

record, and to offer measured and qualified conjectures when necessary to explain events.

This account exemplifies the best of journalism history by tackling a subject of true significance with a range that reaches beyond the discipline. It will deservedly endure as the definitive work about this neglected but vital subject.

Someday, perhaps, an equally thorough account will be written of what news was also "buried" during the U.S. invasion of Iraq. Too bad such stories can't be told in real time when it is still possible to alter the outcome.

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■ ***Competitive Strategy for Media Firms: Strategic and Brand Management in Changing Media Markets.*** Sylvia M. Chan-Olmsted. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2006. 256 pp. \$27.50 pbk.

Competitive Strategy for Media Firms: Strategic and Brand Management in Changing Media Markets is a book with a narrow mission, and it sticks closely to that mission. The author, Sylvia M. Chan-Olmsted of the University of Florida, specializes in the study of competition within the electronic-media industries. Her book, therefore, focuses tightly on the strategies that businesses within those industries are using to remain competitive in a changing digital-media marketplace.

The book is divided into two parts, with the first section helping to prepare the reader for the second section. The early chapters are primers on the ideas that she explores in more detail in later chapters. These primers cover basic concepts and terminology related to strategy, strategic management, diversification, mergers and acquisitions, networks and alliances, and

brand management. The goal is to get the reader up to speed on the essentials of strategy and brand management.

The subsequent chapters, then, examine strategy and brand management for key businesses or markets in the electronic-media industries. These include broadcasting, multi-channel video, enhanced television, broadband, and global conglomerates. A recurring theme in each chapter is technological change—more specifically, how new digital technologies are influencing the ways that these businesses are conducting their business. The book concludes by summarizing trends within the electronic-media industries and with Chan-Olmsted's thoughts about the theoretical frameworks and methods that scholars might use in studying the strategic management of businesses in these industries.

The heart of the book is its synthesis and analysis of research that's been conducted on competition, strategy, and related issues. A significant amount of that research was done by Chan-Olmsted and the various coauthors with whom she has worked. In the fifteen years since completing her doctorate at Michigan State University, she has built a research agenda around understanding how firms in the telecommunications sector try to organize themselves and compete with one another. Her research has a reputation for being thoughtful, rigorous, thorough, and detailed. It is scholarship that seldom shies from the intricacy of its subject matter.

All of that is true of *Competitive Strategy for Media Firms*, as well. Strategy, competition, brand management, and the like are complicated topics, and her discussions in the book remain faithful to that complexity. For that reason, the book would be most appropriate for scholars and students—probably graduate students—with a strong commitment to understanding the management or economics of the electronic-media industries.

The book is unlikely to appeal to a reader with a casual interest in the subject.

Another hallmark of the book is that it is current and comprehensive—within the intellectual boundaries that the author sets out to explore, of course. In the book, Chan-Olmsted is diligent about acknowledging the latest critical developments within an industry, the most popular theoretical perspectives that have been used to study a problem, and the most recent research available about an issue. That said, the speed of technology-driven change is practically breakneck within these industries, and occasionally events have superceded the analysis she has provided.

In the end, though, *Competitive Strategy for Media Firms* accomplishes the main goals Chan-Olmsted sets out in the book. It retains its tight focus on strategy and brand management; it explores the impact of technological change on the competitive strategies of media businesses and on media markets; and it shows how business frameworks and concepts can be applied to research on strategic competition for media organizations and within media markets.

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- *Defending the First: Commentary on First Amendment Issues and Cases.* Joseph Russomanno, ed. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005. 232 pp. \$79.95 cloth.

When Rodney A. Smolla stood before the U.S. Supreme Court to defend the First Amendment rights of three cross burners in 2002, he engaged in a sort of legal tennis match. With lightening quick reflexes, he assessed and responded to his adversary's arguments and to the questions served by the justices. He won

some points, and he lost others. Ultimately he lost the match.

In one of a collection of articles in *Defending the First: Commentary on First Amendment Issues and Cases*, Smolla, dean of the University of Richmond School of Law and a renowned First Amendment advocate, recounts his experience arguing before the Supreme Court in *Virginia v. Black*. His play-by-play account is fascinating. He confesses that he totally misjudged Justice Clarence Thomas's inclination toward the issues in the case, describes one of his own responses to a question as "mealy-mouthed," and bluntly criticizes his opponent's performance. The best part of Smolla's story is his candid description of what he was thinking as the argument progressed. For a non-lawyer, and I imagine for many lawyers, this discussion is totally engaging.

Defending the First is a collection of articles written by First Amendment advocates and scholars to explore some of the current questions about First Amendment principles. It is intended to serve either as an exciting introduction to the field or a thought-provoking reexamination of some well-known cases, depending on who is reading. The best articles in this book are those written by attorneys about cases they argued before the Supreme Court. Jerome A. Barron writes about *Tornillo v. Miami Herald Publishing Co.*, Elliot C. Rothenberg writes about *Cohen v. Cowles Media Co.*, and Don Johnston writes about *Tinker v. Des Moines Independent Community School District*, for example.

Rothenberg's insider perspective on *Cohen* is especially interesting for media law scholars and students because Rothenberg represented plaintiff Dan Cohen, not the newspapers Cohen sued after they broke their promises not to reveal that he was their source of embarrassing information about a political candidate. Interestingly, Rothenberg claims he was the one defending the First Amendment and is highly critical of the