**Media Policy Education and Reporting Pilot Program Application**

**Application Deadline: January 26**

**Return to: Tracy Van Slyke, [tracy@themediaconsortium.com](mailto:tracy@themediaconsortium.com" \t "_blank)**

*Application Length Limit: 4 pages*

Name: Don Hazen

Title: Executive Editor

Organization: [AlterNet.org](http://AlterNet.org" \t "_blank)

Will you be responsible for overseeing the program at your organization? Yes

If you have read and agree to the requirements to the program, please mark X here: X

**1. Why is your organization interested in reporting on the topic of media policy?**

AlterNet has published hundreds of articles on a wide range of media policy issues for more than 15 years.  There are many goals for media reform - particularly diversity of voices, local news responsibilities, break up of media monopolies, net neutrality, etc.  And just as important is   our strong belief the  public that has  access to a broad  array independent journalism, opinion, and voices, especially diverse ones,  is an anchor of our democratic society. The state of our media policy is the great determiner of the quality and access of information citizens have. AlterNet  has a long history and fought hard against John McCain's Telecom Deregulation Act in 1996, the early Net Neutrality battles of 2006-7, and the huge corporate giveaways to Google, Verizon, Comcast and the others.

The media landscape is at an all-time worst thanks to decades of telecom friendly mergers and government deregulation. We can point to many of the worst decisions made in the Bush years made possible by the lack of good information in the public arena, from the invasion of Iraq to the Bush tax cuts. The obscene profits enjoyed by the telecoms is made possible by the lack of genuine oversight on the part of the FCC. Furthermore, the recent decision by the Supreme Court in Citizens United will increase enormously the amount of money that needs to be raised for political campaigns, hugely enriching the corporate media  sector

**2. Has your organization reported on this topic in the past?**  
Yes: X

No:

**If so, please share headlines and links to past reporting over past year:**

LINK for all of AlterNet's media coverage: [http://www.alternet.org/media/](http://www.alternet.org/media/" \t "_blank)

*--What's Behind the GOP's War Against NPR?*by Lauren Kelly

[http://www.alternet.org/news/149207/](http://www.alternet.org/news/149207/" \t "_blank)

*--How AT&T, Verizon and the Telecom Giants Have Captured the Regulator Supposed to Control Them*by David Rosen and Bruce Kushnick

[http://www.alternet.org/media/149437/](http://www.alternet.org/media/149437/" \t "_blank)

*--How the Phone Companies Are Screwing America: The $320 Billion Broadband Rip-Off*by David Rosen and Bruce Kushnick

[http://www.alternet.org/story/148397](http://www.alternet.org/story/148397" \t "_blank)

--Comcastrophe: Obama's FCC Approves Enormous Corporate Media Merger for Comcast/NBC by Josh Silver

[http://www.alternet.org/media/149579](http://www.alternet.org/media/149579" \t "_blank)

*--The Growing Impact of Big-Name Music Monopolies* by Julianne Escobedo Shepherd

[http://www.alternet.org/media/149168/](http://www.alternet.org/media/149168/" \t "_blank)

*--How Comcast, AT&T and Big Telecoms Threaten the Reach of Progressive Artists*

[http://www.alternet.org/media/](http://www.alternet.org/media/" \t "_blank)149088

Many dozens more articles. ( 6 to 8 a week for years.)

**Please provide a quick snapshot of your audience:**

Except for HuffPo. and Salon, AlterNet is the largest independent online media outlet, with a large dedicated progressive readership;  and because of effective SEO, and frequent pick ups by referrer sites like Reddit, Stumbleupon, and DIGG, we reach far beyond the  progressive "choir."

**Size:** (i.e. print, online, viewers, listeners e-list, twitter followers, Facebook fans, etc…)

Almost two million unique monthly visitors, 115,000 subscribers to the daily headlines newsletter and 32,000 for AlterNet's weekly Media newsletter. We have 42,000 Facebook followers and 23,000 followers on Twitter.

