

Research techniques for the media industries

Introduction

Media production is a complex process and research is the starting point for productions of any scale. The films and television programmes that we watch, the radio programmes and podcasts that we listen to, the newspapers and magazines that we read and the websites and computer games that we interact with have all been thoroughly researched and planned in the pre-production stages.

In the first part of this unit you will learn about the different purposes of research within the media industries. For example, research is used to assess the financial viability of a planned production, to gather a range of information relevant to the content of the production, or to allow for the effective planning of a production schedule. There are also media companies who conduct extensive market research in order to gather data about audience consumption of media products and services.

In the second part of this unit you will have the opportunity to further develop your research skills and apply them to your own media production work. You will also learn how to use market research intelligence to further improve the effectiveness of your media products.

The final part of the unit will show you different ways in which you can present the results of your research.

After completing this unit you should be able to achieve the following outcomes:

- Understand the purposes of research in the media industries
- Be able to apply a range of research methods and techniques
- Be able to present results of research





Think it over

Media products are often very expensive and time-consuming to produce, and there is a lot of pressure on the people who plan and make them to get them right. A major Hollywood film such as *King Kong*, which cost over \$200 million to produce and a further \$50 million to promote, needs to attract a large cinema audience to begin to recover these costs and also earn additional revenue from DVD rental and purchase sales. Can you think of any other ways in which the producers of the film can earn extra revenue?

Similarly, the companies who have paid money to have their products and services advertised in a glossy lifestyle magazine or prime-time soap, expect and demand a quality product that will reach their desired audience.

Because of these pressures and demands, media companies put a lot of time and effort into thoroughly researching a product to ensure that it will attract the right audience and that this audience will react to it in the appropriate way. They also plan the production process thoroughly, and make use of the latest technology and techniques to ensure that their product has the desired values to compete effectively in the media marketplace.

As you learn about the different research methods and techniques that are used, you should be thinking about the relevance that they have to your own production work in the other units. You should also think about how you can use both market research and production research to improve the quality and effectiveness of your own media products.

1.1 Understand the purposes of research in the media industries

Purposes of research

There are two main forms of research undertaken by the media industries. The first is called *market research* and the second *production research*. It is important that you understand the purposes of each of these forms of research and what they involve.

Key Terms

Market research is the collection and analysis of information about the market within which a particular product will compete with other products for an audience and for revenue.

Production research is related to the production process itself.

Market research

Effective and successful media products target the right audience and communicate to them in an effective way. As the media industry becomes more fragmented so competition for a share of the audience becomes more intense. Knowing who your target audience are, and what makes them tick, is therefore increasingly important.

Market research involves looking at:

- statistical data about audience size and composition for a particular media product (for example how many people read *The Sun* newspaper and what sort of people they are)
- the extent to which a potential audience are aware of a media product or service (for example how many people are aware of new digital radio channels that are available)
- what people think about particular products and services and what their patterns of behaviour are (for example what people think about broadband Internet technology and what they use it for)
- market competitors who are competing for a share of the audience and revenue with similar products

(for example a company launching a new lifestyle magazine will want to be fully informed about other similar magazines).

The media marketplace is highly competitive and media producers will often undertake detailed research into their target market, or more commonly commission other companies to undertake research on their behalf.



Think it over

Why do you think media producers employ other companies and organisations to carry out research on their behalf? What are the advantages and disadvantages of this approach?

Market research organisations

There are various organisations whose main role is to undertake market research on media audiences and products. The findings of their research often become a commercial product in its own right that is then sold on to media companies.

Some of this information is also freely available to the public. You can find examples by visiting the websites of the organisations listed below, as well as looking in the media pages of newspapers such as *The Guardian* and *The Independent*, and in specialist magazines such as *Broadcast*.

Key Terms

National Readership Survey (NRS) provides information to the industry on who reads what publication.

Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC) provides circulation information to the newspaper and magazine industry.

Key Terms

Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB)

provides estimates of the number of people watching television programmes.

Radio Joint Audience Research Limited (RAJAR)

provides estimates of the number of people listening to radio programmes.

The **National Readership Survey (NRS)** is a non-profit-making organisation that provides information to the industry on who reads what publication. (See Figure 1.01) They provide a market breakdown of the readership of each newspaper and magazine according to such factors as gender, age, social class and many other demographic and lifestyle characteristics. This information is invaluable to companies and agencies that are planning, buying and selling advertising in the print medium, as the data allows them to target the right audience more effectively.

The NRS publishes data covering over 250 newspapers, newspaper supplements and consumer magazines, which is made available to its subscribers via its website.

The **Audit Bureau of Circulation (ABC)** also provides circulation information to the newspaper and magazine industry and includes directories, leaflets, exhibitions and websites in its range of products researched. It was launched in 1931 in response to demands from the advertising industry for independent verification of the circulation and readership claims made by the sales teams of newspapers and magazines.

The **Broadcasters' Audience Research Board (BARB)** is used by the BBC and independent broadcasters to provide estimates of the number of people watching their programmes. The data produced includes which channels and programmes are being watched at a specific time, and a breakdown of the type of people who are watching a particular programme. BARB provides television audience data for all analogue and digital channels received within the UK. The information is obtained from panels of viewers from selected television-owning households, representative of each ITV and BBC region. The data produced by the research represents the viewing behaviour of over 25 million households within the UK

Radio Joint Audience Research Limited (RAJAR) was established in 1992 to operate a single audience measurement system for the radio industry, including all BBC, UK-licensed and other commercial stations. The

Title	Readers		ABC1		C2DE		15-44		44+		Male		Female	
	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%	000s	%
<i>Take a Break</i>	3354	7.0	1215	4.6	2139	9.9	1821	7.6	1533	6.4	456	2.0	2898	11.7
<i>OK</i>	2452	5.1	1416	5.4	1037	4.8	1907	7.9	546	2.3	366	1.6	2087	8.4
<i>Radio Times</i>	2876	6.0	2168	8.2	708	3.3	978	4.1	1898	7.9	1365	5.9	1511	6.1
<i>Nuts</i>	1271	2.6	602	2.3	669	3.1	1194	5.0	77	0.3	1086	4.7	185	0.7
<i>Auto Trader</i>	1590	3.3	780	3.0	810	3.7	1299	5.4	291	1.2	1272	5.5	318	1.3
<i>The Sun</i>	7874	16.4	2899	11.0	4975	22.9	4785	19.8	3089	12.9	4627	19.8	3247	13.1
<i>Daily Mail</i>	5364	11.2	3472	13.2	1892	8.7	1713	7.1	3650	15.2	2560	11.0	2803	11.3
<i>The Guardian</i>	1190	2.5	1072	4.1	117	0.5	646	2.7	543	2.3	697	3.0	492	2.0

Figure 1.01: Table from NRS showing selection of magazines and newspapers (Source: NRS)

company is owned by the Commercial Radio Companies Association (CRCA) and the British Broadcasting Corporation (BBC).

In addition to these organisations, there are a growing number of commercial agencies that offer research and analysis services to media producers, advertisers and regulators.



Theory into practice

Carry out an Internet search for the names and details of some of the commercial companies that offer a market research service to media companies. What range of services do they offer?



	Average weekly viewing per person		Share of total viewing	
	October (Hrs:Mins)	September (Hrs:Mins)	October (%)	September (%)
ALL TV	27:27	28:06	100.0	100.0
BBC 1	6:10	6:15	22.5	22.3
BBC 2	2:25	2:27	8.8	8.8
TOTAL BBC 1/2	8:36	8:42	31.3	31.0
ITV	5:24	5:23	19.7	19.2
Channel 4/S4C	2:30	2:58	9.1	10.6
Five	1:30	1:30	5.5	5.3
TOTAL Terrestrial TV	9:24	9:51	34.3	35.1
Other viewing	9:27	9:31	34.5	33.9

Figure 1.02: Share of viewing times of the different terrestrial TV channels in January/February 2007 (Source: BARB)

Station	Weekly reach of adults		Average hours	Share of listening
	000s	% of population		
All radio	45,045	90	23.5	100
All BBC	32,810	66	17.5	54.4
All BBC Network	28,711	58	16.2	44.0
BBC local/regional	10,262	21	10.7	10.4
All commercial	31,346	63	14.6	43.2
All national commercial	13,318	27	8.3	10.5
All local commercial	25,772	52	13.4	32.8
BBC Radio 1	10,262	21	10.0	9.7
BBC Radio 2	13,269	27	12.6	15.8
BBC Radio 3	2,028	4	7.1	1.4
BBC Radio 4	9,342	19	12.5	11.1
BBC Radio Five Live	5,846	12	8.0	4.4

Figure 1.03: Summary of radio audience figures for the quarter ending December 2006 (Source: RAJAR)



grading tips

Grading Tip **m**

You should explain, rather than simply describe, the range of services offered using well chosen examples, expressing your ideas with clarity and with the correct use of subject terminology.

■ Audience segmentation

Segmenting the audience into different categories makes it easier for media producers to identify and target groups of people with the same needs and wants. Those undertaking research within, or on behalf of, media organisations therefore look for categories they can use to divide up the potential audience.

