

# Life Without C-SPAN? It's Taken an Act of Congress

*Not me! I adore Brian Lamb I'm old!!*  
A new law has pulled the addictive network off some TVs

By Paul Farhi

Washington Post Staff Writer

C-SPAN, the cable TV network that provides around-the-clock coverage of Congress and public affairs, is being pulled off cable systems around the country—ironically as a result of an act of Congress.

## MEDIA

Since a new law regulating many aspects of the cable industry went into effect in June, C-SPAN and its companion network, C-SPAN2, have been cut back or dropped entirely by cable systems serving more than 1.5 million households, according to Washington-based C-SPAN.

One portion of the law approved last fall by Congress requires cable company owners to air the signals of any nearby TV station that demands to be carried via cable. The "must-carry" rule was designed to boost the fortunes of TV broadcasters by guaranteeing that they would not lose access to cable subscribers' homes.

As broadcast stations exercise "must-carry" rights, C-SPAN and C-SPAN2 are being moved aside to make room on crowded cable lineups. "We've been made a sec-

ond-class citizen under this legislation," says Brian Lamb, C-SPAN's chief executive. "We no longer have the same chance of succeeding as any [broadcast] channel."

The new cable law gives broadcast stations an explicit claim to the cable lineup on the principle that government-licensed TV stations, unlike cable-only networks, are required to air programs "in the public interest" and therefore deserve special status. This includes TV stations with narrow formats, such as home shopping or religious channels.

C-SPAN, a nonprofit network funded by the cable industry, has joined a lawsuit filed by Turner Broadcasting System challenging the must-carry rule as a violation of cable operators' First Amendment rights.

THE LAW DOESN'T REQUIRE operators to delete any cable channels to make way for broadcast stations. But cable operators say they have limited channel capacity, and must eliminate a cable network to accommodate a broadcaster.

For example, Jones Intercable, which serves 35,000 subscribers in Alexandria, Va., in May limited C-SPAN2 to daytime hours so that it could add WTKK, a UHF station based in Manassas, Va., that broadcasts religious programs.

Viacom Inc., one of the nation's largest system owners, has cut back

C-SPAN and C-SPAN2 on its systems in the San Francisco area and in the Seattle-Tacoma area. "We have a severe channel-capacity problem," says Susan Evans, Viacom's director of government relations. C-SPAN and several other cable networks were selected for reduced hours based in part on their low ratings, she says.

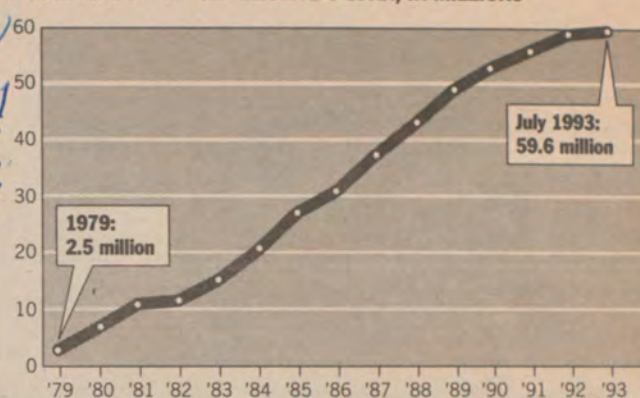
But some critics of the industry charge that cable operators, angry over the must-carry rules and other restrictions under the cable law, are to blame for C-SPAN's situation.

"I think the cable industry is holding C-SPAN hostage," says Jeffrey Chester, co-director of the Center for Media Education, a Washington public policy group. "The vast majority of cable systems have enough channel capacity to keep C-SPAN on. I think there's a real industry strategy to undermine public confidence in the regulation by pulling C-SPAN" and blaming Congress.

C-SPAN, which stands for Cable Satellite Public Affairs Network, remains one of the most widely distributed cable networks. It is available in more than 59 million households, and C-SPAN2 can be seen in 30 million.

However, the networks have been cut to part-time hours in about 1.3 million households, and about 261,000 subscribers have lost one of the two entirely, including those in

HOUSEHOLDS THAT CAN RECEIVE C-SPAN, IN MILLIONS



| Channel  | Dropped by | Households affected | Hours reduced by | Households affected |
|----------|------------|---------------------|------------------|---------------------|
| C-SPAN   | 8 systems  | 48,202              | 11 systems       | 857,200             |
| C-SPAN 2 | 6 systems  | 212,819             | 7 systems        | 470,888             |

SOURCE: C-SPAN

*Send to C-Span*

Gary, Ind.; Alamogordo, N.M.; Steubenville, Ohio; and other towns.

In many instances, protests from C-SPAN viewers have returned the network to full-time hours after reductions were planned. Parable Corp., which serves viewers outside Nashville, decided not to reduce C-SPAN's air time this summer after hearing from subscribers. "We knew we'd get a strong reaction, but we didn't expect all the calls and letters we got," says Keith Walker, Parable's regional operations manager.

A spokesman for Jones Intercable in Alexandria says some subscribers complained after it reduced C-SPAN2's airtime, but that the number wasn't unusual for a channel change.

