
Backstage in the history of media theory: The George Gerbner Archive and the history of critical media studies.

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Abstract: This paper explores the significance of the George Gerbner Archive (<http://web.asc.upenn.edu/gerbner/archive.aspx>) as a resource on the history of Communications and Media Studies. Drawing on historical theory, the paper analyzes a 1973 clash between Gerbner and the International Communication Association over the future of the *Journal of Communication*. Exchanges on this matter revealed conflicting views over how to manage and finance the title. These quarrels manifested surprising drivers behind the US' emergence as a dominant force in global communications research. The letters suggest that much as Gerbner's scholarly reputation is well established, he also exerted considerable influence as an ideas broker. Overall, the case study illustrates the value of complementing media theory with research on the organizational and interpersonal histories behind published work, showcasing the value of the Gerbner archive in this task.

Keywords: George Gerbner, Cultural Indicators Project, International Communication Association, History of Communications Studies.