



Insider



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Media Activism (or how YOU can be an effective Drug Policy Reform Advocate!)

By Mark Greer, Executive Director

The single most underutilized, misunderstood, and **exceedingly valuable** resource in drug policy reform is **Media Activism**. This has been so for a decade.

While there are exceptions to this rule, the lions share of local drug policy reform groups – and even some large national, and international ones – have never really caught on to the potential power of this resource and the tools that have been developed to augment such efforts.

The power of media activism to bring about more sensible drug policies cannot be overstated.

If just one group in each major geographical locality in the U.S. and Canada (for starters) organized a significant print and broadcast media activism program, in less than a year the results could possibly eclipse all of the cumulative time, energy, and dollars the movement has expended over a decade or more.

The Starting Point

Perhaps the most widely recognized example of Media Activism is the **Media Awareness Project** (MAP), which provides accurate information and

Please see *Media Activism* on page 2

Begin Here

Media Awareness Project (MAP)
[\(http://www.mapinc.org/\)](http://www.mapinc.org/)

Media Activism Center
<http://www.mapinc.org/resource>

DrugSense
<http://www.drugsense.org>

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Advertise Your Message for FREE!!

By Steve Heath, Media Activism Facilitator

The month of August kicks off what is likely to be the most important 15 months of any four-year cycle for citizens and grassroots organizations wishing to impact public policy. One of the most effective ways to influence both lawmakers and those running for office in November 2008 is to educate the media.

When leading media representatives in a given community begin to deliver better-informed messages in print, on radio, and on television airwaves, the people running for elected office and their supporters quickly take more notice of these messages and are better able to defend their policy positions.

As Mark Greer summarized, MAP and DrugSense provide public policy advocates the best available Web resources for impacting and influencing media. The **MAP Media Activism Center** can open doors, and as the Media Activism Facilitator, I am available to teach you and your organization how to most effectively employ our resources.

Whether it's creating a blast fax project to hit a wide range of state and national media, writing up press releases that get attention, or getting your important

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evidence-based data to the print media through its long-running and highly successful Letters to the Editor (LTE) campaigns. Most reform advocates are aware of this effort, but even this well-established program is dramatically underutilized by local groups targeting smaller publications nationwide.

Media Contacts (Do You Know This Exists?)

DrugSense maintains and updates a database of over 20,000 media contacts. Newspapers, magazines, radio and TV stations, syndicated talk shows, and more are included in this powerful resource. Contacts including email addresses, fax numbers, phone numbers, and mailing addresses are easily available with a few clicks of a mouse.

This database is accessible in a variety of formats over the Internet. Want send a press release by fax and/or email? Or perhaps contact reporters about an event? The database allows you to focus on your area and your specific market. Just put a zip code into a Web form, tell the form how many miles away from the market to cover, and define the type of media contacts you want. In seconds, your list(s) are generated in a variety of different formats to meet your needs. Please see *[Demand Media II](#)* on page 3.

Although many successful and influential reform organizations like LEAP are saving money and increasing their impact by making good use of this **FREE** resource (*How LEAP Uses MAP* on Page 4), unfortunately many have not yet capitalized on the amazing its potential. With this in mind, we'd like to invite all locally organized drug policy focused groups or chapters to request access to the our **Media Contact on Demand Database (MCOB)** through the following email: info@drugpolicycentral.com; and we'd be happy to teach you how to make the best use of this unique online service.

Once you have access, there are literally dozens of media focused activities in which you can engage. You can start by organizing group letter writing campaigns to respond to drug policy focused news articles in

your local newspapers. Make sure the articles are posted to MAP so that everyone can access them.

But that's only the beginning. You can then use the MCOB database to blast fax, mail, or phone-solicit local radio talk shows. Start with your more eloquent public speakers, and if you're new to talk shows, get some practice and experience with small local stations. Once you build confidence, advance to larger state and syndicated national broadcasts. Finally, you can venture into the most powerful prize of all (and one that drug policy reform has barely begun to utilize effectively): local TV news followed by national media coverage.

And best of all, using DrugSense resources can make all of this work manageable even by a small, dedicated group of activists. Perhaps most important, this sort of organized, local, and escalating effort can represent **millions of dollars in advertising value on behalf of more sensible drug policies** [FOR FREE!!](#)

Website Creation and Support

A Website is an important addition for any organization, including local chapters of national organizations. Good web design and functionality are critical if the site is to attract visitors and serve its purpose. Daily newsfeeds, meeting announcements, and cause-related information – items that encourage people to bookmark your site and come back to it – are a must. Having an attractive site is important, but even more important is how the site evolves in order to stay relevant and increase repeating visits.

