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- **About**

We live in a media-driven, commercial culture, where it's hard to escape the ever-increasing waves of advertising and infotainment. Meanwhile, our public spaces are eroding, and what were once safe havens – schools, museums, libraries, parks – are now awash in commercials.

- **Media Revolution Now!**

Help grow the [Media Venture Collective Fund](#), a non-profit venture fund for media ecosystems in the public interest.

- **Landmark Court Decision**

For more information on the Supreme Court's upcoming "Brand X" case that will "define the future of the internet," read the Center for Digital Democracy's [simple description](#) of what's at stake and how it will effect you.

- **Background**

[Merchants of Crap: A Media Giant Chart](#)

Find out who owns what.

[How to Prepare for the Broadband Era](#)

The broadband revolution should not be a corporate revolution.

[World in Crisis, Media in Conflict](#)

MediaChannel.org's special, ongoing guide to the media coverage of and role in post-9-11 events. See also: MediaChannel's extensive page on [media policy matters](#).

- **Recommended Sites**

[MediaChannel.org](#)

News, commentary and innovative responses on the political, cultural and social impacts of media -- from a nonprofit global network of over 700 affiliates.

[Electronic Frontier Foundation](#)

A nonprofit activism and information hub for Internet privacy, accessibility and development issues.

[Center for Digital Democracy](#)

A nonprofit comitted to the preservation and support of an open, diverse and democratic Internet.

[Fairness & Accuracy in Reporting](#)

A national media watch group that offers well-documented criticism of media bias and censorship.

[Jim Romenesko's MediaNews](#)

The site to find the latest controversy, gossip and insidery stuff of the media biz.

[Media Access Project](#)

A nonprofit advocacy group promoting the public's First Amendment right to hear and be heard on electronic media.

[Free Press](#)

A media reform network providing the latest information on FCC rulings and a beginner's guide to the

complex issues surrounding media diversity.

[PR Watch's Spin of the Day](#)

PR Watch provides great Internet links to newsworthy public relations stories.



A Media Monster Is Eating the Dems

By [Flavia Monteiro Colgan](#), [AlterNet](#). Posted [November 19, 2005](#).

The ever-consolidating news media in this country is not only destroying political discourse, it's favoring the right-wing over Democrats.

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As Harry Truman observed, "You can never get all the facts from just one newspaper, and unless you have all the facts, you cannot make proper judgments about what is going on."

If Give-'em-Hell Harry was around today, he would probably blow a gasket when he realized that not only do most Americans rely on a single news source, but whatever source they depend on is most likely slowly congealing into one mega-corporation. Maybe even more upsetting would be the way Democrats have responded.

Recent momentous news about the continuing elimination of variety in our news sources has gotten scant coverage.

First, it was announced that Village Voice Media intended to merge with the New Times papers. The Voice was, for years, a dependable independent news source available not only in New York, but in major

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cities everywhere, while its sister papers independently covered local news in four other areas.

New Times covered many of the gaps that the Voice didn't, in reporting and geographic coverage. The media conglomerate, if approved by the Justice Department, will consist of papers in 17 of the top markets, and 25 percent of alternative weeklies.

And, just days ago, it was reported that Knight Ridder, the publisher of 32 newspapers, including the Daily News and the Inquirer, will likely go up for sale, and the vultures are circling. Gannett, a likely suitor, already owns 99 daily papers.

This is a trend not just in print, but in broadcast and even the Internet. Today, 90 percent of the top 50 cable stations are owned by the same conglomerates that own the top networks, where more than 80 percent of prime-time viewing is dominated by these same five media giants. They also own the top 20 Internet news sites! And it's only going to get worse.

Media consolidation eats away at the fabric of democracy, which, as Josh Silver, executive director of Free Press, a nonpartisan media reform group, points out, "demands an informed citizenry with access to a variety of voices and viewpoints."

To compete and avoid takeovers, news outlets are cutting budgets, which means fewer reporters to cover more stories. When Knight Ridder bows to pressure from its largest shareholder after posting \$326 million in net income last year, no one is safe.

