



Written by [Mary McHugh](#) on November 17, 2010

Surely You Jest: PTC Report Says TV Profanity Is Increasing

Long gone are the days when TV stars stated that they were careful about the kind of entertainment they provided. Back then when a television set was a new addition in so many households, TV personalities were aware they were being allowed into living rooms across the country — and they were grateful to be part of the family for the night. Television was carefully screened and sponsors were boycotted should anything deemed offensive take to the airwaves and invade the home sanctuaries of America. It was a given that a bad example was bad for children — bad and unpleasant for most adults as well.



But sadly, those days are just a memory. The [Parents Television Council](#), a non-partisan educational organization advocating responsible entertainment, recently offered its five-year comparison of foul language on TV. This grassroots group, founded in 1995, “documented a sharp rise in the frequency and harshness of profanity being used on prime-time broadcast television in a special comparative analysis of the fall 2010 and 2005 seasons.” Their [report](#) is titled “A Habitat for Profanity.”

The Washington Times followed up the PTC report with its article [“The FCC Bomb”](#):

“After the Second Circuit Court of Appeals threw out the Federal Communications Commission’s congressionally-mandated authority to enforce the broadcast decency law, industry and media pundits predicted a sharp increase in the amount of profanity on television. Sadly, they were correct,” says Parents Television Council President Tim Winter, who has research to share.

Use of profanity is up by 70 percent across all major television networks during what used to be called “the family hour,” the group finds in a comparative study of prime times from 2005 to 2010. Use of the bleeped F-word increased by 2,409 percent. Use of the bleeped S-word increased by 763 percent. The study of 252 hours of programming from ABC, NBC, CBS, Fox, UPN and the WB/CW, was released Tuesday....

“Is this a coincidence? Is it an aberration? Or is this exactly the path that broadcasters and the ‘creative community’ in Hollywood set out when they began launching their legal attacks against the broadcast decency law?” Mr. Winter asks, noting that the offending prurience occurs in scripted rather than live programming, so there’s no excuse.

There may be no coincidence at all here. There were several popular (indeed Top-Ten) family TV shows of the 1960s and 70s whose cancellations came abruptly and for no apparent reason, confusing even their stars with each unexplained and unexpected demise. Though these programs were moneymakers, that was no longer the only object: The critical breakdown and indoctrination of the public was now on the radar as well. For what followed was the transitional period into the liberal, edgy programming of



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such shows as *All in the Family* (1971-1979), and some might say *Rowan & Martin's Laugh-In* — provocative for its time (1967-1973).

The political agendas of the Left made great headway during these years, as Americans continued their stupefied TV watching, with a controlled media doling out the goods. And it's been downhill ever since. The rapid lowering of the TV language bar is just the most recent incarnation.

Though some complain, and others comment that “if you don't like it, then turn it off,” this alarming rise in TV profanity actually has some families opting out of television altogether. An [article](#) in *Advertising Age* muses comparatively, “Whether you agree there's no place on TV for cursing or accept that it's part of the language as it exists today...,” while other observers see such language as a sign of an ever-more-decadent society where even the blasphemous use of the name of Jesus Christ is not bleeped out, much less avoided altogether as it should be.

The PTC report observes:

The statistics and examples in this study demonstrate that, freed of regulation in the wake of the Second Circuit Court's castration of the FCC's powers of enforcement, Hollywood's “creative” personnel and their TV network distribution outlets have deliberately unleashed literally unparalleled levels of profanity and graphic language upon the public — the most egregious of it in a time slot in which children are most likely to be in the audience. By so doing, these “creative” personnel — and the networks which employ them — exhibit continued defiance for the broadcast decency law, the American people whose airwaves they use, and the very concept of acting “in the public interest.”

The FCC plans to fight last summer's decision and regain its powerful mandate to oversee and control content, inept though its efforts have been in recent years. The public can assist by communicating with and boycotting offending sponsors, or joining organizations who do so.

Meanwhile, Patrick Gottsch, the president and founder of the successful family-oriented RFD TV channel, speaks for many who are alarmed at the state of television, its shows and advertisements: “I don't know how these other channels, and their sales people, sleep at night.”



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