Common classifications include:

- age
- gender
- culture and ethnicity (ethnographic classification)
- income and social class (socio-economic classification).

Age

One of the most significant and often used categories within the media is that of age. A common division used by media researchers is:

15 years or younger, 16–24 years, 25–44 years, 45–64 years, 65 years and over. However, individual pieces of research will use age divisions that are most appropriate for the task.

For example, research into the impact of advertising on young children will need to sub-divide the 15 years or younger category. Also, a company who is looking at the so-called 'grey' market of over-55s may find it useful to know what people in the 55–60 years age category think about a particular product compared to those who are aged 65–70 years.

Other more general age-related categories can also be used (such as pre-school children, school children, teenagers, pensioners). The regulatory framework can also sometimes be a factor, as in the different age categories used by the British Board of Film Classification (BBFC).

Many advertisers are also interested in what different age groups are reading, listening to, watching and playing, as they can then decide whether or not to advertise their products and services via these media.



Theory into practice

Conduct some research of your own to find examples of advertising that is clearly targeted at a specific age group. Try to include a range of different media.

For printed media you could look in a selection of comics, newspapers and magazines to see if there is a clear relationship between the types of products advertised and the target readership.

You could also record a selection of different television programmes from a commercial station to see what advertising and sponsorship they attract, and look at the pop-ups and banner advertising within a range of different websites.



▲ **Figure 1.04:** The BBFC put an age category on all films, videos and DVDs that are shown and offered for sale and rent in the UK, and are now classifying many video and computer games



grading tips

Grading Tip **m**₂

You should apply the research methods and techniques competently and with only occasional assistance.

Gender

Gender (whether a person is male or female) is also a significant category for audience segmentation as many media products are targeted at a specific gender group. This is perhaps most clearly seen within the magazine market, which has specific products targeted at men and others targeted at women. Of course, this does not mean that men do not read *OK* magazine or that no women read *Four Four Two* football magazine – we should be careful of outdated gender stereotypes.



Theory into practice

Look at a range of magazines and identify some of the ways in which they try to target men and women.

Assess how successful you think they have been. **p**



▲ **Figure 1.05:** It is often clear from the front cover of a magazine which gender it is trying to attract

Culture and ethnicity

Today's media industries operate in a global marketplace. Newspapers, magazines, radio and television programmes from all over the world are readily available to people living in the UK.

Media producers will also try and sell their products to audiences all over the world. There is also a growing production base in the UK for media products that target different cultures and ethnic groups.



Case study

UK Bollywood

'Bollywood' is a term used to describe the Indian film industry and is a play on the term 'Hollywood'. It is the largest and most productive film industry in the world; in 1990 it produced over 800 films. Bollywood's cinema-going audience, in India, Pakistan and elsewhere, is also one of the biggest in the world.

Just like Hollywood, Bollywood has large production studios and huge stars, capable of making expensive, commercial movies. Although the output from these studios can be very diverse, the characteristics that are commonly associated with Bollywood films include epic romances that involve mythological and theological characters, and extensive use of song and dance sequences with elaborate costumes.

The UK market for Bollywood films is expanding. The Leicester-based organisation *FilmPur* has developed into a widely recognised gateway for the industry that connects Britain and the Indian sub-continent. It provides Bollywood film producers who are looking to shoot within the UK and Europe with details and contacts for locations, crew and services, thereby serving as a 'one-stop-shop' for all production requirements. Further information can be found on their website (www.filmpur.com).

- **What are the main conventions of a Bollywood film?**
- **Why have Bollywood films become more popular in the UK in recent years?**
- **What other media products have been influenced by Bollywood?**

Income and social class

The potential audience can also be segmented according to annual salary or type of job and social class. Establishing a person's disposable income can be important, particularly for advertisers who need to target the relevant income group as precisely as possible. It is no good advertising a top-of-the-range sports car to households that have a low disposable income.

Most organisations involved with media research and production use the socio-economic groups A, B, C1, C2, D and E to identify and describe the different audience groupings according to income and social class. If you have studied the media before then you will already be familiar with these socio-economic groupings. The table below (Figure 1.07) describes what these categories stand for.

Sometimes the different categories are combined to simplify the data produced. For example, the table showing readership profiles produced by the NRS on page XX has segmented the readership into two distinct groups: ABC1 and C2DE.

Social grade	Social status	Chief income earner's occupation
A	Upper middle class	Higher managerial, administrative or professional
B	Middle class	Intermediate managerial, administrative or professional
C1	Lower middle class	Supervisory or clerical and junior managerial, administrative or professional
C2	Skilled working class	Skilled manual workers
D	Working class	Semi-skilled and unskilled manual workers
E	Those at the lowest levels of subsistence	State pensioners or widows (no other earner), casual or lowest grade workers

Figure 1.06: Commonly used categories for segmenting an audience according to social class (Source: NRS website)

Advertising

Advertising is an important source of income for many of the media products that we watch, listen to, read and interact with. You only have to look at a popular lifestyle magazine such as *Marie Claire* to see the amount of pages that are dedicated to advertising. Each of these pages is a valuable source of income for the publishers.

Turn on any commercial television station and tune into any commercial radio station and you will soon notice the amount of advertising space that is available.



Theory into practice

Explain why advertising has become such an important part of the media products that we consume.

Do you think advertising is more or less effective than it used to be?

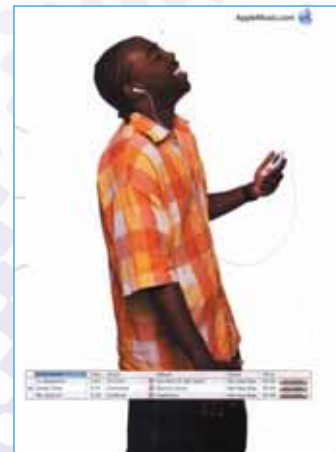


Figure 1.07: Advertising is a common feature in most media texts

Reaching an audience

Advertisers are attracted to media products such as newspapers, magazines, broadcast programmes and websites because they deliver a ready-made audience to them. A popular programme such as *Coronation Street* is watched by around 12 million people, and this is clearly of interest to companies such as *Cadbury*, who have sponsored the programme for over 10 years.

However, sponsors are also very sensitive to public opinion and will withdraw their money and support if they believe that the media product is unsuitable. One of the most infamous examples of this in recent years was in January 2007 when the company *Carphone Warehouse* withdrew its sponsorship of *Celebrity Big Brother* halfway through the series. This was in response to public criticism of the programme for allowing allegedly racist comments to be broadcast.



▲ **Figure 1.08: *Celebrity Big Brother* lost its makers a lucrative sponsorship deal in 2007 following allegations of racism**



Theory into practice

Find examples of different sorts of advertising within a range of media texts. Consider how effectively these adverts get their message across to the intended audience.



Predicting accurately how many viewers and listeners a particular programme is going to attract, and knowing how many actually did view or listen, is clearly very important information to the companies who are buying advertising space and time within the programmes and products. The same goes for magazines, newspapers, comics, websites and other commercial media products that rely on advertising revenue. Predicting and then verifying circulation, readership and rating figures

is clearly a very important purpose of much media research.

Finding the right audience

However, advertisers are not only interested in the size of the target audience but, perhaps more importantly, the demographic make-up of that audience. It is no good advertising *Saga* holidays for the over-50s to an audience of children and teenagers, however large that audience may be. And the advertising agency charged with promoting holidays for the '18–30' age group would probably not choose to advertise within a religious broadcast targeted at the 35s and over. Finding out detailed, demographic information about the audience is therefore an important purpose of media research.

Knowing your competitors

If a media organisation is planning the launch of a new product then they will also require information on how existing products compare with each other, how successful they are and what the target audience thinks about these products. Investigating and comparing existing media products within the competitive marketplace is another key purpose of media research.

It is not only commercial media organisations that undertake and commission media research. The BBC derives the bulk of its income from the licence fee since it does not have any advertising revenue to support its terrestrial broadcasting services. However, it is still in competition with commercial broadcasters. The BBC therefore needs research data to demonstrate its continued popularity, to show that it is providing a service to the public, and to support the political argument for its continued status as a public service broadcaster in an increasingly competitive and market-driven world.



Theory into practice

Research and compare the latest viewing and listening figures for a range of commercial and BBC programmes. What do the figures tell you about the different programmes?





Think it over

Consider the future of the BBC in an increasingly competitive marketplace.

The future of the BBC is always a hot topic of conversation and you should be able to find a range of different viewpoints in the newspapers and on the Internet.

Consider the different points of view and try to understand the various ideas and positions about what the role of the BBC is and how it should operate. For example, should the BBC be allowed to carry advertising on its terrestrial services?



▲ Figure 1.09: The BBC has a unique status in the competitive media market

The second main type of research is that related to the production process itself.

When planning a new media product the company making the programme, film, magazine, website or game will need to undertake a great deal of product research.

This is in order to:

- provide content and gather material to allow them to write and develop the new product
- research the commercial viability of actually making the product
- thoroughly research and plan the production and post-production stages to ensure that it all runs as smoothly as possible.

Some of this research will be generic, but much of it will depend on the type of product being planned.

