Media Conglomerates, Mergers, Concentration of Ownership

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- This Page Last Updated Thursday, April 15, 2004

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Some nations can influence and control their media greatly. In addition, powerful corporations also have enormous influence on mainstream media.

In some places major multinational corporations own media stations and outlets. Often, many media institutes survive on the advertising fees, which can lead to the media outlet to be influenced by various corporate interests. News coverage and other media content can therefore be adversely affected. For example, stories end up biased or omitted so as not to offend their advertisers or owners. While corporate media per se may not be a bad thing, it is when there is a concentration of ownership that there is a risk of increased economic and political influence that can be somewhat unaccountable, which is of concern.

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> Global conglomerates can at times have a progressive impact on culture, especially when they enter nations that had been tightly controlled by corrupt crony media systems (as in much of Latin America) or nations that had significant state censorship over media (as in parts of Asia). The global commercial-media system is radical in that it will respect no tradition or custom, on balance, if it stands in the way of profits. But ultimately it is politically conservative, because the media giants are significant beneficiaries of the current social structure around the world, and any upheaval in property or social relations--particularly to the extent that it reduces the power of business--is not in their interest.

â€” *Robert W. McChesney, The New Global Media; It's a Small World of Big Conglomerates, The Nation Magazine, November 29, 1999*

We are here to serve advertisers. That is our raison d'etre.

â€” *the C.E.O. of Westinghouse(CBS), Advertising Age, February 3, 97*

Having a few huge corporations control our outlets of expression could lead to less aggressive news coverage and a more muted marketplace of ideas.

â€” *Rifka Rosenwein, Why Media Mergers Matter, Brill's Content, December 1999*

It is useful to remind ourselves that free expression is threatened not just blatantly by authoritarian governments and all those in the private sector who fear public exposure, but also more subtly by the handful of global media conglomerates that have reduced meaningful diversity of expression in much of the globe.

â€” *Gerald Caplan, Advancing Free Media, Open Markets, Open Media forum, November 1997*

The 1980s and 90s saw a lot of mergers and buyouts of media and entertainment companies.

When originally writing this article, we had some nine corporations (mainly US) dominating the media world: AOL-Time Warner, Disney, Bertelsmann, Viacom, News Corporation, TCI, General Electric (owner of NBC), Sony (owner of Columbia and TriStar Pictures and major recording interests), and Seagram (owner of Universal film and music interests). As Robert McChesney, a media critic, and author of *Rich Media Poor Democracy*, (University of Illinois Press, 1999) says, these are the â€œfirst tierâ€ companies and following them are around 50 or so â€œsecond tierâ€ companies doing media-related business at either national or regional level. All of these companies each do more than one billion dollars worth of business. (The previous link provides more information on the various firms, if you are interested.)

In 1983, fifty corporations dominated most of every mass medium and the biggest media merger in history was a $340 million deal. ... [I]n 1987, the fifty companies had shrunk to twenty-nine. ... [I]n 1990, the twenty-nine had shrunk to twenty three. ... [I]n 1997, the biggest firms numbered ten and involved the $19 billion Disney-ABC deal, at the time the biggest media merger ever. ... [In 2000] AOL Time Warner's $350 billion merged corporation [was] more than 1,000 times larger [than the biggest deal of 1983].

â€” *Ben H. Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, Sixth Edition, (Beacon Press, 2000), pp. xx - xxi*

When Viacom offered to buy out CBS earlier in 1999 for around $37 billion, it resulted a flurry of praises in the mainstream media in the US, which otherwise reports little on its own industry. However, as the previous link points out, there are increasingly â€œfewer and fewer playersâ€ in the media. This results in the possibility of less diversity and reduced quality of journalism as political interests may not allow certain topics to be covered. (The last link is to a speech from Barbara Ehrenreich at an awards ceremony in New York presenting stories that did not make it into corporate media due to heavy censorship. Worth listening to.)

Just as the Viacom/CBS deal fervor began to die down, we saw the largest corporate merger in history (valued at over $165 billion) between mega internet giant AOL, and media king Time-Warner, merging to form AOL Time Warner. While corporate-owned mainstream media praised this, there were many critics commenting on the resulting lack of diversity that will impact meaningful democracy and open debate even more. (The previous link contains further links to many articles worth checking out that analyze and criticize the merger.)

