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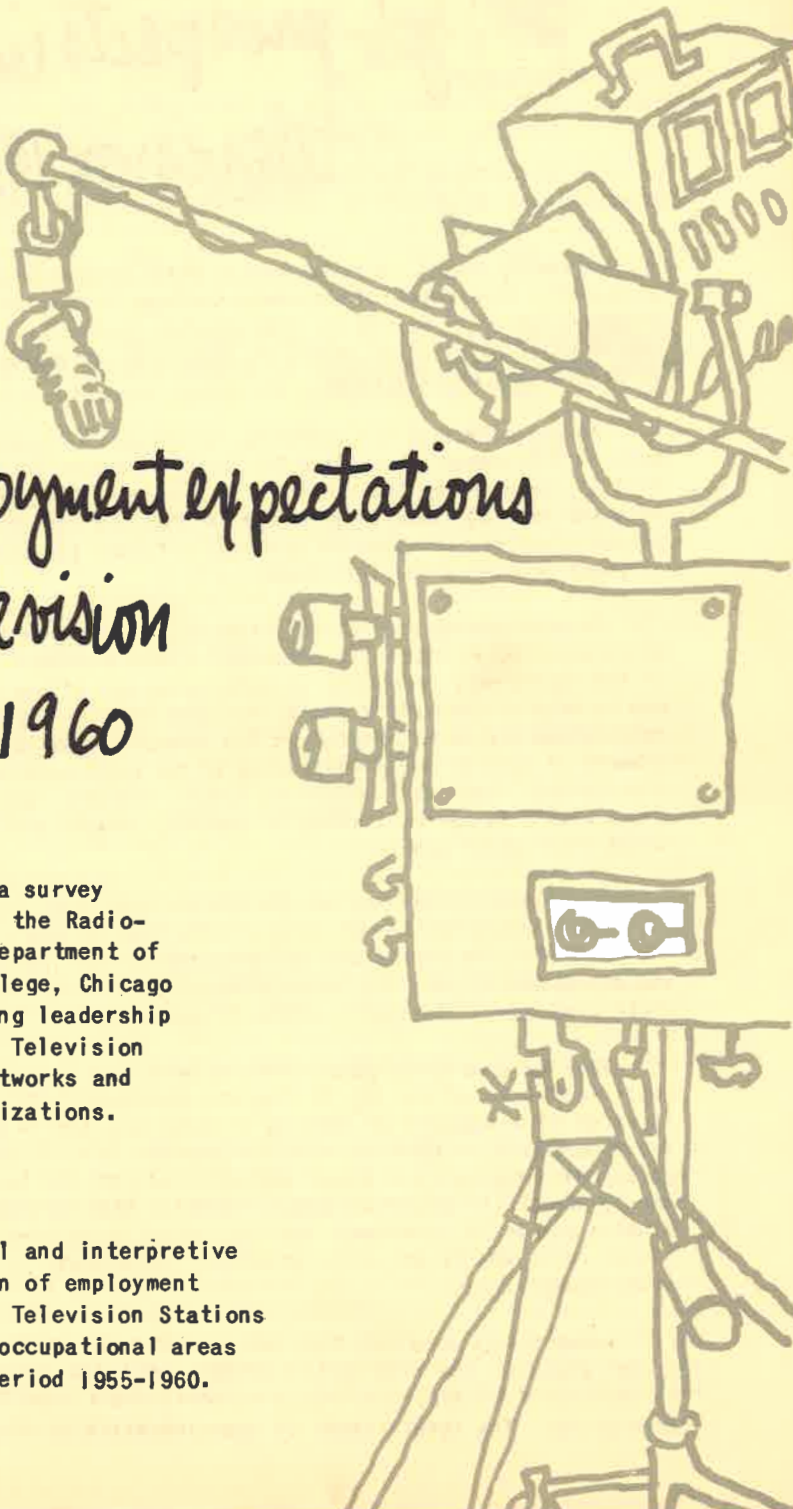
Employment Expectations in Television 1955-1960 Report

Columbia College Chicago

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Employment expectations in television 1955-1960

A Report of a survey
conducted by the Radio-
Television Department of
Columbia College, Chicago
of the Working leadership
of America's Television
Stations, Networks and
Allied organizations.

