



NEWS

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This is an unofficial announcement of Commission action. Release of the full text of a Commission order constitutes official action.
See *MCI v. FCC*, 515 F.2d 385 (D.C. Cir. 1974).

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STEVEN WALDMAN NAMED TO LEAD COMMISSION EFFORT ON FUTURE OF MEDIA IN A CHANGING TECHNOLOGICAL LANDSCAPE

WASHINGTON -- Federal Communications Commission Chairman Julius Genachowski announced today the appointment of Steven Waldman, a highly respected Internet entrepreneur and journalist, to lead an agency-wide initiative to assess the state of media in these challenging economic times and make recommendations designed to ensure a vibrant media landscape.

Earlier this month, the bipartisan Knight Commission on the Information Needs of Communities in a Democracy called for “new thinking” to “ensure the information opportunities of America’s people and the information vitality of our democracy” and proposed FCC action. The Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism has highlighted the dire circumstances for newspapers, and both the Knight report and a recent study from Columbia Graduate School of Journalism called for a full reassessment of the media marketplace both inside and outside of government, including at the FCC.

Waldman is the Co-Founder, President, and Editor-in-Chief of Beliefnet.com, the largest multi-faith Web site for religion and inspiration, and served as its CEO from 2002 until 2007, when it was acquired by News Corporation. Under his leadership, Beliefnet won the top editorial awards on the Internet, including the General Excellence Award from the *Online News Association* and the *National Magazine Award* for General Excellence Online.

Waldman, who will join the Office of Strategic Planning and serve as Senior Advisor to the Chairman, will work with the relevant FCC bureaus and lead an open, fact-finding process to craft recommendations to meet the traditional goals of serving the public interest and making sure that all Americans receive the information, educational content, and news they seek. He will step down from Beliefnet and News Corporation and discontinue his blog and the regular column he writes for *Wall Street Journal Online*.

“A strong consensus has developed that we’re at a pivotal moment in the history of the media and communications, because of game-changing new technologies as well as the economic downturn,” said Genachowski. “Highly respected entities have called on the FCC to assess these issues. At such a moment, it is important to ensure that our policies promote a vibrant media landscape that furthers long-standing goals of serving the information needs of communities. The initiative is intended to identify the best ideas for achieving those goals, while recognizing that government must be scrupulous in abiding by the First Amendment and never dictating or controlling the content of the news or other communications protected by the First Amendment.”

“Steve Waldman is uniquely qualified to look at this shifting terrain and make sure we meet this moment wisely,” Genachowski said. “He was an award-winning journalist in traditional media and then became an Internet pioneer -- launching, running, and bringing to profitability one of the great content success stories. He’s also known for his even-handedness and has garnered respect from people of widely different ideologies and approaches.”

Before creating Beliefnet, Waldman served as National Editor of *US News & World Report* and was National Correspondent for *Newsweek*. He’s author of the *New York Times* bestseller *FOUNDING FAITH: Providence, Politics, and the Birth of Religious Freedom in America*. He also served as Senior Advisor to the CEO of the Corporation for National Service in the 1990s. His work has appeared in numerous publications including *The Wall Street Journal*, *The Washington Post*, *National Review Online*, *Huffington Post*, *The Atlantic*, *ChristianityToday.com*, *The Washington Monthly* and *Slate*.

He has been a regular commentator on national television and radio programs including *Fox & Friends*, *Fox Business*, *Good Morning America*, *The Today Show*, *CNN Headline News*, *ABC World News With Charles Gibson*, *NPR’s All Things Considered* and *On the Media*, and many others. He was named a “Spiritual Innovator” by *Time* magazine.

“I’m excited by many of the new media’s innovations and, at the same time, concerned about the challenges facing American journalism, which potentially harm citizens’ ability to get information they need and hold leaders accountable,” said Waldman. “Most solutions will come from the private and nonprofit sectors. But government rules already affect the media landscape in profound ways so it’s imperative that we both vigorously protect the First Amendment and determine which media policies make sense, which don’t. Unwise government policies can undermine business models and hinder innovation. Smart policy can help businesses, facilitate innovation, and ensure that a thriving media marketplace.”

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