

Robert W. McChesney

Author, Activist and Professor of Communication

Home [About](#) Books ▾ [Articles](#) [Curriculum Vitae](#) [Contact](#)

About

Robert W. McChesney is Research Professor in the Institute of Communications Research and the Graduate School of Library and Information Science at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 2002 he co-founded, with Dan Schiller, the Illinois Initiative on Global Information and Communication Policy. McChesney also hosts the [Media Matters](#) weekly radio program every Sunday afternoon on WILL-AM radio. From 1988 to 1998 he was on the Journalism and Mass Communication faculty at the University of Wisconsin-Madison. McChesney earned his Ph.D. in communications at the University of Washington in 1989. His work concentrates on the history and political economy of communication, emphasizing the role media play in democratic and capitalist societies.

McChesney has written or edited eight books, including the award-winning *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935* (Oxford University Press, 1993), *Corporate Media and the Threat to Democracy* (Seven Stories Press, 1997), and, with Edward S. Herman, *The Global Media: The New Missionaries of Corporate Capitalism* (Cassell, 1997). McChesney's most recent books are multiple award-winning *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (New Press, 2000) and, with John Nichols, *Our Media, Not Theirs: The Democratic Struggle Against Corporate Media* (Seven Stories Press, 2002). McChesney is presently at work on his ninth and tenth books: with John Bellamy Foster, *The Big Picture: Understanding Media and Society Through Political Economy*, to be published in 2003 by Monthly Review Press; with Ben Scott, he is editing a book to be published by the New Press in 2003 titled: *Freedom of the Press is for Those Who Own One: Radical Democratic Criticism of U.S. Journalism from the Progressive Era to the Present*.

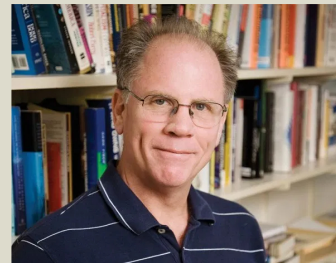
McChesney has also written some 120 journal articles and book chapters and another 140 newspaper pieces, magazine articles and book reviews. His work has been translated into ten languages. Since launching his academic career in the late 1980s, McChesney has made some 420 conference presentations and visiting guest lectures as well as more than 550 radio and television appearances. He has been the subject of more than 60 published profiles and interviews. In 2001 *Adbusters* named him one of the "Nine Pioneers of Mental Environmentalism."

McChesney co-edits the History of Communication Series for the University of Illinois Press, serves on the editorial boards of several journals, and is a research advisor to numerous academic and civic organizations. While teaching at Wisconsin, he was selected as one of the top 100 classroom teachers on the Madison campus. In addition to his academic work, McChesney serves on the Board of Directors for several nonprofit and noncommercial media organizations. In 2001 he was appointed co-editor (along with John Bellamy Foster) of *Monthly Review*, the independent socialist magazine founded by Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman in 1949. Prior to entering graduate school in 1983, McChesney was a sports stringer for UPI, published a weekly newspaper, and in 1979 was the founding publisher of *The Rocket*, a Seattle-based rock magazine. At the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in McChesney's hometown of Cleveland, the founding of *The Rocket* is credited as the birth of the Seattle rock scene of the late 1980s and 1990s.

Summary Profile:

Robert W. McChesney is the Gutsell Endowed Professor in the Department of Communication at the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign. In 2002 he was the co-founder of [Free Press](#), a national media reform organization – www.freepress.net – and served as its President until April 2008, and remains on its Board of Directors. McChesney also hosted the "Media Matters" weekly radio program every Sunday afternoon on NPR-affiliate WILL-AM between 2002 and 2012. From 1988 to 1998 he was on the Journalism and Mass Communication faculty at the University of Wisconsin, Madison. While teaching at Wisconsin, he was selected as one of the top 100 classroom teachers on the Madison campus. McChesney earned his Ph.D. in communications at the University of Washington in 1989; he was inducted into the UW Department of Communication's Alumni Hall of Fame in 2010. His work concentrates on the history and political economy of communication, emphasizing the role media play in democratic and capitalist societies. McChesney co-edits, with John Nerone, the History of Communication Series for the University of Illinois Press. From 2000 to 2004 he served as co-editor of *Monthly Review*, the independent socialist magazine founded by Paul Sweezy and Leo Huberman in 1949.

