Community Television Policies
and
Practices Around the World

prepared by TimeScape Productions

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The methodologies for community-access television evolved from the NFB "Challenge for Change" stream of film and video-making in the last 1960s and early 1970s. Policies evolved in both Canada and the US to make the new tool of video available for community expression and problem-solving via the new medium of cable television.

Countries in Europe and S. America who adopted cable television followed suit with similar enabling policies for community-access television. The dual goals of local expression and freedom of speech characterized this first wave.

Many countries that missed this "first round" of community-access TV (such as Australia, in which cable TV never achieved large penetration and there was no tradition of local television) have generated policies for access with the addition of bandwidth in the 1990s thanks to digital and satellite TV.

Still other countries (often in the developing world) developed community-access television on their own to fill local educational, developmental, and linguistic needs. Many developed over-the-air community television and used volunteers both a) of necessity, due to the low cost of the volunteer model and b) because they realized that the more local people participated, the more relevant the programming became and the more its messages were likely to be applied. Freedom of speech in developmental contexts is also sometimes a motivator for community-access TV if groups are marginalized or threatened; for example, the Zapatista communities in southern Mexico.

In Canada, while $80,000,000 is being spent by Broadcast Distribution Undertakings (BDUs) on "community television", according to the 2003 Lincoln Report entitled *Our Cultural Sovereignty*, both the access and local origination principles have suffered since 1997, when the community television sector was partially deregulated. Community programming became optional, and many cable BDUs who elected to retain the 2-5% cable levy for community programming began to a) professionalize their channels (exclude the public from programming) as well as b) regionalize programming by consolidating offices. Many communities across Canada now have no access... that is, no ability to go to a local cable production office and make a program about themselves or their communities.

The most advanced access centres around the world (examples exist in the US, Europe and Africa) are platform-independent. They are not just television channels. They are community resource centres that may simultaneously hold licenses for over-the-air television and radio frequencies, have must-carry status on cable and other BDUs, may be housed in public libraries, community centres or theatres, and offer free access to computers and web training. The goal of these facilities is to offer the community the expertise, facilities and networking opportunities to get messages out, regardless of medium.

This report recommends that the same approach be adopted in Canada:

- Since cable BDUs now hold only 60% of market share, it no longer makes sense that community TV be carried only on cable nor be administered by cable companies. To be "accessible" to the most Canadians, as expected by the Broadcast Act, the community media tier should comprise platform-independent production centres that trigger licensing and must-carry status on all locally available television, radio and ISP services.

- By the same reasoning, all BDUs (including ISPs, which will increasingly become indistinguishable from BDUs as more video is distributed via the Internet) should contribute the 2-5% BDU levy to these central community-access facilities. In other words, resources from BDUs should be consolidated in a single centre per community. The recent trend toward enabling a telephony-based V.O.D. "community programming service" in parallel with or in competition with a cable-operated "community channel", and letting the satellite service for the area contribute in a third different way, both squanders resources and splits audiences.

- The access-production centres should be administered by the communities they serve, by community boards of directors that represent a broad cross-section of community interests, with special seats reserved for journalists and media practioners who can provide leadership in addressing the community's communication needs.

- The "community tier" in the broadcasting system should truly be a "tier", comprising not just a single channel, but also a national public-access channel, and the possibility of more than one "access" channel within local communities. The additional channels should be available for local governments, universities, and educational facilities, as they are in the United States, in Israel, and in some other countries.

A strong network of community-access production centres across Canada is the most viable solution to the scarcity of local production in both the public tier (the CBC) and the private tier (commercial broadcasters). Throughout the history of cable-administered community television, it has been demonstrated that a relatively small pool of seed money (for facilities, a core professional training staff and equipment) can be multiplied many times over through the use of volunteer labour and with the support of the community. A staff of 5-10 people with the assistance of volunteers (over 100 in larger population centres used to be common in Canada and is still common in other countries) can fully program a local television channel, including production in key genres such as news and information, children's programming, talk and debate programs, sports, and even drama, by offering an airing venue to local video- and filmmakers. Even in smaller communities, a few employees with the assistance of volunteers can fill key programming categories.

These genres, when produced by community television staff and volunteers, tend to be more interactive and democratic than traditional television. They often include phone-in segments, studio audiences, live feedback via new technologies (the Internet, cell phones) and the potential that every viewer can also be a producer. The process provides training a) for the next generation of producers and technicians for the public and private tiers and b) in media literacy, which promotes active citizenship and real political and social participation and engagement.

TERMS AND FRAMEWORK

Countries and examples of community TV are included in this report if they enable:

α) Local origination: production that is generated within a relatively restricted geographic area.

β) Access: significant participation by non-professionals on a voluntary basis (in order to distinguish "community TV" from traditional local broadcasting).

χ) Regular distribution: to distinguish "community TV channels" from video co-operatives, which often enable production, but not distribution. In offering a regularly distributed programming service, community TV channels build an on-going relationship with the local viewing audience that feeds back to their program offerings. The method of distribution (cablecast, broadcast, webcast, screenings) varies by locale.

This report includes community TV services that operate on a nonprofit as well as commercial basis, since some models of community TV depend to a greater or lesser extent upon revenues from commercial advertising and sponsorship.

With respect to point a) above, models of "national community TV" (or more accurately national "public-access TV") are becoming more common around the world. Their relationship to traditional local community TV channels is discussed where they exist.

In the country-by-country analysis, comparisons are made between other countries and Canada, and between one country and another. Unless otherwise stated, the Canadian model used in these comparisons is the model that existed prior to 1997, when all Canadian communities with 2,000 cable subscribers or more enjoyed access to a cable-operated community TV channel. Since 1997, when changes to community TV policy were introduced, the picture became more chaotic. Access-oriented organizations in Quebec and on the West Coast split off from cable companies, and cable companies themselves focussed on local origination often at the expense of access. For this reason, it has been difficult to make Canadian generalizations since 1997.

The data for many countries in this study was collected on site, including assessments of program "quality" and "impact". In countries for which on-site visits were not possible, data was collected from phone interviews, Internet viewing of programming (when available), and governmental and academic reports. In these cases, estimates of quality and impact rely to a greater degree on opinions of members of the communities involved. Whether these assessments are first-hand (made by the author) or second-hand is noted for each country.

Video samples of the programming discussed are available on request for all countries where research was done on site, and for some of the remaining countries.

HISTORIC AND TECHNOLOGICAL CONTEXT

Community-access television had its genesis at the National Film Board of Canada and was established as policy in Canada and the US in the early 1970s. Its introduction coincided with the introduction of cable television service and technological opportunities that it offered for the origination and distribution of local signals, mixed with the redistribution of signals from further afield.

Other countries that followed suit did so because of the same potential of cablecasting. These countries looked to North America for ideas and inspiration and included many countries in Western Europe (Scandinavia, Holland, Germany, Belgium) and pockets elsewhere, including Colombia and Brazil. Countries in which formal national community television policy was never adopted tended to be countries in which cable television was not widely embraced, such as the United Kingdom.

Throughout the 1980s and 1990s, the world-wide picture of community TV and who was doing it (informally or formally) remained relatively stable. Then, with the introduction of satellite and digital television and the enormous increases in bandwidth that these technologies offered, governments began to reassess their communications policies and to question how the new bandwidth should be allocated. With so much new bandwidth, and in an Internet environment in which the public has become used to exchanging news and information directly with one another, most governments have set aside some of the new space for public, educational and nonprofit uses. Many countries that missed the first wave of community television and citizen access to the airwaves have taken advantage of the newer technologies to "catch up".

Most parts of the Western world now have community-access television in one form or another.

In the developing world, local communication efforts for development in the past tended to focus on radio, which was

a) relatively easy for technologically unsophisticated communities to produce.
b) cheap to produce, transmit and receive.
c) could be received using battery-operated receivers, in areas that were not electrified.

As electricity continues to spread into the most remote corners of the planet, television has followed in its wake. Because of the drastically different developmental, educational and cultural needs of communities in the developing world, there has been a strong motivation to find low-budget ways to produce appropriate television. The solution that has been re-invented in many areas has been community TV… produced by volunteers for their own communities, often in the absence of any other programming service in the local language.

So, two different development paths have resulted in the steady and accelerating spread of community television world-wide.

This process is still in flux. Because the evolution of policy in many countries has responded to pressure by communities to formalize informal or unlicensed distribution, this report includes examples of community TV that exist outside of official policy and yet play a significant role in local broadcasting systems.

A final factor that is influencing the development of government policies for direct citizen access to distribution platforms world-wide is media ownership concentration. There is now broad

international recognition that the democratic ideal of freedom of speech is meaningless if citizens do not have equal access to the means of production and distribution. Increasing media ownership concentration throughout the world has emphasized the need to protect and enable democratic access.   Paragraph 24 in the Declaration of Principles developed at the 2003 Geneva World Summit on the Information Society states:

"*The ability for all to access and contribute information, ideas and knowledge is essential in an inclusive Information Society.*"

Paragraph 23 is more specific:

"*The establishment of ICT public access points in places such as post offices, schools, libraries and archives, can provide effective means for ensuring universal access to the infrastructure and services of the Information Society.*"[1]

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For the full Declaration of Principles, see http://www.itu.int/wsis/docs/geneva/official/dop.html

COUNTRIES

The US and Canada[2]

Since community-access TV has a common evolution in Canada and the US, these countries are dealt with together.   Comparisons between the two are useful to understand their practices.

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

The US Federal Communications Commission policy for "public-access TV" evolved from the same National Film Board of Canada experiments, projects, and staff that gave rise to CRTC community television policy in Canada. The National Film Board had been experimenting putting first film, and then video Portapaks in the hands of communities as a tool for problem solving. Opinions of various community members on a problem would be taped, and then the tapes would be watched as a group. NFB facilitators discovered that the act of taping opinons on an issue and then watching those tapes together forced people to a) consider carefully what to say, and b) listen to one another in a way that was rarely possible in the combative environment of a town hall meeting. In the course of this process of articulation and listening, communities were often able to solve their own problems. This new tool was dubbed "The Mirror Machine" in NFB publications. The series of programs that were made using the tool became a stream called "Challenge for Change".

At first, NFB crews and facilitators were sent out across the country to mediate the process. This was expensive. When cable television started to be licensed and to offer local TV equipment and distribution in communities country-wide, the NFB and the CRTC collaborated to develop community television policy. (Ex-NFB English program director Frank Spiller joined the CRTC at about this time and was a key link). An American who worked under Mr. Spiller, George Stoney, took these ideas to the US. Mr. Stoney began to hold workshops and to stimulate debate in the US about taking advantage of cable television in the same way—to make "The Mirror machine" available to communities country-wide.

Objectives that were discussed in evolving policy included:

- "Demystifying" television, so that television viewers would better understand the content they were seeing on other television services.

- Enabling individuals and communities to express themselves on TV. In the US, it has been common to think of public-access TV as enabling "First Amendment rights", that part of the US constitution that deals with freedom of speech and of the press.

- Democratizing TV by providing feedback between "the government and the governed". (The first experiment in the Challenge for Change project was to send an NFB crew headed by Colin Low to Fogo Island to find out what residents thought about a plan to move them off the island!)

A subtle difference in policy emphasis has always existed because of the differing communication environments in the two countries, however. While Canadian CRTC policy

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[2] Information in this section was collected on site.

tended to talk about the two-sided coin of "access" (the ability for anyone to voice an opinion) and "local origination" (local programming, made by local people), US policy tended to emphasize freedom of speech, or the access principle.

Because of the US' larger and more concentrated population centres, and the myriad sources of American information and entertainment programming, there was more concern that viewers be able to "demystify" television and have a voice in the busy media environment alongside professionals than that local communities should have a voice. In Canada, by contrast, policy makers were concerned that there should be ANY Canadian production to serve as a counter-balance to the flood of American programming being brought into Canadian homes via the new technology of cable. Therefore, in Canada, the emphasis on local origination (both local to the community but also "local" in the sense of Canadian alongside the many American programming services) was given more emphasis.

While this difference in policy emphasis existed in the early years, as American communities became used to public-access as a local institution, they began to appreciate the importance of local production, particularly in the more liberal northern states. This championing of local media was perhaps also a backlash against the fact that so many small communities are disappearing or being absorbed into larger urban centres. Many US public-access centres say that their function as a source of local programming is almost if not as important as their function as a soapbox for freedom of speech.

There is still a difference between the two countries, however. It was still much more prevalent at Canadian community TV channels in their heyday prior to 1997 for programming staff to worry about anchoring the programming schedule with a local magazine program, or to search out a variety of programs to serve different age groups and needs (a top-down approach to present a coherent programming service) than it ever was or is to this day at an average US public-access channel. It is still much more common for US public-access channels to adopt a hands-off approach to programming; for example, distributing schedule time slots to local producers on a strictly first-come, first-served basis.

Licensing

In Canada, cable license holders over a certain size were required to provide a community TV channel as part of the cable basic service tier.[3] Until 1997, most channels in Canada were operated directly by the cable operator. In Quebec, where cable companies tended to be smaller and less well endowed than their counterparts in English Canada, independent community groups often operated channels that were carried on cable.

In the US, municipalities charge cable companies "franchise fees". Whether or not these fees result in the establishment of a public-access channel depends on whether local groups ask for the fee to be passed through for this purpose. If they do, an independent board of directors from the community is set up and a nonprofit corporation runs the channel[4].

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[3] See CRTC policy document 1991-59 for the spirit of policy during the early period at http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/1991/PB91-59.HTM. 1991-59 was an update of earlier policies, but little had changed.

[4] FCC legislation in the 1984 Cable Act enabled US states to individually decide how cable franchises were to be negotiated. Most elected to leave their negotiation to municipalites. The Cable Act also stipulates that the franchising authority (state or municipality) may require channels to be reserved for public, educational, and government use, and that the cable operator shall exercise no editorial control

The practice of entrusting the operation of public-access to community groups was more rare in Canada because of the CRTC's concern about legal responsibility for programming content. In the US, this never became a policy issue. Most public-access channels require producers to sign documents taking full legal responsibility for their content**.**

In addition to public-access channels (P), the 1984 US Cable Act stipulated that franchising authorities could require cable operators to provide channel space for government use (G), and educational use (E).

Government-access channels are intended to provide a platform for municipal government to televise council and other meetings, policy-making, health and safety information, and information about local services. By contrast, the NFB Challenge for Change philosophy that access TV should provide a feedback loop "between the governed and government" has never been significantly implemented in Canada, other than the practice of taping city council meetings and the odd phone-in program with local politicians.

Similarly, local educational-access channels provide a powerful link between the community and its educational resources, including everything from televised courses from universities (such as we see in Canada on provincial education channels to a lesser degree), to school plays, high school, college and university sports.

In this way, the "third tier" really is a tier, not just a single channel, as in Canada. This suite of access channels is called PEG. How many channels are set aside is part of the cable franchise negotiation process. It is not uncommon for there to be 3-10 in a US town or city.

In recent years, with the move toward digital, HD, and rich-data services, many US access lobbyists are pushing for a set percentage of total bandwidth to be set aside for PEG use. In some states, this has become policy.

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over content on channels so established. See http://www.publicaccess.org/cableact.html.

Funding

Community- and PEG-access is paid for in Canada and the US by cable companies. There have been two rationales for this effective tax over the years:

- Cable companies use public rights-of-way to lay cable. Franchise fees pay for this use (more strongly a US argument, but also heard in Canada).

- Cable companies and other BDUs make a profit by bringing non-Canadian signals into Canadian homes. They bear none of the risks of production, as do Canadian broadcasters. They should therefore help support Canadian production to balance this effect.

In Canada, the amount spent on community channels has dropped from a recommended 10% of gross revenues (suggested in CRTC documents of the 1970s), to 5% (recommended in 1991-59), to between 2 and 5% today, depending on system size.

The 1984 US Cable Act gave states and municipalities the right to charge cable companies up to a maximum of 5% of gross revenues in franchising fees. Once received, negotiations then have to be done between the community and the municipality (or state) to decide how much of that money will be given to different PEG channels.

The weakness of the US system from the point of view of providing consistent public-access programming services throughout the nation is that individual municipalities (and more recently —states) have to be lobbied by the community to use the cable franchise fee for PEG programming. The spread of public-access TV across the US was slow and is ongoing. For example, the City of Philadelphia only finally got public-access in late 2007, after almost 20 years of lobbying by local media activist groups. They claim that previous city councils were allied with Comcast, the largest cable operator in the US, headquartered in Philadelphia.

Therefore, under this system, access by citizens to the airwaves and to a local programming service is susceptible to local politics. By contrast, in Canada, where cable companies operated community programming services under their own roofs, compliance to CRTC regulation was more or less uniform until 1997. Canadians from coast to coast enjoyed community programming service of equal quality, dependent only on the size of the service area and therefore the amount of money available for programming.

There is another side to the coin, however. American media thinkers tend to look at the Canadian model and say that it is "corporate-run access", susceptible to censorship, since final control over program content lies with the cable operator, not with community producers. In fact, instances of overt censorship were rare in Canada prior to 1997.   Public-access staff members in the US are equally likely to exercise influence over program content in subtle ways.

There were other subtle pros and cons to these two systems.

In Canada, because cable operators were ultimately responsible for program content, there was a greater tendency for program managers to try to create (with the assistance of the community) a coherent programming service for as wide a base of viewers as possible within the community. For example, most community TV channels offered a weekly community news magazine program to anchor the week. If no seniors' or children's programming ideas were advanced by the community itself, staff might circulate the idea for such a program among core volunteers and generate a program to fill a hole. If key programs in the schedule (such as a

news magazine program) lacked a key technical role (such as a volunteer editor), a staff editor might step in, or community TV staff might search among the volunteer ranks to train someone specifically for the position. The result was typically a more coherent, balanced and regular program schedule, and more technical support for volunteer community producers because the cable company felt an investment in "its" community TV channel. This subtle additional technical and leadership support was accomplished with minimal infringement upon pure "freedom of speech" in the author's experience, because most volunteers wanted and needed such support and leadership, and wanted their programs to succeed and be watched.

There was also a different attitude and working relationship between Canadian volunteers and a community TV channel and US volunteers and a public-access channel. In Canada, the majority of volunteers who would walk into a community TV channel and express an interest in volunteering just wanted to learn. They wanted to operate a camera, take courses, and see where their skills fit over time. These general volunteers were welcomed and put to work by channel staff on the programs of other volunteer producers. The co-ordination role was handled by the channel. Perhaps only 10-15% of the people who walked in off the street were motivated (at least initially) to produce a program or directly exercise a right to freedom of speech. The result was that the 10-15% who wanted to produce a program got the support they needed to sustain regular series programs. The majority of the general volunteers worked on multiple programs, cross-pollinating ideas and learning multiple genres. With this experience, many of this general pool would go on to produce programs of their own. Through this process, a sense of community service was built. The volunteer pool grew in purpose and commitment.

By contrast, in the US, most public-access channel staff typically deal with and only loan equipment and studio time directly to community producers. Once community producers have proposed a program idea, it is wholly the producers' responsibility to train and staff their programs from volunteers that they can recruit from among friends or family. It's common to see such producers burn out after producing a few episodes, and such groups of volunteers are much more likely to work in isolation, each with their own soapbox. There is much less sense of programming one service for the community and less cross-pollination of ideas.

In one way however, the American system turned out to be more robust. Because the growth of public-access television was a result of city-by-city lobbying by citizens who had to be aware of legislation and develop relationships with their municipalities, American public-access TV channels have been more resistant in the face of consolidation by large cable operators to being kicked off the airwaves. For example, the US has had a national professional association (the Alliance for Community Media) to represent their interests since 1976.

Because a single CRTC policy turned on the lights at community TV channels across Canada, volunteers never understood their rights or the big picture of citizen access to the airwaves. Most (with the exception of those in Quebec and in pockets on the West Coast) gave up without a fight when cable operators started to exclude them following the introduction of CRTC policy 1997-25. There was no national association until this year through which they could lobby or inform themselves.

Advertising as a form of fund-raising has never been part of the US public-access experience due to the way franchising agreements are negotiated. The cable companies themselves have not wanted advertising on access channels to compete with their own advertising and on other channels they carry.

In Canada, advertising was forbidden on community TV in the early years (although

sponsorship messages were permitted) because it was felt to conflict with its nonprofit, public-service nature. Since 1997 however, CRTC guidelines have been relaxed.   Many cable operators today not only use community channels to promote their other products and services, some turn a profit from them.

Distribution

Canadian community TV and PEG television in the US are distributed via cable. Since the introduction of CRTC policy 2002-61 in Canada, there have also been a few holders of over-the-air low-powered licenses that qualify as community-access, such as St. Andrews Community TV in New Brunswick.[5]

It is not uncommon in the US for an access radio and access television channel to share the same office and to collaborate in program production. For example, an interview with a local band might be recorded simultaneously for both radio and television.

This trend toward multimedia platforms has intensified in recent years. In response to a world-wide awareness of the "digital divide" that separates those who can afford the Internet and related communication technologies and those who can't, many US public-access centres offer a range of Internet services, including free access time, free or low-cost training, and assistance with web design. The most forward thinking centres have understood from the beginning that freedom of speech is an idea that is platform-independent. They have offered assistance with media campaign strategies that include radio, TV, the Internet, live theatre space, newspapers, even assistance designing buttons, or how to get the best out of a bullhorn on a street corner. Examples include the access centres in Grand Rapids, Michigan, and Santa Rosa, California.

While many access centres offer live web-streaming of their programming or on-line archives of past programming that can be downloaded (similar to many commercial and public broadcasters), like those commercial and public broadcasters, the Internet is not yet seen as the main way to "capture eyeballs". The Internet is still viewed as an auxiliary means of distribution, whose full role and importance will continue to develop in the years to come.

In addition to local public-access centres, the US has a national satellite- and web-streamed channel called Free Speech TV that functions as a national public-access platform. Much of the programming is produced at local public-access channels, and 189 local public-access channels in 38 states download FreeSpeech programming on a regular basis and cablecast it locally. In such a large country, it's impossible for FreeSpeech TV to play everything that is submitted. (The staff selects programming, so it can't be said to be "first-come, first-served".) The channel is committed, however, to promote programming that is not being seen at a national level that deals with important political, social, and international themes[6].

Programming Types

There are over 3000 public-access TV channels in the US. There were over 225 in Canada in the 1990s. Because public-access and community TV channels in Canada and the US have

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[5] See http://www.chct.ca/about.html for more information, and for links to the web sites of other over-the-air, low-powered license holders.

[6] For more information about Free Speech TV, see http://www.freespeech.org/html/aboutus.shtml.

been generally well endowed over their history, thanks to a stable base of cable-industry funding, most have studios. It has also been commonplace in both the US and Canada for access channels to have a live feed to the community through the cable operator (not always common in other parts of the world). Thanks to these factors, certain kinds of access production are more common in North America than elsewhere:

- Live, Interactive Studio Production

  This has given rise over the 40-year history of public-access TV to the popularity of live studio programs, and in particular, to live phone-in studio programs. Because local phone calls are free, because the topics of many such programs are local, because more people feel comfortable voicing an opinion in a local context than they might in a national one, and because of the immediacy of the live presentation, there has been a natural pairing with the use of the telephone.   This is rare on commercial broadcast television, but more common on radio.

  Phone-in programs have included the following categories:

  - Issues-based programs, where callers give their views. An important subgroup are *Dial Your MP*-style shows, where callers interact directly with government officials, fulfilling a key policy objective of the channels.

  - Advice programs, where callers get tips and help. Examples include programs about astrology, the stock market, income tax and computer gadgets.

  - Quiz programs, where callers answer questions and win prizes. These programs often have a second level of interactivity, in which the prize winners can come to the studio and may appear on camera.

  Audiences enjoy the live interactivity of these programs, the opportunity to talk to their neighbours and the relative informality and lack of consequence if they say the wrong thing. It's one of the few categories of programs for which producers can gauge the size of their audiences, since they can tell if the phone lines are busy.

  Live programs are a common offering on community television because they are quick to produce. Relatively non-technical volunteers can be taught to produce a live program in about an hour. The program takes as long to produce as the length of the program itself, which is important for volunteers who have full-time jobs elsewhere.

  While some live programs are visually exciting with entertainment or contests, the majority of live programs are talk shows. Many volunteer producers come to community TV to publicize an issue. The challenge for the community-produced talk show is that inexperienced hosts and producers may not be able to focus the discussion with the skill of hosts and producers on commercial television. Combined with the lack of commercial breaks and the fact that community TV has no time limits per se, the failure to condense and focus material can frustrate viewers used to highly structured commercial TV. On the other hand, viewers who tune in because they are interested in a local issue are often forgiving.

  Noam Chomsky commented in the documentary *Manufacturing Consent* that a great limitation of commercial television is its condensed sound-bite format, in which genuinely

new points of view are difficult to articulate. There is only time for guests to align themselves with already well-understood views (simple expressions of "for" or "against" with few shades of grey). The constraints of the commercial TV format have been blamed by media commentators over the years for "dumbing down" the quality of public discourse. Community TV has no such limitations.

Examples of studio programs that have pushed the creative possibilities of the genre include:

- An extraordinarily interactive youth program from Calgary called *The Thursday Edition*. In one episode, viewers were invited to call in with stories about their worst dates. Several who came to the studio to pick up prizes were invited to wrestle on camera with hosts dressed in padded Sumo suits!

- A talking-head show from Winnipeg co-produced by Guy Madden called *Survivor*. Two hosts pretended to be hard-core survivalists, prepared to survive a nuclear holocaust. The series lampooned Cold War paranoia.

- In another show from Winnipeg called *Math with Marty*, an engineering student taught the audience how to solve complex math problems, interspersed with social commentary. In breaks, he and his sister played their own compositions on piano and guitar. The program achieved cult status in Winnipeg thanks to the brilliance of Marty Green's mathematical explanations. He loved math and felt it wasn't being taught well at most educational institutions. His desire to share his love with local audiences had a wacky and compelling appeal.

- *Sister Who*, a spiritual program from Denver. The male host dresses as a kind of theatrical nun and delivers brilliant off-the-cuff sermons about love, spirituality and social inclusion.   Regular guests included the mentally and physically disabled and other commonly excluded groups. His sermons used visual metaphors such as gardening (he would bring plants into the studio and be tending them as he talked) to underscore his ideas about healthy communities.

- ENG Productions

   Pre-recorded programs that include ENG segments shot in and around the community (such as a news magaine) are often more visually interesting than studio talk shows, but they are more time-intensive to produce and more rare on North American community TV. They tend to require on-going staff support to maintain a regular schedule. Without such support, volunteer producers often burn out. They may produce one or a few highly imaginative, visually interesting episodes before giving up.

   When the momentum can be sustained long enough to build an audience, however, such programs tend to be popular. They show known locales and events in the community, and the impact of the volunteer host's skill or appeal is less. If the information is relevant and well packaged, ENG-style programs tend to do well.

- Mobile Productions

   Mobile productions, the third common technical genre, may be live or pretaped. A truck, essentially a studio on wheels, is driven to a location within the community, multiple

cameras are set up, and switching happens live on location. The quick-production appeal of the studio show is translated to the field. Mobiles are used to cover events where multiple cameras are needed, such as sporting and cultural events, and enable significant interaction with the public. These events can be recorded and cablecast live, or live to tape, with no editing.   Because mobiles are relatively expensive, mobile community productions have become possible in N. America thanks to the funding support of the cable industry.

A great advantage of mobile productions, given the mandate of community TV, is that they can capture events in the community and bring them into the homes of viewers who might not otherwise be able to get to them. They help make the community and its life accessible to all.

Examples of dynamic mobile productions include:

- A children's program from Calgary called *Lynn and Company*. A local storyteller would go into primary schools and entertain the children both with her own stories and with a different guest performer each week, such as a magician or juggler. The children would also participate on camera by presenting something they had prepared, such as a dance or skit.

- An entertainment program called *Big Night Out*. The mobile was taken to a different bar each week, where a local band anchored the program. ENG segments were inserted that profiled local cultural events and trends, including the popularity of coffee houses, glow bowling or art exhibits.

- Religious Programming

  US public-access includes the high percentage of religious programming. Thirty percent or more in some communities is produced by religious groups in either a talk show or sermon format. Religious groups are typically well funded and highly motivated to get their messages out and public-access TV has always been a popular platform. There's nothing wrong with this per se, except that their programming tends to alienate from the channel rather than invite viewers that are not specifically interested in their message. In other words, the presence of a high percentage of these programs in a public-access channel schedule fulfills the soapbox, free-speech mandate well, but not so well the mandate to build a sense of community on a single service.

  One might argue that other minority-interest programming such as gay or animal rights programming could alienate viewers as well, yet a diversity of such programs exposes viewers to alternate points of view and fosters a more inclusive community. The difference with religious programs it that they tend to compete with one another to win converts to the exclusion of other parts of the community.

  Many public-access channels, conscious of this difficulty, schedule religious programming on Sundays, or in blocks.

- Diversity

  A final distinguishing feature of US public-access programming perhaps reflects US culture at large: There tend to be more political and social extremes reflected on US public-

access, including soft pornography, programs with conspiracy theories (one in Michigan recently postulated that 9/11 was engineered by George Bush), programs made by the Klu Klux Klan, and programs devoted to cross-bow hunting.

Quantity

A typical N. American community television channel in a major city may produce 5 to 6 times as much as a commercial channel in the same market, using a staff of 5-12 and often hundreds of volunteers. Where the commercial channel might produce the news and one or two local talk shows, a community TV channel might produce 30-40 hours of new production per week in every conceivable genre. The majority of this programming (perhaps 70-80%) is likely to be live, produced either in studio or by mobile, because of the ease of production. The rest might be shot and edited news magazine- or documentary style.

In a smaller community, the staff:volunteer:programming hours ratios would be similar, but scaled down. For example, 2-3 staff with the assisance of a few dozen volunteers might program 5-8 hours per week.

This volume of production is possible with proper funding and management. For the model to work, there needs to be a core staff to solicit community involvement (preferably trained in community outreach), train, and co-ordinate production. There also needs to be the right kinds of equipment: durable and portable ENG units, mobile production units, studios with straightforward maintenance and wiring, adequate set storage, and low-tech editing bays that are available in hours when volunteers are available.

Many US facilities have innovated facilities to promote access. For example, several have tiny studios that a community producer-host can operate on his or her own. The multi-platform access centre in Grand Rapids Michigan includes a live theatre with three Robocams mounted on side and rear walls so that performances can be captured with a minimum of crew. Denver Open Media in Colorado provides "ingestion stations" to enable community producers to upload their productions directly to channel servers for automated playback.

Quality

Various critiques have been levelled at public-access TV over its nearly forty-year history. The classic critiques were that the colour was bad and you couldn't hear it (critiques of technical quality). Since the introduction of cheap digital cameras that are more forgiving of bright contrast and low light, and which have automatic functions, the difference in image quality between commercial broadcast television and public-access television in N. America has largely disappeared. The critiques of content as structured by the host and producers of the programs remain. Any forum that is first-come, first-served in which participants are learning as they go will generate a dramatic range of "quality" as perceived by the viewer at home. Volunteers have neither the time nor experience of professional hosts and producers. On the other hand, they have two advantages that are valued by their audiences:

- Unmanaged, non-professional presentation. Along with the absence of advertising, this can be refreshingly direct. It's similar to the recent appeal of so-called "reality TV", in which non-professionals who look "just like us" are recruited to participate in on-camera scenarios. The appeal of the "real" person on the TV has been rising in recent years, perhaps as a

response to the increase in sophistication and manipulation of television advertising, and in the ever higher bar for Hollywood beauty and glamour. This appeal may be behind the increase in popularity of both traditional documentaries and feature-length theatrically released documentaries, as audiences reach out to connect with "real" people dealing with "real" issues.

- The local or minority issues being dealt with. Most community members who volunteer to produce a television program want to produce a message that is not being seen elsewhere, whether that message is specifically local (and thereby of appeal to other local people) or deals with a minority issue or concern. When one person in a minority is highly enough motivated to make the program, there are usually others highly enough motivated by the same concerns to watch it.

Another critique sometimes levelled at public-access TV by media thinkers is that it is too imitative of commercial formats, and is therefore not fulfilling the policy objective of providing an alternative. The validity of this critique varies widely across N. America. At public-access centres that have a strict first-come, first-served First Amendment policy and whose staff refuses to influence the content of community producers, there is a tendency to be imitative. For example, courses might teach technical skills such as camera or lighting, but not producing or scriptwriting. Programs about local musicians may look much like a professionally produced show of the same genre. This laissez-faire approach to production on the part of public-access channel staff tends to be most true in the South and more conservative areas of the US.

In the northern, more liberal parts of the US, there tends to be a more alternative media climate. Media literacy is often specifically taught at public-access centres, with the goal of making access producers more sophisticated about their choices in producing a program. When this leadership is provided by access channel staff, there is a greater tendency for programming to be socially activist and experimental in format.

In Canada, where community TV is produced within cable companies who see themselves as part of the professional programming spectrum, there has also been a tendency to mimic commercial production formats and provide friendly community programming that doesn't generate complaints for the company.

Even if programming formats tend to imitate commercial models, however, they still fill multiple needs. For example, a producer who decides to cover the local music scene and local bands is providing exposure for those bands and to the local scene that local viewers would otherwise not get. Some of these producers, if asked about their format, might reply that there are good reasons why commercial formats work (a snappy, tightly edited approach, perhaps), and that the format results in a larger audience. The process of making such a program also helps meet the "demystification" policy objective. Anyone producing in a creative field typically needs to master basic formats before they can expect to develop their own style and voice.

Even at the most laissez-faire public-access channel with largely imitative programming, truly creative and determined people still find an outlet. Hours spent combing through programming archives always yield buried gems, bizarrely creative programs that fit no pre-defined format; for example, the *Sister Who* program in Denver, Colorado mentioned above. When its host occasionally appears in "costume" in public, he is immediately recognized.

Audience Response

In 1996, the Canadian Cable Television Association conducted an in-depth market research survey of community TV viewing habits in several large and small Canadian centres. Cable companies at that time were conscious of the entry of competitors to the market (Telcos and satellite companies). They wanted to maximize their investment in community TV as a competitive advantage. They found that in larger cities, awareness of the mandate of community TV and viewership was relatively low (a few percent of potential viewers tuning in per week, which perhaps was equivalent to any small specialty channel in the 30-60-channel marketplace of that time). The channels did not appear to compete well with other sources of professionally produced local news and information.

In smaller towns, however, where the community channel might be the only source of local information, there was much stronger identification with and viewership of the channel (double-digit percentages of potential viewers per week).

Interpretation of this information depended on who you were. The cable companies were disappointed, and the results may have contributed to the deregulation of community TV with CRTC 1997-25 policy.

Proponents of access were not surprised by these results. The goals of community television had always been:

- Niche-casting, not broadcasting. Success by this standard is met if the few percent of people who belong to a minority group tune in to a program made for and by that group. In the busy media environment of large urban centres, this niche-casting role appeared to dominate.

- Producing local content in markets where local content was scarce and not being produced by the other tiers (public and private). Therefore, in smaller communities, it was not surprising that the localness of the content generated more significant viewership, since the niche group (by geography) in this case includes everyone in the license area.

Whereas the relationship between cable operators and the communities in which they were based had generally been friendly and mutually beneficial up to this point, the growing competitiveness of the telecommunications market and the resulting growth in size of cable companies tended to make the pairing obsolete. Cable operators were no longer the small "mom-and-pop" experimental operations of the 1970s. It was not surprising that communities and cable companies found their goals diverging.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

The role of public-access TV in the US and Canada has always had several components:

1) To provide a freedom-of-speech outlet

2) To enable niche-casting; that is, serving underserved audiences with programs aimed at their needs. This secondary goal has tended to flow from the first, in that, for example, if a member of an ethnic or social minority elects to produce a program, the motivation is to express a point of view absent from mainstream programming services.

3)	Local origination, which is a subcategory of niche-casting, in that producing for members of a local geographic community is an instance of providing a programming service for a geographic minority.

4)	To "demystify" television production processes and technologies. The thinking went that because most people then and now get more of their information about the world through television than through any other single medium, and because television is such a powerful unmediated medium (based as on images, rather than print or spoken words), people need to understand how its messages are formulated in order not to be manipulated.

5)	A training ground for industry professionals.

6)	To stimulate debate and provide an alternative to mainstream media.

As an experiment begun in N. America, public- and community-access TV has surpassed most of these expectations:

1)	Barring a few limited cases, where these channels have existed there has been very little outright censorship, at least up until 1997 in Canada. To the extent that public-access was never franchised in some parts of the US, and channels have been closed in both countries, there has been a democratic loss.

