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A Report on Non-Ionizing Radiation

Dave Eisen (1925-2010)

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We just learned that David Eisen, the former Director of Research and Information at the Newspaper Guild, died on September 16 at the age of 85. (A notice appeared in today's *New York Times*.) We got to know Dave Eisen back in the early 1980s when we were reporting on the possible health risks associated with video display terminals (VDTs), cathode ray tube (CRT) displays for computers. (From 1984 to 1995, *Microwave News* also published *VDT News*.) We'll let the obituary that ran in Maine's *Kennebec Journal* recount his life story, but we wish to salute him here.

At a time when very few were willing to take seriously the potential health impacts of EMF emissions from VDTs (there are many different types and some have complex waveforms), Dave made sure that the Guild stayed involved so that its members, many of whom spent long days at a glowing terminal, might be protected. He also made sure that the union's newspaper, *The Guild Reporter,* gave the story ink. Paul Brodeur covered much of this history in the *The New Yorker* (June 26, 1989) and his 1989 book, *Currents of Death.*

These days, when practically everyone has a flat screen or a laptop, CRTs are fast becoming technological relics. But not long ago, millions upon millions sat in front of them all day, every day. After the Swedes disclosed that VDT EMFs could be largely eliminated for less than a dollar per set, companies had no choice but to shield them. The health concerns soon subsided. Left unanswered, however, were some basic questions, such as can VDT EMFs cause miscarriages and birth defects? Today, we face a very similar situation with cell phones, except this time *billions* of people are at risk of brain tumors and acoustic neuromas. We can only hope that there will be other Dave Eisens who will want to help resolve this and other EMF health issues.

David Eisen, Newspaper Guild, VDTs, CRTs, Paul Brodeur, EMFs,

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