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CNA NEWSLETTER

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A Christmas Message from the Vice President



Attila Gasparik

*"Television has become
the "modern alter" in
front of which we bend
down and pray every
day."*

*Attila Gasparik,
Vice President of the
National Audio-Visual
Council of Romania*

For generations the month of December has been the month of celebration. Families unite around Christmas time and these gatherings bring happiness.

Today, Christmas means two hours more in front of the television. The television has become the "modern alter" in front of which we bend down and pray every day. It is like bubble gum for the brain.

Over this holy period we kindly urge you to discover the beauty of nature, to enjoy conversation in the family, to read books or to consider going to the theatre or cinema.

Attila Gasparik

Television Without Frontiers – a new EU Directive

Adopted by the EU in 1989, the Television without Frontiers Directive consists of a set of minimum standards in the audio-visual sector.

Due to the extensive changes that have taken place in the industry, a new directive (Audio-Visual Media Services) was adopted by the EU in December 2007.

The directive provides new regulations for New Media (internet and digital TV), advertising and the protection of children's rights and human dignity.

Each of the EU27 Member States must implement the directive within two years.

For more details see:

http://ec.europa.eu/avpolicy/reg/twvf/modernisation/proposal_2005/index_en.htm

See *"Taming the TV"* kids brochure on page 4

“Children’s Exposure to TV & Radio Programmes”

An Audio Visual Study

Following a public tender that was won by the Metro Media Transilvania research company, the CNA commissioned a study which analyses patterns of media consumption by children. A complete version can be downloaded from www.cna.ro

Based on interviews in 1295 households with children in the 6 - 15 age range, the purpose of the study was to measure media consumption, assess the impact of advertising and evaluate opinions and values of young people in Romania.

The first part of the study looks at children’s access to the various forms of media and communication equipment. While the growth of TV ownership is part of a well known trend, the rapid growth in mobile phone and personal computer ownership is perhaps more unexpected: 82% of households with children now have mobile phones, 52% have personal computers and 79% have access to cable TV.

Patterns of children’s behaviour in their spare time is analysed in the second part of the report. Although the biggest activity (98%) is watching TV, a surprisingly large number of respondents (56%) say they read books while 30% spend their spare time browsing the internet.

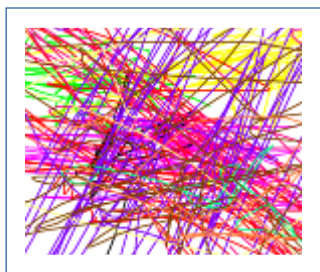
In response to the question “when you are big, which of the following will be most important for you?” the highest number of respondents (38%) agreed with the statement “to have a happy family”. A lesser number of respondents (25%) said that “having a lot of money” was a priority, while only 11% considered “having an interesting job” as the most important factor.

One of the most interesting parts of the study asks the children where they learn about values. The study shows that truth, respect, compassion and generosity are learned at home; while creativity, culture, success and patriotism are picked up at school. Within this framework the children say they learn the following values from the TV: aggressiveness, sensationalism, sexuality, the “pleasures of life” and “getting rich”.

As regards “children’s preferences” the overwhelming majority of respondents (50%) say that cartoons are their favourite type of programme, while 17% say films. All other preferences are under 10%. Regarding inappropriate content, 13% of respondents say they have seen a pornographic film while 44% say they have seen a horror film.

When it comes to advertising, 60% of those interviewed said they switch channels when the ads come on and 72% consider there are too many ads during their favourite show. In response to the question “do you like watching ads on the TV?” only 8% replied in the affirmative, while 85% indicated that they don’t appreciate TV ads.

*“According to the study,
52% of Romanian
households with children
have two or more
television sets”*



An abstract drawing by a 6 year old

“The protection of the Romanian language.”

A partnership with the Romanian Academy of Sciences

As part of its role as “Guarantor of the Public Interest” in the audio-visual sector, the National Audio Visual Council has the legal obligation to “protect Romanian culture and language, as well as the languages and cultures of its national minorities.”