2)	Thousands of ethnic, religious, special interest groups and other minorities have found a voice on public-access and community television channels.

3)	Volunteers in the US produce more than 20,000 hours on local issues, history, culture and the environment every week, more than all the programming produced by NBC, CBS, ABC, FOX and PBS combined. Similar volumes (by population) were produced in Canada prior to 1997[7].

4)	More than one million volunteers participate in access production every year in the US, satisfying both their need to express themselves as well as their need to "know how it works". Similar volumes of volunteers as a percentage of population received media education at Canadian community TV channels every year prior to 1997. For example, there were over 1200 in the Vancouver lower mainland contributing at 12 regional offices up until 1996. In Calgary, 400 volunteers contributed at two offices. These figures were volunteers whose names were kept on regular crew lists, not the total who participated in productions as one-time studio audiences, during outreach to schools, etc.

5)	Thousands of professionals have had their start on community- and public-access channels. In Canada, Guy Madden, Dan Aykroyd, Tom Green, and Mike Myers are high-profile examples. Access channels provide the hands-on experience to complement university media production courses in cities continent-wide.

6)	While experimental and alternative programming has been made over the years (viewers in almost every city can cite "cult" access shows that have had a big impact), many media critics feel that access as a movement has not been as alternative as it might, given its extraordinary freedom. This critique is common to countries other than Canada and the

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[7] Canadian figures were collected from individual channels by the CRTC at the time, but were not tabulated.

US, and is discussed in more detail in the "Summary" section of this report.

Although there is no control group to measure how North American society would have been different without close to forty years of access television, there is a pop-culture awareness and healthy scepticism about the manipulations of the professional media that exists at least in part thanks to the existence of public-access and community television. The wide popularity and awareness of the feature film *Wayne's World* suggests that access television as an institution is known and understood--in the same category as participatory phenomena such as YouTube and Wikipedia.

Challenges

When CRTC policy 1997-25 made the provision of a community channel optional in Canada, many cable operators began consolidating their production offices and professionalizing production to the point that access volunteers were no longer welcome.

Complaints to the CRTC ensued, resulting in policy 2002-61, which enabled a new license class for low-powered over-the-air broadcasters. No funding formula for such operators was offered, however, and the state of community-access programming continued to decline in much of the country. True access continues to be practiced by cable co-operatives such as Campbell River TV in BC (although it has recently been acquired by Shaw), Westman Cable in Manitoba, Access Communications in Saskatchewan, and members of the Fédération des télévisions communautaires autonomes du Québec.

The situation with private cable operators varies. The advertising rules for community television were relaxed during the same period, and many private cable operators have professionalized their channels to the point that there is no access by the community at all, and the channel turns a profit on ads. This is typical of Shaw systems throughout Western Canada, which introduced an aggressive corporate policy for its community channels in 1997. In other parts of the country, access also tends to have been de-emphasized. For example, in Rogers systems, while the web site still advertises volunteer opportunities, volunteers who have contacted Rogers usually find that they are welcome as free labour in technical roles, but it may be difficult to propose and produce a program idea. The situation with every cable company differs, and can differ even among channels in different towns licensed to the same cable company, depending on the relationship between the community and channel staff. In smaller towns, with smaller budgets and more reliance on volunteers, there is still sometimes more freedom for the community to produce.

Aside from the loss in access by the community to make programming, there has also been a trend toward regionalization of production as Canadian cable companies have grown. For example, the number of offices in Vancouver dropped from 12 to 1 under first Rogers and then Shaw. Where once there were over 30 access production centres and distinct channels in New Brunswick, now there are only 6, replaying programming produced in Fredericton for much of their schedules.

The US access scene is also being affected by the growth in cable companies and the entrance into the home video market of telephony and satellite providers. There has been a push by large telecommunications companies to negotiate franchising at the state level in preference to municipality by municipality. This shift has sometimes resulted in the elimination of public access for a state as a whole, such as Florida. There have also been court challenges by cable

operators to municipalities not to have to fund access. As cable companies have grown and most dwarf the municipalities they serve, these challenges have been more difficult to fight.

National Association?

The Alliance for Community Media (ACM) represents over 3,000 PEG channels across the US. It is one of the best-organized national associations representing community television in the world. It holds annual and regional conferences that offer specialist training workshops and programming awards in various genres. The Alliance also lobbies on behalf of member channels.

The Canadian Cable Television Association used to provide some of the same co-ordination and networking opportunities to community programmers in Canada, but is now defunct.

In Western Canada, the Community Education Society of Vancouver (formed from a group of disgruntled ex-Rogers volunteers) took on a lobbying and awareness-raising role when the 12 Vancouver access offices started to be consolidated in 1996.

In Quebec, the Fédération des télévisions communautaires autonomes du Québec was established in 1998 and represents 44 autonomous community TV corporations throughout Quebec. Like the ACM, the Fédération provides lobbying and networking services to members.

In 2008, the Canadian Association of Community TV Users and Stations (CACTUS) was formed to enable proponents of community-access TV from across Canada to exchange information and to develop common strategies in preparation for the proposed review of the sector in 2009.

The European Union

European community media (both television and radio) has enjoyed co-ordination at a pan-national level. In 1997, fourteen European nations created the organization Open Channels for Europe and adopted the Berlin Convention, which states:

"We:

- *AFFIRM that guaranteed and non-discriminatory access for the public to all means of communication are essential to the creation and preservation of a democratic process leading to a cohesive Europe built and sustained by its inhabitants*

- *VIEW the ongoing pursuit of deregulation and liberalisation policies in media and communication; the continued growth of poverty, unemployment and exclusion as the increasing risk for reinforcing nontransparent, elitist and undemocratic trends in Europe.*

Based on the above, we

- *COMMIT ourselves to building a European coalition for citizen's media as part of a global movement for media equity and democratic communication structures... The coalition will also advocate on a European level the non-discriminatory access for the public to all means of communication as an essential part of the civil right to free expression.*

- *CALL UPON the European Parliament and the European Commission, as well as national parliaments and governments in Europe, to recognise that people's direct access to information and participation in community television and radio and open channels are indispensable to democratic societies. They are essential for the development, preservation and integration of cultural identity and national, regional and community identities. Thus they are an important part of the foundation for a Europe for all people.[8]*

In 2004 the Community Media Forum Europe (CMFE) was founded after a series of European and international conferences which had made clear that there still was a lack of information and participation of the third media sector in Europe. Among other goals, the CMFE identified the importance of giving support to new independent civic media initiatives in transition countries, as a key condition for democratic participation and development in their societies.

In 2008, based in part on the advocacy of the CMFE, the EU Parliament adopted a report on community media containing the following key clauses:

"Whereas community media should be open to participation in the creation of content by members of the community, and thereby foster active volunteer participation in media production rather than passive media consumption,

Whereas community media fulfill a broad, yet largely unacknowledged role in the media landscape, particularly as a source of local content, and encourage innovation, creativity and diversity of content,

Whereas community media are an important means of empowering citizens and

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[8] http://www.openchannel.se/europe/berlin97.htm

encouraging them to become actively involved in civic society, whereas they enrich social debate, representing a means of internal pluralism (of ideas), and whereas concentration of ownership presents a threat to in-depth media coverage of issues of local interests for all groups within the community,

The European Parliament:

- *Stresses that community media are an effective means to strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and local identity, which explains the diversity of the sector...*

- *Asks Member States to make television and radio frequency spectrum available,, both analogue and digital, bearing in mind that the service provided by community media is not to be assessed in terms of opportunity cost or justification of the cost of spectrum allocation but rather in the social value it represents to strengthen cultural and linguistic diversity, social inclusion and local identity...*

- *Points out that, in light of the withdrawal or non-existence of public and commercial media in some areas, including remote areas, and the tendency by commercial media to reduce local content, community media may provide the only source of local news and information and the sole voice of local communities;*

- *Points out that good quality community media is essential in order for it to fulfill its potential and stresses the fact that without proper financial resources there cannot be such quality*

- *Advises Member States to give legal recognition to community media as a distinct group alongside commercial and public media where such recognition is still lacking[9]*

This report was followed in February of 2009 by a resolution by the Council of Europe on the role of community media in promoting social cohesion and intercultural dialogue[10].

Most of these policy objectives and observations are familiar to practioners of community media in Canada; for example, recognition that it constitutes a tier separate from the public and private tiers, the tendency for other sources of local information to have atrophied in recent years, and the value of community media to promote social dialogue, civic participation and inclusion. A new role which both the Council of Europe (CoE) and this EU report identify is the potential of community media to promote social integration and understanding among minorities within a community, particularly ethnic minorities. This has become a priority due to the increasingly xenophobic Europe of post 9/11. In 1998, Open Channels for Europe added this addendum to the Berlin Declaration:

"Integration is a personal acceptance of others as they are and an expectation that they will accept us as we are. In order to make this possible we have to meet, see and listen to each other."

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[9] For the full text, see the Community Media Forum Europe web site at: http://www.cmfe.eu/article.php?id=51. A wealth of other documents related to European community media is also available at this site at: http://www.cmfe.eu/.

[10] For the full text, see https://wcd.coe.int/wcd/ViewDoc.jsp?id=1409919.

Similarly, the EU report:

> *"Stresses also that community media promote intercultural dialogue by educating the general public, combating negative stereotypes and correcting the ideas put forward by the mass media regarding social categories threatened with exclusion, such as refugees, migrants, Roma and other ethnic and religious minorities;. stresses that community media are one of the existing means of facilitating the integration of immigrants and also enabling disadvantaged members of society to become active participants by engaging in debates that are important to them."*

Representatives of European and South Pacific community television channels all emphasize the use of community television as a tool of integration to enable minority ethnic communities to be heard and understood by the community at large.

The Netherlands[11]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Holland's National Independent Media Authority offers two categories of television and radio licenses: public and commercial. Public are by definition non-commercial, but are not necessarily operated by the government. Both commercial and public licenses can be granted to national, regional and local entities. What is known as community media in Canada (TV and radio) is defined as local public broadcasting in Holland. Groups obtaining local public licenses are authorized to broadcast radio over the air and both radio and TV via analog cable television for a five-year period.

Holland's Media Act stipulates that public broadcasting at all levels (national, regional and local) should present a "balanced" picture of society and people's interests, accessible to the entire population living in an area, and be independent of commercial interests.[12]

Local public broadcasting must be carried out by a legal entity that sets program policy and represents the "main social, cultural, religious and other spiritual movements within the municipality". Its members are appointed by the municipality at the recommendation of the broadcaster. Only one entity may operate a local public television service at a time.

The municipality is entitled to air programs on the local channel to fill up to 5% of air time, but may not in any other way influence content.

Local public broadcasters are permitted to air advertising provided by third parties, but all revenues from such ads must be used to fund production. Local broadcasters must be nonprofit and submit accounts yearly showing revenue and how it was spent.

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[11] Information in this section is provided by the former head of OLON (Organisatie van Lokale Omroepen in Nederland), Ruud de Bruin, the current head, Pieter de Wit, and Rudolf Burma, the head of SALTO, the community television organization in Amsterdam.

[12] The text of the full act is available in English at http://www.cvdm.nl/dsresource?objectid=6330&type=org.

Each local public broadcaster is legally responsible for the programming. The programming must contain:

- a minimum of 25% of cultural programming, of which half must deal with the arts
- a minimum of 35% of information or educational programming
- a maximum of 25% of entertainment programming
- a minimum of 50% of programming produced by the local broadcaster, for, and about the immediate area in the categories of informative, cultural, or educational.

The first 15 local public broadcasters in Holland were licensed in 1981, simultaneous to the establishment of OLON (Organisatie van Lokale Omroepen in Nederland or the Netherlands Organization of Local Broadcasters).

Today, there are 131 community TV channels in the Netherlands. The majority operate in small to medium-size towns and cities where there may be no other source of local television programming. The local public licenses give them broad permission to organize themselves as they see fit to provide a programming service to the community, and what has resulted is volunteer-produced television that is not "first-come, first-served" in the US style. The majority of the programs are made by volunteer producers who live in the community using the technical assistance of other volunteers, but the final call on what kinds of programs are made and produced rests with the community board of directors.

In these towns, the role of the channel is seen as one of local origination in the absence of other TV services, although the potential for the public to influence content and contribute to production is high.

In Holland's four largest population centres, Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague and Utrecht (which are served by other indigenous television services), the boards of the local public TV license holders have organized themselves according to a first-come, first-served access model so that those who feel underrepresented by professional or commercial local services have an alternative. These channels are called "open channels".

For example, in Amsterdam, there are three local public television licenses administered by the SALTO Amsterdam Broadcasting Organization. One is programmed professionally. Two are pure public-access or open channels, programmed on a first-come, first-served basis. This was the particular direction taken by the Amsterdam governing board, and reflects the fact that Amsterdam is a much busier media universe, with more fragmented niche audiences. The professional public channel is meant to serve the mainstream or "majority" audience, and the two open channels are used by ethnic, religious, artistic minorities, and any individual or organization who wants to express themselves on television.

Funding and Facilities

Funding for community TV in the Netherlands comes from several sources:

- The federal government funds municipalities at a rate of 1.07 Euros per household to support local public broadcasting. A community of 10,000 households might receive just over 10,000 Euro, while a town of 100,000 would receive just over 100,000. This formula has been subject to change and is under review. OLON feels this is inadequate and has asked for 5 Euros per household.

- Advertising.

- Miscellaneous sources such as viewer donations, lotteries, training or special projects that are chargeable, and contributions from the cable industry at the time of license transferrals or renewals.

The mix of funding varies by locality. In Groningen in the north of Holland, with a population of 180,000, the combined radio/television/teletext/and Internet service employs nine people and uses 120 volunteers. Two-thirds of its funding comes from the federal government channelled through the municipality. The remaining third comes from advertising and training.

In Amsterdam, with a population of 750,000, the three local public television channels and five radio channels share a budget of 1.1 million Euro. The board of SALTO elected to give the professional service 70% of this budget. The two open TV and 5 radio channels share the remaining 30%. This isn't enough money to offer full studio and equipment access for the public for television, only for radio. Individuals and groups that want to produce have to find thier own equipment and facilities. The SALTO office functions mainly as a playback facility.

Pieter de Wit of OLON said finding adequate funding for community TV in the Netherlands is a year-by-year battle. A major policy focus for OLON is to enact national legislation to put stable funding into the Media Act. At present, federal authorities argue that local media should be funded by local authorities.

While the municipalities do support community media, they are sometimes hesitant to put more money into channels that they feel can be critical of them. In de Wit's opinion, "National funding is needed, so that these channels can fill their media function of being a watchdog for democracy."

There is also federal funding for OLON from the National Broadcasting Fund of 470,000 Euro. OLON generates another 175,000 Euros annually from fees from member channels and about 300,000 Euros from projects. These include negotiating collective agreements on authors' rights, distributing PSAs from NGOs and government, workshops, festivals, and promotion through member channels of government initiatives such as reading programs. With this total budget of just under 1,000,000, OLON employs between 7 and 10 people who work on lobbying, infrastructure for the sector, promotion of the sector, training and support to member channels.

Distribution

Local public television has must-carry status on analog cable, which reaches more than 90% of Dutch homes. The community or open channel is one channel among approximately thirty.

Approximately 1,000,000 households have made the transition to digital cable.

10% of Dutch homes subscribe to satellite.

Distribution is in a state of transition. Open channels currently do not have must-carry status on digital cable, which is a policy issue for OLON.

While 8 of the 131 local public broadcasters in Holland are experimenting with streaming their programming over the Internet, de Wit said that the Internet is not yet considered a viable alternative for television, but an auxiliary to it. He said that community access needs to be "on every platform" and that if community TV programs were only transmitted on the Internet, 2/3rds of the producers would probably stop producing.

All programs produced for the two Amsterdam open channels are available via webstreaming live and on demand for download.[13]

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

At the 131 local public broadcasters outside Amsterdam, since the community boards' mandate is to provide basic coverage of local events, the majority of programming is a mix of in-studio talk shows and news magazines, local history, local culture, local sport, and local documentaries. The majority is not considered "alternative". Production values tend to be consistent at a given channel.

Most such channels do not fill air time 24/7 with moving video. Many provide text- and still-image-based news services in a loop when moving video is not available.

On the open channels in Amsterdam, Rotterdam, the Hague, and Utrecht, the programming can be very alternative, often leading the Dutch broadcasting sector in its technical innovation and interactivity with viewers.

In Amsterdam alone, approximately 1,000 volunteers contribute to the production of 60-70 regularly broadcast programs, in 15 languages, many subtitled in Dutch.

Of these 60-70 programs, which total approximately 8,000 hours of new production per year (some weekly, some bi-monthly):

- Many serve ethnic communities (Eritrea, Muslims, Surinam, African, Antilles, Turkish, Pakistani, Caribbean, Jewish, English, Chinese). One called *Multicultural Television, the Netherlands*, features members of different ethnic groups within the community doing interesting or outstanding things.

- Several are about music.

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[13] See the SALTO web site (in English) at http://www.amsterdambroadcasting.org.

- Several are talk shows or documentaries about current affairs and politics.

- Several deal with the Amsterdam and Dutch culture and art scene. One, called *Cult TV*, has sophisticated graphics and a rap introductory theme song created for the program. Another, *Ratatouille TV*, recently profiled a local art exhibit about the life of a theatre designer.

- A few serve groups with minority sexual preferences.

- There is programming thread for and by kids:

  - An infotainment show for youth including discussion, music and dance.
  - A game show whose contestants have common interests (e.g. three young sports instructors) followed by ENG-style reporting about work opportunities in related fields.
  - *Wise Kids*, featuring children about 10 years old interviewing personalities around town, interviewing each other, and showcasing cultural events. In a regular segment, called "Laboratorium", the kids learned a science topic, such as how bottled drinks are mixed.
  - On program by and for kids from a multicultural background, the youth reporters asked other kids what they think is meant by the word "respect". The graphics for the program show building fronts around Amsterdam chromakeyed with the faces of youth of different ethnic backgrounds. Segments include a review of a play and an interview with its director, a conversation with a folk dance troupe, a review of an Oriental movie, a rap festival, and a review of an urban architectural plan.
  - *Student TV* interviews a communist author, has a regular segment that is a kind of "Candid Camera" in which a student asks someone on the street a question. The answer is a joke at the interviewee's expense. It also includes student-made short experimental film dramas.
  - *Youngsterdam* has a regular segment called "AIR", short for "Amsterdam iPod Reporters", which consists of streeters asking Amsterdammers their opinions on aspects of pop culture. In one episode, the question is, "What's your favourite kind of dance?" The answers are interspliced a young woman touring a dance exhibit at a museum.

- There are no sports or mobile productions (since there is no centralized support for TV production, only radio).

- Many are religious (grouped onto SALTO's second channel).

- Some represent minority political views, such as anti-globalists and socialists.

- There is little drama or comedy, other than the odd skit (for example, included in *Surinaam TV* and in *Student TV*).

- There is little live production, as SALTO has no central TV studio. Most is shot and edited documentary style, although a few groups have their own studios or rent time at studios.

- Amsterdam council meetings.

- Game shows.

- Two programs are simultaneously aired on SALTO's radio channels, including an English breakfast talk show that included news and events from both the English and larger Dutch community, from an English perspective.

- When no moving video is available, a text news service is presented with audio (music or interviews) from SALTO's radio channels.

The channels are well organized, with regular listings of programs and times, and ads for other programs.

Most programs look professional. Of those that don't, flaws tend to come not from poor audio or picture (since digital cameras are so easy to operate), but a lack of structure or flow among segments.

Among the most avant-garde and interactive shows are:

- *De Hoeksteen*, a bi-weekly program simulcast on cable and on the web. It interviews people around the world on a common topic, such as the environment, the international art scene or politics. The interviewees in their homes around the world provide feeds using webcams.

- *Out Loud tv* is an art program in which people can upload their home movies to a server. The top 10 each week (by viewer vote) are cablecast on SALTO.

- *Amsterdam On Air* is taped in a theatre with a live audience. Hosts discuss topics of the day. Viewers participate by sending e-mail or SMS questions or comments, which are relayed onto a screen in the theatre.

Audience Response

In 2005, the last year in which formal data was collected, community TV channels in the Netherlands were watched by an average of 35% of Netherlanders at least once per week.

In Amsterdam, with a population of 4,000,000, the audience is more fragmented, but the programming is made by and intended to serve niche communities not served by mainstream television services also available on cable in Amsterdam.

Rudolf Burma, the head of SALTO, said that most Amsterdammers have watched the channel at one time or another and are aware of its existence, although they might not understand or be aware of its mandate as an open channel.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

According to Pieter de Wit, head of OLON, the impact on Holland of local public broadcasting (including open channels) includes:

- Strengthening local democracy. He said, "Municipalities are being given more and more tasks and responsibilities, so there is an urgent need for more and better local media to

monitor them."

- Stimulating communication among different (cultural) groups.

- Giving voices to minorities.

- Raising awareness of cultural and local identity.

- Stimulating participation in local society and cultural activities.

- Raising the talent level in broadcasting and experimenting with new programming formats (particularly at the more avant-garde Amsterdam open channel).

- Increasing media literacy, by activating people to participate in media production. Over the 25-year history of local public broadcasting in Holland, over 200,000 people have participated.

Challenges

The major challenges to Dutch community television include:

- Securing must-carry status on digital

- Establishing a national source of funding to maintain local media objectivity.

National Association?

See the final paragraph in "Funding and Facilities", above.

Germany[14]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Each of Germany's sixteen states has its own Media Law, which governs licensing and standards for media within the state. A national body co-ordinates among states, with the result that the Media Law from state to state is similar[15].

As in the Netherlands, there are two categories of television channels in Germany: commercial and public. Community channels in Germany are also called "open channels" and constitute a special category of public channel.   The Media Laws emphasize that these channels should:

- provide citizens with access to freedom of speech on television.

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[14] The information in this section comes primarily from Juergen Linke, long-time head of the Open Channel in Berlin and current head of Open Channels for Europe.

[15] The Media Law documents governing media in each state are available in German at http://www.alm.de/365.html?&ALM_PLAINTEXT=.

- access to the means of production.
- equal treatment by all.

Historically, the implementation of German open channels most closely resembles that of US public-access channels in their emphasis on individual freedom of speech as opposed to group access or local origination. The following is extracted from the web site of the German Federation for Open Channels[16]:

"There are certain regulations and rules common to all Open Channels in Germany:

1. Open Channels are first come first served channels. Irrespective of how important a producer or his programme is or is not, everybody is treated equally!

2. The Open Channel staff does not influence the contents of the productions.

3. The staff does not produce the programme. The staff members encourage people to use the Open Channel. They train the producer, support and motivate him.

4. There is no censorship.

5. The producer is legally responsible for the programme he wants to be aired. If he breaks the law he will be prosecuted.

6. All commercial activities are forbidden.

7. Using the technical equipment, the training and assistance are free. "

Making use of open channels (both television and radio) is regarded as part of any German's right to freedom of expression under the constitution.

In recent years—perhaps as a reaction to increasing media concentration—the teaching of media literacy as an overt subject by open channel staff has increased in importance. The channels are being seen as educational resources by legislators. The web site for the German Federation of Open Channels states:

"Media literacy is an important approach to education. It provides a framework to access, analyze, evaluate and create messages in a variety of forms – from print to video to the Internet. Media literacy builds an understanding of the role of media in society as well as essential skills of inquiry and self-expression necessary for citizens of a democracy.

By empowering children and youth to grow from being critical consumers of media to being effective communicators through the media, the OKB helps to create and preserve a democratic process."

The first German open channel began in 1984.

There are no "licenses" per se for open channels that can be hung on a wall. The goals of open channels are described in the Media Law, and there are two ways by which they come into existence.

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[16] The Federation's web site can be found at www.bok.de.

The Media Authority for fourteen of Germany's sixteen states operates one or more open channels directly. The director of an open channel (such as Juergen Linke, the former director of the Berlin channel and the main source for this information) is an employee of the Media Authority. These open channels are relatively well funded, and there may be several within a state. For example, the Rhineland has 20.

The second category of open channels owes its existence to the initiative of groups of citizens; for example, in a town that doesn't have a Media Authority-operated open channel. Citizens would approach the Media Authority for permission to operate, which would trigger must-carry status on cable television.

In total, there are over 80 open channels in Germany, about half in each category. A few have both radio and television licenses.

Funding

Funding for the Media-Authority operated open channels comes from the Media Authority. The Media Authority is funded by a TV set fee of 2 Euros per month per television from television owners, as in the UK. The majority of this funding goes to two professional national TV channels and several regional public channels. About 2% goes to open channels, but the exact amount depends on the yearly budgets submitted to the Media Authority by the open channels. In some states, budgets are relatively consistent. In others they can be subject to political shifts in policy.

Independent open channels (initiated by citizen request) get only part of their budgets from the Media Authority. They make up the shortfall by applying for special project budgets from the municipality, from EC funds, or from sponsorship from local businesses. No moving ads are permitted.

The range of funding for open channels therefore varies, from 1.4 million Euros for the Berlin open channel (population 3.4 million), with 13 employees and approximately 100 regular volunteers, to rural independent channels that are entirely volunteer-run. Some regional channels take advantage of employment training programs, part-time, and freelance workers.

Distribution

All but one state distributes its open channels via cable. Rostock has an over-the-air channel. Open channels have must-carry status in systems with over 50,000 subscribers.

Cable penetration is approximately 60% over the country. In Berlin, there are 1.4 million cabled households.

While most community radio stations in Germany webstream programming in addition to broadcasting over the air, only eight of the open television channels do so. The technical quality of streamed TV versus audio is not yet considered adequate to make the Internet a significant platform.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality[17]

The quantity of programming produced at open channels varies, from Berlin, with an average of 4 hours of new production per day (1 hour live, 3 hours ENG-style and edited), to small volunteer-run channels that produce 3-5 hours per week, filling their schedule with repeats and text bulletin boards with community events.

Both the Berlin channel and a few others have multi-camera mobiles for capturing special events (usually cultural), live to tape.

Berlin, along with Amsterdam, leads the West in avant-garde community-access TV programming, pushing the edge of new technologies that engage the community. In one youth program, teenagers from around Berlin could video-jockey songs and quizzes from local community centres, using webcams. For example, if the program went to air at 8 p.m., a co-ordinator from the open channel called a few minutes to air to count in the first group of teenagers, on location at a particular community centre. They would introduce clips they had prepared, such as short skits, or debate an issue. The signal was web-streamed to the open channel, and then distributed via cable throughout Berlin. After the kids at one centre were done, the next group was be cued in their centre. This is the only example of such distributed broadcasting encountered by the author world-wide.

In another experiment, the Berlin channel co-operated with the public-access centre in Grand Rapids, Michigan, to exchange an evening of Berlin and Grand Rapids programming. On a given evening, each channel web-streamed its programming over the Internet to the other channel, from which it was distributed by cable within the partner city. This gave citizens of each city a taste for public-access programming in another part of the world.

Other examples and categories of programming:

- About 20% religious programming, gradually increasing.

- Ethnic programming: including Islamic, Arabic, Slovakian, Iranian, African, Italian, Turkish, English, Greek, and Jewish. Europe post 9/11 has witnessed increasing inter-ethnic tension. Juergen Linke, former head of the Berlin Open Channel and current head of Open Channels for Europe, says he considers ethnic programming important in promoting intercultural dialogue. He regrets that the numbers of such programs have been diminishing since 9/11, however. He says the decline may be due to communities turning more inward and less willing to expose themselves to criticism. Channels in Denmark recount the same decline. Alternatively, he thinks it may be an effect of a negative environment filtering down from above. He says that the Media Authorities have a prejudice against ethnic programs, as if they might be platforms for potential terrorists. He says, "These programs are SO important for society... This really worries me". In attempt to reverse this trend, he organized a conference in Berlin in September of 2008 called "Open Channels and Intercultural Dialogue".

- As in the Netherlands, strong youth programming, including:

  - short videos shot by a youth theatre group

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[17] A live stream is available from the Open Channel in Berlin at http://www.okb.de/frame-stream-next.htm.

- a program called *Dance 24 TV* that features children's dance competitions hosted by youth themselves
- a news magazine produced by youth
- two university-made programs. In one episode, students ask people on the street about their attitudes toward life and death, as an introduction to a segment about biking adrenalin junkies. In another, inspired by a 2003/4 strike, students tackle tough, social, economic and political issues.

- A gay soap opera that is so popular the open channel in Vienna also runs it.

- Outdoor folk festivals.

- Short films, such as from Berlin's Contravision festival.

- Studio discussions politics, such as *The Other Press*, about problems in neighbourhoods or about local government.

- Music programs, showcasing for local hip hop, rock, soul, and electro-Gothic bands.

- A show about health.

- An animal rights show.

- A docu-soap about a young man's love for the theatre.

- A labour market magazine.

- A program about local history.

- A program about nature and spirituality.

Many of the studio-taped magazine programs are live and include call-in segments. Linke said that technical quality has improved in the last 10 years due to digital cameras. Most of the programs are well shot and lit. Sets tend to be simple. Most programs also are tightly edited, with a high percentage of ENG-segments. Linke commented, "A lot of new producers discover us channel-hopping. They notice that there is something different about the channel. There's a fresh quality that's a plus and they come in to our office to find out more."

While Linke acknowledged pride about the range of topics and views on the channel, he said that he had hoped that the channel would be more innovative, more radical, and more political. He said that when he approaches activist groups to introduce the open channel, they often say, "Wonderful idea, but we have no time, no people who could do that". Before he left the channel to head the German Federation of Open Channels last year, Linke introduced a system whereby people with a message can drop by the station and tape a message. Technical volunteers are on-hand to do the sound and camera[18].

He feels part of the problem is that the staff stay too long. Over the years, they lose their activism. He said that he is developing policies to encourage new entrants.

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[18] More information can be found on the web site of the Federation of Open Channels for Germany, or http://www.bok.de/doku/offene-kanaele-engl.pdf.

These comments resonate with Canada experiences prior to 1997. Many people working at community television channels were graduates from film and television training programs hoping to work in the commercial and professional industries. They often viewed their time at a community TV channel only as a stepping stone. Because the commercial and professional sectors are highly competitive, many stayed in the community sector, but found that after four or five years, their enthusiasm for working in the trenches of volunteer-run television had faded.

In addition, few were trained in community facilitation or media activism. This is one reason individuals within management of community television channels tended not oppose the gradual professionalization of Canadian channels that began in 1996-97. Many had become bored of the access format and were looking for personal challenge.

Audience Response

In Berlin, between 1 and 2% of cabled households watch the open channel on a regular basis. Given that there are currently 30-40 channels on analog cable and that the open channels aim to be nichecasters rather than broadcasters, Linke feels that this is a success story, particularly for a large city. He cited that ARTE, the popular French-German arts specialty channel, has the same audience share. He said that within niche groups for and by whom the programming is produced (especially ethnic minorities) that regular viewership is much higher.

He observed that young audiences tend to watch mainstream commercial channels, while older viewers skew toward public-service channels.

He said that the average person on the street is familiar with the open channel and its mandate.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Many Europeans, including Germans, refer to the important role that open channels play in promoting intercultural dialogue and integration with immigrant populations.

Germans, on average, are media-savvy. The Media Authorities believe that the open channels play an important role in developing this media literacy and awareness.

Challenges

Mr. Linke cited two current challenges for open channels in Germany:

- More stable, guaranteed funding in some states, particularly for the smaller independent open channels.

- Open channel staff who started the channels in the 1980s and 90s should retire and let a younger generation take over.

National Association?

The Federation of Open Channels for Germany co-ordinates activities, lobbies and offers professional development for member channels.

Austria[19]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Austria has no federal policy with respect to community television.

Because of interest expressed by journalists, academics, and groups working in the arts and alternative media, a report was commissioned by the Vienna municipal government in 2002[20] to investigate the feasibility of a Viennese community television channel. A private cablecast license was sought (since no special category of community TV license exists), and the municipality agreed to fund the channel.

There are no official guidelines for how the channel should be run. For example, there is no legal bar to the channel airing commercial advertising, since the license is a private cablecast license. The channel manager, Christian Jungwirth, and his staff base their approach and policies on the recommendations of the 2002 report.

The report was strongly influenced by the German model of community TV, with its emphasis on freedom of speech and non-commercial character. Consequently, the Vienna channel's 20 employees believe their role is to train and support the public to produce its own programming. There are over 80 programs currently, or about 2-3 hours of original programming per day. Only 2 are produced by staff. The channel does not allow moving advertising, but does permit sponsorship acknowledgement in program credits and actively encourages partnerships with community organizations including business.

Mr. Jungwirth says that a key recommendation of the 2002 report is "the legal separation of program production/distribution on one hand and ownership over all the technical infrastructure (e.g. cameras, edit suites, servers) on the other. Also very important to me is the independent ownership of these two companies. One hundred percent of the shares of both companies are in the hands of a charitable society. The members of the board are all famous persons from the scientific community, or from the field of professional journalism and the arts (especially film arts). They are all politically independent, and they give me backing against political intervention."

Funding

The municipality of Vienna's support amounts to 980,000 Euros for the current year, of a total budget of approximately 1,010-1,020,000 Euros. The difference is made up mainly by sponsorship.

Distribution

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[19] The information in this section comes Christian Jungwirth, the Vienna station manager, the station web site, and from viewing the programming.

[20] Report available on request in German.

Okto 8 is one of approximately 30 cable channels available to 900,000 of Vienna's population of 1,800,000. Terrestrial (broadcast) television has already undergone conversion to digital. Most Viennese rejected buying new digital television sets, opting instead to subscribe to cable or satellite.

Distribution via cable is not guaranteed. Initially Vienna's cable provider was resistant to the idea of unleashing "crazy" programming as one of its services. The Vice Mayor asked the company to reconsider. Since then, the cable company has come to view the channel's unique programming as a competitive advantage that satellite providers cannot offer; in particular the rich variety of ethnic programming (approximately ¼ of the program content) and niche programming, such as for the gay community.

Mr. Jungwirth is negotiating to have the Viennese community channel offered as part of cable services in other districts.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Okto 8 does not have the "first-come, first-served" programming philosophy of many German open channels and US public-access channels, even though 80 of the 82 programs currently on the air are made by the members of the public, approximately 25% of whom use their own cameras and editing equipment, with no technical support from the channel.

Mr. Junwirth believes that building audience, political, and community support is vital to the survival of the channel. Consequently, all new producers as well as technical volunteers are given extensive support and training while developing a program concept. They may discuss a series idea for a month, produce a pilot, and have feedback from channel staff before being given a green light to go forward.

This has caused some consternation in the community among proponents of completely free access. The program manager says that although there is variable quality among the programs, there is constant feedback and on-going training, and a general slow rise in quality over time. He acknowledges that the channel censors programming for failure to adhere to technical or journalistic standards. The example he gave was of programming from the "far right".

Nonetheless, he insists that his channel overall provides a different point of view that is more in depth and more independent, and which serves niche audiences not served by commercial and public broadcasters.

The programming is eclectic and relatively high-brow:

- There is no religious programming. Jungwirth says that no proselytizing nor one-sided political programming is allowed, although it is encouraged for producers to report about religion or politics from a balanced point of view.

- There is a high percentage of fiction, including five short film showcases (including one focussing on African film) and one for independent feature-length art films from across Austria which can't be seen anywhere else. He says fiction is actively sought and promoted because "It's an important genre. That's what TV is about."

- There is not much sports programming. He says that commercial and public broadcasters fill the sportscasting niche adequately, and that his mandate is to fill niches not already served. There is one wrestling program, one soccer program (about national and European sport) and one on local martial arts clubs.

- Fifteen percent of the programming is ethnic, produced in languages other than German (African (3), Arabic, Kurdish, Turkish (2), Yugoslavian, Latin American, Macedonian). Some are news magazines. Others focus on ethnic music and art.

- Eight programs about music.

- Three programs about general art and culture, including literature.

- One program about theatre.

- Two programs about philosophy and one forum that looks at different religious and lifestyle approaches; for example, paganism and homeopathy.

- One program features Viennese personalities.

- One cooking show.

- Three programs are made by and for youth.

- One program examines issues from a feminist perspective.

- Several programs are aimed at the gay and bisexual communities, including one about HIV.

- One program about urban planning and architecture.

- One program about astronomy.