Websites must have registered domain names and an Internet Service Provider (ISP) to host them. Beware of commercial 'free' offers. These folks have to make money somehow, and if they don't, your Website could someday be history.

Instead of taking a risk on fly-by-night ISPs, why not utilize DrugSense's Web hosting service, Drug Policy Central (DPC)? DPC hosts many reform Websites and provides all levels of online technical support. To enquire about DPC hosting services, please visit the

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Demand Media II!

To engage in effective in media activism, accurate information about the media is vital. This includes the names, addresses, phone numbers, and main contacts for literally thousands of media outlets. This data can be very costly. For example, the famed Bacon's Media Directories (www.us.cision.com) is priced at \$1,795 all-inclusive. Data just for newspapers/magazines, radio/TV, or Internet media cost \$450 for each hard copy directory. An upgrade to computerized data would likely top \$1,000! Few cash-strapped reform organizations can afford this vital information, and it seems like an unnecessary waste of precious funding for wealthier organizations purchase it, when **DrugSense offers comparable data for FREE!**

The last issue of the *Insider* introduced readers to our **Media Contact on Demand** (MCOD) media contact database. To kick off our Media Activism project at the beginning of 2005, we developed this important resource by purchasing a media list like Bacon's and incorporating it into our existing media contact database. What resulted was an extensive, exclusive 20,000+ record resource that lists all U.S. print and broadcast media: TV and radio stations, daily and weekly newspapers, trade and consumer magazines, news syndicates, and AP and UPI bureaus. It is searchable on a number of parameters such as by venue or by specific distances from any zip code or city. It can easily output mailing labels or data formats compatible with fax or e-mail programs. All of this is available for free from your computer with a few clicks of your mouse.



Click on this map to find media contacts within a state.

Media Contact on Demand

Media Contact Database

[\(http://www.mapinc.org/mcod/\)](http://www.mapinc.org/mcod/)

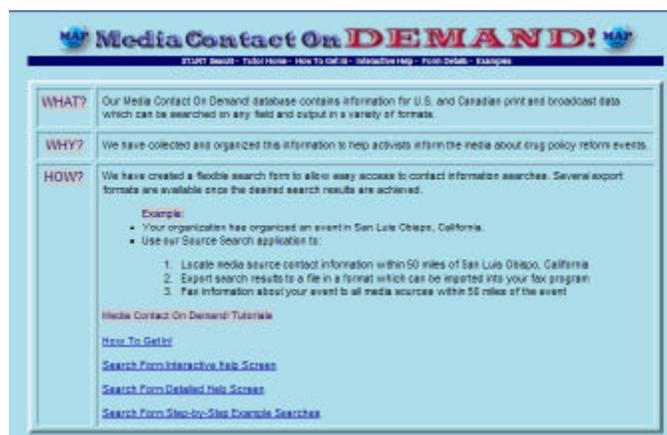
MCOD Training System

http://www.mapinc.org/mcod/source_screen.htm

Register for MCODE

<http://www.drugsense.org/html/join>

DrugSense staff member, **Doug Snead**, has developed a spidering program capable of systematically text-mining media Websites for contact information. By regularly pulling Web data, MCODE is more up-to-date than purchased databases and contains information that is far richer and more detailed, allowing DrugSense to avoid the cost of buying media data.



Finding help using MCODE is easy.

To make MCODE easier to use, DrugSense staff member, **Jo-D Harrison**, created several training modules and placed easy access to this Help system on MCODE's entry Webpage.

While we would prefer to limit use of this resource to reform advocates, we don't want to overly burden those who wish to explore it. Thus, registered DrugSense members receive full access to MCODE. Others can obtain a limited number of records by using the username <guest> without a password.

We encourage you to try out and use this valuable resource. If you have any questions or would like a personal demonstration, please contact DrugSense's Director of Communications, **Philippe Lucas** at phil@drugsense.org.