Democrats, traditionally hostile to large corporations, have been fairly good at taking on the issue of media consolidation, particularly when they aren't in power. Al Gore spoke out on it in his 2000 campaign, and Democrats like Sen. Dorgan and Rep. Dingle have largely led the campaign to diversify ownership (joined by some unlikely allies like Trent Lott).

The grassroots in the liberal blogosphere have made media consolidation a pet issue. Yet it isn't their adverse feelings toward corporations that's fueling their campaign against consolidation. Rather, many liberals feel, consolidation is a conspiracy that slants the news to the right.

One example: On a recent edition of CBS' "Face the Nation," the politicians brought in to discuss the indictment of GOP House leader Tom DeLay were all Republicans. (If you are interested in other cases, visit the Web sites for Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting or Media Matters.)

But what Democrats have failed to grasp is that there is no conspiracy to shut them out, it's just that they aren't very good at playing under the current rules.

When TV news became more entertainment than journalism, and newspaper reporters needed more pithy quotes, Democrats failed to adapt.

CNN President Jonathan Klein explained that Democrats have a hard time getting booked because they don't get "angry" enough to excite the viewers. He told Charlie Rose that liberals "don't get too worked up about anything. And they're pretty morally relativistic. And so, you know, they allow for a lot of that stuff."

Is that fair? No. But, unless the rules change, that's the reality progressives are facing. They can't change the rules unless they gain power, and they won't gain power until they work their way into the media.

Instead of huffing and puffing about how unfair it was that the media didn't take the time to learn the nuances of John Kerry's convoluted thinking - like "voting for the \$87 billion before I voted against it" - or that disingenuous conservatives like Ann Coulter get too much air, Democrats need to wise up.

It sounds stupid and superficial, but Democrats need to start talking in pithy sound bites instead of wonk-speak, show some emotion, connect with the audience on a visceral level and, for goodness sake, brush their hair and get rid of all tweed and clothes that don't fit. There's a reason you don't see your English lit prof on with Tucker Carlson.

In the 1950s, both parties were struggling to figure out the new medium of TV, and I'm sure a lot of curmudgeons were griping about how it was dumbing down the news. But a young candidate named John Kennedy figured out how to play by the new rules to win, then succeeded in forcing more sophisticated debates once in power.

We are at a point of similar change in the media, with consolidation ruining the national debate. The question now is will the Democrats be able to find a few new John Kennedys?

Flavia Colgan is a frequent commentator on MSNBC and CNBC. This essay originally appeared in the [Philadelphia Daily News](#).

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join common cause against media consolidation

Posted by: vomitgalore on Nov 19, 2005 12:34 AM [[Report this comment](#)]

now we must let new FCC Chairman Kevin Martin know that he cannot repeat the mistakes of the past. That's why we're asking you to sign on to this petition addressed to Chairman Martin, and the FCC's other commissioners. We know that if we get an open and transparent process, we can mobilize millions of citizens across the country that do not want their media to be any more concentrated than it is. This petition begins phase two of our fight against ultra concentrated media. We know that citizens want a media that serves their needs. Earlier this year, groups representing more than 20 million Americans signed on to the Bill of Media Rights, which offers a vision of an independent, diverse media that provides all of us with the information we need to govern ourselves.

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Liberal Media (??)

Posted by: Tom Degan on Nov 19, 2005 2:11 AM [[Report this comment](#)]

Whenever I hear one of these far-right halfwits go into a tirade over the "liberal media" I have to wonder what planet he or she has been living on. When Reagan gutted the FCC in the early eighties they did away with the fairness doctrine which had guaranteed that all sides of every issue would be heard by the public. The result was, you guessed it, an explosion of right-wing lies and the lying liars that tell them (Thankyou Mr. Franken).

One of the first things that the democrats have to do when they retake the House and Senate in January '09 is to re-regulate the FCC. Regulation is a good thing because it tempers the excesses of human nature and the conservative revolution of the last twenty five years has shown, for all to see, human nature at its very worst. Just as in 1933, history will no doubt repeat itself and it will take a "liberal" (BOO!) democratic administration to come in and clean up the mess.

I can't wait.

Tom Degan
Goshen, NY
tomdegan@frontiernet.net

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