That was in early 2000. Around early 2002, according to an article from *The Nation* magazine, the top ten media companies were now AOL Time Warner, Disney, General Electric, News Corporation, Viacom, Vivendi, Sony, Bertelsmann, AT&T and Liberty Media (see previous link). As the article's author, Mark Crispin Miller points out, while different companies may â€œcome and goâ€ out of the top brass, the â€œoverall Leviathan gets bigger and biggerâ€.

Not all media merger attempts are successful. In February Comcast's $66 billion bid for Disney failed. But the fact this was attempted and would lead to more concentration if successful raised issues about concentration in media.

And as the following (cited at length) notes, the media concentration is a global issue:

> It is not a matter for the United States only.
>
> For example, in addition to its more than 11.5 million direct broadcast satellite (DBS) subscribers, Murdoch manages the assets of Hughes Electronics, DirecTV's parent company, which gave News Corp. increased clout over programming in Latin America.
>
> Rupert Murdoch's News Corp/FOX merger with DirecTv in December 2003 was opposed by many, to no avail.
>
> â€œNews Corp's Sky Latin America and Hughes Electronics' DirecTv Latin America (DLA), dominate the DTH (direct to home) sector in Central and South America. A News Corp takeover of DirecTv would put effective control of both platforms in the same hands,â€ commented Steve Blum, in an article published in the August-September 2003 issue of â€œThe Orbiterâ€, a bulletin that caters to the satellite sector.
>
> Murdoch's empire includes British Sky Broadcasting and START TV in Asia, too.
>
> America's first broadcast network, NBC, owns and operates more than 14 stations, along with CNBC, a business-news network, and Telemundo, the nation's second-largest Spanish-language broadcaster. NBC has recently acquired Bravo, the Arts and Film cable network.
>
> Viacom owns theatres in Canada (Famous Players) and other places -- United Cinemas International, in partnership with Vivendi, for example.
>
> CNN International can be seen in 212 countries, with a daily audience of 1 billion globally.
>
> How does all of this affect concrete media coverage?
>
> â€œIf media moguls control media content and media distribution, then they have a lock on the extent and range of diverse views and information,â€ says [Chuck] Lewis, [executive director of the Centre for Public Integrity]. â€œThat kind of grip on commercial and political power is potentially dangerous for any democracy.â€
>
> â€” *Miren Gutierrez, Fewer Players, Less Freedom, Inter Press Service, March 20, 2004*

At first thought, one might ask, what is wrong with a few companies becoming so big? Isn't that how business works? Focusing on democracy-enhancing principles and the institutions needed for it such as the media and journalism, the concern that arises is that there are very few media owners in the mainstream that reach out to the masses. As a result, there is the risk of reduced diversity of issues and perspectives and of political influence and interests from a few affecting the many.

Most citizens get their views and understandings of the world around them from the mainstream media. It is therefore critical to understand some of these underlying issues. The rest of this section introduces some of these concerns.

Vertical Integration

Many of the large media company owners are entertainment companies and have vertical integration (i.e. own operations and businesses) across various industries and verticals, such as distribution networks, toys and clothing manufacture and/or retailing etc. That means that while this is good for their business, the diversity of opinions and issues we can see being discussed by them will be less well covered. (One cannot expect Disney, for example, to talk too much about sweatshop labor when it is accused of being involved in such things itself.) The wider ramifications are highlighted well in this following quote:

> Vertical Integration was once looked upon with alarm by government. It was understood that corporations which have control of a total process, from raw material to fabrication to sales, also have few motives for genuine innovation and the power to seize out anyone else who tries to compete. This situation distorts the economy with monopolistic control over prices. Today, government has become sympathetic to dominant vertical corporations that have merged into ever larger total systems. These corporations, including those in the media, have remained largely unrestrained.
>
> â€” *Ben H. Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, Sixth Edition, (Beacon Press, 2000), p. xvii*

Vertical integration is also a part of a business strategy that serves to enhance market power, by allowing cross-promotion and cross-selling. Robert McChesney highlights this well:

> [T]he pressure to become a conglomerate is also due to something perhaps even more profound than the need for vertical integration. It was and is stimulated by the desire to increase market power by cross-promoting and cross-selling media properties or â€œbrandsâ€ across numerous, different sectors of the media that are not linked in the manner suggested by vertical integration. ... â€œWhen you make a movie for an average cost of $10 millon and then cross promote and sell it off of magazines, books, products, television shows out of your own company,â€ Viacom's Redstone said, â€œthe profit potential is enormous.â€
>
> â€” *Robert W. McChesney, Rich Media Poor Democracy; Communication Politics in Dubious Times, (University of Illinois Press, 1999), p.22*

