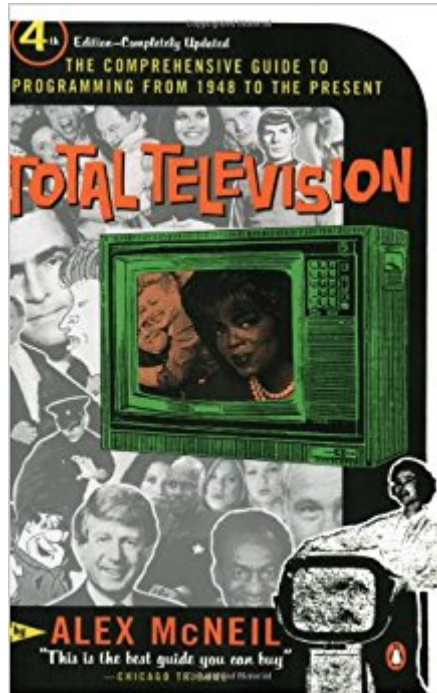




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Total Television: Revised Edition



Synopsis

A TV guide includes more than 5,400 series, prime-time fall schedules for every season, more than one thousand noteworthy specials, more cable series than ever before, Nielsen's top twenty season by season, Emmy and Peabody award winners, and more.

Book Information

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Customer Reviews

If you're a fan or student of American TV, you must have this book, which provides descriptions of 5,400 series and their major participants from 1948 to 1995. The information is presented in alphabetical order in entries up to several pages long. Special broadcasts are also listed chronologically in an appendix. Thankfully, the index is comprehensive, so you can easily trace the mayfly-like flitting of stars, personalities, and lesser deities from show to show. And, I don't usually say this, but it's really a heck of a bargain.

There are other guides to television, but nothing so vast, so thick, so comprehensive as this one. --
Los Angeles Times

True to its description, this thing contains every show ever made up until its publication. While the information isn't extensive for many of the programs beyond air dates and a brief description, it's a good starting point resource for finding out about an obscure show to do further research on it elsewhere.

First, we might note that "... To the Present," in the book's title, means through late 1995. So nothing in the last ten years is included. For years, I have enjoyed "The Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows, 1946-Present" by Brooks and Marsh. I prefer the format of the Brooks and Marsh book to that of the McNeil book--e.g., the cast is in list form, which makes for easier and quicker reading; the showing time is also included. The chief advantage of the McNeil book is that it includes daytime TV, which the Brooks and Marsh book does not.

A wonderful reference book

Love this great book

My husband had a much older edition. I order this newer edition for him for Christmas. It arrived timely, in great shape, and he is now enjoying the updated version. Thanks so much for great service!

adequate, as listed.

Where this book is not as easy to use as Brooks and Marsh's "Complete Directory to Prime Time Network and Cable TV Shows"(see my review for this one), it offers more-as far as the addition of daytime shows and more explanation of the entries. I like the other guide mainly because it's a good quick reference for prime time. However, if I'm really interested in detail or, again, a daytime program-like some Saturday morning cartoon of my childhood-then this is the one to get. I have both books, actually-for reasons specified here.

Like author/critics from Roger Ebert and Pauline Kael to Joel Whitburn and Fred Bronson, TV historian Alex McNeil has a fun but never-ending job. He charts the myriad of programs that have appeared on broadcast networks (including those, like Dumont, which no longer exist), cable, and in syndication. His fun comes in praising the praiseworthy, trashing the deserving, goreing sacred Hollywood cows and keeping a critical expert's eye on important pop culture strands and shifts."Total Television" is exhaustive, enjoyable, fun and fact-filled reading from any page it's read. McNeil generously shares facts, transporting you to time, channel, cast (sometimes literally in hundreds) and summaries of thousands of familiar and long-forgotten TV shows. TV's giants (from

Walt Disney and Captain Kangaroo to Oprah Winfrey and "Monday Night Football") receive their fair space, while McNeil also chronicles changes in TV daytime dramas, game, talk, and sports shows. McNeil's consistent irreverence and historical perspective is remarkable. He salutes Walt Disney for creating TV's first mini-series (the wildly popular "Davy Crockett") while also creating TV's first "synergy" (TV show promotes park and films, which promote movies and TV show). McNeil also gives long-running, non-cult classics like "Gunsmoke," "Knots Landing," and "Wagon Train" their proper respect while chronicling the knotty, behind-the-scenes problems plaguing stars from Nat Cole to Judy Garland to Jerry Lewis to Sammy Davis, Jr., and the respective failures of their 50s-60s variety shows. (He recalls failed sitcoms like "Family Dog" and "The Waverly Wonders" with especially sweet relish). McNeil also features sections on landmark TV moments (which decrease in number and size from the mid-70s), full TV schedules, and Emmy winners. This is NOT a book read cover to cover, even by diligent TV fans. Series' with same or similar titles, long paragraphs retelling old tales of Roseanne Barr and 1992's "Tonight Show" fiasco (in an otherwise fascinating entry on that TV staple) are redundant one after another. But in preferably small portions, "Total Television" is a refreshingly unobjective reference book of the best, worst, longest and least TV's omnipotence has presented.

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