

# 10 YEARS

## FIGHTING FOR YOUR RIGHTS TO CONNECT AND COMMUNICATE

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### AUGUST 2003

Free Press is born! Robert W. McChesney, John Nichols and Josh Silver decide to launch a nonprofit devoted to reforming the media. Kimberly Longey comes on board in 2003 and helps turn their concept into an organization. On Aug. 14, Free Press is officially incorporated.

### SEPTEMBER 2003

The Senate votes to overturn the Federal Communications Commission's gutting of media ownership rules. The vote comes after Free Press and its allies inspire more than 3 million people to contact Congress and the FCC.

### NOVEMBER 2003

The first National Conference for Media Reform kicks off in Madison, Wis. Bill Moyers tells the crowd of more than 1,700 activists: "It's your fight now. Look around. You are not alone."

### JANUARY 2004

Free Press joins with a coalition of grassroots allies to organize public turnout at FCC field hearings across the country. At the first hearing on Jan. 28 in San Antonio, commissioners hear more than six hours of testimony against further media consolidation from hundreds of students, labor organizers and civil rights activists.

### JUNE 2004

The U.S. Court of Appeals for the 3rd Circuit strikes down the FCC's weakened media ownership rules in the case *Prometheus Radio Project v. FCC*.

### OCTOBER 2004

Free Press blasts the Sinclair Broadcast Group for its plan to air an anti-John Kerry documentary as "news" right before Election Day and for censoring a *Nightline* episode that featured the names of all U.S. soldiers killed in the Iraq War.

### MARCH 2005

Free Press and the Center for Media and Democracy file a complaint with the FCC citing hundreds of incidents in which broadcasters snuck "fake news" segments into their programs. A month later, FCC Chairman Kevin J. Martin agrees to investigate and fine stations under rules banning payola and "covert propaganda."

### MAY 2005

More than 2,000 attendees flock to St. Louis for the National Conference for Media Reform. Highlights include appearances by Phil Donahue, Al Franken, Bill Moyers and Patti Smith.

### JUNE 2005

Free Press delivers more than a million signatures in support of public broadcasting at a rally on Capitol Hill featuring Sen. Hillary Clinton and PBS stalwart Clifford the Big Red Dog. Days later, with dozens of Republicans crossing the aisle, Congress rejects funding cuts proposed for PBS and NPR.

### NOVEMBER 2005

Kenneth Tomlinson, the divisive and partisan chairman of the Corporation for Public Broadcasting, steps down after Free Press delivers nearly 100,000 petitions calling for his removal because he misused federal funds and secretly hired investigators to expose "liberal bias" at PBS.

### APRIL 2006

Free Press launches the Save the Internet campaign, uniting a broad and diverse coalition of groups in defense of Net Neutrality — the Internet's First Amendment. The coalition later grows to include millions of activists and thousands of groups, from MoveOn.org to the Christian Coalition to the American Library Association.

### JUNE 2006

Sen. Ted Stevens delivers his now infamous "series of tubes" speech in Congress. Audio of the rant goes viral — spawning dance remixes and jokes on *The Daily Show*. By year's end, after Net Neutrality activists attend in-district meetings during the congressional recess, Congress abandons the corporate-friendly rewrite of the Telecommunications Act.

### SEPTEMBER 2006

Free Press releases "Out of the Picture," the first in a series of groundbreaking reports. The study offers the first comprehensive analysis of media ownership by women and people of color.

### OCTOBER 2006

Following years of Free Press advocacy, the five FCC commissioners go to Los Angeles to attend — for the first time as a full group — a public hearing on media ownership.

### JANUARY 2007

The National Conference for Media Reform arrives in Memphis. More than 2,500 attendees hear from actress Geena Davis, activist Van Jones, journalist Helen Thomas and the Rev. Al Green's Gospel Choir.

### MAY 2007

SavetheInternet.com wins a Webby for the "Best Activist Website" and "Best Activist Video." Our video "Independence Day" draws nearly 750,000 views on YouTube.

### SEPTEMBER 2007

Verizon is caught blocking text messages sent by NARAL Pro-Choice America to its own members. Free Press leads efforts to expose, reverse and investigate phone-company censorship.

### OCTOBER 2007

Hundreds rally outside the FCC alongside the Rev. Jesse Jackson, several members of Congress and two FCC commissioners to oppose the latest FCC plan to allow more media consolidation. A week later, more than 1,100 people pack an FCC hearing in Seattle and berate FCC Chairman Martin.



### JANUARY 2008

In response to a legal complaint filed by Free Press, the FCC launches an investigation into Comcast for illegally blocking Internet traffic. A month later, at an FCC hearing at Harvard, Free Press catches Comcast paying seat fillers to crowd out the general public and cheer industry officials. In August, the FCC sanctions Comcast.

### MAY 2008

The Senate votes to overturn the FCC's attempt to dismantle media ownership rules. The FCC had moved forward with its plans even though 99 percent of public comments opposed further media consolidation.

### JUNE 2008

More than 3,000 attendees head to Minneapolis for the National Conference for Media Reform, featuring Arianna Huffington, Lawrence Lessig, Dan Rather — and a film crew sent by Fox News' Bill O'Reilly.

