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A TREATISE ON VIDEOGRAPHY

Video has a profound impact on our world, and yet its definition has been fragmented and reduced from its earliest root meaning. Today it has become a wimp of a word, describing the visual portion of television, and nothing more. Video is a Latin word meaning "I see". Caesar's famous quote "Veni. Vidi. Vici." is translated "I came. I saw. I conquered." Could we suppose that Caesar saw what he "saw" on TV? Or was he in "videoland", a nonsense place, currently featured in Webster's Ninth Collegiate Dictionary?

When Caesar said "Vidi.", he meant that he comprehended the scene. "I saw." said Caesar. And "Video", ("I see"), said the blind man. What these two men expressed in common was their "seeing" in the largest sense of the word. The Latin "video" is related to the Sanskrit root "vid", meaning "to know". The word "provide" illustrates this premise. (pro-, Latin for "forward" coupled with videre, "to see", means "to see forward".) If "videre" meant literally "to see with ones eyes", then it would not be possible to provide. "Videre" is to see, more than eyes or TV!

The trend which limits the definition of video to, "the visual portion of television", began in the 1930's. Television's developers had a technical need to separate sound signals from picture signals during transmission. Earlier in the 20th century, the sound business had adopted the Latin word "audio" meaning "to hear". It's OK to call TV sounds "audio signals". It's OK to call TV pictures "video signals", as long as the technical definition is presented under the primary definition, which is currently absent from ALL dictionaries.

In 1972, while writing an article on video production, I became stuck on the proper noun with which to title same. The search for a title led me to combine "video", with the terminal element of Greek origin, "-graphy", meaning "writing"; thereby creating a word, VIDEOGRAPHY. Seeing the importance of VIDEOGRAPHY, I protected the word by using it as a tradename for a production company and studio, commencing in August, 1972.

Having secured the word, I submitted my manuscript, entitled "VIDEOGRAPHY, What Does It All Mean?", to AMERICAN CINEMATOGRAPHER magazine. It was published in October, 1972. Within months of this publication, there were hundreds of printed uses of the new word, VIDEOGRAPHY. Generic usage increased, and in April, 1976, a magazine calling itself VIDEOGRAPHY was published. I filed a law suit for tradename infringement, against the magazine's publisher, United Business Publications.

The case, tried in Los Angeles Superior Court, rested on whether the publisher could show printed usage of the word VIDEOGRAPHY by anyone, anywhere, prior to my article in October, 1972. They could not! The court ruled in my favor, thereby validating my authorship of the word.

Believing that VIDEOGRAPHY is an important generic word, I hereby commit the word, & its definition, to the public domain; declaring, VIDEOGRAPHY is a noun, meaning "A recording of the senses".

Vivere, Videre, Volare!
To live, To see, To fly!

Bob Kiger

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