

# Reality television

[Media](#), [Television](#)



Since the creation of reality television, people have been influenced for both the better and worse. Many professionals have invested their time and resources into finding out just how and why reality TV has had such a big impact on society and they have come up with many different perspectives on the matter. In the early stages of reality television, the whole premise was immediately scrutinized because it held an unconventional perspective on what the public knew to be reality.

Authors Julia Anne Taddeo and Ken Dvorak of the *Interdisciplinary Journal of Film and Television Studies* wrote “ one of the first Reality TV programs— Alan Funt’s *Candid Camera*—which made our Cold War paranoia about surveillance into a laugh-inducing gimmick...gently poked fun at his subject...How different an approach to self-revelation seems from the more recent crop of Reality TV programs. ” (para 2). This early state of reality television was much simpler and the example given was a program that shed light on a global issue.

It showed the war in an almost comical light which enabled viewers at home to relate in a new way to the war and the men fighting it. Compared to the norm of reality TV today, this original reality approach had a different perspective, one that was not meant for harm or culture shock, which cannot be said for many modern reality shows thriving on drama. Furthermore, author of *Studies in Art Education* Robert Sweeny wrote more specifically about the beginning of reality television by citing a program called *Jackass*.

He stated, “ The marketing of skateboarding as an ‘ extreme’ sport points to the larger interrelationship between shows such as *Jackass* and media

representations of gender identity, with provocative links to recent examples from performance art. ” (para 5). Basically, Sweeny expresses the development of reality TV to the stage of incorporating a sport with social issues. The characters on the program were mainly professional skateboarders but the focus was not on their careers, instead it was upon the funny stunts and pranks performed.

The extreme antics of the men addressed issues like “ media representation of gender identity” (para 5) but also helped the genre of reality television directly related to younger generations of viewers. After the introduction of reality shows aimed at a younger age demographic, the innocence of children was compromised. This was because kids were being exposed to uncensored, mature themes at a younger age.