For example, a journalist asked to write an article about a new piece of government legislation and its impact on people might have to do some very quick research to be able to write the copy. He or she might use secondary research to find out more specific information about the legislation and the background issues, as well as conducting some primary research in the form of interviews with politicians and sample members of the population to try to understand the potential impact. The information gained can then be used to inform the writing, with some of the quotes used in the article itself. Some form of picture research might also be undertaken to find a suitable image to accompany the article.

A documentary filmmaker will also undertake both primary and secondary research but may have a little more time to do so. As well as researching for the content of the documentary, he or she may also have to undertake research into the cost of hiring equipment and personnel to shoot the documentary as well as the post-production and distribution services required. In addition, the filmmaker will almost certainly have to undertake some location research (called a recce) to identify suitable venues for filming to take place, assist in the planning of specific shots, and assess any problems or health and safety issues that the crew might face.



Theory into practice

Write a list of the problems a crew might face when out on location. How might a recce help to overcome some of these?



grading tips

Grading Tip **m**₁

You should explain, rather than simply describe, the problems a crew might face when out on location and how a recce would help to overcome some of these.



grading tips

Grading Tip **d**₁

You should fully explain the problems and the ways in which a recce can help overcome them, using clear examples to support what you are saying. You should express your ideas fluently using correct subject terminology.

The amount of information that is gathered during the process of production research can often be huge, particularly if the production is a complex one that involves many different aspects. It is therefore important that all of the information is carefully logged, organised and stored to ensure it is secure, while also allowing easy access and cross-referencing.



Case study

Careers in research

There are hundreds of market research agencies in the UK, from large international companies to smaller consultancies. The largest market research agencies now commonly take on graduates every year; some have year-round recruitment procedures but places are much sought-after so you have to make sure you are right for the job. Get some work experience in a firm before you apply – it will give the impression that you are really keen!

As a researcher in an agency you will oversee a number of client accounts, working on a variety of projects in, quite possibly, a range of different industries. Most people in the agency will be pursuing the same career path as you and you may have the opportunity to move between different research sectors, giving you a broad experience of research techniques.

Virtually every company in the UK uses market research. As a result, many of these companies, particularly the larger ones, will employ their own researchers, usually one or two.

■ The role of a researcher

Some radio and television productions employ researchers as part of their pre-production team.

The role of a researcher on a television programme such as the talk show *Trisha* is to find out background information about the themes that are going to be covered in a particular show, and to contact and interview potential guests to find out what their stories are and whether they would be suitable for the show.

The reality programme *Big Brother* employed a team of researchers and research assistants to sift through and interview potential housemates.

Researchers are also employed on radio programmes such as *Today* on Radio 4 and *Newsbeat* on Radio 1, to find out information about the stories of the day, make contact with potential sources of information and arrange interviews.

In this role, you will be expected to keep the company in touch with its customers and informed of its investment and marketing decisions. You will commission researchers in external agencies to work on behalf of your company, as well as organising internal research among staff and customers. You will gain a close knowledge of your company's overall way of working and play a key role in shaping its future development.

Day-to-day role

You'll start off as a Research Executive, overseeing the day-to-day smooth running of specific projects, from the commissioning stages right through to the final presentation to the client.

Your role is likely to include: designing the best way to fulfil a client's need; managing the budget; advising on questionnaire design; briefing interviewers (the people who hold the clipboards); monitoring the conduct of the research process; checking and analysing data; and writing a results and recommendation paper for your client, which you may also have to present to them.

The type of research you are involved in will determine the specific tasks you undertake, but your days will definitely be full and varied.

Career path

Market research is far from a desk-bound career. As you progress you'll be expected to have increasing levels of client contact. Depending on your clients, this could involve a fair amount of national and international travel. You'll also have to make presentations to clients, meet interviewers and respondents, and visit appropriate research venues.

Career progression in market research can be very rapid! As a general rule, you can expect to be a Research Executive for 18 months, after which time you will become a Senior Research Executive. From then on, most companies base promotion on merit,

so you can progress as quickly as the quality of your work and opportunities permit. It wouldn't be unusual for you to be holding responsibility for accounts and managing a team by the time you are 30 years old.

Once you've gained a range of experience, you could find yourself making the brave move of going it alone and setting up your own agency. This is a popular route and will allow you to pick and choose the projects you work on and the hours you put in – something to bear in mind during the long months of summer.

- **What skills do you need to be a successful researcher?**
- **What tasks does a researcher undertake?**
- **Why is the role of researcher such a good introduction to working in the media?**

■ Viability

Another important purpose of production research is to demonstrate that your planned product is viable (workable).

You need to test the viability of your product at a number of different levels:

- Is the product financially viable?
- Do you have the necessary skills to undertake the production process?
- Do you have the right equipment and technology available to you?
- What help and support will you require?
- Have you got enough time to produce the product?

Income

In terms of financial viability, you will need to explore the different ways in which you can fund or generate income from your product and then balance the amount of income that it is likely to generate against the costs of production and distribution. This will show to what extent your proposed product would be viable were it to be launched into the competitive media market.

As we noted earlier, advertising is a crucial source of income for many of the media products that we watch,



Theory into practice

Write a list of the potential sources of income that are available to your type of media product.

How much income do you think you could generate from these sources?

What would you need to do to try to get this income?



listen to, read and interact with. Turn on any commercial radio or television station and open any magazine or newspaper and you will soon notice the amount of advertising space that is available. Many websites also have advertising within them – perhaps you are familiar with the plague of 'pop-ups' that seems to be growing in number.

Sponsorship of individual products by commercial companies is becoming increasingly popular and should be seen as a potential income source.



Think it over

The *Guardian* newspaper has a dedicated sponsorship team who offer a range of sponsorship solutions within its newspapers and websites. These include the sponsorship of supplements, advertisement promotions and microsites.

Money from the direct sale of the product to the consumer is also an important source of income that you need to explore. Most newspapers and magazines have a cover price, and some television programmes and websites have a subscription fee or are operated on a pay-per-view basis. Films, television programmes and radio shows can also earn income from the sale and rental of video, DVD and CD copies.



Think it over


Pixar, the company that made the animated film *The Incredibles*, reported that it had sold almost 18 million copies on DVD by the end of 2005. Sales of the DVD helped the company to triple its annual profits.

Other potential sources of income for a media product include merchandising, running competitions, and the income generated through premium phone lines.

You should also research the availability of grants, loans and commissions that might be available to help support the costs of media production. There are a number of public and private schemes that are designed to support creative production, including those run by the Arts Council, the British Film Institute and the National Lottery.



Theory into practice

Carry out some research to find current information about potential sources of production funding. 

Costs

The costs of producing your product also need careful researching.


Some of the different sources of expenditure will depend on the product you are making, but many are common to all forms of media production. For example, if you were going to launch a new media product onto the market, whether a newspaper, magazine, television programme, audio product, game or website, you would need to employ people to get your product off the ground and up and running.

- **Staffing**

You would need creative people to help research and develop your ideas, technical expertise to assist in the production stages, and then marketing people to help sell your product and generate income from advertising, sales and merchandising.



Theory into practice

Write down the different roles that you would need people to undertake if you were to launch your proposed product onto the market. 

- **Production equipment**

Staffing is only one of the costs of course, and any media product will require the use of some form of production equipment.

Audio and moving image products will require the use of various types of recording and editing equipment. A range of hardware and software options are available for print and multimedia production.

For the production work that you complete as a student for this qualification you will probably be able to borrow the necessary equipment from your school or college. However, if you were working as an independent producer then your equipment would have to be purchased or hired for the duration of the production process. You would therefore have to research the costs in advance so that you can budget for them.



Think it over

If you are producing a print-based product such as a newspaper or magazine, then you would need to employ a team of journalists to produce the copy and perhaps a photographer to provide the pictures. You would also need some editing and sub-editing staff, and a designer or two to make sure it looked good and attracted the right audience.

For moving image products, the size of your crew would depend on the size and scale of the production itself and the funds that you have available.

Many small independent production houses will employ only a handful of people who are multi-skilled and able to undertake a number of different roles. Most of these will be employed on a freelance basis and hired only to do a specific role on a specific project.

Broadcast television programmes are likely to have larger crews, and as a result higher production costs and the need to secure a higher budget.



▲ **Figure 1.10: A production team need to work together with each individual knowing his or her own role inside out**

- **Skills audit**

Having access to the right equipment is essential, but you also need to have the necessary skills to be able to use it effectively.

An important first step is to assess your initial skill level. You will then be able to plan what skills you need to develop further and how you will be able to do this. This process can also help identify any skills gaps you have and those areas in which you might require extra help and support from other people.



Theory into practice

Carry out an initial skills audit.

To do this you will need to do the following:

1. List all the equipment you already have experience of using.
2. Describe the level of media production skills and techniques you already have for each item of equipment.
3. Identify any gaps and any areas that you need to develop further.
4. Draw up an action plan to further develop your existing skills and to fill any gaps that you have identified.

Try to use **SMART** targets in your action plan.

This means they need to be **S**pecific, **M**easurable, **A**chievable and **R**ealistic, and carried out within an appropriate **T**imescale.

