

Multichannel **NEWSWIRE**

Groups: Beware the 'Merger Monster'

By Steve Donohue

8/15/2006 5:09:00 PM

AT&T is facing a new attack involving its plan to merge with BellSouth on a new "Merger Monster" Web site (www.mergermonster.com) launched Tuesday by a coalition led by the Media Access Project.

MAP and its CEO, Andrew Jay Schwartzman, a frequent critic of big telecommunications mergers, pokes fun at poor customer service and layoffs that the group claimed will result from the merger.

The site features unflattering pictures of AT&T CEO Ed Whitacre, with one photo containing a "Hold please" caption of Whitacre wearing a digitally composed customer-service representative's headset.

"After 20 years, the Merger Monster is back! Like a bad horror sequel, the bulky beast that we all thought was dead and buried has risen and is preparing to terrorize consumers with poor customer service, inflated prices, job cuts, digital discrimination and privacy invasion," the Competition Coalition wrote in the announcement of its Web site.

Other groups backing the coalition include the Sothern Media Justice Coalition, the Association of Community Organizations for Reform Now and the Alliance for Competition in Telecommunications, which is backed by XO Communications and other small telecommunications firms that face stiffer competition from the AT&T-BellSouth merger.

[<<< Back](#) | [Print](#)

© 2006, Reed Business Information, a division of Reed Elsevier Inc. All Rights Reserved.