McChesney then continues to also point out an example where the film, *Beavis and Butt-Head Do America*, based on the MTV cartoon series, cost $11 million but generated a *profit* of $70 million dollars. Such enormous profits are common place, and hence, the lure that vertical integration and increasing market power is obviously great. Especially considering that the above-mentioned film is at a lower end of potential profits, when compared to say Disney's Lion King that generated over $1 billion in profit:

> Disney, more than any media giant is the master at figuring out â€œnew synergistic ways to acquire, slice, dice and merchandise content.â€ Its 1994 animated film *The Lion King* generated over $1 billion in profit. It led to a lucrative Broadway show, a TV series and all sorts of media spin-offs. It also led to 186 items of merchandising. Wall Street analysts gush at the profit potential of animated films in the hands of media conglomerates; they estimate that such films on average generate *four times more profit* than their domestic box-office take.
>
> â€” *Robert W. McChesney, Rich Media Poor Democracy; Communication Politics in Dubious Times, (University of Illinois Press, 1999), p.23 (Emphasis is original)*

(It is interesting to note how a film goes beyond box office take, but goes towards larger market share and profit through all the cross-selling. That is, a film may generate certain revenue, but the overall profit will be even more than the revenue! From a business strategy, this seems like an amazing way to make â€œsomething out of nothingâ€! While the medieval alchemist was unsuccessful in converting lead to gold, the modern alchemist -- the mega corporation -- can almost do just that!)

On such television channels or newspapers/magazines owned by such large corporations, you are understandably not going to read much criticism about those companies. Furthermore, you are not likely to see much deep criticism about economic, political or other policies that go against the interest of that parent company. So, while it is understandable why a company would aim for such cross selling and integration, the threat to diversity and real competition is real. For smaller companies (who might still have multi million dollars backing) without such an arsenal of distribution and cross-selling possibilities, the competition is very difficult, and they face either going out of business, or being bought out, or if lucky, the dictum of â€œif you can't beat them, join themâ€ (or try to emulate them!) rings true. On the one hand, Wall Street would approve of further mergers and buyouts and vertical integration, while on the other hand, diversity and real competition would be negated.

Interlocking Directorates

Interlocking directorates is also another issue. Interlocking is where a director of one company may sit on a board of another company. As pointed out by U.S. media watchdog, *Fairness an Accuracy In Reporting* (FAIR) for example, Media corporations share members of the board of directors with a variety of other large corporations, including banks, investment companies, oil companies, health care and pharmaceutical companies and technology companies. (See the previous link for details of top media companies and the companies they are interlocked with, etc.)

Ben H Bagdikian, in his book, *The Media Monopoly*, details some of the impacts of this interlocking. In these cases where directors from numerous large corporations sit on each others boards and own or sit on boards of large media companies, he points out that conflicts of interest can be numerous. Furthermore, he also points out that it is difficult to show beyond doubt that these conflicts of interest make their way into media decisions:

> It is not often the public hears of ... clear destruction of editorial independence. In most cases there is no *visible* imposition of the parent firm's policies, and the policies are often not absolute, conditioned as they are by the desire for profits. ... The problem is ... subtle and profound. In a democracy ... a wide spectrum of ideas has equitable access to the marketplace [justifying a private publisher's imposing his personal politics on the decision of what to print]. The effect of a corporate line [exerting control over public ideas] is not so different from that of a party line [of a country imposing controls]. ... Detecting how most of the mass media impose political tests on what the public will see and hear is not as straightforward as [it may] seem. Political intervention in its most pervasive form is not open and explicit but is concealed under seemingly apolitical reasons [such as the natural choices that have to be made on the countless number of works that might not be published for legitimate non-political based reasons]. ... Most difficult of all to document is the implicit influence of corporate chiefs. Most bosses do not have to tell their subordinates what they like and dislike. (Emphasis added)
>
> ...
>
> The deeper social loss of giantism in the media is not in its unfair advantage in profits and power; this is real and it is serious. But the gravest loss is in the self-serving censorship of political and social ideas, in news, magazine articles, books, broadcasting, and movies. Some intervention by

> owners is direct and blunt. But most of the screening is subtle, some not even occurring at a conscious level, as when subordinates learn by habit to conform to owners' ideas. But subtle or not, the ultimate result is distorted reality and impoverished ideas.
>
> â€” *Ben H. Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, Sixth Edition, (Beacon Press, 2000), pp. 35 - 36, 45.*

He continues to further point out that the concentrated ownership also allows criticism to be managed as well:

> Corporations have multimillion-dollar budgets to dissect and attack news reports they dislike. But with each passing year they have yet another power: They are not only hostile to independent journalists. They are their employers.
>
> â€” *Ben H. Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, Sixth Edition, (Beacon Press, 2000), p. 65.*

In this respect, as the mainstream media is more corporate owned, the same market pressures that affect those companies, affect the media as well and hence, the media itself is largely driven by the forces of the market.