You might wish to use a **SWOT** analysis when doing your initial skills audit. Here you identify the *strengths* that you already have and the *weaknesses* that you will need to improve. You can then identify the *opportunities* that are available to you (resources, workshops, support) and any *threats* (barriers) that might get in the way.



- **Copyright**

When planning your product and drawing up the budget, you also need to take account of the potential costs of using copyright material.

Much of your material will probably be original material that you and your team produce yourself. However, you may also want to use some copyright material, such as a still from a feature film or a clip from a song.

Key Terms

Copyright is a type of intellectual property that cannot normally be used without the permission of the owner.

Like other forms of intellectual property, copyright can be bought and sold. Copyright owners can choose to licence others to use their work while retaining copyright ownership over the rights themselves.

One of the ways of using material that is under copyright is to write to the copyright holder and ask permission to use the material. You will often have to make a payment for the right to use the material.

You can find more information on copyright and other forms of intellectual property, such as logos and trademarks, on the UK Patent Office website (www.patent.gov.uk).

• Distribution costs

Having budgeted for the production costs associated with your product, you will also need to research the costs of distribution or placing your product within the market.

It is one thing paying for the production of a radio, television or print-based advert, but you also have to research the costs of buying space and air-time within a specific media form.

Again, the budget you have available to you will dictate what you can and cannot do. For example, to buy a 30-second slot within a drive-time local commercial radio show would cost around £20, so you could get a solid campaign for a few hundred pounds a week. Larger regional and national stations are more expensive and a similar campaign could cost between £1500 and £2000 a week. Similarly, a full-page monotone advert in a local newspaper such as the *Nottingham Evening Post* would cost around £5000, compared to over £20,000 for a full-colour advert in a national magazine such as *Cosmopolitan*.



Case study

Budgeting for copyright

John, a student on a BTEC Media Production course similar to your own, needed to research the viability of an audio product for Unit 44.

He researched the cost of purchasing the right to use a range of different songs in the product. He found that using a current top-10 track would cost several thousand pounds and was therefore way outside his budget.

John then found some cheaper music that was produced by a relatively unknown artist and which would cost a much more realistic £100 for permission to use in the product.

However, John also found some copyright-free music on a CD that came with a music technology magazine. He decided to go with this option instead since it meant that he then had more money to spend on the production.

- What else is covered by copyright?
- What do you need to do if you want to use copyright material?
- What does the copyright symbol look like?



Theory into practice

Do some research of your own to find out the different costs of buying advertising time in a range of different media products.

To what extent do you think they provide good value for money?



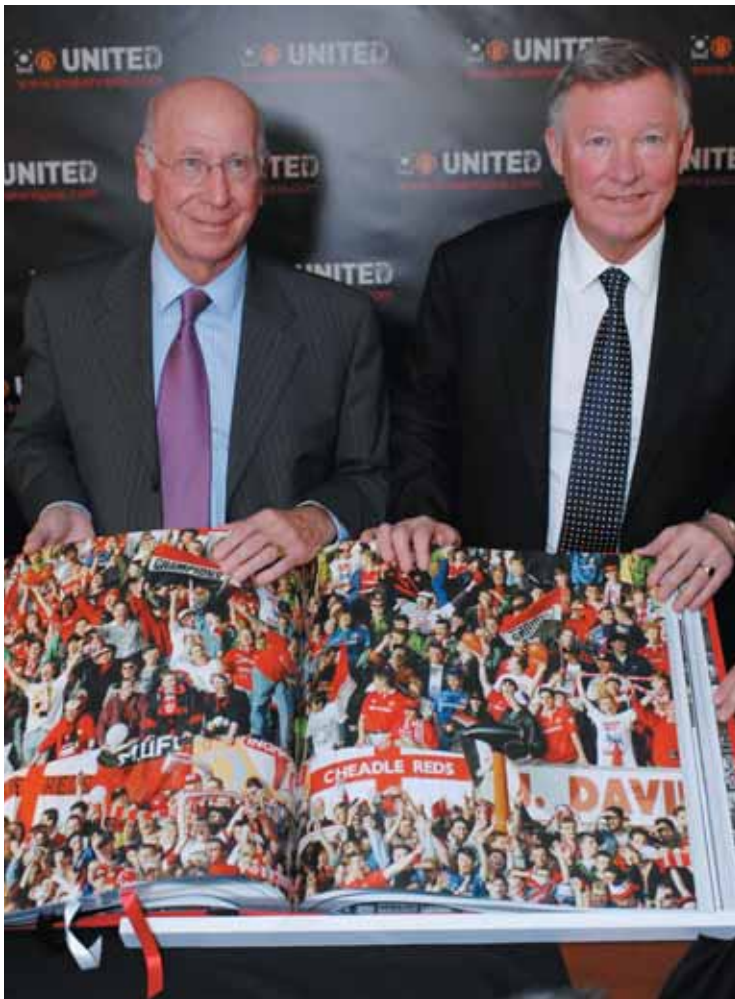
- **Marketing and promotion**

Your budget also needs to include the money you will need for marketing and promoting your product. This is often over-looked by students who are costing a production, but it is no use having a really good product if you then have no money to promote and market it.

Depending on whom you are producing the product for, the marketing and promotion may not be your responsibility. However, you should demonstrate that you have some understanding of the need for effective marketing and promotion, and that you have also undertaken some research into the relative cost of different options.

Advertising is only one aspect of what is called the 'marketing mix' – you might also want to consider such things as:

▼ **Figure 1.11: A promotional event to help launch ((TBC)) magazine**



- sponsorship of an event at which your target audience will be present
- organising a publicity stunt to get your product in the news
- using a celebrity to endorse and promote your product
- producing merchandising items such as badges, t-shirts, pens and hats.

- **Timescale**

As with all aspects of the media industry, you will have a specified timescale to work to and a deadline by which your work must be completed.

Your deadlines are likely to be considerably longer than those you will be faced with if you gain employment within the media industry. For example, the team who put together the *BBC Six O'Clock News* must have all news items ready by the specified time every single day.



Think it over

The weekly television series *Lost* had around 250 people working on it and each episode had a three-week production schedule. This comprised:

- five days of planning and preparatory work by the director and his team
- a further three days for getting all of the technical aspects in place
- nine full days for shooting, with most of this taking place on location in Oahu, Hawaii
- four days for post-production work in Burbank, Los Angeles, which included editing, scoring the music and adding visual effects.



▶ **Figure 1.12: The producers of *Lost* had to work to a tight schedule**



Knowledge check

- Describe the two main forms of research undertaken by the media industries. **p**
- State the full name of the following research organisations: NRS, ABC, BARB, RAJAR. **p**
 - Explain what each organisation does and include an example of the research data produced. **m d**
- Describe the different ways in which a media audience can be segmented. **p**
- Explain the importance of advertising to media production. **m d**
- Summarise the role of a researcher. **p**
- Explain, using clear examples, how the viability of a media product can be assessed. **m d**
- What is a SWOT analysis? **p**
- Explain what the term copyright means and why it is an important factor in media production. **m d**

1.2 Be able to apply a range of research methods and techniques

In the previous section we looked at the different purposes of research in the media industries. Whatever purpose research is undertaken for, it is likely that many of the methods and techniques used will be the same. In this section you will be able to apply your knowledge and skills to a range of different situations.

The four main methods of research that you need to understand are

- primary
- secondary
- quantitative
- qualitative.

Key Terms

Primary research – Research to obtain original data using such methods as interviews, questionnaires, focus groups and observation.

Key Terms

Secondary research – Research based on the use of pre-existing data and information that has already been gathered by other people or organisations. It is often available in books, journals or via the Internet.

Quantitative research – Type of research that is based on measurable and quantifiable facts and information, producing numerical and statistical data.

Qualitative research – Type of research that is based on opinions, attitudes and preferences rather than hard facts.

Primary and secondary research

One of the basic distinctions to be made is between **primary** and **secondary** research.

Primary research is original research that is carried out for a specific purpose. It involves the use of a range of different techniques to obtain new data.

Conducting a survey in the street, interviewing people over the phone and running a focus group are all examples of techniques used to undertake primary research.



▲ **Figure 1.13: Conducting a survey in the street can be an effective method of undertaking primary research**

Secondary research involves the use of data and information that has already been published or is already available within an organisation. Looking in books, journals and on the Internet for information that already exists are all examples of secondary research.

Many media organisations will also use data and information that has already been gathered and analysed

▼ **Figure 1.14: A media researcher at work using a range of secondary sources**



by another company to add to and support, sometimes even to replace, their own primary research.

Quantitative and qualitative research

Another important distinction is between research that produces **quantitative** and **qualitative** types of information and data.

Quantitative research produces data and information that is measurable and quantifiable. The data can usually be represented numerically and is often presented in the form of tables, charts and diagrams.

Both primary and secondary research techniques can produce quantitative data. This includes such things as ratings, circulation figures and market analysis, as well as the counting and measuring of items or space in a content analysis of a media product.

Qualitative research produces information on people's opinions, views and preferences about something. Again, both primary and secondary research techniques can produce qualitative data, and it is often very important within the media industry as it is used to find out what individuals and groups think and feel about a particular advertisement, film or television programme, for example.

Depending on the nature of the research and the types of questions asked, it is not always possible to analyse the resulting information statistically, particularly if the responses are personal and subjective.

