

Broadcasting in a Time of Epochal Change

The reverberations of worldwide recession that began in the United States in the fall of 2008 have been felt in Japan's media industry. In addition to the intensifying competition in the media to diversify using the Internet and other technologies, the drop in advertising income resulting from the downturn in the business environment has made it increasingly difficult for newspapers and commercial broadcasting enterprises to make ends meet. The impact of the sudden worsening of the economy on the management of NHK, which had only just declared that it would decrease the receiving fees that provide its fiscal base for three years starting in 2009, is still difficult to assess. Amid these changes and uncertainties, Japan is planning to complete its shift to digital transmission for both terrestrial and satellite broadcasting by July 2011 according to national policy. The external environment of the media is in transition. We are in the midst of a time of major changes such as come only once a century.

Since its founding in 1946, the NHK Broadcasting Culture Research Institute has been engaged in research on the media not only in Japan but overseas and in research and surveys of domestic public opinion. It is important to keep up with the changing times, but we take pride in our efforts to take time to examine and assess the media, especially public service broadcasting, from an objective viewpoint.

This year's issue of *NHK Broadcasting Studies* features articles selected from among studies published by the Institute over the past year on the subjects of accountability in public service broadcasting, international television broadcasting in the East Asian region, attitudes and trends among bloggers in Japan (especially, "TV bloggers"), young people's perceptions of television in the era of the expanding Internet society, Japanese attitudes toward the environment, and the history of the stipulations on programming in Japan's Broadcast Law. Our contribution by an overseas specialist this year focuses on the value of research for the development of media for children. Of these, the study of accountability in public service broadcasting is a comparative study of initiatives in Sweden, Denmark, the United Kingdom, and Japan. The overview of international broadcasting in East Asia, too, introduces what has been accomplished in Japan, Korea, and China with details on NHK's recent efforts in strengthening its international broadcasting.

Featuring topics that touch on key concerns in the study of broadcasting, we hope you will find valuable information and insight in each of these articles.

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We look forward to receiving your constructive advice and comments as we strive to contribute to the broadcasting and media research communities through this publication.

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