Starting from a phenomenon that is becoming more and more obvious, and disturbing, namely the incorrect use of the Romanian language on the nation’s TV and radio stations, CNA started a campaign to raise public awareness about the protection of the Romanian language.

In order to address this challenge a partnership agreement was entered into with the “Iorgu Iordan-Al. Rosetti” Linguistics Institute of the Romanian Academy of Sciences. The partnership agreement includes the monitoring of the main TV and radio stations in Romania (selected by the size of their audience rating) and the analysis of all language errors identified. The verbal and written messages on 12 TV stations and 6 radio stations, namely the messages those respective stations take responsibility for were monitored. The spoken comments of the guests were not included.

The first report by the specialists was presented to the National Audio-Visual Council on the 4th of November 2007, and resulted in the first penalties (fines) being given to certain broadcasters. The report that was presented to the press highlighted a series of linguistic errors made by various media presentors. The report also indicated another type of errors that are considered less serious in terms of style, verbal mistakes that were almost certainly made due to the emotions, pressure and haste that are the inevitable result of live broadcasts.

These errors can have a negative impact upon the audience and also on the broadcasting station. Viewers and listeners can become confused about the difference between correct syntax and incorrect speech; and the broadcasters themselves can lose a certain amount of credibility by being seen to condone incorrect verbal standards - which is almost certainly due to the lack of education, cultural knowledge and professionalism of their employees.

CNA will continue to try and help improve the quality of spoken Romanian language on the airwaves, and this requires consistency and perseverance. The partnership with the Romanian Academy of Sciences grants scientific legitimacy to an issue of genuine public interest, namely the defence of the Romanian language and making the broadcasters accountable in this respect.

A second report on linguistic mistakes will be drafted in cooperation with the Linguistics Institute experts and will be released in early 2008. CNA is committed to fulfilling its legal obligation to “monitor the accuracy of Romanian language” used in the audio-visual sector and to impose sanctions if necessary. The full report (in Romanian language only) can be found at the Council’s website on www.cna.ro

By Gabriela Stoica



“As part of its role as “Guarantor of the Public Interest” in the audio-visual sector, the National Audio Visual Council has the legal obligation to protect Romanian culture and language”

“TAMING THE TV”

A new brochure for primary school children



The cover of the brochure

The protection of minors from inappropriate TV content is one of CNA's top priorities. In order to inform children about the potential risks of too much TV, an illustrated story was published for distribution in the primary schools. The 16 page brochure was aimed at children aged 8 to 10 years old - the age group considered most receptive to messages about inappropriate TV.

The title of the brochure is “The taming of the TV” and the story is about a middle class boy called Matei who doesn't have any friends; he doesn't play outside and his life revolves around watching the TV.

Realising the problem, his parents decide to confiscate his TV and he has one last night with his programmes. But then he is sucked up into the inner world of the TV (called

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“Mondomedia”) and taken on a tour by Philo Farnsworth, the inventor of television.

He sees a dinosaur, a scene from an action film and is given the option of remaining forever inside the TV. He chooses to go home (in a rocket) and then decides for himself that he should go outside and play football, rather than switch on the set.

Although the story is aimed at primary school children, the overall package is aimed at teachers - as it is they who will deliver this material in class and discuss the issue with the children and parents.

Each brochure was packaged inside a presentation folder with the simple title “Children and the TV”, and a poster was inserted. “Teacher's Notes” were included in the brochure itself and one of the most interesting suggestions is to invite local TV producers to come and speak to the kids.

A total of 50,000 copies was printed and these were sent to primary schools in each of Romania's 42 counties. The brochure is also available in PDF format.

EU bans children's advertising

In recognition of the fact that children, and their parents are often the target of unscrupulous advertising, the EU has decided that each Member State must ban certain types of advertising that promote, for example, unhealthy food. It has been found that parents are coming under increasing pressure to buy those products which are promoted on the TV.

This EU directive applies to radio and TV stations, as well as internet sites.