a presence in advertising even more than say

actual tv shows or something shows  
how much they have  
assimilated....Their existence as a  
potential market even has come home  
to businesses but there's still that  
weird dichotomy in the way they're  
treated when they are written about-  
-it's not their issues that are  
written about it's more how the  
individual fits in.

In the next transcript excerpt, Future Reflections  
editor Barbara Cheadle, joined the chorus of  
complaints about mainstream coverage of people with  
disabilities:

BC Unfortunately there's too much  
human interest stories...good tear  
jerking human interest stories. ...  
Still tendency to see  
institutions/agencies as appropriate  
spokespersons. The blind are still  
not taken seriously as sources of  
hard news.

The comments of Rumpel (In the Mainstream), Dreyer (UCP Progress), Melledy (Able News), Ries (The Forum), Kensicki (MDAD News), and Pisa (The Arc and The Dove) added harmonious tones to the chorus.

FR They [mainstream media] still have a long way to go... addressing the problems we have in society...the stories are particularly heroic or particularly pathetic. I'm particularly concerned with paternalism. I don't see movies, newspapers, or t.v. being leaders, they are more or less reflective.

The researcher asked Rumpel how his publication differed from the media he criticized. The following quotation indicates that Rumpel was a little stumped at first but was able to make some distinctions about the tones and subject matter in his publication, In the Mainstream.

FR We don't...that's a good question...we don't do features we don't run 'feel good' stories.....we

talk about training ....  
accommodations.

Even though Rumpel did not address a need for activism or political involvement on the part of people with disabilities, he did perceive In the Mainstream's coverage of people with disability as superior to coverage in mainstream media, e.g. the Washington Post, Time Magazine, network television, and Hollywood movies. This perception of superior coverage was typical of all of the editors interviewed for this study.

Ries acknowledged some progress on the part of mainstream media but chided them for residual bad habits.

ER Well I think the awareness is improving. I think this is an area in which you have seen some strides being made. I think we're fortunate in this area to have what I think is generally considered to be a pretty good newspaper in the Post and I think perhaps more aware of those issues than perhaps some smaller



papers might be and do their best to get that viewpoint out. There are some things from our standpoint that we would like to see in mainstream newspapers that we don't as far as things like using "people first" language and some sensitivities along that line, you know, the way that we do things when we're writing articles and when we're editing articles we always include "people first" language and that's I can't speak about the Post specifically but I have noticed in many mainstream publications have still that's still not the rule (The Forum).

UCP Progress' Dreyer agreed about the lack in mainstream media.

AD Right. I think it's better than it was (laugh) but I think it still has a long way to go. I think one of the first times somebody with

specifically cerebral palsy really hit the lime light was "My Left Foot", you know that movie? ...because you know it was about a very specific person with a very specific disability and a lot of people viewed him as the exception rather than the rule because he was such an extraordinary man. That certainly brought something I think the ADA has helped a lot because that got a lot of mainstream coverage. You know I think as with a lot of minorities there's not the coverage [it] is always the exception not the rule.

Dreyer compared her coverage of cerebral palsy to mainstream coverage by saying because her organization works with people with cerebral palsy that is their whole world. Cerebral palsy was interrelated in whatever was featured in the publication rather than handled as an exceptional phenomenon.

Pisa, editor of The Arc and The Dove, complained about mainstream coverage also.

LP I guess people are somewhat unfamiliar. I wish reporters would be using the "people first" language because I often see "the retarded" "the autistic" I just cut out a couple of articles from the Post from last week and they don't use that language. But in general people are becoming more sensitive to the right of people to live in a community, to be included in classes, or at least they acknowledge that's the law or the state's priority is to do that. But there's, I guess, sometimes there is almost like a hesitation to accept that. There was just an article in the Post about a man in a group home that was strangled by another man and both of them had mental retardation and it went on and on

about how this man is not going to be able to stand trial because he's probably not going to be found competent. He's probably going to get away with it which I found really offensive because it that wasn't really the issue so much but at the end it did go on there was a paragraph and a half about how violent crime among people with mental retardation is extremely rare and you know so they were trying to allay some of those fears but earlier in the article they were saying this guy is sort of getting unfair treatment because he has mental retardation.

MDAD News editor Kensicki continued the criticisms:

NK My personal opinion is that some movies (to be particular) are flawed on the deaf character, some portray deaf characters who can lipread from miles away, come on.

As for newspapers and magazines, well considering the selection of the New Miss America who's deaf and the coverage of Marlee Matlin--I'd say that they seemed to have been portrayed unrealistically. These two are exceptional and there's no more intensive look at the average deaf.

If one were to use ideas about mainstream coverage of disability as the sole criterion, it would be safe to generalize among this group and say it was an issue all of the editors had similar opinions about. These unified interview responses will be discussed again in the context of media theory.

While a content analysis was not part of this study, it was possible to draw some information about content from the editors involved in the long interviews. The next chapter provides editors' perceptions which indicate similarities and differences to feminist and African American publications.

Chapter VII Comparison of Disability Publications  
to African American and Feminist Publications:  
Theoretical Implications

The information received from the mail survey and subsequent interviews with editors suggests that disability publications are both similar to and different from the feminist and African American publications mentioned in the literature review chapter of this dissertation. Most disability editors in this study did not offer explicit information about how they view themselves in comparison to African American and feminist publications. In spite of this, the researcher was able to discern some patterns of perceptions of disability publications conveyed by the editors' responses and descriptions of their publications.

#### Alternative to Mainstream Coverage

The literature review chapter of this dissertation led to the following generalizations about the African American and feminist press. The African American or Black press in the United States was developed over a period of one and one half centuries. The Black press was initiated by a group of people who were at first disenfranchised because of slavery and later by racist policies and attitudes

which kept them from participating fully in mainstream American life. In a similar fashion, feminist publications developed because groups of activist women became convinced that they could not rely on the mainstream media to accurately present their issues to the public.

In contrast, only one of the 12 editors who were interviewed for this study suggested that her publication was developed out of a sense of discrimination and/or frustration with the mainstream society or mainstream press. Barret Shaw, editor of Disability Rag is the editor referred to here. Cindy Blank-Edelman, editor of PWD Update was aware that PWD Update approached disability differently from mainstream publications but did not explicitly describe the alternate imagery as countering mainstream media. In contrast, Shaw stated that one of the main themes that ran throughout the Rag is challenging the media's depiction of people with disabilities.

BS...there was also a main theme always throughout the Rag has been the depiction of people with



disabilities in the media. So there's always a whole lot about newspaper coverage about tv coverage, about film. I think has probably been the Rag's biggest single influence is the impact it has had-- which we can see quite dramatically over the fifteen years-- it has existed on the visibility of people with disability on tv in advertising but it is still hard to overcome the stereotypes and the way the mainstream press treats it.

Blank-Edelman said that PWD Update discussed disability in terms of oppression.

CBE It's more like we talk about disability in terms of oppression and talk about how we can change society from within ourselves by empowering ourselves and by working with other people so that we can overcome the oppression not the disability.

Although each of the editors interviewed expressed an opinion about mainstream coverage of disability issues, Barret Shaw was the sole editor who connected her perceptions of unfair mainstream coverage to her goals and activities for Disability Rag.

The remaining editors discussed other reasons for the existence of their publications. For example, most described their publications as sources of information and news about their organizations and/or activities. Barbara Cheadle, Future Reflections editor, highlighted several categories of information during our interview. As pointed out earlier, Cheadle said that the various experiences of blind people and their families and information about education, technology and legislation were important aspects of this publication.

The National Amputee Golfer and Mainstream editors published their magazine and newsletter respectively to inform their target audiences about golfing activities and employment and hiring activities. Fritz Rumpel put it succinctly,

FR Our scope is employment issues  
of people with disabilities;

analysis of Legislative History,  
survey of EEOC guidelines...

Nancy Kensicki, editor of the MDAD News admitted the need for the association (Maryland Association for the Deaf) to lobby on behalf of all deaf and hard-of-hearing citizens in Maryland. However, there was no mention of any attempts as an editor to influence mainstream coverage of deaf and hard-of-hearing people.

In contrast, publications such as Freedom's Journal made critiquing and challenging mainstream coverage of African American people and issues a major focus of their content. Even a contemporary newspaper such as the Afro-American sees itself as providing alternative perspectives on issues that concern African Americans. For example, during election campaigns, the Afro-American devotes a great deal of space urging readers to vote and telling them how candidates stand on issues disproportionately affecting members of the African American community (e.g. inner city crime, homelessness, affirmative action, etc.).

### Target Audiences

The editors responding to the mail survey indicated that their target audiences consisted as much of legislators, other professionals, parents, partners, and other persons living with disabilities as of people with disabilities themselves. One might correctly assume that persons from other groups read feminist and African American publications, however, the target audiences were precisely women and Blacks respectively. This factor distinguishes disability related publications from African American and feminist publications.

Referring again to Chapter II, the researcher stated: The audiences for these [early feminist] publications were also primarily women interested in voting rights for women, as well as other issues related to improving the quality of life for women. Feminist publications were and are crucial to the women's movement in this country. Similarly, in Chapter II the researcher noted that some of the issues that members of the Black race had to contend with during the pre-Civil War period were varying levels of education, economics, and social standing

among free Blacks. Race cohesiveness and improving lifestyles in the North may have been as important for early Black journalists as the abolition of slavery; thus free Blacks were the primary audience for the early Black press.

While the feminist and African American publications targeted activist women and literate members of the African American population, the disability related publications in this study do not primarily focus on a target audience of people with disabilities. This fact has implications for content, tone, and style of the publications. The life experiences of people with disabilities may not be reflected as accurately in a publication reaching out to people without disability as it might be if there were no concern for the non-disabled audience members' sensibilities. For example Carol Gill, contributor to the Disability Rag, assumed that being non-disabled has an affect on how much one can empathize with someone with a disability.

