

Meeting Association: STATE OF BLACK BOSTON (SOBB) MEDIA ADVISORY COMMITTEE

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Report Date:	Original Report date: June 16, 2011 and Revisited 12 years later - January 16, 2023
Report Focus:	<i>Issues pertinent to using media to improve the image, voice and equity of the Black community,</i>
Report Purpose:	<i>Advice and input to the SOBB team: Trotter Institute at U-Mass Boston, the Urban League of Eastern Massachusetts, and the Boston Chapter of the NAACP.</i>
Announcements:	<i>Based on the Urban League National Conference of 5,000 attendees held in Boston, Massachusetts</i>
Conclusion:	DIGITAL MEDIA & BLACK DIASPORA AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT KEYS TO EQUITY IN MEDIA

TODAY'S MEDIA AT A GLANCE: Historically mass-media has been used to investigate and determine the accuracy and timing of data, facts, intelligence and advice. They take that information and communicate timely, reliable access key to personal, financial and professional success. If that information is miscommunicated untold, unorganized, unrelated, withheld, wrongly interpreted or otherwise inaccurate, the information becomes a tool for many kinds of disenfranchisement. Simply put, mass media; collectively print (photos\books\newspapers\billboards), audio (radio\music), and video (TV) and film (movie) products; was produced and completed in a way to be read, listened to and viewed by the end-user. Thus media corporations used writers, editors, producers, etc. to create the content and control information in a strictly pay\advertise to read\listen\view fashion in order to make money. During the industrial age, mass media production was distinctly tied to a time of heavily used "analog" devices which were pre-robotic, machine mechanics manually controlled.

The digital age combining electronic and computerized robotics, multi-media applications and internet and web communications differs in that print, audio and video are produced and complete in a way that requests, encourages, challenges and heralds end-users: digital re-authorization with original information, interaction in webinars, reinvention of web spaces, resampling of music, reengineering of software and more. Mass-media has changed and even the conglomerates are befuddled about how fast the growth of information searching has moved away from broadcast.

Further, the world is approaching an "Information Revolution" also known as the Information Economy; where software, technology and web aided 'ease of communications have impacted research, sales and every area life. This ease of communications is based on robotics, computers, digital media, the web and the simple formula of your information plus my information equals double the information. Well, multiply this doubling among billions of internet users, combining all media technologies, including digitization, newspapers, radio, television and film and you have what experts call the "total collective global information." The first impact of this evaluation came around the year 2,000 with reports showing the world's collective global information was doubling in five year intervals. In 2013, the world's collective global information is expected to double every 11 hours. Facebook has grown past a half billion users; Arbitron reported 52 million Internet radio listeners and there were more video productions watched in six years of YouTube than there was in the entire history of television combined, topping 100 million two years ago. Search Engine Land reported Facebook status updates at 700 per second; Twitter tweets at 600 per second; Buzz posts at 55 per second; Google searches at 34,000 per second; Yahoo searches at 3,200 per second and Bing searches at 927 per second. These figures show the web is not only a growing sector in making, distributing and searching for news and stories - its ease, reach and reliability have won the question of webcast versus broadcast. That's not to say broadcast will die out; however, its place may take a back seat in popularity, much like weekly newspapers compared to daily papers. The biggest gain for Blacks is mass-media corporations owning print, radio and television companies are no longer solely in control of information development, production and distribution.

OVERVIEW - THE RISE OF BLACK MEDIA: As African-Americans' became comfortable with freedom in the United States, their ability to establish Black neighborhoods, churches, military regiments and organizations led to the beginning of Black newspapers. During the mid 1800's, 4.5 million African-American's were communicating across the country through spoken word and a few newspapers in the underground press. Black publications can be traced to John B. Russwurm's Freedom's Journal's (1827), Frederick Douglas' North Star (1847) and the Detroit Tribune (1849). Freedom's Journal provided international, national, and regional information on current events; editorials declaiming injustices; biographies of prominent African-Americans and listings of births, deaths and marriages in the African-American New York community. Employing subscription agents, Freedom's Journal used the mail to circulate in 11 states, the District of Columbia, Haiti, Europe, and Canada. According to the US Census, by 1900, there were 75.9 million people in the United States with 8.8million Blacks 12% of the US population and less than one-half million other races.

