

## PUBLIC INSPECTION FILES FOR TELEVISION STATIONS

After more than a decade of advocacy by public interest organizations, the Federal Communications Commission has finally required all television stations to post their public inspection files online at a website hosted by the FCC. This important resource for the public (and researchers) was made available in February 2013.

In the past, members of the public wishing to view these files had to visit each station during normal business hours. Now, anyone can view the files for any station at any time on the internet. Public Inspection Files contain a wealth of information about television stations and how they serve their communities including:

- station profile (license status and expiration date, community of license, type of service, licensee address, main studio address, and closed captioning contact);
- all applications (including renewals, assignments, transfers of control);
- ownership reports;
- equal employment opportunity records;
- political files (records of requests for the sale of by time and actual times sold to political candidates, candidate supporters and opponents, and issue-oriented advertisements);
- children's television programming reports (identifying programming designed and aired to serve the educational and informational needs of children);
- FCC investigations or complaints;
- issues programs lists (quarterly listings of issues important to the community and programming aired in response to those issues); and
- joint sales and time brokerage agreements.

With a few exceptions, all television stations (including commercial, non-commercial and class-A) should have uploaded all of the information listed above and more by February 4, 2013. Members of the public can easily access the information on the FCC website ([www.fcc.gov](http://www.fcc.gov)) by clicking on the Quick Link "Public Inspection File." (This website may also be accessed directly at <https://stations.fcc.gov/>.)

Stations can be searched by call sign, network affiliation, and channel facility ID number. Each station page has the same format, which makes it easy to find the items desired. This data base not only makes it easy for members of the public to find out information about stations serving their communities, but it should provide extensive detailed data of interest to media scholars and researchers.