All-important discussion about post-production, editing and the duty of care, music, pre- and ancillary completion guarantees, sales and distribution, budgeting, producers, pitching, financing, mechanics for media legals), script development, script mechanics for interactive digital copyright, legal issues (with a focus on the technology of network and convergence, the technological changes in the industry and their implications for filmmakers. They say the most exciting and rewarding formats for the future are media-rich content to mobile phones via wireless networks and they provide some startling statistics on DVD consumption, which they anticipate may be overturned by video on demand and digital cinema as early as 2008.

The trio’s ‘Digital Media Survival Kit’ provides an excellent overview and their message is loud and clear: ‘harness this new niche power ... or die’. Cardillo, Jeffrey and Allen explain that new media formats and innovative distribution systems, along with digital capabilities, are the keystone to making money creatively, especially in the delivery of DVD-quality video on demand (VOD) to the home market, shifting the revenue ratio in favour of filmmakers. This is invaluable information for all new filmmakers and for established filmmakers that are planning to migrate their original material to multiple digital formats.

Next, independent film and television producer Damien Parer walks us through the necessary details of running a professional production business and formulating a comprehensive business plan. Parer conceived the idea for the original handbook, so it’s no surprise that his contribution to the overall book is the glue that binds the chapters. While emphasizing that it is in the producer’s interests to cross all t’s and dot all i’s, he engages experienced entertainment lawyer Lyndon Sayer-Jones to help climb ‘the legal ladder’. Sayer-Jones presents a crucial chapter that covers the legal aspects producers wish would handle themselves. Sayer-Jones, who is also an expert in intellectual property, offers suggestions on how to keep control of your project and how to lower costs, as well as a mine of helpful hints about location, credits, completion guarantees, composer’s agreements, errors, omission insurance and the important elements of a marketing/distribution agreement.

Linda Aronson’s chapter ‘Script Mechanics’ follows a lot of discussion about business, law and production matters. She urges that ‘even a producer with limited time and money can significantly improve their script development practices by planning properly, and by learning and applying basic script doctoring techniques’. With the script in shape and the project ready to be shared, Ginny Lowndes’ chapter, The Written Pitch, provides a detailed roadmap to help the novice negotiate the intimidating task of pitching, an area which seems to need considerable education within Australia’s emerging ranks. It’s a detailed account, but readers would do well to refer to the Australian Film Commission’s website (http://www.afc.gov.au) for further reading on the topic, including information regarding the necessary format of documents required.

A glossary is always useful but the one featured here is one of the most comprehensive glossaries I have seen. An appendix brimming with lists of agencies, organizations, groups, publications and services provides more than useful balance.

After reading such a thorough, well-edited and thoughtfully presented text, I was puzzled by the exclusion of seven chapters from the chapter bibliography at the end of the book and four authors from the contributor biographies. These oversights aside, I was completely satisfied with the text. Film Business: A Handbook for Producers should be prerequisite reading for anyone entering the industry or updating their knowledge. It is more than a reference book; it is a gospel.

Karen Cosgrove-Smith is a Masters of Arts research student (Film/TV), Creative Industries Faculty, at the Queensland University of Technology.
Technocratic and business speak, make _Television Disrupted_ an occasionally eye-glazing read, it does carry its weight as a useful work of reference. I’m sure that I’ll be dipping into it for some time to help make sense of the technological elements of other television literature – the glossary of terms alone clocks in at an impressive thirty pages.

This sort of reaction to Shelly Palmer’s volume is perhaps more than the author himself intended, given that he strangely warns off a certain class of person in an opening section confrontingly headed ‘Who Should Not Read this Book’: ‘academics and analysts looking for reference material, rigorous Socratic arguments or theoretical pontifications should not read this book.’ Apart from exemplifying the general insouciance of Palmer’s prose, this sentence also captures me (as self-confessed academic, if not seeker of Socratic truth) in its grip, as well as a fair percentage of those who will come across this book in their various browsing. After all, the networked environment that Palmer discusses has enabled television viewers to become analysts, in online form, through blogs, chatrooms and the like. The twist in the tail of Palmer’s attempt to define the ideal market for his book is that it is precisely those ‘academics and analysts’, rather than the ‘ideal’ audience of business professionals, who will be intrigued by the title of his text.

