

## STUDY ADVICE for ACCA – “Using the Media to Study”

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### 1. WHAT VALUE?

Watching television, listening to radio broadcasts and reading newspapers are activities that most of us do for relaxation and pleasure not for study. However, the information relayed and the opinions and ideas expressed by the 'mass-media' can *contribute enormously* to our knowledge and understanding. It's difficult to evaluate the intellectual force of the 'mass-media', it really depends on the *selectivity* of the person concerned and the *technical skill and competence* with which the information, opinion and ideas are presented. However, the impact of the 'mass-media' on education should not be underrated and a student studying for professional exams can gain a great deal from using the various news channels sensibly and selectively.

Television, radio and newspapers can extend your knowledge by commentating on *live* day to day occurrences and giving examples of how theory works in practice.

They will also help you to keep abreast of new developments in the subjects you're studying.

Professional journals will keep you informed of current business problems and developments within specialist professional areas. It's very important that you read relevant articles in your own Institute's journal, or those in contemporary journals, and where necessary make notes or extract articles, cross-indexing them to pertinent areas of your studies.

Remember to use the Tony Surridge 'Accounting News' automatic link to the websites of: **BBC News**, **Sky News**, **Bank of England**, **CNN**, **ACCA**, **Financial Times** and **CIMA**. You'll find this link on our website at [TonySurridge.co.uk](http://TonySurridge.co.uk).

### 2. THE SCRAPBOOK APPROACH

Your scrapbook will consist of a ring-binder or some other form of clip-file in which selected articles are filed. The articles need to be *cross-indexed* to relevant areas of study and where appropriate to *other articles*.

Some students like to file articles which they have extracted from journals and newspapers or printed down from relevant web sites, within their study notes. If this approach is used it may be difficult to cross-reference these articles which relate to *more than one subject or topic*. However, if you have access to a photocopier you'll be able to file copies in each relevant study topic, or of course, you could print out twice.

### 3. PROFESSIONAL JOURNALS

These journals are a *particularly important source of information* and important articles frequently form the basis of exam questions. Journals, such as 'Student Accountant' are often sent free-of-charge to registered students of Professional Institutes. Articles deal with developments within the profession and discuss current problems in a manner not possible in study texts. One of the most important uses of

professional journals is that they highlight changes in law and professional practice and the correspondence columns make useful background reading. Remember, however, that as a general rule exams do not examine new laws until they have been in force for at least six months. When an examiner writes an article in a student publication it will give you an idea what he's interested in, and it's usually a pretty good indicator that a question covering the same topic might soon be set.

#### **4. NEWSPAPERS & PERIODICALS**

Generally speaking newspaper articles will be relevant to your studies. Newspapers can be divided into two major categories - the 'serious' press and the popular press.

In the UK, for instance, the popular press, which includes such newspapers as the Daily Mirror, The Sun, The Daily Mail and the Daily Express, are "fun and interesting" to read. They present news and features in an eye-catching way but may not always give a detailed 'business slant' view of events.

The recognised leader in the 'serious' press is The Times. This is a more important newspaper and students in the UK can, at times, obtain it at concessionary rates. The articles, reports and features are authoritative and independent and where topics are relevant to your syllabus they become an important addition to your notes.

The Financial Times (FT) is also an important newspaper so far as your studies and exams are concerned, as are the Daily Telegraph and Independent. It's interesting to note here that such newspapers are no longer the best place to look for "Situation Vacant" advertisements, and you need to visit appropriate websites to search for jobs. We suggest that you visit our website at [tonysurridge.co.uk](http://tonysurridge.co.uk) and click on '**Jobs & Recruitment**' which will give you an indication of the positions you may consider now, and likely salaries you'll be able to earn when you obtain your qualification. Job opportunities and salaries across the whole financial spectrum are advertised on our website.

In addition to the "Dailies" there are the "Weeklies" which include journals such as "The Economist", the "Investors Chronicle" and others. These are all responsible journals and provide an important commentary on the current economic and financial scene and whilst not necessarily essential reading for your exam, will assist you in gaining a balanced view of current developments and situations on a worldwide basis.

Serious newspapers can provide a rich source of information to reinforce your study text and you should cultivate the habit of reading them daily.

#### **5. TELEVISION AND RADIO**

In general terms news programmes in the UK are objective and provide information in advance of newspapers (hence the decline in the newspaper industry). It's important that you keep abreast of current events but bear in mind that they are unlikely to affect your next exam. Feature programmes on economic, financial and business matters are, on the other hand, more relevant to your studies, but remember that opinions and views stated are those of the individuals involved in the programme, so do not take them as "gospel truth". Argue against their ideas and form your own opinion on the matter under discussion.

The techniques required for note making from television and radio programmes are different from those required for making notes from books and other study text. Note making will reduce the time spent actually listening or viewing so notes should be very brief or made *after* the programme. Once a programme is over *question* the value of it, and recall the points which have left most impact on you. These are worth making notes on.

#### **6. THE WEB**

There is, of course, a whole wealth of relevant information waiting for you on the Web. It's just a matter of searching for it!