Nondisabled people, no matter how much they love us do not know the inside experience of being disabled.

Moreover they are in a position to escape the stigma. They can leave our sides and go out among strangers as 'normal people,' if only for a few minutes of peaceful anonymity." ("The Disability Continuum" in The Ragged Edge, p. 47)

If one accepts that persons within any group have some experiences that differ from persons outside the group, then it is not a great leap to believe that publications targeted to able-bodied persons affiliated with people with disabilities would be qualitatively different from those addressing people with disabilities first and foremost. This explains why some of the publications examined in this study are assimilationist rather than activist in tone. "Let's all get along" is a much more likely theme when addressing members of different groups than it is when communicating among one's own group and when advocating change in the society.

#### Staff Demographics

Along the same lines, the disability publications in this study did not make a claim that most of their

staff were people with disabilities. This factor also makes disability publications dissimilar to feminist and African American publications. Very often mainstream women's magazines are owned by men and some African American/Black publications are owned by members of other racial groups. However, these phenomena would disqualify those publications from most of the scholarly study referred to in this dissertation. One of the criteria for feminist publications in Mather's study was that they be owned by and run by women. In similar fashion, Hutton (1993) and Tripp (1992) made distinctions between Black owned publications and White abolitionist publications in their studies.

#### Social Movement Coverage

Kessler (1990) wrote that the feminist newspapers served several functions for the women's movement. They boosted morale, raised people's consciousness, and hosted political and philosophical debates. Anne Mather suggested in her "History of the Feminist Press" series that feminist publications were excellent primary documents for understanding and examining the women's movement (1974-75).

The Black press served similar functions for free Blacks in a racially hostile society. The newspapers raised consciousness, hosted political and philosophical debates, provided lessons on "appropriate" middle class culture, and challenged White media's representation of Blacks in America.

According to the information gleaned from editors participating in this study, a comparable statement could only be made of Disability Rag. This publication and its previous and current editors were explicitly committed to the disability movement and philosophical debates concerning it. The other editors described their publications as separate from the movement--if and when they perceived of a disability movement at all. For instance, Amy Dreyer, UCP Progress, qualified her affirmative response to the question about the publication's involvement in the disability rights movement.

AD I think we're largely a funnel of information and giving people the information that they need to go out and become active. yes.



This tendency to view one's newspaper or newsletter as a mere information piece was typical among editors because they were socialized to think of themselves as objective communicators and not as activists or political communicators ("The Top Story", CBS News, 9/27/95; "The Diane Rhem Show", WAMU, American University, Washington, DC, 9/26/95; and Tuchman, 1978, p. 159). Michael Schudson claimed that this socialization was widespread and not limited to persons who have been socialized as journalists.

By the 1960s, both critics of the press and defenders took objectivity to be the emblem of American journalism, an improvement over a past of "sensationalism" and a contrast to the part papers of Europe. Whether regarded as the fatal flaw or the supreme virtue of the American press, all agreed that the idea of objectivity was at the heart of what journalism has meant in this country (Schudson, 1978, pp. 9-10).

The fact that approximately 83 percent (10 out of 12) of the editors interviewed described their publications as primarily informational pieces has implications for theories about how their publications function in the U.S. culture.

Actually, the information itself might be a socializing factor for targeted audiences. For example, the types of advertisements publications run (e.g. vans equipped with wheel chair lifts, teletype machines,) provide a practical service for many readers. In addition, writing articles about legislative issues also allows readers to organize with one another to respond to or initiate various activities. Most of the editors interviewed for this study indicated no awareness of this aspect of their publications.

Implications of Marxist and Liberal  
Pluralism Theories for  
Disability Publications

Though the editors were not interrogated directly about liberal pluralism and marxist theories of media function, it is possible to speculate about their

perspectives or theories concerning the functions of their publications and media in American society.

As pointed out in the previous chapter, all of the editors participating in the long interviews criticized mainstream media representation of disability. In this sense, the editors attest to a prevailing pattern of representation of disability in the mainstream media. However, only one editor--Barret Shaw--explicitly linked the role of her publication with challenging or countering the pervasive "supercrip" imagery.

In addition, most of the publications in this study appeared to be an outgrowth of the need to communicate with various constituencies, i.e. people with disabilities, families, educators, association members, donors, etc. They were not consciously developed as alternatives to mainstream media. The publication editors were not asked to directly respond to or comment on mass communication theoretical debates, however the research questions come directly from these debates. Therefore, interview items were designed to elicit information that would allow the

researcher to make inferences about mass communication theory.

### Review of Liberal Pluralism Theory

To briefly recap, the liberal pluralism theory of media in American society informs us that media is a marketplace of competing ideas. Various members of the society compete for and gain access to media at given points in time. This competition is enshrined in the U.S. Constitution via the First Amendment. Liberal pluralists assume that all audience members/citizens have equal access to media. Liberal pluralists also assume that our educational systems, government, and other public institutions are functioning in such a way that all citizens are equally motivated to express their ideas and aspirations in media.

Persons espousing the liberal pluralism theory of mass media would couch the phenomena of disability publications and the perceptions of these editors in the following terms: (1) These publications are providing access to the marketplace of ideas to people with disabilities, and may be creating new ideas about disability related stories (Manning-Miller, 1993).

(2) These publications are a natural part of a free and pluralized society -- they are vehicles for all to have their say.

The liberal pluralism theory does not explain or predict why there have been slow and minuscule changes in how mainstream media handles disability issues. During June/July 1995, for example, NBC Nightly News featured the mountain climbing feat of a man who is blind. It was clear that the hook or news of this story was that someone who is blind wanted to and then later did successfully climb a mountain. Little attention was given to the other mountain climbers or to the activity itself. This was a typical "supercrip" news story. Classic liberal pluralism theory does not adequately predict or explain this insistence on "supercrip" imagery even as the market encompasses more disability publications. What might better explain the role and function of the disability publications? One explanation might be that disability publications participate in a marketplace that is parallel to the mainstream marketplace of ideas but has few connections to the mainstream marketplace of ideas.

## Review of Marxist Theory

Marxist theorists, as explained in Chapter II, described mass media as tools of elite people; tools which are fairly inaccessible to the working and middle classes. The assumption of Marxist theorists is that a few, powerful elite benefit from maintaining the status quo. Therefore, they argue media corporations, or conglomerates work to squelch ideologies that are contrary to the needs of the elite. Marxist theorists posit that audience members are without the motivation or means to influence mainstream ("mainstream" in Marxist theory would translate as power/elite) ideas or assert any autonomous ideology. In this study, the disability editors' thoughts about how "supercrip" and negative imagery persists in the mass media support and reflect Marxist theory more than liberal pluralism theory. Hegemony describes a system of ideological control so pervasive and effective that proletariat and bourgeoisie people struggle with one another for limited material goods but do not seek to overthrow the ruling class.

Specifically, the hegemonic "supercrip" imagery is still pervasive and effective. The "supercrip" imagery and stories rely on outdated perceptions about people with disabilities as people who are pathological--people, who it is assumed "cannot" or do not function in employment, education, relationships, recreation, and other regular aspects of American life. Most of those people (in this case, editors of disability magazines and newsletters) in unique positions to overturn the imagery seemed to settle for criticism rather than move on to activism. Here are a few examples of the answers I received when I asked editors if they were active in the disability movement or community:

AM . . . , so busy putting paper out  
no time for additional activity  
(Able News).

Terry with The Progressive knew activism was needed,

TT And it's not that, it's like I  
said... it isn't that it is not  
important it's just that people  
don't think about it. Somebody's  
gotta get in their face and actually

say this is what we want, this is what we deserve as human beings.

Yet in the same interview she admitted that The Progressive staff was not very involved in disability advocacy political activities but she said she admired organizations such as *ADAPT*.

TT Unfortunately I don't think we are a part of that. Once again, I say we're more slanted toward politics in general; and I would say more politics meaning what's going on in the world community versus once again issues. As far as a group, I'm embarrassed to say I can't think of the name of the group in Washington that goes out and actually does aggressive work for people with disabilities.

It might be unrealistic to expect small publications, with limited staff and financial resources, to take on better staffed and financed, in short, more powerful media outlets. Nevertheless, they have not--and the fact that most of them have not--could provide more



fuel, in this researcher's opinion, for Marxist theories of media operation than for liberal pluralism theories. Yet, the editors do have autonomous ideologies and expectations related to disability issues and coverage. These apparent contradictions are the reason this researcher concludes that a combination of liberal pluralism and Marxist explanations is a better option for explaining and predicting the role of media, than either alone.

To some extent feminist theories and themes of diversity are transforming scholarship and the academy. The following statement about how sociologists are currently studying issues that were historically linked to women's activism supports this notion of transformation.

the feminist perspective has generated the study of phenomena reflecting the sexual politics that had not been previously studied. For example, rape, spouse abuse, sexuality, childbirth, housework, incest, sexual harassment, pornography, and prostitution are

all now studied by social scientists. Other examples of newly studied topics include the gendered nature of language, environmental policy, technology, body language, everyday talk, and advertisements (Nielson in Bowen and Wyatt, 1990, p. 3).

It is still too early in the analysis of disability publications and disability studies to claim this type of paradigm shift or influence in academic perspectives. However, the current analysis may contribute to discussions of and provide data for connecting themes in disability scholarship to themes in more mainstream academic settings.

The next chapter provides conclusions and implications for further research.

