

Welcome to the Open Society Institute!

Before we get started, I would like to share some tips that we hope will help you while using our facility.

EVENT LIAISONS during the conference are Linda Shipley, with short red hair and Kimberly Boritz, with long curly brown hair. Linda can help you with questions about the conference, Open Society Institute and the Media Program. Kimberly can assist you with messages, faxes and photocopying.

LADIES AND MEN'S ROOMS are located in the entrance hallway outside the Conference Room and Reception Area. Keys for these rooms can be found on the Reception Desk. We only have a few keys, so please return them to this desk.

GUEST TELEPHONES are located in the Reception Area and in the Visitors Workstation directly outside the Conference Room. You can dial out only by asking the Receptionist for the dialing access code. You will need the code for all calls, including 1-800 numbers, charge calls, local and long distance calls, and internal extensions. The telephones are in very heavy demand, so please limit the length of your calls to 5 minutes or less.

GUEST FAX MACHINE (#212-548-4652) is located in the Visitors Workstation directly outside the Conference Room. You can dial out only by asking the receptionist for the dialing access code, which you need in order to send a fax. You may also receive faxes at this machine. Please ask the Event Liaison to assist you. The Receptionist does not have access to a fax machine.

PHOTOCOPYING. Please ask the Event Liaison to assist you. The Receptionist does not have access to a photocopier.

TELEPHONE OR OTHER MESSAGES may be left with the Receptionist. Please note that the Receptionist will need to know your name and the name of the conference you are attending. However, the Receptionist cannot take messages into the meeting. The Event Liaison will collect and deliver messages to participants. If you are expecting a telephone call, please tell him/her.

OTHER EQUIPMENT/SERVICES such as conference calls, flip charts, videos, etc. need to be arranged in advance with our Events Coordinator. The Receptionist cannot get these items to you.

OSI LIBRARY is open to interested browsers. However, please keep your voices low and do not bring food or drink into this space.

COURTESY towards your fellow guests and staff is expected. Please be aware that OSI staff are hard at work immediately outside the Conference Room. Please keep your voices low and do not use telephones other than the two provided in the Reception Area and Visitors Workstation.

Many thanks for your cooperation.

The Open Society Institute Media Program

An essential ingredient of a healthy democratic society is a strong media: a media that fosters the free flow of information, a wide ranging diversity of opinions, and is beholden to no orthodoxy, whether state-sponsored, market oriented, or otherwise.

These values are being eroded as all electronic media, but especially radio and television, are undergoing radical change. Television and radio are shifting from the old analog world into the digital world of the future. That transition has been accompanied by massive deregulation. In this shifting market and policy environment, huge vertically integrated, publicly traded media conglomerates have sought to position themselves through mergers and takeovers to consolidate control of what, when converged with the Web, promises to be the biggest mass marketing opportunity in history. As these companies seek synergy between various corporate holdings, the quality of news and public affairs, children's, cultural and educational programming has been subordinated to market considerations.

Public broadcasting has also been affected. Consistently under attack and under funded by Congress it has had to rely more and more on commercial interests and foundations for program funding, which has determined the content of the programming.

The Internet and the World Wide Web hold the promise of enhancing democratic dialogue and being inclusive of historically marginalized communities. It continues to grow dramatically, but control over this interactive medium by media conglomerates is taking place through the same process of mergers and marketing as affects radio and television.

Concerned that the public interest in the media is being subsumed by market values, the Open Society Institute has initiated its program on Media Policy. The program seeks to promote more open, ethical journalism, quality cultural, educational and children's programs, a diversity of voices, and increased in depth coverage of societal issues by influencing public policy for both commercial and public broadcasting. The program also seeks to promote public interest space and universal access on the World Wide Web to ensure electronic media's potential to create informed citizens and healthy communities.

In order to promote an electronic media accountable to the citizenry, diversity of opinion, openness, and substantive news, public affairs, cultural, educational and children's programming, the Program on Media Policy will explore such issues as:

1. The re-regulation of the broadcast media to promote the public interest;
2. Promotion of other media related technologies in the public interest such as micro-radio;
3. A public broadcasting free and clear of governmental and corporate influence over programming; and
4. Offsetting the effect of corporate consolidation and branding on the World Wide Web.