Controlled Media Manipulation: Corporations That Control Almost Everything We Watch, Hear & Read

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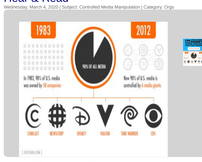

Back in 1983, approximately 50 corporations controlled the vast majority of all news media in the United States. Today, ownership of the news media has been concentrated in the hands of just six incredibly powerful media corporations. These corporate behemoths control most of what we watch, hear and read every single day. They own television networks, cable channels, movie studios, newspapers, magazines, publishing houses, music labels and even many of our favorite websites. Sadly, most Americans don't even stop to think about who is feeding them the endless hours of news and entertainment that they constantly ingest. Most Americans don't really seem to care about who owns the media. But they should. The truth is that each of us is deeply influenced by the messages that are constantly being pounded into our heads by the mainstream media. The average American watches 153 hours of television a month. In fact, most Americans begin to feel physically uncomfortable if they go too long without watching or listening to something. Sadly, most Americans have become absolutely addicted to news and entertainment and the ownership of all that news and entertainment that we crave is being concentrated in fewer and fewer hands each year.

The six corporations that collectively control U.S. media today are Time Warner (TWX), Walt Disney (DIS), Viacom (VIA), Rupert Murdoch's News Corp. (NWS), CBS Corporation (CBS) and NBC Universal. Together, the "big six" absolutely dominate news and entertainment in the United States. But even those areas of the media that the "big six" do not completely control are becoming increasingly concentrated. For example, Clear Channel (CCO) now owns over 1000 radio stations across the United States. Companies like Google (GOOG), Yahoo (YHOO) and Microsoft (MSFT) are increasingly dominating the Internet.

But it is the "big six" that are the biggest concerns. When you control what Americans watch, hear and read you gain a great deal of control over what they think. They don't call it "programming" for nothing.

Back in 1983 it was bad enough that about 50 corporations dominated U.S. media. But since that time, power over the media has rapidly become concentrated in the hands of fewer and fewer people....

In 1983, fifty corporations dominated most of every mass medium and the biggest media merger in history was a $340 million deal. ... ([I]n 1987, the fifty companies had shrunk to twenty-nine. ... ([I]n 1990, the twenty-nine had shrunk to twenty three. ... ([I]n 1997, the biggest firms numbered ten and involved the $19 billion Disney-ABC deal, at the time the biggest media merger ever. ... ([In 2000]) AOL Time Warner's $350 billion merged corporation [was] more than 1,000 times larger [than the biggest deal of 1983].

--Ben H. Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, Sixth Edition, (Beacon Press, 2000), pp. xx—xxi

Today, six colossal media giants tower over all the rest. Much of the information in the chart below comes from mediaowners.com. The chart below reveals only a small fraction of the media outlets that these six behemoths actually own....

Time Warner

Home Box Office (HBO)
Time Inc.
Turner Broadcasting System, Inc.
Warner Bros. Entertainment Inc.
CW Network (partial ownership)
TMZ
New Line Cinema
Time Warner Cable
Cinemax
Cartoon Network
TBS
TNT
America Online
MapQuest
Moviefone
Castle Rock
Sports Illustrated
Fortune
Marie Claire
People Magazine

Walt Disney

ABC Television Network
Disney Publishing
ESPN Inc.
Disney Channel
SOAPnet
A&E
Lifetime
Buena Vista Home Entertainment
Buena Vista Theatrical Productions
Buena Vista Records
Disney Records
Hollywood Records
Miramax Films
Touchstone Pictures
Walt Disney Pictures
Pixar Animation Studios
Buena Vista Games
Hyperion Books

Viacom

Paramount Pictures
Paramount Home Entertainment
Black Entertainment Television (BET)
Comedy Central
Country Music Television (CMT)
Logo
MTV
MTV Canada
MTV2
Nick Magazine
Nick at Nite
Nick Jr.
Nickelodeon
Noggin
Spike TV
The Movie Channel
TV Land
VH1

News Corporation

Dow Jones & Company, Inc.
Fox Television Stations
The New York Post
Fox Searchlight Pictures
Beliefnet
Fox Business Network
Fox Kids Europe
Fox News Channel
Fox Sports Net
Fox Television Network
FX
My Network TV
MySpace
News Limited News
Phoenix InfoNews Channel
Phoenix Movies Channel
Sky PerfecTV
Speed Channel
STAR TV India
STAR TV Taiwan
STAR World
Times Higher Education Supplement Magazine
Times Literary Supplement Magazine
Times of London
20th Century Fox Home Entertainment
20th Century Fox International
20th Century Fox Studios
20th Century Fox Television
BSkyB
DIRECTV
The Wall Street Journal
Fox Broadcasting Company
Fox Interactive Media
FOXTEL
HarperCollins Publishers
The National Geographic Channel
National Rugby League
News Interactive
News Outdoor
Radio Veronica
ReganBooks
Sky Italia
Sky Radio Denmark
Sky Radio Germany
Sky Radio Netherlands
STAR
Zondervan

CBS Corporation

CBS News
CBS Sports
CBS Television Network
CNET
Showtime
TV.com
CBS Radio Inc. (130 stations)
CBS Consumer Products
CBS Outdoor
CW Network (50% ownership)
Infinity Broadcasting
Simon & Schuster (Pocket Books, Scribner)
Westwood One Radio Network

NBC Universal

Bravo
CNBC
NBC News
MSNBC
NBC Sports
NBC Television Network
Oxygen
SciFi Magazine
Syfy (Sci Fi Channel)
Telemundo
USA Network
Weather Channel
Focus Features
NBC Universal Television Distribution
NBC Universal Television Studio
Paxson Communications (partial ownership)
Trio
Universal Parks & Resorts
Universal Pictures
Universal Studio Home Video

These gigantic media corporations do not exist to objectively tell the truth to the American people. Rather, the primary purpose of their existence is to make money.

These gigantic media corporations are not going to do anything to threaten their relationships with their biggest advertisers (such as the largest pharmaceutical companies that literally spend billions on advertising), and one way or another these gigantic media corporations are always going to express the ideological viewpoints of their owners.

Fortunately, an increasing number of Americans are starting to wake up and are realizing that the mainstream media should not be trusted. According to a new poll just released by Gallup, the number of Americans that have little to no trust in the mainstream media (57%) is at an all-time high.

That is one reason why we have seen the alternative media experience such rapid growth over the past few years. The mainstream media has been losing credibility at a staggering rate, and Americans are starting to look elsewhere for the truth about what is really going on.

Do you think that anyone in the mainstream news would actually tell you that the Federal Reserve is bad for America or that we are facing a horrific derivatives bubble that could destroy the entire world financial system? Do you think that anyone in the mainstream media would actually tell you the truth about the deindustrialization of America or the truth about the voracious greed of Goldman Sachs (GS)?

Sure there are a few courageous reporters in the mainstream media that manage to slip a few stories past their corporate bosses from time to time, but in general there is a very clear understanding that there are simply certain things that you just do not say in the mainstream news.

But Americans are becoming increasingly hungry for the truth, and they are becoming increasingly dissatisfied with the dumbed down pablum that is passing as "hard hitting news" these days.

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