Undertaking your own research

You will gain a greater understanding of the different research methods and techniques by applying them to your own research projects. As part of your course you will be working on a number of different practical productions and this is a good opportunity to undertake both market research and production research that is linked to them.

■ Undertaking primary research

Planning your research well in advance is an important factor, particularly when undertaking primary research.

When planning primary research it is important to:

- think carefully about what you are trying to find out
- choose an appropriate sample
- decide upon an appropriate research technique
- be aware of the size, scope and timescale of the task ahead.

Interviews and questionnaires

One of the main methods used in primary research is asking people questions, and it is likely that you will use some form of questioning technique for the research tasks that you undertake.

In undertaking this form of primary research you may decide to:

- conduct one-to-one interviews with a selected number of people
- produce a questionnaire to survey a larger group of people
- organise a focus group.

Undertaking a series of one-to-one interviews can be a very effective method for getting reliable, qualitative data from selected individuals, but it can also be very time consuming. Also, if you are asking very personal or sensitive questions then the respondent may not feel happy to disclose such information in a face-to-face situation.

The use of a questionnaire is perhaps the most popular form of primary research, but its presentation, and the form and structure of the questions, need careful consideration if the results that you obtain are going to be both reliable and valid.

Questionnaire design

If you are going to send your questionnaire to the respondents for them to fill in, it is important that the questionnaire itself looks attractive and professional and does not put people off.

An appropriate title or theme for the study should be at the top of the page and you should include a brief introduction so that people are clear about who you are, what the purpose of the survey is and what the results will be used for.

You should also include clear instructions for how the survey should be completed. This is particularly important if respondents are to complete the

questionnaire by themselves, as you will not be there to explain anything that they do not understand.

And, of course, you also need to tell them where they should return the questionnaire once they have completed it.

The questions

Key Terms

Open questions allow the person answering to give his or her own views and opinions on a particular subject. They often start with the following words:

- what
- why
- when
- how
- who.

Closed questions are more limited in terms of the potential answers that can be given. They are often answered with *Yes*, *No* or *Don't know*, or an answer picked from a range of given options.

As a general rule you should start your questionnaire with some straightforward closed questions that are easy to answer.

Asking people their age, sex, occupation and marital status, for example, should get them into the process of completing the questionnaire, and will also provide you with some basic demographic information when analysing your results. This will also allow you to check that you have covered a representational sample of people, and to include some more respondents in the survey if you need to.

When using closed questions it is often easier to include the potential answers on the questionnaire itself, with a tick-box for people to select the answer. If you use this method it is important that you include all of the potential answers. You will also need to decide whether to include an 'Other' or 'Don't know' option.

Closed questions, and other types of questions where the potential number of responses is limited and specified in the questionnaire, are good in this form of survey as they are relatively easy for the respondents to complete. They

will provide you with quantifiable data which you can represent in the form of graphs, charts and diagrams. However, more open-style questions, where you might be asking people to write down a personal response

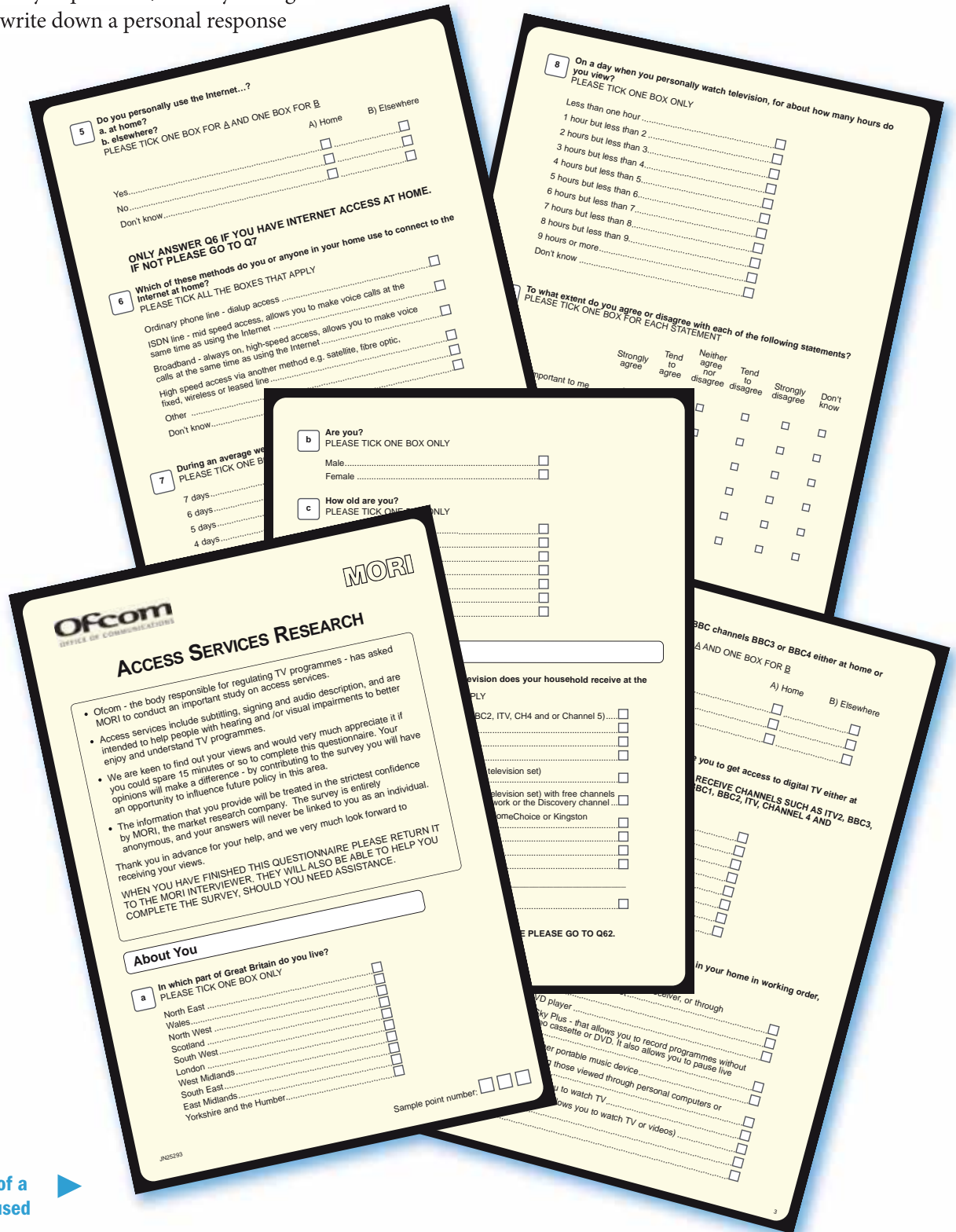


Figure 1.15: Example of a recent questionnaire used by MORI.

to something, often provide you with more qualitative information that can give a more meaningful insight. Both open and closed questions are sometimes used together in a paired question, as shown in the example in Figure 1.16.

Q7a: Do you use the website Youtube?

Yes No

Q7b: If you answered Yes to 7a, describe your experience of using Youtube in the space below.

▲ Figure 1.16: An example of a paired question containing both open and closed elements

■ Using a scale

For some questions you might want to gauge the extent to which the respondents agree or disagree with a particular statement, or the degree of their feelings on a subject. Here you can use a rating system or a response scale of some kind. Types of scale include the following:

- A **Likert scale** asks the respondent how strongly he or she agrees or disagrees with a series of statements.
- **Rank order scales** ask the respondent to indicate the order of preference from a list of given answers, usually through the use of numbers.
- **Semantic differential scales** use a sliding scale between two opposing words and ask respondents to indicate where on the scale their opinions lie.

Examples of the use of all three scales are shown in the diagrams below.

	Strongly agree	Agree	Neither agree nor disagree	Disagree	Strongly disagree
The magazine is informative.		✓			
The magazine is good value for money.				✓	
The front cover is attractive.	✓				

▲ Figure 1.17: A Likert scale asks respondents how strongly they agree or disagree with a series of statements

Where do you get your news from? Rank the following sources of news in their order of importance to you, with 1 being the most important and 5 being the least important.

Television Internet

Radi Local newspaper

National newspaper

▲ Figure 1.18: Rank order scales ask respondents to indicate their order of preference from a list of given answers, usually through the use of numbers

Place a cross on the scale below to show what you feel about the product in the advert.

Looks attractivex..... Looks unattractive

Healthyx..... Unhealthy

Good valuex..... Poor value

Tastyx..... Tasteless


▲ Figure 1.19: Semantic differential scales use a sliding scale between two opposing words. Respondents indicate where on the scale their opinions lie by marking with a cross

You might also want to group specific questions together into different sections, perhaps with a separate heading.

This can make the questionnaire look more attractive and appealing. It may also give people a sense of achievement when they have completed a section, so the questionnaire does not seem so long.



Theory into practice

If you were completing a questionnaire for somebody else, which features would encourage you to answer truthfully and which would put you off? 

In formulating the questions themselves, you should avoid ambiguity and keep the language as simple as possible. You should also try to avoid asking leading questions that suggest a particular answer to the respondent, and the use of emotive language (which can cause strong feelings) that again might prejudice the response.