- Eleven programs about local politics and issues, including several innovative formats:

  - In one, international journalists comment on issues from their own point of view, and in their own language, but the round-table discussion that follows is concluded in German.
  - Another focusses on poverty, exclusion, and integration.
  - Another debates EU issues from a Viennese perspective.
  - One is produced by the International Centre for Journalism at Danube University, and has won a prestigious award.
  - Another reports from a "feminist, anti-racist, ecological, anti-capitalist perspective".
  - Another airs both an edited version of a political round-table discussion, as well as the full-length version at a different time.

- Three to five programs are imported from Germany, including a community-produced soap opera.

- One program examines television as a medium, and fulfills a media literacy training

mandate. [21]

Although the channel can cablecast live, most material is preproduced. There are 2-3 hours of new production per day, or about 19 hours per week. The rest of the schedule is filled with repeats. Most of the 80-82 programs currently being produced have a new half hour episode once per month.

Several of the program descriptions refer to the fact that they allow more time for discussion or exploration of their topics than is possible on commercial television.

The production values are generally high: clear audio, visuals, editing, and sophisticated genres and programming formats.

Audience Response

Okto 8 has been on the air since November of 2005. In its first year, audience share was approximately 0.8 % of the cable-viewing Viennese public. Given that there are 30+ channels on cable, and 40% of the audience is dominated by the state broadcaster, that leaves an average of 2% for each other channel. In 2007, the channel's audience doubled to 1.7%. Jungwirth hopes that the audience will again double in 2008.

While he acknowledges that audience is important for the channel to continue to receive municipal support, he also acknowledges that the kind of programming produced (alternative, representing niche audiences such as ethnic and gender minorities) works in a large urban centre where these niche audiences are present and significant. He understands that he is seeking those niche audiences rather than the broad audiences pursued by public and commercial broadcasters.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

In the words of the channel manager, Austria had a "backward" media environment until recently. The first private radio station was licensed only in 1998. The first private television station was licensed in 2005. Prior to that, all services were provided by the state. While private channels in both media do exist now, 40% of viewership is still dominated by state channels. According to Mr. Jungwirth, this dominance sets the trend for what topics are discussed, the prevailing points of view, and programming genres. Private services that have been licensed since 1998 and 2005 tend to follow the lead of state channels.

In Jungwirth's view, the role of community TV is to provide both an alternate voice to this dominant model, and to enable citizens to learn about and be involved in television production.

Challenges

Mr. Jungwirth says that the biggest policy issue for community TV in Austria is to get a national

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[21] For a complete list of current programming with descriptions in English, see http://okto.tv/programmes/?language=en. The programs themselves can be viewed at http://okto.tv/webstream.

charter and funding model so that it can be enjoyed by more Austrians.

Belgium[22]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Belgium has no national policy with respect to community TV. The country is divided into three geographic areas by language group: Flemish, German and French. Each has independent responsibility for arts and communications. For example, all three zones have a publicly funded professional broadcast TV service.

Only the German zone, Eupen, with a population of 74,500, has a community-access TV channel. It is modelled on nearby German channels.

The channel was created by its current manager, Freddy Schroeder, and the Minister of Communications for Eupen, Minister Lambert. It was given a public nonprofit broadcasting license, in the same category as the public professional broadcast license, with the stipulation that it cannot show ads for commercial entities. It is allowed to promote NGOs, local clubs and other nonprofit organizations.

It is in its ninth year of operation.

Funding

The channel receives a yearly subsidy of 21,000 Euros which pays for a small space and equipment, but not staff. Until this year, it was volunteer-run. This year, Mr. Schroeder, who is a teacher at a technology school, was given a posting for the year (receiving his usual salary) to run the channel. He hopes that in future, a core staff could be provided by employment retraining programs.

Distribution

The channel is distributed by cable to 25,000 of the approximately 50,000 homes in Eupen. It is one channel among approximately thirty, the majority of which import programming from outside Belgium.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

In a given year, approximately 40 volunteers participate in program production, producing about 1.5 hours of new production per week. The channel is on the air 24/7, replaying programming in a loop.

The programs include nature documentaries set to music, local nonprofit societies presenting their activities, music concerts, occasional sporting events, occasional programs by school children, and monthly transmissions from the regional Parliament.   The youngest volunteer is

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[22] The information in this section comes from Freddie Schroeder, station manager in Eupen.

39 years of age. Most are over 50, which flavoured the program content and approach.

Mr. Schroeder said that quality is "amateur" but improving. Although the channel has a small studio with the capacity to broadcast live, he hasn't yet been able to train enough volunteers to form the core of a live studio crew. The majority of productions are shot in the more labour-intensive shoot-and-edit documentary style. He seemed uncertain why more young people (who often form the core technical crew volunteers in other countries) havn't expressed more interest in Eupen. The staff shortage limits his ability to advertise, recruit, or train volunteers. Most are self-taught.

Audience Response

Thirty percent of the inhabitants of Eupen say that they watch the channel regularly, which is high, given that only 50% of the inhabitants have access to the channel via cable in their own homes.

Mr. Schroeder said the channel receives a steady stream of supportive feedback from the community about what they like and don't like. When asked what programs had stimulated the most response, he said, "All of them. There's so little made here that it all makes an impact on people. It took us awhile to convince people that they really could make their own programs, but now that they're getting the idea, interest is finally growing, quality is slowly improving, and we get more and more audience feedback."

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

While the publicly funded professional broadcast TV service focusses on a mix of regional Eupen issues, national Belgian issues, and international issues from a Belgian point of view, Mr. Schroeder sees the community-access channel as:

- showcasing the organization, clubs, individuals and activities of the region.
- a means of self-expression for the people of the region.

Challenges

Mr. Schroeder said that the biggest challenge facing the channel is funding. Without core staff, the channel's production capacity and potential to be live, for example, is underutilized, as well as the ability to attract and train volunteers.

The United Kingdom[23]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

There were experiments with community-access TV on cable in the 1970s in the UK (copying the N. American model), but the cable industry as a whole never took off except in pockets.

Prior to 1996, broadcasting licenses in the UK were held nationally. Starting in 1996, it became possible to obtain a "Restricted Service License" for either radio or television in the UK. RSLs are currently issued for four-years, with competitions for renewal. Several dozen RSL license holders have come and gone, most operating on a commercial model and equivalent to local private broadcasters in Canada.

A minority of RSL licenses have been obtained by nonprofit organizations. Most have had business, advertising and sponsorship relationships with the local community as a funding source, such as Solent TV on the Isle of Wight (which closed in 2007).

A few have included volunteer production and the access principle in their organizational model. Only one of these access-oriented, nonprofit channels is on the air currently, Northern Visions of Belfast. Its web site states:

> "*NvTv is a not-for-profit community venture which seeks to create a public space where local issues are presented in informative and entertaining ways;*
> *health education and economic resources in the community are promoted;*
> *local talent and initiatives are celebrated;*
> *participation is inclusive of all under represented communities (whether geographical, racial, ethnic, cultural or generational)*
> *An important element of this service is to act as a forum for public discussion and to promote community access to television broadcasting.*[24]

There is one other community-access TV channel carried on cable in Immingham, on the east coast. Its carriage was negotiated with the cable company directly, without a government licensing procedure. Its mission statement is as follows:

> "*Our initial aim was to provide the area with its first local television channel. Now we have succeeded in doing so we aim to continue producing and scheduling programmes that directly or indirectly support, enhance, promote or deliver local concerns & initiatives. Concentrating on programmes that are designed to raise educational attainment, regenerate communities, develop the arts, reduce unemployment and develop the economy.*"[25]

Finally, there is one "community TV channel" distributed via digital satellite with national coverage. It is an undertaking of the nonprofit Media Trust, whose goals are to harness the power of the media industry to serve the voluntary and charitable sectors. Media Trust contributing members (which include most of Britain's commercial and professional media) pledge support and personnel to help train and assist voluntary and charitable organizations to

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[23] The information in this section was gathered on site.
[24] See http://www.northernvisions.org.

[25] See http://www.channel7tv.co.uk.

make videos about their activities and volunteer needs. These videos air on the channel. The goal is to bring this work to the attention of the British public and to encourage more participation in the voluntary sector. The Community TV Channel web site enables viewers to donate as well as find out how they can volunteer for charities in their area.[26]

Although this channel is not about local origination nor access by anyone, anytime, it nonetheless has overlap with community television philosophy in its:

- emphasis on the voluntary sector and on volunteerism, and

- on giving media access, training and support to community organizations that would not normally have such access.

The existence of this nationally distributed "community channel" created the impression in a recent report by Ofcom (the British Office of Communications) that local community TV was not needed. This reflects the lack of understanding on the part of the British regulator of the purpose of local origination and community access, and on the UK's history of almost exclusively nationally produced and distributed television.

Nonetheless, Ofcom's recent report "*Ofcom's Second Public Service Broadcasting Review - Phase 2: Preparing for the Digital Future*" summarizes large-scale audience surveys in which the British public wants:

- alternative sources of public-service broadcasting to the BBC
- more local news and information
- is willing to pay for it.

The report estimates that between 330-420 million additional pounds will need to be found from public sources to maintain the current level of local and public-service programming after the 2012 switch to digital. Despite these findings, the report does not cite community-access local production as a possible low-cost alternative. It appears that the paucity of successful community-access models within the UK to date and the UK's history of high-quality public-service broadcasting as delivered by the BBC have conditioned the regulator to think exclusively in terms of all-professional solutions[27].

Nonetheless, Britain's revised 2003 Communications Act recognized the existence of both community TV and radio as a sector, and introduced the legislative framework that Ofcom can allocate public funds to the sector if it wants. This has resulted in the creation of a formal licensing category for nonprofit community radio, but not yet for nonprofit community television (as distinct from the RSL licenses)[28].

The community-access radio sector has developed faster during the same time period. Because costs of production are less than for television, community radio channels have typically been more successful recruiting adequate advertising and sponsorship to underwrite their operations, even in small population centres.

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[26] See http://www.communitychannel.org.

[27] For the full report, see http://www.ofcom.org.uk/consult/condocs/psb2_phase2/.

[28] See http://www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2003/ukpga_20030021_en_1 for the full text of the act.

Funding and Facilities

A Community Media Fund of 500,000 pounds has been established to fund community radio. In the first year of the fund (2004), there were 15 community radio channels and this funding was adequate to the needs of applicants. This number has ballooned to 170 however, and the amount now available to each channel does not cover the cost of transmission.

While the Community Media Association of Great Britain has lobbied simultaneously for funding for community television, so far, none has been forthcoming.

The budget for Northern Visions is approximately 300,000 pounds. It defines itself as an "access media centre" promoting an "active citizenship program". It is the community development projects they do with local groups that attract financial support, not the fact that it is a television channel. In the words of Marilyn Hindman, one of the key staff: "We apply for funding based on social value including media literacy and social inclusion. For example, 50% of our wards don't have any Internet. All of the money is linked to these kinds of social value projects, not for television per se. TV is just the platform on which we broadcast the results." Northern Visions gets some funding from the Belfast City Council, the Arts Council of Northern Island, and the Northern Ireland Screen. The remainder is revenue from projects carried out with local organizations and commercial work they solicit to pay for special infrastructure needs, such as a new transmitter. The latter accounts for 20-30% of the budget.

NVTV maintains 9-12 employees, depending on the projects on-going. Seven are involved in community outreach. NVTV has its own studio, equipment and editing facilities. Three to five volunteers assist per week with essential office services, and another 40-50 per week are involved in productions via the 200 community organizations with whom NVTV collaborates.

The budget of Immingham channel 7 is 85,000 pounds, which is used for supplies such as videotape, not for salaries or facilities. The facilities (studios and editing) are supplied by the Grimsby Technical Institute. Three broadcast professionals volunteer their time to run the channel. The cash budget is raised through funding for special projects in the community, such as the production of healthy eating videos for the National Health Service, or shows produced with the police or fire service, and from advertising. The three professionals get assistance from work placement students, about 20 other regular volunteers who help with administration, and the dozens of volunteers involved with the production of particular programs.

Distribution

Northern Visions, as with other RSL license holders, is distributed free to air on UHF. It is also web-streamed with a one-day delay.

Channel 7 in Immingham is distributed via cable. It was given must-carry status as a condition of the cable license, although that status has since been removed. It is also web-streamed, although the server cannot handle more than 50 hits at a time. Channel manager Carole Dove said the server space is donated and that to expand the bandwidth would be prohibitively expensive.

The national Community Channel is available to 16.5 million households via digital satellite on

Sky 539, Virgin TV 233 and Freeview 87 and is also streamed.

Although all three channels are streaming as a secondary platform, their staff don't currently view the Internet as a viable stand-alone alternative. It is estimated that 20-30 % of British citizens don't have computers and in many places the bandwidth either doesn't permit an adequate image quality or is too expensive (for example, in Immingham). Several community TV channels have attempted to launch exclusively on the Internet during the last ten years, but have not survived. Ms. Dove said that she would have to get 65,000 hits per day to sustain a community programming service via the Internet. She decided that despite the Internet's apparent "cheapness", it wasn't really.

The British switchover to digital is planned for 2012. Although the national commercial and public broadcasters have been guaranteed free space on the service of the country's single digital multiplex operator, RSL TV license holders and community radio channels have not. This has created uncertainty among the holders of RSL licenses and was an indirect cause of at least one nonprofit channel (Solent TV) going off air in 2007.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Although series of relatively short duration are occasionally produced, Northern Visions approaches its community television mandate as an arts centre that engages in particular expressive video projects for particular purposes, often in concert with other community organizations. It airs the results of these collaborations on the community channel.

They tend not to approach programming as a "television service" per se, with the necessity of filling the channel with anchor programs, personalities, or regularly scheduled programs. In spirit, this is closer to Canada's original "Challenge for Change" philosophy (using a local cable channel to air the results of particular communications projects within the community) than to the philosophy of filling the channel with easy-to-produce series programming that resulted at most Canadian community TV channels.

Northern Visions plays an hour of programming per day, consisting of several shorter programs of no set length in a repeated cycle all day long. NvTv typically completes 4-5 hours of new production per week, which are rolled into this playback schedule. NvTv has a studio; programming is a mix of ENG shoot-and-edit documentary style programming with studio talk shows. Although staff would like to do live programming, the channel doesn't have line of site to its transmitter nor the financial resources at present.

Examples of recent programs include:

- Local multicultural festivals.

- Documentaries in which youth and teens air their views on current events. For example:
    - Teens talk about their experiences and expectations of school, and whether they view it as an important platform for a career.
    - Youth discuss wetlands.
    - Schoolchildren meet local farmers, to encourage people to buy locally.

- Local theatre and youth drama projects.

- A discussion forum among local community leaders (including the Lord Mayor) about parades in Belfast, how they are policed, applied for, and managed (a hot topic given past violence triggered by such parades).

- A regular series called *Funky Junk* by a mother and daughter to teach 6-12 year olds to use recycled materials in arts and crafts.

- A program showcasing local bands.

- A discussion forum with local filmmakers.

- A documentary about "defastenism", a movement in contemporary art.

- A profile of a music school open to all ages.

- Short films.

- A mini-series about local cemeteries, in which particular stones and are used as a jumping off point to discuss Belfast history.

- A mini-series called *Climate Camp* that tackles environmental issues. In one, demonstrators camped outside a local coal-fired power plant.

- A book show that travels to the Edinburgh International Book Festival.

- A segment about Belfast's local produce market, made by journalism students.

The programming generally looks professional… clear audio, picture and editorial structure. It doesn't look commercial however; there are no "stars" or ad breaks, and discussions on issues tend to be in depth. The program about the parades, for example, was expertly edited and always interesting, but meandered from person to person, developing arguments and tangents in depth.

The programming is generally "talky" and brings the viewer close to the people making it, but not trapped in chairs in studio. It is highly visual and mainly shot ENG-style within the community.

Immingham has three mobile media units and produces about 4 hours of new production per week (2 on projects led by in-house producers, and 2 sent in from the community). They replay programming on a five-week cycle.

Immingham's programming also tends to be project-driven and produced in association with community service organizations. Some examples:

- A literacy and numeracy program by a local service organization.

- Animated shorts from around the UK.

- *Artist Tea*, about tea-drinking habits and the inspirations of local artists.

- A program about local urban renewal in a depressed area of the city.

- Profiles of small-to-medium size local businesses.

- Community news magazine.

- A program that commemorates WWII bombing in the area.

- Investigation of local knowledge about breast cancer.

- *Childcarer of the Year Awards* (produced by local council).

- *Fast Slug,* a local music showcase.

- A local ghosthunting show.

- A profile of a neighbourhood centre, built through community effort.

- A drama about three local kids from WWII who travel to the present and back.

- *Know Your Street*, explaining the origins of local street names.

- A show about local property flooding.

- Local teen drama about pregnancy (Immingham has the highest rates in the UK).

- A local painter teaches "how to" at local landmarks.

- A program made by parents about local facilities available to parents.

- Science projects from a local school, to pique kids' interest in science.

- A show about a local phone-&-ride service.

- A "how to" dance program.

- A local film fest.

- *Viewpoint*, a soapbox about local and international issues in which viewers participate.

Immingham's programming looks professional technically. The program manager, Carole Dove, said that technically the channel can cablecast live, but has not done so because of potential legal issues if material goes to air that contravenes broadcasting codes.

The additional budget of NvTv and its stable staff enable the Belfast channel to take more initiative than Immingham in pursuing topical stories and issues. Immingham tends to have to wait to get project funding for the longer term. This accounts for the difference between a one-week playback schedule that is constantly updated and a five-week schedule.

Marilyn Hindman of NvTv had several insightful observations to make about the development of programming and its value to the community. When asked whether the majority of ideas come from the community (individuals calling or approaching the channel) or from staff, she said:

"It depends on who's here. Leadership and personalities of staff are critical for resulting programming on the channel. Not many people really have original ideas in society. That's just the way it is. It's exceptional to find really good ones.

A mixture of ideas flow in from community with staff-initiated ideas. Ideas spark being out in community working all the time. It's the interaction.

For example, take our cultural tourism work on the Shankhill. People travel here to see the murals. We had started covering only the history, the heritage, but people from that area were frustrated that tourists come in, see the murals, and then leave without spending any money. So we started to promote hotels and restaurants where people can stop and stay. These things kind of grow. If you just rely on the people in the community calling in with ideas… you don't get that. You need the coordination at the top to make the linkages and keep the long-term development that feeds back into the community."

She also had a significant comment about the relatively low volume of programming produced by her staff each week (4-5 hours) versus the volume that can be produced at a typical US or Canadian public-access channel in a mid-sized city using volunteers (where figures upward of 30 hours a week are typical).   She pointed out that in a multichannel universe, nobody watches any channel more than a few hours a week in any case, and if you can capture viewers for that few hours, you're doing well. She pointed out that reruns of popular series are available over and over on different channels on satellite and cable services, allowing viewers to watch most shows on demand simply by switching channels. "Even commercial channels only come up with 3-4 hours per week, even the BBC. The rest are network repeats." According to her, it's no longer a matter of trying to build audience loyalty to a single channel that needs to produce new programming every day, but to produce high-quality, relevant programming that people can apply in their lives. If they know they can find that on your channel and they check in to see what's new periodically, that's enough.

This discussion about whether volume matters in the new media environment (one of the advantages of volunteer-driven local television historically has been its generation of significant amounts of programming at low cost) will be an important one in future policy-making.

Audience Response

In surveys done in Belfast, 1 in 5 of the potential audience of 250,000 say they watch NvTv at least once a week.

Immingham, channel 7 has a potential audience of 140,000 homes across NE Lincolnshire on digital cable. Over the last 3 years, 67% of local people say they watch once a week. Older people watch more often. Younger people tend to watch if there's somebody they know; for example local bands, which generate requests for DVDs. Channel 7's schedule is published in the newspaper and there is reasonably high awareness of its mandate and programming.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Both NvTv and Channel 7 Immingham are articulate about their role in the community:

Carol Dove comments on the qualitative feedback that the channel receives: "People watch because they see good-news messages about their area. Local TV coming from the BBC and ITV is mostly local news. They just never cover anything that's nice. You hear about the stabbings and deaths and playgrounds being vandalized. It's about ethical content, not doing anything for a head-line. We cover the things that make us feel proud of the community and feel good about ourselves. For example, we did a show on how people got their first jobs… a fireman, a policeman. People say, 'I know Helen, I know Buster'. You just don't get that anywhere else."

Marilyn Hindman at NvTv: "People talk about human rights, especially in a place like Belfast. The right to communicate underlies everything else. You could say, 'Well we have the BBC and ITV', but there's no real right to communicate there. There are gatekeepers. The Commissioning Editors and all the other people who run those channels always have the last say, no matter how much they try to do a documentary that interviews people in the grassroots. There's nothing where communities can actually say what they want and have it broadcast. Everything comes from that. Especially if you live in a divided city, people need these outlets. You need to be able to discuss all these things and bring everybody in before you can make any positive changes, like what we're doing in the Shankhill. We did surveys, and they said we need to break the isolation. We need to be able to talk to one another, have better links with Britain, and to understand what one another is doing. Communication underlies everything. Without good communication, anything else you try to accomplish doesn't work."

Challenges

Local broadcasting has always been problematic in the United Kingdom. The RSL license structure is generally recognized to have "failed", to quote one industry observer. There had initially been a Local Broadcast Group (LBG), a professional association of RSL license holders, that met to discuss strategy and common issues, but it has folded.

Most practitioners have concluded that LCTV (local community TV) cannot survive without public subsidies and volunteer labour.

National Association?

The Community Media Association of Great Britain (the CMA) represents both community television, community radio, and Internet-based community initiatives. The Association lobbies on behalf of the sector, and provides professional and educational leadership.[29]

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[29] For more information about the CMA, see http://www.commedia.org.uk.

Ireland

Margaret Gillan of the Community Media Network informed the author in January of 2012 that there are active community TV channels in Dublin, Cork, and Navan in the Republic of Ireland.

We await updates to this report from these channels. For more information about them in the mean time, please see their web sites at: www.dctv.ie, www.cctv.ie and www.p5tv.com respectively.

Denmark[30]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

As in many countries, community TV in Denmark is in a period of transition, anticipating the switchover to digital.

Until this year, there has been an over-the-air community television channel in Copenhagen. In 113 smaller population centres, community TV has been allotted 3 hours per week of air-time on local commercial TV channels.

Both the channel in Copenhagen and the 113 smaller community TV organizations are not allowed to show advertising and are expected to maximize opportunities for local expression by groups and individuals in the community.

Funding and Facilities

Denmark's community TV sector is the best-funded among Scandinavian countries, receiving 50,000,000 krones (about $11,000,000 Canadian) per year from the federal government. This amount is divided among Copenhagen (which receives 12,000,000 krones or about $2,500,000 Canadian) and the 113 smaller centres.

In addition, some centres receive additional funding from municipalities, NGOs and other local organizations who wish to make programs in partnership with the channels.

For example, Aarhus, Denmark's second-largest city (with 300,000 inhabitants) receives 260,000 krones (about $50,000 Canadian) from federal sources and an additional 1,000,000 krones (about $200,000) per year from the municipality.   Eight full-time employees co-ordinate access television production, and two co-ordinate radio production.

Smaller centres might receive $100-150,000 krone ($20-25,000 Canadian) and might afford a single employee; the rest would be volunteers.

Whether these budgets translate into a central production centre varies by location. Aarhus is housed in a municipally supported media centre shared by several groups. They deliver tapes for playback to the commercial channel's head-end.

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[30] Information in this section was provided by Erik Meistrup, Chairman of the National Organization of Danish Community TV and by community producers in Copenhagen and Aarhus.

Copenhagen's 40+ producing groups meet at 5 or 6 different centres around the city where they can share studio time and equipment, and from which they can broadcast live. Many of these are municipal facilities provided rent-free.   Copenhagen supplements its income by selling late-night time to commercial enterprises.

Neither Copenhagen nor the community TV groups in smaller centres are permitted to air commercial ads, only a sponsorship message at the beginning and end of programs.

Distribution

The Copenhagen community channel is analog, over the air on UHF, with a potential audience of 2,000,000 (40% of Denmark's population). The Copenhagen channel also webcasts three channels.

The 113 other community TV production centres in Denmark get 3 hours per week each on a local commercial over-the-air analog channel.

Starting in November of 2009, the 113 community producing centres will be allotted approximately 6 hours each on one of 9 regional digital channels. This represents a two-fold increase in their access to air-time and much greater audience reach. Production will continue to happen at the 113 centres.

The fate of the Copenhagen fully devoted analog channel is undecided. Its producers, like those in the smaller centres, are entitled to a certain number of hours on one of the new regional digital channels, representing a decrease in air-time. They are contesting this change.

About 50% of Danes subscribe to cable. Whether a local community TV signal is available on cable as well as over-the-air depends on local conditions. For example, in Aarhus, the community producing organization, in addition to producing 3 hours per week for the over-the-air local commercial affiliate, also provides about 50% of the programming for a local cable channel on the Stofa service.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Community stations in Denmark, as in other countries, vary widely in how much they are able to produce, usually depending on the local population base. For example, the three hours of air-time currently available on analog channels is enough for some of the smaller stations. Other stations, such as Aarhus, welcome the move to digital that will occur in 2009, doubling their air-time, because they can easily fill it.

Copenhagen produces over 40 hours of new programming per week, and is on air 24/7[31]. Its programming falls into the following categories:
- comedy and entertainment (shot in comedy clubs)
- sport (boxing, fitness, motor-sport)
- politics (EU from a Danish point of view)
- culture (mostly local to Copenhagen, including cult music)

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[31] For more information about the Copenhagen channel (in Danish), see http://www.kanalkobenhavn.dk.

- lifestyles (camping, gadgets)
- erotica (for seniors, for youth)
- documentaries (a recent one examined Greenland's relationship to Denmark, another about Bolivia)
- short videos
- debate

At the smaller channels:

- Since NGOs often provide partial funding for community television groups, the programming often reflects their concerns. For example, in Aarhus, there is a program made by and about psychiatric patients. Another deals with health issues and disabilities. Another tackles youth issues.

- Thirty-forty percent of the pogramming provides alternative information about politics and local issues. For example, Aarhus offers news made by ethnic minorities, with subtitles in Danish so that the larger community can share their concerns. Other programs deal with issues of local housing or resource allocation, and routinely feed into local policy-making.

- Another large category of programming deals with local culture, including literature, new authors, local painters, and sculptors.

Most Danish community programming looks semi-professional. It looks and sounds clean technically, and benefits from clean editing. The strength of the journalism and hosting varies by program, but as in most places, the fresh voices and faces, localism, and lack of commercial format is considered to be a plus by channel viewers.

Audience Response

Danish community television is well watched. In Copenhagen, 150,000 watch per week, out of population of 1,000,000 and about 500,000 potential viewers (50% have cable and do not receive the over-the-air signal).

The Aarhus community programs receive about 30,000 viewers per week on the Stofa cable service of 120,000 potential viewers. No measurements have been done of over-the-air viewers.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Most Danish cities are too small to support local commercial television production, so community production is the only source of local TV. Two other large impacts of community TV in Denmark are:

- In promoting Danish culture, both nationally and locally. According to industry participants, this has become a more important role in the last five years, as Denmark's national channels have cut back on artistic and cultural programming that does not fall under the broad category of entertainment.

- Since 9/11, the ethnic programming provided by the channels, as in Germany and other European countries, is considered to be a vital means of promoting integration and cross-cultural understanding.

Challenges

With the move to digital next year, Danish channels will need more funding both to make the technical transition, as well as to support the additional programming that the increased air-time will enable.

National Association?

There is no national community television association in Denmark, although several informal groups exchange information about technical and legislative issues.

Norway[32]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

NRK, the Norwegian state television channel, was the only Norwegian TV channel until 1988, when the private TVNorge was licensed. The first private radio channels were licensed in the 1970s. Channels from other countries came to Norway via cable in the 1970s and 80s and later by satellite.

Analog to digital conversion is in progress for over-the-air channels, which will enable space for more channels and improve quality. RIKF TV, a private consortium, will manage the network of new digital transmission towers.

In this environment, two community TV channels have existed for more than fifteen years, and one national public-access channel was licensed this year:

- In Halden, a town of 28,000, there has been a community TV channel for 15 years, run by 8-10 volunteers. Kjetil Aabo, the station's manager and editor, said that the channel was his idea. He asked the government for permission, and then asked the local cable company for a channel. The company said "yes" because they felt they could sell more subscriptions with local programming. About 50% of the local population has cable. The remainder has either satellite or over-the-air TV.

  Over the years, other cable operators have been given permission to do their own transmissions, occasionally accepting tapes from the public.

- A small team of students started Student TV in Trondheim in 1991. They produce 30-minutes of student news every week that was initially aired on NRK in prime-time but now airs on a local affiliate of TVNorge. It isn't "public-access" in that the students do not advertise the possibility of volunteering or facilitate community involvement, but they

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[32] Information in this section comes from phone interviews with community channel staff.

themselves are non-professionals[33].

- Influenced by examples in Germany and Sweden, a national public-access channel called Frikanalen (The Free Channel) launched this year on a digital over-the-air channel. It resulted from a consortium of more than 60 sports, cultural, political, and community service organizations that "want a community window where they can present themselves and interact with viewers"[34].

   Producing organizations are individually legally responsible for content.

Extracts from Norwegian Parliamentary records and documents that led to the establishment of Frikanalen include the following:

- (from 2002) *To achieve pluralistic public debate, it's necessary to consider the real access the community has to television. In several countries, the law requires broadcasters or distributors to reserve some of the broadcast capacity for religious and other organizations. In the Nordic countries this is termed "open channels". This is important to guarantee free speech. The government must work out new licensing rules and distribution channels via the digitalization of television*[35].

- (from 2003-4) *There has been good experiences with similar channels in other countries. In an era of strong commercial dominance in the media, we must make sure that a non-commercial alternative can find space, and that financial solutions be found to realize this goal*[36].

- (from 2003-4) *Access to media as channels of free speech is normally limited, at least for those who are not preferred sources by the commercial media. To buy access in media through advertisements is not realistic for most people, because it is very expensive. Several media concepts can promote pluralism and access to free speech, including access by marginalized groups in society. One example is the introduction of so-called "open channels", which enable participation by many different organizations that edit their own programs. Such concepts are known abroad*[37].

- (from 2003-4) *The introduction of an "open television channel" in Norway is an example of*

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[33] Source: Eric Volg, student programmer.

[34] Source: Frikanalen's CEO, Finn Andreasson. For more information about Frikanalen, see (in Norwegian) http://www.frikanalen.no

[35] Translation provided by Ola Tellesbo from the Norwegian Parliamentary web site: http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Innstillinger/Stortinget/2001-2002/inns-200102-142/

[36] Translation provided by Ola Tellesbo from the Norwegian Parliamentary web site: http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Innstillinger/Stortinget/2003-2004/inns-200304-128/

[37] Translation provided by Ola Tellesbo from the Norwegian Ministry of Justice web site: http://www.regjeringen.no/nb/dep/jd/dok/regpubl/stmeld/20032004/Stmeld-nr-26-2003-2004-.html?id=197978

how the government can enable open and enriched public dialogue.[38]

Funding and Facilities

Halden TV derives funding from commercial ads and from community donations. The station manager has the channel's only editing suite in his home. There is also a studio/office in the town from which live broadcasts can be made. Many programs are made in volunteer's living rooms or in informal studios.

The budget for Frikanalen is about $500,000 US from the Norwegian department of culture. In addition, users will pay yearly membership fees of about $2,000 US.

At the beginning, Frikanalen will just be a playback facility to which producers will bring tapes. In the long term, the channel would like to help support production. Finn Andreasson, Frikanalen's CEO, estimates the organization will need about $2,000,000 US to do it.

Distribution

Halden TV both cablecasts and webcasts.[39]

Because the country's transition to digital is gradual and digital channels are becoming available a few at a time, for the first two years of Frikanalen's license, the channel will broadcast from 12-17:30 each day, sharing a channel with local commercial television. After two years, Frikanalen will broadcast 24/7. Frikanalen is lobbying for must-carry status on satellite and cable.

Frikanalen will also offer its programming for download from a web server.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Halden TV produces 2-3 hours per night on week nights, including the *Halden Magazine[40]*, consisting of local interviews, sports, and politics. In one of its most popular regular programs, *Roundtrip in Halden*, two volunteers drive around Halden to see what's going on, pointing the camera out the window, making humorous comments along the way.

The majority of programs are pretaped. Occasional live sports programs are produced.

Programming categories and members that will appear on Frikanalen include:

- Student TV from Trondheim
- A national sea rescue organization
- A program by the blind and weak-sighted

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[38] Translation provided by Ola Tellesbo from the Norwegian Parliamentary web site:
        http://www.stortinget.no/no/Saker-og-publikasjoner/Publikasjoner/Innstillinger/Stortinget/2003-2004/inns-200304-270/
[39] http://www.halden.net/tv/
[40] Source: Kjetil Aabo, manager and editor at Halden TV.

- Welfare organizations
- Minority groups
- Children and youth programming
- Sports
- Culture
- Community organizations
- Religious programming, limited to a maximum of 30 minutes a day. (Many more religious groups wanted access but did not get it.)

Audience Response

No audience surveys have been done at TV Halden, but its manager reports that "Many people like it, and tell their friends." His view appears to be supported by the cable operator who carries the programming, as they keep it in the channel line-up voluntarily.

Student TV in Trondheim reports that it is watched by about 120,000 viewers per month out of a potential viewing audience of 400,000.

Audience figures for Frikanalen are not yet available.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Due to the limited presence of community-access TV in Norway and the newness of Frikanalen, it's premature to assess the role of community TV in the country. However, the fact that more than 60 community groups lobbied for 6 years to get the license for Frikanalen attests to the need felt by these groups for an outlet to reach audiences.

Challenges

Norway has very limited amounts of local television of any kind. It could fill this gap with low-cost volunteer-supported community television if the example of TV Halden were promoted or made mandatory to cable operators. Cable is accessible to only half of Norway's population, however. To reach the remainder, local over-the-air services on the new digital networks would have to be explroed.

National Association?

Although a consortium of community organizations came together to lobby for Frikanalen, no formal community media organization exists in Norway.

Finland[41]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

A network of 24 community-access channels serves Finland's Swedish minority (6% of the total population, with a potential reach of 150,000 or half the total Swedish-speaking population). Eighteen of these channels are very active, and four can afford minimal staff. The rest are staffed by volunteers.

The oldest channel started in Nykarleby in 1972. Most of the rest began throughout the 1980s. The latest opened in 1993. The idea for community-access channels came from Finland's first cable network, which entered the Swedish-speaking part of Finland with the idea of cablecasting Swedish programming from Sweden, supplemented with local material. The first such channel was informal. Regulation followed that cable operators must reserve space for a nonprofit community TV channel, although they are not obliged to run it[42].

Cable TV to the rest of Finland followed later, and has reached 45% penetration country-wide.

In addition, a community-access channel in Helsinki called M2Hz recently opened, whose programming is primarily offered in Finnish. This channel was initiated by a consortium of 40 cultural organizations concerned about the conversion to digital television[43].

According to Minna Tarka, the director of the Helsinki channel, the digital conversion was originally touted as an opportunity to open up more bandwidth for civil use in more "interactive" and "participatory" formats. She says that digital licenses were given away on commercial bases primarily to multinationals, with little consideration of cultural impact. She says Finland is such a small country (5,000,000) that the prevailing view is that television is too expensive to be produced domestically.

Finally, Tarka says that the terrestrial digital network is owned by a non-Finnish company (Digita Oy, part of the French TDF group), and that digital transmission fees are huge, beyond the range of "the little guy".

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[41] The information in this section is derived from long-distance phone calls and web sites, as noted.

[42] The information about Swedish-speaking access channels in Finland was provided by Jan Sundqvist, the co-ordinator of the Finnish-Sedish Local TV Association. For more info, see the association's web site at http://www.lokaltv.org/pages/index-eng.html.

[43] Source, Minna Tarka, director of the channel's host organization MCUit, who is currently writing a PHd about digital conversion. For more information, see the channel's web site at http://www.m2hz.net/?lang=en&p=news.

As a response, 40 groups within civil society including artists, NGOs, and associations of seniors and immigrants got together to petition the Ministry of Transportation and Communications to develop a new kind of channel in Helsinki and to find space for it within the digital system. The mission statement on the channel's web site states:

"M2HZ opens a new channel for cultural production and social debate. M2HZ aims to provide a missing link to the Finnish media landscape, where the concept of public access television does not exist and where the convergence of media ownership has created a homogenous public sphere."

Funding

A few of the rural Swedish-speaking channels receive small amounts of public support from local government, amounting to perhaps 50% of a total budget of 10-20,000 Euros. Some sell commercial space. A few sell their programs to the national Swedish-language public broadcaster, YLE FST 5.