## Chapter VIII Conclusions

I have learned that publications for people with disabilities are an important source of information for people with disabilities, and others interested in disability issues. Most importantly, these publications provide spaces where the communication processes among people interested in disability issues take place. Exchange of information and ongoing dialogue is fundamental to general American ideals of democracy and free speech but it is imperative for people with disabilities (and other non-mainstream groups) as they continue to forge a group identity. There was not strong evidence, however, that a "unified disability community" exist in the same way that the deaf community I experienced at Gallaudet University existed. This is rather disappointing, but probably an accurate description of today's disability groups, as perceived by women and men who edit publications targeted to people interested in specific disability related issues. These editors are not necessarily on the cutting edge of any activism that may be happening among people with disabilities.

This dissertation is the second documented scholarly attempt to describe disability publications in the United States. The first was Carmen Manning-Miller's presentation at AEJMC's 1993 Annual Convention. The study for this dissertation was conducted to ascertain perceptions of disability and related concepts from editors of publications produced by and for people with disabilities and to develop some insight into how disability publications function in mass communication processes in the United States.

#### Strengths and Limitations of the Study

While the study produced a relatively small sample size, the publications in the study represent a broad range of disability type. See Appendix C, C1 "Disability Targeted by Publications". In addition, the researcher's intimate involvement and awareness of Deaf culture (described in detail in the Preface to this dissertation) was both a strength and a limitation. This knowledge and experience provided insight, and access to participants that might have otherwise been unavailable. On the other hand, there was always an underlying expectation that other

disability groups would function like the deaf community did at Gallaudet University.

#### Research Questions Revisited

Here again, are the research questions that fueled this study:

1. Who runs these disability publications?
2. Are there models or patterns which describe how these publication editors communicate about disability?
3. Do editors perceive that disability publications contribute to or reflect other types of diversity in the United States?
4. How are disability publications similar to or different from the Black press or feminist press in the U.S.?
5. Do disability publications represent untapped resources for internships and entry level positions for undergraduates in communications, journalism, and mass communication programs?
6. What theory or theories best explain the functions of the disability publications in this study?

Careful analysis of the data collected regarding editors' perceptions of their publications and

disability yielded the following insights about 56 disability publications.

#### Who Runs These Publications?

The research reported in this dissertation identified a growing list of disability publications in the United States. Specifically, this research identified 131 publications for people with disabilities (116 more publications than the 15 identified in the Manning-Miller study). The current list, however, is not exhaustive.

The 56 disability publication editors responding to my questionnaire were as likely to be able-bodied as they were to be people with disabilities. In addition, approximately half of them had no previous journalism experience or training. As for the age, sex, racial/ethnic make up for editors participating in this study, they were typically White (82 percent), 30 - 60 years old (68 percent), and female (62 percent).

This study also provided information about the targeted audiences and broad variety of disabilities that are addressed by publications in this study. See Appendix C, C1 "Disabilities Targeted by Publications"

for a list of specific disabilities and their frequency among the publications that are represented in the study. The targeted audiences for these 56 publications were as likely to include legislators, parents, partners, and other "able bodied" folk as to include people with disabilities. This dual focus seemed to influence the tone of most editors' publications to more conciliatory and less challenging.

In addition, only 10 of the publications in this study had separate subscription fees. Most people received copies of the publications because of membership fees paid to an affiliated organization. These disability publications did not rely heavily on advertising income. The nature of the advertising, (e.g. communication devices, specially equipped vans, personal ads) however, suggests the ads may be providing a practical service for the targeted audiences. Since most publications did not have separate subscription fees, and fewer than half (23) accepted advertising, the researcher concluded that these publications were not income generating tools. To that end, these publication editors are not



required to respond to market forces the way most mainstream media are. Shaw (Disability Rag editor) in fact does not accept advertising in order to maintain her journalistic freedom. Those 23 publications that accept advertising tended to include advertising specifically addressed to their audiences (e.g. communication technology, specially equipped vehicles, or services performed by people with disabilities) more than more general advertising. Therefore, the researcher concludes that these publications are primarily informational items and not means of delivering audiences to advertisers.

#### Models or Patterns Among Publications

The 56 disability publications in this study were not all alike. They included Special Interest publications, Mainstreaming/ Assimilationist publications, and to a lesser extent Activist/Political publications. As stated in Chapter V, only the publications for whom the researcher had interviews were linked with the three specific models. Four out of 12 (25 percent) were identified as Activist/Political; four as Mainstreaming/ Assimilationist; one as Special Interest; and three

(20 percent) could not be categorized from the information provided by editors. These publication models or categories were derived from the editors' perceptions about and responses to questions about the concepts of disability movement, disability community, diversity, and mainstream representation issues.

This researcher agrees that these editors spoke of disability in more progressive/civil rights ways than the mainstream press tends to do. (All of the editors interviewed criticized mainstream coverage of disability.) Most of the editors, however, did not view it as part of their role, function, or philosophy to confront mainstream media. So, the editors as a group were not actively challenging mainstream media's hegemonic images of disability.

### Reflections of Diversity

U.S. Census Data and population studies published in the last five to ten years forecast that the American population and prospective work force is changing. A greater proportion of U.S. citizens will be people of color, persons formerly considered "minority" groups because of small numbers. This fact and the recent momentum and visibility (at least since

the 1960s) gained by many groups who were previously excluded from powerful and influential positions (e.g. African Americans, women, gays and lesbians, and people with disabilities) makes it imperative that all aspects of the American society respond in some way to this phenomenon--diversity. Publications for and by people with disabilities are not exempt from this mandate. There has, however, been limited discussion among persons concerned with disability about other types of diversity.

When asked about it, most of the 12 editors interviewed admitted that their publications did not adequately reflect diversity in the United States population. About one third of the 12 editors exerted specific and steady attention to reflecting and incorporating diversity in their publications. This means two-thirds did not. Those editors who made racial/ethnic, gender, age, sexual orientation, social class diversity a priority were only partially successful.

Frankenberg (1993) makes the point that color blind approaches to difference are not effective if one wants to have a more inclusive society. I agree

that color/blind/race neutral or evasive approaches to difference, manifested by several of the editors I interviewed, perpetuate the status quo as effectively as blatant discrimination does. It, therefore was disappointing, but not surprising to find that people of color, people under 30 and over 60 were not well represented among the people who edited the disability publications in this study.

#### Similarity to Feminist and African American Publications

In terms of the 56 publications examined here, the researcher concluded that they were not as similar to Black and feminist publications as she had expected. Disability publications met Kessler's criteria for media established by groups that are underdogs, holding views about themselves that differ from views held by members of mainstream society, and being excluded from the conventional marketplace. However, the evidence from the disability publication editors in this study did not support an expectation for a thematically unified disability press in the sense that scholars of Black and feminist publications have theorized a Black or a feminist press. Examining

a larger sample of disability publications might yield more similarities between disability publications and Black and feminist publications than were observed in this study.

### Employment/Internship Opportunities

Appendix D, D5 "Publications Desiring Interns" lists the 29 publications and editors who indicated a desire for interns. Most of the editors had no stated preference for staff members or interns with disabilities. They did not seem particularly inclined to recruit students with disabilities over and above non-disabled students. Since unemployment rates among people with disabilities remains higher than it is in the general population (Burkhauser, 1982, National Disability Employment Awareness Month, 1993), publications such as those in this study would be an excellent source of training, if not actual employment for mass communication students with disabilities.

### Limitations of the Study

The number of editors who participated in this study was small. In addition, the results of the study are not generalizable to all disability publications in the United States because they were not identified as a random and representative sample. Even though the subset of 12 editors interviewed were randomly selected, one does not know to what extent they are representative of the sample of 56 editors.

Another limitation of the study was the partial self selection of editors for the interviews; the researcher randomly chose editors to interview from a subset of editors who indicated they were willing to have the researcher call for additional information. Those editors who did not provide permission for follow-up might have had very different responses to some of the questions the researcher asked.

In addition, the researcher relied solely on the perceptions of the editors about their publications and made no attempt to independently substantiate these perceptions by soliciting information from publication audience members, or other members of the publication staffs. This limitation was mentioned in the methodology chapter in terms of the "self-interest" of editors. Getting information from editors rather than audience members also means that the researcher did not get a sense of what is actually going on among the rank and file.

#### Implications for Further Research

This dissertation provided information about disability publications that has never been documented in scholarly material. It was a descriptive study

which raised as many questions as it answered. These "new" questions are mentioned below as possible additional studies. Therefore, disability publications are ripe for further study.

Additional research that could lead to more conclusive understandings and analysis of disability publications might include: using the questionnaire and models developed in the current study with another list of disability publications; conducting long interviews with a different subset of editors; developing alternate methodologies for assessing these 56 editors' perceptions about disability related issues; examining the perceptions of other groups, e.g. audience members with and without disabilities; and/or conducting content analyses of all or some of the 56 disability publications identified through the current study.

In addition, this study raised research questions for many related areas of study. These future studies could focus on:

- An historical analysis of the U.S. organizations serving people with disabilities.



- Analysis of activism of people with disabilities related to mainstream media representation of disability
- Examination of the "blind movement", Activism Activity in Louisville, Kentucky or "Deaf President Now" protest mentioned by editors in this study.
- In depth examination of the types of advertisements/corporations one finds represented in these publications.
- Interactions between Disability Publication editors/staff with Mainstream editors/staff.

The list could go on. In short, this study provides one link in a growing body of mass media and disability research. There is, however, much to be learned about the role publications for and by people with disabilities play in developing group identity for people who live with disability in the United States. I have learned that publications for people with disabilities are an important source of information for people with disabilities, and others interested in disability issues. Most importantly, these publications provide spaces where the communication processes among people interested in

disability issues take place. Exchange of information and ongoing dialogue is fundamental to general American ideals of democracy and free speech but it is imperative for people with disabilities (and other non-mainstream groups) as they continue to forge a group identity.