By time of the great Black migration to the north, the Chicago Defender (1905); the Pittsburgh Courier (1907) and the New York Amsterdam News (1909) were reporting national news. In 1918, Marcus Garvey created the Negro World weekly which grew to 500,000 subscribers across the US and Caribbean, the paper was banned by colonial rulers ceased by 1933. Most of these early newspapers were short lived because African-Americans alone could not provide the volume of advertising and sales needed to support their newspapers' production and distribution. At the time urban tensions were rising as Blacks competed for jobs and housing. Tensions grew to unrest with anti-segregation movements escalating to riots in Chicago, Knoxville, Omaha, and Washington, D.C. White media including entertainment in carnivals, circuses, medicine shows and theater often portrayed African-Americans through stereotypes using images called "Blackface" and "coon" which held insulting behaviors, gestures, buffoonary and images. By 1919, African-American author, film director and independent producer, Oscar Micheaux created the first film about and for Black audiences. Over the course of his life, Micheaux wrote, directed produced and more than forty-four, full length feature films on African-Americans. Early Black photographers also worked to counter negative visual stereotypes by focusing on the free Black communities throughout the country and presenting confident, successful human beings.

In 1945, John H. Johnson began publishing Ebony magazine. By 1949, Jesse B. Blayton Sr. purchased WERD, Atlanta; broadcasting 40 miles, to become the first Black owned and operated radio station in the United States. In 1951, John H. Johnson published Jet Magazine, which became notable for chronicling early, close up stories of Martin Luther King, Jr and the Civil Rights. By 1955, in preparation for the Montgomery, Alabama "Bus Boycott, several women stayed up 24-hours-a-day for a week printing 10,000 flyers with mimeograph machines to get the word out. The mimeograph machine which used an ink with the toxicity and narcotic effects of airplane glue, had to be wound from a long lever by hand 10,000 times to produce the 10,000 flyers needed for the event. By the 1960's and '70's TV had begun to show successful images of African Americans including "I Spy" with Bill Cosby; "Julia" with Dianne Carroll and the Flip Wilson Show. Along with so many benchmarks in media; African American daily newspapers appeared in Norfolk, VA; Kansas City, and Washington D.C. And like those previously founded by Marcus Garvey and John H. Johnson they were still aspiring to fight oppression. In August of 1970, the first issue of "*Black Enterprise*" magazine published by Earl G. Graves hit newsstands. Before the 1980's many Black newspapers were forced to closed their doors subject to economic decline.

By the 1970's an FM radio format known as "urban contemporary" emerged. Many AM radio Black stations transitioned from Soul and R&B music to gospel and talk by the end of the 80's, although Chicago AM radio remained popular. In 1980, Robert "Bob" Johnson founded Black Entertainment Television (BET), the first African-American owned cable television network. BET as an all Black programming format, which has grow to be viewed in more than 90 million homes worldwide. In 2008, African-American, Tyler Perry purchased a TV and movie studio, when years ago he was denied access to programming in mainstream media. That same year, Oprah Winfrey and partners sold the cable channel Oxygen to NBC Universal and in 2010, Oprah Winfrey partnered with Discovery Communications to purchase a U.S. based cable and satellite network, called OWN. That same year, BET announced the American Black Diaspora population was growing at a faster rate than the rest of the general population, expanding 13.4 percent in ten years. And today there are more than 250 listings of Black owned newspapers in the USA.

As the diveristy of Black populations in the United States grew far more global from Black citizens immigrating from all of the world, US Census data chaged its ethnic assessments from a few categories to 63 ethnic categories.

Meanwhile in Boston, African-Americans had a consistent conscience monitoring local news through the weekly Bay State Banner with a 45 thousand New England subscriber base. And for more than fifty years, WILD-AM 1090 radio served as a music, cultural and news outlet for New England's Black community. However without a strong succession plan, the station was forced to turn to brokered programs and finally had to sell. In Boston, Black media has fluctuated between upstarts, partnerships and community access programming from a variety of weeklys, magazines, community radio and local cable access TV to partnerships with major broadcast stations. What makes Boston unique is its glut of colleges and universities, 35 colleges in Boston proper, 100 in Greater Boston, collectively serving an average 250,000 students. There is no lack of Black Diaspora media talent with Boston's rich artisan, music and engineering associations.

