

On the Playing Field

The major media corporations have a growing monopoly. In the UK just five companies own at least 85% of newspaper sales.

Murdoch's News International controls over two thirds of the newspaper circulation, including The Times, The Sunday Times, The Sun and the News of the World. On top of this they also have a controlling interest in Twentieth Century Fox, publishers Harper Collins, satellite BSkyB and StarTV which covers most of Asia and the Middle East (potentially reaching two thirds of the world's population).

The world's largest media company, AOLTimeWarner, owns the 24-hour cable news channel CNN, 40% of US cable TV, 50 record labels, the magazines Time, Life, Money and People, as well as being the worlds largest Internet Service Provider.

VESTED INTERESTS

These huge corporations and rich individuals have values at odds with the rest of us. Their vested interest in almost every major issue results in them offering a very narrow view of the world. Self censorship is common as the proprietors and advertisers concerns are considered more important than a duty to the truth.



The corporate media doesn't exist for our benefit, its aim is to perpetuate power and profits.

Still letting it push your buttons?



www.whitedot.org

"There is no such thing as a free press, you know it and I know it... The business of a journalist is to destroy the truth, to lie outright, to pervert, to vilify, fall at the feet of mammon, and sell himself for his daily bread. We are tools, vessels of rich men behind the scenes, we are jumping jacks. They pull the strings - we dance."

John Swainton - editor of the New York Times on the day of his retirement.

THINGS CAN BE DIFFERENT

The Internet, photocopying, and low cost computer and video equipment have made it easier than ever for everyone to publish their own thoughts and experiences. This information 'revolution' creates opportunities for us all to peer beyond the government propoganda, showbiz hype and consumer bullshit. Now we can all examine for ourselves many of the issues trivialised or ignored by the mainstream. But while we may become better informed, if we fail to act on what we learn, this 'revolution' will be little more than yet more entertainment for passive spectators. Words mean nothing without action...

The Vested Interest

EVERYDAY - EVERY WEEK - EVERY YEAR

FREE?

MEDIA MOGUL ATE MY HAMSTER!

...or why the media sucks

We all know that the media is full of trivia and celebrity frivolity but wouldn't it be better if it were really keeping us informed, and not simply using sensationalism to increase market-share and sell advertising.

Without a free flow of information and ideas, how can we be expected to make informed decisions about issues that directly effect our lives and the lives of others?

DIET OF TRIVIA

Every day, people in this country spend an average of four hours, reading, watching, or listening to 'the media' - be it TV or radio, newspapers or magazines, films or videos, books or billboards.

"It is easier and less costly to change the way people think about reality than to change reality"

Dr. Spin

LIES

Through the media we are subjected to a continuous flow of hogwash and misinformation. Real issues are ignored or scorned while we get populist entertainment dressed up as a true and accurate reflection of the way things are.

It's easy to see for yourself how the media misrepresent reality. People involved in an event are often surprised at how it is later portrayed in the media. They wonder if they were at a different event and question how the reporters could have got things so wrong. Sometimes the facts may be correct but are given a misleading spin and often focus on some minor point or on personality rather than the issues. More often the facts are simply ignored as being inconvenient but avoidable obstacles to furthering the publication's particular agenda.

Are important issues neglected simply because they might be boring or difficult to understand, or is it because we might feel inspired to act? If information is power, then perhaps the media prefers us to be powerless.

Could the daily diet of soaps and celebrity haircuts be intended to distract us from reality, leaving us disempowered and unable to think for ourselves?



www.indymedia.org.uk
 a network of individuals, independent and alternative media activists and organisations, offering grassroots, non-corporate, non-commercial, open publishing.

global news, views, photos, video and audio reports from where it happens, as it happens.

Plus... 'Offline' a monthly publication that brings the highlights of IndyMedia UK news back to the streets.

DOWNLOAD offline THE INDYMEDIA NEWS STREET

SchNEWS
www.schnews.org.uk
 c/o On The Fiddle, PO Box 2600, Brighton, BN2 0EF
01273 685 913

Weekly news-sheet and yearly book with additional articles, photos, DIY guides, cartoons and 'yellow-pages' listing hundred grassroots contacts.

CorporateWatch

"The Earth is not dying, it is being killed and those who are killing it have names and addresses" - Utah Philips.