A statistical and interpretive
consideration of employment
prospects in Television Stations
and related occupational areas
during the period 1955-1960.



job prospects in television 1955-1960

The following report is based upon a study conducted by the television-radio department of Columbia College in connection with the preparation of a course on "Television in American Life". The course will consider the impact of Television on employment, cultural development and attitudes.

As one aspect of the planning, we set out to compile an estimate of the number of skilled TV station production personnel who will be employed by the industry in the next few years. We felt that the working leadership of the TV stations and related occupational areas are necessarily the best informed spokesmen as to employment prospects for the industry.

In addition to presenting a tabulation of the responses to the questionnaire, we have also presented a more extended consideration of the employment prospects in Television and of how young people can be most effectively prepared for jobs in this area. Such other conclusions are based largely on: (1) comments which accompanied the answers of most of those responding to the questionnaire, (2) a review of the literature concerning the TV industry, and (3) discussions with a number of leading TV station, network and broadcasting trade association people.

While some of the conclusions are our own, they reflect the department's accumulated experience of more than 22 years of providing students with the most practical preparation for jobs in radio and the department's last five years of experience in maintaining a completely equipped "station" - studio TV operation.

Four hundred fifty questionnaires were sent to the leading executives of each of the 359 TV stations on-the-air, the TV-radio editors of 10 newspapers of leading circulation, the TV directors of the 25 advertising agencies with the greatest TV billings, 24 of the personnel directors and other top officials of the four networks, and 32 especially qualified people selected from various areas, including people in government service, those associated with educational radio and TV and other prominent individuals in the television industry.

Answers were obtained from top executives of each of 154 television stations, the TV directors of 10 of the advertising agencies, 11 network officials, 3 TV-Radio editors, and 4 from the selected area group. **The total number of questionnaires returned was 182.**

Following are the questions asked and the resulting replies:

1. **There are now 379 TV stations on the air. There are 2,053 available TV channels. How many stations do you think will be on the air in 1960?**

No. of stations	500	600	650	750	800	923	1100	1400	1600	1800
Frequency of selection	24	4	1	1	82	1	39	10	1	9

The weighted average of these selections indicated that about 913 stations are predicted for 1960.

2. **Compared with today's practices, is it likely that in 1960 the number of employees required per station will be smaller, greater, or about the same?**

Trend	Greater		Smaller		About the Same	
	No.	%	No.	%	No.	%
Frequency of selection	45	25.9	67	38.5	62	35.6

The present 379 stations employ about 45 people each, according to the generally accepted industry average. Approximately 17,000 are on station payrolls. The four networks employ additionally about 4,500 people. But these 21,500 people are only about half of the "big picture" in television. At least an equal number of people, though not on station staffs, are directly engaged in the TV operation. This would include personnel in film studios, advertising agencies, program producing services, art studios and the large area of free-lance talent, such as actors, actresses and announcers. On this basis about 43,000 people are employed in television today.

The response to Question 2 showed a slight indication toward a smaller average employment per station in 1960. Assuming that the average station employment will be about 40, this would indicate a station employment of about 36,520 based on 913 stations in 1960. Because network activity is likely to increase with the growing number of stations, network employment is estimated on a proportional basis at 8,000 for 1960. The resultant figure of about 45,000 is doubled to account for the ever-increasing number of skilled personnel in allied fields, though actually these agencies are growing at an even faster rate than the stations and networks themselves. It appears, therefore, that station and related employment will be about 90,000, or an increase of approximately 47,000 by 1960.

Apparently there seems to be a job bonanza developing for creative young people who can meet the special requirements of aptitude and acquire the necessary training.