How LEAP Uses MAP

By Mike Smithson, LEAP Speakers Bureau Director

The **Media Awareness Project** and the multiple layers that have been added to it over the past several years is the single resource in the movement that we cannot do without. With the news stories and subscriber delivery, the activist is now in tune to the many drug stories that are printed across the country. In 2003, Richard Lake advised me of the database of media that they have built, allowing the activist to zero in on media outlets or specific areas within a selected range of a city, community or even zip code. This was very helpful during Howard Wooldridge's first ride across America. Now, **DrugSense** has added a new wrinkle, with a workforce of letter writers and activists to back up stories in the newspapers with LTEs and to listen and contribute to call-in radio shows when a LEAP speaker is interviewed. This tactic allows for an overall effort unavailable in any previous 'movement'.

Imagine a coordinated attack: Speakers Bureau coordinators calling an area of the country to book a speaker into civic group meetings, colleges, and churches. Using the MAP database, we reach out to magazines and weekly newspapers to offer stories on the upcoming tour. Then, as the dates get close for the tour, media interviews are acquired, because they want to hear why the local Rotary is listening to a cop about drug legalization. A newspaper story is published, and activists are alert and ready to follow up immediately with LTEs. The expert speaker is brought on the air of a local talk radio show because they read the newspaper story and they were contacted by a LEAP volunteer to set up the interview. How timely! During the show, one of the callers is an activist who asks specific questions, supports the speaker, and suggests further discussion on this matter. Editorial pieces are written based on the activity of the LTEs, the stories in the paper, and the radio interviews. Another round of LTEs follows.

Our movement has resources the likes of which have never been available to socially conscious citizens. Leaders of the movement need to take advantage of

these resources, coordinate efforts in specific areas, and defeat the drug policy ignorance of the American population. This is just like a military campaign: we have a GOAL, a STRATEGY to realize that goal, TACTICS to use and then there are the LOGISTICS to support the efforts.

The work that **DrugSense** performs using **MAP**, the Media Contact on Demand Database, and the team that supporting these efforts in specific areas is vital to the defeat of drug prohibition. Without this resource, we're akin to an orchestra missing the brass section.

Law Enforcement Against Prohibition

LEAP utilizes DrugSense resources including a sharp new Website.
(<http://www.leap.cc>)

FREE!! From page 1

messages into print, we can help increase the reach and impact of your organization or initiative.

Our experience in helping activists and organizations get their messages into print via "Letters to the Editor" (LTEs) and guest Op-Ed is unparalleled. Research shows that newspaper opinion pages are read by a demographic that is more highly educated and likely to vote. Therefore, a printed LTE or Op-ed is actually worth its dollar equivalent in advertising value. Placing a six-inch text ad on a newspaper's front section would likely cost over \$1,000. A 200 word LTE delivers the same message for **FREE**. A 600 word Op-ed has an equivalent advertising value of over \$3,000. Both only take a bit of time, experience, and the right resources, all of which are available at DrugSense.

Most public policy organizations regardless of topic employ either contracted "media support" or try to get by with their own in-house tools. Far too often, they fail to adequately get their message out to the general public. DrugSense offers **FREE** and proven resources to increase the media outreach and impact of your organization, and the results can be astounding. We look forward to helping you and your organization realize the full potential of Media Activism to produce real reform. Please contact **Steve Heath** at heath@mapinc.org for more information.

What We Do

Busy activists need quick, easy access to services that can get their name in the media and help them appear like much bigger organizations. And, they need to do this professionally, on a limited budget. That's where DrugSense can help. Here's what we can do for you and your group:

Web Hosting. Need a Website? Our Drug Policy Central (DPC) subsidiary offers free or low-cost, subsidized Internet services to drug policy reform organizations worldwide. Notable clients include LEAP, the November Coalition, DanceSafe, Michigan NORML, and over 100 others.

E-mail Discussion Lists and Forums. Get your group active and communicating with its own e-mail discussion list or online forum. Exchange e-mail, ideas, and documents with one another to become more organized and effective.

Contact the media. Our Media Contact on Demand (MCOd) database lists **ALL** U.S. print and broadcast media: TV and radio stations, daily and weekly newspapers, trade magazines, news syndicates, and AP and UPI bureaus. Please see *Demand Media II* on Page 3 for details.

Get Media. From Letters-to-the-Editor, to press releases, to radio and television interviews, our Media Activism Center is filled with ideas on how to get valuable media attention. DrugSense also holds periodic Teamspeak meetings to train activists on how to use these services. Please check MAP OnAir for upcoming Activism Roundtables.