#### Recommendations

In an ideal world where research interests mesh with daily activities, and small struggling editors have access to abundant resources, I would suggest that the editors who graciously participated in this study consider:

- forming an association of editors of disability publications
- becoming involved in journalism activities/training or some arena that will help them develop a greater sense of their power to influence, shape, and participate in furthering the group identity and civil rights of people with disabilities

#### "Difference" and Journalism

Journalists have a history of treating "difference" in unfavorable ways. Stereotyping abounds. The tendency to use language that emphasizes

or exaggerates the difference when it is not relevant to a story, or to ignore the social and political issues and context of difference were documented in the dissertation.

It is incumbent upon mass communication scholars studying "difference," (as defined in the foreword of this dissertation) to engage in a dynamic interdisciplinary approach that looks at more than publications and the perceptions of their editors as the site of exploration. Editors write about, and encourage their staff to write about the issues they think are important and relevant. It was also noted earlier that these editors did not appear to be different from most communication professionals in this sense. Their orientation to disability issues, while more progressive than most mainstream editors, was not overwhelmingly activist. Therefore, the sense of a disability community they projected was one of an evolving entity, quite nascent in its activities, goal, and objectives. It seems then, that a disability community is not as well formed and cohesive as the community of deaf people at Gallaudet University. A different view might emerge if one

studies people with disabilities from a different  
vantage point.

## Appendices

Appendix A Cover Letters, Questionnaire, Return Rate  
Information, and List of Publications

A1 (GENERAL COVER LETTER)

October 10, 1994

^F1^

^F2^

Dear ^F3^:

I am a Ph.D. Candidate in the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland College Park. I am extremely interested in publications like yours and what they contribute to our understanding about living with disabilities in America. Most mass communication and journalism texts and current research in the field ignore people with disabilities and the significant contributions they make to mass communication and the press in America.

I hope the research I am conducting about disability publications will contribute to an increased understanding of people with disabilities, disability rights issues and the interaction between people with disabilities and the press.

(GENERAL COVER LETTER, P. 2)

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire at your earliest convenience. Return it and your comments in the self addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible but no later than October 28, 1994.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lillie S. Ransom, Candidate

Maurine Beasley, Chair



A2 (COVER LETTER FOR DEAF PUBLICATIONS)

October 10, 1994

^F1^

^F2^

Dear ^F3^:

I am a PhD Candidate in the College of Journalism at the University of Maryland College Park. I am extremely interested in publications like yours and what they contribute to our understanding about living as a deaf person in America. Most mass communication and journalism texts and current research in the field ignore deaf people and people with disabilities and the significant contributions they make to mass communication and the press in America.

I hope the research I am conducting about Deaf and disability publications will contribute to an increased understanding of Deaf culture, people with disabilities, disability rights issues and the interaction between people with disabilities and the press.

(COVER LETTER FOR DEAF PUBLICATIONS, p.2)

Please complete the enclosed questionnaire at your earliest convenience. Return it and your comments in the self addressed stamped envelope as soon as possible but no later than October 28, 1994.

Thank you for your time and cooperation.

Sincerely,

Lillie S. Ransom, Candidate

Dr. Maurine Beasley, Chair

A3 General Questionnaire for Editors  
of Disability Publications

1. What is the official name of your periodical/publication?

---

The first part of the questionnaire is to describe your audience:

Audience Demographics

**CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.**

2. Disabled: List all that apply or specify type(s) of disability:

---

3. NonDisabled:

- a. \_\_\_parents of children with disability
- b. \_\_\_spouses/partners of people with disability
- c. \_\_\_educators, legislators, other professionals
- d. \_\_\_general nondisabled population
- e. \_\_\_other, please identify

---

4. Income of target audience:

- a. \_\_\_less than \$10,000 annually
- b. \_\_\_\$11,000 - \$20,000       "
- c. \_\_\_\$21,000 - \$30,000       "
- d. \_\_\_\$31,000 - \$40,000       "
- e. \_\_\_\$41,000 - \$50,000       "
- f. \_\_\_more than \$50,000       "

5. Age:

- a. \_\_\_under 18 years of age
- b. \_\_\_19 - 30 years of age
- c. \_\_\_31 - 40 years of age
- d. \_\_\_41 - 50 years of age
- e. \_\_\_51 - 60 years of age
- f. \_\_\_61 - 70 years of age
- g. \_\_\_over 70 years of age

6. Are your audience members mostly

\_\_\_female? \_\_\_male? \_\_\_mixed?

The next part of the questionnaire describes the publication itself:

Circulation Information

7. How often is this periodical published?

- a. \_\_\_ weekly
- b. \_\_\_ biweekly
- c. \_\_\_ monthly
- d. \_\_\_ bimonthly
- e. \_\_\_ quarterly
- f. \_\_\_ semi-annually
- g. \_\_\_ annually
- h. \_\_\_ bi-annually
- i. \_\_\_ other, please describe\_\_\_\_\_

8. How many of each issue are distributed?

(circulation)

- a. \_\_\_ less than 1,000
- b. \_\_\_ 1,001 - 3,000
- c. \_\_\_ 3,001 - 5,000
- d. \_\_\_ 5,001 - 7,000
- e. \_\_\_ 7,001 - 10,000
- f. \_\_\_ 10,001 - 15,000
- g. \_\_\_ 15,001 - 20,000
- h. \_\_\_ 20,001 - 25,000
- i. \_\_\_ 25,001 - 30,000

- j. \_\_\_\_30,001 - 50,000
- k. \_\_\_\_50,001 -100,000
- l. \_\_\_\_100,001 - 200,000
- m. \_\_\_\_more than 200,000

Now, if you could provide some information about the resources available for printing and distributing your publication...

Publication Income/Resources

9. What, if any, is the subscription price?

- a. \_\_\_\_\_per copy
- b. \_\_\_\_\_monthly
- c. \_\_\_\_\_quarterly
- d. \_\_\_\_\_annually
- e. \_\_\_\_\_other, please describe

10. Does your publication use paid advertising to supplement costs?

\_\_\_\_If Yes (go to a.)                      \_\_\_\_If No (skip to # 11)

a. Who are your main advertisers?

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15. Racial/Ethnic identification:

- a. \_\_\_\_ White
- b. \_\_\_\_ Hispanic
- c. \_\_\_\_ African American/black
- d. \_\_\_\_ Native American
- e. \_\_\_\_ Asian American
- f. \_\_\_\_ biracial
- g. \_\_\_\_ other (list all that apply or

specify\_\_\_\_\_)

16. How long has the editor been with the publication?

- a. \_\_\_\_less than 1 year
- b. \_\_\_\_1-3 yrs
- c. \_\_\_\_4-6 yrs
- d. \_\_\_\_7-9 yrs
- e. \_\_\_\_10-12 yrs
- f. \_\_\_\_13- 15 yrs
- g. \_\_\_\_other (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_)

17. Where did the editor work before coming to this publication?

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18. What is the editor's academic and professional background?

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Comments: \_\_\_\_\_

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#### Staff Demographics

WRITE NUMBERS OR PERCENTAGES NEXT TO EACH CATEGORY IN THIS SECTION

19. How large is the staff?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ paid employees b. \_\_\_\_\_ interns

c. \_\_\_\_\_ volunteers

20. How many of your **paid staff** fall into the following categories?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ males b. \_\_\_\_\_ females

c. \_\_\_\_\_ ethnic/racial minorities

(list all that apply or specify)

---

\_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_ under 18 years old e. \_\_\_\_\_ 19-30

f. \_\_\_\_31-40 g. \_\_\_\_41-50 h. \_\_\_\_51-60 i. \_\_\_\_61-70

j. \_\_\_\_over 70.

k. How many staff members are people with disabilities? \_\_\_\_

(List all disabilities that apply or specify)

---

21. How many of your **interns** fall into the following categories?

a. \_\_\_\_males b. \_\_\_\_females

c. \_\_\_\_ethnic/racial minorities

(list all that apply or specify)

---

\_\_\_\_d. \_\_\_\_under 18 years old e. \_\_\_\_ 19-30

f. \_\_\_\_31-40 g. \_\_\_\_41-50 h. \_\_\_\_51-60 i. \_\_\_\_61-70

j. \_\_\_\_over 70.

k. How many staff members are people with disabilities? \_\_\_\_

(List all disabilities that apply or specify)

---

---

22. How many of your **volunteers** fall into the following categories?

a. \_\_\_\_males b. \_\_\_\_females

c. \_\_\_ethnic/racial minorities  
(list all that apply or specify)

\_\_\_\_\_d. \_\_\_under 18 years old e. \_\_\_ 19-30  
f. \_\_\_31-40 g. \_\_\_41-50 h. \_\_\_51-60 i. \_\_\_61-70  
j. \_\_\_over 70.

k. How many staff members are people with disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_

(List all disabilities that apply or specify)

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
23. Can you identify other characteristics which indicate the diversity among your staff? If yes, list all that apply or specify. If no, skip to # 25.

\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_  
24. Please indicate numbers or percentages of paid staff, volunteers, interns which fall into categories identified in #

23: \_\_\_\_\_  
\_\_\_\_\_

---

25. Would you or any members of your staff be interested in journalism training?

a.  Yes,

Why? \_\_\_\_\_

b.  No,

Why not? \_\_\_\_\_

26. Are you interested in interns for your publication?

a.  Yes

b.  No

27. Are your interns  paid?  unpaid?

28. If you already use interns -- from where do you recruit them?

---

---

29. What is the title of the individual completing this questionnaire?

---

30. Would you be willing for me to call or visit for a follow up interview about your publication? If yes, please provide your name, address, phone and fax numbers.

---

---

31. Is there anything about your publication you would like to add that might be of interest to someone doing research about disability publications?\_\_\_\_\_

32. One final request....It is important that my questionnaire be sent to as many disability publications as possible so will you please identify other disability related publications in the space provided below?