Lamb is concerned that C-SPAN's

situation could deteriorate in the next few weeks. Cable operators and the broadcast networks have announced they are soon starting new cable networks—a result of another aspect of the cable law, which permits certain broadcasters to negotiate special deals with cable companies. These new cable networks, he says, could cause further displacement of C-SPAN.

"This [law] has turned out to be one of the most unpleasant experiences I've had in television," he says, "and I've been at this 17 years."

The question could be moot in a few years, he and others say, because technology is expected to allow cable operators to offer hundreds of cable channels.

seemed to lack emotion, says Eshleman.

"All those feeling and associations you get from looking at a Kiss you just can't get with some neat shape you make up and decide to call a Hug," says Eshleman. "It would have been nice to think that we could have done the same thing Milton Hershey did 75 years ago and created something brand new, but it just didn't work."

As the emphasis shifted from

shape to flavor, the answer to the Hugs puzzle suddenly became obvious. In the long history of candy-making in America, there remain only a handful of ingredients that haven't been fully exploited by confectioners. White chocolate is a big one. With the new technology created for Kisses with Almonds, it was possible to do almost anything with the Kiss, including putting a miniature milk-chocolate Kiss inside and a white-chocolate one outside.

For their part, Hershey's research and development scientists had long been testing various types of white chocolate—which is made of cocoa butter, sugar and milk and actually has no chocolate liquor in it. They immediately began trying combinations of the mini-Kiss surrounded by a white Kiss, but the balance wasn't easy to find: too much white chocolate and it might not appeal to American tastes, too much milk chocolate and

it tastes just like the original Kiss.

Then there was the issue of eye appeal. The white chocolate outside looked bland, boring. Todd Johnson, a scientist on the R&D team, suggested a plain white Kiss might even be mistaken for fancy guest soap, the kind you keep in the bathroom. Something had to be done.

"Somebody suggested putting stripes on it, chocolate stripes," remembers Eshleman. "It turns out the stripes have become an integral part of what Hugs is all about, although we didn't quite realize it at the time."



IN 1991, WHEN HERSHEY FINALLY believed it had achieved the ultimate Hug, the product was sent to consumers for testing.

"We knew right away we had a hit on our hands," recalls Kathie Rhyne, the marketing executive directly overseeing the Hugs brand. "The tests went better than we expected."

The results of the year-long experiment showed Hugs would be popular with adults and kids alike, a critical factor to any new candy's success, since these days, fewer and fewer consumers are under the age of 35. More important, the test showed sales of Hugs wouldn't hurt sales of Kisses, but help them.

Now, says Rhyne, it was time for the really hard work to begin. Hershey wanted to get Hugs to mar-

team—a new concept for the executives at Hershey, who used the typical corporate "hand-off" approach to get things done.

"We needed to break down the barriers between departments," says Rhyne. "We didn't have time for R&D to pass this off to engineering and have them hand it to manufacturing. Everyone needed to work together like clockwork."

And they did.

After spending three and a half days locked in a resort in the Poconos last February, the 40 key players in the Hugs launch agreed to a common mission statement, with specific sales targets, deadlines and manufacturing goals. Moreover, they agreed to have their performance evaluated by senior management as a group, not as individuals. Nine members of the team, including representatives from sales, manufacturing, logistics, marketing and engineering, would meet regularly to hammer out problems and discuss strategy. The broader team would be kept fully informed of their progress and meet once each quarter.

"There were times we really wondered whether we were going to make it," says Ron Orlosky, operations manager at the new Hershey plant. "One month before we turned the lights on in that building we were presenting Hugs to buyers. That had me pretty worried."

Ron Lott of engineering recalls

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**Keith Geiger**  
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### A Message From the Midwest

I'd seen television newsclips of the raging Mississippi. I'd read newspaper accounts describing how the Missouri River created a new course for itself. And I'd talked with a number of NEA members who experienced the flood firsthand.

But nothing had prepared me for the trip I made to Illinois, Iowa, and Missouri three weeks ago. Nothing had prepared me for the sight and smell of Paul Brother's house in Lemay, Missouri. Brother's evacuated home stands two blocks from the school in which he teaches. It was flooded by water backing up through the sewer as well as coming over the levee.

determined to scrounge for materials and re-invent lesson plans even as they struggled to rebuild their lives. Parents were focused on finding places to live and ways

to support their families. Businesspeople were intent on reopening in the area.

The sense of community, of interdependence and mutual responsibility so frequently absent in today's world was in abundant evidence all across the Midwest's flood-drenched plains this summer. Tens of thousands of people came to help sandbag. Neighbors helped each other rescue pets and prized possessions from water-logged homes. People opened their houses, their hearts, and their wallets for the displaced. A Missouri teacher told me that when she called to contribute to a St. Louis TV station's collection effort, the operator cried.

Towns organized work teams to clean up their public schools. They were determined that, if humanly possible, the schools would be



*I have a story to tell Larry. I first heard him in Florida when I retired in 1966 or 1967. I loved him - so good at his job!*

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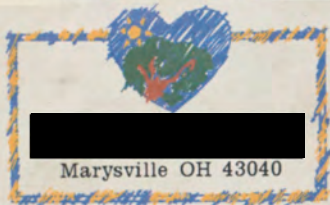
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*(teacher Ohio)*

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