**Mass Media and Reality**

Consider these two constructed realities that are common in mass media—particularly relating to entertainment and advertisement messages:

1. **Celebrities and spokespersons are idealized versions of us.**

View the following to see examples of these “constructed realities”.

[An actress's photo is altered to make her movie ads fit this reality.](http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/06/14/melissa-mccarthy-the-heat-poster-photoshopped_n_3441543.html) <http://www.huffingtonpost.co.uk/2013/06/14/melissa-mccarthy-the-heat-poster-photoshopped_n_3441543.html>

[A singer's photo is manipulated to match a magazine's constructed reality.](http://www.people.com/people/article/0%2C%2C20297322%2C00.html) [http://www.people.com/people/article/0,,20297322,00.html](http://www.people.com/people/article/0%2C%2C20297322%2C00.html)

Creating and distributing mass media messages can be an expensive, and potentially profitable, operation. As a result, big business and corporations are usually involved in the creation and distribution of mass media messages. With profit as a motive, businesses make their messages as effective as possible. To accomplish this, they use the latest research, techniques and technology to construct realities that can be remarkably effective and believable. Understanding how these constructed realities work makes us better consumers of media—something that is particularly important when the purpose of a constructed reality is to manipulate your beliefs or actions.

When we talk of mass media, we are not simply considering the technology used to deliver messages to vast numbers of people. We must also consider who owns or controls those technologies and who creates and controls the messages. The relationships between technology, ownership and the creation of mass media messages are so important that when we use the term "the media," we are usually referring to all three.