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Editor(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Editor(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Editor(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Editor(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Name \_\_\_\_\_

Editor(s) \_\_\_\_\_

Address \_\_\_\_\_

**THANK YOU!!!!**

Return in self-addressed stamped envelope to:

4414 Cedargarden Road, Baltimore, Maryland 21229-4506

Call (410) 525-3609 if you have questions.

YOUR COOPERATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS GREATLY  
APPRECIATED.

Lillie S. Ransom, Ph.D. Candidate, University of  
Maryland, College of Journalism and Mass Communication

A4 Pilot Questionnaire for Editors of  
Disability Publications

1. What is the official name of your  
periodical/publication?

---

The first part of the questionnaire is to describe  
your audience:

Audience Demographics

CHECK ALL THAT APPLY.

2. Disabled: List all that apply or specify types  
of disability:

---

3. NonDisabled:

- a. \_\_\_parents of children with  
disability
- b. \_\_\_spouses/partners of people with  
disability
- c. \_\_\_educators, legislators, other  
professionals
- d. \_\_\_general nondisabled population
- e. \_\_\_other, please identify  
\_\_\_\_\_

4. Income of target audience:

- a. \_\_\_less than \$10,000 annually
- b. \_\_\_\$11,000 - \$20,000       "
- c. \_\_\_\$21,000 - \$30,000       "
- d. \_\_\_\$31,000 - \$40,000       "
- e. \_\_\_\$41,000 - \$50,000       "
- f. \_\_\_more than \$50,000       "

5. Age:

- a. \_\_\_under 18 years of age
- b. \_\_\_19 - 30 years of age
- c. \_\_\_31 - 40 years of age
- d. \_\_\_41 - 50 years of age
- e. \_\_\_51 - 60 years of age
- f. \_\_\_over 60 years of age

6. Are your audience members mostly \_\_\_female?  
\_\_\_male?       \_\_\_mixed?

The next part of the questionnaire describes the publication itself:

Circulation Information

7. How often is this periodical published?

- a. \_\_\_weekly
- b. \_\_\_biweekly
- c. \_\_\_monthly



- d. \_\_\_ bimonthly
- e. \_\_\_ semi-annually
- f. \_\_\_ annually
- g. \_\_\_ bi-annually
- h. \_\_\_ other, please describe  
\_\_\_\_\_

8. How many of each issue are distributed?  
(circulation)

- a. \_\_\_ less than 1,000
- b. \_\_\_ 1,001 - 3,000
- c. \_\_\_ 3,001 - 5,000
- d. \_\_\_ 5,001 - 7,000
- e. \_\_\_ 7,001 - 9,000
- f. \_\_\_ 10,000 - 15,000
- g. \_\_\_ 15,001 - 20,000
- h. \_\_\_ 20,001 - 25,000
- j. \_\_\_ 25,001 - 30,000
- k. \_\_\_ 30,001 - 50,000
- l. \_\_\_ 50,001 - 100,000
- m. \_\_\_ 100,001 - 200,000
- n. \_\_\_ more than 200,000

Now, if you could provide some information about the resources available for printing and distributing your publication...

Publication Income/Resources

9. What, if any, is the subscription price?

a. \_\_\_\_\_per copy

b. \_\_\_\_\_monthly

c. \_\_\_\_\_annually

10. Does your publication use paid advertising to supplement costs?

\_\_\_\_If Yes (go to a.)

\_\_\_\_If No (skip to # 11)

a. Who are your main advertisers?

---

---

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---

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---

11. Who owns this publication?

Name\_\_\_\_\_Title\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

O w n e r ' s   o t h e r   i n t e r e s t s :

---

Last, but not least I need some information about you and your staff. Please add any information you think is important:

Editor Demographics

12. Age:

- a. 20-30
- b. 31-40
- c. 41-50
- d. 51-60
- e. 61-70
- f. over 70

13. a.  Female

b.  Male

14. Does the editor have a disability?

Yes  No

List all disabilities that apply or specify disability:

---

15. Racial/Ethnic identification:

- a.  White
- b.  Hispanic
- c.  African American/black
- d.  Native American

- e. \_\_\_\_ Asian American
- f. \_\_\_\_ biracial
- g. \_\_\_\_ other (list all that apply or specify\_\_\_\_\_)

16. How long has the editor been with the publication?

- a. \_\_\_\_less than 1 year
- b. \_\_\_\_1-3 yrs
- c. \_\_\_\_4-6 yrs
- d. \_\_\_\_7-9 yrs
- e. \_\_\_\_10-12 yrs
- f. \_\_\_\_13- 15 yrs
- g. \_\_\_\_other (please specify:\_\_\_\_\_.)

17. Where did the editor work before coming to this publication?

\_\_\_\_\_

18. What is the editor's academic and professional background?

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Comments:\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

\_\_\_\_\_

Staff Demographics

WRITE NUMBERS OR PERCENTAGES NEXT TO EACH CATEGORY IN THIS SECTION

19. How large is the staff?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ paid employees b. \_\_\_\_\_ interns

c. \_\_\_\_\_ volunteers

20. How many of your **paid staff** fall into the following categories?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ males b. \_\_\_\_\_ females

c. \_\_\_\_\_ ethnic/racial minorities represented on staff  
(list all that apply or specify)

---

\_\_\_\_\_ d. \_\_\_\_\_ under 20 years old e. \_\_\_\_\_ 20-29

f. \_\_\_\_\_ 30-39 g. \_\_\_\_\_ 40-49 h. \_\_\_\_\_ 50-59 i. \_\_\_\_\_ 60-69

j. \_\_\_\_\_ 70 and over.

k. How many staff members are people with disabilities? \_\_\_\_\_

(List all disabilities that apply or specify)

---

21. How many of your **interns** fall into the following categories?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ males b. \_\_\_\_\_ females

c. \_\_\_\_\_ ethnic/racial minorities represented on staff

(list all that apply or specify)

---

\_\_\_\_\_d.\_\_\_\_under 20 years old e.\_\_\_\_ 20-29  
f.\_\_\_\_30-39 g. \_\_\_\_40-49 h.\_\_\_\_50-59 i. \_\_\_\_60-69  
j.\_\_\_\_70 and over.

k.How many interns are people with disabilities?\_\_\_\_  
(List all disabilities that apply or specify)

---

22. How many of your **volunteers** fall into the following categories?

a. \_\_\_\_males b. \_\_\_\_females  
c. \_\_\_\_ethnic/racial minorities represented on staff  
(list all that apply or specify)

---

\_\_\_\_\_d.\_\_\_\_under 20 years old e.\_\_\_\_ 20-29  
f.\_\_\_\_30-39 g. \_\_\_\_40-49 h.\_\_\_\_50-59 i. \_\_\_\_60-69  
j.\_\_\_\_70 and over.

k.How many volunteers are people with disabilities?\_\_\_\_  
(List all disabilities that apply or specify)

---

---

23. Can you identify other characteristics which indicate the diversity among your staff? If yes, list all that apply or specify. If no, skip to # 25.

---

---

---

24. Please indicate numbers or percentages of paid staff, volunteers, interns which fall into categories identified in #23\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

25. Would you or any members of your staff be interested in journalism training?

a. \_\_\_\_\_ Y e s ,

Why?\_\_\_\_\_

b. \_\_\_\_\_ No, Why not?\_\_\_\_\_

---

26. Are you interested in interns for your publication?

a. \_\_\_\_Yes

b. \_\_\_\_No

27. Are your interns \_\_\_\_paid? \_\_\_\_unpaid?

28. If you already use interns -- from where do you recruit them?

---

---

29. What is the title of the individual completing this questionnaire?

---

30. Would you be willing for me to call or visit for a follow up interview about your publication? If yes, please provide your name, address, phone and fax numbers.

---

---

31. Is there anything about your publication you would like to add that might be of interest to someone doing research about disability publications?\_\_\_\_\_

---

---

---

---



32. One final request....It is important that my questionnaire be sent to as many disability publications as possible so will you please identify other disability related publications in the space provided below?

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Editor(s)\_\_\_\_\_

Address\_\_\_\_\_

Name\_\_\_\_\_

Editor(s)\_\_\_\_\_

THANK YOU!!!!

Return in self-addressed stamped envelope to:

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Call (410) 525-3609 v/tty if you have questions.

YOUR COOPERATION IN THIS RESEARCH IS GREATLY APPRECIATED.