Questions that are too vague or too complex are unlikely to be answered with any validity, if they are answered at all.



Figure 1.20: A badly designed questionnaire is unlikely to be completed by many people

What is perhaps most important, though, is that you think very carefully about the form and structure of the questions that you are asking. You need to make sure that people will be able to understand and respond to the questions you are asking, and that their responses will provide you with the information you require.

Figure 1.21: A simple tally chart for closed questions may be more efficient than a questionnaire for each respondent


Presenting your questionnaire

There are four main ways in which you can present your questionnaire to your sample audience. You can:

- stop and ask people the questions face-to-face
- telephone them
- post or email the questionnaire to them
- include the questionnaire in a magazine or newsletter and ask respondents to post it back or hand it in.



Theory into practice

What do you think the advantages and disadvantages are of the different ways of presenting your questionnaire? 

The first three ways will enable you to identify and select specific respondents, so you can target your questionnaire at a selected audience. You can therefore be sure that you are covering a representative range of people according to age, gender, culture and other demographics.

Asking people face-to face or via the telephone can be very time consuming, particularly if you are covering a large sample of people. However, it does allow you to explain any questions that respondents might not fully understand. If you use either of these methods you will also need to think carefully about how you are going to record people's responses.

Using a tally chart (see Figure 1.21) or data recorder might be more efficient than simply filling out an individual questionnaire sheet for each respondent.

Q	Answers	Responses	Total
Q1	15 years or younger		3
	16–18 years		8
	19–21 years		6
	22 years+		3
Q2	Male		9
	Female		11

If you post or email the questionnaire, or include it within a publication of some sort, then people can answer the questions in their own time and in their own environment. This means that some people may be more inclined to give you confidential information, though of course you have little control on how many people will actually complete the questionnaire or return it to you.

Pre-testing

Pre-testing your questionnaire on a small sample of your audience before you conduct your full survey is a very good idea. It will allow you to identify any potential problems with specific questions, or the design and layout of the questionnaire itself, in good time for you to make any changes. You may also be able to identify some responses under the 'Other' option that may be better to include as one of the specified options.



Theory into practice

1. Design a simple questionnaire that uses a mixture of both open and closed questions as well as at least one of the scales you have learned about in this section. **p₂**
2. Use the questionnaire to survey a chosen group of people. **p₂**
3. Analyse the results and write up the findings in a short report. **p₃**



grading tips

Grading Tip **m₂**

For question 2, you should undertake the survey competently and with only occasional assistance.

Grading Tip **d₂**

For question 2, you should undertake the survey to near professional standards and work independently.

Focus groups

Focus groups are pre-selected panels of people who are seen to represent the target audience. They tend to be used by marketing and advertising agencies to test the likely response of the target audience towards the product that is being advertised, as well as to the advert itself.

Film studios also use focus groups in preview screenings of major films prior to release. This is to ensure that the audience reaction is the desired one. There are many examples of studio executives changing the ending of a film, often against the wishes of the director, because the audience in the preview screening didn't like it.

If you are going to use a focus group as part of your research you will need to think carefully about who you invite to be in the group, where you will hold it, how you are going to manage the discussion and what you will use to record what is said.



▲ **Figure 1.22:** Focus groups are often used in market research.

Undertaking secondary research

There is a wealth of information and research data already available in books, journals and on the Internet, and you will probably undertake some form of secondary research to supplement and perhaps support your own primary research.

It is worth noting that simply collecting pages of information from the Internet does not in itself constitute

secondary research. Any information that you print off from the Internet, or photocopy from books and journals, needs to be read and understood, perhaps annotated, and then used to inform or supplement your own primary research.

When undertaking secondary research it is important that you clearly understand what the original purpose of the research was, who commissioned it and when it was conducted. Not every piece of research that you come across will necessarily be reliable or valid.

For example, if you were researching the effects of advertising on young people you might discover a piece of research that concludes that there is no evidence to show that cigarette advertising encourages young people to smoke.

What you would need to know before using this secondary information is that the research is very dated (from the 1960s), was conducted in the USA and not the UK, and was sponsored by a leading cigarette manufacturer of the time!



Remember!

It is important that you clearly reference any work that you use and take account of any copyright issues that may apply.

Interpreting results

Once you have collected all of your primary and secondary research data, you need to sort through and collate it then evaluate and summarise the findings.

Sorting and collating

The amount of information that is gathered when undertaking a research study can often be extensive, particularly if it is linked to a complex production that involves various different aspects.

An important step at this stage is to sort through the information you have gathered and select and use the material that is of value to your needs. Teachers and

moderators report that far too many students simply put all of the primary and secondary research they have produced and found into a folder and expect to receive a good mark for it. You need to think carefully how to collate your research material into relevant and logical categories that will be useful and will allow you and others to access it again at a later date.



Remember!

It is not the size or amount of the research that you have undertaken that is important but the methods and techniques you have employed and the way in which you have analysed and used the results.

Storing information

Once you have sorted out the information that you require, and discarded the information that you do not, you need to ensure that all of the relevant information is carefully logged, organised and stored to guarantee it is secure, while also allowing you easy access to it.

It is best if you create a research folder at this stage if you do not already have one, in which you can store all of your relevant research material. This research folder needs to have a clear index system so that you can easily find a relevant piece of information. Any secondary material that is stored should also be highlighted and annotated in some way so it is clear what you have selected from it and what it has been used for.

It is also best to include some form of written commentary in your file that explains to the tutor and moderator what is in there, how it was obtained, why it has been included, and how it has or is going to be used.

You may of course also store some or all of your information electronically. Copies of your questionnaire and any questions that you used in an interview or for your focus group are best stored on a computer and backed up on an appropriate disc or storage device. You may find it worthwhile to store your hard data on a spreadsheet or database as well as the paper versions that you may have produced while carrying out the research.



Case study

Applying research methods and techniques

Let's take a look at how a group of BTEC National Diploma Media Production students applied some of the research methods and techniques they learned about in this unit to their practical production work.

John's research

Remember John? He was producing a series of radio adverts aimed at 14–18-year-olds for Unit 44 and needed some information about his target audience.

John decided to produce a questionnaire that asked people in the 14–18 years age group about their hobbies and interests. It included a mixture of open and closed questions. These aimed to get both quantitative and qualitative information that would help John to produce more effective adverts that appealed to the target audience.

John decided to ask students in his own school to complete the questionnaire, but also asked some young people in the street and in a local college, so that he didn't just get responses from his friends at school.

Alice's research

Alice was working with a group of students on a video project. Like John, Alice and her team produced a questionnaire for a representative sample of their target audience as part of their research. They also decided to organise a focus group so that they could ask some more in-depth questions and find out what people really thought about their proposed product.

Alice's group also looked at a range of different programmes and videos that were aimed at their target

audience. They hoped this would give them a better understanding of the sorts of codes and conventions and production techniques that would appeal to this age group.

Shilpa's research

Shilpa and her team decided to develop their design and journalistic skills by producing a promotional magazine. As part of their research they examined a range of printed products aimed at their target audience as well as different forms of printed promotional material, to get additional design ideas.

To extend their vocational knowledge they also decided to visit a local newspaper office to find out more about the actual process of putting together and printing a print product.

Bilal's research

Bilal sees interactive media as the future and had decided to design and produce a website as his main production project. He conducted a great deal of secondary research on the Internet, looking at what did and did not work in website design, and then used this information to produce a series of sample pages which he tested on his audience via email.

Bilal used the results of this research to help him fine-tune his ideas for his website.

- **Which research methods and techniques are you going to use in your research?**
- **What skills will you need to develop to make sure your research is a success?**
- **Do you have a clear idea of what the timescale is for your research project?**



Knowledge check

1. Explain the four main methods of research. **p₂**
2. Explain, using specific examples from your own work, what factors need to be considered when planning, designing and carrying out a survey using a questionnaire. **m₂ d₂**
3. Explain what a focus group is. **p₂**
4. Explain clearly what issues you would need to consider when undertaking your own secondary research. **m₂ d₂**

1.3 Be able to present results of research

After you have completed a substantial research project, or a number of smaller linked research tasks, you will need to present the results of this research.

In fact, the name of this final section is a little misleading as you need to do more than simply present the results that you obtained from your research. The content of your presentation should include the following key elements:

- an introduction to your research in which you outline its purpose and aims
- an explanation of the methods and techniques that you have used
- the research data itself, presented in a suitable form (such as tables, charts, graphs or diagrams)
- a summary of your main findings (the results)
- the conclusions that you can make from these findings
- any proposals that you are making based on these conclusions.

This information can be presented in the form of a written report, as an oral presentation or as a combination of the two, with a presentation to the class backed up by a written report and accompanying notes, logs and data.

If you choose to present your findings in the form of an oral presentation then you must make sure that this is recorded so that your mark can be checked by the moderator towards the end of the course.

However you decide to present your findings, you will need to think carefully about the structure and content of what you produce as well as the language that you use.

For your work in this unit you may have been working with a real client, and in this case it would be better if this client was in the audience for your presentation.

If not, then it is more likely that your audience will be comprised of your tutor and fellow members of your class.

