

Who Owns the Media in Columbus?

The Columbus, Ohio, area is the nation's 32nd-largest TV market and 37th-largest radio market. Columbus is dominated by a handful of media firms. Just four companies control 75 percent of the Columbus area's local news market.

The Wolfe family's Dispatch Company, owners of the Columbus Dispatch, WBNS-TV 10, WBNS-AM 1460 and WBNS-FM 97.1, controls nearly half of the local news market for the entire Columbus area.

Tell the FCC to Stop Media Consolidation

The town meeting in Columbus on March 7 is your opportunity to speak out. Visit www.freepress.net/future for more information.



Television

The **Dispatch Company** and large conglomerates, such as **Sinclair Broadcast Group**, **LIN Television** and **Media General**, control the Columbus TV market. Sinclair and Dispatch together control nearly 75 percent of the revenue. WBNS-TV 10 (the Dispatch-owned CBS affiliate) and WSFJ-TV 51 are the only two locally owned and operated TV stations. Sinclair owns WSYX-TV 6 (the ABC affiliate, one of 47 stations the company owns nationwide) and runs the local Fox station, WTTE-TV 28, through a local marketing agreement. **Cunningham Broadcasting** actually owns WTTE, but the Smith family has the majority of voting stock in both Cunningham and Sinclair (current FCC rules prohibit Sinclair from owning both stations). Even though this duopoly is a clear violation of federal rules, the FCC has taken no action. There are no full-power commercial TV stations owned by women or racial and ethnic minorities in the Columbus market.

Radio

Clear Channel and **Saga Communications** dominate the Columbus radio market, with Clear Channel owning six stations (including WTVN-AM 610, the dominant news radio station), and Saga owning four. Together, these two companies own 30 percent of all the commercial radio stations in the market and control nearly half of the revenue. Nationwide, Clear Channel owns more than 1,000 radio stations, and Saga owns 89. Non-local owners control nearly 56 percent of Columbus' commercial radio stations. Radio One, an African-American-owned company, controls the market's three minority-owned stations, WCKX-FM 107.5, WJYD-FM 106.3, and WXMG-FM 98.9. Columbus has four radio stations owned by women, WBZX-FM 99.7, WMNI-AM 920 and WTDA-FM 103.9 (all owned by North American Broadcasting Company, based in Columbus) and WHIZ-FM 102.5 (owned by Southeastern Ohio Television, based in Zanesville).

Newspapers

The *Columbus Dispatch* is the sole daily newspaper in the area, with an average weekday distribution of nearly 250,000 copies. The *Columbus Citizen-Journal*, a competing daily, ceased operation in 1985 after the owners of the *Dispatch* ended an arrangement to share their printing press. This move, a potential antitrust violation, prompted the Department of Justice to join a court case against the *Dispatch* which was later dropped. The *Columbus Dispatch* is locally owned and operated by the Wolfe family, who also own the area's dominant TV news outlet and two radio stations.

Media Ownership in Columbus Doesn't Reflect the Diversity of its Population

Racial and ethnic minorities comprise 23 percent of the population in the Columbus television market; 19 percent of population in the Columbus radio market; and 33 percent of the population in the city of Columbus. Despite the diversity in the Columbus area, only 7.5 percent of the area's commercial broadcast stations are minority-owned. Women own just 7.5 percent of commercial stations.

FCC Deregulation Would Devastate the Area's Few Independent Voices

According to an analysis by the Consumer Federation of America, the Columbus media market is already highly concentrated, with four firms controlling 75 percent of the area's entire local news market, and the Dispatch Company controlling nearly half. If the FCC eliminated its few remaining ownership protections, then the top four firms would likely increase their share to nearly 90 percent of the Columbus area news market.