In the US, for example, it is very noticeable how competitive the media companies are between themselves. While competition can be a healthy aspect of news reporting and media in general, pushing for better quality, the oligopoly and concentrated control of media companies has meant that the competition has reduced itself to attracting viewers through sensationalism etc rather than quality, detailed reporting etc.

Many stations report news on the very same stories at the exact same time and have commercial breaks at the same time! The sensationalism they compete for is what they hope will drive audiences to their channel.

This type of competition affects the ability to provide quality news and affects the depth and even reputation of professional journalism.

> Media executives speak in the language of war - of bombarding audiences, targeting markets, capturing grosses, killing the competition, and winning, by which they mean making more money than the other guy. Some news organisations even refer to their employees as â€œthe troopsâ€. It is hard for media workers, including journalists, to operate outside the ethos of hyper-competitition and ratings mania. As willing or unwilling conscripts in the media war, journalists imbibe its values and become warriors themselves.
>
> â€” *Danny Schechter, Chapter 2, Peace Journalism and Media War: the Fight to Reform Journalism, What Are Journalists For?, presented on the Conflict and Peace Forums, September 1998.*

Disney

As an example of influence, Disney's size and popularity provides a good example. Disney is well regarded for providing wholesome family entertainment, with numerous films, cartoons/animation movies and so on. However, with the increasing size, owning the ABC news station, and enormous vertical integration, there have been increasing criticisms of Disney as well, ranging from the subtle cultural and even racial, gender and class bias depicted in their cartoons and movies, to their ability to naturally (directly or indirectly) influence major news stories via their ABC ownership.

That is not to say that Disney is necessarily sexist, racist and so on by intent. It is possible that the drive for profits is more important and leads to less criticism, because from a business perspective, they have been very successful and implemented the most â€œappropriateâ€ strategies to expand and grow. As Michael Eisner, CEO of Walt Disney Co. said in an internal memo:

> We have no obligation to make history. We have no obligation to make art. We have no obligation to make a statement. To make money is our only objective.
>
> â€” *Michael Eisner, CEO, The Walt Disney Co., (Internal Memo). Quoted from* [Mickey Mouse Monopoly-Disney, Childhood & Corporate Power] *(see also p.29 of the transcript which is provided as a link from this previous link.)*

Because it is sometimes hard to imagine criticism of Disney, especially as a prominent icon of American culture that has provided light entertainment, fun and laughter for so many, the following links provide more in-depth look at Disney in this respect, and in the light of its increasing size and influence:

- Background info from Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting.
- Additional info on what Disney owns from Columbia Journalism Review
- A search for â€œDisneyâ€ from the Mediachannel reveals many articles
- Mickey Mouse Monopoly-Disney, Childhood & Corporate Power a documentary looking at the gender, class and racial aspects of Disney movies and animation.
- The Mousetrap; Inside Disney's dream machine is issue 308 from New Internationalist Magazine, December 1998. It has a collection of articles related to Disney.

Concentration of ownership is where the problem largely lies

> Defenders of narrowing control of the media point, accurately enough, to the large numbers of media outlets available to the population: almost 1,700 daily papers, more than 8,000 weeklies, 10,000 radio and television stations, 11,000 magazines, 2,500 book publishers ... and more ... Unfortunately, the large numbers deepen the problem of excessively concentrated control. **If the number of outlets is growing and the number of owners declining, then each owner controls even more formidable communications power**.
>
> â€” *Ben H. Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, Sixth Edition, (Beacon Press, 2000), p. 222 (Emphasis Added)*

It isn't necessarily the corporate ownership that is problematic. For example, in U.K. the Independent Television Network (ITN), and Channel 4 are highly regarded for their quality documentaries and ITN's evening news program was said to challenge the BBC's news programming for quality (until ITN seemed to succumb to pressure to use that prime time for movies instead of news). More problematic is when the ownership of media (and therefore of major avenues of opinions and views etc) becomes concentrated, as pointed out by Ben Bagdikian here:

> The threat does not lie in the commercial operation of the mass media. It is the best method there is and, with all its faults, it is not inherently bad. But *narrow* control, whether by government or corporations, *is* inherently bad. In the end, no small group, certainly no group with as much uniformity of outlook and as concentrated in power as the current media corporations, can be sufficiently open and flexible to reflect the full richness and variety of society's values and needs. ... The answer is not elimination of private enterprise in the media, but the opposite. It is the restoration of genuine competition and diversity.
>
> â€” *Ben H. Bagdikian, The Media Monopoly, Sixth Edition, (Beacon Press, 2000), pp. 223-224 (Emphasis is original)*

This concentrated power, Ben also points out, â€œis so concentrated, ubiquitous, and artful, that to a degree unmatched in former mixtures of entertainment, it dilutes influences from family, schooling, and other sources that are grounded in real-life experience, weakening, their ability to guide growing generations.â€ (see p.xx of the above-cited book).

In some respects, even large media companies can be potentially beneficial. For example, with size comes that political power, and ability to provide appropriate scrutiny on wrong-doings of local businesses etc, as pointed out by Dan Kennedy:

> [T]here is at least an argument to be made that only big media have the power and influence to cover the large institutions that dominate modern life. In January 2000, Jack Shafer wrote a piece for the online magazine *Slate* (owned by the extremely big Microsoft Corporation and thus part of a media alliance that includes NBC, MSNBC, General Electric, the Washington Post, and Newsweek) arguing exactly that.
>
> â€œSmall, independently owned papers routinely pull punches when covering local car dealers, real estate, and industry,â€ Shafer wrote, asserting a nasty little truth known by every reporter and editor who has ever worked for a locally owned community newspaper. â€œWhatever its shortcomings - and they are many - only big media possesses the means to consistently hold big business and big government accountable.â€
>
> â€” *Dan Kennedy, Monopoly Money, Boston Phoenix, January 17, 2002*

But when big media is owned by big business, there is less criticism of big business or related political issues in big government.

Political bias can also creep in too. Media watchdog, Fairness and Accuracy In Reporting (FAIR) did a study of ABC World News Tonight, CBS Evening News and NBC Nightly News in 2001 in which they found that â€œ92 percent of all U.S. sources interviewed were white, 85 percent were male and, where party affiliation was identifiable, 75 percent were Republican.â€ While of course this is not a complete study of the mainstream media, it does show that there can be heavy political biases on even the most popular mainstream media outlets.

A year-long study by FAIR, of CNNâ€™s media show, *Reliable Sources* showed a large bias in sources used, and as their article is titled, CNNâ€™s show had reliably narrow sources. They pointed out for example, â€œCovering one year of weekly programs [December 1, 2001 to November 30, 2002] with 203 guests, the FAIR study found Reliable Sourcesâ€™ guest list strongly favored mainstream media insiders and right-leaning pundits. In addition, female critics were significantly underrepresented, ethnic minority voices were almost non-existent and progressive voices were far outnumbered by their conservative counterparts.â€

Given that so many of the large media owners are entertainment companies, broadcast journalism and much of print journalism, as well as the book publishing industry, are increasingly criticized for having become appendages to entertainment empires. Furthermore, with various top media/entertainment companies owning shares in each others' enterprises, combined with the interlocking described above, the resulting concentration of ownership, while maybe not a monopoly in the strictest sense, tends towards oligopoly or cartel, and this leads to a common interest amongst such companies in keeping out competing enterprises and even competing ideas. *The Nation* magazine captures the consequence of this quite well, looking at the situation in the United States:

> Of all the [media] cartel's dangerous consequences for American society and culture, the worst is its corrosive influence on journalism. Under AOL Time Warner, GE, Viacom et al., the news is, with a few exceptions, yet another version of the entertainment that the cartel also vends nonstop. This is also nothing new -- consider the newsreels of yesteryear -- but the gigantic scale

> and thoroughness of the corporate concentration has made a world of difference, and so has made this world a very different place. ... the news divisions of the media cartel appear to work *against* the public interest -- and *for* their parent companies (Emphasis is Original)
>
> â€” *Mark Crispin Miller, What's Wrong With This Picture?, The Nation, January 7, 2002.*

A U.S. Federal Court ruling on February 19, 2002, lifted barriers to two regulations that attempted to limit the power of media companies. One was that a company can reach no more than 35 percent of the country, and the other was that it cannot own a TV station in an area where they own a cable company. As a result of this decision, the concern here is that it means that those with the most money can buy other stations which will lead to further concentration and consolidation. (See also the Center for Digital Democracy web site for more on this and other such issues.)