16b Cherwell Street, Oxford OX4 1BG
 Tel/Fax 01865 791391 mail@corporatwatch.org

www.corporatwatch.org.uk

monthly direct action review, contacts list, events diary etc.
Action Update
 c/o Dept 29, 22a Beswick St, Manchester M4 7HS
0161 226 6814
 efactionupdate@bigfoot.com
 efaun.email-subscribe@topica.com

This leaflet is obviously just a brief glance at complex issues (oh the irony). You don't need to look far to find examples to prove that the corporate media is inherently useless. There are plenty of books and papers published on the subject. However (as always) the best way to know something is to experience it for yourself - compare your personal experiences with coverage in the mainstream media. Question everything & ACT!

anti-copyright 2002 Copy and distribute freely.
 more from... 07050 618445
 www.talk.to.hamsters
 email hamsters@talk.to

THERE MUST BE MORE TO LIFE THAN

Printed on recycled paper made from non-GM trees.

INSIDE - WEAPONS OF MASS DISTRACTION - IT'S WAR! - PICTURES

"Whether the issue is health, consumer safety, environmental preservation or democracy and world peace, citizens today find themselves confronted by a bewildering array of hired propagandists paid to convince the public that junk food is nutritious, pollution is harmless, and that what's good for big business and big government is good for the rest of us." Center for Media & Democracy

HOGWASH & WHITE WASH

In this country, the government doesn't have direct control of the media but that doesn't mean that there is no 'state' control. Before the introduction of the current system of government, society was controlled by the church and the monarchy. Now the corporations hold the power. They exert influence over governments and control much of the media. In ways both subtle and blatant, the state still shapes the models of reality presented to us by the media.

MAKE BELIEVE

Royal soap is interesting. Really? Acres of space are devoted to these throwbacks... even we are doing it!



Politics is politicians and elections. The media focuses on the petty dramas and personalities of party politics. It rarely bothers to hide the governments failure to act in the best interest of ordinary people. We are meant to think that there is no choice but another election. But democracy is not about scrawling an 'X' on a scrap of paper every five years. No wonder so many people are disenfranchised from this 'democratic' process. Real politics is about how all of us choose to live and act everyday.

The experts will fix it. Be it crime, poverty, homelessness, pollution or whatever, we are told that the government, scientists or private companies are finding a solution. Clearly with 'experts' on the case, we don't have to think too much about it or do anything. But can we really leave it all to them? Do they have our best interests at heart? Who created these problems?

The problems are caused by ... teenagers, parents, single mums, teachers, people on benefits, unions, immigrants, asylum seekers etc. Such scapegoating diverts attention from the real issues and the real causes and creates division. United we stand...

SUPPRESSED

Ordinary people count. Its not what 'experts', politicians or celebrities do or say that counts (even if makes the headlines). It's what we think and do, in our everyday lives, our workplaces and communities. We, the majority, through our own action or inaction create our own realities and can either leave things as they are now, or work to make things better.

Resistance is everywhere. There are alternatives to the dominant economic and political system but they remain invisible through the mass media. Even when the media is forced to recognise the serious problems caused by capitalism, they ignore or try to discredit those trying to create a society based on co-operation not greed and profit.

SEX

The 'love lives' of the rich and famous are one of the mainstays of the mass media. It's easy to understand why we are attracted to such imagery and why sex is used to sell just about everything. It is less obvious why violence should be so attractive and yet the media can't get enough of it.

VIOLENCE

The news media use 'violence' to create more sensational stories than reality provides. They focus on conflict, often exaggerating it to suit their purpose. If there was no violence, they may invent it or not report the event at all.

DOUBLE STANDARDS

While smashing the windows of multinational companies becomes acts of mindless violence, riot police charging in with batons, shields, and CS gas are simply said to have controlled the crowd. Even people pulling up a trial of GM crops are said to have 'spoiled an otherwise peaceful protest' thereby equating property damage with violence.

VERBAL ABUSE

Carefully selected words can conjure up images that help to shape the reader's opinion. For example the authorities version of events can be presented as fact while words like 'claimed' and 'alleged' are used to cast doubt on other peoples accounts. Groups can be discredited with labels such as 'rent-a-mob', 'anarchists', 'extremists' or worse...



TERRORISM

You may have noticed how the word terrorism has become so prevalent in recent years. Is there more terrorism? What exactly does the word mean anyway?

