Advantages provided by TV:

1. Reaching an audience
2. Sponsorship & Budgets

Precedents for TV Doc.

William Bluem:
1. Radio documentaries of 1930s
2. Non-fiction tradition of Flaherty, Grierson, Lorentz
3. Motion Picture Newsreels
“March of Time” Newsreel

1. Founded by Louis de Rochemont
2. Actually began in radio (Roy Larsen) and moved to m.p in 1935
3. Attempt to get behind newreels very different approach

March of Time

1. Always seeking controversy
2. Single issue in depth
3. Willing to use reenactments

1st Important TV Doc. Series

Grew out of this journalistic tradition
1. See It Now on CBS
2. Developed by Fred Friendly and Edward R. Murrow
3. From 1951 to 1958 sponsored by Alcoa Aluminum Company
Murrow’s Philosophy

1. Deal with single subject -- in depth
2. Paid for out of network profits
3. Editorial policy not news
4. Stylistically -- cross-cutting to show one side then the other

Turning point for See It Now

The McCarthy Era: (3 shows)
1. The Case Against Milo Radulovich (1953)
2. Argument in Indianapolis (1953)

Eventually lost sponsorship (Alcoa drops in 1955) --- too controversial

TV Documentary Series

1. See It Now replaced by CBS Reports in 1959
2. NBC began White Paper in 1960
3. ABC began Close-Up in 1960
ABC Close-Up Unit the Most Innovative

1. Built from Robert Drew’s Time-Life Unit

2. Experimental & innovative

3. Trained many documentarians: Leacock, Pennebaker, the Maysles

Technological Breakthroughs

1. Lighter cameras (handheld)

2. Better sound recording equip.

3. Faster lenses and filmstock

Leads to “Cinema Verite” style

Problems for TV Documentary

1. Fact (reporting) vs. Editorial --- most doc. units grew out of news division

2. Networks and outside pressure:
   - Fairness Doctrine
   - Sponsors influencing content
Public Broadcasting

1. NET estab. in 1967
2. Later much of funding from big corporations: Ford, Xerox, IBM
3. Finally establishment of PBS:
   - Still relying on corporate sponsors
   - Constant fundraising

Arthur Barron & CBS Reports

1. Berkeley Rebels (1965) - very controversial
2. Next - doc. about teenagers:
   - 16 in Webster Groves (1966)
   a. Some created sequences
   b. Some “cinema-verite”

Criticism of 16 in W.G.

- Selection -- what it shows vs. what it leaves out
- Staging
- Camera tricks - slow-mo, etc.
- Music
- Editing loads (unfairly) the meaning
In response to complaints -- CBS produced Webster Groves Revisited (66) Gave people chance to blow off steam Chance to examine & re-examine the original documentary

Typical “Documentary” Issues?

- Fairness
- Objectivity
- Truthfulness
- Reporting vs. Opinion
- Imposing own point-of-view