However, history has shown that it's a mistake to try to operate a Black media outlet whether print, radio or TV without the support of the larger Black Diaspora audience. Black media outlets must include the multi-lingual, multi-ethnic, multi-cultural relations across the global Black Diaspora in order to generate the revenue needed to succeed. Bringing news, stories and knowledge work for us by us to the forefront, using communications technologies is part of today's required social capital and is fundamental to self-determination. BET Magazine reported most Blacks are technology end-users who purchase the best electronics at a 30% higher rate than all ethnic counterparts, regardless of income. In 2008, Nielsen reported US advertising spending targeting Black consumers exceeded \$2.3 billion, 35% of its total budget between 22,000 national, regional and local advertisers, across 130+ media vehicles.

The US 2001, CIA World Fact Book reported 219 million TV's sold in 1997 and Nielsen reported 114.9 million homes had televisions in 2010 vs. 62 million with computers. According to PricewaterhouseCoopers in 2009, entertainment software added \$4.9 billion to the U.S. Gross Domestic Product, \$180 million from Massachusetts, when 273.5 million - computer and video games were sold in the United States. Nielsen also reported the average American watches more than 4 hours of TV each day totaling 28 hrs per week, and Newsweek reported we spend 3 hours per day, 21 hours per week online.

According to BET, African-American buying power between 2000 and 2008 increased 55 percent to \$913 billion and by 2013, that figure is expected to improve another 36 percent to \$1.24 trillion. BET data also suggests that roughly 31 percent (\$39 billion) of all African-American discretionary income is earmarked for investment in personal computers, smart phones and other advanced consumer-electronics devices. – *Mediaweek.com*

Blacks using entertainment technologies make no distinction between learning and play. Whether TV's, DVD\CD players, iPod\MP3 players, digital cameras, camcorders, cell phones, PC's, etc. without realizing it entire families are investing in technology and through their investment are supporting and advancing the latest versions of high-tech software and equipment without an equitable return on investment. We've taken to new technology in droves; the Bureau of Labor Statistics reported in 1987, families spent an average 7% of their annual income on entertainment compared to 1% on education. Each year, more discretionary income is being spent on the hottest gadgets, e.g., the *Kindle*, *iPhone* and the *Wii* to maintain a fashionable, connected lifestyle in a world where everything from books and music to games and films are available 24/7 on-demand.

Nevertheless, very little discretionary income is used by Blacks to create any of these products or applications in mixed media formats or otherwise. For Blacks, there is no equitable relationship between money and time spent in return for skills gained, education or employment. Think about the kind of skills gained or prospective income earned from consistent investments in newer, faster, better technologies over time. Most of us haven't learned to use the previous version before we buy what's new.

Neither entertainment companies nor mass media provide Black consumers with an equitable economic return on their investment and unquestioned loyalty in the form of media coverage, jobs, scholarships or community\business development, nor support through research, creative engineering and/or public\private partnerships as consultants, micro-enterprises, franchises, etc. We are literally throwing money out of our neighborhoods and across regions and into other countries that offer us no jobs, contracts or community investment

SUMMARY - PREVENTING INFORMATION APARTHEID: Television teaches in as little time as a three minute commercial, where the advertiser has time to send some 300 messages in color, music, sight and sound. Many of the messages are important, but for ethnic and poor communities the messages are often mixed at best. Advertiser oriented news reporting, talk shows, movies and sitcoms have set a false wealth standard for society. TV is a one way distribution of information without immediate validation or critique. Yet advertising is pushing a growth in television to 800+ channels as an *entertainment* industry. Creating and using mass-media resources is an essential part of investing in and sustaining an educated and literate population.

In 1994, The Chronicle of Philanthropy headlined a story "Preventing Information Apartheid," which stated "Non-profits are urged to insure that new communications technologies fulfill their promise of benefiting all Americans." On that cover page, was a large photo of then Vice President Al Gore informing non-profits and advanced telecommunications corporations that the federal government was trying to make the information it collects more readily available to the public. His comment was "The principle that information is good lies at the heart of a representative democracy."

