



CALL FOR PAPERS

The National Conference on Media Reform Academic pre-Conference

Minneapolis, MN

June 5, 2008

The national conference on media reform has become the meeting place for media reform advocates, activists, media makers, educators, journalists and other citizens concerned about the state of American media. In recent years, there has been growing interest in how academics can tie their research to a reform agenda.

This year, we plan to devote the day before the national conference to presenting new research about reform movement issues and to promoting dialogue between academics and media reform proponents. We are seeking original research papers for presentation at this unique event. To ensure a high level of research papers, two committees of both established scholars and graduate students were established all under the auspices of the **Institute for Information Policy at Penn State University**. The conference will include no more than four paper sessions, solicited from both graduate students and faculty. The **Social Science Research Council** will provide scholarships for graduate student travel. The papers should focus on following issues of concern to the media advocacy community. International and comparative studies of these issues are highly encouraged:

1. Media ownership

Media ownership is a key focus of the media advocacy community. The relationship between research and policymaking has been highlighted in this debate. This track will concentrate on research pertaining to and surrounding the FCC's media ownership policies and their formulation since the 2003 *Prometheus* decision. Presentations can focus on the use (or abuse) of academic research by the FCC, on the decision making process, on the new rules eventually crafted by the FCC, with reference to (or neglect of) issues of localism, minority and women ownership or any other pertinent matters of interest.

2. Sustaining independent media

This track will focus on the relationship between independent media outlets and their means of distribution. Presentations can address the role of community radio, television or websites, as well as the debates regarding independent programming over cable, and other issues pertaining to the sustenance of independent media outlets, rather than to ownership patterns

3. Digital technology challenges

Last year's conference took place at the height of the network neutrality debate. While more academic work on this issue has come out in the past year, some fresh challenges created by new technological realities have surfaced. Topics of discussion may include, in addition to network neutrality, creator and employee rights in these new digital environments, copyright, statewide franchising for IPTV, DTV transition, broadband deployment and more.

4. Access to dominant media

Physical access to media, on the one hand, and the commercial character of programming, on the other, raise questions regarding the need to create policies ensuring diversity in access so that alternative voices may be heard, and to the diminishing role of public and non-commercial broadcasting in our national landscape. In light of the upcoming national elections, this track can also offer an opportunity to discuss issues of candidate access to the media and vice versa.

Anonymous abstracts of no more than 500 words and a short bio of the author(s) **on a separate page** should be submitted to mediareformconference@psu.edu by January 25, 2008. Authors will be notified of the status of their submission by March 31, 2008, and will be expected to make their full studies available by May 23, 2008.