

New Economic Study Shows: Bigger Media Hurts Oregon

Oregon will suffer if the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) completely eliminates or even further relaxes key limits on media ownership, according to new research examining the impact of potential media mergers in **Portland, Eugene, and Medford**, prepared by economic experts on behalf of Oregon members of the Media and Democracy Coalition.

Dwindling Newspapers, TV and Radio Stations

Since 1996 the FCC has quickly whittled away at what Oregon residents are able to read, hear and see. Further media consolidation will affect every resident of Oregon by reducing the number of media organizations that serve them. Diversity of ownership in media organizations equals diversity of viewpoints which ensures that Oregon receives robust debate on issues of community concern.

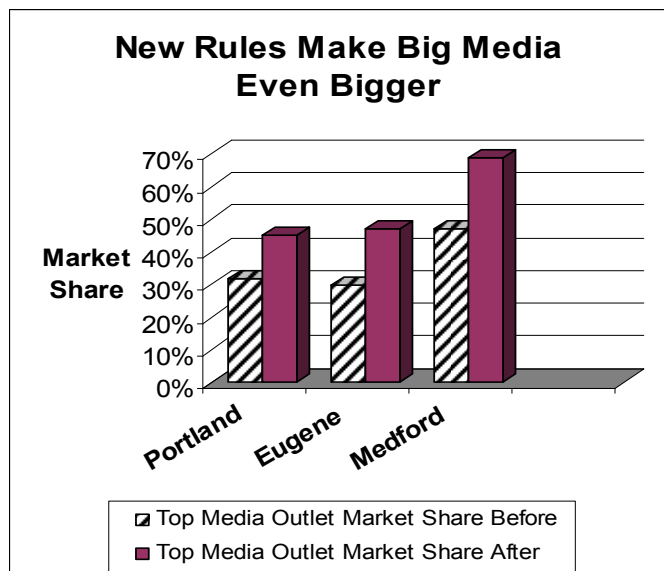
Diversity of Media Protects Democracy

Local radio, television and newspapers provide crucial information informing voters of an incumbent's track record or the background and platform of challenging candidates. The study reveals how Oregon's cities will lose choice and supply of critical local media if the FCC's proposed regulation takes effect, allowing the largest newspapers and largest TV stations to merge.

Key Findings: What Are The Impacts of Big Media Mergers In the Oregon Cities Studied?

Portland: Oregon's most diverse and most populous city. In the aftermath of proposed FCC rules Portland will end up with homogenous media unable to address the needs of this city's diverse and growing population.

- In the newspaper market the major players are *The Oregonian*, *The Statesman Journal* and *The Columbian*. In TV, the major outlets are KATU, KOIN, and KGW.
- **Impact of Mergers:** Portland is already a highly concentrated market with few media options because of years of FCC pro-consolidation rules. Any cross media merger involving the top newspapers and TV outlets would further increase concentration, possibly creating dangerous media monopolies.



More...

This factsheet is by the Media and Democracy Coalition. www.media-democracy.net
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The MDC is a broad-based coalition of local and national media reform, civil rights, creative artist, consumer, justice and democracy organizations working to stop further media consolidation and to guarantee that Internet and broadband access are affordable, accessible, fast and available to all.



Eugene: Home to the University of Oregon, Eugene has a large student population and also serves a thriving arts community. Eugene media provide important information on western central Oregon for surrounding suburbs and outlying areas. After potential mergers are complete not only will Eugene suffer but so will every resident in the surrounding area as well.

- In the newspaper market the dominant player is *The Register Guard*. In TV, the major outlets are KEZI, KVAL, and KMTR.
- **Impact of Mergers:** Because of the dominant position of the newspaper and three major television stations, any single merger will only further concentrate the already concentrated market, ensuring that fewer voices and viewpoints are heard.

Medford: This city reflects the media battle that lies ahead for most of the smaller cities across Oregon. The city's media offerings are already slim due to years of consolidation; further consolidation will essentially create a media monopoly that has control of 70% of the Medford media market.

- The newspaper market is dominated by the *Mail Tribune*. The major TV outlets are KOBI, KTL and KDVR.
- **Impact of Mergers:** Because of the dominant position of the newspaper and three major television stations, any single merger violates the DOJ/FTC Merger Guidelines by a wide margin. After the merger the resulting top media outlet will have nearly 70% of the market with its nearest competitor coming in with only 10%.

Why This Matters:

How big the media gets matters to our democracy at all levels of government, including the local level. The Supreme Court has long held that “the widest possible dissemination of information from diverse and antagonistic sources is essential to the public welfare.”

Broadcast licenses give their holders powerful public voices that are not available to every citizen. They pose a challenge in a society whose democracy relies on vigorous debate over public policy and social issues. The Courts have long accepted limitation on ownership of media outlets by those who hold broadcast licenses as “a reasonable means of promoting the public interest in diversified mass communications.”

Further, localism is important because of our federal system of government that elects representatives on a local basis and places a great deal of emphasis on local policy for critically important issues – like public safety and education. Localism remains vital in media policy because citizens rely overwhelmingly on traditional outlets for information – local television stations and daily newspapers.