Planning your presentation in advance is crucial to its success. You will also need to practice it and do some run-throughs so that it goes as smoothly as possible on the day.



Think it over

Oral presentations are often used in the media industry to pitch new ideas to a potential client or backer, and these pitches will often include details of research that has been carried out to support the proposals being made.

The sorts of people who would be in the audience for such a presentation would be those who would have the final say as to whether your idea would go into production or not. These people could include a commissioning editor, producer, exhibitor, broadcaster, publisher or potential purchaser of the final product.

■ Presentation skills

Conducting an effective presentation is not an easy task. You will need to identify what presentation and communication skills you already have, and which ones you need to develop further.



Theory into practice

Think about your own communication skills. Are you confident when speaking to other people? What can you do to improve the way in which you get your ideas across?



Key Terms

Intrapersonal communication – This refers to communication within you, and includes all of the thoughts, fears and anxieties that you may have about your presentation. Control these and your presentation is more likely to go well.

Interpersonal communication – This is face-to-face communication between two or more people, and includes aspects of spoken and non-verbal communication.

Key Terms

Non-verbal communication (NVC) – This term refers to all of the features of body language that occur during interpersonal communication. It includes such features as the clothes that you wear, your posture, facial expression and hand and arm movements.

Paralanguage – This is not what you say but the way that you say it. It includes features such as pitch, tone, pace and volume, as well as the fillers and hesitations that are used in everyday language, for example ‘ummm’, ‘y’know’.

Visual aids – The props, objects and examples that you include in your presentation. Also includes slides, images and posters that can help to structure what you say.

Non-verbal communication

It is said that first impressions count. Certainly, the way in which you present yourself to your audience, how you dress, your posture, orientation, hand and arm movements and facial expressions, are all important aspects to consider.

Paying careful attention to these aspects of your non-verbal communication can make your presentation look more professional and be more effective. It can also make you feel more confident.



▲ **Figure 1.23: Body language is an important form of communication**



Think it over

It is thought that up to 70 per cent of interpersonal communication occurs through body language.

Dress and appearance

When presenting your ideas you need to dress to impress. What you say and do will look and sound more authoritative if you present yourself in a professional manner.

When deciding what to wear and how to present yourself, you need to think carefully about who will be in your audience and their likely expectations, as well as the context and location of the presentation. Jeans and a T-shirt topped off with a highly gelled hairstyle may look fashionable, but the people who you are hoping will invest money in your project might expect a more formal and business-like approach.



▲ **Figure 1.24: The way you dress can have an impact on how you communicate**

It is also important that you feel comfortable in what you are wearing and practise in your presentation clothes beforehand.



Case study

Creating the right impression

When planning her presentation, Shilpa was very aware of the need to create a good first impression. She thought carefully about her clothes and overall appearance.

She decided that she would try to communicate professionalism and organisation to her audience by treating it like an interview and dressing in a smart and business-like manner.

The audience was made up of her friends and class mates, and Shilpa felt more comfortable presenting a very different image to them on the day rather than the more casual image of baggy jeans and t-shirts that they were familiar with.



▲ **Figure 1.25: Shilpa makes a good impression**

This strategy worked, and the feedback she received on the day was very positive.

- **How do you think you should dress to impress?**

Posture and orientation

The way in which you hold and position your body can also communicate a lot of information to your audience. You need to demonstrate that you are a confident, professional person who is in control and knows what you are doing.

Your audience will not appreciate looking at the back of your head while you talk to the screen behind you. Neither will they think positively about you if you are slumped in a chair or have your arms folded across your body in a defensive manner.

Hand and arm movements

You will probably be nervous when you are presenting to your audience and tell-tale signs of these nerves can 'leak out' and distract from what you are trying to communicate. An audience can end up focusing on the presenter who paces up and down and waves his or her hands and arms around too much, rather than listening and trying to understand what he or she is proposing.



Theory into practice

Look carefully at the way in which skilled politicians present themselves to an audience and to the camera. Consider the hand and arm movements they use. How do these make them look decisive and in control of the situation?

p₃



▲ **Figure 1.26: Politicians are trained to use body language to communicate power and authority**

Facial expressions and eye contact

Facial expressions are often the hardest part of non-verbal communication to control, so can be another area where your nervousness can leak out. Smiling is good. It makes you feel better and puts your audience at ease.

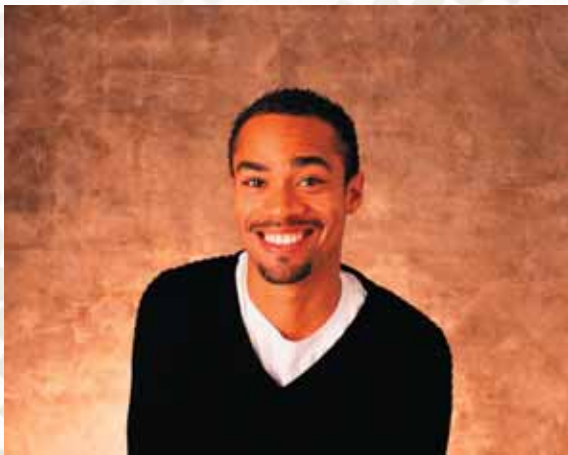
Eye contact is also very important. It can be used to engage your audience and direct questions to individuals.



Think it over

The face is the most communicative area of your body. It contains over 44 muscles that can contort and twist into almost 5000 different expressions, which communicate hundreds of different messages.

It also uses more of these muscles to frown than it does to smile!



▲ **Figure 1.27: A smiling face will convey a positive message to your audience**



Think it over

How would you feel if you were part of a small audience and the presenter never looked at you once? How would you feel if the presenter looked at you, and *just* you, all of the time?

As a general rule you should try to engage each member of your audience in eye contact if possible. This will make them feel at ease and communicate honesty and trustworthiness.

However, if you hold this eye contact for too long and end up staring at people this will have the opposite effect and make them feel uncomfortable. Two or three seconds should be long enough before you move on to another person.

Think carefully about all of these aspects of non-verbal communication and try to control and use them to your advantage. Get it right and you will communicate integrity and professionalism. But do not worry too much if you get it wrong at this stage – it is all part of the learning process and you will gain more confidence and skill with every presentation that you give.



Think it over

In the 1960s US Presidential debate between the two main contenders, Richard Nixon was judged by most radio listeners to have been a clear winner over John F. Kennedy.

However, many of the 70 million who watched the debate on television were not impressed by Nixon's unshaven appearance and the image of him sweating under the television studio lights.

This became an enduring image of the campaign and is thought by many to have cost him the presidency.

Spoken communication

Although non-verbal communication is very important, you will also need to say something in your presentation! Speaking in front of a group can be a daunting task – even the most confident of people can become extremely nervous before making a speech.

Paralanguage

Paralanguage refers to the way in which you speak rather than the content of what you say. It is another aspect of your presentation that you will need to try to control and manipulate to your advantage.

People often have a tendency to speak too quickly when nervous, as if they were trying to get to the end as quickly as possible. You will need to slow down and set the pitch (not too high and shrill or too low and bassy), the tone (not too serious and not to jokey) and pace (not too slow and hesitant or too fast and manic) of your spoken language so that you are communicating effectively to your audience.

When people are nervous or are trying to think of what to say next, they will often include fillers such as 'erm', 'y'know' and 'like', and will hesitate between words. You will sound more confident and come across in a more professional way if you are able to control and limit the use of such fillers and hesitations.



Theory into practice

Practice different ways of delivering your spoken language. It is a good idea to record the results and then listen back to hear what you sound like.

Be warned – your recorded voice will sound very different to the one that you are used to hearing!



Register

Register refers to the choice of words that you use. You will have to select a register that takes account of the audience you are presenting to, the context and the level of formality.

You might feel a little embarrassed addressing your school or college friends in the audience with 'Good morning ladies and gentleman and welcome to this presentation', but the context of the pitch might demand such an introduction.

You should also be wary of using technical terms, jargon or abbreviations that some members of your audience might not understand.

Figure 1.28: Using too many specialist terms may confuse your audience



Visual aids

When planning your presentation you also need to think carefully about the use of any visual aids you want to include.

You might want to use over-head transparency (OHT) slides or PowerPoint slides to help structure your talk and provide an alternative visual reference point to yourself.



Think it over

The effective use of OHT and PowerPoint slides is a skill that will need to be practised.

The slides should provide a concise summary of what you are saying rather than a running commentary. A common mistake that people make is to cram too much information on to each slide.

Postal questionnaires

- Pros: cost effective, can gather relatively detailed information and statistics from a large sample
- Cons: low response rates, less suitable for small sample, slow
- Approximate timings: (approx 8–10 weeks total)
 - write, design, print and mail = 4 weeks
 - allow time for responses = 2 weeks
 - data input and analysis = 2–3 weeks

Figure 1.39: Brief bullet points on a PowerPoint slide will get your message across more clearly than reams of text

If you are using PowerPoint in your presentation then you also need to be wary of having too many sound effects and transitions, as an audience can easily tire of such gimmicks. It can also make your presentation look rather superficial and can get in the way of the overall message that you are trying to communicate.

