

## Case Study Title: Faster Than a Speeding Airwave

**Article Information:** Please provide the information requested below for the four to five USA TODAY articles (from the printed newspaper) you've selected which were published between July 1, 2005 and March 1, 2006, focusing on a news topics relating to the Phi Theta Kappa Honors Study Topic, *Popular Culture: Shaping and Reflecting Who We Are*.

Article headline: Tech industry works to move Web content ...from here (Laptop)...to here (Video viewers)...to here (Televisions)...to here (Telephones)

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): Michelle Kessler, Jefferson Graham, Edward C. Baig

USA TODAY publication date: January 6, 2006

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): Money

USA TODAY page number: 1D

Article headline: XM, Sirius: Threshold of a 'radio revolution'?

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): Peter Johnson

USA TODAY publication date: January 9, 2006

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): Life

USA TODAY page number: 5D

Article headline: Teens hang out at MySpace

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): Janet Kornblum

USA TODAY publication date: January 9, 2006

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): Life

USA TODAY page number: 1D

Article headline: 'Unpredictable' Fugees phone it in--literally

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): Elysa Gardner

USA TODAY publication date: February 6, 2006

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): Life

USA TODAY page number: 1D

Article headline: Top popped on what cellphone technology can do for us

Byline (reporter(s)' name(s): Kevin Maney

USA TODAY publication date: March 1, 2006

Section (News, Money, Sports or Life): Money

USA TODAY page number: 3B

**Summary Statement:** The emergence of popular culture icon Howard Stern into the vastness of outer space through satellite radio forever changed America. Satellite radio is reshaping popular culture just as the telegraph did. A new technological way of life is appearing and there is no stopping it. Peter Johnson of USA Today said that just as Howard Stern retools his act for a new generation of listeners, so, too, is satellite radio recasting what radio means to Americans.

A symbol from earlier days of terrestrial radio, Stern crossed over to satellite radio, the future. Because popular culture reflects who we are, Sterns' leaping into the future of satellite

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broadcasting reflects how a society perceives itself. The restrictions of the Federal Communications Commission have given rise to an era of satellite where nothing is held back. It is a sensationalist culture now.

Those great satellites in the sky that are changing and reshaping our culture on the airwaves are also reshaping how we view our past. Superman claimed to be faster than a speeding bullet, but now airwaves are even faster than Superman. And faster than a speeding airwave, your favorite Superman episode can be downloaded on your cell phone. From reruns of I Love Lucy on a video iPod to a VCast exclusive of a live concert, people now have the power to decide what is important to them at their fingertips. “We’re living in the modern age now,” Wyclef Jean of the hip hop group Fugees said in an interview with Elysa Gardner of USA Today. “I call it the Year of the Matrix”. V Casting is eliminating the need for a traditional radio DJ according to Wyclef. “Now all our fans have to do is go to their phones and they’ll be the first ones to hear something.”

Never before has a generation been so in control of what comes into their lives. The blogosphere is the new ideology. Adolescents that use to ask their parents for advice now turn to each other in cyber hang-outs such as MySpace.com. It is parenting through the airwaves. Janet Kornblum said in USA Today that MySpace plans to expand to mobile devices and satellite radio. “Walk in on any teen using a PC with unrestricted Internet access and you’re likely to see the chaotic world of MySpace splashed across the screen,” Kornblum said.

Hollywood and movies that once were the cornerstone of all things popular culture are now simulcasting motion picture premiers on a computer screen. Popular culture will become even more globalized when people all over the world attend a world premier movie at the same time....online.

“Radio--traditional radio--has to be on its game as never before because it’s all becoming ‘radio’: AM, FM, satellite, Internet, cellphone, in-store, cable radio and things that haven’t even been invented,” Tom Taylor said in an interview with Johnson.

Look, up in the sky! Is it a satellite? No, it’s Superman and he’s coming to a cell phone near you!

### **Discussion Questions:**

1. From bobby socks to poodle skirts to mohawk hair cuts, popular culture has always defined youth. Do you think the rising cyber hang-outs like Myspace, Facebook and others define a new culture of youth? Why or why not.
2. In satellite radio, personalities such as Howard Stern can pretty much say whatever they want. Is this a good thing?
3. Do you think a college student or a business person could do without a cell phone or the internet for a day? A month?
4. Does downloading classic television shows or movies on a video iPod make it more accessible to watch?
5. So far satellite radio is only available by subscription. There is a monthly charge for cell phones and the internet. Do you feel this divides cultures into the haves and the have-

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nots? How can someone without these services still be a part of popular culture in their surroundings?

### **Future Implications:**

The unrestricted vastness of space holds enormous potential for the future of the earth's inhabitants. Popular culture will continue to be the uniting force behind globalization as citizens are linked together through technology.

While Americans and the world become connected through technology, society may become unconnected with the isolation of hand-held devices. Generations of cyber societies will define popular culture. Instead of the camaraderie that bonded generations together, now people visit websites devoted to popular culture and discuss it on weblogs.

Equipment that binds people together can also cause gaps in society as it is divided into the haves and the have-nots. Because cultures continue to evolve, this gap will have even more of an impact. Generational differences can also be a consequence on who is "computer literate".

"Groovy" "Far Out" and "What's Up" are words that identify popular culture. With new technology, expressions such as "Wi-Fi" "TiVo" and "Bluetooth" will characterize an up-to-the-minute generation.

Satellite radio and the internet allow people freedom of self-expression like never before. The significance of this liberty on civilization remains to be seen.

"Cyberspace is a real place, even if the entry gates come in the form of a PC," Kornblum said.

### **Additional Resources:**

Anderson, Brian. "We're Not Loosing the Culture Wars Anymore." City Journal. Autumn 2003. Pp. 14-30.

Cantor, Paul. Gilligan Unbound: Pop Culture in the Age of Globalization. 2001.

Fattah, Hassan. "America Untethered." American Demographics. March 2003. Pp. 35-59.

Fishwick, Marshall. Popular Culture: Cavespace to Cyberspace. 1999.

Lipsitz, George. Time Passages: Collective Memory and American Popular Culture. 1990.

Stone, Brad and Flynn, Emily, and Itoi, Kay and Lee, B.J. "Your Next Computer." Newsweek 07 June 2004: 15-54