



## Women in the Mainstream Media: A Growing Presence

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Even in the year 2006, we are less likely to see faces of women and women of color on television news, hear their voices on the radio, or read their words in the newspapers than the faces, voices, and words of their male counterparts. Ample research has documented the underrepresentation of many groups of women in these fields, yet these disparities continue and have wide reaching effects on gender equality.

In 2005, women only made up 37.5 percent of the staff in daily newsrooms. Interestingly, while the proportion of women of color in newsrooms has increased by almost three percentage points over the past five years, women of color still were only 17.2 percent of women journalists in newsrooms in 2005.<sup>i</sup>

**Table 1: Number and Percent of Various Groups in Newsrooms, 2005**

	Number	Percent of Total
Black Women	1,464	2.7%
Black Men	1,523	2.8%
Hispanic Women	979	1.8%
Hispanic Men	1,350	2.5%
Asian Women	923	1.7%
Asian Men	745	1.4%
Native American Women	131	0.2%
Native American Men	164	0.3%
White Women	16,824	31.1%
White Men	30,032	55.5%
Total	54,135	100.0%

In addition, women are underrepresented in executive positions and on boards of directors of our largest media and communications companies. A study by the Annenberg Public Policy Center at the University of Pennsylvania found that in 2002, women made up, on average, only 15 percent of top executives and only 12 percent of board members of Fortune 500 telecommunications, publishing and printing, entertainment, and advertising companies. Not a single of these companies had a majority of women in top executive positions or on boards.<sup>ii</sup>

Increasing the participation and access of women to expression and decision-making in and through the media and new technologies of communication was a strategic objective of the United Nations Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action.<sup>iii</sup> This goal has special relevance for younger women, who not only are underrepresented in visible and behind the scenes media positions, but can also be detrimentally affected by stereotyped or inaccurate media representations of women.

## Where are the Women in Mainstream Media?

Forbes spotlights the 100 most powerful women in media, which include Condoleeza Rice, US Secretary of State (at #1), Sallie Krawcheck, Chief Financial Officer of Citigroup (#7), Oprah Winfrey, Chairman of Harpo (#9), Judy McGrath, Chief Executive of MTV Networks (#49), and Diane Sawyer (co-anchor ABC's Good Morning America, Primetime Live (#55)).<sup>iv</sup>

The youngest women on the list include 34-year-old Queen Rania of Jordan (#80) 39-year-old Nina Jacobsen, President of Buena Vista Motion Pictures Group (#94) and 38-year old Mary Callahan Erdoes, Chief Executive of JPMorgan Private Bank (#100).

There are also a number of women-run or women-focused media sources, such as [Women's eNews](#), [Bitch Magazine](#), [Daily Feminist News](#), [Bust](#), [IndyBay Women's News](#), [In These Times](#), and [Feminista!](#)

Women, including women of color and younger women, are very active in alternative media such as blogs and online journals. Check out the YWTF factsheet on women and blogging for more information on this subject.

## Where Can I Get More Information?

There are a number of organizations that focus on issues of media justice for women. Here are a few places to start:

The International Women's Media Foundation  
<http://www.iwfmf.org/>

Girls, Women + Media Project  
<http://www.mediaandwomen.org/>

Women in Film and Television International  
<http://www.wifti.org/>

Women in Media and News  
<http://www.wimnonline.org/>

## What Is YWTF and How Do I Get Involved?

The Younger Women's Task Force (YWTF), a project of the National Council of Women's Organizations, is a nationwide, diverse and inclusive grassroots movement dedicated to organizing younger women and their allies to take action on issues that matter most to them. By and for younger women, YWTF works both within and beyond the women's movement, engaging all who are invested in advancing the rights of younger women.

For more information or to get involved, please visit [www.ywtf.org](http://www.ywtf.org).

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<sup>i</sup> American Society of Newspaper Editors. "Diversity in Newspaper Newsrooms, Newsroom Employment Census 2005." <http://www.asne.org/index.cfm?ID=5648>.

<sup>ii</sup> Falk, Erica and Erin Grizard. "The Glass Ceiling Persists: The 3<sup>rd</sup> Annual APPC Report on Women Leaders in Communication Companies." The Annenberg Public Policy Center of the University of Pennsylvania. 2003.

<sup>iii</sup> Fourth World Conference on Women Platform for Action – Women and the Media.  
<http://www.un.org/womenwatch/daw/beijing/platform/media.htm>.

<sup>iv</sup> Forbes. The Most Powerful Women in Media. [http://www.forbes.com/2005/07/28/lists-powerfulwomen-media-05powom\\_cz\\_sh\\_0728media.html](http://www.forbes.com/2005/07/28/lists-powerfulwomen-media-05powom_cz_sh_0728media.html).