Obsolete or inappropriate information, modeling and dissemination is one form of information apartheid. Black media representation for constituents in the Black Diaspora is a definite necessity. Not only because broadcast corporations, politicians and news outlets can manipulate people with self-serving, overzealous advertising and misleading promotions. But particularly because Black media must protect its vulnerable consumers, senior citizens and latchkey children from exploitive campaigns.

Without critique, feedback and other forms of dialogue to balance mass-media, the first impressions the world receives about Black communities come from strangers who are not from the people or places being reported on. The sensitivity required for accurate reporting on Black people, customs and communities toward safety and positive developments cannot be based on a stranger's cold interpretations.

The issue here is not be whether media corporations survive or perish, in fact, the statistics mentioned earlier could be interpreted that the state of Black Media in Boston is in the hands of its politically, socially aware, media savvy residents - and their ability to employ, network and unite through today's multi-media web communications tools and resources.

History shows under-served community residents cannot beg, nor just sit and wait for new opportunities to come. They have to stretch through self-development to understand and participate in ground-breaking national and regional investments in order to broaden their knowledge and competitiveness. They must take deliberate meticulous, careful, painstaking and particular conscientious application to the work of preparing and positioning themselves to participate in the opportunities at hand - which include learning digital media and use of web technologies and applications.

If the residents living in cities aren't connected to colleges and universities, they, their communities and thus their cities lag behind in participatory activities that foster personal and neighborhood economic development. Creative industries like advertising, entertainment, information production, technology and broadcast media bring together creative thinking, creative capital, research and development funds; which create more information and new startup companies. Residents stay competitive by getting involved in educational and entrepreneurship opportunities and much of it can be on-line.

Further, corporations whether for or non-profit, media, education or retail, need to be held accountable by the families and communities that support them e.g. public education system has been around for over a century, yet only its means of delivery, the schools, have been public. The books schools use are written for profit by private individuals and are published by for profit corporations; other links in the education chain have always been for profit.

While public school communities are consistently receiving supplies, manufacturing, distribution and other delivery services from corporations, they offer no skills training, career development or scholarship opportunities for individual end-users, nor workforce development opportunities with benefits from manufacturing, nor even a distribution plant were the publishing, advertising, entertainment, software, information, technology, education and broadcast media industries make generous annual profits.

CONCLUSION - WE MUST RETHINK OUR POSITION AS A MARKET SHARE: An average 6.8 billion people are online researching, using, originating, exchanging and sharing information, goods and services. That gives the web a population the size of a country. However, only 13.5% of the global web population is of the USA; interpreted nationally around 27% of all Americans are digitally literate and about 3.5% are Black. While some 60% of Americans own computers, only 19% are using them competitively as producers. That means most of us aren't prepared for the often discussed impact of global communications on our local economy, work, skills and lifestyle. Most Black people still find computer technologies, software and the web intimidating. Nonetheless, these tools and resources are immediately necessary to record our history, define our heritage, tell our news and share our wealth of different cultures, languages, educations, histories, standards, needs, resources, solutions and more through stories.

In the old days of the industrial revolution, competitive intelligence was an ability to pit one mind against all opponents. But in today's global economy, competitive intelligence is more comprehensive and inclusive of our ability to understand our knowledge and the ubiquity of our social/professional networks in ways that we can muster to meet, adapt and master our personal and economic goals and challenges. We must work on relationship development between people of the Black Diaspora to build our multi-ethnic, multi-national, local to global communities of interest, culture and place toward long-term, sustainable, intergenerational economic security.

Boston's 16.3 million tourists in 2004 brought in \$7.9 billion into the City of Boston and Boston's 135,000+ students bring an annual 4.4 billion to the city. We must work collectively to bring these tourist and student markets into the Black community regardless of what media is available. We must redouble our efforts with benchmarks offering innovative communications training and developmental programs that meet the demand for digital literacy in the global economy. As the information age merges with and surpasses the digital age; reading, writing, math and computer literacy are amalgamating into digital literacy, becoming "the" critical skill set for anyone needing to work. Thus the digital age requires writers, editors, producers and other media experts, not only to create original content but to get it out to their publics and get responses in many fashions - from texting with cell phones to emails and a wide variety of social networks.