Channels have occasionally had problems accepting municipal funding; the municipal body may try to censor segments critical of local authorities. Most try to stay independent.

Local viewers also donate and sponsor programming.

The new Helsinki channel received a three-year start-up budget of 210,000 Euros from a regional council.

Distribution

Distribution of the Swedish network of community channels is mostly by digital cable, but a few are distributed over the air on the digital network. Some also webstream.

The new Helsinki channel is being distributed in an experimental mode over the mobile devices of a telephone company, one program a week on a local cable channel owned by Sanoma, Finland's biggest media company, and over the Internet. Tarka says channel contributors hope to expand these options to include digital terrestrial and digital cable.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

In 1995, the last year in which a survey was done, 1480 hours of programming were produced by all Finnish community-access channels, more than YLE FST 5, the Swedish-language channel distributed by the Finnish national broadcaster. Most produce 2-3 hours per month, which are replayed several times, with a text information service the rest of the time.

Most channels are staffed by about a dozen regular volunteers who make the programming as a hobby. At Nykarleby, they range in age from 15 to 65.

The most common categories of programming include local news, live coverage of local council meetings, documentaries, portraits of local individuals, and occasionally drama or short films or animation.

The Nykarleby channel manager said that the program that had the most impact was about an immigrant family that came to Nykarleby from the Middle East that wanted to stay, but couldn't get a VISA. When they were supposed to leave Finland, they disappeared, and were hidden by a family in Nykarleby. To reassure friends that they were OK, the family filmed themselves transmitting a greeting and aired it on the community channel.

Webstreams from some of the channels show simple formats: studio talk shows in tiny home-made studios, or stand-ups done at sporting or cultural events.

M2Hz solicits programming from the community. Topics produced recently include:

- Profiles of local artists
- A segment on Helsinki forests
- A segment on fair trade for coffee
- Streeters asking Helsinki residents whether the global financial crisis would affect their Christmas holiday celebrations
- Poetry
- A segment on the Helsinki Museum of Contemporary Art
- Video art
- Responsible fashion tips, in a segment called "Know What You Wear"
- Street art versus graffiti
- Finns discuss raising their children in other countries
- Streets asking Helsinki residents who they think are the most powerful individuals on earth
- An animation spoofing the word "candidate", to coincide with local elections
- Travellers' rights that airlines often don't tell you about

Audience Response

According to Jan Sundqvist of the Finnish-Swedish Local TV Association, most people in the small communities served by member channels watch their channels every week. The most dynamic category for viewers is news... They tune in to find out what's going on in their community in their own language.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

While it's premature to assess the role and impact of the Helsinki channel M2Hz, Jan Sundqvist at the Finnish-Swedish Local TV Association said the biggest impact of member channels has been to "keep our citizens together in a positive way. When you go to work, everybody says, 'I saw you on TV'. It makes the whole community feel like a family." The intimacy of the programming and its impact is similar to that of kibbutz TV in Israel.

National Association?

The Finnish-Swedish Local TV Association employs a single co-ordinator. Via the association, member channels have been sharing programming since 2005, and carrying out professional development activities such as training and a yearly video festival.

Sweden[44]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

According to Christer Hederstrom, Media Advisor to the Swedish government, "Swedish cities are too small for local commercial TV operation."

To help fill this vacuum, Sweden has had "open channels" since 1985. These channels have their own license category, which is free, non-commercial, has must-carry status on cable, and is mandated to enable volunteer access. They cannot broadcast commercials, but are allowed sponsorship.   The Swedish Radio and Television Authority web site states:

"The Swedish Radio and TV Authority may appoint a legal entity as a local cable television company. This gives cost-free access to a specified amount of capacity on each cable network with more than one hundred connected households in a municipality. The local cable television company must allow different interests and opinions to express themselves in its activity. In their broadcasting activity, local cable television companies must strive for the broadest possible freedom of expression and information. The broadcasts of a local cable television company are normally limited to one municipality. "

As of March 2008, 27 local cable television companies or "open channels" (mostly NGOs) had been appointed by the Swedish Radio and TV Authority[45].

Funding and Facilities

Swedish open channels are financed by membership fees from producing associations. For example, there are approximately 80 producing associations in Stockholm, each paying about $1,300 for the right to cablecast on a regular basis. The channel in Stockholm has a studio and producing facilities that are free for members. It has one employee. The rest are volunteers. Approximately 50% of programming is produced using these common facilities. The rest are produced with member resources and equipment.

Gothenburg's community TV channel, in another of Sweden's larger centres, charges both a membership fee and a broadcast fee per program.

Most channels are entirely volunteer-run.

Distribution

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[44] Information in this section was provided by Christer Hederstrom, Media Advisor to the Swedish Government, and from web sites and documents written by Mr. Hederstrom, including *Access Broadcasting Governmental Inquiry on Non-commercial Local Radio and Television Completed*, 2004 (Summary in English, main report in Swedish) and http://www.communitymedia.se/cat/accesstv.htm.

[45] See www.rtvv.se.

Just over four million Swedish households have a television set. Fifty percent receive programming via cable television networks, about 30% use their own aerial for terrestrial transmissions, and the remaining 20% have their own or a shared receiving dish for satellite television.

The transition from analog to digital distribution of terrestrial TV began in the autumn of 2005. The digital distribution network currently covers 98 percent of Swedish households. Thirty-five percent of households have made the switch to digital.   When digitalization is fully implemented, the degree of coverage for SVT's channels is expected to reach 99.8%.

Most Swedish community TV channels also webstream[46]. Gothenburg has a programming archive that is available 24/7.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Stockholm, with 340,000 households, produces 60 hours of new programming per week.

To make a program, community producers have to belong to an NGO that is a paying member. While it is relatively easy to start an NGO, the membership fees present a barrier for individuals who may want to make one-of projects.

Approximately 1/3 of the programming in Stockholm is made by ethnic minorities. Other programs include:

- A chess show made by teenage girls, which is so popular it is distributed on community channels in smaller cities.

- City council meetings, live.

- Religious programming.

- Gothenburg airs a live feed from the European parliament.

- In Vaxjo: Of 197 programs downloadable from its web archives, 95 are religious, 20 are sports, 60 are culture or news, 13 are live presentations or performance, and 9 are short films or drama. Vaxjo is considered to carry an abundance of progressive programming, including *Democracy Now* from US public-access, political programs made by students, and coverage of local football and soccer teams. (While sports coverage is relatively commonplace on community TV in North America, it's resource-intensive, high-budget, and therefore rare on volunteer-run channels.)

- Smaller cities tend to do less original programming (e.g. 1 hour per week). They fill time with repeats and text messageboards.

Audience Response

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[46] To watch this programming, see the individual web sites at http://www.communitymedia.se/cat/links.htm#sweden.

Mr. Hederstrom said that no surveys of viewership have ever been done. He said, "One viewer is as valuable as 100. We're niche-casting. It's not a commercial model." However, he said that many of the producing groups, particularly ethnic programs such as *Somali Television*, receive a lot of feedback from viewers.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Mr. Hederstrom says that the overall impact of community TV in Sweden is that it is providing a democratic platform for communication. He said that public and commercial channels are not open "except for the white man. This is a multicultural society, and open channels are the stage for that. Young people, women, handicapped people and old people can all find a voice."

Challenges

1) There needs to be public funding to reduce the reliance on member fees and open up access to the channels to a broader base.

   Mr. Hederstrom, who advises the Swedish government on community media policy, is working with government to fund a national organization for community TV and radio. He said that what has hampered federal funding for community TV up to this point is that the government doesn't want to have to deal with channels on a one-by-one basis to monitor licensing or performance. The Television and Radio Authority would prefer to create a single fund and have a separate organization handle licensing, monitoring and funding.

   This direction would appear to apply in Canada as well. With rapid changes in technologies and marketplaces since 1997, the CRTC has found channel-by-channel monitoring of the community sector difficult.

2) The 35% of Swedish homes that have already made the transition to digital television no longer have access to open channels. Open channels have not yet been assigned space in the digital spectrum.

National Organization?

Sweden has an Open Channel Network maintained by volunteers.

Spain[47]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Spain has a dynamic yet checkered history of community-access television. The first access channel, Radio Television Cardadeu (RTVC) was set up in the province of Catalonia[48]. Regular broadcasts began in 1982. The goal of channel was to produce programming in the Catalan language. Catalonia, along with Galicia and Basque areas of the country, had all suffered brutal repression under Franco.

The Spanish government of the time allowed no private broadcasting of any kind that would compete with broadcasts of the national Spanish Radio Television (RTVE).

RTVC established three principles of operation:

- In-house production of news and information in Catalan, based on citizen involvement.

- Nonprofit structure, including strict limits on advertising.

- Broadcasting geographically restricted to the municipality.

This model appears to have evolved partly as an ideological position (to allow citizens to exercise the right to freedom of speech, only recently restored in the post-Franco era), and partly to demonstrate that the channel was not competing with the national broadcaster. This nonprofit, non-commercial, and local mandate was used as a defence against several attempts to shut down the channel during the early 1980s.

At the time, there was little interest in local commercial production, which was viewed as too expensive.

RTVC became a model that was copied by more than 40 community-access channels throughout Catalonia, Galicia and the Basque territories, most of which survived until the end of the 1980s.

Their activities and successes demonstrated the viability of local television, and began to attract interest by municipalities that wanted a more professional and commercialized local service, particularly as production costs dropped with the introduction of smaller digital-format cameras and editing systems. During the 1990s, competing models of what local TV should be like

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[47] Information in this section was provided by a) Carme Mayugo, a media literacy teacher and a member of Okupem las Ones in Barcelona. She is pursuing a doctorate at the University of Santiago de Compostela about the relationship between media literacy and community-access television b) Pamella Gallo, a media researcher based in Spain c) articles and statistics available on-line about the Spanish audio-visual sector.

[48] For more information about RTVC, see http://www.cardedeu.org/tele.

sprung up, including a municipally supported and administered professional public-service model, as well as a private commercial model. Legislation was passed that discriminated against the original access channels; for example, that there could only be one license holder in a municipality, or that license-holders had to produce a minimum number of new hours of programming per day, or must have a minimum amount of equipment and resources before applying.

Today, 12 community-access television channels remain in Catalonia, 3 in Andalucia, and 1 in Galicia. All find themselves in a state of legislative semi-limbo.   In 2004, the Spanish government introduced its "National Technical Plan for Digital Terrestrial Television", which envisioned that all broadcasters should have made the switch from analog to digital between 2006 and 2008[49]. Many of the community-access broadcasters found that they couldn't meet the technical and commercial requirements of the Plan, and were facing closure by late 2007. In order to preserve them, first the Senate and then the Deputies' Congress approved modifications to the 2007 "Law for the Information Society" that would enable them to continue analog transmission. This law, called "LISI", recognizes the need for these broadcasters as follows:

The fifteenth amendment:

In order to promote the presence of citizens and private non-profit entities and to guarantee pluralism, freedom of expression and citizen participation in the information society, means of financial and other support must be found for the development of services of a non-profit nature, managed by citizens, which promote democratic values and participation, whether they be of general interest or for communities or groups that are socially disadvantaged.

The eighteenth amendment says that frequencies will be set aside for such use, and that channels that cannot qualify under the new regulations can continue to broadcast in analog according to the original 1995 law[50].

The idea of neighbourhood, volunteer-driven television also caught on in Barcelona. During the period 1989-93, ten communities shared and programmed one channel that was seen city-wide. This frequency was taken over by the municipally funded Barcelona TV in 2004, which consciously modelled itself on Toronto's City TV. The management continued to air short segments from the 10 neighbourhood TV offices. (This kind of citizen participation had been envisioned in City TV's original license application.) Barcelona TV also installed self-operating street cameras throughout the city, with which pedestrians could record messages for airing (also copying CityTV). According to Spanish media commentators, this focus on citizen access and alternative production started to be de-emphasized following the 2002 Barcelona Olympics, which pushed the broadcaster in a more "slick and heavily capitalized direction".[51]

None of the original neighbourhood offices survives in Barcelona, although a pirate channel called "Okupem les Ones" (We Occupy the Airwaves) started broadcasting in 2002[52] in the

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[49] For the text of the Plan (in the original Spanish), see http://www.porlared.com/cinered/portada/plantdt.pdf.

[50] For the full text of LISI (in Spanish), see http://xribas.typepad.com/xavier_ribas/files/LISI.pdf.

[51] For more information on Barcelona TV, see the channel's web site at http://www.barcelonatv.cat.

[52] For more information, see the channel's web site at http://www.okupemlesones.org/

Catalan language.

Today, the only licensed access television that survives in a large city is Tele K in the Vallecas neighbourhood of Madrid[53], covering a broadcast area of 2 kilometres.

Funding and Facilities

Funding for most community-access TV is a mix of municipal funding, publicity for small local businesses, and direct support from the community.   Tele K in Madrid receives no public monies and has developed a mixed funding formula, including 40% from workshop and teaching fees. The remainder comes from memberships, contributions from the community and advertising.

Distribution

Distribution of community-access TV in Spain is over-the-air on UHF. In communities in which the transition has already been made to digital television but where a community-access channel continues to broadcast in analog, viewers can elect to turn their digital set-top boxes off or on.

A few channels, such as Okupem les Ones, make live and archival programming available through their web sites.

While 90% of the population can now receive digital terrestrial signals, it is estimated that approximately 40% have bought the set-top decoders necessary to use the signals, 21% receive satellite television, 15% receive cable, and about 4% receive television service via DSL or phone lines.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The majority of community-access TV channels (with the exception of Tele K in Madrid) serve communities with fewer than 50,000 residents. Community-access channels like the one in Cardadeu broadcast talk shows, local news, sports and cultural events. (The original motivation for establishing the channel was to be able to broadcast local "jazz nights".)

The 2-3 employees of a such channels often focus on core weekly programming such as news, sports and special events, while volunteers (perhaps 10-30) produce special-interest themes such as kids' programming, dance, or other social or cultural issues.

Most produce a weekly block of programming (perhaps 5-6 hours of new programming) which is repeated throughout the work. Most have studios and live facilities.   Participation by telephone and studio audiences are common.

While all produce programming that is local and many enable active local viewer participation (both qualities which make them alternative to regional and national services), it is researcher

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[53] See Tele K's web site at http://www.vallecas.org/. A live stream of Tele K's programming can be viewed at http://www.worldtvradio.com/p2ptv/spanish/tele-k-vallecas.

Carme Mayugo's opinion that the majority are not progressive in approach in other ways. Only RCTV in Cardadeu, Tele K, Okupem las Ones, and one channel in Andalucia actively think about media literacy themes or that they are providing alternative production methodologies, genres or viewpoints to other media.

Examples of RCTV Caradadeu's programming:

- *The Armchair*, a program about Catalonian literature and poetry. Locals present poems, new publications are discussed, and viewers compete to identify works read on air.

- Game shows whose questions test viewers' knowledge of local history and culture.

- An interview show, in which viewers have to guess who the guests are, after hearing them talk.

- A talk show called *Program 0* critiquing television and advertising, local issues, and including on-air quiz segments.

Current Tele K programming (from the Vallekas area of Madrid) includes:

- *Vallekas Gang* – kids' programming
- *Vallekas Today* – News
- Multiple musical programs featuring local trends (e.g. flamenco)
- *Vallekas Sports*
- *Neighbourhood Report* – short films and reports from neighbourhoods around Madrid
- *Plastic Arts of Madrid*
- *NGO News*
- *Local debates*
- *Cultural Agenda*

Audience Response

No formal studies exist on viewership of Spanish community TV. However, given its fragile funding formula (no public funding; support via advertising, municipalities, and direct viewer support), its long history in many communities and its successful appeal to the Senate and Deputies in 2007 to make an exception for them in law, it appears to have strong local support.

When Tele K was threatened with closure in 2007, demonstrations in the streets were organized to keep it open.

Channels such as RCTV in Cardadeu have also had success with live participative and phone-in formats.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

The role of the first community-access TV channels in Spain was enormous. They asserted the cultural and linguistic rights of long-repressed minorities. They led the way for the proliferation of new legislation and for the establishment of independent private broadcasting and local broadcasting for the country as a whole.

Although some community-access channels still exist, except for Tele K in Madrid, this sector exerts less influence today. Its future has not yet been successfully negotiated for the switchover to digital.

It is Ms. Mayugo's opinion (which she shares with practitioners in northern European countries), that the current most important contribution of community-access TV is to promote social integration and to personalize the public service.   She feels that the recent EC stance on community media reflects the fact that politicians are looking for new tools. They want to improve dialogue between governments and citizens (at every level) and to act as a social safety valve for marginalized groups, particularly ethnic groups in an increasingly multicultural Europe. She and others are repeating Canada's original core Challenge for Change philosophies.

Challenges

To facilitate the re-establishment of community-access TV in Spain, a long-term solution for digital conversion is required, along with sources of stable public funding. The channels that survive are fragile, and many channels have come and gone through the years as a result.

It's Ms. Mayugo's opinion that a model existed briefly in the early 1990s that could have emerged as a stable and effective local service. At that time, many municipalities had begun actively supporting the citizen-run access channels that had sprung up in the 1980s. This hybrid, municipally -supported/access model existed briefly. Then, many municipalities took over the community licenses. They now program pro-partisan materials whose journalistic merit and appeal to the population she questions.

A re-examination of this potentially powerful local partnership (municipalities with citizens, rather than one at the expense of the other) could hold promise.

National Association?

Spain has a national association of community media called REMC (Red Estatal des Medios Comunitarios)[54]. This association facilitates the exchange of programming, common broadcasts, training and lobbying for the sector.

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[54] See http://www.medioscomunitarios.net.

Italy[55]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Italy's Prime Minister Silvio Berlusconi owns the three largest private channels in Italy (owned by Mediaset). In addition, he controls the three main public channels (RAI) through his role as head of government. Industry observers say this gives him control of 90% of the television market.

The founder of Italy's first community-access TV channel, Giancarlo Vitali, cites this peculiar situation as his motivation for founding Orfeo TV in Bologna in 2002. Orfeo TV was the first of nearly 50 such channels to spring up, part of a movement called "Telestreet" or "Telestrada". The name refers to the fact that most broadcast with transmitters that reach as few as 3-400 residents or a single apartment building. They operate in "shadow zones" that official television frequencies can't reach.

Another channel called Disco Volante ("flying saucer") began broadcasting from the office of an NGO for people with disabilities. (The channel's 71-year-old director is confined to a wheelchair and speaks with difficulty, the effects of having had polio as a child. The chief camera operator has Downs syndrome.)

Because Telestreets are unlicensed, many have been shut down by authorities as fast as others pop up.   Disco Volante was shut down in 2003 because it didn't have a license to broadcast. (No new licenses have been granted in Italy since 1991, effectively freezing the media landscape.) After an 18-month court battle, the channel was back on the air, thanks to Article 21 of the Italian constitution, which guarantees freedom of expression. The precedent was established that as long as they do not infringe on frequencies licensed to others, they are allowed to operate in the shadow zones.

Funding and Facilities

There is generally no money or support for Telestreet channels, except when operated by nonprofit groups. Most are run by individuals who own their own cameras and editing facilities. Most reject an advertising model on ideological grounds.

Distribution

Low-power, analog, over the air on UHF.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Because of their financial and legal fragility and their small range, Telestreet channels come and go and it's hard to make generalizations about them. They broadcast from a few hours a day to around the clock.

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[55] Information in this section comes primarily from Pamela Gallo, an Italian media critic and researcher currently living in Barcelona, articles about "telestreets" available on-line, and the "telestreets" own web sites.

Some examples of programs include:

- Disco Volante: Because it is operated by a nonprofit group whose clients are physically handicapped, it produces segments about local architecture and accessibility for the disabled, but also about problems in the quarter and the city, quality of life for immigrants, and problems of the environment. A recent documentary about Prime Minister Berlusconi was also aired.

- Orfeo TV: Covers local issues affecting 5,000 viewers within range. Recent topics included the building of a parking lot over a 15th century garden. Orfeo also discusses national and international news, and describes itself as "an alternative to mindless gameshows".

- Several Telestreet channels have recently critiqued government initiatives to promote competition and privatization among Spanish universities.

Role and Impact of Telestreet Channels Overall

While the proliferation of Telestreet channels suggests the need for alternative media, commentators don't feel they've made a significant impact on Italian culture or the communications environment yet; their reach is just too small. Nonetheless, they have received press internationally that has drawn attention to excessive media concentration in Italy's televisual sector.

Challenges

The switchover to digital TV that has already begun in Italy poses opportunities for Telestreet channels. Opposition ministers proposed in 2006 that 10% of available frequency be made available for Telestreet stations.

National Association?

There is no national association to represent community media in Italy.

France[56]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

France has no history of local television. In 2004, Article 29 of the the Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel (CSA) enabled the assignment of local licenses for nonprofit and community purposes as follows:

"Le Conseil supérieur de l'audiovisuel veille, sur l'ensemble du territoire, à ce qu'une part suffisante des ressources en fréquences soit attribuée aux services édités par une association et accomplissant une mission de communication sociale de proximité, entendue comme le fait de favoriser les échanges entre les groupes sociaux et culturels, l'expression des différents courants socioculturels, le soutien au développement local, la protection de l'environnement ou la lutte contre l'exclusion.

Le conseil veille également au juste équilibre entre les réseaux nationaux de radiodiffusion, d'une part, et les services locaux, régionaux et thématiques indépendants, d'autre part."

No such channels were created until 2007, when four new local digital frequencies were assigned for the Paris region: three to private commercial services and one to be shared by four not-for-profit and educational television services. One is an access TV organization or, as they are called in France, "télé associative". This organization, Télé Bocal, began creating programming in 1995, which it has screened at bars throughout Paris' 20th borough.

The director of Télé Bocal, Richard Sovied, expects that the new category will trigger license applications from other "associative television" channels around France in the coming months and years.

Télé Bocal describes its policy objectives and relationship to the community as follows:

Ce ne sont plus seulement des spectateurs mais aussi des acteurs de l'événement qui ont droit à la parole. Nos adhérents, nos bénévoles, les habitants..., par l'intérêt qu'ils portent à TÉLÉ BOCAL nous prouvent chaque jour l'attachement qu'ils ont à une télévision à taille humaine.

While Télé Bocal is the only such channel on air at the moment, other associative TV projects, usually broadcasting pirate signals, have come and gone over the years, never achieving licensed status.

In 2000, a national public-access channel was licensed on cable and satellite nationally and over the air in Paris.   Zalea TV[57] (TéléviZone d'Action pour la Liberté d"Expresision Audiovisuelle) was the first access channel of any kind to be licensed by the CSA. In subsequent years, it experienced multiple licensing problems (it was forbidden to broadcast during elections, for example). It finally had to shut down in 2007, after its third application for carriage on digital terrestrial TV was turned down.

A summary of Zalea TV's charter is as follows (from its web site):

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[56] Information in this section was provided by Richard Sovied, director of Télé Bocal in Paris.

[57] See http://www.zalea.org for more information.

- *"The promotion of pluralism of information and of free speech in the media, regardless of economical, political and other pressures exerted by the « establishment ».*
- *Democratisation of citizens' access (whatever their nationality) and non profit organizations' access to free expression of their opinions and ideas, their creativity and their perception of how information should be presented in the audiovisual media,*
- *Fight against censorship, self censorship and the manipulation of information by the established audiovisual media,*
- *Deconstruction of the codes used by established television, search for new esthetic models to serve new editorial and artistic viewpoints,*
- *Transforming television, now a vector of alienation and passivity, into a vector of action and emancipation.*
- *Defense of human rights and the fight against all forms of discrimination and exclusion."*

Apart from producing its own programs (a comparatively small part of its activity), Zalea TV supported "*the diffusion of works, whether amateur or professional, that are refused, censored, under-exposed, or ignored by established television... Editorialized public access on Zalea TV is open to community programs produced by citizens, groups or organizations. Their programs will not be judged either on format or technical criteria, but on their affinity with Zalea's editorial Charter, based on the international Declaration of Human Rights*."

Zalea TV promised to air every submission somewhere within its program schedule, without cost, as long as the submission did not contravene its charter.

Before its dissolution, Zalea TV had asked that legislation be adopted that would make all contributors to associative television channels legally responsible for their own work.

Funding

T9l9 Bocal has a budget of 300,000 Euros per year. In the past, it raised money from the bars in which it presented its programs, and paid for employees through government student and unemployment schemes.

The budget of Zalea TV was about 100,000 Euros, from private donations and equipment and facility support. The organization had hoped to increase this amount to an operational budget of 200,000 Euros (not including the cost of satellite distribution, which was 800,000 Euros per year). This would have paid for 5 employees in technical and administrative roles.

Before its dissolution, Zalea TV had asked for the creation of a production fund for non-commercial free expression from a tax on commercial broadcasting and cell phone providers.

Distribution

Over T9l9 Bocal's history, it has screened one hour per month of new programming in 44 locations throughout Paris and the surrounding countryside. The one hour consisted of short news clips, humour, fiction, music and art in an eclectic mix.

It is now available on digital terrestrial television and on the Internet[58].

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[58] See http://www.telebocal.org.

Zalea TV was distributed temporarily over cable and satellite nationally, and over the air on UHF in Paris, although there were problems of range with the frequencies allotted to it. Its programming is now available only archivally on the Internet.

Before its dissolution, Zalea TV had asked for must-carry status over the air, and on the services of cable of satellite providers for all "associative television" channels.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Télé Bocal's program offerings have included a mix of artistic and fictional material with commentary on current events and local news. The archive on the channel's web site is organized into the following categories, which gives a sense of its priorities and approach (in translation):

- News (happenings in the neighbourhood, such as demonstrations, festivals)
- Culture
- Fiction (short skits)
- Humour
- Micro-sidewalk (streeters)
- New Talent
- Miouzik
- Clubs (music, theme parties and events)
- Demonstration of the Month (street demonstrations on political themes of all stripes)
- Funny stuff

Monthly episodes contain segments from several categories. The most segments fall under "Humour" and "Funny Stuff", including sophisticated animations, skits shot on the street, and political commentary. This channel skews toward youth (under 30), and is highly creative. For example, a regular feature in the "Fiction" category is called "Garbageman" and is a spoof on the superheroe movie. In one episode, Garbageman, dressed in green garbage bags and cleaning gloves, gets an emergency call from a seal on an iceberg (an animated stuffed toy), alerting him to the dangers of global warming due to excess energy consumption. Garbageman has to do battle with Electricman, a metaphor for the overuse of electric devices.

There are no studio or talk shows. The segments are shot ENG-style, mostly handheld.

Similarly, a sense of Zalea TV's programming can be derived from the regular threads into which its programs were organized:

- Music.

- 100 short films of political commentary (under 5 minutes) made by different contributors leading up to the presidential elections.

- A weekly slot for the Association of Cyber-Journalists (short reports, films and videoconferences).

- Zalea TV's daily "Behind-the-Scenes" news program, which was open to contributions from

anyone, and examined issues in depth, such as election candidatures, extraditions, distribution of banned films and audiovisual products, and condemnation of the Rwandan genocide.

- A thread called "Free Media, and Freedom in the Media" which included interviews with media critics, critiques of the CSA, and profiles on alternative radio.

- Short films and videos, including documentaries (one about unemployment) to fictions about relationships, to video art.

- "Conflicts and Demonstrations"; for example, examination of the revolution in Venezuela and immigration in Europe.

Audience Response

T~~9l9~~ Bocal can now be seen by 10-12,000,000 viewers on the Ile de France. While no formal audience figures exist yet for T~~9l9~~ Bocal's transmissions, its support by local business establishments over a ten-year period (the bars where it aired its monthly programs) suggest steady local support.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Associative TV in France has yet to make a big impact, but the idea has been gradually gaining acceptance by legislators. It is likely to become more influential as more local digital channels are licensed across France in the coming years.

LATIN AMERICA

Latin America, like Africa, has a long history of community radio, which predates community television, and prepared the way for it.

The rise of community TV has also been strongly influenced by the historic repression of free media by the continent's many dictatorships. Journalists all over the continent had been looking for ways of getting their messages out. Since about 1990, when most of the dictatorships had fallen, they have been finding and using such alternative means with extraordinary passion and imagination. If any one thing can be said that characterizes the various forms of community television that have sprung up throughout the region, it is the diversity and experimental quality of it, from NGO-supported "street TV" in the slums of Rio to small vibrant commercial yet volunteer-driven TV in the Andes of Peru.

A few generalizations can be made:

- The North American distinction between "professional TV" and "community TV" is less apparent in Latin America, where people are used to having to do more than one thing to make a living, and volunteerism to participate in cultural events (such as the region's many carnivals) is common.

- There is a preponderance of programming that showcases local musical content. While most Northerners have heard of Rio's carnival, it is not so well known that almost every village in South America has its own carnival, during which local music and costume is celebrated. These events define and distinguish one community from another, with the result that the yearly preparations that lead up to them are a common source of programming on community television. Coverage tends to be colourful (thanks to the costumes and pageantry) and dynamic, shot in the streets.

- The weather throughout most of the region is warm, so there is generally much less "talking-head" and studio community TV than in North America.

Mexico[59]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Community-access radio stations have existed in Mexico since the 1940s, providing local information and educational programming. At present, there are more than 130, although only 12 have licenses. The latter were issued by the Vincente Fox government in 2004 and 2005. They have been subject to shutdown and confiscation of equipment by authorities throughout their history. In recent years, community radio journalists have been killed by paramilitary groups and others that are threatened by their exposure of social problems, even contributors to the officially licensed channels.

While there has been simultaneous lobbying by journalists and community groups to create a license category for community-access television, these efforts have so far been unsuccessful.

Nonetheless, at least three organizations inside Mexico are teaching, producing and distributing

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[59] Information in this section was gathered on site and interviews with the three organizations mentioned.

video programming to the community on a regular-enough basis to have developed relationships with their communities that mimic those of a community television channel. Since they have demonstrated long-term viability and are involved in the push for formal licensing, they serve as important examples of how official community media policy develops from grassroots movements:

The three are:

- Centro de Comunicacion Ciudadano (Centre for Citizen Communication) in Mexico City

  This organization is located in a community centre. It offers regular video training courses for the community, production opportunities including free equipment loan, and regular screenings of works at locations throughout the city. Among the mission statements of the Centre are:

  - to help develop a more informed, critical, analytical and participative public.
  - to create production and transmission opportunities for organizations, citizens, and artists.
  - to generate public, academic, and political debate about the uses of media.[60]

- The Chiapas Media Project, in Southern Mexico.

  This organization offers on-site video production training courses in indigenous Zapatista communities throughout the state of Chiapas, including free equipment loan and regular screenings both within the communities and internationally through its Chicago office[61].

- Canal 6 de Julio ("Channel 6th of July") in Mexico City

  This organization produces documentaries and other factual programming genres that tackle social problems throughout Mexico, particularly critiques of the mainstream news and media. Although most productions are done by "professionals" (not always fully compensated for their time) and Canal 6 does not do training or outreach to amateurs per se, they are included in this survey because of their media literacy training role[62].

Funding and Facilities

The Centre for Citizen Communication in Mexico City is funded by the City of Mexico, the Secretariat for Social Development and various other local cultural and governmental bodies. The community centre in which it is housed includes a workshop space, an office, an edit suite, and cameras that can be loaned.

The Chiapas Media Project is funded by various foundations (mostly American), as well as by direct video sales world-wide and special presentations. The local office is in San Cristobel de las Casas. There is no studio. Productions are shot on location in Zapatista communities.

Canal 6 de Julio is funded by direct video sales, primarily within Mexico. Canal 6 does not have

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[60] For more information see http://www.comunicacioncomunitaria.org.
[61] For more information, see http://www.chiapasmediaproject.org.
[62] For more information, see http://www.canalseisdejulio.com.

a studio but does have a range of fully professional cameras, graphics, and editing systems.

Distribution

The Centre for Citizen Communication screens its works at the community centre where it holds its training and production workshops, as well as at various venues around the city.

The Chiapas Media Project screens its videos within the communities that produce them (both the community's own videos, as well as within neighbouring communities that have similar concerns). This is the primary audience and use for the videos... as a local tool for education and solidarity. Through its Chicago office, the videos are screened at film festivals world-wide, in workshops, university courses and special presentations, and by direct order.

Canal 6 de Julio sells its videos through Mexico City bookstores and by direct order from its web site.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The Centre for Citizen Communication in Mexico City works with children as well as adult amateur and semi-professional videographers. The production style is shoot-and-edit. There is no studio and no live production.

The professional workshop and production co-ordinators, as in many developing contexts, provide content leadership to fill specific local communication needs. For example, the children's video workshops are often organized around spoofing mainstream programming genres, in order to develop media literacy skills. They aren't told what to write and shoot, but they might be given parameters to work within.

Similarly, a recent series of adult training workshops and production sessions were held in partnership with the history department of the Autonomous University of Mexico City (UACM). The goal was to capture the histories and identities of various communities that have recently been absorbed into Mexico's urban sprawl. A professor from the university partnered with professional filmmakers and videographers to teach adult participants how to capture this history. Participants chose their own topics within this framework.

As in other community video projects in Latin America, Mexicans have a flair for colourful topics that lend themselves to television. Their stories deal with local festivals, historic landmarks and buildings, historic waterways and gardens, and local figures. While the hosts were amateur, the finished segments look professional technically and have a fresh, earnest quality. These productions can be seen on the Centre's web site.

The Chiapas Media Project produces almost exclusively documentaries, focussed on two main themes:

- Educational topics that can be used by communities throughout Chiapas. For example, if one community builds a well or establishes a coffee-producing co-operative, a video will be made to show other communities how to achieve similar goals. These videos are typically very earnest, dealing with problems encountered during the project, whether external (e.g. conflict with authorities) or internal (e.g. limitations imposed via traditional gender roles).

- Ideological approaches are interwoven throughout the videos. The videomakers are conscious of the power of the video camera. They know, for example, that if a camera is present during a conflict with authorities (which often take place over land, to which many of the communities do not have recognized title), that there is less likely to be violence. They are also conscious of the use of voice. One of the most interesting features of the Zapatista approach to media use and their construction of self-image is that they often wear masks. In one video, a woman explains, "When we didn't wear masks, we were faceless and voiceless. When we wear the masks, we are noticed." They describe themselves as existing in a state of "resistencia" or resistance. They have made their outcast state a matter of solidarity rather than weakness.

Due to their ideological approach, most of the videos present a challenge to common modes of Northern thinking.

Canal 6 de Julio also produces mainly documentaries, and in two main topic areas:

- Important social or political topics that the producers feel are being misrepresented in mainstream media. For example, *Tlalelco: Keys to the Massacre* examines the killing by government forces of students in 1968. Another, *Welcome to Zimapan*, deals with the creation within the municipality of San Luis Potos of a toxic waste dump following the exploitation of the area's gold and silver by multinational companies. These documentaries are hard-hitting and unapologetic. Their purpose is to reveal "the other side of the story that you didn't hear in the mainstream media".

- Documentaries that lampoon and lay bare both the power and the methodologies of the mainstream media, particularly television. Mexico has one of the most concentrated media markets in the world, with 95% of all television, radio and newspaper outlets in the country in the hands of just two companies, Televisa and TV Azteca. One documentary, called *Telecomplot* (or "TelePlot"), examines how Televisa, the nation's largest broadcaster, collaborated in a plot to discredit federal election candidates by manipulating footage of the candidates and their supporters taking bribes. Another lampoons popular soap formats, in which fairy-tale like scenarios are regularly shown, in which a poor indigenous (but beautiful) girl might marry a rich white Mexican.

The production quality of Canal 6 is high. It is fully professional, taking advantage of all the resources of a full-featured graphics editing studio. It often employs humour and animation to undercut figures of power.

Canal 6 may not be "community-access" in the sense of training amateurs to express themselves, but it is an example of how difficult it can be even for professionals to get on air in a country with such enormous media concentration and tight links between political and media elites. The existence of this "channel" without a frequency underscores the need for public-access channels at a national as well as local level.

Audience Response

The audience for the screenings of the Centre for Citizen Communication tend to be confined (although not exclusively) to members of the communities of origin of the producers. It is a form of niche-broadcasting. Ticket sales are promoted by posters and other local advertising.

Reception of the videos by audiences present are good. People enjoy seeing their own neighbourhoods featured in the historical videos, and respond well to the clever media critiques created by the kids. The Centre is viewed as doing important work, and has been successful in securing on-going project funding.

