



SEARCHLIGHTS AND SUNGLASSES

LEARNING LAYER

Nonprofit vs. commercial: What's the difference?

What are the differences between nonprofit news organizations and commercial ones?

Discussions at three levels:

Flashlight: Have students search the Internet to answer that question, list five differences each and come to class ready to discuss. Did anyone compare audience size? How would that be done?

Spotlight: From a media consumer's perspective, can you tell the difference between a nonprofit and commercial operation? How? Now take a look at the [investigative channel on YouTube](#). That's nonprofit media being distributed over a commercial platform. How would you categorize that?

Searchlight: What are the disincentives for becoming nonprofit? How have those disincentives diminished in recent years? Look at the report on [IRS delays in approving nonprofit media](#). Class discussion: If you were starting a news organization, would it be nonprofit or for-profit?

Extra credit: PBS says it has moved from being a 21st Century laggard to a digital leader. Watch [this keynote by Jason Seiken](#). Review [PBS.org](#). Did you know PBS wins [Webby awards](#)? On the other hand, the economics of public broadcasting are in flux. Local stations collect local donations and use them to purchase national programs, like *All Thing Considered*. When public media users can get the national programming directly, who needs the local station? Post a video to YouTube predicting the future of public broadcasting.