


# So what's going on here anyway?

This is the 2007 Chicago Media Action Holiday Singalong. Chicago Media Action (CMA) is a Chicago-area group actively devoted to issues around the media. The main issue we're highlighting with this Singalong is media concentration, particularly involving the Tribune Company.

## What do you mean by "media concentration"?


 It's the idea that fewer and fewer companies own more and more media outlets -- TV stations, radio stations, cable channels, newspapers, magazines, movie studios, and internet websites. The Tribune Company has been advocating for new laws to allow it to own more media properties nationwide, and thus increase media concentration overall.

## What does the Tribune Company control?


 WGN-TV and 23 other television stations, Superstation WGN (cable), WGN-AM, CLTV, 11 daily newspapers including the Chicago Tribune, 3 Spanish language newspapers including Hoy, Chicago Magazine, Sports & entertainment concerns incl. the Chicago Cubs, Tribune Studios, Tribune Entertainment Company, and numerous other concerns, interests, and subsidiaries.

**Note:** Five of the Tribune Company's TV stations (including WGN-TV) are a part of otherwise illegal TV-newspaper duopolies.


## Why should I care? What does this have to do with me?

 As media concentration increases, the media become increasingly worse -- commercialism increases, localism declines, and quality journalism decreases. What's more, there's less room for independent music and fewer diverse perspectives overall. Plus, there's the democracy argument: In a democratic society, a diverse media is necessary for an informed and active body politic.

## That sounds like it's too big a problem. Besides, we have the Internet now.

 It might sound daunting and over the heads of most "everyday people", but the involvement of "everyday people" in recent years -- numbering in the millions, and across the political spectrum -- has been why the issue is still alive today. Popular involvement fueled successful blocks to change the rules which would have otherwise allowed increasing media concentration, like that in 2003 where an FCC vote was overturned when millions of people spoke up. And yes, we have the internet, but if the internet made everything a level playing field, the prices of TV and radio broadcast licenses would sink. They haven't; they're highly lucrative, and in Chicago are bought and sold for hundreds of millions of dollars. What's more, newspapers, supposedly a "dying" industry, still rake in profit levels that make other industries jealous.

## So why don't I hear about this on the news? Isn't this a conspiracy theory?

 No conspiracy, just business as usual. If you read business publications involving the media, the media aren't shy about talking about this issue. But it's very rarely discussed as an issue of importance to the public, and for good reason: public opinion surveys show that the more "everyday people" know about the issue, the more outraged they get over the issue and the more they want to do something about it.

## So what should I do about it? We suggest three things:

- (1) **Contact the FCC and members of Congress to let them know what you think.** You can comment with easy-to-use forms at [stopbigmedia.com](http://stopbigmedia.com).
- (2) **Learn more.** We recommend [chicagomediaaction.org](http://chicagomediaaction.org) and [freepress.net](http://freepress.net) as two places where you can learn more and keep up on the issue.
- (3) **Spread the word.** Recent success has been precisely due to informing folks when the media didn't. Now you know about the issue. Share that knowledge; it is the giving season, after all.



[www.chicagomediaaction.org](http://www.chicagomediaaction.org)