Thanks to the international support lent to the Chiapas Media Project via its Chicago office, its videos have been seen by thousands world-wide, at film festivals, special screenings, in media workshops and classes, by direct order, and sometimes by airing on television internationally.

Similarly, the videos of Canal 6 de Julio have been seen by thousands, mostly within Mexico, but also abroad. Their best-sellers have sold as many as 30,000 copies, and have been seen by many more on pirate versions.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

While community radio is well established in the country and has contributed directly to social movements for change, the community television sector is stall nascent through lack of enabling legislation.

The largest impact of the sector has been felt outside, thanks to the support of the Chiapas Media Project by its office in Chicago. Through international distribution of its videos, media, social, and political activists around the world have heard of Zapatista communities, Subcomandante Marcos, and their struggles. The videos have given them a degree of credibility and that is rarely achieved by groups that might be called "terrorist" in another situation. The videos provide the Zapatista communities with real protection from the worse manifestations of violence that could be used against them, because Mexican authorities fear negative international press.

The discovery by Chiapas residents of the use of video as a form of protection from government abuse (either violence of more subtle forms of abuse) is a discovery that has been made by other indigenous groups around the world, including the Amazon Indians in Brazil and Aboriginals in Australia.

Challenges

Mexico needs legislation to set aside frequencies for community television, as it has done for radio.

Venezuela[63]

Venezuela has possibly the most explosive media environment in the world, with the most bitter and controversial relationship to its national government.

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[63] The information in this section comes from phone interviews with Maria Victor Paez, a Toronto-based Venezuelan sociologist, and numerous on-line articles about Catia TV (the most well-known of Venezuelan community TV channels).

The national commercial broadcasters are owned by a handful of wealthy families that have been anti the government of President Hugo Chavez since his election in 1998. For example, four of these replaced regularly scheduled programming with anti-Chavez content that incited the populace to take to the streets in the lead-up to the April 2002 coup. One, RCTV, is widely acknowledged to have participated directly in the coup. During the coup itself, all four broadcast cartoons, with no reporting of the pro-Chavez anti-coup reaction movement. State television was shut down.

Since the coup, RCTV's over-the-air license expired and was not renewed (although it is still carried on cable and satellite).   Media critics around the world continue to be concerned about the lack of balance on Venezuelan television. It is not uncommon for there to be exhortations to "kill the president" during a news hour.

In this environment, community television (and radio) has played an increasingly important role as an alternative source of information. Prior to 2000, clandestine community radio and television channels existed, and were often harassed and shut down by authorities. In June of 2000, Chavez' government passed an "Organic Telecommunications Law", which provided the legal foundation for community media as a third tier in Venezuela's broadcasting system. In order to qualify as a community broadcaster, a channel must meet the following criteria:

- It must be not-for-profit.

- 70% of the programming must be produced locally.

- A maximum of 15% or the programming can be produced by channel staff; the remainder must be produced by community volunteers.

- The channel must offer training so that the community can qualify itself to produce programming.

Other than to introduce this legislation, the pre-coup Chavez government largely ignored community media. It was slow to issue licenses and offered channels no financial support.

During the coup, it was via community radio and television channels and cell phones that the populace heard about the resistance to the coup and helped mobilize the support that returned Chavez to power. Many of the channels were raided and had equipment confiscated by coup supporters, similar to the state channels.

After the coup Chavez realized that state media by itself represents an insufficient balance to private media, in part because of its lower ratings but also because its centralized nature makes it vulnerable to shut-down.[64] He started issuing licenses as enabled by the 2000 legislation. His government has also made donations of equipment to the sector during the last five years, although no on-going operational support.

Today there are over 50 community TV channels (and several hundred community radio channels) throughout Venezuela. Whether the majority are pro-Chavez depends on who you talk to. They supported the restoration of Chavez' government during the coup and generally identify themselves with socialist ideologies, but they are run by community councils that view

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[64] This assessment comes from Gregory Wilpert. See http://www.venezuelanalysis.com/analysis/221.

their role as a watchdog on government (local, regional and national) and as a voice for local residents. They don't hesitate to criticize authorities to improve conditions in their neighbourhoods, so much so that Chavez has more than once been advised by staff to shut them down.

The slogan of Catia TV, a community TV channel in Caracas that was the first to be licensed and which plays a leadership role in training and advocacy for other channels in the country is: "Don't just watch TV, make it."[65]

The frequency that had been assigned to RCTV was given in 2007 by the Venezuelan government to a new channel called Tves ("Social Television"), which was touted in the international press initially as a "national public-access channel".   The channel's mandate says that it is not supposed to produce programming per se, but to serve as an airing platform for the independent production sector, regional programming, community and alternative programming, programming produced by public and private educational facilities, and NGOs. Its actual programming schedule, however, includes international children's programming such as *Caillou* and *Magic Schoolbus*, sports, Argentinian soaps, and *Ally McBeal*. Whether this "national public-access channel" will be able to fulfill an access mandate remains to be seen[66].

Funding and Facilities

The funding for community television throughout Venezuela varies from place to place:

- The conditions of license do not preclude advertising, and it is an on-going process of definition for these channels to determine what kinds of financial support to accept. Most consider public-service or institutional PSAs acceptable, ads for small businesses within the license area acceptable, and ads for multinationals such as MacDonalds or Coca Cola unacceptable.

- A few receive funding from municipalities (although this also is controversial, because the channels wish to retain autonomy to critique the municipality).

- The federal government has made periodic donations of equipment and start-up funding for community television channels.

Facilities vary, but most have a small studio, edit suite(s) and cameras that can be borrowed.

Distribution

Distribution of community TV in Venezuela is over-the-air on UHF.

Approximately 95% of Venezuelan households can receive TV over the air. Approximately 50% have a subscription to either satellite or cable television.

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[65] For more information on Catia TV, which provides leadership and training to many Venezuelan community TV channels, see http://www.catiatve.org.

[66] For more information, see Tves' web site (in Spanish) at http://tves.com.ve.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Venezuelan community TV is focussed on reporting on neighbourhood conditions and standing up for local people, and also on capturing and promoting local culture to create a sense of pride in community. Community producers are also encouraged to inform themselves and to produce commentaries about regional, national, and international issues. Participation with a local community-TV channel is a multi-level process of media education.

Programming topics and genres include:

- Mini-documentaries on local history, including interviews with seniors. Some of the community TV channels evolved out of movie clubs, and interviews with seniors about the neighbourhood was one of the first genres of programming.

- Baseball games, with inserts on local issues to attract audiences

- Musical and cultural performances.

- Programs made by and about children's activities (such as kite-flying, a Venezuelan tradition).

- Coverage of political speeches and presentations. For example, one on Catia TV's web site currently records President Chavez committing tanks to the border with Colombia in support of Ecuador... it's an unedited sound bite, without commentary.

- Coverage of protests and conflicts. On Catia TV's web site currently is hand-held footage of a conflict between students at the School of Social Work at the Central University of Venezuela and authorities. Articles about Catia TV claim that community producers are encouraged and trained not to take reports in existing news at face value, and always to include first-hand sources on both sides. The description for this particular video claims that it examines both sides of the conflict, including critiquing the coverage done by Globovision, one of Venezuela's national commercial broadcasters, considered critical of the Chavez government.

- A trip along the coast of Venezuela documenting the Island of Birds.

- Interviews with and coverage of local cultural institutions, such as the District Capital Institute of Art and the Image.

- Critiques of local service, including garbage collection.

- Talk shows about Venezuela's role internationally.

The productions look professional. Most programs are shot using hand-held ENG units in the community. As with much of Latin American community programs, they are characterized by vivid colours and lots of action.

As Maria Paez Victor, a Toronto-based Venezuelan sociologist who has visited the channels puts it, "I fall off my chair when I hear and see the stuff coming out of these neighbourhoods.

These people are poor, but you see the calibre of discussion and programs… It's like giving crayons to a child, but they actually know how to draw."

Audience Impact

No formal surveys exist of community TV in Venezuela, but the fact that the channels helped mobilize opposition to the coup and that they generate routine controversy vouches for the fact that they are widely watched.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Community media in Venezuela has provided a powerful political balance to commercial media politically. Although any one channel has limited distribution, there are several in Caracas, the capital, which have demonstrated that they can wield influence in national affairs.

Community media also appears to be providing a powerful social alternative to viewers. According to Ms. Victor, the heroes of the country's commercial media are almost always white (as in most Latin American countries). Dark-skinned people in the ubiquitous soaps usually play the maid, the chauffeur, or the bad person. She said, "There's nothing that reflects the real concerns and interests of 80% of people".

She echoes numerous articles about Venezuela's community media when she says: "This is one of the key parts of participatory democracy. All the people who were marginalized and were totally invisible, now have a voice. They were even invisible to themselves, because they had no way of communicating with one another. Community TV and radios have become the life-blood of those communities. Community TV and radio are very important in expressing what the community councils are deciding."

National Association?

Venezuela has a national association that co-ordinates and represents community media, called ANMCLA "Asociasion Nacional de Medios Comunitarios, Libres y Alternativos". The ANMCLA was founded in 2002 and focusses on lobbying efforts and training to "demystify technology as the obscure preserve of specialists and the production of information as the closed prerogative of professionals."

Brazil[67]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

There are two categories of community TV in Brazil. One is legislated and is based loosely on the North American idea that there ought to be channels set aside for public use and free expression.

The 1995 "Law of Cable TV" (#8.977) states that seven channels have guaranteed and free access to basic cable, including legislative channels at the municipal, state, and federal levels, a university channel, a channel for cultural and educational organizations and finally:

"*a community channel open for free use by non-profit, non-governmental entities".[68]*

This reservation of a cluster of channels for public use, as opposed to a single channel, resembles the PEG system in the United States.   There are 70 community television channels in this category in Brazil.

The second category is called "street TV"[69], and was developed by NGOs in partnership with community leaders. Two conditions gave rise to this second form of community TV in Brazil and other parts of Latin America:

1) The fact that much of Latin America was ruled by dictatorships until the early 1990s. During long periods of suppression of free speech, both professional journalists and community media activists sought to circumvent censorship. When democracy finally took hold, the years of suppression stimulated people to experiment with new methods of communication that would be interactive and involve all levels in the society, not just elites.

2) The stark difference in wealth between the richest and the poorest in most Latin American countries. While televisions and videos have been pervasive in the culture for as long as they have been in North America and Europe (the rich have always had them), the poor have been influenced by video content but have not had access to televisions on a regular basis themselves.

These conditions led NGOs and media organizations to experiment with street TV. A mobile production vehicle (a van with cameras inside) rolls up in a poor neighbourhood (a "favela" or slum) that does not have access to TV. The community facilitators operating the mobile encourage members of the community to use the cameras to explore problems in the community on tape. They might hold a day-long workshop, in which members of the community interview one another on local issues or present local performances. At nightfall, the facilitators set up a projection screen, invite the community to come to a party, and present not only the videos completed during the day, but also similar videos produced in other favelas in the same city. The screening itself is often interactive. Viewers may be invited to take a microphone immediately following the presentation of each video to comment, creating a forum for debate.

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[67] The information in this section was gathered on site, as well from paper documents and reports in Portuguese. Copies available on request.

[68] The full text of this law can be examined in full in Portuguese at: http://www.canalcomunitario.com.br/guia_documentoselegislacao.htm.

[69] "Street TV" in Latin America should not be confused with "telestreet" in Italy.

These examples of street TV are included as "community TV" for the purposes of this report because:

α) It's the only kind of TV available in areas where residents do not own TVs yet are influenced by TV in the culture. It recognizes that they have a need to feed back and make images for themselves.

β) Street TV is typically produced on a regular basis. The mobile might reappear in the same favela every few weeks on a rotating basis. This creates the expectation that issues can be dealt with at a regular local forum, provides opportunities for on-going media training, and creates a feedback relationship with the community as it starts to see itself, just as a regularly broadcast or cablecast signal would do.

The objectives of NGOs and media organizations who do street TV, interestingly, often change over time. Since NGOs typically respond to perceived "problems" in poor communities, many initially think that way to empower the community is to encourage residents to stand up against injustices, to make public their problems, and to explore possible solutions. What many of these well-meaning people found once they had visited the communities, held a few training sessions and presented screenings, is that people in these communities preferred to showcase more positive things, so that they could feel proud of the places that they lived. For example, they might suggest taping local musicians, or profiling people living in the neighbourhood who were doing interesting things. This initiative on the part of the community proved the value of the medium; residents took it over and insisted on portraying themselves as a neighbourhood of vibrant, real individuals, not a collection of social problems.

This same desire to use community TV to highlight strengths rather than to shed light on weaknesses was reported in two equally violent cultures: Israel and Colombia. In all three, TV as a medium was seen as most powerful when bringing the community together, not when dividing people through focussing on conflict.

Funding, Facilities and Accessibility

Unlike cable companies in North America, those in Brazil have neither the responsibility nor the right to influence community channel content nor support its production. There is also no federal or municipal funding for community television.

Because of the wording of the cable law, individuals do not produce community television in Brazil. As in Israel, you have to belong to a registered NGO. Groups generally produce a single program (which may have multiple episodes). The equipment and resources for production are up to the group to find. The tapes are brought to the cable company for playback.

Street TV has typically been funded on a project-by-project basis through NGOs. This means that while their achievements are often stellar, they may be able to continue for only a year or two. They tend to disappear unless their infrastructure can be handed over and maintained by the communities themselves. A few of the more successful street TV projects, such as TV Maxambomba in Rio and Video nas Aldeias in Recife (a special subcategory of street TV described below) generate revenue through international video sales.

Distribution

The official community TV channels are carried on cable. Cable TV penetration has always been low in Brazil, however (estimated currently at 12%), making community TV on cable far from accessible by all.

Street TV is projected in the town square.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Because of the lack of production funding for the cable community channels and because producers have to belong to a group to produce, about 1/3 of the programming (similar to the proportion in the US) is religious.   Religious groups typically have the resources and motivation to produce on a regular basis. Other common groups include labour unions (also well funded). Less common are arts or community-based groups whose purpose is to produce for the local geographic community.

The fact that only the middle and upper classes can afford cable television also influences the content on the community channel. For example, much of the content on the Rio de Janeiro channel showcased middleclass sports clubs, activities and concerns. Unusual programming from underserved communities did manage to find their way onto the channels, however; for example, a startling and beautiful series of programs showing disabled people in dance performances, funded by an NGO.

The most startling, moving, and educational programs tend to appear on street TV, where seed money exists from an NGO or media organization to send trained facilitators into the field to seek out marginalized voices. Some of these programs eventually found their way to the cable community channels. For example:

- One series is made by the street cleaners who work Rio's famous carnival. Their program shows the underside of Rio life, and how the Carnival appears from the point of view of the desperately poor people who clean the streets and grounds. It is done with humour, grace and insight. This desire to show "the other side" of Brazilian life not seen by tourists is a recurring theme.

- In Sao Paulo, *Workers TV* evolved as a mobile production meant to express the views of favela dwellers who worked at a particular factory. Initially the topics were related to conditions in the factory and the programs were projected on screens at the factory entrance. Over time, program co-ordinators realized that the poverty in which the workers lived was linked not only to conditions inside the factory, but also to conditions in their homes and streets. The mobile production unit began making the rounds of the neighbourhoods in which the workers lived, and tackling topics related to clean water, housing and street safety.

- Based out of Recife, an NGO called Video nas Aldeias ("Video in the Villages"), practices a kind of street TV perhaps more appropriately dubbed "village TV". Production equipment is taken to indigenous villages throughout the Amazon and the Indians are taught to document their own lives. The results are played back for them and for other villages throughout the Amazon on generator-powered TV monitors.

The filmmakers who created this project initially wanted to explore theories of editing. They wanted to give cameras to people who had never seen TV and see whether they would naturally come up with editing as a concept. The Indians began seeing uses for the video of their own, including the following:

- Groups throughout the Amazon are separated by hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles. Isolated groups started making "video postcards" to send to the other groups (and later to groups in other countries) to get to know one another. Through this process, they became aware that some of them were more "civilized" (had had contact with whites, wore T-shirts, used metal cooking pots) whereas others were less "civilized" or "closer to the creator" to use their own words. The more "civilized" ones used the videos of the less "civilized" ones to reflect on the changes taking place among them. They now use the video to capture their traditions, stories, and heritage, to pass them on to their grandchildren. As one of the chiefs says, "What an amazing tool, that my grandchildren know me through the video. We never had that."

- The video postcards are also used to warn each other about incursions into their territories by miners and loggers, and how to fight for their rights.

- In recounting details of a historic battle to filmmakers one day, the Indians in one village began spontaneously acting out what happened. It evolved into the videotaping of a drama, in which the villagers took on the roles of the famous people in the battle.

- Other videos capture villagers talking about what it was like when they first met white people, what it was like to be vaccinated, and what it was like to have to wear clothes when they went into the towns for the first time.

- The filmmaker-co-ordinators make a regular program from the footage for air on mainstream Brazilian TV to educate non-Indians about indigenous people.

These experiments evolved into extensive training programs, in which villagers evolve new uses for video all the time.

Both the street TV and Video in the Villages projects demonstrate how marginalized groups, once given access to video as a tool, quickly see its power. They adapt it to build community strengths.

Audience Response

Street TV is popular. It is presented in the context of a street party in the spirit of "take-back-the-night" walks organized by feminists in Western cities. The audiences of street TV are poor.

The audience of Video nas Aldeias includes the Amazon Indians themselves, urban Brazilians of European and African descent, and the international community via film festivals.

Brazilian cable-distributed community TV, as in other large urban centres around the world, tends to get lost in the busy media universe by the average viewer. It is consumed, however, by those communities of interest to which the program's producer belongs. Its audience is the minority of the middle and upper classes who can afford cable TV. (Although 50-60% of the

Brazilian population is estimated to fall into a "middle class", only 12% subscribe to cable.)

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

The net impact of these two kinds of community TV in Brazilian cities is very different, and underscores a phenomenon that is also apparent in N. America. A completely laissez-faire approach to community TV in which anyone can bring a tape for playback tends to lead to the use of the channels by well-established groups such as religious groups or labour unions who know how to use the media. They may be excluded from mainstream media and latch on to community media as an appropriate platform.

The weakness with the laissez-faire approach is that the most marginalized elements in a culture, who most need a voice and recognition of their existence by the larger culture, are often those who are not organized, have no resources, who do not know how to articulate their needs or political views, and do not know how to access media. In the early days of the NFB's Challenge for Change program and early community TV channels in Canada, community TV leaders understood that facilitation and education was needed to reach out to those marginalized sectors of the community, and that their contribution was needed as a balance for the views and interests expressed on mainstream television.

Perhaps the role of community TV in Brazil (and by extension, the world) is best captured in a story told by Claudius Ceccon, head of TV Maxambomba, one of the street TV projects in Rio. He said that a couple of months after the dictatorship of João Figueiredo fell in 1985, TV Maxambomba took a mobile production unit into one of Rio's many favelas. The neighbourhood had become so violent that people were afraid to go outside at night. On this particular evening, the mobile production unit had driven up and down advertising with a bullhorn, inviting people to come out of their houses to watch videos. As people fearfully began to assemble, one man at the back tentatively put up his hand and asked for news from the world outside the favela. He didn't know that the dictatorship had fallen. Mr. Ceccon said, "That was the real dictatorship, that these people were so isolated, they didn't even know what was going on. It was a dictatorship of information."

Street TV in these communities has given people a sense of pride in where they live, a sense of being connected to the outside world, empowerment that they can make a difference in their communities, and a new set of tools.

As with the experience of community TV in other countries, community TV in small, specific communities with specific needs tends to be known and watched widely. In larger cities, competition from other media sources means that the average television viewer may not be aware of community TV. Community TV in those settings tends to serve the niches or special-interest communities that make and watch it.

Cable-distributed community TV is much weaker as a concept than in North America. Because of the lack of funding for production, there are few central production centres or studios. As in Australia and Israel, most groups produce in isolation and bring their tapes for playback to the cable operator. There tends to be little cross-fertilization of ideas or sense of a single community producing a coherent service for itself.

Challenges

- More care needs to be taken that street TV projects funded by NGOs are sustainable in the long term.

- Since cable television has never achieved significant penetration, other distribution platforms need to be sought for community TV so that it is accessible to all Brazilians (e.g. over the air, Internet, satellite, digital).

- Production funding needs to be made available so that more individuals and truly marginalized groups can access community TV.

National Association?

The Brazilian Association of Community Channels (ABCCOM) lobbies and provides professional leadership for the sector.[70]

Uruguay[71]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Uruguayan telecommunications policy allows for closed-circuit community television within housing complexes. In the one main example of such a license holder (in the capital, Montevideo), the complex includes about a dozen apartment buildings housing 3000 people. The channel is called Amercia 3.

In the second example of community television in Uruguay, also in Montevideo, a municipal broadcaster includes one-hour of community-produced programming within its schedule per week. The channel offers both free training and equipment to facilitate this production. The channel is called TV Ciudad (City TV) and is much like City TV in Toronto in its early days. The policy objective of the channel is to include citizens in the programming of the television channel to the greatest extent possible. The stream of programming produced by citizens is called "Arbol" or "Tree", and refers to the development of the community as an interlinked network. TV Ciudad's web site gives the following description of Arbol:

"The idea came from the need to empower the voices of Uruguayans, and to include those who had been excluded from the communication system, thanks to the historic concentration of media, and the social divide that limits training and access to technology. Also, there is a need to generate reflection on the role of communication and the media, especially of television.... We propose using the audiovisual field as a tool of expression, dialog and action, at both the local and global levels."[72]

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[70] For more information, see the Ministry of Brazilian Culture web site (in Portuguese) at:

http://www.cultura.gov.br/foruns_de_cultura/forum_nacional_de_tvs_publicas/caderno_de_debates/index.php?p=21134&more=1&c=1&pb=1

[71] The information in this section was gathered on site.

[72] For TV Ciudad's web site and the full description of Arbol, see
http://noticiasarbol.blogspot.com/2008/03/la-idea-surge-de-la-necesidad-de.html.

The slogan on Arbol's web site is: "*We make video in order to live together.*"

In 2007, thanks to lobbying by AMARC (Association Mondiale des Radiodiffuseurs Communautaires), Uruguay's federal telecommunications regulatory body, URSEC (Unidad Reguladora de Servicios de Comunicaciones) passed a new media law. It states that 1/3 of all bandwidth on both analog and digital over-the-air spectrum will be reserved for community media. In August of 2008, the first public application of this policy was announced. Out of 9 digital over-the-air channels that will be licensed on the UHF band, 3 will be licensed to community-access television, 2 for public television, and 4 for private TV[73].

Key policy objectives of the 2007 law include:

"Article 1:

Broadcasting is a technical support for the exercise (pre-existing any state intervention) of the human right to liberty of expression and of access to information...

Article 2:

The radioelectric spectrum is the common property of humanity subject to administration by states; as such, equal access to the frequencies by all of Uruguayan society constitutes the general principle of such administration."

Subsequent articles go on to define "community broadcasting" as follows:

- *"That it should be administered by nonprofit societies, whose members live within the licensing area.*

- *That their goal should be the promotion of social development, human rights, cultural diversity, plurality of opinion, and democratic values.*

- *That "community broadcasting" does not necessarily imply a geographical restriction. The license area shall be determined by the goals of the broadcasting group and available frequencies.*

- *That the programming be made by groups and individuals living in the license area; the license application must demonstrate how citizen participation in both the administration of the channel and in the production of the programming will be ensured.*

- *The administrators of the channel cannot also manage for-profit ventures.*

- *The programming may not proselytize on behalf of specific political parties or religious groups.*

- *URSEC commits to establishing an "Honorary Council of Community Broadcasting" to guarantee that there is citizen participation in the application of the new law, comprising*

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[73] See http://legislaciones.amarc.org/URU_Ley_Radiodifusion_Comunitaria.pdf for the full text of the law in Spanish.

members of universities, various government departments, and practicing community broadcasters. The Council will also assess license applications.

Funding

Funding for the closed-circuit housing complex community television channel in Montevideo comes from cable subscriptions.

Funding for the *Arbol* series on TV Ciudad comes from TV Ciudad general coffers.

There is no public funding support as yet for the new television license category under the 2007 law. Media observers expect that some of the licenses may be administered by universities (drawing on educational funding sources), that others may receive support from international sources, and others from local advertising and direct community support.

Distribution

TV Ciudad is broadcast in Montevideo and carried on cable throughout the rest of the country. Uruguayan cable penetration is estimated at 50%, including paying customers and those who pirate signals.

Arbol programs are also projected within the communities where they are made. Some *Arbol* videos are available on-line.

The closed-circuit housing complex community channel is cablecast.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The programming that is made as part of *Arbol* attempts to tackle meaningful themes within the community, under the leadership of facilitators at TV Ciudad. For example, workshop participants are encouraged to write stories about issues in the community or of personal concern to them. They spend time in media literacy training workshops, talking and thinking about what to write and how to approach a topic before they do it. They don't get on-site support during shooting, however, and the results are sometimes correspondingly weak. The workshops teach ENG-style shooting and editing; participants don't have access to TV Ciudad's multi-camera studio. In this way, the *Arbol* stream is kept separate from mainstream production at TV Ciudad. This prevents participants from taking on full ownership in the idea of community TV, from developing skills quickly, and from getting live interactive feedback.

The quantity of programming produced at America 3 is high, thanks to its multi-camera studio. The majority of programs are talk shows or live entertainment. They are lively, immediate, capture a sense of community activity and fun, and are well attended and watched. For example, local bands are often featured, and the residents of the housing complex come and dance on air. Another night, locals might discuss philosophy or politics from armchairs. People are energized by the fact that they have a channel that is open to everyone to participate; the lobby is jammed every evening. It tends to be viewed more as a fun place to go in the evening than as a vital medium of communication.

Audience Response

Approximately 200 people per year participate in the making of programming for *Arbol*, but no audience figures exist for TV Ciudad the channel or for the *Arbol* stream within the channel's schedule. Arbol staff estimate that approximately 3,000 people per year view the Arbol programs at community projections.

America 3 is watched by most residents of the housing complex on a regular basis. It's how they find out what's going on in the complex.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

The role and impact of community TV in Uruguay is minimal so far, since it exists only in these two limited pockets.

However, *Arbol* has had a high impact on direct project participants. Where they initially relied on TV Ciudad staff to maintain the workshop series and organize screenings, participants have now taken over administration of the project.

Similarly, the impact of the closed-circuit housing complex channel has been enormous on residents. The channel comprises a multi-camera studio from which live programming is produced most evenings of the week. Because the studio is accessible to the entire community within a few minutes' walk, and is housed in a multi-purpose community centre in the middle of the complex, it serves as a hub for community activity. Live interactive formats are favoured, where, for example, a local band might be featured. The band might invite viewers at home to come to the studio to dance along. A comedian might tell jokes and offer prizes which are given on air to viewers at home who had come in to the studio to claim their prize. The camera captures the busy comings and goings of the community. The nightly tapings have become a community event. The easy accessibility and interactivity makes this model similar to kibbutz community TV in Israel.

Community radio, on the other hand, has existed in a pirate format for many years, broadcasting from dozens of Uruguayan communities without licenses. Thanks to AMARC's efforts and to the new law, more than 40 of these radio broadcasters have now been licensed. With a legal framework in place, the community media sector is expected to keep expanding and to have more impact in the months and years to come.

National Association?

AMARC maintains an office in Uruguay, and has spear-headed lobbying for the new media law.

Challenges

With no public funding for community media, the sector may remain fragile.

Bolivia[74]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Bolivia has two categories of community TV: one licensed by government, the other operated by an NGO.

There are two categories of broadcasting license (with no distinction between radio and television):

- "Official" (state) channels
- "Private" channels, which include commercial, cultural and educational channels

Thanks to work by AMARC, three decrees have been introduced since 2004 clarifying the role and rules with respect to community media as a subcategory of private licenses.

Prior to the issuance of these decrees, community radio channels had existed through the Bolivian Andes since the 1940s. The first channels appeared in mining communities and broadcast in local languages. Andean miners had been exploited by Spanish authorities since the conquest. The channels represented a solidarity movement for indigenous culture.

In 2004, Decree 27489 recognized the existence of these channels, and paved the way for television channels wishing to operate in the same category and according to the same rules:

"*Community broadcasters operate in rural areas, to promote social goals, health, education, well-being and development. They are participative, non-sectarian, should reinforce cultural identity, use and strengthen native languages, offer appropriate social and cultural content, and enshrine the free and plural communication of individuals*" (article 1).[75]

Subsequent articles stipulate that the channels must be not-for-profit (funded by donation, advertising or other sources) be run by the communities themselves, and reach no more than 10,000 people. They are exempt from broadcast license fees.

In 2005, Decree 28526 added the following sentence:

"*The goal of community broadcasting is to contribute to the betterment of life of the residents of the service area, to promote citizenship through the strengthening of democratic values and institutions.*"[76]

Decree 28526 also affirmed that community media has a right to space on AM, FM, VHF and UHF.

In 2007, Decree 29174 added the following sentence:

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[74] The information in this section was gathered on site.

[75] See http://www.derechoteca.com/gacetabolivia/decreto-supremo-27489-del-14-mayo-2004.htm for the full text of the decree in Spanish.

[76] See http://www.derechoteca.com/gacetabolivia/decreto-supremo-28526-del-16-diciembre-2005.htm.

"Plurality will be assured by the equal access of all members of the community, without discrimination against any individual or group."[77]

Community TV is just beginning. Local TV channels have existed primarily in the low-lying jungle regions of Bolivia, which mainly rebroadcast commercial programming from the cities. They are informal... one neighbour puts up a satellite dish and rebroadcasts to the community (if the community is electrified and TVs are available).

With official recognition of the community broadcasting sector, AMARC and the Cinematography Education and Production Center (CEFREC) have started working with the channels to generate more local programming. Until recently, the cost of production equipment had been too much compared to radio, and penetration of electricity and televisions was limited.

The policy objective of CEFREC, which has operated a version of street TV since 1989, is to enable members of Bolivia's 36 indigenous language groups to tell their own stories. Bolivia is the only country in Latin America in which indigenous people outnumber those of Spanish descent, yet as the project participants have noted: "*In the current era of trade liberalization and globalization, the dominant society has used mass media to flood indigenous communities with commercial and cultural messages that are incompatible with our lives.*" CEFREC says it counteracts the messages of mass media, which tend to devalue indigenous culture, and harnesses media as a tool for self-determination. "*We see ourselves in the screen and we are able to express our ways of life and our culture through the video.*"[78]

Funding and Facilities

There is no public funding for community media in Bolivia. Channels are expected to survive on local advertising, donations (occasionally from abroad), and volunteer labour.

CEFREC derives its funding from video sales, donations, and international aid.

Distribution

Community TV is distributed over the air on UHF and VHF.

CEFREC's productions are shown both in the community of origin at communal screenings (many of the communities have few TVs), as well as in Bolivia's major population centres, on the street on projected screens or in community halls. CEFREC has also established a full-fledged community TV studio in Sopecho in the Bolivian Andes.

Although there is no regular broadcast schedule except in Sopecho, the workshops, productions, and screenings are on-going, and are filling the role of a community-access TV channel in communities that are not yet equipped to operate a channel per se.

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[77] See http://www.derechoteca.com/gacetabolivia/decreto-supremo-29174-del-20-junio-2007.htm

[78] For more information about CEFREC, see http://www.nativenetworks.si.edu/eng/rose/cefrec.htm.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The background of Ivan Sanjines, CEFREC's founder, is in filmmaking. The first few years of workshops taught video production using the shoot-and-edit style of documentary or feature films.

Most of the productions are dramatic, with a few docu-dramas. The themes of most are cautionary tales… traditional tales that teach morals or modern tales showing individuals confronting modern problems. The reason for this, according to Sanjines, is two-fold:

- Community leaders feel that their stories, traditions and values are being lost.

- The natural way to pass on traditions and values is through dramatic storytelling, in which the characters are villagers similar to you, and find themselves facing difficult choices.

As he expressed it, "The expository form of the documentary is based on a tradition of writing, debating and arguing in prose. Non-literate cultures tend to formulate teaching as stories. They're easy to remember and retell."

Some of the tales are recognizable to Westerners, including a cautionary tale about greed in which a man kills another man over gold. Others are peculiar to the region. Bolivia has a dry climate, and some Bolivians believe that if you don't drink enough water before you go to bed your head will detach itself from your body in the night to look for water. If your hair gets entangled in anything and you can't make it back to your body before you wake up, you die. This is presumably meant to explain deaths during sleep, but has a broader message about not taking short-cuts and thinking you can get away with it.

Other topics include:

- A Bolivian Romeo-and-Juliet story, in which a young woman falls for a young man beneath her social class. Her parents try to marry her to someone else, so the young man sneaks into her room one night by scaling the walls of the building, and helps her escape by bicycle. They hide in a cave. She sneaks back to her house in the night for food, and is shot by her father, who mistakes her for a burglar. Her spirit returns to her lover, who doesn't initially realize that she is dead. Once he does, he goes to a shaman to ask what to do. He is warned that she may take him to the world of the dead with her, and he has to find a way to release her spirit. This is a cautionary tale both for the young couple, who act against their parents' wishes, but also for the parents, who attempt to marry off their daughter against her will.

- A music video by a 14-year-old girl, in which she documents US-backed military squads that destroy coca farms throughout the Bolivian Amazon. (Coca is a traditional plant used for tea, but also the source for cocaine). She sings, "I write your name in the sand (COCA) and it is washed away. I write your name on stone (COCA) and it is destroyed by rain and wind. I plant you in the forest, and the gringos come and destroy you." Her father was jailed and tortured for resisting the squads, and she sings at the end "To all of you watching in other places, please sing your stories and what happens to you too, so that these things will end."

- A young man from the village goes to visit a relative in the city, hoping to get help to find a

job. He is illiterate, his peasant clothes are laughed at, and his relative doesn't want to acknowledge him.

- A docu-drama about a woman whose husband beats her. She takes a job to support the family against his wishes. When he objects, she seeks support from the village council. It perhaps shows an idealized (positive, supportive) response from the village elders, but nonetheless shows women through fiction that they can organize and find resources if they find themselves in trouble.

The production methods employed by the Bolivians are very different from Northern methods. While there is a belief in the North that you need the directorial vision of a single person to generate strong and thematically consistent works, Bolivians produce communally.

To participate in training workshops in the capital, La Paz, community leaders such as teachers are chosen by community councils. The participants sign contracts with the community that after taking the training, they will return to the community and share what they learn.

Members of the 36 linguistic groups participate in the workshops together, taking turns acting as camera person, sound operator, etc. When each community sooner or later generates an idea for a video, the others who were trained from across the country converge in the community and assist. Equipment is loaned from CEFREC in La Paz. The evolution of the script is a communal effort that expresses the will of the community. No scriptwriters or directors are identified in the credits, and the resulting works have strong and consistent narratives. They achieve high technical quality and look like films.

Audience Response

Audience response to CEFREC productions within the producing communities is enthusiastic. On-going commitment to production is also high, with almost no drop-outs among trainees.

Audience acceptance at community screenings in urban centres also appears to be high, judging from attendance. Halls are full. Audiences stay to hear the discussion afterward and express how important it is to capture the traditional tales that define the land under the onslaught of foreign media.

Because these programs do not yet have an outlet on nationally distributed media, however, the numbers that can see them at public screenings are relatively small.

CEFREC's work is also well received at community media festivals around the world.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

The impact of community media (notably radio) in Bolivia has been enormous:

- In enabling the indigenous majority to organize against oppression and exploitation, particularly in mining communities. Campesinos (peasants) have defended their radio stations with their lives.

- In enabling indigenous people to strengthen traditional values and languages. At one radio

station, community leaders begin broadcasts by chewing coca leaves (a traditional way of sharing) in front of the microphone, inviting listeners to join them.

- In the past, community radio was used for local communication in the absence of newspapers and postal service, for communities that were largely illiterate. Personal messages were read several times a day; there might be a call for a meeting of women from the Comité de Amas de Casa (Housewives Committee); messages from the union leaders about their negotiations with the government in the capital; messages of love among youngsters; announcemount of a new play or cultural event, sporting activities, burials and births.

The AMARC trainer Jose Luis Aguirre is designing training for community TV stations based on the same ideas:

 "We want to use media and not have the media use us. The important changes happen at a cellular level... that's what we want to promote. Commercial production lacks dialogue. That's what we encourage at the local level. The commercial approach is a manipulative one. It sells them stuff they don't need, and creates dependencies on foreign products that weren't there before.   We teach self-reliance... that they can tape their own sound effects... birds, trees, water. You don't need to order an expensive sound effects CD."