With blatant double standards, the state applies the word to virtually any act of aggression or political dissent of which they don't approve. But isn't one persons terrorist another's freedom fighter? Was Nelson Mandela a terrorist? Just what is 'eco-terrorism'?

Terrorism is an emotive word invoking fear and anger. It's use in oversimplistic propaganda helps justify new police powers, the erosion of civil liberties, and extreme acts of violence by the state.

WAR NOW!

War sends the media into a frenzy. Roll out the computer generated maps, foreign correspondents, political commentators, defence experts etc. They love it. Different people saying the same thing - mostly nothing but speculation. The media assists the politicians with their propaganda - 'defence of democracy' or 'humanitarian necessity'. Dissent is vilified as

unpatriotic, played down or ignored. Nothing must challenge the hypocrisy and the manufactured illusion of public support and consent.

"the first casualty of war is the truth"

George W Bush

MAKING A KILLING

Of course it's not just the media that loves war - politicians also enjoy the opportunities provided. Draconian laws are passed in the name of national interest and security and unpopular news can be buried under all the media hype and speculation. Thatcher saved her career by launching a war on Argentina, Clinton escaped his sex scandal by blitzing Iraq, and Bush took his approval rating from 20% to 90% by bombing Afghanistan and committing the entire 'free world' to an endless 'war on terror'.

There's also plenty of money to be made. Increased 'defence' budgets provide the arm's trade with a profitable killing, and the spoils of war go to the multinationals in the form of lucrative new markets, cheap labour, oil reserves and other tax free resources to plunder.

SOME ALTERNATIVES

IN PRINT	DISTRIBUTION
New Internationalist www.newint.org	AK Distribution , PO Box 12766, Edinburg EH8 9YE. 0131 555 5165
The Ecologist www.theecologist.org	Freedom Press 84b Whitechapel High Str, London E1 7QX 020 7247 9249
Ethical Consumer www.ethicalconsumer.org	re-pressed (non profit) repressed@mail.com www.re-pressed.org.uk
Genetix Update www.genetixaction.org.uk	ONLINE
Bristle self-funded mag' Box 25, 82 Colston St Bristol BS1 5BB editors@bristle.org.uk	www.protest.net events listing. get active.
The Pork-Bolter porkbolter@eco-action.org PO Box 4144, Worthing BN14 7NZ	swiops.tincan.co.uk activist search engine and internet portal
The Loombreaker c/o Dept 29, 22a Beswick St, Manchester, M4 7HS 0161-226 6814 www.loombreaker.org.uk	www.alternet.org international news&views
Counter Information c/o 17 West Montgomery Pl, Edinburgh EH7 5HA www.autonomous.org.uk/ci 0131 557 6242	www.freespeech.org with net TV service
	www.urban75.org news& comment. no ads
	www.prwatch.org Watching the PR Industry
	www.mediachannel.org spotlight on the media
	www.squall.co.uk online + downloadable version.
	www.mwaw.org Media Workers Against War

PRINTERS

Footprint Workers C-op
radical printing
0113 262 4408
www.footprinters.co.uk

MUSIC

David Rovics
DRovics@aol.com
www.davidrovics.com

SeizeTheDay
Big Hill, PO Box 23,
5 High Str, Glastonbury,
Somerset, BA6 9DP
www.seizetheday.org

PeaceNews & NVA

Quarterly international
magazine and monthly
UK focused newsletter.
reporting on global conflict
and the peace movement.

peacenews@gn.apc.org
www.peacenews.info
5 Caledonian Rd,
London N1 9DY

DO OR DIE

Voices from the
ecological resistance
c/o 6 Tilbury Place
Brighton. BN2 2GY
www.eco-action.org/dod

FILM & VIDEO

Lifecycles, pedalpower
outreach / video screening
01803 840098
www.lifecycles.info

Groovy movie solar
cinema 07946 520436
www.groovymovie.org

i-Contact training&shows
0117 914 0188
www.videoNetwork.org

CultureShop video
distribution. PO Box
29683, London E2 6XH
www.cultureshop.org

Undercurrents
01865 203662

Britains longest
running alternative
video news service
on vhs, cdrom.
Plus training.

www.
undercurrents
.org

ENTERTAINMENT TONIGHT... Buy, Consume, Obey. Who benefits? Question everything!

