

## Big Media Behaving Badly (again)

Last October, the Associated Press found that cable giant Comcast was secretly blocking a popular program called BitTorrent. The service allows people to quickly download large files such as videos, movies, and music. Comcast justified their actions by claiming BitTorrent users were congesting their network. In reality, the media giant was trying to block competition for its video-on-demand business, and justifying a profitable business model that allowed them to avoid upgrading their infrastructure to accommodate larger Internet files. Free Press legal counsel filed an official complaint with the Federal Communications Commission, which resulted in an investigation into Comcast's anti-consumer activity.

As part of the investigation, the FCC scheduled a hearing at Harvard Law School on February 25, 2008 to question Comcast. With just 5 days notice, Free Press organized a huge public turnout to the event. On hand were all five FCC commissioners, the chairman of the House Internet Subcommittee, the lead lobbyists for both Comcast and Verizon, some of the world's top scholars on Internet freedom, area activists, students and citizens, and a gaggle of press from prominent local and national media. Free Press was cited throughout the event—both on the panels and in side conversations with media, audience members and Berkman Center for Internet & Society staff—as more than just the catalyst of this debate but a potent agent for change in the country. Our legal counsel, Marvin Ammori, testified. Watch the hearing video [here](#).

With so many high-profile people attending, you'd think Comcast would be on its best behavior.

But Comcast showed just how serious they are about blocking the public's right to information. Comcast was caught paying seat warmers—completely disinterested people who fell asleep at the hearing—while over 100 concerned citizens who wanted to participate were totally shut out. See our video of Comcast's "sit-for-hire" tactics [here](#).

While Comcast's actions are contemptible, they've brought unprecedented attention to the issue. The public is outraged—as they should be. First Comcast blocks the Internet, and now the public from its right to be heard. Traffic to our [SavetheInternet.com](#) site is skyrocketing, and Free Press has been getting lots of media attention like these articles in the [Washington Post](#) and the [Boston Globe](#).



Click [here](#) to find out what you can do to protect an Open Internet.

## The Clock is Ticking: 60 Days to Stop Media Consolidation



Last December, the FCC approved new rules that could unleash a flood of media consolidation across America, allowing one media conglomerate to own nearly every media outlet in one city. The new rules will mean less diverse voices, local news and investigative journalism. Congress has the power to throw out these rules—and if hundreds of thousands of people demand it, they'll have to listen. In early March, Senator Byron Dorgan (D-ND) introduced a bill to veto the FCC's big handout to Big Media, but Congress must act within 60 legislative days.

Click [here](#) to find out what you can do to stop Big Media.

## Register Now!

In other news we're in full swing preparing for our **4<sup>th</sup> National Conference for Media Reform**, June 6-8 in Minneapolis. It'll be an amazing event and we hope you'll come. Confirmed speakers include Bill Moyers, Dan Rather, Naomi Klein, Arianna Huffington and many more. Information on the conference and registration is at [www.freepress.net/conference](http://www.freepress.net/conference).

Also, our conference scholarship application process has begun. We plan to provide \$65,000 worth of scholarships to over 200 people from communities often left out of media policy debates, particularly people of color, youth and low-income activists. Please forward this info onto people you know who might want to attend. Details are [here](#).

