



Free To Choose Network Company History/Backgrounder Company: Free To Choose Network

Free To Choose Network (FTCN) is a 501-c-3 not-for-profit organization housing Free To Choose Media, an award-winning, global entertainment company, which produces and distributes thought-provoking public television programs and series; izzit.org, an educational initiative that distributes video-centric teaching units for a large network of K-College educators; and Free To Choose Press publishing company.

In 1977, former public television executive Bob Chitester and economist Milton Friedman and his wife, Rose, began collaborating on a film project which became Free To Choose, an award-winning PBS television series and an international best-selling book based on the series, with sales in the millions. The series and book are still in wide use and have been profoundly influential. In fact, Mart Laar, the first post-Soviet Prime Minister of Estonia, said it was Friedman's book, Free To Choose, that guided him in shaping the new Estonia.

"Bringing these ideas to the large audience that a TV documentary could attract excited us," wrote Friedman. "Bob hit me at a particularly good time. I had just retired from active teaching at the University of Chicago, and was in the process of moving from Chicago to San Francisco to join the Hoover Institution at Stanford University. In the end, the project turned into the most exciting experience of our lives."

On the heels of that success, Chitester founded FTCN in order to continue creating documentaries for public television which offer a fresh perspective on a range of important global and national issues. More than 30 years and 500+ projects later, FTCN continues to bring thought-provoking and entertaining productions to public television audiences, through its production company, Free To Choose Media (FTCM). Internet audiences are able to view FTCM documentaries on www.FreeToChoose.TV, or on the FTCM's Roku channel and YouTube.

FTCM production teams travel the world to explore vital topics such as the economic roots of the Arab Spring and the inspiring stories of entrepreneurs raising themselves and their communities out of poverty, as well as revealing how innovation and new technologies may be the answer to the world's growing energy needs. In the past year, production teams filmed in New Zealand, India, Scotland, Paris, London and New York.

In addition to producing stimulating documentaries, FTCN also reaches out to the next generation with its educational site, izzit.org, offering classroom teachers, homeschool parents and students educational teaching units that encourage critical thinking about U.S. and world history, language arts, economics, the sciences, civics and more. Presented in easily understood and entertaining formats and language, izzit.org teaching units are available for K-College grades. More than 300,000 educators are using izzit.org videos today.

While broadcast film production and educational outreach remain FTCN's principal activities, the company also publishes a selection of books through Free To Choose Press (FTCP). Books published by FTCP are carried in major outlets around the country, and in some cases, the world. *Ideas & Action*, by George Shultz, *Hypocrites & Half-Wits*, by Donald J. Boudreaux, and *Power to the People*, which is based on FTCM's public television documentary by the same name, are some of the current titles published by FTCP.

FTCN employs approximately 27 full-time workers and is based in Erie, PA.