The Quest for the Public Airwaves

And now, corporate lobbyists are trying to have even the public airwaves sold to private corporations. While in many countries, national ownership of the airwaves can lead to propaganda avenues, many democratic countries are able to, through their governments, apply some set of standards and regulations on how radio is used to ensure people have access to it while also allowing private corporations a lot of access to it. Large, private, often multinational corporations, however, do not have such accountability. Their only real accountability is to shareholders, whose concerns are returns on investments (profit).

As Jeremy Rifkin asks, â€œOur PCs, palm pilots, wireless internet, cellular phones, pagers, radios and television all rely on the radio frequencies of the spectrum to send and receive messages, pictures, audio, data, etc ... If the radio frequencies of the planet were owned and controlled by global media corporations, how would the billions who live on earth guarantee their most basic right to communicate with one another?â€

For additional detailed discussion and history, while there is a lot of information, you can start at the following:

- *Rich Media Poor Democracy; Communication Politics in Dubious Times*, Robert W. McChesney, (University of Illinois Press, 1999), part II.
- Policy Center from MediaChannel.org provides a number of articles on related issues.

The Quest for the Internet?

The Internet is hailed as the new communications medium taking over from television eventually. While there are currently enormous problems and issues of the â€œdigital divideâ€ and while it is still in its infancy, the Internet has proved to allow enormous amounts of information to be exchanged and be made available. It is very easy to get news from half way around the world, and some see the Internet as one of the main new technological advances that will enhance and improve democracy further. Some even describe the Internet as providing a more level playing field for new, smaller and diverse groups and companies.

The potential is very exciting and numerous innovative sites, activities and other forms of organizing and action has been centered around the use of the internet.

However, in terms of the potential for diverse news and information reaching people, as Danny Schechter, executive director of the MediaChannel.org, points out, the Internet, is not very diverse, even though it appears to be. â€œThe concentration in ownership that is restructuring old media has led to conglomeration in news transmission and a narrowing of sourcing in new media. It is cheaper for Web sites to buy someone else's news than generate their own.â€ Like many others, he points out how major web portals such as AOL look to â€œlock inâ€ their audience to their site(s) and products so that they can better sell and target their audience (customers).

Furthermore, consolidations and media mergers such as that of AOL and Time Warner, have skewed the â€œplaying fieldâ€. According to Jupiter Media Metrix, a company that tracks internet and technology analysis and measurement, the â€œ**[t]otal number of companies that control 60 percent of all minutes spent online in the US dwindled 87 percent, from 110 in March 1999 to 14 in March 2001**â€ due to successes in advertising and marketing as a key to overcome the barrier to online entry. (See this press release from them for more details.) They further point out that within the 14 companies, it is heavily skewed towards the top four. Also, they suggest that key factors driving media consolidation in this way include:

- Mergers and acquisitions turning â€œalready powerful companies into even more powerful media behemothsâ€.
- Major media companies have been able to invest heavily in â€œ[i]mproved quality of presentation, intensity of marketing and integration with off-line programmingâ€
- Economies of scale, that also apply to online businesses as well as traditional businesses.

As Danny Schechter also points out in the above mentioned link, most news and information sites don't provide their own news sources, but get them from the likes of Reuters and Associated Press, or, in the case of broadcast companies, their own content together with mixes of such agency content.

More Information on Ownership issues

For more information on ownership related issues, as well as the links above, you could start at the following links:

- From the MediaChannel.org:
  - Media Concentration Watch section provides a collection of articles.
  - Their Media Ownership section provides information and links to articles, books and other resources, including a chart of ownership data.
  - Why Ownership Rules Matter looks at issues in the U.S. in particular.
- From Fairness and Accuracy in Reporting:
  - Corporate Ownership provides numerous articles.
  - A search for the term â€œownershipâ€ will result in numerous articles. (You will have to type in the search term though.)
- Project on Media Ownership has maps, charts and a database to track the increasingly concentrated ownership of the â€œculture industriesâ€.
- *The Nation* Magazine has a chart detailing the â€œbig tenâ€
- Who Owns What from Columbia Journalism Review provides a list of major media organizations and details what else they own.
- Media Giants from PBS provides links and charts breaking down what major media giants now control.
- The links page from this web sites mainstream media section.