



## Meaning in the Media: Discourse, Controversy and Debate

By Alan Durant

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Meaning in the Media addresses the issue of how we should respond to competing claims about meaning put forward in confrontations between people or organisations in highly charged circumstances such as bitter public controversies and expensive legal disputes. Alan Durant draws attention to the pervasiveness and significance of such meaning-related disputes in the media, investigating how their 'meaning' dimension is best described and explained. Through his analysis of deception, distortion, bias, false advertising, offensiveness and other kinds of communicative behaviour that trigger interpretive disputes, Durant shows that we can understand both meaning and media better if we focus in new ways on moments in discourse when the apparently continuous flow of understanding and agreement breaks down. This lively and contemporary volume will be invaluable to students and teachers of linguistics, media studies, journalism and law.

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'Brilliant, highly readable, sophisticated, and illustrated with a wealth of well-chosen examples, *Meaning in the Media* offers a major new analysis of disputes about meaning in public life, and of the linguistic, legal and social factors that affect their resolution. Essential reading not only for linguists, media scholars and specialists in language and the law, but for anyone who has ever been involved in a debate about defamation, honesty in advertising, or offensive language.' Deirdre Wilson, Emeritus Professor of Linguistics, University College London and co-author with Dan Sperber of *Relevance: Communication and Cognition*

'*Meaning in the Media* is that rare find: a work accessible to students and researchers whose clarity and readability will give linguistics the type of visibility it deserves in our meaning-suffused society. For scholars and students working in a number of fields, in law and beyond, it offers a common vocabulary and analytical model with which to tackle contested meaning.' Graeme Dinwoodie, Professor of Intellectual Property and Information Technology Law, University of Oxford

#### **About the Author**

Alan Durant is Professor of Communication at Middlesex University Business School, London. His previous publications include *How to Write Essays and Dissertations: A Guide for English Literature Students* (2nd edition, 2005) and *Ways of Reading* (3rd edition, 2007). He was also co-editor of *The Linguistics of Writing: Arguments Between Language and Literature* (1987).

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