



Propaganda mills aren't presenting fair info

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Unscrupulous hucksters and paid propagandists have always been with us; but the tobacco lobby turned it into a shadowy industry of professionals who specialize in confusing and misleading the public on behalf of their corporate clientele.

These professional “merchants of doubt” found a huge demand for their services among corporations that found it more profitable to mislead the public than to clean up their act.

Among the favorite ploys is to create deceptively named front organizations that masquerade as “think tanks” or grass-roots citizen organizations. These corporate-funded fronts pose as public service organizations, and package their paid skills as “distinguished fellows,” dressed in academic or research credentials. But these “think tanks” are essentially propaganda mills, and their “distinguished fellows” are hired skills paid to confuse and mislead the public.

Among the most influential of these fake “think tanks” are the Heritage Foundation and the Cato Institute. The Heritage Foundation was founded by the notoriously right-winged zealot Adolph Coors and his billionaire friends. It continues to get major funding from the Koch brothers, who were also among the founders of the Cato Institute.

But instead of treating these corporate propaganda vehicles and their hired skills as the disinformation specialists they are, the media dutifully treats them as credible sources of academic research, and their skills as respected authorities on economics and policy.

This is one of the many ways the media is failing its duty to present factual information that is not calculated propaganda designed primarily to mislead and manipulate the voting public.