Lillie S. Ransom, Ph.D. Candidate,

University of Maryland

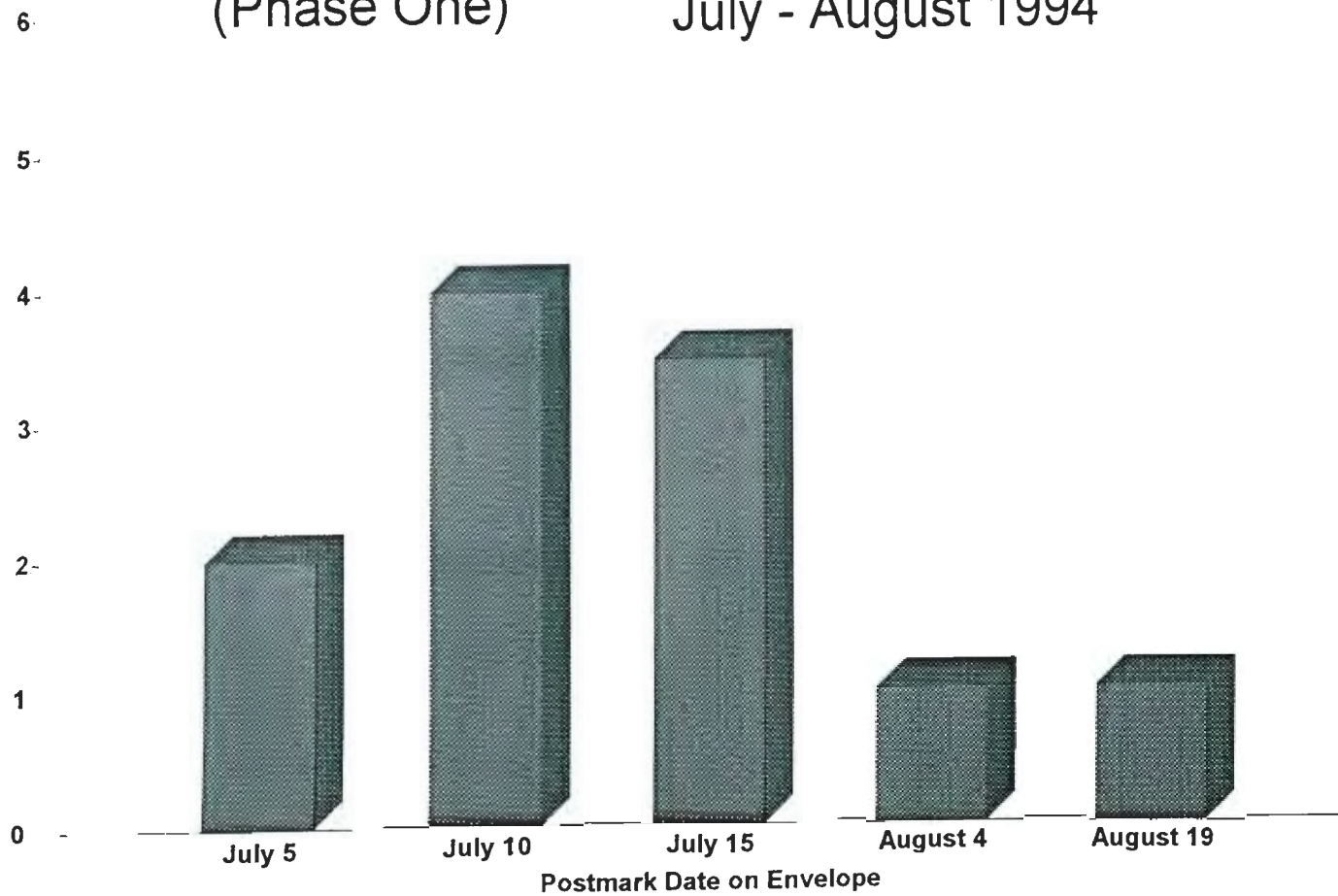
College of Journalism and Mass Communication

# Return Rate of Pilot Questionnaires

(Phase One)

July - August 1994

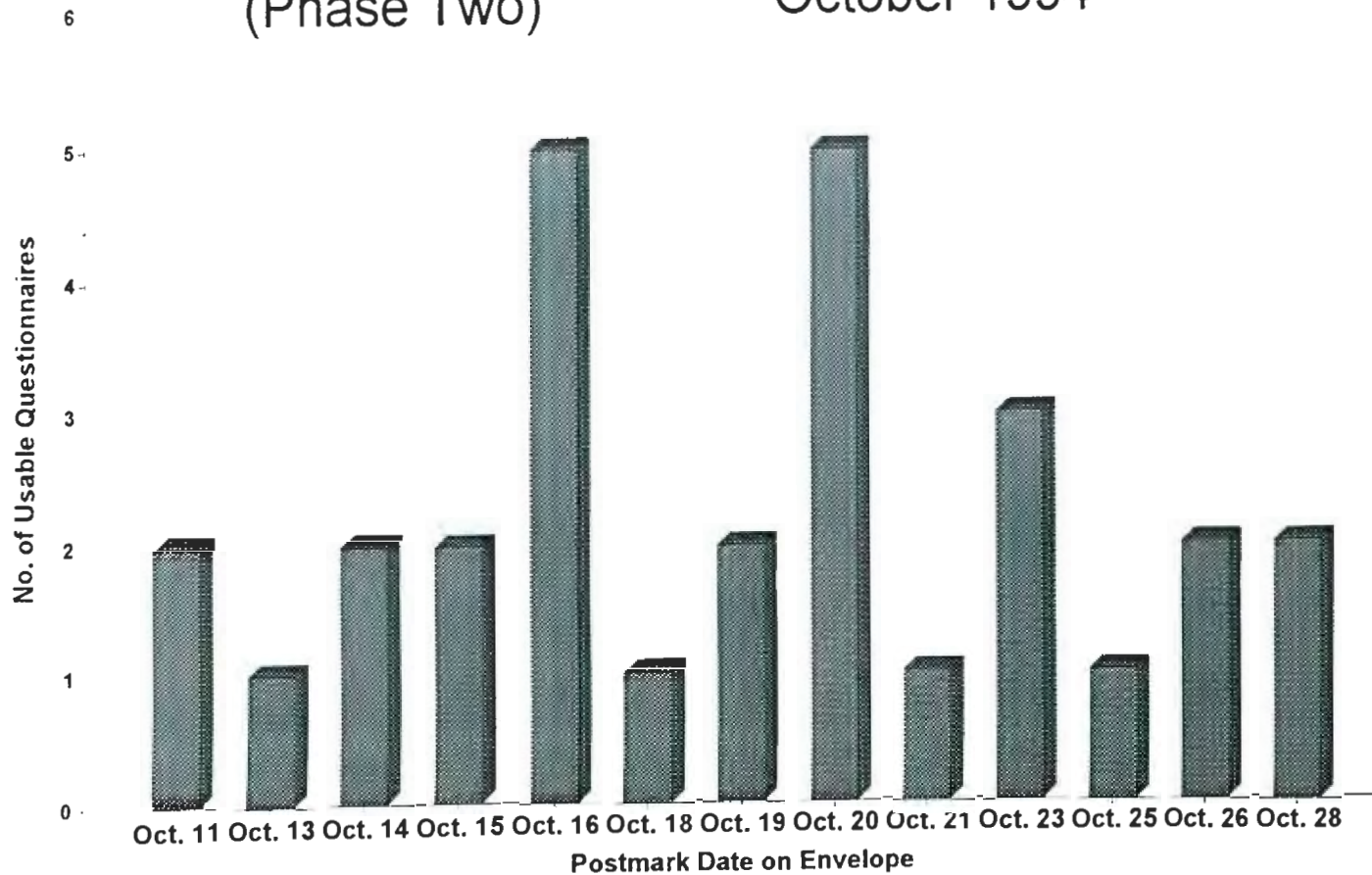
295



# Return Rate of General Questionnaire

(Phase Two)

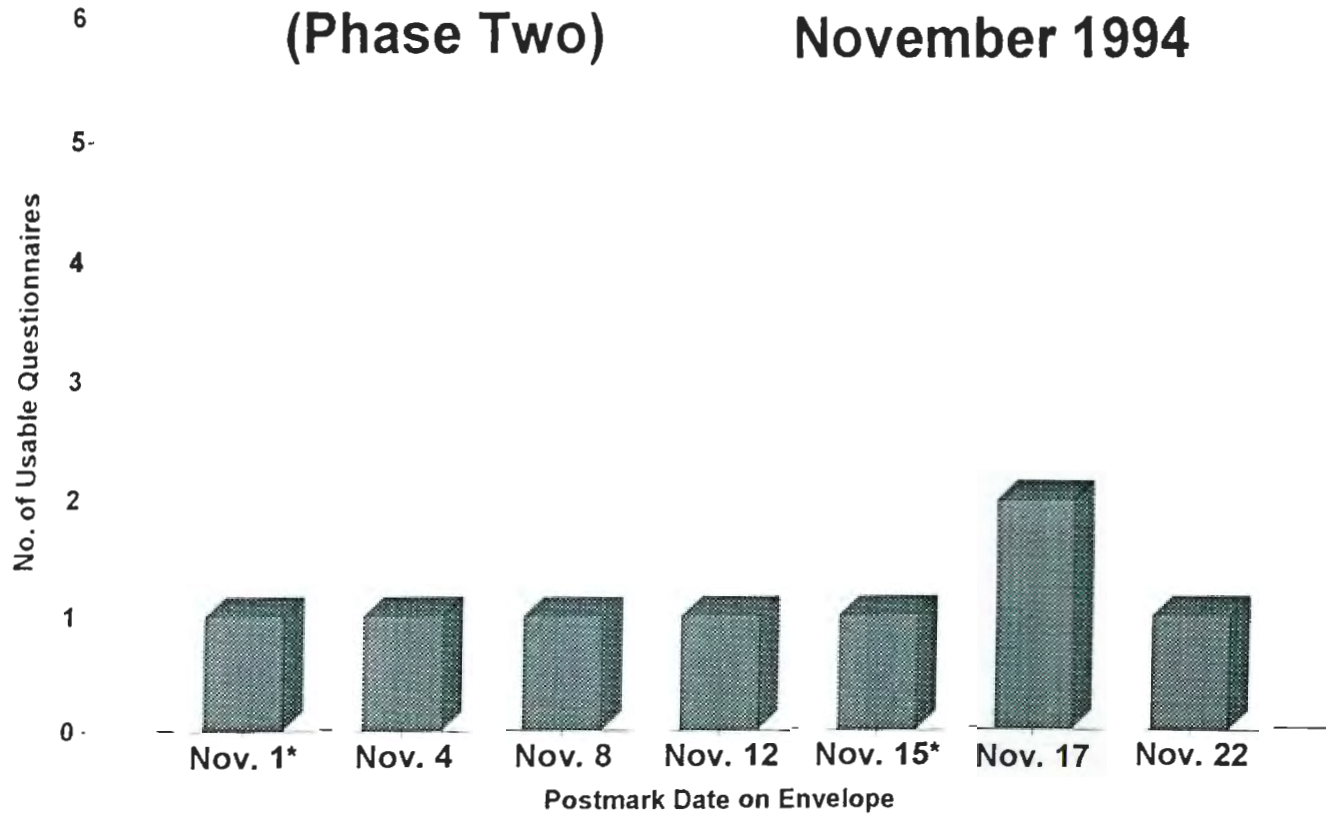
October 1994



# Return Rate of General Questionnaire

(Phase Two)

