

From: "David Peterson" <davidpet@mcs.net>
To: "George Gerbner" <ggerbner@nimbus.ocis.temple.edu>,
"George Gerbner" <ggerbner@pobox.asc.upenn.edu>
Cc: "David Peterson" <davidpet@mcs.net>
Subject: RE: CHICAGO MEDIA WATCH
Date: Thu, 30 Oct 1997 13:38:15 -0600
X-MSMail-Priority: Normal
X-Priority: 3
MIME-Version: 1.0

Dear George Gerbner:

Too bad Chicago Media Watch won't be able to arrange an email interview with you at the present time. But we understand. Perhaps we can do it for one of our newsletter's upcoming issues?

In the meantime, there is one favor that you can do for us. You're among the number of people that will be participating in the Chicago Media Watch conference this December. Some of the others are Robert McChesney, Jerry Landay, Rocky Mountain Media Watch's Paul Klite, Kathleen O'Reilly, a Washington-based lawyer who's filed briefs against the Telecom Act of 1996, and the like.

What I'd like to do is ask each of the conference's participants to answer a single question for me via email. Then I'll publish the answers in the Fall issue of the CMW newsletter.

An answer that ranged anywhere from 200-400 words would be wonderfully helpful. Though, ultimately, I'll leave the length of your answer up to your discretion.

The theme of December's conference will be, The Telecommunications Act of 1996 and the First Amendment. First, let me introduce some relevant themes, then follow up with the kind of question(s) I'd like you to answer.

The Preamble to the Telecommunications Act of 1996 affirms states that the Act's goals are "To promote competition and reduce regulation in order to secure lower prices and higher quality services for American telecommunications consumers and encourage the rapid deployment of new telecommunications technologies." Indeed, a typical advertisement that was running in the national newspapers at the time declared that "competition will give consumers more choices, better services and lower prices" (Coalition for Communication Reform Now, a group whose major backers included the Regional Bell companies and cable television sectors). As then-South Dakota Republican Senator Larry Pressler, who was the chairman of the Senate Commerce, Science, and Transportation Committee, said on the very day President Clinton signed the Act into law, the Telecom Act "will lower prices on local telephone calls through competition," "It will lower prices on long-distance calls through competition. It will lower cable TV rates through competition. This is the biggest jobs bill ever to pass this Congress."

Yet since the summer of 1995, when it first became clear that there was going to be some kind of telecom act coming out of the 104th Congress, the Disney Co. has paid \$19 billion for Capital Cities/ABC, and Westinghouse another \$5 billion for the CBS television network. In September, 1995, the long-distance telephone giant AT&T announced that it was breaking up its \$80 billion-a-year conglomerate into three separate businesses, a move that would cause as many as 40,000 layoffs. Since then, Bell Atlantic and Nynex announced a \$23 billion merger; U.S. West paid \$5.3 billion for Continental Cablevision, the nation's third largest cable company; Pacific Telesis Group offered itself to the GTE Corp., and was then bought by yet another Baby Bell, the SBC Corp.; British Telecom, WorldCom Inc., and GTE Corp. have made increasingly lucrative pitches to acquire the long-distance carrier MCI; Time Warner's purchase of the Turner Broadcasting System was

completed; Rupert Murdoch's Australia-based News Corp. became the largest owner of television stations in the United States when it added New World Communications to its Fox Television lineup; and the software giant Microsoft launched a new cable television channel with the NBC broadcast network. (Etc.)

Moreover, cable TV rates have risen faster than inflation, while cable companies have failed to show any interest in entering telephony. Nor have the cable companies begun to undertake the massive investments that even a system upgrade would require of them. Long-distance rates also have risen faster than inflation. But cross-sector competition has failed to materialize among the cable industry and the Regional Bells. Nor has anything remotely resembling the level of personal interactivity--not to mention democratization of information--predicted for the National Information Infrastructure (or Information Superhighway) begun to show up anywhere around the country.

The range of questions that I'd like you to address for me is as follows: What has the Telecommunications Act of 1996 really accomplished? Where is the U.S. (or global) media field headed from here? And are you optimistic or pessimistic about the direction that you believe the media field is taking?

Please address one or more of these questions along whatever axis you believe will provide the most compelling observations you can think of.

Thanks.

Sincerely Yours,
David Peterson
Chicago Media Watch
davidpet@mcs.net

*Sent 10/30/97
Me Sell
PCC*

To: Liane Casten <LCasten@aol.com>
From: George Gerbner <GGerbner@pobox.asc.upenn.edu>
Subject: Dec 13
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Hi Liane -

I am pressed to make final commitments and arrangements for Dec. 13 and have no info.
. Please send me the schedule, including transportation arrangements, times, and
exactly what my schedule and role will be. Thanks.