McChesney has written or edited twenty-seven books. His most recent books are *Blowing the Roof off the Twenty-First Century: Media, Politics, and Post-Capitalist Democracy* (Monthly Review Press, 2014); *Dollarocracy: How the Money-and Media Election Complex is*



Recently Published

- [People Get Ready](#) March 1, 2016
- [Strategies for Media Reform](#) June 1, 2015
- [Blowing the Roof Off the Twenty-First Century](#) October 1, 2014
- [Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism Is Turning the Internet Against Democracy](#) September 1, 2014
- [The International Political Economy of Communication](#) March 1, 2014

Destroying America (Nation Books, 2013), which he co-authored with John Nichols; and *Digital Disconnect: How Capitalism is Turning the Internet Away from Democracy* (New Press, 2013). The latter two of these books have won awards, as well as six of his other books: the multiple award-winning *The Death and Life of American Journalism: The Media Revolution that Will Begin the World Again* (Nation Books, 2010), co-authored with John Nichols; *The Political Economy of Media* (Monthly Review Press, 2008); *Communication Revolution* (New Press, 2007); *The Problem of the Media: U.S. Communication Politics in the 21st Century* (Monthly Review Press, 2004); *Telecommunications, Mass Media, and Democracy: The Battle for the Control of U.S. Broadcasting, 1928-1935* (Oxford University Press, 1993); and the multiple award-winning *Rich Media, Poor Democracy: Communication Politics in Dubious Times* (New Press, 2000). In 2008, *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* was awarded the ICA Fellows Book Award, which recognizes books that "have made a substantial contribution to the scholarship of the communication field, as well as the broader rubric of the social sciences, and have stood some test of time." *Rich Media, Poor Democracy* was reissued by The New Press in 2015 with a new preface by the author.

McChesney has also written some 100 journal articles, 150 book chapters and another 350 newspaper pieces, magazine articles and book reviews. His work has been professionally translated into 33 languages.

Since launching his academic career in the late 1980s, McChesney has made some 1,000 conference presentations and visiting guest lectures as well as more than 1,100 radio and television guest appearances. He has been the subject of some 200 published profiles and interviews. In 2008 the *Utne Reader* listed McChesney among their "50 visionaries who are changing the world." In 2001 *Adbusters* Magazine named him one of the "Nine Pioneers of Mental Environmentalism." In 2006 right-winger David Horowitz included McChesney on his list of the "101 most dangerous professors in America." In 2010, McChesney received the Dallas Smythe Award, "the highest honor given by the Union for Democratic Communications. It is awarded to researchers and activists who, through their research and/or production work, have made significant contributions to the study and practice of democratic communication." Along with John Nichols, McChesney was awarded the U.S. Newspaper Guild's 2010 Herbert Block Freedom Award; according to the Guild's Executive Council, "the two of you have done more for press freedom than anyone. Your body of work is second to none. This is a transformative year for journalism. If we're able to chart a course that will preserve what matters, it will be in large part due to both of you." In 2011 McChesney was given the "Communication Research as an Agent of Change" lifetime achievement award from the International Communication Association. In 2012 McChesney was awarded the C. Edwin Baker Award for the Advancement of Scholarship on Media, Markets and Democracy, presented by the International Communication Association.

Prior to entering graduate school in 1983, McChesney was a sports stringer for UPI, he published a weekly newspaper, and in 1979 was the founding publisher of *The Rocket*, a Seattle-based rock magazine. At the Rock and Roll Hall of Fame, in McChesney's hometown of Cleveland, the founding of *The Rocket* is credited as the birth of the Seattle rock scene of the late 1980s and 1990s. In his spare time, McChesney [writes about professional basketball](#) for a number of websites.