"As responsible communicators, we have to make these technologies bidirectional. Communication is different than just providing information. It's not about introducing ideas to people, but about building ideas WITH people. Every technology is an extension of our natural capacities, but some technologies tend to stimulate participation more than others.."

National Association?

AMARC has functioned as a lobbying and professional body for Bolivian community media to date.

Peru[79]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Community television in Peru does not exist because of the policy objective of any authority. It has arisen on its own as a result of a combination of cultural and economic factors.

During the period of Fujimori's government (the 1990s), centralized commercial television networks in Spanish-dominated Lima had affiliates throughout the country, including the largely indigenous highlands of the Andes. When Fujimori's government fell in 2000, capital retreated to Lima. Many affiliates were sold at bargain prices to local indigenous business people. Most discovered that they could earn enough money through advertising to keep the doors open and to maintain equipment, but little was left over for program production.

Consequently, they invited the public to collaborate. Most offer community producers a 50/50 split on any advertising or sponsorship that can be sold for a program.   With the advent of small

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[79] The information in this section was gathered on site.

digital cameras and home editing suites (in addition to the studio facilities at most of these channels), there is no shortage of access to equipment or air time, so channels are receptive to most programming ideas. Since most of the owners are indigenous themselves and resent domination by Spanish culture, they would rather seek out local production expressing local culture and values than replay network programs from Lima.

There are dozens of such small channels throughout Peru, which have developed a similar modus operandi without formal collaboration or consultation among them. The result is de facto community television. Anyone with a program idea is given training and access to equipment to produce, and the community benefits from a wealth of local programming.

This is the only instance of community TV in the world that the author found that is commercially funded yet there is no little censorship, competition for air time, nor skewing of content toward commercial formats. Part of the reason is that the amount a given producer can make in advertising or sponsorship doesn't amount to a living. Some make as much as 1/3 of their income in this way, supplementing careers as teachers or other trades. It's just enough to make dedicated and interested people come forward with program ideas, but not enough to create a stampede where making money becomes the main focus for either the producers or the channel.

The channels themselves are relatively poor. They have tiny studios, they have cameras, they have lights but cash is tight enough that they recycle tapes continually.   Cameras are older models kept in circulation by self-taught technicians.

In addition to cultural factors, the economics of the area favour the model. In developing contexts such as rural Peru, the majority of economic transactions take place not between multinationals and locals buying brand products such as Nikes or Coke. Most locals can't afford international brands. They buy from local shoemakers, local beverages on the street corner, local clothing fitted to the climate. There is little incentive for big companies to buy ad time on village TV channels, even though they hold commercial licenses that permit advertising. The ad time being bought is primarily by local businesses. The amount of money changing hands is small; consequently, this part of Peru's entertainment market is largely ignored by big-money interests in Lima.

So, with the right economic and cultural motivators, community TV can thrive on its own, but these conditions are precarious. Peruvian communities are just technologically advanced enough to support TVs and TV viewing, but just technologically and economically backward enough not to be considered important markets for big advertisers, at least in an environment of a recession. How long this set of factors will prevail is questionable.

Funding and Facilities

As decribed above, most channels survive on advertising and sponsorship, and contributions by community producers. Most have studios and can broadcast live. Cameras tend to be older models, small-format. Tapes are recycled.

Distribution

Over the air. The Peruvian government is currently testing different possible digital TV systems.

The conversion to digital has not begun, and it is unclear how the conversion may affect small rural broadcasters.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The Peruvian Andes are in a state of transition and the community programming reflects this. At least as far back as the Incas pre-Conquest, every Peruvian village has had unique costumes, dances and carnivals. These form the basis for at least 1/3 of the programs. It's as if 500 years of cultural suppression has found an outlet. The programs are highly visual and energetic, perfectly suited to television. They present local groups presenting songs in their entirety, shot in studio occasionally, but more often against the majestic scenery of the Andes. There is little commentary in the majority of these programs.

The production quality per se is often low (not much editing, low-resolution camcorders, a single mic on the group of singers), but the colourful costumes, the music and the scenery still make these programs dynamic television, although one might argue that the volume is repetitive.

The remaining 2/3s of the programming present a similar range and variety as in N. American, except there is less seeking out of a personal soapbox, and more of a genuine desire to develop the community. Rural Peruvians understand that their villages are modernizing fast. They are both proud of their advances as well as of their traditional culture. The programs are optimistic and enthusiasm about the community's future and about the potential for the programs themselves to contribute positively to that future. They are also characterized by a certain journalistic naiveté.

Examples include:

- Programs about the Internet in which viewers can call in and get free technical tips.

- News-magazine programs that attempt investigative journalism styles but which are often amateurishly biased, or contain scenes of graphic violence that wouldn't pass on larger channels. For example, a documentary that was anti-abortion showed aborted foetuses being disposed of.

- Shows about local tourism to encourage viewers to become more aware of the natural beauty and sporting opportunities in their area. (Many locals serve tourists but don't understand or value what it is that the tourists have come to experience.)

- Programs showcasing local businesses.

- Children's programs, such as one in Juliaca called *Arco Iris* ("The Rainbow"). Children are invited to dance before the camera and to play interactive competitive games such as blind man's bluff. In one, the kids had to wrap one another up in toilet paper like a mummy. There is a studio audience of children to cheer on and judge the ones on camera. Elements of this program were crassly (and arguably immorally) commercial. The kids were coaxed to endorse particular candy and junk food products on air. As with the amateurishly biased investigative journalism programs, the excesses of some of these programs were part of their exuberance.

Rural Peru is sufficiently developed that not much of the programming falls into the educational or development category that is common in Fiji and Nepal.

Unlike Brazil, there is little religious programming on Peruvian local TV, perhaps because of the uniform and rarely challenged Catholic faith of the population. There are few minorities vying for converts who might resort to the local TV channel.

Some channels and producers feel that they are not free to tackle serious problems in the community for fear of political and economic elites. For example, there is controversy about multinational mining operations in rural Peru. Because the station owners are small operators, several have tried to do stories about farmland or water supplies alleged to be polluted by mining, but have had to withdraw them because of pressure from local politicians.

This is a vulnerability of independent operators dependent on a local economy, and it is important to note that this vulnerability exists even when the channels accept no direct subsidy from local authorities. Local leaders may receive a variety of indirect or direct personal and community benefits for allowing multinationals in their back yards, and large numbers of local people are often employed by them.

In other cases, local TV channels have tackled such topics where there is enough backing by local people. For example, in one instance, residents staged an anti-mining march in large enough numbers that the local channel felt safe to cover both the march and to make editorial comments on the side of the people. The channels were often nervous to be the vanguard of dissent, however.

Audience Response

These local TV channels are more watched than the average community TV channel in N. America as a percentage of population. When the author stopped people on the street and asked them about the local channel, most knew of it, watched it, and commented favourably on the contents of "their" channel. They identified strongly. Peru doesn't have any big cities except for Lima; therefore, viewership throughout Peru's towns is comparable with the results of the 1996 Canadian CCTA survey for smaller Canadian population centres.

There is one community TV channel in Lima, in a slum. It has a large impact within the neighbourhood similar to street TV in Brazilian favelas. People in marginalized communities need such outlets to feel they have a voice, so participation and awareness of the channel is high. Outside the neighbourhood and beyond the channel's broadcast area, however, most well-heeled Limenos (inhabitants of Lima) haven't heard of it.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Local TV in Peru plays a key role in the life of smaller communities, especially indigenous communities. It reflects and strengthens both local traditions as well as stimulates and provides a platform for reflection about change. Participation by local businesses is part of the dynamism of these channels. It seemed natural to local residents that they should have local TV, and these channels are an integral part of the daily economic, political and cultural lives of these communities.

Challenges

The economic underpinning of local TV in Peru may be fragile. Time will tell whether the commercial-community model can be sustained if national networks once again make inroads into rural areas.

National Association?

No national association of community television exists in Peru, although channel operators were more or less aware of their peers in neighbouring towns.

Colombia[80]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Colombia has a category of community TV license as we understand it in North America. As in North America, the intent is enable non-commercial local expression within the broadcasting system.

The licensing category developed, as it did in N. America, as a spin-off of the introduction of cable technology. In the 1980s, towns throughout Colombia were experimenting transmitting television signals by microwave and then distributing them locally via cable. As happened here, local operators realized that they could make and distribute their own signals with those coming in by microwave and satellite. As this idea caught on from town to town, Colombia's National Television Commission (the CNTV) created this category of license. Agreement 006 (1999) states:

"This television service for communities is established on a nonprofit basis, with the goal of producing their own programming to satisfy their educational, recreational, and cultural needs."[81]

Subsequent agreements, such as 009 (2006) elaborated:

"The programming produced by the channel must bring neighbourhoods together, reinforce the cultural identity of the community, promote citizen rights and responsibilities, and safeguard the participation of members of the community in these productions.[82]

There are currently about 553 legally licensed community TV channels in operation throughout Colombia:

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[80] Information in this section was provided by Colombian academic Luis Fernando Baron, Clemencia Rodriguez (with the University of Oklahoma) and Maria Patricia Tellez, a community media researcher living in Brazil.

[81] See http://www.cntv.org.co/cntv_bop/normatividad/acuerdos/1999/acuerdo_006.pdf for the full text in Spanish.

[82] See, http://www.cntv.org.co/cntv_bop/normatividad/acuerdos/2006/acuerdo_009.pdf, article 17.

Most commentators and individuals working within the sector feel that the legislation creates as many problems as it presents opportunities. For example:

- Community TV license holders are limited to a maximum of 15,000 subscribers.

- There are geographical restrictions on the service area, and they are not allowed to interconnect with other community TV license holders.

- They have the right to distribute free-to-air public and private channels in the region or available by satellite, but no more than seven encoded (for pay) signals on the cable service.

- License holders with fewer than 2000 subscribers have to produce a minimum of one hour of original production per week.

- License holders with 2-8000 subscribers have to produce a minimum of two hours of original production per week, plus a half hour for each encoded (pay) signal they distribute.

- License holders with more than 8000 subscribers have to produce a minimum of two hours of original production per week, plus an hour for each 1000 subscribers in excess of 8000, plus an additional half hour for each encoded (pay) signal they distribute.

- License holders are allowed to insert and sell advertising within their own productions, but not to replace or insert ads within the services they retransmit.

- License holders are required to pay for their licenses and to submit extensive documentation about their activities (including identification, addresses and phone numbers for every subscriber).

- License holders must meet various technical standards.

- They are not allowed to distribute signals over the air.

- They have to pay 10% of their income to CNTV.

On the other hand, they receive technical and financial assistance for redistributing the signals of national and regional free-to-air services for which over-the-air reception is not available.

Funding

Funding for Colombian community TV follows a similar model to that in North America. These small, not-for-profit cable services charge subscribers for access to the system. With this income, they program a local service. The channels are also permitted to show up to 6 minutes of advertising per half hour.

Distribution

Community TV in Colombia is distributed via cable.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

By condition of license, Colombian community TV is not allowed to show programming that is politically or religiously motivated.

Colombian community TV has similarities to that in Israel and in the favelas of Brazil. Many Colombians live with the constant threat of paramilitary violence, and the act of coming together to make media and share stories is an act of resistance against the isolating influences of violence.

The most common formats include local news and magazine programming, followed by live sporting and cultural events. Beyond these, programming can vary greatly. For example:

- Two well-known channels in Cali and in Antioquia are run by women who are single heads of families, producing programs aimed at their needs. (Families headed by single women are the majority in both Cali and Antioquia.)

- Others rely heavily on youth in production roles. They tend to favour live musical and cultural productions.

- Others favour filmmaking styles and documentary-making, and have significant participation by a new generation that is passionate about film.

Unlike the Chiapas Media Project in Mexico, which routinely videotapes paramilitary and military violence in Zapatista communities as a means of protecting local residents, the Colombian channels avoid directly commenting on or documenting the violence. Clemencia Rodriguez, a native Colombian and researcher at the University of Ohio says, "That would be suicide." Instead, programmers focus on rebuilding communities through documentation of the effects. For example, the channel TVO Bien (a pun on "I See You Well") near Medellin aired a drama recently made by young women about the waves of refugees entering the city from areas of armed conflict in the countryside. The twenty-minute drama examines misperceptions between the rural and urban kids. For example, the rural girls don't understand the preoccupation of the urban girls with buying tight clothes, belts and accessories. In programs like this, the communities learn to deal with the aftermath of conflict, and to appreciate their own resilience.

Audience Response

No formal audience studies have been done of Colombian community television, despite its longevity. According to Professor Rodriguez, because the communities are small, "Everyone tunes in."

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Respect for differences has become one of the pillars of Colombian community TV philosophy.

Channel 21 in El Carmen de Bolivar has made such a concerted effort to "program for peace" that it won the Colombian National Peace Prize in 2003. According to Professor Rodriguez, the channels are considered "crucial life-lines in contexts where unarmed civilians are cornered by drug-traffickers and right-wing paramilitaries. Armed minorities create havoc in communities of unarmed majorities. The channels are there to serve that unarmed majority."

Challenges

People working within the sector would like more flexible licensing, so that communities of larger size could be served, and programming could more easily be shared by interconnecting communities.

There are also problems of sustainability, due to the absence of sources of non-commercial funding. The communities are poor, and small (by condition of license). Advertising and subscription revenue doesn't amount to much.

Suggestions have been put forward to CNTV to create a Community Media Fund from the license fees that private broadcasters pay for their use of the public airwaves. Others have suggested taking 10% of the money the Colombian state spends on advertising.

National Association?

Colombia has a National Community Television Council (CNTC) based in Bogota and six regional co-ordinating bodies. There is a yearly national programming competition with categories for news, children's programming, youth programming, special event programming, documentary programs and "new formats". The CNTC lobbies to strengthen the community television sector.

The Middle East - Israel[83]

The only examples of community TV known in the Middle East are in Israel.

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

There are three kinds of community television in Israel:

- Federally funded local community television channels.

- A federally funded national community television channel.

- Community television channels on kibbutzim, or communally owned farms.

The Israeli government has a national policy framework for community television that is based loosely on models in N. America and Europe and on the goals of:

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[83] Information in this section was gathered on site.

- Facilitating individual free expression.

- Providing a platform for the airing of local community events and concerns.

A third goal is unique to Israel: that of enabling the large retired segments of the population to contribute meaningfully to the community and to express themselves. To paraphrase Oded Haviv at the Israeli Ministry of Communications: "The generation that came to Israel after the Second World War had to sacrifice many of their personal goals and dreams to pitch in, work on community farms, and build a basic fabric for life here. Now, at the end of their lives, Israel is a country that could have supported them in their dreams. As a way of giving back to them, we want to enable them to fully explore and express those dreams now."

Most kibbutz television channels were set up to enable all members of the kibbutz to participate in kibbutz meetings, even those confined to their homes by family responsibilities. Since kibbutzim are privately and communally owned, they can operate closed-circuit television without any formal licensing process.

Funding and Facilities

Israeli community TV is funded in part by the federal government and in part by municipalities. There are nine regional community TV channels throughout Israel. Programming is produced by community TV groups that apply for their own licenses. The licenses gives them access to government funds for production and the right to show their program on the regional channel. The regional "channel" is typically a playback centre, not a production centre.

This means that individuals cannot produce directly nor bring a tape for playback to the community channel. You have to join a group. This also means that participation in community television across the country has an erratic profile. For example, if a particular producing group happens to be senior citizens, there may be no outreach to teenagers. Groups in some areas do welcome teenagers, but there is no rule about who can be involved.

The amount of money provided by the government and municipality is tiny, usually enough for a group to maintain an office within a municipal government facility or community centre, to own one or two small digital cameras, one or two editing computers, and to pay an editor part-time. There are few community TV studios throughout Israel for this reason and almost no live production. Everything has to be shot and edited, which is onerous for volunteers, with the result that most groups spend most of their budget for a part-time editor and produce a single program per month.

The national community channel is a playback centre for tapes sent in from the regions that are considered to be of national interest.

Funding for kibbutz TV varies from kibbutz to kibbutz and is taken out of kibbutz coffers according to communal funding priorities. Most have studios and better production facilities and support than community producing groups in the rest of the country.

Distribution

The nine regional community TV channels are carried on cable (the HOT network).   The national community TV channel is distributed via satellite (the YES network). Cable penetration approaches 90% in Israel. YES claims to have 37% of the multichannel television market.

Kibbutz TV is distributed via closed-circuit cable television.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Perhaps ¼ to 1/3 of local community programming is municipality-supported and takes the form of a news magazine highlighting local events and concerns.   Local authorities sometimes impose expectations about programming content. Some might expect important community events to be covered. Others actively censor content; for example, in Gilo, a right-wing Jewish neighbourhood that faces Arab Bethlehem. Gilo has been shelled by points inside Bethlehem more than once. A doctor from Gilo produced a documentary about the difficulties Palestinians face crossing the security checkpoints along the Jerusalem wall. The municipality would not let her air it. As an individual, she was not able to submit the video directly to either the regional or national community TV channel. The censorship can be overt, as in this example, and internal. Over time, volunteers don't produce about topics that they know will not be aired.

Approximately 1/3 of the programming is produced by and about a particular cultural rather than geographic community; for example, the Ezravision magazine, which is about the activities of the English-speaking community in Israel.

These cultural and language-based programs have different themes, depending on the group. For example:

- The programming by Ethiopian immigrants—who struggle as a black underclass in a similar way as in the US—is mostly about discrimination.

- Much of the programming by South Americans focusses on Latin music.

- Because the English-speaking community represents an elite backed by money from abroad, many of the activities profiled are humanitarian.

About 1/3 of the programming is made by seniors, and may overlap the ethnic and municipal programming categories, since it's often the seniors who have time to volunteer.

Production values of most programs are high, thanks to the ENG-style shooting and the use of part-time paid editors to assemble the programming. Production values are also high in genres not often seen in N. American community programming, especially drama.   For example:

- Much of the output of the seniors groups (about 1/3 the total) is dramatic They aspire to tell their life stories as Israel's first generation.

- Several NGOs work with teenagers, both Arabs and Jews, to help them cope with living in a conflict zone. They tell their stories through drama.

- A group of mentally handicapped adults televise theatrical productions because drama is regarded as the "hardest" or most "professional" format. They want to break down stereotypes about what they can accomplish.

- A troupe of deaf Arabs produce all-visual theatrical stories for children.

The focus on drama arose for several reasons:

- The society as a whole is under stress due to conflict. Drama is seen as a more effective therapeutic way to cope with conflict than simply talking about it.   Drama turns the conflict to creative purpose.

- Most of these groups, the seniors, the immigrants, the handicapped and the youth, feel marginalized. They view drama as the pinnacle of artistic expression. To produce in this most challenging genre is to overcome all barriers.

- There is trickle down from Israel's professional industry, which sees digital video as an appropriate medium to shoot drama. Since Canada hasn't been producing large volumes of community-access TV in the last ten years, it has missed this shift.

- Because most Israelis producing community TV don't have access to studios, they don't have the N. American option of producing live studio formats. Since they're pursuing a more labour-intensive shoot-and-edit style in any case, it's not much extra work to express issues dramatically.

- The news and news-magazine style that comes so easily to N. Americans is slightly less culturally familiar in the Middle East. Israeli television is full of news, documentary and news-magazine programming, as it is part of the Western media landscape; however, groups at the community level seem to turn more naturally to drama than to professional journalistic styles.

- Independent filmmakers view the community channel as a legitimate outlet for their work, perhaps due to the national community TV channel, which offers them national exposure. Several producing groups throughout the country have either been started by filmmakers looking for alternate forms of distribution, or have filmmakers among their membership in leadership capacities.

There are three drawbacks to the lack of centralized studios and the model of isolated groups producing:

- The immediacy of live and especially phone-in programming that evolved in N. America is almost wholly absent in Israel. Community programmers have to compete in the same genre as the professionals for viewers: ENG-style labour-intensive edited programs. On minimal to non-existent budgets, this competition is difficult to match or to sustain over time.

- Although there are a couple of national programming events at which community producing groups can meet one another, they rarely work together and do not experience the common purpose and cross-fertilization of ideas that occur at shared N. American community television facilities.

- There is a lack of coherency about the programming on the channel. Most groups produce only one new program per month. These programs tend to be viewed only by the immediate community of interest. There is low awareness among viewers who follow one program about what is on the channel at other times.

These drawbacks are absent for the few community channels that are well enough endowed to have a studio, such as in the highly politicized Jewish settlement of Malee Adumim in the West Bank. The settlement was built several miles west of Jerusalem within the West Bank to give Jerusalem a buffer. The settlement is surrounded by Arab villages, and so significant funding has been made available to the community TV channel to serve as an emergency warning system in case of attack. There is a live studio that acts as a meeting place where all segments of the community come together, volunteer, and make programs. They produce a full weekly programming schedule, recognizable to any N. American familiar with community-access TV.

Interestingly, channel staff have invited Arabs representing FATAH and the PLO from surrounding villages to participate on live debate programs more than once. The channel is being used to break down barriers.

KIBBUTZ TV

Many kibbutzim have studios and produce live interactive programming (such as game shows) that draws the community to the studio to participate.

The quality of production at kibbutzim tends to be high. Kibbutzim channels are usually managed by a committed staff person as her or her job within the kibbutz, with the assistance of other kibbutz members as volunteers. Staff devote many loving hours to the production of highly personal videos (such as wedding videos, bar mitzvahs, and graduation ceremonies), knowing that they will be treasured for years to come and are kibbutz history in the making. Because staff tend to make the same kinds of videos year after year, they become expert at the formats they make.

Kibbutz TV also includes coverage of kibbutz meetings (see "Role and Impact of Kibbutz TV" below), dramatic spoofs about the kibbutz lifestyle and streeters about issues within the kibbutz.

Role of Community TV

The role of community TV varies from place to place in Israel, as it does in Canada. When the CCTA undertook a market research survey of community TV viewers, awareness, and viewing habits in 1996, it discovered that there is deeper awareness of community TV and higher viewership in smaller communities than in urban centres, where there are:

- fewer other sources of local programming and community information
- a stronger sense of shared identity.

This is also true in Israel. In smaller towns, such as an Arab town surrounded by Jews, or in a rural farming community in the desert, there is much higher viewership of the community TV channel than in larger centres such as Haifa, Tel Aviv or Jerusalem.

Because almost no Arab television is produced inside Israel, and because the programming coming from outside Israel in Arabic is critical of Israel, Arabs inside Israel feel cut off,

particularly in times of conflict. For these communities, community television in their own language is vital and they are proud of it. It gives them a sense of modernity in a part of the world where Arab communities are often underdeveloped compared to their Jewish neighbours only a few miles away. Their community TV channels anchor them in what they consider to be their homeland against all the odds.

Similarly, Jews in Israel share a sense of isolation and of being surrounded by hostile forces. Community television provides many, especially in isolated rural areas or in the West Bank surrounded by Arabs, with a vital sense of connection to one another and to the larger community of Israelis.

Since about 1/3 of community TV producing groups are seniors, as aforementioned, a significant role of the community channel is to engage and put to use their skills and experience.

There is a conscious effort on the part of many producers of community TV to build community. As the past president of the Israeli Community Television Association, Zevik Zehavi says, "We are surrounded by conflict. We live and breath conflict, politics, and violence. We are surrounded by this divisiveness in the media. We want community television to build consensus."

There is a strong thread in Israeli community TV to be inclusive, to bridge conflict, and to project a picture of a gentler society. For example, projects in which Jews and Arabs work together are common, as are topics about Jewish and Arab peaceful co-existence. So are titles about the blind and mentally handicapped making their own videos. One community producer commented that Israel is a militarized and paradoxically racist society (anti-Arab), which promotes macho values in mainstream media in order to survive. Community television is produced mainly by senior citizens and by social liberals who want to build bridges.

Finally, the 1/3 of Israeli programming that is made in languages other than Hebrew helps newcomers adapt to their new home and to celebrate their diverse backgrounds. Israel, despite its aspirations to being a homogenous Jewish state, is in fact one of the most culturally diverse countries in the world thanks to its immigration policies, which attract Jews from Ethiopia, Iran, Iraq, Yemen, Western Europe, North and South America, Russia and the Indian subcontinent. Many arrive with poor Hebrew language skills and spend 3 months in assimilation centres, learning to adjust. Many initiate community television programs in their own languages (sometimes subtitled in Hebrew so that the community at large can watch) to assist others like them. Segments may offer practical advice such as where to get a passport, or showcase artistic and cultural events within the ethnic subcommunity.

Role of Kibbutz TV

The genesis of community TV on the Israeli kibbutz parallels the genesis of community TV in Canada and the US, with its roots in the NFB's Challenge for Change program and in particular, the Fogo Island project. The Fogo Island project was an attempt to collect footage from Fogo Island's residents about their needs and bring it back to Ottawa so that the government could hear them. Early NFB Challenge for Change and community channel policies aimed to create a feedback loop between the government and the governed. This gave rise to the tradition in Canada of airing city council meetings and the popularity of the "Dial-Your-MP" format, and in the US of allotting entire channels to municipal governments.

In Israel, in the early years of the kibbutzim, children lived in separate buildings from their parents. Designated child-care workers cared for them during the day, enabling parents to attend kibbutz meetings where day-to-day decisions were made. Ten to fifteen years ago, when most kibbutzim returned to nuclear families, it became difficult for parents of young children to attend. Many kibbutzim began televising meetings via closed-circuit television so that families at home could participate. Once homes were wired with closed-circuit TV, the kibbutz members who operated the cameras began to think of other video services they could provide. A range of common kibbutz program formats evolved:

- Kibbutz news magazines. Many kibbutzim have over 1000 members, so keeping up with everything that is going on is not possible face to face. Many magazines include comedy skits about kibbutz life. The comedic slant grows from an awareness that kibbutz members live an alternative lifestyle to most Israelis. They highlight and poke fun at these differences (for example, how kibbutz members procrastinate and waste time). These programs only more rarely document controversial issues in the community, because everyone knows everyone. Committing to a particular point-of-view on tape about a topic that is still being debated can be divisive rather than helpful. So, interestingly, kibbutz programs tend to mirror the programs of Israeli community TV off the kibbutz in emphasizing consensus while downplaying conflict.

- Family events, such as marriages, bar and bat-mitzvahs, and high school graduation. These events are highly personal and elaborately planned. The kibbutz is one big family so kibbutz TV feels more like "family TV" than "community TV". Kibbutz TV staff may spend hours going through archival footage of a particular person about to graduate high school or retire, to produce a video tribute. Other family and community members may participate in gags, skits or storytelling to help make the video memorable.

Therefore, the role of kibbutz TV is to facilitate communication about day-to-day decision making and events, as well as to record and reflect upon significant milestones for kibbutz members. Many kibbutz young people who go away to university or to the army are very articulate about how protected and idyllic an environment the kibbutz is to grow up in. A significant tool in focussing their feelings are the kibbutz videos and TV programs. These videos consolidate their sense of community identity.

Audience Response and Community Impact

The impact on small communities and on niche groups within the community that produce and at whom the programs are aimed… is high. For example:

- A community in the Arava desert in southern Israel used to feel extremely isolated. By producing programs about how they are transforming and innovating desert agriculture, they have built community pride and awareness in other parts of Israel about their region (via the national satellite community channel).

- In an Arab village in Northern Israel, participation by deaf members of the community in televising deaf plays for children, has transformed the profile of the deaf (who were formally viewed as almost useless and certainly not marriageable).

- The impact on new immigrants (most of whom will never speak Hebrew in their new

homeland as if it were a first language) of being able to see programming in their own language and about their own original cultural is high. It is a way to celebrate their roots as well as give them confidence to reach out and participate in the larger Israeli community. For Iranians for example, music is a medium for the cultural transmission of values and history that have been suppressed since the fall of the Shah. Almost all the Iranian programming on Israeli community channels focusses on music and is widely watched by that community.

- The impact of the Arab-Jewish projects about peaceful co-existence is also high. Arabs and Jews are afraid of one another. When they meet in public on the rare occasions when their living arrangements permit a meeting, they are afraid to do or say the wrong thing and make it worse. In community TV projects that bring Jews and Arabs together, the act of working together to record and tackle their issues, and of airing the finished projects to a mixed audience is transformational. For example, Arab kids from the West Bank and Jews from the Orthodox sections of Jerusalem who meet in workshops to produce videos, meet one another's families at a final screening at the Jerusalem Cinematheque. The Arabs from the West Bank braved the checkpoints and felt safe enough to come across for this particular event, because of the tremendous efforts their children had made to bring them together.

Kibbutz TV is watched by everyone on the kibbutz. People are aware of which issues are being discussed at the meetings and monitor the discussions from home. If they feel the need to intervene, they cross the kibbutz to the meeting hall.

There is a positive feedback loop between these events and the fact that they are televised. For example, the high school graduation videos show more than just a parade of students walking across a stage to accept a diploma. The "shows" are often created by the kids themselves and consist of songs, skits, and other entertainment commemorating their childhoods on the kibbutz. Most of the kids head off after graduation to the army. The event is an emotional rite of passage for the whole community. (When the author visited one house on a kibbutz, the family interrupted the interview to watch the premiere of the graduation ceremony!) Their awareness of its significance and of the fact that it is being recorded stimulates them to a high degree of creativity and preparation.

In summary, Israeli community TV is extremely diverse. It addresses many needs of many people, who voluntarily come together in groups to make programming.

Challenges

The money spent on community TV may be adequate overall, but is divided up and spent by too many separate groups. The isolation of community groups and their relative poverty is unnecessary. If they pooled resources and built a few regional studios (Israel is a tiny country), community channel output could be much higher and genres more diverse.

National Association?

Israel has a national association representing community television, which represents member channels in lobbying, helps organize regional and national programming events, and assists

new groups to obtain licenses.[84]

The Indian Subcontinent – Nepal[85]

Although community radio has recently been enabled through formal licensing in India, and scattered community video projects exist, usually sponsored by NGOs, no sustained community television distribution is known to exist in the Indian subcontinent except one developed by two extraordinary individuals in Nepal.

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Public policy in Nepal has followed and responded to developments in the field, in particular in response to the entrepreneurial story of two men in a remote Himalayan village.

In 1991-92, in Tansen in the middle Himalayas, about 3-400 homes had televisions, but there was no television signal. People used VCRs and loaned one another Bollywood movies. Mahesh Shakya and his father offered TV and VCR repair service. Mahesh knew that there were satellites overhead carrying free programming from all over the world, if only one knew how to decode it, so he taught himself English so that he could read Western technical magazines and learn how to build one. The day he succeeded, about fifty of his neighbours jammed into his house to see moving images of the Western world, many for the first time.

Within about ten days, anyone who had a TV had made their way to the nearest town big enough to buy cable co-ax and had cabled themselves to Mr. Shakya's house. A makeshift cable network was born. At that time, Nepal had no regulatory framework for cable service. It had been a democracy for less than a year.

For a couple of years, homesteaders continued to watch free satellite TV via the Shakyas' cable network. One day a tourist gave the Shakyas a camcorder. Mahesh realized that he could produce programs from his basement and cablecast them over his network. Community TV was born. He named his program *The Local Program*, and for the last 17 years he and a handful of volunteers have produced one new hour per week.

As the regulatory environment caught up, Space Time, the largest cable company in Nepal, started to offer competing cable service. Mahesh was forced to regularize his program offerings. He indebted himself to buy legal decoders and to offer customers a similar number of channels to Space Time, with the addition of the local service. Most subscribers remained faithful to his service because they want *The Local Program*.

The relationship between the media and regulators has been unstable over the years, mirroring the instability of the Nepali government. While the print press has been largely free and uncensored since the 1990s, Ministry of Communications officials worry that the country's largely illiterate population is susceptible to manipulation by radio and television. Because the Maoists spread from Western Nepal in the early 1990s to the capital in this century, officials were also nervous of media sources out of range of easy monitoring. The first independent

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[84] The association's web site can be found at http://comtv12.pionet.com/ (in Hebrew).

[85] Information about Nepal was gathered on site.

radio service was licensed in Kathmandu, directly under the government's nose only in 1999, but has since had its license revoked. Mahesh was fined and threatened with imprisonment when (according to him) Space Time edited together election coverage out of context to make it look as if his *Local Program* was anti-government. *The Local Program* eventually got back on the air and is part of a licensed cable service today.

Other groups around Nepal have considered offering similar services to the Shakyas using a similar model (paying for community programming out of funds brought in through cable service), but none has achieved sustained service.

Funding and Facilities

The Shakyas fund the community programming in Tansen from cable subscriptions. Community programming facilities are extremely simple. The Shakyas use their basement as a studio, with mostly natural light. They designed their own teleprompter, and for years created titles by shooting words printed on a piece of paper. Even after they received a donated Amiga computer, no Nepali-language fonts were available. Mahesh had to draw and save each letter by hand, and then combine graphic files for individual letters to create a title.

Distribution

Cable.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The *Local Program* is produced once a week and airs on Saturdays. It consists of a mix of news magazine-style segments with cultural segments such as local dancing, or a behind-the-scenes look at the preparations for a marriage.   Strengths of the program include the visual variety and colour of the footage (almost impossible to avoid when most of the life of the village is conducted outside, where people wear bright clothes, and the landscape is breathtakingly beautiful). Mahesh and his volunteers have a natural sense of rhythm, enjoyment of music, and aesthetic sense, perhaps because of the visually stunning part of the world in which they live.

The weakness of the programming lies in its frequent lack of articulated purpose or structure. This is apparent in both the editing and lack of framing by a host. For example, in covering a local festival, they might shoot an entire dance and play it back unedited. We might do the same with *Riverdance*, since it enables viewers to enjoy an event they might have missed. However, many of the stories on *The Local Program* are like this.

The exception is their use of drama. In one program, they wanted to encourage viewers not to litter. Rather than choosing a documentary or news-segment style about the actual situation in the village, it came more naturally to present their ideas as a drama about a king whose kingdom is messy. The drama was scripted, had a specific message, and was edited effectively to support that message.

This preference for drama as a teaching tool over documentary (which a Bolivian pointed out is based on the Western tradition of the prose argument) is also prevalent in the Middle East, Aboriginal Australia and Latin America.

Audience Response

On Saturday mornings, everybody in Tansen watches *The Local Program.* Since not everyone has a TV, it's common for people to congregate at neighbours' houses.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

One old lady said, "It's not just the stars on TV, it's us too." Community television in Tansen has made this remote community feel that it is "on the map". The sense of being awash in images from elsewhere that is so familiar to Canadians is common in most small countries. As TV reaches more and more households around the globe, communities tend to be recipients rather than producers of information. As individuals and communities process their place in the world, the ability to feed back and create our own images is universally empowering. It helps us understand our own culture, strengths, and weaknesses by comparing ourselves to the cultures that are presented on television. We learn to articulate what is different or the same about the self versus the other. From this articulation develops the possibility of taking positive action. This transformative process is what NFB filmmakers recognized as so powerful on Fogo Island, and led to the evolution of the Challenge for Change program.

In Nepal, this process manifests in a very specific way. Community television is playing a unique role in this struggling and evolving democracy. Nepalis are still developing what having a "free press" means, what objectivity means, and what having a point of view means. These ideas are not self-evident to them. For example, the fact that Mahesh named his program simply *The Local Program* is typical. He understands that his program is different than other offerings coming to the village via satellite because of its localness. He does not understand, however, that his program necessarily embodies a particular point of view about his village, and that another group of people from somewhere else might make a different program about the same community events.

In a scriptwriting workshop, when asked to come up with story ideas for segments to shoot, one volunteer said, "I'd like to make a story about traditional dancing." When asked, "Who is the audience? What is your take on this topic? Is it for people from other villages who have never seen the dances from this village, and therefore you want to explain some of the details of the costumes and the moves? Or is it for people from your village? If it's for people from your village, why make this video? They know what the dance looks like." She was unable to answer. She could not see that the intended audience should determine how to present the dance.

Nepali government officials, such Khedar Tapa, the former Communications Minister, understands that Nepalis are relatively unsophisticated media consumers who could be provoked to insurrection by inflammatory programming. He fears television more than radio and radio more than print. He understands that illiterate people may accept what they see and hear in a moving image and not understand that they are being manipulated. In both radio and print ideas have to be intellectualized into language, transmitted to a viewer and then decoded by the viewer to derive meaning. It's a process that engages the viewers' judgement. Television has the appearance of raw sensory data, and therefore the potential to bypass conscious judgement.

The introduction of non-government controlled television has been stimulating this local population both to exercise its freedom of speech as well as to come to grips with what that

freedom means.