George.

To: Liane Casten <LCasten@aol.com>
From: George Gerbner <ggerbner@nimbus.temple.edu>
Subject: Tickets arrived

Cc:

Bcc:

X-Attachments:

Liane --

The tickets are here. Arriving Chicago O'Hare Dec 13 at 10:39 am. Please send info on where to go, program, my role, etc. George.

To: Liane Casten <lcasten@interaccess.com>
From: George Gerbner <ggerbner@nimbus.temple.edu>
Subject: Urgent
Cc:
Bcc:
X-Attachments:

Liane:

On 11/5/97 I wrote:

"I am pressed to make final commitments, etc... Please send me schedule and exactly... what my role will be."

On 11/23/97 I wrote:

"Tickets are here...Please send info on where to go, program, my role, etc."

Today is Friday, 12/5, still no response.

Liane, I have competing and conflicting demands to give keynote presentations almost every week, and must respond to those that give me full, prompt, and satisfactory information about where to go upon arrival and my exact role. I can commit participation only if all info and my role warrants it in view of other demands. If I do not get this over the weekend, or latest by Monday, I am afraid I will have to cancel out and accept another invitation for the same time, and return the ticket. Please respond ASAP.

George..

Justine Tom3NewDimensions:Temporary Items:Word Work File A 2070

To: <lcasten@interaccess.com>

From: George Gerbner <ggerbner@nimbus.temple.edu>

Subject: Re: Urgent

Cc:

Bcc:

X-Attachments:

Liane,

Thanks for update, (and also fax).

My comments interspersed, below (in CAPS).

>George,

>1. Please remember, this whole conference developed around your schedule.

>That's why we made it the 13 of this month.

YES, BUT I HAD NO SCHEDULE OF PROGRAM FOR THE DAY, FAX DOES NOT GIVE SCHEDULE.

>2. Since you are arriving the morning of the conference, I'll have someone

>go to the airport to pick you up and bring you directly back to the

>conference location. (Please be available on the top leve after the plane

>landsl--not the bagage level, so the person driving the car can see you

>easily. At this point, I don't know what car, but can get that information

>to you as soon as I have a driver.)

YES, PLEASE DO. ALSO GIVE ME A PHONE NUMBER TO CALL, JUST IN CASE. I HAVE HAD TOO MANY AIRPORT PICKUP MISSES. I DO NOT CHECK BAGS, BUT WILL LOOK FOR PERSON WITH GERBNER SIGN AT THE GATE.

>You are scheduled to speak directly after lunch, and as we spoke on the

>phone, the title of the general presentation is "First Amendment--Gasping

>for Breath. Jerry Landay will begin to give the group an overview of just

>what the First Amendment is--as in an introduction. Then Paul Klite will

>discuss how the First Amendment is being misused by corporations to

>advertise and seduce. You will end with the punch of discussing the abuse

>of the First Amendment and violence. That, I believe was the agreed topic

>as of our last conversation.

OK

If you have any problems with this, please let

>me know just as soon as possible. Our schedule is being finalized this

>weekend. If you prefer going first in the group, I have no objection, but

>this is essentially a teach-in, to let our group understand what is

>essentially not being discussed anywhere in Chicago.

>Frankly, I had wanted you in the morning, to keynote the day, but your

>travel schedule made that impossible. Thus, we have had to juggle around

>your arrival in mid-morning.

>

>3. To insure your comfort and privacy, you are being given a lovely hotel

>room in Evanston for the night, after we all dine together when the

>conference is over. Then I will probably take you and Paul Klite back to

>O'Hare for travel home.

OK, LIANE, THAT'S FINE. SORRY ABOUT WHINING, BUT WITH TOO MANY DEMANDS I NEEDED THIS INFO PRONTO. APPRECIATE YOUR PROMPT RESPONSE.

GEORGE

From: "Liane Casten" <lcasten@interaccess.com>
To: "George Gerbner" <ggerbner@nimbus.ocis.temple.edu>
Subject: Re: Urgent
Date: Sun, 7 Dec 1997 22:54:49 -0800
X-MSMail-Priority: Normal
X-Priority: 3
MIME-Version: 1.0

Hi George, I think the taxi idea is great and the only reason we were going to send someone was to save money, frankly. This conference is costing us a few bucks. So, I'd be most grateful if you could swing the taxi and then there would be no chance of your getting lost. Yes, it's at Loyola University, Lake Shore Campus at the Sullivan Library, right on Sheridan Road. Come in and turn right--and walk to the auditorium. And thanks for thinking of the taxi; it relieves me one task. I'm grateful. And as for the schedule, it's done, but I've not had time to write it up properly. But, it looks really good. Perhaps by tomorrow late afternoon, I can fax it to you.

Liane