The Media Were American: U.S. Mass Media In Decline

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A description of the media in the United States as well as links to some of the main newspapers and broadcasters. ABC, CBS and NBC ruled the roost for decades until the mass take-up of cable and satellite and the arrival of the Fox network. Fox News Channel is the dominant US cable news network. Mainstream TV is slick, fast-moving and awash with advertising. Ratings and advertising revenues spell life or death for individual shows. There are around 10,000 commercial radio stations. In cities, there are services to satisfy almost every taste. Around 62% of American adults consume news via social media. Around 79% of all US adults use Facebook (Pew Research Center, 2016), far outstripping Twitter use (24%). The broadcast media, capable of mass-producing messages and images instantaneously, have been largely responsible for homogenizing cultural and regional diversities across the country. Beyond this cultural significance, the power of the media is important to politicians, who use the media to influence voters; and to businessmen and women, who use the media to encourage consumption of their products. The relationship works in the other direction as well. Another trend which has accompanied the decline in readership and number of publications is the dramatic decline in competition. Variety at local and national levels has been reduced as media operations have become concentrated in the hands of just a few publishers and corporations. New York City is a good example.