

Media and Communications Law



What is Media and Communications Law?

Media and communications law is the set of laws and regulations that govern public communications such as newspapers, cable and satellite television, radio broadcasts, and internet communication; and private communication services such as telephone providers. This area of law encompasses the technology of broadcasters and private communication platforms as well as the broadcast content, including advertisement regulation. Media and communications lawyers might specialize in a particular area of media regulation, such as advertising or news, or in cybersecurity and technology innovation ([Georgetown](#)).

Media and communications industries are regulated by the Federal Communications Commission (FCC) in the United States. The FCC sets policy guidelines for television, print media, radio, and digital/social media. The FCC was created in 1934 to promote competition in the communication industry, but has adopted policies of increasing deregulation in the last fifty years. While some argue that deregulation promotes healthy competition and allows companies to create content that better satisfies consumers, others argue that diversifying the market is necessary to long-term consumer satisfaction and economic growth ([Van Gent](#)). Many media and communications lawyers work for the FCC. Others work as in-house counsel for media and technology companies, or in private practice with firms that handle media and communications cases ([Georgetown](#)).

Media and communications lawyers might also advise their clients on issues of copyright, intellectual property, contracts, and first amendment issues. First amendment cases related to free speech and free press often involve journalists or media companies ([Dunkle-Polier](#)). Campaign finance law is also related to media law because political advertising on television, radio, and the internet is regulated. The growth of social media has offered a significant challenge to media and communications law in this and other sectors. Thus, this field of law is changing and expanding rapidly ([Garrett](#)).

Where Do Media and Communications Lawyers Work?

Government

Federal Communications Commission—[Jobs and Internships Senate Subcommittee](#) on Communications, Technology, Innovation, and the Internet—[Internships House Subcommittee](#) on Communications and Technology—[Internships](#)

Private Sector

Communications Workers of America—[Careers](#)
In-house at media companies
Firms that handle media and communications cases

What Classes Should I Take?

- Administrative Law
- Antitrust Law
- Business Organizations
- Commercial Law
- Consumer Law
- Corporate Finance
- Corporate Governance and Compliance
- Information Privacy Law
- Intellectual Property Law

Media and Communications Law Resources



Resume Boosters for Media and Communications Law

Intern or extern with a media company

Intern or extern with a firm that handles media and communications cases

Join the Business and Tax Law Society

Professional Associations

American Bar Association

All University of Memphis law students have free membership to the [American Bar Association](#). Their website provides routinely updated information and interest-specific career advice. Join different sections to find out what they offer. Check out the [Communications Law Section](#).

Federal Communications Bar Association

[The Federal Communications Bar Association](#) is an organization of attorneys and other professionals involved in the development, interpretation and practice of communications and technology law and policy. They offer networking, professional development, and community service opportunities for its members. [Students may join while in law school for a reduced rate](#).

Media and Communications Law Links

[Summer 2020 Issue of *Communications Lawyer*](#)

This edition of the American Bar Association's Forum on Communication Law publication includes a profile of communications lawyer and first amendment advocate Barbara Wall.

["Ethics for Media Lawyers: The Lessons of Ferguson"](#)

This article by Len Niehoff examines media ethics issues that surfaced in the wake of the 2014 police shooting of Michael Brown. American Bar Association, Summer 2015.