Progressive News on Standing Rock

A Brief Overview 12-15-16

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1. Here's a brief essay I wrote about independent media's coverage of Standing Rock:  
[https://www.themediaconsortium.org/2016/10/31/mass-media-has-failed-us-once-again/](https://www.themediaconsortium.org/2016/10/31/mass-media-has-failed-us-once-again/" \t "_blank)

2. You can check out Media Consortium members stories on Standing Rock at:  
[http://mediaconsortium.tumblr.com/tagged/standing-rock](http://mediaconsortium.tumblr.com/tagged/standing-rock" \t "_blank)

The Media Consortium supported member's work by amplifying stories via Facebook, Twitter, and this Tumblr account, as well as via the essay above.

Top-Level:

Independent news outlets serve stakeholders, not stockholders, which means they actively search for stories that matter most to their audiences. For that reason, independents are usually first to a story, and stay with it longer. That is true for Standing Rock.  
  
**First on the Scene:** Truthout began covering the Standing Rock reservation in 2011, with its first stories about the water issue published in **MAY 2016**. The only national outlet earlier to the story was Unicorn Riot, another independent news outlet which published in April 2016. By late August, over 15 Media Consortium members were on the story. On the other hand, corporate media only began covering the Standing Rock protests in a serious way after Democracy Now! 's Amy Goodman was [arrested](https://www.democracynow.org/2016/9/12/north_dakota_v_amy_goodman_arrest" \t "_blank) there on September 3, charges later dismissed.

**Deeper Coverage:** Independent media went beyond covering the protests; many outlets also covered the deeper story that lay behind the standoff. Yes! magazine [ran a story](http://www.yesmagazine.org/people-power/how-to-contact-the-17-banks-funding-the-dakota-access-pipeline-20160929" \t "_blank) that went viral telling readers which banks funded the Dakota Pipeline, which resulted in considerable pressure being placed on those banks. In These Times linked the violence at Standing Rock to a six-month [investigation into police killings](http://inthesetimes.com/features/native_american_police_killings_native_lives_matter.html" \t "_blank) of Native Americans.

After the Standing Rock water protectors convinced the Army Corps of Engineers to deny a permit to continue construction of the Dakota pipeline, most media turned their attention elsewhere. Not independent media. Not only have independents stuck with the Sioux winter camp, they have tracked how the Standing Rock protest is influencing other pipeline protesters ([The Nation](https://www.thenation.com/article/inspired-by-standing-rock-west-texans-take-action-to-fight-another-pipeline/" \t "_blank)), other environmental justice efforts like the Flint water crisis ([Colorlines](http://www.colorlines.com/articles/vets-standing-rock-want-help-flintwatercrisis-next" \t "_blank)) and the indigenous rights movement ([Waging Nonviolence](http://wagingnonviolence.org/feature/nodapl-unites-movement-indigenous-rights/" \t "_blank)).

Finally, a note:

Independents do a great job of telling stories that aren't being told elsewhere. What they need is more resources to develop new ways to distribute these stories and to engage new readers/viewers with these stories. With those resources we could ensure that all environmental justice stories make the same impact as Flint and Standing Rock.