Another impact of community television locally has been to teach illiterate people development skills. Mahesh purposefully produces programs about health and safety.

The impact of the community television channel on the country overall has been enormous. This channel was cablecasting its signal before any radio or television channel had been licensed outside direct government control. Because Mahesh so clearly uses the channel to benefit the community and to promote Nepali culture, although the Ministry of Communications was initially nervous about its existence and panicked when it received reports that Mahesh was cablecasting biased election coverage, his license was always returned to him, and the Ministry backed him when the cable giant Space Time repeatedly attempted to shut him down. His channel has served as a model for the nation and has given the government confidence in the value and power of independent media at a critical moment in the country's democratic development.

The South Pacific

There are certain commonalities among the community television channels in the South Pacific. The governments of both Australia and New Zealand recognize the sector and have a license category that recognizes their nonprofit and local character. Neither country provides financial support, however. Channels are expected to survive on advertising. The result is that the model has only been able to survive in large population centres.

The countries also share a similar multicultural make-up that influences content on the channels. Channels in both countries are aware of one another and routinely share programming.

While the community TV channel in Fiji bears no resemblance to those in Australia and New Zealand, the broadcast environment in Fiji is controlled primarily by New Zealanders. Fijians' expectations for television are conditioned by norms set in New Zealand.

Australia[86]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Australia, like the UK, had no history of local television prior to the 1990s. Five national channels (three commercial and two public) currently have free access to both analog and digital spectrum. Since broadcast policy has historically had a national focus, the community television sector has fought an on-going battle for recognition.

Australia has three parallel systems of community TV, all of which have had some degree of federal government involvement:

1) Aboriginal Community TV

   In the early 1980s, when satellite television was being introduced into the Australian outback, Aboriginal leaders feared the effects of the influx of televised culture from the cities. To "fight fire with fire", as one Aboriginal leader said at the time, the government gave a satellite receiving booth to each Aboriginal community that had an identifiable or more sedentary nucleus (as opposed to groups that were completely nomadic). The booth enabled the community to receive ABC and SBS (the two national channels), in addition to a VHS camcorder, a VHS edit suite, and permission to substitute locally produced Aboriginal programming at any time into the ABC and SBS feeds.

   Since 2001, a nationally distributed satellite channel called Imparja has shared the programming made by individual Aboriginal community TV channels, in addition to commissioning and producing new works. Although semi-professional, it fills the role of a national Aboriginal public-access service.

   Seventy-eight of these licenses exist, administered under the BRACS scheme

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[86] The information in this section was collected on-site in Sydney, Melbourne and Perth, at two Aboriginal channels near Alice Springs (Warlpiri Media and Yeundumu), and during numerous phone conversations with community TV staff, the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia (the CBAA), the Community Media Fund, and the Australian Media Authority.

(Broadcasting for Remote Aboriginal Communities)[87].

2) Urban Community TV

One-year free over-the-air test licenses were given out for community television in Australia in 1992. They remained on test status until 2003. License-holders suffered from the financial instability of being unable to attract investors or make capital investments, because they never knew whether their licenses would be renewed from one year to the next. They were also hampered by their position on UHF. Many Australians do not have the dual antennae to receive UHF. Critics of the extended test said that the channels were too commercial, relying 100% on sponsorship in the absence of any source of non-commercial funding.

In 2004, the first channel was given a five-year license and the sector was formally recognized. Currently, Perth, Melbourne, Lismore, Brisbane, Sydney, Adelaide and Canberra hold licenses. These are the capital cities (except for Lismore), and Australia's largest population centres.

Perth, although still a license-holder, has just closed its doors, unable to maintain its financial model. Australia has been gradually switching to digital television, but no provision has been made for community TV in the digital spectrum. Community TV is gradually losing viewers and with them, the ability to raise sponsorship dollars. Approximately 42% of Australian homes still watch analog television.

The web site for the Australian Communications and Media Authority[88] states that community broadcasting helps fulfill the goals of Australia's Broadcasting Services Act by:

- "*Promoting the diversity of broadcasting services available to the Australian public.*
- *Developing and reflecting Australian identity, character and cultural diversity.*
- *Providing programming that is locally significant.*"[89]

The Code of Practice for Community Television (available at the same site) provides more detail:

"The licensee will encourage members of the community that it serves to participate in:
(i) the operations of the licensee in providing the service; and
(ii) the selection and provision of programs under the licence…
- *The licensee will not operate the service for profit or as part of a profit-making enterprise.*
- *The licensee must not broadcast advertisements but may broadcast sponsorship announcements for a total of not more than 7 minutes in any hour of broadcasting.*
- *The licensee may broadcast sponsorship announcements only during periods before programs commence, after programs end or during natural program breaks...*

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[87] For the history of the BRACS scheme, see http://www.powerhousemuseum.com/hsc/bracs/.

[88] http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_311074.

[89] See http://www.acma.gov.au/WEB/STANDARD/pc=PC_311074.

Conditions relating to sale of access to airtime

Each CTV licence is subject to the condition that the licensee must not sell access to more than 2 hours of air-time in any day to a particular person who operates a business for profit or as part of a profit-making enterprise, unless the person is a company that has a sole or dominant purpose of assisting a person in education or learning.

Each CTV licence is subject to the condition that the licensee must not sell access to a combined total of more than 8 hours of air-time in any day to people who operate businesses for profit or as part of profit-making enterprises."

Despite the intent that the licenses be not-for-profit, it is possible for up to 8 hours per day to be sold to commercial ventures. This is allowed because of the lack of non-commercial sources of funding, and is the main flaw in the Australian model. It resulted in the Brisbane channel showing harness racing (a major sponsor) for much of the broadcast day and has generated complaints about the sector as a whole. Commercial broadcasters see the channels as direct competition.

Expectations for local programming content are also stated, but not enforced with percentages or minimum requirements:

"Community television licensees aim to broadcast material that promotes local and Australian culture, representing diversity in a responsible manner, breaking down prejudice and discrimination, and preventing the broadcast of material- which is contrary to community standards...

Community Television stations will:
- *Broadcast programming for entertainment, information and education, with priority being given to matters relating to the local community; and/or of artistic and cultural relevance.*
- *Promote freedom of speech and avoid censorship wherever possible.[90]*

3) National Community TV on Cable and Satellite Pay Television Service

As part of a benefits package in the merger between Foxtel and Optus (a cable and a satellite pay television service respectively), Foxtel created Aurora Community Television, available on channel 183 of its basic tier.

While the channel espouses some of the philosophies of community TV and is an interesting attempt to apply them at a national level (a phenomenon that has emerged in several countries), it fails to meet several key criteria of a true community-access channel. Foxtel's web site states:

"Aurora Community Television is an independent, not-for-profit television channel dedicated to providing access for Australian communities."

It is not an access model in the sense that anyone can broadcast a show on the channel, nor is production support offered.   Only charities, nonprofit organizations, and faith-based

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[90] The full text of the Code is available at
http://www.acma.gov.au/webwr/aba/contentreg/codes/television/documents/ctvcodeofpractice.pdf

organizations can submit a program for consideration. Once selected, they have to pay a broadcast fee of $600 Australian per hour. There are also conflicting terms in the programming requirements. For example, program producers are advised that 1) their programming should be aimed at "mainstream Australians" not at "micro-communities" 2) faith-based programming may belong only to five major groups who exceed a certain population base 3) the channel should not be considered "an open microphone". The channel avoids niche-casting.

Critics of the channel say that in calling itself an "access channel", Aurora Community TV has found a clever way to obtain free programming and revenue. On the other hand, the channel does appear to provide a platform for charities and nonprofits to publicize their events relatively cheaply (for those whose programming is accepted), and several producers who got their start on one of Australia's urban channel 31 community channels have shown their programs on Aurora nationally.

The relationship between Aurora and the urban channels is ambivalent. When Aurora opened its doors in 2005, it invited community producers from Australia's urban channels to air their programs. Several of the urban channels refused to co-operate; for example, some insist that if a program is shown on Aurora, it can no longer be shown on the local channel. One of the urban program managers explained that local sponsors of the program would withdraw their support if they felt the program was not uniquely available on the local channel 31. He said, "When you have a model of community TV based on sponsorship, you need eyeballs." Another said, "Why should we give them free air time if they're willing to pay Aurora $600?"

As such, Aurora cannot be considered a national platform for sharing programming among urban (or Aboriginal) community TV channels. This tense relationship demonstrates how the ideal of open access can quickly be strained when money changes hands, and is an unfortunate spin-off of the vulnerable financial position of the urban community TV channels.

Funding and Facilities

The capital equipment for Aboriginal community TV was provided initially through the federal government via the BRACS scheme, approximately $25-30,000-worth per installation. Little to no money was available for operating expenses. Production was done on a voluntary basis with no professional co-ordination after an initial training session.

No money has been provided from federal government or industry sources for urban community television, although some channels have obtained state funding via lotteries for infrastructure upgrades. For example, the Perth channel had support from the Western Australian government, and Victoria indirectly supported the Melbourne channel by paying it to air state government PSAs.

Most communities that held the test licenses attempted to pay costs by finding sponsorship for programs, with varying degrees of success. One group in Victoria had to give up its test license eventually, because it couldn't sustain its programming. In other centres that were more successful financially, strange partnerships arose. In Brisbane, the harness racing association was such a major financial sponsor of the community channel that up to eight hours a day of the programming schedule was given over to coverage of the sport. This practice was eventually

stopped by regulators by limiting the amount of time that a single commercial organization could buy on a community TV channel to two hours.

Due to financial limitations, the Sydney and Melbourne channels have no central studio or production office. Many small groups representing different interests (religious groups, artistic or cultural organizations, special-interest groups such as gays and lesbians) buy their own digital cameras and edit suites, make programs ENG-style, and deliver their tapes to a central office that is just a playback facility.

There is a federally funded Community Broadcasting Foundation (CBF) that funds community radio, but not community television. Industry representatives say that because there was no history of local television in Australia prior to the introduction of the community TV test licenses, regulators had no experience of the economics of operating a local TV undertaking for profit or otherwise.

Community radio, on the other hand, has existed for more than thirty years. Because it is cheap to produce and technologically relatively undemanding, community radio was able to establish itself with small amounts of money generated from local communities. It managed to demonstrate its viability, and through 30 years of lobbying for federal support, has obtained it.

Community television requires more money and infrastructure to produce. Practitioners have made the attempt to generate enough revenue via sponsorship only in the capital cities, thereby undermining the idea of "community television" to a large extent.

According to Barry Melville, formerly of the Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, in order to secure formal recognition for the sector and to obtain permanent licenses, lobbyists made the mistake of claiming that they could support themselves. They committed that if they were given permanent licenses, they would not ask for federal funding.

The most financially stable channel (and generally regarded as the best-managed, the most prolific, and the most stylistically ground-breaking) is the Melbourne channel.   Its budget is 2.7 million Australian dollars, raised predominantly from sponsorship. It supports a staff of 18-20, of which 8 are sales staff. Only three of the remaining staff deal with community producers directly, of whom there are about 100 at any given time. The latter produce weekly shows, most shot in a single-camera ENG-style off site. Approximately 1200 volunteers support these 100 programs.

Melbourne's community producers are entitled to sell their own sponsorship in two natural ad breaks in an attempt to cover costs and must belong to a not-for-profit organization. The structure is not set up for individuals, who are encouraged to volunteer through member organizations.

An advantage to reliance on sponsorship cited by Melbourne staff is that their programs promulgate a significantly different point of view from the fully government funded ABC and SBS (the mainstream and multicultural national public channels respectively), which they feel are biased.

The Sydney channel was supported exclusively by sponsorship and the selling of air time until 3 years ago. Like the Brisbane channel, it sold a significant portion of the broadcast day to a commercial company. It was involved in seniors' real estate and aired reruns of classics to appeal to seniors. This practice, like harness racing in Brisbane, was stopped with modified

legislation. A new nonprofit organization was given the mandate to run the channel.

The new management has allied itself with the Department of Communication Arts at the University of Western Sydney, and enjoys free rent and other forms of financial support. Its yearly budget is about 1.5 Australian dollars, which supports six full-time and two to three part-time employees. It outsources the raising of sponsorship to a sales agent.

The Brisbane channel currently employs six staff, of whom one is engaged in raising sponsorship. This channel is undergoing financial reorganization, and charges community producers $200 per week to air their programs four times.

Melbourne does no formal training of volunteers. Sydney has developed a relationship with a nonprofit organization that provides training to volunteers and community producers for a cost.

Both the Brisbane and Perth channels (when the latter was on the air) had internal studio facilities and production equipment that could be loaned to volunteers. Both also engaged in training activities.

The point of view of staff at existing channels is that the model can be made to work in big cities, but is unlikely ever to be sustainable in smaller centres.

Distribution

Australia has had a combination of cable and satellite (provided by Foxtel) since 1995, averaging 29% penetration. The larger cities are cabled. Satellite service is offered in rural areas. Foxtel offers 45 channels on analog and 100 on digital.

The remainder of the population relies on terrestrial over-the-air television. The transition to digital is underway, with approximately 30-40% of terrestrial customers already receiving digital television. The three national commercial and two national public television channels have already been allotted digital spectrum (7 megahertz each) and have committed to upgrading their signals to HD.

Urban community TV is distributed over the air on analog UHF (channel 31) and is not available to the 60-70% of Australians who either subscribe to Foxtel or who have already switched to digital. UHF antennae are not always easy to buy.

Aboriginal community TV is broadcast over-the-air from the satellite receiver head-end (usually a shed in the desert), along with national channels.

A significant amount of the Aboriginal community TV that is produced and broadcast in remote communities is also shared nationally via the commercial satellite channel Imparja.

Melbourne channel 31 is also web-streaming programs from its archives on demand.[91]

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[91] For Melbourne programs, see http://www.c31.org.au/new/

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The results for both Aboriginal and urban community TV have been variable.

When there is little to no core funding to sustain technical staff and outreach co-ordinators, the "success" or level of activity that a community television channel can sustain depends on the whims, technical experience and accidental cohesion of local volunteers.

Many of the editing sheds and original VHS equipment distributed throughout Aboriginal Australia quickly fell into misuse or grew outdated, often due to lack of training and co-ordination, and also due to the itinerant nature of Aboriginal life. A minority of centres adapted to the new technology quickly and have become prolific and regular producers, thanks in large part to friendships between interested professionally trained and highly motivated (white) co-ordinators/filmmakers and talented Aboriginals in some of the larger population centres. For example, in Yeundumu, near Alice Springs, a group of Aboriginal artists has experimented with video and adapted it to their storytelling needs, capturing sacred festivals, passing on fast-disappearing survival skills, and recreating dream-time myth. Much of this programming looks nothing like programming produced elsewhere in the world. A few examples:

- A characteristic type of Aboriginal painting uses symbols and dots to tell stories about sacred ancestors and their travels across the landscape. This format has been adapted to plasticine animation by videomakers in central Australia.

- Dream-time storytelling events where tribes congregate have been captured on video. Because of the Aboriginal focus on landscape and the fact that particular elements of the landscape (rocks, trees, a hill, a water pool) may represent an ancestor or historic event, the elements of the landscape on which the filmmakers elect to focus or hold a shot are often incomprehensible to outsiders.

- Aboriginals viewers have an inherent mistrust of editing. For example, if they capture a sporting event, they don't like to edit highlights because they feel it distorts the original events. They are patient viewers and prefer to capture and see an entire action.

Aboriginals also use video in a way that they share with indigenous groups in other countries such as Brazil and Mexico. They use the camera to record meetings with authorities on sensitive issues such as land rights.

Among urban community TV channels, Melbourne produces the greatest number and most innovative programs. Many are replayed by other community channels both in Australia and in New Zealand. A few have been bought by SBS (one of the public broadcasters). Many people now working in Australia's professional sector got their start on Melbourne community television. Commentators speculate that Melbourne's success derives from the high number of arts organizations involved with the channel and the concentration of such organizations in the city.

Many productions are not available on other services, including coverage of independent art, religious and ethnic minorities, and marginalized groups such as the gay community.

Approximately 100 new programs per week (about 60 hours) are delivered for playback, the majority produced off site. This amounts to 66% of the programming schedule. They include:

- *A Life in Crime,* in which former criminals share their stories in a studio talk show.

- A young couple hosts a program about trends from a desk with their laptops, cutting to Vox Pops on the street, providing hints for a healthy and successful life, local introducing local bands and humour segments, and responding to viewer e-mails.

- *The Schtick* – hosted from a fitness club by three hosts in exercise gear who work out as they talk.

- 25-30% ethnic programming, such as the hit *Salam Café*, a comic talk show by Muslims, sharing Muslim points of views. *Salam Café* has been picked up by SBS and can be streamed from its web site. The program generates the response "Oh. They're just like us" and has become a standard bearer for immigration. Although *Salam Café* is in English, few ethnic programs are subtitled because of expense.

- *Asylum* about local bands, opens with an animation and is hosted by a guy in his basement.

- *Class TV* is produced by a high school, and consists of music and skits.

- *No Limits* is hosted and produced by disabled people.

- A program about multiple sclerosis.

- *Vasily's Garden* is hosted by an elderly Greek gardener who uses gardening tips and plants brought to Australia by immigrants as a frame for stories about immigration.

- *Bite Size* is a showcase for short films and videos.

- Sketch comedy, recorded at local clubs.

- A small amount of religious programming, aired in late night and early morning slots. (So much is submitted that the channel selects one program from each religion.)

The Sydney channel, under its new management, receives about 50 new program episodes each week, produced by about 1000 volunteers. Some are weekly, others are monthly or bi-monthly. Unlike Melbourne, the Sydney channel accepts tapes from either individuals or groups. The program manager says that approximately 1/3 of the programming is ethnic, and must be produced either in English or subtitled in English so that it can be understood by the community at large. The remaining 2/3 "mimics commercial formats, but is made by locals and therefore provides a platform for up-and-comers" according to the program manager. The popular *Joy's World* is hosted by a senior from her garage, and includes interviews with community figures about local topics.

According to the Sydney program manager, there is a range of technical quality, but the majority are indistinguishable from commercial programming with the exception that they tend to have a more leisurely pace (viewed positively by most viewers) and more modest sets.

Because Australian community TV channels are mainly playback centres and producers deliver their tapes, there is almost no live interactive or phone-in programs.

Other urban channels currently produce fewer original programs:

- The Adelaide channel, currently on a test license, has five.

- Brisbane has four. It replays programs from other community TV channels (especially Melbourne), international feeds such as Deutsche Welle, and classic Hollywood programming. Two years ago, the channel had 10-15 locally made programs, the majority of which have moved to the Aurora national channel. Brisbane's programs, according to staff, tend to reflect men's concerns and outdoor life; for example, programs about fishing, 4-wheel drive, and car restoration.

Audience Response

In Melbourne, one third, or 1.4 million viewers tune into channel 31 at least once per month. Considering that 60% of the potential audience subscribes either to Foxtel or has made the conversion to digital, this is most of the audience within its reach. Despite the gradual switchover to digital, Melbourne's audience figures are gradually creeping upward. Most residents know the channel exists and are aware of its mandate. Channel staff attribute the channel's popularity to the preponderance of low-to-middle income earners in Melbourne and to its thriving arts community. They feel these factors foster an appetite for alternative media and viewpoints.

Community producers increasingly see channel 31 as a destination rather than as a stepping stone. The program manager cited two instances in which producers had been recruited by SBS (with paid contracts), but came back to channel 31 because they felt they had more freedom to do what they wanted.

Until the change in management 3 years ago, the Sydney channel had poor audience penetration and awareness due to:

- Poor reception in parts of the city.

- Financial mismanagement, resulting in the sale of a large part of the air-time to a commercial entity that wanted to supply programming to seniors' residences.

- The demographic of Sydney, which is upscale, and management feels has a more outward-looking, international orientation, less interested in alternative points of view.

- The main commercial and public networks' production centres are in Sydney, creating a competitive media environment.

Under new management, a cumulative audience of 1.2 million (out of a population of 4.5 million) tune in at some point every month. The manager, who had worked in commercial TV says, "Unlike an average channel that mostly gets complaints if it hears from viewers at all, we mostly get phone calls and e-mails saying we're fabulous. They like the fact that we are different. We're not as slick. They like that we're local."

In Brisbane, 850,000 of 3.5 million potential viewers tune in at least once a month; however, with the current programming schedule (predominantly Hollywood classics), this figure can't

necessarily be attributed to the local content.

Although the programming achievements of Aboriginal community television have been stunning in pockets and audience acceptance of this material is correspondingly high, it has been difficult to build consistent audiences because of the nomadic lifestyle of many Aboriginals. Even those in electrified settlements where TVs are common go walkabout during hunting season, for religious reasons, or to attend family functions in other settlements. Even more challengingly, it's almost impossible to find volunteers or paid Aboriginal staff who can act as community leaders, trainers, and co-ordinators at community television facilities. Young white people from the city tend to be hired to run such centres with the result that the Aboriginal community does not feel in control of the medium, even though it has access to it.

On the up side, while viewing patterns are irregular, Aboriginal leaders view the libraries of tapes that have accumulated as priceless records of a way of life that is disappearing. They consult tapes that are up to 20 years old to see whether traditions are noticeably changing.

An additional wrinkle in the use and acceptance of Aboriginal community-made video is that there are taboos against viewing images of deceased people. Once a person who has been videotaped dies, the community can no longer view the video. This is an on-going source of difficulty in communities that wish on the one hand—to capture fast-disappearing practices and rituals—and on the other, to respect this cultural taboo. Sometimes the tapes are re-aired, but with the deceased person's face blocked.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Community TV in the outback is enabling Aboriginals to tell their stories and to record a fast-disappearing culture. A few programs, such as the animated art, demonstrate that traditional culture can flourish and thrive using the new medium.

For very small Aboriginal communities that cannot fill a channel, the program sharing that has been made possible on Imparja has provided a significant cultural bond among Aboriginal groups throughout Australia's enormous outback.

The impact of community TV for urban Australians is captured by the following blogger, commenting on the closure of the Perth channel:

"*This, sadly, is the beginning of the end for the community TV sector in this country.*

This is the same sector that has given us not only many new faces on TV (Rove, Andy and Hamish, Georgi Quill just to name a few), but it has given TV networks far more people behind the scenes. The Today show office in Melbourne is largely made up of people who worked at C31 Melbourne. Channel Seven's Broadcast Centre in Melbourne has a large group of people who use to work at C31 Melbourne.

In many TV production companies, there are one, two or three people who started their careers with community TV

It will be a sad day for the whole TV industry when the community TV sector goes -not only will the voice of minority groups and communities be lost but the nurturing ground of many of today's TV professionals will also be lost.

Of course digital broadcasting will help address this situation but also a better funding/revenue raising model is also required. The community TV sector gets no money from the federal government despite the role that community TV plays - especially in the area of multicultural broadcasts now that SBS has become a de facto commercial network."

Urban community TV is also an outlet for Australia's multiethnic communities and a bridge between them and white Australia. As Australia only opened its borders to widespread immigration starting in the1980s, the need for these kinds of bridges has been more pressing than in other Western countries.

Challenges

Community television in Australia needs reliable sources of non-commercial funding to develop beyond the major cities. It is currently filling the need for expression by niche groups in a few large markets with talented management, but the model is fragile. To stabilize the programming service where licenses currently exist and to extend the model outside the capital cities, the sector needs funding.

The community television sector is also threatened by the government's failure to allot spectrum for it on digital. There appear to be multiple reasons why this has not happened:

- The planning for digital conversion occurred before the community TV sector had official recognition and permanent licenses.

- There is resistance to this new sector being given bandwidth by traditional broadcasters, whom the community TV sector feels is "unused to dealing with competition" (unlike broadcasters in Europe and N. America, who have had competition from cable specialty channels for upwards of twenty years).

- Critics observe that there is a government preference to use the new spectrum afforded by satellite and digital technologies to upgrade technology (e.g. the conversation to HD) rather than to diversify programming.

Nonetheless, government representatives acknowledge that a solution for the community sector to migrate to digital is "urgent" (both TV and radio).

National Association?

The Community Broadcasting Association of Australia, the CBAA, represented both community TV and radio until recently.[92] As the two sectors have received different treatment by government, however, their professional development and lobbying needs have diverged. The community TV channels have tended to keep in touch with one another recently directly, on an ad hoc basis.

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[92] For more information about the CBAA, see http://www.cbaa.org.au/content.php/671.html.

New Zealand[93]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

In 1989 the New Zealand government allocated a set of regional over-the-air licenses for non-commercial and community use. The only formal guidelines were that they should be not for profit and "community-focussed". Initially, they were not allowed to show advertising, but the rule has been relaxed to allow up to 6 minutes of ads per hour, to a maximum of 50% of total revenues. This maximum is not enforced.

In recent years, the policy for these channels has continued to be refined, as discussed in the documents *Regional and Community Broadcasting Policy Framework[94]* and *Non-Commercial Radio or Television Licences Policy Guidelines.[95]*

The intent of the licenses is to:

- *"Encourage local broadcasting, separate from national networks and controlled by community organizations.*

- *Promote diversity, by reflecting upon local and regional concerns, community interests, communities of interest, and ethnic and linguistic minorities.*

- *Facilitate wide technical, cultural and social access to broadcasting, to increase democratic and civic participation, and specifically, to enable communities to participate in program production.*

- *Enable regional and community broadcasting which is not defined by advertising markets and therefore can provide a voice and shared public space for those often not well-catered for."*

There is room for interpretation for how individual channels should operate.

The two most well-known, oldest and access-oriented of the license-holders are the channels in Auckland and Wellington, New Zealand's largest urban centres. Both are operated by Triangle Television. Triangle Television has been broadcasting to the Auckland region since August 1998 and since August 2006 in Wellington.

The CEO and founder, Jim Blackman, says his community group applied for the licenses because he found "NZ television exclusive rather than inclusive". He says that Auckland is the most culturally diverse city in the Southern Hemisphere, and that 1 in 4 New Zealanders is not born in New Zealand. He wanted a strongly access-driven model to "provide opportunities for diverse communities to get on air". He says, "The airwaves should be available to the people… it's 'People's Vision'." Triangle's web site declares:

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[93] The information in this section was provided by Triangle Television staff in Auckland and Wellington, including Jim Blackman, CEO & Founder, Callum McGilvray, Station Manager, and Hans Versluys, Programme Director.

[94] This document can be found at http://www.mch.govt.nz/publications/community-broadcasting/index.html.

[95] This document can be found at http://www.mch.govt.nz/radio-tv-licences/further-info.html.

"Anyone can put a programme on Triangle Television, so if you think your interests or perspective on life are absent from the media we have one response: make your own show and get your voice heard!"

One of Mr. Blackman's early collaborators was the New Zealand Race Relations Office, which had previously spearheaded the use of community radio by ethnic minorities. This collaboration appears to have a large influence on the programming and usage of the channel. (See "Programming Types, Quantity and Quality" below).

According to Mr. Blackman, the other twelve license holders in Triangle's category have been less successful at establishing community-access television for two reasons:

- They operate in smaller and more rural areas, in which minority communities that might be interested to make a program are smaller and less likely to have the financial resources and manpower to make a program or to pay the broadcast fee that supplies most of Triangle's budget.

- The dual UHF/VHF antennae that are necessary to see Triangle's programming are not common, so few people are aware of the channels' existence.

These rural channels, although technically nonprofit, rely on commercial sources of revenue; for example, shopping programs in which local businesses and products are showcased. In Mr. Blackman's view, the programming looks more like a commercial local channel than a community channel and there is little participation by local people.

Funding and Facilities

The combined budget for Triangle's Auckland and Wellington channels is approximately NZ $1,300,000, of which NZ $116,000 comes from a government fund called New Zealand On air, for the production of news and current affairs programming. Most of the balance comes from broadcast fees that are paid by community producers of NZ $260 per half hour in non prime-time, and NZ $405 in prime time.

Triangle itself does not sell ad time. Community producers are entitled to sell ads or obtain sponsorship of up to 6 minutes per hour and to charge whatever they like, provided they do not make a profit. According to Blackman, most producers abide by this rule and use money they obtain to cover costs. Some have other careers, or operate in the prosumer market making wedding videos. Some producing organizations (such as religious and ethnic groups) employ professional producers, hosts, directors, editors and camera operators to make their programs for them. Others work professionally in radio or other media, and make community TV in their spare time using skills that cross over. Few hosts, camera operators or editors that contribute to the programming are volunteers.

Therefore, via the broadcast fee and self-supported production, the community producers are shouldering the bulk of the production, operation and transmission costs of the channels.

While Triangle does have limited production equipment and a small studio (which it rents at $50/day per camera or $100/day for the studio), the majority of producers use their own facilities and equipment, relying on Triangle staff only for occasional feedback.

With its small budget Triangle's staff of 6 must schedule, administer and technically support both the Auckland and Wellington channels. There is little time for production or training.

Distribution

New Zealand has never had cable television.

The government-mandated regional community and nonprofit channels are on UHF. Eight other free over-the-air analog VHF channels reach New Zealand's population of 4,000,000. In Wellington and Auckland, many people have the dual UHF/VHF antennae required to receive Triangle.

Satellite television is also available, offering an additional 50-60 pay-per-view channels. Almost half of New Zealanders subscribe to it.

Triangle's sister organization, Stratos, buys transponder time on the Freeview satellite for NZ $7-800,000/year. Stratos combines programming from Triangle's Wellington and Auckland channels, and from the most nationally relevant programming provided by the twelve smaller license holders. Stratos pays the transponder fee by selling advertising, handled by an additional staff of four.

The UHF/VHF antennae will disappear with the conversion to digital, expected in 2015.

Blackman does not see the Internet as a viable distribution platform due to low speeds and the lack of bandwidth throughout New Zealand. He says that this is unlikely to change in the near future and that the government has abandoned the Internet as a viable platform for TV.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Because of the broadcast fees and need to produce programming using one's own facilities and resources, this model of community television favours production by existing organizations and groups rather than by experimenting individuals. It also favours production by professionals and semi-professionals. In Blackman's words, "This model is geared toward people who are already highly motivated and know what they want to say. It's a vigorous entrepreneurial model. We made the decision to invest our resources in equipment and infrastructure rather than in staff."

Over 30 hours of new local programming are submitted every week (of which 15-20 are submitted in languages other than English), and Triangle is on the air 24/7. The program schedule is filled out with international multilingual programming to address the country's multicultural minorities; for example, Deutsch Welle TV, Aljazeera English, and the Voice of America.

Approximately 1/3 of the programming schedule is locally produced. The following is a recent programming week in Auckland:

- 22/35 programs either from abroad, from within local ethnic communities, or in a foreign language, including the languages and communities of nearby southsea island countries

such as Samoa and Fiji

- 6/35 religious

- 4 news/discussion programs, one called *Scrutiny* in which Auckland policy-makers are invited to explain their ideas

- 1 lifestyle program, heavily product-focussed

- 1 by kids made in a school

- a gay/lesbian film fest

- 1 comedy show with an Indian slant

- 1 yoga show

- 3 programs imported from Australian community television, including one called *Blokesworld* and another about vintage cars.

There are no Maori programs because there is a separate channel in Maori.

Because Wellington's ethnic communities are smaller, the programming schedule is more similar to a Canadian or US community/public-access channel. There is more emphasis on individual ideas and program themes; for example:

- a program on hunting
- a program on the paranormal

Since programs are generally produced elsewhere and brought to Triangle for playback, there is no live, interactive or phone-in programming. A minority of the programming is produced in a shoot-and-edit documentary style covering events in the community; the majority are talk shows shot in small studios in people's houses or other facilities.

Production quality is variable, depending on the producing group. According to Blackman, the average quality is higher than at a typical first-come, first-served, free, fully staff-supported access facility such as in Canada, the US or Europe. He says that no program is turned away, as long as it conforms to New Zealand broadcast law, such as those governing liable and hate. He says the channel has received only three complaints in its ten-year history, including two that were dismissed, and one in which a religious Mullah was talking about gay pride festival in NY and commented that all gays would burn in hell. On that occasion, the channel apologized. The channel offers the right of the reply to complainants.

Triangle does exercise discretion in the positioning of what it considers technically weaker programming within the programming schedule; for example, programs with poor audio quality.

Audience Response

In Auckland, which has a population of 1 million, 350,000 viewers say they tune in to Triangle Television at least once a month, either over the air or on satellite. This audience has been growing by 50-70,000 per month, according to Blackman.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

As a small English-speaking country, New Zealand faces broadcasting challenges similar to those faced in Canada. The majority of what can be seen on NZ television is not made in New Zealand. There is a push within the industry and in government to get more NZ-made programs. Blackman says, "There's a lot of cheap reality shows as opposed to proper documentaries that describe what our society is going through and how we are evolving as a people." He says that community television focusses on issues-driven content and to the needs of minorities.

While Triangle does provide a neutral platform on which anyone can distribute a program, and programs are being made that fill niches not being addressed by commercial broadcasters in the country, there are nonetheless significant technical and financial barriers to entry by the truly grassroots and disenfranchised. If you happen not to belong to a group that can back you to make a program, you might find access difficult.

The New Zealand model resembles that of Brazil, but with higher entry barriers in the form of broadcast fees.

Judging from the programming schedule, the channel is a multicultural station, providing a voice more to ethnic communities than to geographic local communities per se.

Challenges

According to Blackman, the biggest challenges faced by Triangle Television and for the community broadcasting sector in New Zealand are:

- Funding for the transition to digital.

- Additional operational funding to reduce or eliminate broadcast fees and to provide more equipment and training support. At present, the lack of non-commercial funding has prevented the model from being viable in all but the largest population centres where sufficient support can be found in producing communities.

- The potential for licenses to be abused by groups with narrow interests and which do not reflect the community as a whole. The group that held the Wellington license before Triangle took a 24/7 feed from Trinity Broadcasting in the US, the religious service set up by Tammy and Jim Bakker. Blackman said that the government needs to improve its licensing criteria.

<u>Fiji</u>[96]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

As in Nepal, government policy objectives in Fiji with respect to community television have developed in response to initiatives in the field.

Two retired filmmakers, John and Regina Yates, decided to make Fiji their home. They were there in 1992 when commercial television was first introduced, which consisted mostly of programming from New Zealand, except for local news and sports. They were taken aback at the impact that this predominantly foreign programming had on local audiences. For examples, the incidence of diabetes jumped to 25% of the population, who were unaccustomed to seeing advertising for sugary products such as soft drinks. Kids no longer wanted to wear traditional clothing in villages or to show traditional marks of respect to village leaders.

Feeling a responsibility to their new home, the couple decided to establish a community TV channel based on models that they had heard about in North America and Europe. The government had given all available broadcast spectrum to Fiji 1, a consortium majority owned by New Zealanders, for 10 years. It had retained a single channel with the idea of offering an educational government service.

When the Yates approached the Communication Minister, plans for the educational government service were on hold, and they were given this channel in 1996.

Funding and Facilities

CTV Fiji receives funding from a variety of sources, including local corporate sponsorship (often in the form of food to feed volunteers), embassies (Canada and Japan), and project money from organizations such as the United Nations. Its existence is precarious, as it constantly has to search for operational money. Its founders' attention is always split by the need to raise more money.

CTV Fiji owns its own transmitter, and renovated a former pumping plant to house a small studio, control room, edit suite and offices. CTV productions are shot with miniDV camcorders.

Because the channel controls its own transmitter and the studio has a direct link, the channel can broadcast live.

Distribution

Community TV Fiji is a free, over-the-air service that blankets the west side of Fiji's main island, reaching a population of about 100,000 or 10% of Fiji's population. (Fiji has 3-400 islands. The commercial broadcaster, Fiji 1, reaches the four largest.)

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[96] Information about Fiji was gathered on site. The author was unable to determine whether the channel is still in operation, however. Although the web site is still active at http://www.openchannel.se/fiji, the information is outdated including contact phone numbers.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

Thanks to CTV's multi-camera studio, the channel broadcasts over 20 hours of new programming per week, much of it live and interactive. This kind of programming is popular with viewers, who are used to live, traditional interactive storytelling and dance.

The production of live programming is also popular with Fijian volunteers. They tend to find the more labour-intensive ENG shoot-and-edit style programs demanding. Fiji is hot year round, with free food available on every tree. You can sleep outside with no ill effects. Few Fijians have bank accounts. As in many development contexts, the planning horizon for the average person is much shorter than in the West. It was unfamiliar to most of the young volunteers to undertake the meticulous planning and sustained effort required to complete a documentary-style program.