### JUNE 2008

Free Press launches InternetforEveryone.org, an initiative to ensure fast, open and affordable Internet access for all Americans. Free Press organizes day-long, interactive community forums on broadband issues in California, North Carolina and Washington, D.C.

### SEPTEMBER 2008

Free Press delivers 50,000 letters urging the mayor of St. Paul, Minn., to release journalists, including Amy Goodman of *Democracy Now!*, arrested while covering protests outside the Republican National Convention. In response to the public outcry, authorities drop all charges.



### JANUARY 2009

President-elect Barack Obama releases a policy platform that embraces Free Press' positions on media diversity, media consolidation and universal access to an open Internet.



### FEBRUARY 2009

President Obama signs into law the American Reinvestment and Recovery Act, which includes \$7.2 billion to expand broadband access and adoption. Obama directs the FCC to produce its first national broadband plan.



### MAY 2009

Free Press publishes the book *Changing Media: Public Interest Policies for the Digital Age* to coincide with its first policy summit in Washington, D.C. A second policy summit — "From Ideas to Action" — follows a year later.



### APRIL 2010

Free Press testifies before the FCC on new strategies for supporting public media, unveiling proposals from its paper *New Public Media: A Plan for Action*.



### AUGUST 2010

Chanting "don't be evil," Free Press and its SavetheInternet.com allies protest outside Google headquarters to denounce the company for striking a pact with Verizon that jeopardizes Net Neutrality. The deal subsequently falls apart.



### DECEMBER 2010

SavetheInternet.com's "Can-You-Hear-Us-Now-a-Thon" delivers 2 million petitions supporting Net Neutrality to the FCC. The agency soon issues an order that establishes open Internet rules but unfortunately fails to protect wireless users.



### DECEMBER 2010

Congress passes the Local Community Radio Act, making room on the radio dial for hundreds of new noncommercial Low Power FM stations. The vote follows a 10-year battle with the powerful National Association of Broadcasters. In one protest, activists hula hooped outside the NAB offices to tell the lobbyists to stop making LPFM stations "jump through hoops." President Obama signs the bill in January.



### FEBRUARY 2011

Free Press rallies more than a million Americans to stop a new congressional effort to defund public media. The cast of *Sesame Street* joins Free Press and union leaders in a protest on Capitol Hill.



### APRIL 2011

More than 2,000 people congregate in Boston for the National Conference for Media Reform with House Democratic Leader Nancy Pelosi, economist Joseph Stiglitz, performer Sarah Jones and journalist Glenn Greenwald. At the event, Craig Aaron takes over as president and CEO of Free Press.



### JULY 2011

In a case argued by Free Press, a federal appeals court again blocks the FCC's attempts to loosen media ownership limits and allow a company to own a newspaper and broadcast station in the same market.



### AUGUST 2011

After months of Free Press advocacy, the Justice Department blocks the proposed merger of AT&T and T-Mobile, a deal that would have left two companies in control of 70 percent of the wireless market. The FCC follows suit in December, extensively citing Free Press research, and AT&T then abandons the deal.



### SEPTEMBER 2011

Free Press begins tracking arrests and harassment of journalists covering Occupy Wall Street and other protests, advocating for press freedom and for law enforcement to respect the "right to record."



### JANUARY 2012

The Internet goes dark, millions call Congress, and Free Press activists take to the streets to protest the SOPA and PIPA Web-censorship bills. Both bills are shelved.



### APRIL 2012

The FCC requires broadcasters — for the first time and after years of Free Press advocacy — to post political ad-spending information online, making it possible for the public to find out who is paying to sway their vote.



### JULY 2012

Nearly 2,000 groups from 130 countries sign the Declaration of Internet Freedom. This set of five principles — free expression, access, openness, innovation and privacy — is translated into 70 languages.



### SEPTEMBER 2012

Free Press threatens to file an FCC complaint against AT&T for forcing customers into pricey plans to use Apple's FaceTime video-chat application. AT&T soon reverses course and pledges to make the app available to all customers.



### DECEMBER 2012

After the FCC once again trots out plans to weaken media ownership rules, more than 200,000 Free Press activists and a coalition of labor and civil rights groups tell the agency: "No more media for Murdoch." The FCC later abandons the proposal.



### APRIL 2013

Thousands of activists, policymakers, artists and journalists from every state and dozens of countries converge in Denver for the National Conference for Media Reform.



### MAY 2013

In a nationwide day of protests, activists from Free Press and the Coalition to Save Our News oppose the rumored sale of eight Tribune Company newspapers to the Koch brothers. The Kochs later announce they are no longer bidding on the papers.



### JUNE 2013

Free Press helps organize and launch the StopWatchingUs campaign in the wake of revelations about the National Security Agency's widescale spying. Within a week, more than 500,000 activists sign on to push for more oversight and accountability. Thousands also take to the streets in nationwide protests.



### AUGUST 2013

Following a decade of advocacy from prison reform, media justice and civil rights groups, the FCC votes to reduce exorbitant calling rates for prisoners and their families. Free Press, which filed comments and lobbied at the agency on behalf of a coalition of groups, celebrates with its allies.



### SEPTEMBER 2013

Free Press relaunches the Save the Internet campaign in response to *Verizon v. FCC*, a landmark case before the U.S. Court of Appeals for the D.C. Circuit in which the phone giant is challenging the FCC's Open Internet rules and claiming a right to discriminate and "edit" the Internet.