**Geographic Distribution:**84% American audience 16% International

**Demographics:** The audience is well-educated (75% college or higher education), 55% male-45% female, and 2/3 of readers are aged 30 and older. Two-thirds of readers earn over $60,000 a year.

**What kinds of influentials in your audience would be receptive to this topic? (i.e. activists, policy makers, high number of retweeters, press contacts):**AlterNet's media policy readership ranges from activists to thought leaders, funders, mainstream media practitioners and members of the independent and progressive media.

Given the size of our audience, the frequency of our coverage, and the targeting of our media newsletter, it is probably true that we reach more people

with media reform messages and information than any other media. Our Media special coverage is unique among progressive magazines, blogs, and on-line news magazines.

**4. In a series of online feature articles we are thinking of covering issues including:**

--The effects of the Comcast merger in the larger media industry, as well as the outcomes for internet users.

--Report on Maria Cantwell's Internet Freedom, Broadband Promotion, and Consumer Protection Act of 2011

--In the face of Verizon’s recently-announced legal challenge to the FCC’s net neutrality order, we think it’s time to consider making telecommunications companies separate their wireline and wireless services.

—Telecom ramming, cramming and slamming — buzzwords for types of consumer rip-off. “Ramming” is the latest telecommunications rip-off by which a phone company ‘s customer gets a service package that they did not need or want or cannot even use. Under ramming, the original advertised price has nothing to do with the actual costs a customer pays. “Cramming” (when mysterious charges from an unknown company is added on your bill) and “slamming” (by which a customer’s account is arbitrarily transferred to another firm without their permission).

We would likely be able to publish and promote one feature article every 10-14 days, giving space for the author to research and to allow for some time to elapse between pitching radio hosts to interview our authors and sources.

**5. Please provide a brief overview of your Public Relations capabilities including social networking strategies/opportunities, press and ally relationships/contacts and what you could do to promote your reporting through the pilot program.**

AlterNet has internal mechanisms to promote articles to Digg, Reddit, Stumbleupon and popular news aggregation sites. Hundreds of articles on AlterNet go viral every year in this way, oftening garnering 50,000-100,000 pageviews in a matter of days. And with a combined 65,000 followers on Twitter and Facebook, we can move content through the social media.

We have deep relationships with many  progressive and mainstream radio hosts who are always reaching out to AlterNet's editorial staff for guest bookings based on articles we have published, reprint relationships with many sites that resurface our content and we have administrative staff that can organize media availability for our writers and sources. AlterNet writers like Adele Stan, Joshua Holland, Mark Ames, Lauren Kelly, Julianne Escobedo Shepherd, Sarah Seltzer, and many others appear frequently on radio and TV.  We expect that we will successfully place for a range of media appearances,  writers who are working on media policy and media consumer issues.

**6. Would you be willing to collaborate with another TMC member to produce at least one piece of editorial content? If yes, share one broad idea of what kind of collaboration you’d like to explore.**

Yes, we'd like to work with an ethnic media outlet such as Color Lines or New America Media to produce a comprehensive feature on minority media ownership on a regional level in the US, and the status of minority ownership initiatives being pursued by the White House and FCC.

**7. Do you have a reporter already on staff or a freelancer identified that covers this beat**?

**If so, please note their name:** Staff writers/editors Tana Ganeva and Lauren Kelly, and freelancing team David Rosen and Bruce Kushnick. TBD which writer would be the lead journalist participating on TMC conference calls.

For historical reference, AlterNet's parent organization, the Independent Media Institute ( IMI), under Don Hazen's leadership, organized the Media Democracy Congresses, in 1997 and '98,  in San Francisco and New York, attended by approximately 2,000 people overall, well before Free Press was created. And Don Hazen  (with Julie Winokur) edited: "We the Media.." from the New Press, perhaps the definitive book of the media reform movement in its earlier stage.