

# The News Media: Communicating Political Images

## Chapter 10

# Historical Development: From the Nation's Founding to Today

- The objective-journalism era
  - Yellow journalism
  - Radio, the new mass communication system
  - The FCC and regulation
    - The Communications Act

# Historical Development: From the Nation's Founding to Today

- The rise of the “new” news
  - The end of the Fairness Doctrine
  - Cable news
    - CNN
      - Founded by Ted Turner in 1980
      - Chose to pursue a path of partisan neutrality
    - Fox News
      - Founded by Rupert Murdoch in 1996
      - Chose a partisan (conservative ) format

# Historical Development: From the Nation's Founding to Today

- The rise of the “new” news
  - Partisan radio talk shows
    - Without the Fairness Doctrine, radio programmers were free to move to a politically partisan format
  - Emergence of the Internet
    - Low-cost entry compared with other mass media
    - Some “new” news outlets a stunning success
      - The Drudge Report, Daily Kos, Instapundit

# Journalism and Politics

- The signaling function
  - Alert the public to important developments
  - U.S. media well-equipped to play this role
  - Performed by the traditional media
    - Wire services (AP, UPI, Reuters)
    - Daily newspapers
    - Television networks

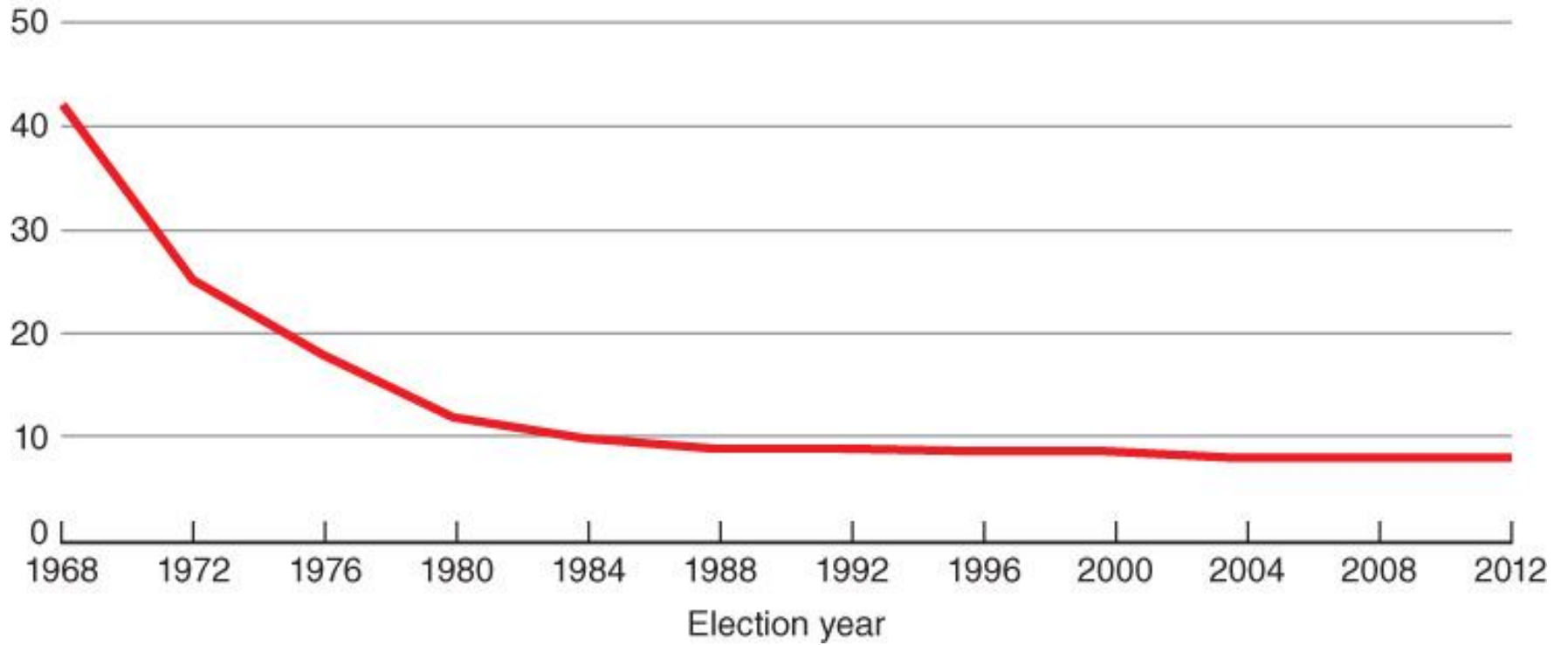
# Journalism and Politics

- The signaling function
  - Agenda-setting of U.S. media results in similarity in national news everywhere
  - News media are meant to inform the public, but also need to attract an audience
  - Media focus on politics instead of policy

# Journalism and Politics

- The common-carrier function
  - Conduit for political communication
  - TV news has become more journalist-centered
  - Topics sometimes distilled to the “sound bite”
  - Framing: the way events are cast
  - Priming: the process by which a communicated message, because of its content, activates certain opinions but not others

Average sound bite in seconds



# Journalism and Politics

- The watchdog function
  - Objective journalism fosters watchdog reporting
    - Watergate
  - Watchdog function failures
    - Post-9/11 terrorist attacks
  - Internet has expanded watchdog capacity of media

# Journalism and Politics

- The partisan function
  - Traditional media: mostly neutral
  - Talk shows: mostly conservative
  - The Internet: mostly liberal

# The News Audience

- The partisan divide
  - Until the 1980s Americans had three TV networks
    - Huge daily audiences—newscasts varied only slightly
    - Viewers exposed to the views of both political parties
  - Patterns disrupted
    - Fairness Doctrine rescinded
    - The emergence of cable TV and the Internet

# The News Audience

- The information divide
  - More news outlets, yet viewers less informed
  - Fragmented news sources have led to partisan polarization among audience
  - More news available, but alternate programming aids avoidance of news