



Written by [Raven Clabough](#) on June 3, 2010

FCC and FTC: Enemies of Free Press and Free Speech

A coalition of 30 or more organizations is currently urging the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) to regulate what is being dubbed “hate speech” on talk radio and cable broadcast networks. In a letter addressed to the FCC, the coalition targeted the Internet, syndicated radio, and cable television programs, accusing them of “masquerading as news” to promote hate.

In the letter, the organizations explain, “As traditional media have become less diverse and less competitive, they have also grown less responsible and less responsive to the communities that they are supposed to serve. In this same atmosphere hate speech thrives, as hate has developed as a profit-model for syndicated radio and cable television program masquerading as ‘news.’”



One group that is a “surprising” member of this coalition is Free Press, a self-proclaimed socialist/Marxist organization that receives financial support from the George Soros Foundation, as well as the Ford Foundation. Discoverthenetworks.org reports that even while Free Press “calls for revolution, the overthrow of the capitalist system, and the socialization of America, Free Press has been regularly granted audiences not only with members of Congress, but with those overseeing media policy at the Federal Communications Commission and the Federal Trade Commission. For example, when Julius Genachowski became chairman of the FCC, he promptly appointed Free Press spokeswoman Jen Howard to be his Press Secretary. By late September ... Genachowski announced his plan to push for net neutrality.”

Another group comprising the coalition is the Center for Media Justice, aka, the Center for “social justice” and “environmental justice.”

Likewise, the Media Alliance and the Benton Foundation are involved in the coalition. The mission of the Benton Foundation is to work “to ensure that media and telecommunications serve the public interest and enhance our democracy.” This mission is pursued by “seeking policy solutions that support the values of access, diversity, and equity.”

While the letter does not specify between left-wing or right-wing media, the coalition’s members alone imply that the groups being targeted by this letter are those that stand opposed to the Obama regime: *The New American*, Fox News, anti-Obama bloggers, etc. Ironically, the letter claims that this media has become “less responsive to the communities,” even while approximately 60 percent of Americans stand in favor of the Arizona immigration law, support the state of Israel, and wish to repeal the healthcare bill, as opposed to what is reported by the mainstream media, those not targeted in the letter. So who is truly “less responsive to the communities that they are supposed to serve”?



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Not surprisingly, this coalition was announced on the Friday before Memorial Day, a perfect opportunity for the story to be buried and forgotten.

In addition to the efforts put forth by this coalition of “reputable” organizations, the Federal Trade Commission has created a Discussion Draft that addresses the current issues plaguing the journalistic climate and makes a variety of policy recommendations to correct the problems. The project for “the reinvention of journalism” was first announced in May 2009, in order to “meet the challenges faced by journalism in the Internet age,” but the draft was not put together until a year later. The draft is scheduled to be discussed on June 15, 2010 at the National Press Club.

The draft seems to primarily target groups that access information from other news sources and use it in their own writings, such as is done by many non-mainstream media outlets and bloggers. That is why much of the draft suggests stricter Copyright laws and Fair Use laws, including proposing to make it a violation of the Fair Use Act to copy “original content done by a search engine in order to conduct a search.”

The other primary function of the draft seems to place government in complete control of the information available to the average consumer. This can be seen in what is perhaps the most chilling of the proposals: proposal 3, “Licensing the News.” That proposal reads:

Some suggest that some sort of industry-wide licensing arrangements be adopted, perhaps with the government’s help and support. Foreign governments have considered how to provide adequate incentives and funding for the news and are exploring, for example, the creation of government-fostered pilot programs to investigate new business models for IP [Intellectual Property] and discourage free-riding. Such programs might enable newspapers and other content providers to experiment with “micropayments” and other means to monetize digital content. Such market and policy experiments may provide useful insight to continued IP policy discussions.

The goal of driving a wedge between consumers and accessible information is evidential throughout the document, including in the following two proposals: “allow news organizations to agree jointly to erect pay walls so that consumers must pay for access to online content” and “allow news organizations to agree jointly on a mechanism to require news aggregators and others to pay for the use of online content, perhaps through the use of copyright licenses.”

Another recommendation found in the draft involves training AmeriCorps, a federal program that places young people with nonprofits to get training and do public service work, as journalists. The proponents of this idea claim, “This proposal would help to ensure that young people in journalism will stay in the field.” In other words, the federal government will be churning out loads of “unbiased journalists” to work in the news sector. Seems legit.

Likewise, the draft addresses the possibility of “government funds [being] used to support journalism” by proposing that the federal government use tax breaks for newspapers to “deduct their expenditures,” “provide postal subsidies to recipients of newspapers,” and “increased government subsidies, indirect and direct.”

Additionally, the discussion draft proposes increased funding for public radio and television stations such as National Public Radio (NPR) and the Public Broadcasting Station (PBS), since the purpose of these programs are to “inform, enlighten and enrich the public.” Ahem. Also, there is a proposal to establish a “National Fund for Local News” and a variety of proposals that will allow for federal funding of media.



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Perhaps the most interpretive of the policies is that "news organizations seeking tax-exempt status, especially those that have historically taken positions on candidates and other political issues ... must refrain from participating in political campaigns and lobbying activities." Of course, the issue with this recommendation is who is in charge of making this determination. When the Huffington Post or MSNBC, simply leaves out or avoids reporting on an issue that may be deemed "controversial," thereby protecting the Left, will this be considered a political campaign or a lobbying activity?

The list of anti-free press proposals seems unending, and I encourage you to read the document when you have time to sift through the pages upon pages of recommendations. The overall gist of these suggestions are more spending and more control.

That should be the Obama's next campaign slogan.



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