

Vertical integration in television has had a major detrimental effect on the viewing public. The big providers of content have grown bigger and tougher after a slew of mergers and acquisitions since fin-syn went away. The networks are now parts of studio/distribution conglomerates, and the networks have the market clout to demand onerous contractual terms that have forced most independent producers out of business or have forced them into the conglomerate's fold. With the independent producer have gone the independent voices that made what we saw on the public air waves so much more vibrant in the past. The consolidation is unsettling. Only the FCC has the mandate and ability to foster diversity on the airwaves. I think only by protecting independent producers can the FCC protect the public interest in diversity.