As an alternative to OHT and PowerPoint slides, you might want to consider using posters and flip charts to summarise your main points, or make handouts for your audience to read either in the meeting itself or after it has finished.

It is also a good idea to include some activity that involves your audience members. This is particularly important if the same people are listening to a whole series of presentations in a single day. You need to make your presentation stand out, so including some sort of interactive element, for example, that involves your audience looking at a sample or mock-up of your work then giving some feedback, can help you achieve this.



Theory into practice

To prepare effectively for your final presentation you will need to undertake a mock presentation on a topic of your choice.

1. Plan and deliver a short presentation on a topic of your choice.
2. Following feedback, assess how your presentation went.
3. Identify the skills that you need to develop to improve your presentation skills. Draw up a skill development action plan.



Case study

Use of visual aids

Shilpa's presentation

When Shilpa was planning her presentation she decided to structure it with PowerPoint slides and include a sample recording of her work within the presentation. She used only brief bullet points in the slides, with each bullet point having a maximum of six words.

As part of her research and preparation for the presentation, Shilpa had experimented with different effects for the words appearing and special transitions between slides. However, after getting feedback from a sample of the target audience she decided that these effects and transitions were too obtrusive. She therefore chose instead to adopt a more conventional approach of simply cutting between slides and having each line appear at the click of the mouse.

John's presentation

John and his team also used PowerPoint slides, but they hadn't done as much research or planning as Shilpa had.

As a result, their slides were over ambitious in terms of the amount of information they had put on to each slide and the number of special visual and sound effects that accompanied the text. The audience were overwhelmed with information and found it difficult to focus on the actual product that was being proposed.

However, when the PowerPoint slides were over, John and his team ran a very effective question and answer session with the audience. They also showed them a sample of their video work on DVD, which was very well received.

- **What visual aids are you planning to use in your presentation?**
- **How will you make sure that you engage your audience?**
- **What skills will you need to develop to make sure your presentation is a success?**



grading tips

Grading Tip **m**₃

You should present your ideas competently, expressing your ideas with clarity and with appropriate use of subject terminology.

Grading Tip **d**₁

Your presentation should be to near professional standards and your ideas should be expressed fluently.

Written report

It is a good idea to also include a written report in your final portfolio of evidence. It is important that you present all of your written work in a logical and coherent manner.

Spelling, punctuation and grammar

In your presentation you had to take care to control your verbal and non-verbal communication so that you presented a professional and organised image. You now need to continue with this in your written report by ensuring that your spelling, punctuation and grammar do not let you down.



Think it over

However good your research has been, if you are hoping for a distinction grade you will need to present the results of that research in an effective manner using fluent language and correct terminology.

There is no set way of writing up your final report. However, you do need to make sure that it is clearly and logically laid out, with the use of appropriate headings and sub-headings. You must also take care to check your spelling and grammar.

Structure

The structure of your report should be similar to that of your oral presentation, though of course there is the opportunity for you to include more detailed information in a written report.

As a reminder, your report should include the following elements:

- an introduction in which you explain its purpose and aims
- an explanation of the research methods and techniques that you have used
- the research data itself, presented in a suitable form (such as tables, charts, graphs or diagrams)
- an explanation of what you found out from analysing the results of your research
- the conclusions that you can make from these results
- any proposals that you are making based on these conclusions.

Because this is a written report you should also include a bibliography in which you detail the books that you have used in your research project. You should also include details of any other sources of information, including websites, newspapers and magazines.

Additional research material such as copies of any questionnaires that you used, tally charts and respondents' answers should be included in an appendices section of the report.



Think it over

The sources that you have used should be referenced in your bibliography in a consistent way.

One of the most popular forms of citation is the style known as MLA, which stands for Modern Language Association. The Harvard method and APA (American Psychological Association) are two other styles that are often used.

The MLA style has the author's surname followed by his or her initial. This is then followed by the title of the book, which is sometimes written in *italics* or in **bold**. The final information is the place of publication, the name of the publisher and the year that the source was published. For example:

Hart, J. *Storyboarding for Film, TV and Animation*. London, Focal Press, 1999.

Final portfolio

You should now be in a position to put your final portfolio together that will provide the evidence that you have met all of the required learning outcomes for this unit.

This will involve you collecting together and sorting through some of the work that you have already

completed for this unit, as well as producing some additional pieces of work.

The End of Unit assessment activities on pages XX–XX will guide you through the evidence required to achieve each of the learning outcomes at Pass, Merit and Distinction level.



Knowledge check

1. Explain what key areas a presentation of your research should cover. **m₃ d₃**
2. Explain fully what the following terms mean:
 - a) intrapersonal communication
 - b) interpersonal communication
 - c) NVC
 - d) paralanguage
 - e) visual aids. **p₃**
3. What should you do to try to make your oral presentation as professional as possible? **d₃**
4. What should you do to make your written report as professional as possible? **d₃**



Preparation for assessment

End of Unit assessment activity 1

This assessment activity will allow you to cover P1, M1 and D1 of the learning outcomes for this unit.

For this first assessment task you need to think carefully about the different purposes of research in the media industries. Then, in your own words:

- Describe the different purposes of research, making sure you cover both market research and product research. **p₁**
- Explain the different purposes you have described, showing not just what is done but why it is done, and illustrate the points that you make with appropriate examples. **m₁**
- To achieve a distinction grade you will need to make sure that you have fully explained the purposes of research in the media industries and have justified what you have said by using supporting arguments, evidence and examples. You should also make sure that you have used technical and specialist language correctly and expressed your ideas with fluency. **d₁**

Your work can be presented in both written and oral form and be accompanied by appropriate notes, logs and diaries as well as examples of research material that you have studied.

Whether producing a written or oral report you should ensure that you use appropriate subject terminology correctly and express your ideas clearly and fluently.

Look closely at the assessment evidence grid on page XX to check what you need to do to gain a pass, merit or distinction for this part of the unit.

End of Unit assessment activity 2

To successfully cover learning outcomes P2, M2 and D2 you will need to submit evidence in your final portfolio

that shows you have applied relevant research methods and techniques when undertaking both market and product research.

It was suggested in Section 1.2 that it is a good idea if your research for this learning outcome is linked to some of the production work that you are undertaking in other units.

If you have followed this advice then your main task here is to gather together the research that you have already conducted and organise it so that it shows clear evidence that you have met all of the learning outcomes for a pass, merit or distinction grade.

If you haven't yet conducted both a market research task and a production research task then now is the time to reread the sub-section in 1.2 called *Undertaking your own research* (pages XX–XX) and follow the guidance carefully in planning, developing and carrying out your own research projects.

- To achieve a pass grade you should ensure that you show clear evidence of applying a range of both primary and secondary research methods and techniques that generate both quantitative and qualitative data. At this level you can have had some assistance with your work. **p₂**
- To achieve a merit grade you will need to show that you can apply the relevant research methods and techniques competently with only occasional assistance. **m₂**
- To achieve a distinction grade you will need to apply relevant research methods and techniques to near professional standards while working in an independent manner. **d₂**

End of Unit assessment activity 3

To meet the final set of learning outcomes you need to present your research project in the form of an oral presentation or a written report, or both. The content and quality of this presentation will mean that you are awarded either a pass, merit or distinction grade.

What you need to do to achieve these grades is explained below.

- To achieve a pass grade for this learning outcome you need to present the results of the research that you have carried out in the form of an oral presentation or a written report, or both. Whichever form you use you will need to make sure that you have used at least some appropriate subject terminology to be sure of a pass grade. **p₃**

- To achieve a merit grade you will need to ensure that the presentation of the results has been done competently and that your ideas are expressed with clarity. **m₃**
- To achieve a distinction grade you will need to also ensure that the correct terminology is used throughout and that the language is fluent and used in the right context. Your meaning will need to be clear at all times and the attention of the reader or audience will need to be maintained throughout. **d₃**

If you decide to do an oral presentation then you will need to include a recording of it in your final portfolio of evidence as well as any additional supporting material.

Look carefully at the information covered in Section 1.3. Make sure that your presentation covers all of the required aspects and that you present the results of your research in as professional a way as possible.

Grading Criteria	Activity	Pg No.	To achieve a merit grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:	To achieve a distinction grade the evidence must show that the learner is able to:
P1 describe purposes of research in the media industries expressing ideas with sufficient clarity to communicate them and with some appropriate use of subject terminology	End of Unit assessment activity 1	((tbc))	M1 explain purposes of research in the media industries with well chosen examples expressing ideas with clarity and with generally appropriate use of subject terminology	D1 fully explain purposes of research in the media industries with supporting arguments and elucidated examples expressing ideas fluently and using subject terminology correctly
P2 apply research methods and techniques with some assistance	End of Unit assessment activity 2	((tbc))	M2 apply research methods and techniques competently with only occasional assistance	D2 apply research methods and techniques to near-professional standards working independently to professional expectations
P3 present results, expressing ideas with sufficient clarity to communicate them and with some appropriate use of subject terminology	End of Unit assessment activity 3	((tbc))	M3 present results competently, expressing ideas with clarity and with generally appropriate use of subject terminology	D3 present results to near-professional standards, expressing ideas fluently and using subject terminology correctly