TV industry executives did not suggest a definite way out of the puzzle of where they would find the tens of thousands of people needed to overcome the fast developing shortage of new staff personnel. Question 3 was designed to obtain their reaction to this problem:

3. Since new people will be required to man the increased number of TV stations, from where will such additional trained personnel come? Please arrange these sources in the order of importance, in your opinion, by marking 1, 2, and 3. (From Radio), (in-service training by the TV stations themselves), (training in schools, College TV courses), (other (explain)).

Source	Order of Importance			
	1	2	3	
Radio	56	56	58	
In-service	93	51	23	
Schools	28	52	83	
Other				29

The trend of answers indicated primary reliance would be placed on the in-service training which the stations themselves would provide. There was about an equal division between radio and practical college television courses as secondary sources.

4. Do you believe there are sufficient colleges and schools today specially equipped for practical television training to meet future demands for trained personnel?

Yes 52

No 113

Possibly the TV leaders' less limited acceptance of Colleges as the first source of new station staff people may be explained by their vote - over 2 to 1 - against the foregoing proposition. A sizeable number, however, added the comment, that skills developed in practical college courses or in radio stations should precede on-the-job training. This suggests where stations are most likely to recruit new staffers. Other minor sources mentioned included motion pictures, summer and stock theaters, and newspapers.

Accompanying their estimates of personnel needs, the industry executives predicted overwhelmingly - about 7½ to 1 - (Question 5)

that the growth of television will result in increased employment of women. Until now, women waged an uphill battle to obtain creative jobs in the related fields of radio and motion pictures.

5. Is it likely that the growth of television will result in the increased employment of women in the industry?

Yes	154
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No	23
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6. Is color television likely to enlarge substantially the personnel requirements of stations (other than those originating network color TV programs) by 1960?

Yes	70
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No	109
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Thus while employment by stations will perhaps not be increased much by color TV, some staffers will have to have specialized "know-how" of telecasting in color. For example, the station art director may become a decisive factor in program presentation. The absence of industry experience with color TV would suggest that many of its implications have not been examined.

Our survey suggests that colleges and universities should provide the most practical curriculum consistent with the character of the television industry, which is almost exclusively a commercial endeavor. They properly devote substantial portions of their curriculum to such academic fields as archeology, English literature, and medieval history as well as to such applied fields as accounting, law and the various business specialties. In these latter areas, education is necessarily conducted in the most practical manner, expressed in realistic business terms, and reflects the economic and social demands of society. However, here, now, is the present day reality of television, an industry profoundly affecting virtually every avenue of American life, and likely in the future to have an even greater influence. Surely, training for professional responsibility in such a significant industry should also be a prime concern of higher education.

Supporting this view were voluntary comments of participants in the survey. One executive commented, "I believe that more colleges and universities should include closed circuit TV for training personnel."

A "closed circuit TV station" for training purposes, would be like that used by students at Columbia College. It includes a fully equipped studio with cameras, lighting, film chain, control room and monitor screens enabling students to produce and televise programs under conditions which closely parallel actual commercial TV station operation and programming.

Other typical comments were:

A Missouri station manager: "Schools thus far do not seem to graduate individuals with practical know-how. Most are too theoretical."

A Kentucky station manager: "The TV school needs to emphasize small station operation...What percentage of students will begin their careers in a responsible big-station position?"

A Colorado station president: "Pre-professional training in schools and colleges is the best solution. There is too much emphasis on the 'glamour' phase of TV. Not enough training in the all-important 'behind the scenes' jobs."

An Oklahoma manager: "In-service training will be the prime source of trained personnel, utilizing schools and radio as the source of raw material."

On the basis of the survey it appears that an effective, practical preparation for employment in television would require of the college:

1. a fully equipped TV station paralleling that of the average American station. It should be available exclusively for training for a substantial portion of the time.
2. a faculty made up of specialists whose main work engages them in commercial telecasting.
3. a faculty with a "small station outlook", preparing the students for as many essential station jobs as possible.
4. a curriculum which develops the student's dollars-and-cents understanding of TV, both from a standpoint of sales and operational economy.
5. courses which draw systematically and regularly on the experience of the industry. One way might be through regular contact with its alumni in Television.

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