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](https://www.youtube.com). 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](https://www.irs.gov). 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](https://www.youtube.com). Review [PBS.org](https://www.pbs.org). Did you know PBS wins [Webby awards](https://www.webbyawards.com)? 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.