November 1994

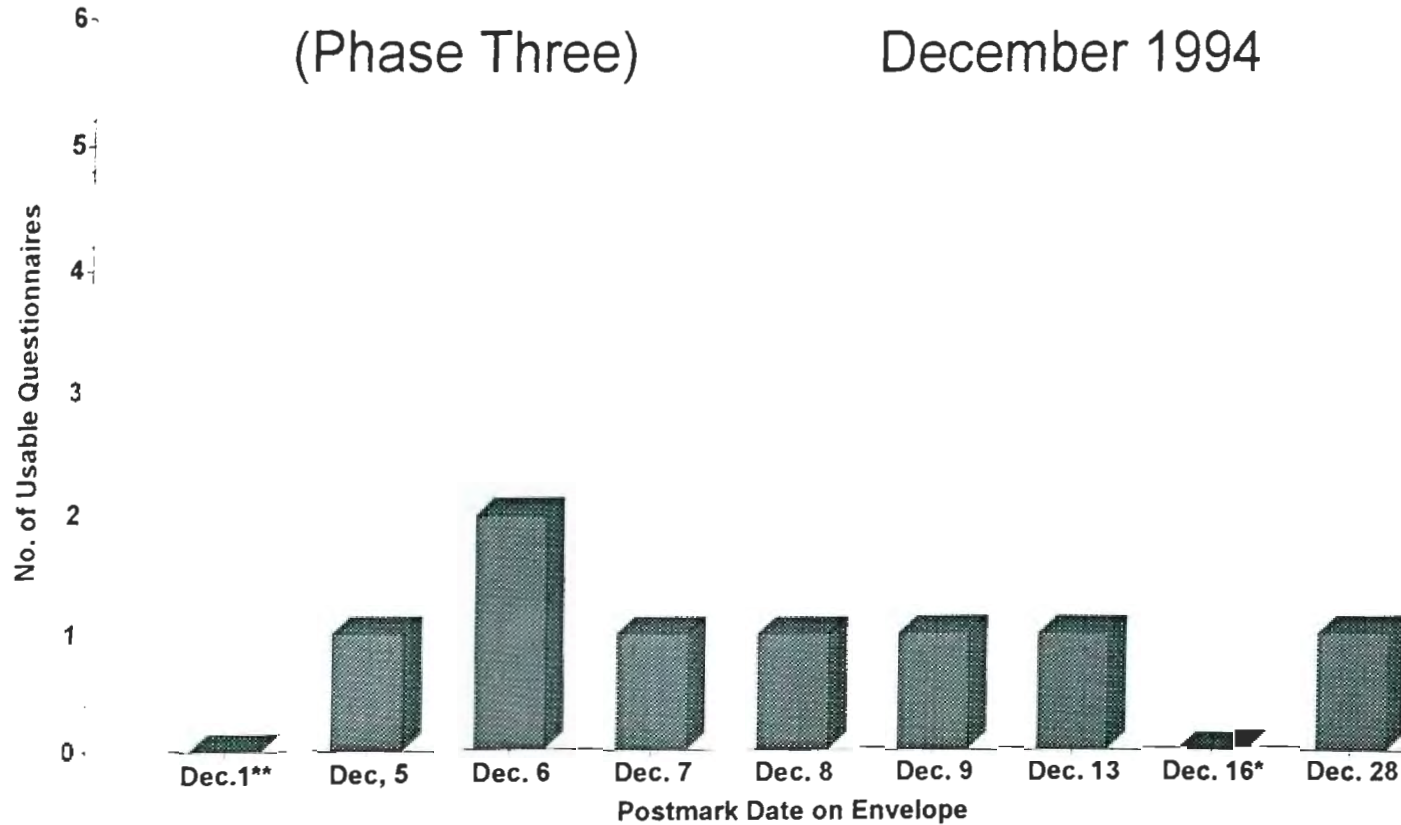


\*Date reminder postcards were sent to editors

# Return Rate of General Questionnaires

(Phase Three)

December 1994



\*Date reminder Postcards were sent to editors.

\*\*Date a small mailing (with "newly identified" publications) went out.

Following is a list of the 56 publications whose editors responded to questionnaires for this study. There is also a brief description of the target audience for each publication. The list is alphabetized for easy reference.

A7 PUBLICATIONS PARTICIPATING IN THE STUDY

1. \_\_\_\_\_, all disabilities
2. AAAD Deaf Sports Review, deaf and hard-of-hearing
3. Ability Magazine, general non-disabled audience
4. Able Newspaper, all disabilities and general non-disabled population
5. Abled!, general non-disabled population
6. Accent on Living Magazine, parents, spouses/partners of people with disabilities
7. American Rehab Association Rehabilitation Report, educators, legislators, professionals
8. The Amp, amputation
9. The Arc and The Dove, mental retardation, developmental disabilities
10. Around Melwood, developmental disabilities
11. Braille Monitor, blind, deaf-blind adults, parents of blind children, professionals

PUBLICATIONS CONTINUED

12. Communicator, all disabilities
13. Disability Issues, all disabilities
14. The Disability Rag and Resource, all audiences
15. Echo, for people with multiple sclerosis
16. Fen Pen, individuals with fetal alcohol syndrome and other alcohol related birth defects
17. Future Reflections, parents of blind or blind and multiply handicapped children
18. Goodwill Forum, mouthpiece of National Goodwill organization
19. Handicapped Sport Report, parents, spouses/partners, health and fitness professionals
20. Hearing Hearts, non-disabled people concerned about deaf issues
21. Horizons, all disabilities
22. In the Mainstream, human resource professionals
23. Incitement, disability activists, users of wheelchairs and many other disabilities
24. Independent Living, all disabilities, educators, legislator, and general non-disabled audiences

PUBLICATIONS CONTINUED

25. Kaleidoscope, International Magazine of Literature, Fine Arts and Disability
26. Links, providers of services and supports for people with disabilities
27. Mainstream, Magazine of the Able-Disabled
28. MDAD News, deaf, hard-of-hearing, and late deafened people
29. National Amputee Golfer, amputees
30. NAPAS Newsletter, all legally recognized disabilities
31. New Mobility, all disabilities and non-disabled audiences
32. NISH News, all
33. Paraplegia News, spinal cord injured, ms, amputee, polio, and non-disabled audiences
34. PeopleNet, all disabilities
35. Perspectives, all learning disabilities but mainly dyslexia
36. Polio Network News, health professionals, educators, spouses/partners
37. The Progressive, general information for and by people with disabilities



PUBLICATIONS CONTINUED

38. PWD Update, cross-disability
39. Report on Disability Programs, for people with permanent physical disabilities
40. The Risk, general non-disabled population
41. SATH News, travelling information for people with all disabilities
42. Seasons, mobility impaired, sight and hearing impaired
43. The Silent Advocate, deaf and hearing impaired
44. Silent News. deaf, hard-of-hearing, deaf-blind
45. The Source, deaf, hard-of-hearing, cp,epilepsy, mental illness
46. Sports 'n Spokes, spinal cord injured, ms, amputee, polio, and non-disabled audiences
47. Spotlight, for general non-disabled audience
48. Thorncroft Newsletter/Aspire News, all disabilities and non-disabled audiences.
49. UCP Progress, parents, spouses/partners, educators, legislators, donors
50. Update, targeted to volunteers with the visually impaired

PUBLICATIONS CONTINUED

51. **USABA Newsletter**, blind and visually impaired and non-disabled audiences
52. **Vision Access**, low vision
53. **Vision**, deaf, hard-of-hearing
54. **Voice Newspaper**, all disabilities and non-disabled audiences
55. **Wheelchair Sports, USA Newsletter**, non-disabled audiences
56. **WILDA**, Women in Leadership Disability Activist

Appendix B Long Interview Script and Protocol

B1 Long Interview Script for Disability Editors

Thank you again for completing the disability publication questionnaire last month. This interview is an opportunity to go more in-depth with you about your publication.

1.) When was (name of publication) started?

2.) Has the (name of publication) been published consistently since that time?

3.) What type of articles, stories, editorials has (name of publication) featured in the last several issues?

4.) Are these (articles, stories, editorials) different from items typically covered in (name of publication)?

5.) Did or does (name of publication) carry any thing about the passage of ADA in 1990? Examples.....

6.) Have you carried any thing about ADA or other related issues since?

7.) What are your opinions about mainstream coverage (e.g. movies, television, newspapers, magazines, etc.) of people with disabilities. [Interviewer will name the disability or disabilities targeted by the publication editor]

8.) How does this [mainstream coverage] correspond with or compare with the coverage in (name of publication)?

9.) How is your publication unique in the context of disability publications?

10.) Is there a disability rights movement in the U.S.? (If response is "yes"...go to 11.) (If response is "no"...go to 12)

11.) Describe your understanding of this movement and the role(s) your publication play in it--if any. Give examples. Are you personally involved in disability rights issues in other ways?

12.) Is there a disability community in the U.S.? (If response is "yes"...go to 13.) If response is "no" ...go to 14.)

13.) Describe your understanding of who is part of the disability community and the role(s) your publication play in the community. Give examples. Are you involved in the disability community in other ways?

14.) Have you felt it necessary to demonstrate diversity within the disability group(s) you write for? Why or why not?

Interview Questions Continued

15.) What would you say about the comparison of disability publications to Feminist or African American publications?

\*\* Following question only for persons who indicated an interest in interns.

16.) Do you prefer people with disabilities as interns? Why or why not?