Firstly, _Television Disrupted_ argues that technological changes are disrupting television to the extent that they are forcing changes in business models and approaches to the maximization of customer value. But if this gives the impression that Palmer’s writing clusters heavily at the interface of technological advance and the actual nitty-gritty of business then that impression would be a mistake. Another of the odd things about this text is that it doesn’t pay as much attention to the complexities of actual business activity as it does to the minutiae of technology. Case studies of enterprises like Google and Microsoft that would appear best placed to bridge the divide between networked television are sketched in lightly if they are mentioned at all.

The second way in which _Television Disrupted_ engages the question its title poses is at the level of telesvisual convergence. To an extent, the entire book might be read as an exemplar of Toby Miller’s suggestion in 2000 that ‘it may even be that television as a word comes to take over what we now call “new media”’. Despite Palmer’s enthusiastic embrace of new television technology, he finally shies away from the insistent implications of his book, claiming at the start of his final chapter that ‘no form factor is likely to completely wipe out a previous form factor in the media business’. Thus, as much as he explodes the notion of television’s essentiality, of what television is or might be, Palmer still seems to retain a possibly unacknowledged allegiance to the form in its ‘legacy media’ incarnation.

If there’s any truth in Miller’s observation, then we may indeed be witnessing the radical disruption of television that would come with the subsumption under its name of all those ‘rival’ technological forms Palmer describes. Whether this constitutes the ultimate triumph or the final downfall of the form previously known as television is just one of the many fascinating questions that _Television Disrupted_ brings to attention without addressing in great depth. To be fair, Palmer does say that he is writing for a business community, but the issues he raises and comments upon happen to us deeply into the territory of television studies proper.

This last observation brings us to the third and final of the disruptions with which Palmer’s book can be associated. The third way in which _Television Disrupted_ opens up the concept of disruption is through its participation in that mode of disruption that has always characterized television studies, by which I mean its interdisciplinary nature. ‘Television scholars,’ writes Charlotte Brunsdon, ‘are employed in departments of sociology, politics, communication arts, speech, theatre, media and film studies.’ Why, therefore, not in business departments too? (As we are informed in About the Author, Palmer guest lectures to business students at a number of tertiary institutions.)

I am not arguing that _Television Disrupted_ is of itself a praiseworthy example of interdisciplinarity. When Palmer strays beyond his technological expertise his commentary on historical, political and social forces is often glib, pop psychological or just plain inappropriate. Sun Tzu’s _The Art of War_ as a business guide, anyone? Furthermore, you could steer battalions through the holes in logic of this gem: ‘While most people really know a quality movie or television show when they see it, they have no idea what makes a quality song. They only know if they like it or if they don’t!’ Really?

All misgivings aside, however, _Television Disrupted_ speaks most powerfully to the question of how television can be explained through the notion of disruption – the key notion of its title – in its exemplification of the disruptiveness consequent on interdisciplinarity, a disruptiveness that one could label an enduring, not to mention very welcome, openness to new perspectives. For better or worse, this volume is already a participant in the interdisciplinary current that wraps around television studies.

_Television Disrupted_ is also a valuable text for the wealth of information that it contains on the exciting technological changes that are enmeshing all of our lives as media consumers. I imagine it will become a well-thumbed addition to my bookshelf, until it is, inevitably, surpassed by the technology that it so comprehensively explains. But for the in-depth critical investigations of the form that ‘academics and analysts’ like to read, and which can’t be divorced from every other aspect of the television business, I’ll refer to studies that don’t seek to refuse me entry the moment that I sit down to read them.

Patrick West is a lecturer in writing at Griffith University, School of Arts.

Endnotes