Opportunities for Black media in this century lay with collaborating to help individuals in communities, corporations, agencies and governments to get precise contemporary, actionable, competitive information at any given moment. Blacks need to share expertise across industries as well as careers of interest on the horizon and be vigilant about growing fluency in communicating with others to broaden understanding about the truth and farce in media.

The U.S. government is making a wide swath of investments in teaching, education, healthcare, biomedical research, information technology, high speed internet, transportation, clean energy, export trade and small business development. Media professionals across the Black Diaspora must position as a group on the web and communicate what's going on. To do this well, Black media professionals need to reach beyond the gap in Black *owned* corporate media and focus on helping audiences understand how emerging markets and evolving opportunities impact national issues and how national trends affect regional markets. In this way, Black media professionals can combine their efforts to become a consistent information resource for the Black Diaspora. In return, audiences will organize friends, neighbors, agencies and others to participate this information sharing. Thus Black consumers get what they need for the revitalization of neighborhoods under-represented by mass media. And in exchange Black media professionals gain the recognition and audience share which translates to larger corporate advertising to support bricks & mortar, larger outreach through satellite and so on. Digital literacy in this case is a real asset, as use of computer technologies and the web can increase neighborhood-based research and information delivery at speeds ten times faster than any other form of media.

Despite the fact that comprehensive information "creation" and sharing has historically been the "job" of mass-media, the promise the aforementioned figures show is the state of closing and limping Black owned media outlets in Boston may not be quite as dismal as it seems. It is not necessarily about bricks and mortar, it is up to individual residents - independently and with leaders, agencies, colleges, etc. to embrace and master digital literacy as professionals, families, groups and agencies to participate in and develop the kind of information production & distribution venues that determine the future of the Black community.

RECOMMENDATIONS: Whether Blacks deliberately capitalize on the knowledge and skills of the Diaspora or are continually and blindly led, cast aside and/or exploited, will depend on the strength of and commitment to communications literacy; as well as understanding its impact on our economy, work and lifestyle.

What can you do to help yourself?

- Children need to be made aware of what direction to go in with their professional development.
- Children need to be kept abreast of the sacrifices and contributions made toward the possibilities of professional development across all sectors.
- Today's youth, the future of tomorrow, need to be able to think critically about the values and standards that allow them to be actively involved in skills improvement through academia and digital training rather than to go backwards to industrial skills. They also need to solve problems and understand and train for careers in media.
- Bring forward your expertise as an authority within their field, industry & culture through education, training and self development to write opinion articles and expand articles to chapter documents and books.
- Those wanting to work in emerging markets must reinvent themselves to become digitally literate to prepare to be competitive within their vocation and college choices.
- Master digital literacy to participate in and develop the kind of information production & distribution venues that determine the future of the Black community.
- Form a community media committee that monitors media and provide media literacy training.

What can Professionals & Groups do to help the community?

- Create & make available academic research, writing & journals as online global resources in the context of community protection, technology integration and connectivity engagement.
- Hammer out mandates requiring corporate reporting on how investments in the information economy benefit audiences via a show of best practices.
- Mentor and apprentice youth, students and new professionals into a wider variety of industries across sectors in emerging industries.
- Create open information and public awareness campaigns using the web's tools and resources to educate and organize community residents to get corporations to invest an equivalent percentage of citizen's spending dollars back into the cities and townships toward training, scholarships and hiring consumers.
- Communicate and collaborate toward sharing expertise knowledge and resources with each other.
- Develop mid-range and long-term goals and alliances that help communities to enhance quality of life through collaborative efforts using the web's social networking and media production mediums to build cultural bridges for ongoing dialogue between Black communities locally, regionally, nationally and internationally.
- Organize to create a high voltage radio station and other media outlets to meet constituent needs.

