



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

# LEARNING LAYER

## Types of public media

Have students explore the website of a few of the following news programs: [PBS NewsHour](#), [This American Life](#), the [Center for Investigative Reporting](#), [Religion and Ethics Newsweekly](#) and [The Texas Tribune](#).

**Pick one or more of these activities:**

**Flashlight:** Discuss whether these forms of public media are similar. What community is each trying to engage and how? Can you tell which started within the last decade? How are these groups supported economically? Which do you think has the largest budget?

**Spotlight:** Visit [Alexa](#) or another site that measures web traffic. Which site has the lowest ranking? Why do you suppose that is? Which is growing the fastest? Again, why? Are any of the rankings identical? Why is that?

**Searchlight:** Have students listen to [this retraction](#) from “This American Life” following the broadcast of fabricated material from one of their sources. What weaknesses of public media does this present? What strengths? Do the lessons learned here apply to social media as well as traditional news organizations?

**Extra credit:** Go to the website of Investigative Reporters and Editors. Find the [group’s annual awards](#). How many of the awards seem to have been won by public media vs. commercial media? What do you think that means?