

**Submission for the 2017 Teaching Contest of International Communication Division,  
AEJMC**

***Corporate Profile: A Case Study Analysis of Multinational Communication/Media Companies***

**1. Abstract**

This class activity is for my 4<sup>th</sup> year seminar course (Global Communication: Contemporary Issues) in the 2016/17 academic year (September 2016 till April, 2017). The course, which is full year course (6 credits), has 13 enrolled students. The activity tasked students to explore business strategies and structural elements of corporate media/telecommunication/ICT companies as a way to think critically about global and regional media giants, particularly those that originated from Middle East, Africa, Latin America and Asia. One of key learning objectives of this activity is to provide students with contextual understanding of the international media/telecommunication/ICT corporations' strategic operation and pursuit of profits in the broader context of networked global communication industries and interpenetrated globalization processes. Pedagogically, this case study activity is aimed at enhancing students' critical analytical skills and knowledge of media globalization through evidence-based critical assessment of institutional arrangement and business strategies of international media/telecommunication/ICT companies of their choice.

**2. A description and explanation of the activity, including a discussion of the learning objective(s).**

Each student must pick a specific media/telecommunication/ICT company with global presence and analyze the company's business strategies, trends, market presence and finances. For the analysis, the students must use corporate documents such as annual financial reports, corporate social responsibility reports and annual reports as their primary data sources. Secondary data for the analysis were to be drawn from business databases, trade publications and peer-reviewed journal articles. One of the key learning objectives of this activity for students to be able to articulate (a) the corporate strategies, key products and structures of their chosen companies, and (b) the companies' current positioning in the global and regional markets at large. By so doing, each student's assessment and case profile must include a SWOT (strength, weaknesses, opportunities and threats) analysis of the selected company's business operations.

Another learning objective of this activity is for students to have understanding of the fluidity of global media marketplace as well as the contraflow of global communication, based on the financialization and market operation of the international media/telecommunication/ICT companies. To this end, all American multinational companies and cross-section of Canadian and British ones were excluded from the suggested list of eligible conglomerates for the exercise. The exclusion is to allow students, who are already familiar with several of the North American multinational companies, to engage with multinational conglomerates from other regions of the world. To this end, students were strongly advised to examine global and regional conglomerates with origin from Africa, Middle East, Latin America, Asian/Oceanic region, and to a large extent from Europe. In addition to lectures and seminar discussions, this activity is another opportunity to provide students with a survey overview of non-US/American multinational companies, particularly those from Europe, Africa, Middle East, Latin America and Asia.

### 3. Rationale

I designed this activity to provide students with systematic and evidence based understanding of the interconnection of strategic business decisions that shape a growing expansion of media conglomerates across the world. It is also to underscore the changing global media industries, and the multiplicity of global and regional media giants that are not “traditional” American multinational companies. In this context, it is to showcase the market presence of these non-US/American companies within the global networked economy and the geopolitical contexts of international communication.

### 4. Learning outcomes

Through the mapping and analysis of the business strategies of their chosen companies in the global, regional and national markets, students demonstrated intersectionality of basic business strategies and organizational structure that shape media business in the competitive marketplace. Students also sharpened their analytical skill of media finances and industry trend in the regional and global contexts. Specifically, in drilling through corporate financial data and annual reports, students were able to provide a critical structural analysis of the media business and set of business strategies that underpinned their chosen companies’ pursuit of profits and market expansion at large. After the activity was completed, several students informed me that they found the assignment refreshing in the sense that they were:

- provided with transferable research and analytical skills to the real world;
- able to connect a web of relationships among various companies that they did not know have interdependence or collaborative relationship with one another; and
- got to understand media globalization beyond the reductionist framework of the “American cultural imperialism”.

One student commented that she never heard of Naspers (South Africa), prior to this assignment. Another student indicated that he did not know Vivendi (France) was of the top 10 largest multinational media company in the world, until he started research for the paper. He also found Vivendi’s strategic leverage of France’s historic, political, cultural and linguistic relationships with its former colonies for market expansion into those countries, particularly in the Pay-TV markets in Francophone African countries and Vietnam, very revealing and further solidified his understanding of electronic colonialism concept that Thomas L. McPhail discussed in the course textbook – *Global Communication: Theories, Stakeholders and Trends* (4<sup>th</sup> edition). Overall, the activity helped all the enrolled students in the course to have insightful understanding of global media and communication industries.