



Media Minutes

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Producers: Stevie Converse and Candace Clement

TRANSCRIPT

President Barack Obama Voices Strong Support for Net Neutrality

President Barack Obama reaffirmed his strong commitment to maintaining an open and neutral Internet during a crowd-sourced "interview" conducted on YouTube. It was the first interview given by the president since his speech.

As a follow-up to the President's State of the Union speech, YouTube collected questions and votes for five days. More than 55,000 submitted and voted on both video and text questions. 11,696 questions were submitted.

Obama answered a question about Network Neutrality from James Earlywine of Indianapolis. Earlywine's question received more than 1,300 votes, placing it at the top of the list in the "jobs and economy" category. The question was read by YouTube's Steve Grove.

Steve Grove (1.27) – The number one question that came in the jobs and economy category had to do with the Internet. And it came from James Earlywine, Indianapolis. He said, "An open Internet is a powerful engine for economic growth and new jobs. Letting large companies block and filter online content and services would stifle needed growth. What is your commitment to keeping the Internet open and neutral in America?"

President Barack Obama – Well, I'm a big believer in Net Neutrality. I campaigned on this. I continue to be a strong supporter of it. My FCC Chairman Julius Genachowski has indicated that he shares the view that we've got to keep the Internet open, that we don't want to create a bunch of gateways that prevent somebody who doesn't have a lot of money but has a good idea from being able to start their next YouTube or their next Google on the Internet.

So, this is something we're committed to. We're getting pushback, obviously, from some of the bigger carriers who would like to be able to charge more fees and extract more money from wealthier customers. But we think that runs counter to the whole spirit of

openness that has made the Internet such a powerful engine for not only economic growth, but also for the generation of ideas and creativity.

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Howard Zinn on the Importance of Community Media

Howard Zinn, historian, author, playwright and educator, died last week at the age of 87. Zinn is best known for writing “A People’s History of the United States,” in which he celebrated the historical contributions of workers, women and people of color.

In 2002, Howard Zinn made this recording for Seattle’s Reclaim the Media.

Howard Zinn - *This is Howard Zinn, and I’d like to tell you something about Media and Democracy.*

George Orwell wrote the lines, "Who controls the past controls the future. Who controls the present controls the past." He understood that if you can control what people know about history, if you can decide what gets in and what is left out, you can order their thinking. You can order their values. You can in effect organize their brains by controlling their knowledge.

The people who dominate today’s big media networks, who publish school textbooks, who decide upon the dominant ideas in our culture, are mostly rich, white men. Not surprisingly, they ask that history concentrate on those who are rich and white and male. That is why the point of view of black people has not been a very important one in the telling of our history; same with women’s perspectives, or those of working people.

Most of what we get from mainstream media and from standard history books is ideological--biased not in favor of the people, but towards the commercial and political interests of the men and corporations at the top.

When the New York Times interprets events in a certain way — whether by describing a nonviolent demonstration as a “riot,” or by failing to critique government foreign policy claims, that interpretation becomes history — it becomes the record people will turn to in the future to find out about the past.

That’s why media voices from outside the mainstream have been so important throughout American history, even if they are left out of history’s “official version.”

There have been periods in American history when pamphlets and newspapers have had an important effect in arousing and organizing a movement. Back during the anti-slavery movement, abolitionists spread literature all over the country — so much so that President Andrew Jackson ordered the Postmaster General to bar abolitionist literature

from the Southern states. Earlier in this century there were thriving labor newspapers, providing a counterpoint to the business-run press.

Today, community radio stations and alternative publications are still found all over the country. Satellite TV and the Internet make it easier to distribute alternative media to audiences in distant homes and libraries. These community-based media resources are increasingly important, as critical voices are silenced or pushed to the margins by the mainstream.

By letting these voices speak, the alternative media preserve crucial parts of today's history—and challenge powerful institutions' right to control the future.

This is Howard Zinn.