

What are the Information Needs of Communities & Citizens? Winchester, MA - 8 miles north of Boston - gets most of its information from Boston media: television and daily newspapers. There is a weekly Winchester paper (The Winchester Star) and a regional daily (Daily Times Chronicle). For local information the local PEG access TV station - WinCAM - provides a lot of information along with a newer web-based service (WinCentral). Both are non-profits corporations. The people of Winchester seem to be fairly well served as far as local information is concerned but there needs to be a wider circle of information and debate needed. Many people don't - or won't - participate in debates concerning local issues; they need more encouragement to speak their minds. The local government does a good job of trying to be transparent and they work well with WinCAM and WinCentral trying to foster resident input and learning.

How is Commercial Media Serving Your Community?

How is commercial media serving Winchester? Poorly. The Boston TV stations and newspapers have been cutting back local coverage for a long time. Radio is pretty much a nonentity in any community debates (there is very little local radio in Boston among the commercial stations). None of the Boston commercial media offer decent coverage of local issues and events (except for things that are sensational or titillating). The third leg of the FCC mandate - localism - has been thrown to the wolves.

What is the State of Noncommercial, Nonprofit, and Public Media?

Public media - non-profit TV and radio stations - try to do a good job getting out information into the community but are hampered by a shortage of resources. I include PEG (public, education and government) access television in the public media category. Each town around here has at least one local TV station and many do a good job in trying to address the informational needs of the community. Our local PBS station - WGBH in Boston - had a local news show for many years but dropped it about 12 years ago. There are few local non-profit news web sites around here and expanding non-commercial media and news would be a welcome alternative to the commercial stations who ignore most local concerns. On the extremely local level people in the community rely on non-profit TV and web for information affecting their lives and community.

What is the Impact of the Internet and Mobile Information?

Our local government tries to do a good job on making information available through the web but don't update information often enough to make it a go-to destination for information. WinCAM and WinCentral do a good job of fostering information sharing within the community and between the government and the community. Your choices for high speed internet access are two: Comcast or Verizon. Both companies provide decent service but are relatively pricey (\$50 a month for access).