- Create a web intranet for which acts as a virtual office space, allowing direct connectivity regardless of community or country to collaborate on media campaigns. This intranet should be both a center for sharing ideas and resources as well as a forum for Black media professionals to learn, network, heal and collaborate.
- Dialogue locally and abroad to share research, evaluate and identify effective strategies, showcase best practices and obtain better information on what works and why.
- Create\keep an updated list of Blacks in media coupled with an online media venue for networks, webcasts and other kinds of discussions and showcases in Boston, the US and around the world.
- Embrace and master digital literacy to participate in and develop the kind of information production & distribution venues that determine the future of the Black community both independently and with leaders, agencies and colleges.
- Develop and deploy a product or a service that gives Blacks something "more" to do with web and cell phone apps.

Systems & Agency Recommendations:

- Agencies must make sure constituents are at the table when important policy decisions are being made.
- Create a bureau system of public\consumer information verifying, editing and monitoring to protect consumers who don't advertise.
- Form partnerships with professional media groups to extend civic efforts.
- Providing on-line networking opportunities, panels, workshops and conferences to develop community ideas.
- Make a significant impact by interpreting client base needs as a market segment
- Create systems that take findings to the community in developmental campaigns organized into actionable information displayed with links to deliver equitable results to residents.
- Agencies must create succession programs that allow new and experienced professionals to provide help and eventually take the helm when necessary.
- Work on relationship development between people of the Black Diaspora to build multi-ethnic, multi-national, local to global communities of interest, culture and place toward long-term, sustainable, intergenerational economic security.
- Create\support micro lending and financing programs that support Black media

REPORT BIOS: This report was written by Paula Robinson Deare and V. Paul Deare with editorial recommendations by Melody Adams, William Murrell & Sandi Robinson.

Paula Robinson, Founder\CEO Eworkstyle Institute brings communications methods, systems and technical knowledge from the print, radio and television industries to Eworkstyle Institute. Prior to entering Public Relations with Fox Broadcasting, Paula served as a newspaper graphic designer, magazine columnist, radio talk show host and producer/host for several cable TV stations in metropolitan Boston, Dedham and Needham Massachusetts. Active nationally in the communications industry, Paula is a regular speaker on the subject, receiving proclamations from the City of Boston and Massachusetts House of Representatives, as well as recognition awards from the National Science Foundation and Massachusetts Teachers Association. *A member of MIT Community Fellows*, Robinson holds their Excellence in Media and Technology award given by the Department of Urban Studies & Planning.

V. Paul Deare, President\COO Eworkstyle Institute has examined, fought for and taught public policy around the economic influence of globalization; capital mobility; escalation of economic inequality; America's domestic fiscal insecurity; racial/gender bias; and community investment in the context of an emerging global economy for more than 40 years. Specializing in multi-disciplinary teaching and management of actionable, civic engagement and stakeholder empowerment; Paul as worked at all levels from grass-roots to civic leadership on issues, processes and policies of social equity, neighborhood development and economic revitalization in Massachusetts, New York, California, the Caribbean and China. Paul Deare has worked both as and - with funders, executives, board members and stakeholders on sustainable affordable housing, transit oriented development and the general health and well-being of communities and constituents in the United States and around the world.

William Murrell, III Founder\CEO About Black Boston.com co-deployed the nation's first 4G LTE cell phone cluster with Lucent Alcatel for Verizon as an IT manager with fifteen year history. Recognized by Boston Magazine with a "Best of Boston" award; he is a Devry University graduate in Electronic Communications who obtained an FCC RadioTelephone License. William is the producer of aboutBlackboston.com and holder of Blackboston.com and twitter.com/Blackboston web assets which have twice ranked in the Top 15 on the Boston Business Journal and the Top 25 Book of Lists.

Sandra "Sandi" Robinson Quality Time & Associates After more than twenty years in Boston Radio with WILD AM 1090, former General Sales & Marketing Manager Sandi spent several years with LaMEGA Spanish Radio before launching her consulting firm Quality Time & Associates. She is an innovative leader who embraces cross media platforms and public relations including: print, radio and outdoor media outreach strategies to develop audience information and education. Sandi helps businesses create promotions and publicity with an eye toward exploring strategic market opportunities to reach new audiences.