Real Time Meetings over the Internet. In the cyber age, you can conduct your organization's meetings for FREE over the Internet in real time. In one of our Virtual Conference Rooms hosted on the chat software Teamspeak, your group can talk to one another, plan future events, and develop responses to current problems.

Build a Drug Policy Knowledge Base. Our DrugNews Archive of more than 180,000 articles on all aspects of

The Sites of Our Services

Web Hosting
Web hosting, e-mail discussion lists, databases, and more.
(<http://www.drugpolicycentral.com>)

Free DPC Quotes
Quotes for free or low cost Internet services.
(<http://www.drugpolicycentral.com/hosting/quote/>)

E-mail Discussion Lists and Forums
Group communication tools.
(<http://drugsense.org/lists/>)

Contact the Media
DrugSense's comprehensive 20,000+ record media database.
(<http://www.mapinc.org/mcod/>)

Get Media
DrugSense's Media Activism Center.
(<http://www.mapinc.org/resource/>)

Real Time Internet Meetings
Real time voice conferences over the Internet.
(<http://www.mapinc.org/resource/teamspeak/>)

Learn from Others - Local Initiatives
Learn how others have successfully changed policy with local initiatives.
(<http://drugsense.org/caip/>)

Get Your Group OnAir
Log and track your broadcast media events.
(<http://www.mapinc.org/onair/>)

Build a Knowledgebase
Submit drug policy news articles and help build a movement-wide early warning system.
(<http://drugsense.org/caip/>)

Join DrugSense
Accessing some of our services like MCOd require registering at the DrugSense Website.
(<http://www.drugsense.org/join>)

drug policy serves as a knowledgebase for the movement as well as an early warning system of issues that may become important. You can help build this resource by submitting the drug policy related articles.

Get Your Group OnAir. MAP OnAir can help your group track, promote, and respond to media events that occur on television and radio.

Learn from What Others Have Done. Thinking about fielding a citizen-led initiative, community ordinance, or changing your college's current drug policies? Learn the language of other initiatives and what made them successes or failures at our Community Audits and Initiatives Project (CAIP).

More MAP Stats

We like to reserve one section of the *Insider* to report statistics about our Websites. These statistics are based on data from the Web tracking software, Webalizer. Since we host so many sites, judging our success based on only one or two vastly understates our – and consequently reform's – impact on the drug policy debate. Based on these parameters, here's how our main sites fared at mid-year.

- **Pages:**

An HTML document or anything that generates one defines a 'page'. MAP served 1,883,210 pages in June 2007, up +2.4% over the same month one year ago. DrugSense page counts were up +30%, with those for DPC jumping a remarkable +172.6 over June 2006.

- **Sites:**

Each request to a server comes from a unique 'site', which can be referenced by name or IP address. A close representation of individual users, 237,846 unique IP addresses visited the MAP site in June 2007 almost the same as one year ago. Those for DrugSense grew by +33%, while DPC's dropped slightly.

DrugSense/MAP Usage Statistics

	Pages	Sites	Visits
MAP (DrugNews Archive, media activism resources)			
June 2007	1,883,210	237,846	850,035
June 2006	1,838,782	236,465	681,178
<i>Percent Chg</i>	<i>+2.4%</i>	<i>+0.6%</i>	<i>+24.8%</i>
DrugSense (DrugSense Weekly, collateral materials)			
June 2007	231,689	104,731	135,291
June 2006	177,546	78,730	89,255
<i>Percent Chg</i>	<i>+30.5%</i>	<i>+33.0%</i>	<i>+51.6%</i>
Drug Policy Central (bot & client sites)			
June 2007	1,152,797	91,861	505,376
June 2006	422,827	92,275	195,813
<i>Percent Chg</i>	<i>+172.6%</i>	<i>-0.4%</i>	<i>+158.1%</i>

More MAP Stats

MAP Statistical Summaries

(<http://drugsense.org/html/modules.php?name=Overview>)

Alexa

(<http://www.alexa.com>)

Alexa on DrugSense

(<http://drugsense.org/stats/alexa.htm>)