## B2 LONG INTERVIEW INFORMATION

### Long Interview Protocol

A phone call was made to randomly selected questionnaire respondents who indicated on the questionnaire that they were willing to answer additional questions in an interview format.

The researcher explained that the follow up interview would take no more than one hour of the respondent's time and required no preparation on his/her part. Questions would be related to editors' perceptions and not related separate "factual" information that required research on their part.

Phone appointments were made with one editor serving as the phone pilot, and eleven other editors of disability publication editors.

Everyone cooperated fully and the researcher/interviewer consistently stayed within the promised time frame.

**ACTUAL TRANSCRIPTS AVAILABLE  
FROM RESEARCHER UPON REQUEST**

Appendix C Publication, Audience and Editor  
Demographic Information



C1 Disabilities Targeted by Publications

(SPSS Variable = AUDDIS disabilities of target audience)

310

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
amputee	1	2	3.6	5.3	5.3
blind/visually impair	3	2	3.6	5.3	10.5
deaf/hh/h.i.	5	4	7.1	10.5	21.1
developmental dis.	6	2	3.6	5.3	26.3
learning disability	12	1	1.8	2.6	28.9
polio/post polio	17	1	1.8	2.6	31.6
different disability	19	1	1.8	2.6	34.2
all disabilities	30	19	33.9	50.0	84.2
blind and deaf	305	1	1.8	2.6	86.8
deaf- blind	503	1	1.8	2.6	89.5
mob. imp., diff.	1319	1	1.8	2.6	92.1
blind, c.p. different	50419	1	1.8	2.6	94.7

Disabilities Targeted by Publications Continued

m.s., amputee, polio	140117	1	1.8	2.6	97.4
sp. cord, polio,m.s.	201714	1	1.8	2.6	100.0
.		18	32.1	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
Total		56	100.0	100.0	

---

Valid cases      38      Missing cases      18

C2 Non-Disabled Groups Targeted by Publications

SPSS Variable = AUDNODIS non-disabled target audience,

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
educ legis prof	3	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
general non-disabled	4	1	1.8	1.8	3.6
other	5	2	3.6	3.6	7.3
all non-disabled cat	8	30	53.6	54.5	61.8
flag!! *	9	12	21.4	21.8	83.6
refusal/inability to classify	10	2	3.6	3.6	87.3
parents, partners	12	1	1.8	1.8	89.1
parents, ed./leg./prof.	13	1	1.8	1.8	90.9

-----

\*flag-- respondents made some unusual and some times inconsistent choices, for example, several might check "all non-disabled categories" and also check two (rather than all) of the other options.

Non-Disabled Groups Targeted by Publications Continued

partners, "	23	1	1.8	1.8	92.7
ed./leg./prof., general	34	1	1.8	1.8	94.5
" , other	35	2	3.6	3.6	98.2
general nondis., other	45	1	1.8	1.8	100.0
.		1	1.8	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
Total		56	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 55 Missing cases 1

C3 Sex Breakdown of Audiences Targeted by Publications

(SPSS Variable = AUDSEX sex of target audience)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cum
				Percent	Percent
female	1	3	5.4	5.6	5.6
male	2	2	3.6	3.7	9.3
mixed	3	48	85.7	88.9	98.1
	4	1	1.8	1.9	100.0
	.	2	3.6	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	54	Missing cases	2		

314

C4 Breakout of Editors' Age Range Categories

(SPSS Variable = EDAGE editor's age range)

				Valid	Cum
Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Percent	Percent
19-30	2	8	14.3	14.5	14.5
31-40	3	9	16.1	16.4	30.9
41-50	4	20	35.7	36.4	67.3
51-60	5	9	16.1	16.4	83.6
61-70	6	5	8.9	9.1	92.7
	9	4	7.1	7.3	100.0
	.	1	1.8	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	55	Missing cases	1		

C5 Breakout of Editors' Sex

(SPSS Variable = EDSEX editor's sex)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
female	1	35	62.5	63.6	63.6
male	2	16	28.6	29.1	92.7
both	3	4	7.1	7.3	100.0
	.	1	1.8	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	55	Missing cases	1		

C6 Editors' Disability/Ability Classifications

(SPSS Variable = EDDIS is editor disabled?)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	28	50.0	50.9	50.9
no	2	26	46.4	47.3	98.2
	3	1	1.8	1.8	100.0
	.	1	1.8	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 55 Missing cases 1



C7 Breakout of Editors' Disabilities

(SPSS Variable = EDDISTYP what type(s) of editor disability)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid	Cum
				Percent	Percent
amputee	1	4	7.1	12.9	12.9
blind/visually impair	3	3	5.4	9.7	22.6
cerebral palsy	4	2	3.6	6.5	29.0
deaf/hh/h.i.	5	3	5.4	9.7	38.7
fibromyalgia	9	1	1.8	3.2	41.9
learning disability	12	1	1.8	3.2	45.2
multiple sclerosis	14	1	1.8	3.2	48.4
polio/post polio	17	4	7.1	12.9	61.3
different disability	19	2	3.6	6.5	67.7
spinal cord injury	20	3	5.4	9.7	77.4
blind, different dis.	319	1	1.8	3.2	80.6

318

c.p.	"	419	1	1.8	3.2	83.9
epicondilitis, mobility imp.		813	1	1.8	3.2	87.1
diabetes, different dis.		1119	1	1.8	3.2	90.3
polio, quadraplegia		1718	1	1.8	3.2	93.5
different dis., dev.dis.		1906	1	1.8	3.2	96.8
polio, diabetes, blind		171103	1	1.8	3.2	100.0

.	25	44.6	Missing
	-----	-----	-----
Total	56	100.0	100.0

Valid cases

31

Missing cases

25

08 Breakout of Editors' Race/Ethnicity

(SPSS Variable = EDRACE editor's racial, ethnic identification)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
White	1	44	78.6	84.6	84.6
African American/Black	3	3	5.4	5.8	90.4
Asian American	5	1	1.8	1.9	92.3
another race/ethnic	7	4	7.1	7.7	100.0
.	.	4	7.1	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	
Valid cases	52	Missing cases	4		

320

Correlations: EDDISTYP AUDDIS

EDDISTYP	1.0000	-.0669
AUDDIS	-.0669	1.0000

N of cases: 23            1-tailed Signif: \* - .01    \*\* - .001

321

" . " is printed if a coefficient cannot be computed

C9 Frequency of Publication Distribution

(SPSS Variable = PUBSCHED publishing sch.)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
biweekly	2	1	1.8	1.8	1.8
monthly	3	13	23.2	23.2	25.0
bimonthly	4	8	14.3	14.3	39.3
quarterly	5	22	39.3	39.3	78.6
semi-annually	6	2	3.6	3.6	82.1
annually	7	1	1.8	1.8	83.9
other	9	9	16.1	16.1	100.0
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 56 Missing cases 0

322

Appendix D Editors' Professional Background, Request  
for Training and Interns

D1 Academic and Professional Background of Editors  
 (SPSS Variable = EDACPR editor's prof. & acad. bkgrd)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
communications...	1	16	28.6	33.3	33.3
ed,psyc, soc...	2	12	21.4	25.0	58.3
physical health...	3	4	7.1	8.3	66.7
other, unrelated	4	16	28.6	33.3	100.0
.	.	8	14.3	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

324

Valid cases 48 Missing cases 8

D2 Number of Editors Interested in Journalism Training  
 (SPSS Variable = JOURTRAI editor's interest in training)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	17	30.4	37.0	37.0
no	2	29	51.8	63.0	100.0
.	.	10	17.9	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 46 Missing cases 10

325



D3 Editors' Interest in Interns

SPSS Variable = RECRINT editors' interest in interns!

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum. Percent
yes	1	29	51.8	58.0	58.0
no	2	21	37.5	42.0	100.0
.	.	6	10.7	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 50 Missing cases 6

D4 Publications Paying Interns

(SPSS Variable = PDINT will editor pay interns?)

Value Label	Value	Frequency	Percent	Valid Percent	Cum Percent
yes	1	6	10.7	22.2	22.2
no	2	21	37.5	77.8	100.0
	.	29	51.8	Missing	
		-----	-----	-----	
	Total	56	100.0	100.0	

Valid cases 27 Missing cases 29

D5 Publications Desiring Interns

<u>Publication</u>	<u>Editor's Name</u>	<u>Pay</u>
1. AAAD Sports Review	Shirley Platt	?
2. Able Newspaper	Angela Melledy	N
3. Abled!	Anchea L. Troncalli	N
4. Ability Magazine	Rosemary Alonso	B
5. Am. Rehab. Association Report	Gene Loudon	N
6. The Arc and the Dove	Lucienne Pisa	N
7. Aspire News	Karoline Martin	N
8. Disabilty Rag	Barrett Shaw'	N
9. Echo	Kathleen Dickinson	N
10. Future Reflections	Barbara Cheadle	?
11. Goodwill Forum	Eric Ries	Y
12. Handicapped Sport Report	_____	Y
13. Hearing Hearts	Bev Cox	N
14. Horizons	James H. Storrs	N
15. Incitement	David Witte	N
16. In the Mainstream	Fritz Rumpel	Y

Key: Y = yes

N = no

B - Both paid and unpaid internships      ? = don't know

Publications Desiring Interns Continued

17. Mainstream	Cyndi Jones	Y
18. MDAD News	Nancy Kensicki	?
19. New Mobility	Barry Corbet	Y
20. NISH News	Linda Schulte	Y
21. The Progressive	Teri Terry	N
22. PWD Update	Cindy Blank-Edelman	N
23. Report on Disability Programs	Mary Crowley	B
24. The Risk	Jeff Tate	N
25. Silent News	Tom Willard	Y
26. The Source	James Tresh	N
27. UCP Progress	Amy Dreyer	?
28. USABA	Marc Lucas	Y
29. WILDA	Janet Bernavlt	N

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