Alexa Statistics

3 month averages

	MAP	DrugSense	DPC
World Rank	47,877	200,837	325,353
U.S. Rank	11,287	67,832	99,147
Page Views	9.9	2.1	1.8
Linked sites	1,022	533	77
	Freevibe	ONDCP	DEA
World Rank	105,164	190,564	166,412
U.S. Rank	47,708	66,233	62,166
Page Views	1.6	1.6	2.8
Linked sites	506	1,600	789
	NORML	MPP	DPA
World Rank	69,378	180,005	189,021
U.S. Rank	16,256	39,709	37,724
Page Views	2.8	2.3	2.0
Linked sites	1,105	653	837
	Cannabisnews	Drug War Facts	LEAP
World Rank	180,513	647,262	629,043
U.S. Rank	35,018	230,794	177,696
Page Views	1.4	1.4	1.7
Linked sites	402	365	274

- **Visits:**

'New visits' to a page are calculated by counting a unique site as 'new' after a specified time passes between accessing it. 'New' MAP visits equaled 850,035 during June, jumping by almost 25% over June 2006. DrugSense and DPC Visits have grown by even more, +51.6% and 158.1% respectively.

- **Alexa Statistics:**

Alexa, an independent organization that tracks Website statistics, ranks millions of top-level domain names, beginning with 1 as the highest. Currently, the top five Alexa-ranked Websites are Yahoo!, the Microsoft Network, Google, YouTube, and Live Search. Alexa ranks are computed by analyzing the Web usage of millions of Alexa toolbar users. These data are used to arrive at an estimate of how often the site itself is visited, along with how many pages are viewed per visit.

The numbers above reveal MAP to be one of the highest ranked sites in drug policy. More pages are viewed at MAP than any of the other listed sites. More importantly, visitors to reform sites view more pages on average than do visitors to prohibition sites, showing that reform is clearly winning the information battle on the Internet.

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Drug Policy Central webpage and use the dropdown menu to review the various options.

DrugSense has a standing offer to provide basic hosting to any viable drug policy organization or chapter. Our resources are available at a variety of price points based on the client’s ability to pay DrugSense for the time and effort expended on set-up and support. (This is often free to applicants that qualify under our grants program.) The DPC team has a few cookie cutter designs from which you can choose if you have no one to Webmaster for you. If you have a Webmaster who can do it all, we can work with them. If you have an existing Website, we have the know-how to transfer it.

Already have a website and want to increase traffic? Consider a newsfeed from our Media Awareness Project, something that hundreds of organizations already incorporate into their sites. You can customize the newsfeed in a number of ways to create the look, feel, and content that meet your needs.

Email Lists and Threaded Discussion Forums

Both e-mail lists and forums can help organizations facilitate communication with their members. Private discussion lists allow leaders to work on the day-to-

Resources on this Page

DPC Hosting Quotes
[\(http://www.drugpolicycentral.com/hosting/\)](http://www.drugpolicycentral.com/hosting/)

Custom News Feeds
[\(http://www.mapinc.org/js/\)](http://www.mapinc.org/js/)

Sign up for E-mail Discussion Lists
<http://www.drugpolicycentral.com/hosting/lists/maillist.php>

day business. Public discussion lists focus on organizational goals, announce events, distribute newsletters, and call members to action with Alerts. Each list may have a place in your organization. Private or public threaded discussion forums can replace e-mail lists.

The Ohio Patient Network – focused on medical cannabis in Ohio – has an active private e-mail list for a dozen leaders scattered across the state, as well as a public discussion list. A large one-way announcement list e-mails its acclaimed monthly newsletter, *OPNews*, along with occasional Action Alerts.

All of these services are hosted by DrugSense's DPC. You and your drug policy reform organization can obtain similar support through the request forms at the hosting URL above.

If you’ve taken the time to read this, make the time to take **action**. YOU and your organization CAN be a more effective catalyst for change.

Donate Today!

Your tax-deductible donation funds all of these DrugSense services and more. [Help change drug policy now!](#) Please fill out the form below, make your check or money order payable to **DrugSense** and mail to:

DrugSense/MAP • 14252 Culver Drive #328 • Irvine, CA 92604-0326

Amount: \$50 \$100 \$250 Other: _____

Name: _____

Organization: _____

Street: _____

City: _____ **State:** _____ **Postal Code:** _____

E-mail: _____ **Phone:** _____

Comments: _____

DrugSense is a 501(c)(3) non-profit organization. Your donation is tax deductible to the extent provided by law.



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When the news breaks, MAP fixes it!

Inside the Insider:

Special Double Issue!!

Media Activism How YOU can be an effective drug policy reform advocate

Advertise Your Message for FREE! Utilize our media resources to get your message in print or on TV

Demand Media II More on DrugSense's extensive media contact database

And more....



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