Technical quality is generally high, although differences in the makes of the three studio cameras (small digital camcorders) leads to mismatches in white balancing. Because of limited set storage, the channel uses chromakeyed backgrounds for almost every program… usually a scene from a tropical beach sunset or other local scene. This has the odd effect that when the shot cuts from one host to another, the background is always the same, with no change in angle. Viewers seemed to have accepted this oddity.

Programs have uneven lengths and rarely show credits. The Yates feel that topics should be as long as they are, rather than padping to fill a particular length. They feel that credits promote the idea of a star system rather than focussing on program content and an ethic of community service.

Regular programming includes:

- Children's programming, include an ecological series featuring puppets made by teenagers. Themes promoted the appropriateness of local building materials, foods, and environmental protection.

- Phone-in quiz programming, to promote learning.

- Short documentaries on educational topics such as fire prevention and health.

- Educational talk shows hosted by local resource people with the possibility for audiences to call in. Topics include sexuality, herbal medicine, cooking, computer use, dental hygiene.

- A small business series that showcases the achievements of Fijians. One episode demonstrated how to make paper at home.

- Family programming demonstrating how to make crafts at home, or introducing viewers to games and puzzles.

Audience Response

Although no formal statistics have been collected, the audience response to Community TV Fiji is enthusiastic. Viewers are ebullient in their praise and appreciation for what they term "their"

channel. The phone lines are jammed most nights.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Community TV Fiji is the only source of original Fijian TV programming except for news and sports.

It is also the only media service in the country that serves both the indigenous Fijian population and the nearly 50% of the population of Indian descent with a significant volume of programming in their own languages. There have been 3 attempted coups since 2000 because of the political tension between these two groups, around issues of land ownership.

Because of linguistic and religious differences, these two groups live almost wholly separate lives in different communities, even though they may be separated by only a few kilometres. Other media in the country cater to one group or the other (for example, newspapers or radio in either Fijian or Hindi) or publish in English, the common language of the country.

CTV Fiji is unique in that it broadcasts in all three languages. Pre-recorded programs such as talk shows on an issue are recorded three times, in Hindi, Fijian and in English. Sometimes this means inviting different guests representing these communities. At other times, translation by the host occurs simultaneously. Live phone-in programs are hosted by at least two volunteers, one from each linguistic group and sharing the common language of English. Callers are welcome to speak the language they want, and the volunteer who understands them translates to English for the other viewers.

The effect of these practices is to create a unique forum within the country where viewers can communicate in their own language, while still participating and exchanging ideas with viewers belonging to the other language group.

In addition to providing multi-language programming, CTV Fiji also attempts to bridge the cultural divide by producing programs that present the activities of one cultural group to the other. In one of its programs, about the Hindi festival Diwali (roughly equivalent to Christmas… an end-of-year festival of lights), volunteers wrote a dramatic framework in which a Hindi family invites a Fijian family over to sample holiday food. While visiting, the Hindi family tells the story of the holiday. The drama was recorded in English, so that all segments of the community could follow.

The second effect of the channel is to provide a local forum for cultural expression and the exploration of local issues in a country (like Canada) that is awash in foreign media. This is done both via documentary-style and phone-in programming.

Fijian viewers expressed that phone-in TV is tremendously important, because it mimics the face-to-face, everybody-at-the-same-level style of the traditional village meeting, where everyone has a chance to voice an opinion according to a respectful protocol.

A third effect of the channel it to balance the influx of foreign programming, which is felt to transmit values foreign to indigenous Fijians. Among these values include disrespectful attitudes of youth to elders, foreign clothing and music, excessive violence and incitements to buy commercial products on loan, resulting in high bankruptcy rates.

On phone-in programs, many of these issues are discussed openly, so that local people have a chance to articulate how they feel about the material they're seeing on other channels. As one caller says (commenting on foreign dramatic plots), "It all seems to be a power struggle." As a Fijian community leader says, "It's not that we want to live in the past, but we want to work toward change at our own pace. That's what Community TV enables us to do."

A fourth effect of the channel is to promote democracy and positive change within the country. Some Fijians view the power held by village chiefs as backward, and few people in a community are willing to stand up to them. Viewers say that the opportunity to call in to the community channel anonymously and state a point of view on an issue is empowering.

The call-in shows also provide a safety valve for the ethnic tension between Fijians and Indians. On the night of the 2000 coup (which ousted the first democratically elected Indian prime minister), only 1 in 6 viewers who called in to the channel supported it. It became apparent that it was staged by disgruntled Fijian chiefs. Several viewers said that the airing of this program, in which people aired their fears and reactions to the day's events, reduced tension in the community. People were able to hear from their country mates (their own race and the other) that most people were not in support of the coup.

The channel was advised the next day by coup leaders not to air any more programs about the coup. Because the community channel was generally well regarded by the chiefs, it received only a warning. By contrast, the commercial channel Fiji 1 had its office and equipment ransacked for airing coup news footage.

The last effect of the channel is the development mandate of the programming. An underlying cause for the coups is the slower economic development of the Fijian community compared to the more entrepreneurial Indian sector. CTV Fiji seeks to close this gap by singling out Fijians who have started businesses and featuring their achievements. It also airs programs that teach home-business skills such as computer literacy, cooking without electricity and saleable crafts. It also airs an intriguing series called *Tutti Frutti* which means "a bit of this, a bit of that" in Hindi. Its purpose is to stimulate Fijians to use their minds for fun. As the show's producer says, "Learning in classrooms is alien to Fijians and they tend to view using their brains as work. There isn't a culture of playing intellectual games for fun, or inquiry as fun." *Tutti Frutti* introduces a different game, craft or scientific puzzle on each program. It was co-hosted by Fijian teenagers.

Although it's difficult to quantify the overall impact of a particular program or series, the author met at least one individual who had started a successful home business as a result of seeing an idea on CTV Fiji, and the channel as a whole was enormously popular. People in the street know about it. Most people with TVs watch it, and people without electricity often go to neighbour's houses to watch it.

Challenges

The Yates hope to raise funds to build an additional transmitter in the capital, Suva, so that Fijians on the east side of Fiji's main island could also watch, which would more than double the viewership.

In the long term, the channel needs stable sources of non-commercial funding. Its current reliance on overseas one-time project funding is risky and time-consuming for the channel's

management to sustain.

In the longer term, the Yates hope that the example of CTV Fiji will be emulated by other island nations in the South Pacific, so that "People can have their own channel. They can see themselves on TV, and they can develop their own culture."

The Far East

The only examples of community-access television known in the Far East are in Japan and South Korea.

South Korea[97]

Inspired by the work of the NFB's Challenge for Change program, in 1999, Korea introduced a new media law that included four requirements to increase access to and control of what is shown on television by ordinary citizens:

1) The Korean Broadcasting Service (KBS) must air programs produced by citizens. The amount of time given to citizen broadcasts was not specified.[98] In a subsequent by-law, at least 100 minutes per month was stipulated. In consultation with media groups, it was decided to air citizen productions in a 30-minute Saturday afternoon slot called the *Open Channel*.

   While there is no production support (compensation, training or facilities) from the KBS for these programs, a fund called the Broadcasting Development Fund was set up by the Korean Broadcasting Commission (the KBC) to offset costs of production. Producers whose programs are selected for the slot receive between $5-8000.[99]

2) Every terrestrial broadcaster in Korea is required to have a viewer's committee, with the power to comment on programming. These committees are composed of ordinary viewers and industry professionals not employed by the broadcaster. The selection committee for the 30-minute *Open Channel* slot is drawn from these viewers' committees. There is broad agreement by government and the viewers' committees that the *Open Channel* slot should enable more critical program content and content aimed at underserved audiences. In practice however, there can be controversy over the selection of particular programs.

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[97] The information in this section was provided by Kim Myoung Joon, founder of MediAct, and a Chair of the Programming Committee of RTV, Korea's national public-access channel; as well as articles by media critics.

[98] Article 69 in the new media law (Programming of Broadcast Programs): "The Korean Broadcasting System shall program the viewer participation programs directly produced by the viewers under the conditions as prescribed by Presidential Decree."

[99] Article 38 of the new law (Expenditures of Fund)
"The Fund shall be used for a project falling under any of the following subparagraphs: ... 4. Broadcast programs produced directly by the viewers."

For example, one program that was submitted was critical of a new national ID card and was not selected. A march was organized in protest. When the membership of the viewers' committee changed, the program was aired.

Another program was produced by semi-conductor workers critical of company policy. The company threatened to sue KBS if the program aired. Another protest was organized and the program aired.

The law does not give KBS power to edit content within a submitted program, so this is an evolving experiment where everyone is testing the limits. Mr. Kim Myoung Joon, founder of MediAct and a Chair of the Programming Committee of RTV, Korea's national public-access channel, said "The broadcasting system has the power to select the viewers' committees, but there are trade unions inside the broadcast system that balance the power of management."

KBS doesn't advertise that anyone can make a program and prefaces each episode with a content disclaimer.

3) Cable and satellite operators must air programs submitted by viewers on regional or community-access channels.[100] Some activists have taken advantage of this opportunity and regularly submit programs, but the ability to do so is not advertised and not widely known.   Programs that are aired are compensated at $20-30/minute.

To help publicize and support these opportunities, media activists have established about 20 media centres around the country, such as MediAct in Seoul. These centres provide training and equipment and are funded in several ways: MediAct by a student council, others by the Korean Ministry of Culture, KBS provides free space within its building, and the KBC built two centres in Pusan and Inchan, for 20 million Won each (about $18,000 Can).

4) As a condition of license, the satellite broadcaster SkyLife was required to partly fund a national public-access channel called RTV,[101] in partnership with the KBC.

RTV operates according to four principles:

- Openness: open to everyone
- Nonprofitability: no commercials
- Independence: free from political and corporate influence
- Fairness: has a program planning committee, program selection committee, and advisory group free from the influence of management.

RTV receives about $500,000 Canadian annually for program production and a million for

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[100] Article 70 in the new law (Structure and Use of Channels): "A Comprehensive cable broadcasting business operator and a Satellite broadcasting business operator shall, in case where the viewers request the broadcast of a program directly produced by them pursuant to the provisions of the Commission's regulations, broadcast it via a regional channel or a public channel unless there is any special reason."

[101] RTV was established in 2003. See www.rtvkorea.net.

operations. RTV has 20 employees. Although no money or facilities are provided up front to facilitate program production, producers are paid if their program is accepted. Weekly programs are reimbursed at about $40/minute or $1,000 for a half-hour. One-of productions are aired in a strand called the *Unlimited Freedom Zone* and are reimbursed at $10-20/minute.

Approximately 90% of programs submitted for the *Unlimited Freedom Zone* are selected. The few that are disqualified have problems with technical quality or are "so inward looking as to be incomprehensible to a wider audience", according to Mr. Kim. Staff encourage alternative and critical content. Examples of recent programs include:

- Puppet shows
- Programs by and about people in wheelchairs
- Issues of violence and divorce for Korean women who marry internationally looking for a better life.

The weekly programs are selected by a programming committee drawn from activist organizations not employed by RTV. Examples include the *Migrant Workers' Program*, *Labour Movement Program, Anti-Globalization Issue* program, *Radical Perspectives in Film and Video*, and cultural programs.

There is no live production at RTV.

Distribution

Cable penetration in Korea is 90%. Satellite penetration is 10%. For this reason, although RTV is nationally distributed, its potential audience on satellite is small. An additional law requires cable operators to air one of two public-interest channels, either RTV or a channel that focusses on the needs of disabled people. Approximately 40% carry RTV.

RTV also webstreams its programming live.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Mr. Kim said that Koreans' understanding of what media can be is changing since the 1999 act was passed. Particular programs have had impact, such as the ID card program on KBS, which caused a controversy that was picked up by mainstream media. Recognition is growing that alternative sources of information are important.

The existence of the programming committees and the process of debating whose voice gets heard and what should be the criteria has also had impact.

Mr. Kim feels that the impact of the *Open Channel* slot on KBS has been large. KBS is available over the air and everyone in the country has access to it. On average, 5% of the national potential audience, or several million people, watches the *Open Channel* program every week.

Challenges

Mr. Kim cited two current challenges to access TV policies in Korea:

- Since Lee Myang-bak (former CEO of Hyundai) was elected president in August of 2007, the South Korean government has attacked the public media structure, including RTV and the access production centres.   In 2009, RTV may lose the KBC portion of its budget because (according to government sources) "RTV was using public money to criticize the government". The remainder, from SkyLife, covers only transmission. RTV will also lose its status as one of the two public-service channels that must be carried on cable.

- The lack of awareness of some of the outlets available to ordinary people, in particular the outlets on local cable. Mr. Kim said that there are media activists organizing people to produce programs only in pockets.

Japan[102]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

Local cable television started in Japan in the 1950s and was primarily used to overcome the transmission difficulties of Japan's mountainous landscape. By 1970, the first local cable channels had begun. Today, there are over 500.

Of these 500, of 262 that responded to a 2002 survey, 36 were broadcasting some kind of community-access programming along with staff-produced programming. There is no special category for "community-access television". Advertising is allowed.

Most cable companies, while functioning as television monopolies within their service areas, are small and have to compete with local newspapers and radio. For this reason, most offer a local channel. Some air access programming from a motivation to serve the community. Others welcome the free programming.

By contrast, while local over-the-air channels exist, most have difficulty producing local content and fill out their schedules primarily with network content. An estimated 2/3 of local terrestrial broadcasts consist of network content, another 20% is purchased, and about 10% is produced in-house, including a mix of news, lifestyle programming and talk shows.

The economics for local cable operators are different. In order to offer a competitive local cable service package, many are willing to subsidize their local program production from cable revenues.

There are fewer than 10 community radio channels in Japan, holding licenses that are not specifically nonprofit nor designated as "access" channels. They are just local channels that

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[102] Sources for information in this section include Professor Sakae Ishikawa, Department of Journalism at Sophia University, a 2002 PHd dissertation (in Japanese) by Kim Kyung Hwan, cable TV companies in Japan, Gabriele Hadl, Coordinator, Civil Society Media Policy Research Consortium at the University of Tokyo, Shinji Uozumi, Associate Professor, Kansaigaidai Univ. in Osaka, Japan. Also Internet sources as footnoted.

have elected to operate along nonprofit, access principles.

In 2010, a new media law is being proposed to address issues of convergence. A research group from the University of Tokyo recently queried federal opposition members about their opinions about public-access television. Some said they knew about the concept and thought it should be included in the new law.

Funding

There is no federal government support for these channels or recognition that they exist as a class of media distinct from the cable platform on which they are distributed.

Some municipalities, such as wards in Tokyo, have provided financial support to local cable channels to stimulate local and access production and to transmit their own messages.

Most of the access programs in smaller centres are self-funded, meaning that volunteers find their own equipment and donate their time to make the programs. A few receive support from local government and businesses.

Distribution

Because of tight cable franchising laws, Japan's cable industry has not consolidated as in North America and Europe. Current estimates of cable and satellite penetration combined are about 20% of households.

The low penetration of cable and satellite is reported by industry observers to be a combination of:

- Cable being viewed mainly as a retransmission service for mountainous areas or small islands where over-the-air reception is impractical.

- Tight laws regarding franchising, which have prevented the entrance of large cable companies from overseas as well as consolidation of Japanese companies. There are over 500 cable companies in Japan.

- A general satisfaction on the part of Japanese with the five main channels available over the air. As Anne Cooper-Chen writes *in Mass Media in Japan*, "The multi-channel era is slow coming in Japan. Whereas Americans want to choose themselves what they will watch, the Japanese prefer broadcasted programs of general appeal... It's a case of 'me-tooism'... these programs become the topics of conversation and gossip over drinks the following day."[103]

Gabrielle Hadl, Coordinator, Civil Society Media Policy Research Consortium at the

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[103] *Mass Communication* by Anne Cooper-Chen, including quotes from others.   See http://books.google.ca/books?id=hzfVsTpRFBYC&pg=PA112&lpg=PA112&dq=history+cable+TV+Japan&source=web&ots=SDP_JipACO&sig=arV9wqcGJKovthP93Dv9PflHmZ4&hl=en&sa=X&oi=book_result&resnum=3&ct=result#PPA112,M1.

University of Tokyo, feels that things are changing in Japan, as evidenced by the eager and wide participation of Japanese in the Internet. On the other hand, she acknowledges that the Japanese educational system has been slower to promote critical thinking and to teach media literacy formally than most other developed countries.

Shinji Uozumi, Associate Professor at Kansaigaidai University in Osaka, agrees that Japanese in general are more slow to seek out alternative media sources. According to Professor Uozumi, it has much to do with the more homogenous nature of Japanese society (fewer visible minorities, with obviously different information needs and viewpoints) as with the history of Japanese mainstream television, which has been tightly controlled by government.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

In the 2002 survey that was done as part of Kim Kyung Hwan's PHd dissertation, access programming fell into the following categories:

- Dissemination of local information
- Information about natural disasters such as typhoons and earthquakes
- Promotion of local culture
- Information about local industry and commerce
- Information for daily life
- Understanding of local citizenship.

In Chuki, the cable operator has a public-access channel that provides training and equipment support. The owner had heard of public-access in other countries and thought it was a good idea. This is the only example where a cable company provides active support to community production.

Examples of cities where the cable operator accepts tapes made by the public in a passive role include:

- Hiratsuka and Oiso in Kanagawa prefecture: Ten to fifteen volunteers produce a monthly program consisting of short segments that might review local restaurants or examine a social or economic problem.

- Sakaide, Kagawa Prefecture on the Island of Shikoku: A group of 10 volunteers used to produced 60-90 minutes of programming a day, usually in a discussion format, for example, discussing the Gulf War. This group is no longer active.

- Osaka: A video collective called Terere produces a regular program for airing by the local cable company.   The group acts as a facilitator for the local community by soliciting short submissions and packaging them together. Nonprofit organizations sometimes contribute segments about their activities. Individuals provide home videos and short artistic films.[104]

- Tokyo: There is a cable channel called Musashinomitaka Citizens TV (MMCTV) that is run by a nonprofit group. The channel produces about 1 hour per day:

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[104] For more information, see Terere's web site (in Japanese) at www.terrere.jp.
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- a local monthly news magazine
- *Kichiban*, a variety program of 'street news'
- *Everyone's Video,* advertised as an open slot, but the station retains the right to refuse transmission based on content or quality. The web site description implies that non-controversial content such as hobbies, local shops, travel or art is welcome.

- In some wards, local government promotes new policies or tourist information.

- Hekikai in Aichi Prefecture: A citizen-run cable channel called Daichi TV interviews local people on the street about local personalities, places and groups. The group receives support from the cable corporation, KATCH-TV.

- There are also reports of local drama production and production by ethnic minorities, such as Korean-Japanese and Brazilian labourers.

There is no sports, religious or live programming. Although a volunteer in Hiratsuka said that live programming is possible, he said that the volunteer base is too small to support a regular studio crew.

While some cable operators say that all content is welcome, some community producers have been told that anything dealing with women's issues, labour topics or the environment is taboo.

Audience Response

No formal research has been done about feedback to citizen-produced programming on local cable channels, although many of the local cable channels say that their overall channel viewership is good.

The fact that these companies have produced local programs for years and continue to do so tends to vouch for the value to local audiences of the programming and of its contribution to the cable companies' competitiveness.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

Professor Sakae Ishikawa, a community producer as well as a professor in the Department of Journalism at Sophia University, Tokyo, is of the opinion that local cable channels do not have a big overall impact. His view echoes the view of Anne Cooper's comments in *Mass Media in Japan* that most Japanese prefer to watch entertainment programs produced by major broadcasters. For local news, they tend to to buy local newspapers, which are often free.

The community television sector in Japan should be considered to be nascent. It exists, people practice within it and are lobbying for pro-access policies, but it has no formal recognition.

National Association?

Inspired by the N. American public-access model, various groups within Japan have wanted access since the 1970s. (Much has been written academically, mostly in Japanese). So far,

however, they have been unsuccessful in effecting policy change.

Some of them are attempting to distribute video over the Internet and via DVDs. These efforts have resulted in the establishment of an association called J-Cam, (short for Japanese Council for Citizens', Community and Alternative Media). Between 3-500 people have attended recent meetings of J-Cam.

Africa

In Africa, as in Latin America, community radio has a long history. Radio programs are relatively cheap and technologically simple to produce, and the audience doesn't need electricity. The majority listen on battery-operated receivers. Community radio production has been promoted by foreign NGOs as a tool of education and development.

As for community television, the larger part of Africa is still neither electrified nor of a standard of living that would enable wide television ownership. This study found only two examples of community-access television channels: in South Africa and in Benin.

South Africa[105]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

The South African government created legislation to enable community TV and radio in 1992 as a way to include South African racial groups that had been traditionally underrepresented in the media. The legislation has changed several times since. The first community TV channel to be licenced was Soweto TV in 2007, followed by Cape Town TV (CTV) in 2008, after continuous lobbying. Three other community TV licences have been awarded since.   During the same period, over 100 community radio stations were licensed.

According to the Independent Communications Authority of South Africa's (ICASA) 2004 *Community Television Broadcasting Services: Position Paper*, licensed channels must:

- Be nonprofit organizations with boards of directors elected by the community.

- Promote "public access" in which the "viewer becomes the broadcaster".

- Involve different sectors of the community in program selection and planning via programming committees.

- Focus on "grassroots community issues" and on "community issues not normally dealt with by broadcasting services covering the same area". Examples include development, health care, education, the environment and the reflection of local culture.

- Promote the development of a "sense of common purpose with democracy".

Cape Town has no private or public local television, so expectations for the channel have been high according to Ms. Thorne. It began broadcasting in September of 2008.

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[105] The information in this section was provided by Cape Town TV (http://capetowntv.org/) and government documents as footnoted. According to CTV, the four other community TV licence-holders in S. Africa currently function more like local commercial broadcasters (see note in "Challenges" section), due to the financial fragility of the sector. As this situation changes or new information becomes available, information about other licence-holders will be added.

Funding and Facilities

Cape Town TV is a nonprofit association. It has received between 800,000 and 1.3 million Rand (about $100,000-$160,000 Can) for the first year of operation by the Media Development and Diversity Agency (MDDA). The MDDA was created by an act of parliament (Act 14 of 2002) "to enable historically disadvantaged communities and persons not adequately served by the media to gain access to the media."[106]

The MDDA both funds and lobbies on behalf of community TV and radio license-holders. Private broadcasters must put a percentage of their revenues into the MDDA.

The support from the MDDA is intended to sustain CTV only until it can sustain itself from advertising, up to a maximum of 8 minutes per hour.

Most equipment has been donated.

The channel is based at a film school; ,many students are volunteers.

About 100 NGOs also pay 1000 Rand (about $115) a year to be a member. For this fee, they are entitled to 17,000 Rand-worth of free advertising and can participate in productions.

The channel has 12 full-time staff, 3 full-time interns, three part-time employees, 10 regular office volunteers, plus dozens of volunteers who participate in particular programming through NGOs and community groups.

Distribution

There is no cable TV in South Africa. Cape Town TV broadcasts an analog signal on UHF within a 100-kilometre radius, with a population of 2.5 million people.

Community television has been allocated space within the public broadcasting multiplex on digital networks. Government has committed to cover the transmission costs of the digital migration for all broadcasters. Community channels must migrate by the end of December 2013.

There is a subscription satellite service (DSTV) to which about 2 million South Africans subscribe. The cheapest package costs 99 Rand per month, which is out of the range of many.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

CTV broadcasts 24 hours per day. Cape Town TV's programming comes from several sources:

- Eighty percent (about four hours per day) is independently produced and submitted; the channel pays nothing for it. Thorne says "A lot of it is consciousness cinema and great local cultural programming made by NGOs, educational institutions, members of the community

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[106] See http://www.mdda.org.za/ for more information.

(including weddings and cultural events), and short films".

- Eight proposals for co-productions are currently in different stages of development. If the proposals come from individuals or groups that are not paying members, they are charged 5% of their total budget as a broadcast fee, but they may find program sponsors and sell advertising. A few programs in this category include *What's Happening in Cape Town* (a daily community event roundup), *2010* (preparations for the World Soccer Cup), *Street Stories* (ordinary S. Africans on what's going on in the community), *Community Album* (showing people's photos), and a talk show about social issues such as poverty.

- If the program proposal comes from a member NGO, it can use the channel's studios for free. About eight such programs are in development, about sports (to which several sports clubs contribute), youth, the environment, local participative democracy and sustainable development, and women's housing. According to Thorne, the goal of working with the NGOs is to "strengthen civil society and give it a voice".

- There is an open studio for people in the community who want to host their own talk show. They can try a pilot.

- About 10% of the programming comes from international sources over the Internet, with the intent of encouraging local interest in the Net (to which 80-90% of Cape Town TV viewers do not have access). Examples include programs by Stephen Hawking about the shape of the universe, about 9/11 conspiracy theories, and others from the TEDTalks web site. (The channel is allowed up to 45% international programming).

- Rebroadcasts of Al Jazeera and Deutsche Welle (in English).

Thorne admitted that with current budgets, the channel is not a full public-access centre in the sense that anyone can come with an idea and find instant training and assistance for free. She says this mix is the best they can do to approach that ideal for now.

Audience Response

The South African Advertising Research Foundation (SAARF) reports cumulative monthly audiences for CTV of between 1.3 and 1.5 million. The biggest demographic is in the R5000 - R10000 monthly household income, primarily coloured, more female than male, relatively well off by South African standards (since they own televisions).

Thorne claims that "people absolutely love CTV", particularly poor black working communities, which is the demographic that the MDDA is trying to reach. Thorne said white people also watch, who are "alternative, intellectual, thinking arty types". She said, "People are sick and tired of what the public broadcaster [the South African Broadcasting Corporation] is dishing up". According to her, the SABC replays "American soap operas and rubbish". Thorne says that the relationship between Cape Town TV and viewers is "highly personal". Individual audience members give regular feedback by phone and visit the office. She said, "We seem to have a rapport with audiences that I never believed would be possible."

To put these comments in context, Thorne elaborated that the three SABC channels are only semi-state funded (citizens are supposed to pay a television license fee like in the UK, but most

don't), and therefore still heavily reliant on advertising. She said that the public channels are "commercial, formulaic and lacking in vision".

The SABC has received criticism internationally that it favours government interests and certain ethnic groups over others.

Other than the three state channels, there is one private national commercial channel available over the air called eTV, which replays a predominantly American and international schedule.

Role and Impact of Community TV Overall

While too early to know what the ultimate impact of this new community TV channel will be, a quote from the book *Re-Visioning Television: Policy, Strategy and Models for the Sustainable Development of Community Television in South Africa* puts the channel's mission into context:

"The introduction of a quality, accessible local television network represents the final piece in post-apartheid South Africa's media jigsaw... The race is now on to develop models and fine-tune systems that will make the most powerfully democratic tier of broadcast media sustainable, empowering and development friendly.

Free media and/or community media is anathema to repressive governments around the world. In South Africa, by contrast, community television is expected to play an important role in job creation and skills development as well as contribute to the strengthening of civil society, the promotion of participative governance and the expression of the country's rich linguistic and cultural heritage."[107]

Challenges

According to Thorne, the main challenge for community TV in S. Africa is that it is expected to survive mainly on advertising revenue. When stations get info financial trouble and turn to local business interests for support, the community organization effectively loses control. *"We can't fulfil our mandate when we're in survival mode. We need more base line support from government, at least 3 million rand a year, or about three times what we have been getting."*

Signal costs is the other challenge which Thorne says the sector is still working to address. *"There is no differential tariff for private, community and public broadcasters, so we pay the same as them."*

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[107] Full text available at http://www.hsrcpress.ac.za/product.php?productid=2171.

Benin[108]

History, Licensing and Policy Objectives

A multimedia centre was set up by the United Nations for Population Activities in 2004 in Benin's coastal capital, Cotonou.

Half of Benin's population is under 15, and the mandate of the centre is simultaneously to provide training opportunities to Benin's youth, as well as to promulgate messages about HIV, safe sex, marriage and parenting. While this mandate may sound narrow (not an "access" centre in the broadest meaning of the term), HIV and unwanted pregnancies are viewed by Benin's government as major threats.

The chair of the council of administration is the Minister of Youth for Benin. The license for the radio and television frequencies was provided by the Minister of Communications and is only the second public license granted in the country. Mr. Tony Simard, the United Nations Population Fund (UNFPA) representative in Benin who spearheaded the establishment of the centre, convinced the Minister that the country's youth could participate in the democratization of the country. (Benin was a Marxist-Leninist-style dictatorship until 1990.)

Funding and Facilities

The centre is funded by grants from the United Nations Foundation and UNICEF ($300,000 Can in the first year).

Eight employees and 300 youth volunteers staff the centre, which includes radio and television broadcasting, and training in theatre, print journalism, computer graphics, and the Internet.

Distribution

The television signal is carried on UHF and reaches 1,000,000 viewers.

Programming Types, Quantity and Quality

The radio and television programming features African culture and educational segments that promote the rights of women and children, safe sex, staying in school, delaying marriage, and pre- and post-natal health. The educational and issues-driven content is wrapped in popular culture, such as local African music, to attract viewers.

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[108] The information in this section was provided by Canadian Tony Simard, the UNFPA representative who founded the centre. Information can also be found at http://www.unfpa.org/adolescents/opportunities/benin/benin-st.html.

Audience Response

No formal statistics have been collected on audience for the television programming to date.

Role and Impact of the Media Centre Overall

While no formal statistics exist, more than 1,000,000 people can receive the radio and television signals broadcast by the centre, and more than 300 youth receive training every six months.

The strategy of appealing to the country's youth appears to be working. The father of one female student said, "These programmes need to be heard by the whole community. I am now learning from my daughter... Most of my children are out of school and trying to find work. It's a difficult time for young people today, since there are so many of them going after so few jobs. Most end up in the informal economy, or stay at home like two of my other daughters."

His daughter said, "Before coming here I could not speak in front of people, I was shy, retiring and unable to make decisions for myself. Now all that has changed. I have developed a strong sense of self and intend to work in radio or TV as a dramatist or broadcaster."

SUMMARY

This survey demonstrates that nations and people around the world have evolved variant models of community-access television to respond to local needs, local legislation and local funding availability. Many issues and trends are common, however, and some general observations can be made.

Technical Quality

Since the early days of community-access television in Canada, there have been enormous improvements in technology that have favoured access production. Where once studio tube cameras were large, unwieldy and demanding to maintain, and on-location shooting required heavy Portapaks and skilled lighting, community producers now enjoy small-format digital cameras that capture quality footage even in low light. Editing can be done using standard computers and a minimum of specialized software. This transition has occurred during the last ten years, since the decline of access here began. Criticisms that were sometimes levelled at community television about its poor technical quality no longer apply. The line between "professional" and "non-professional" production is considered irrelevant today at most community-access centres world-wide.

Attitudes Toward Community-Produced Content

While community TV channels once represented one of the only sources of alternative or non-mainstream video content to be encountered by most Canadians, (and not all viewers knew how to react to it when channel surfing), attitudes have changed in the past ten years:

- There has been a trend toward audience saturation with star-driven, manufactured content. "Reality TV", in which ordinary people are placed in (arguably) real situations before television audiences, have become mainstream. There has been a simultaneous rise in the popularity of long-form documentaries that audiences will pay cinema rates to see. While these are both "professional" formats, they reflect an appetite to see real people facing real challenges. Production formats and methodologies have also become increasingly access-like in the mainstream. Footage shot with Steadicams or hand-held (compared to dollying) and more gritty production looks are more accepted. News footage tends to be captured by a single videographer now instead of a team of reporter/camera operator/audio operator. Finally, there has been a move away from the formality of film production processes toward HD and digital video.

- The Internet has increased expectations by ordinary citizens that they should be able to participate directly in media production, whether through blogging, creating their own web sites, or participating in video fora such as YouTube. People are happily watching YouTube in playing-card-sized windows on their computers with jerky playback for its novelty and realism, despite the professional industry move toward HD.

Combined with the improvements in the equipment available cheaply to community producers, these factors have gone a long way toward eliminating the one-time divide between "professional" and "community" production.

Content

The three most significant factors in shaping the content that is produced for and by access channels around the world are:

- Funding (governmental, municipal, NGO, commercial or industry taxes)

- Needs of the community

- Management

Some general observations can be made about the influence of these factors:

Funding

All types of funding have potential pitfalls that can affect the variety and diversity of voices that are heard:

- FEDERAL: Federal funding can be vulnerable to political influence. For example, there have been cuts to Korea's national public-access broadcaster by conservative elements in government. To the extent that a federal government respects democratic press freedoms and is content to administer arts and cultural funding through arms-length bodies (the case with most Western countries in which community-access TV exists), this poses less of a constraint.

- MUNICIPAL: Channels in Israel that receive the majority of their funding from municipal sources have reported instances of censorship if programming is critical of local administration or local businesses. Municipal-business links have been blamed in the US for the thirty-year battle to obtain public-access TV in Philadelphia (the home of Comcast, the largest cable company in the US). Instances of censorship by municipal authorities have also been reported in South America, even when no direct funding is involved; channels have been threatened with closure and staff have been harassed by police where local channels have criticized the practices of multinational mining or other companies.

- MEMBERSHIP FEES FROM PRODUCERS: Where there is no stable source of non-commercial funding or such funding is insufficient (such as in New Zealand, Australia, Denmark, Brazil), and channels charge membership fees to producing groups as an alternative to commercial funding (or are forbidden by legislation to show commercials), it favours access by groups rather than individuals; for example, religious or ethnic groups, arts groups, NGOs or sports clubs. Voices and topics still reach the screen that are not seen on commercial or public channels, but representation of the truly marginalized and voiceless is more rare.

  A second limitation is that when money changes hands for program production and distribution, commercial-like characteristics tend to arise that inhibit access. For example, because community TV channels in Australia rely on a mix of advertising and membership fees, when Aurora Community Channel (a national not-for-profit channel launched on the

Foxtel digital network) opened its doors in 2005 calling itself a national access channel and offering to show programming from community producers around Australia for a fee, several local community channels introduced policies to forbid their producers from providing their programming. Their grounds were that a) producers shouldn't pay Aurora if they didn't have to pay the local channel that had supported the production b) the national platform would compete and take away viewers if it offered the same programming.

- ADVERTISING: In most countries where no stable source of non-commercial funding from government sources exists, where commercial advertising is permitted by legislation, and where channel managers have opted to pursue it, resources are split between the need to chase advertising and the need to facilitate access. In rare cases, such as in Peru, where channel managers are committed to local culture and where local indigenous businesses need an advertising outlet, the pairing can be natural and complementary.

  More often, however, the goal of seeking the largest audience for a given program (serving the needs of advertisers), and the goal of serving niche audiences, conflict. In most such cases, staff resources are consumed with playback and fund-raising, with a laissez-faire approach to seeking programming. Most of the programming trickles in from groups within the community that are already well organized and have resources, as in the MEMBERSHIP FEE model. In the worst cases, channel management actively recruits semi-professional producers and commercial-like programming to attract the most advertising, and the principal of access may be eclipsed partly or entirely. This has been the trend throughout Canada's largest cable-operated channels, since the rules against advertising were relaxed in 1997.

- NGOs: NGO-funded community channels tend to be found in developing countries and have an explicit educational or development mandate. While such channels at first may not seem to offer "access" in the sense of opening their doors to whomever to produce whatever as in North America and Europe, most provide free training and rely on volunteer help. They grasp that the more direct the involvement by the community, the more relevant the programming. Members of such communities typically recognize the same educational and developmental needs identified by NGO staff, so there is rarey conflict.

  The programming that results may be radically different. For example, in Bolivia, traditional teaching is done via oral fiction. Consequently, the style of production that is taught is fictional and film-like rather than studio TV-based. So, while it is true that the NGO guides community effort in a particular direction, this leadership is appreciated. The particular stories produced come from the communities themselves and well supported at screenings.

- CABLE INDUSTRY TAXATION: Because the introduction of cable made available local production resources and channels in many countries, the cable industry is sometimes required to carry community television channels and/or fund them. While this led to stable funding for community TV in both Canada and the US for almost thirty years and to positive industry-community relations, this alternative has become more problematic as cable companies have grown and their community-based character has changed. In many parts of English Canada and some parts of Quebec where cable companies have directly administered program production, access has been lost and programming has been regionalized and commercialized along with cable operations.

  In the US, where the cable industry has traditionally footed the bill for production but the

channels have been run by independent community boards, the loss of access by the public hasn't been as severe, but there have been other problems: Some cable companies have challenged municipalities (whose size they now dwarf) in court, not to have to pay for public-access channels. In some states, cable companies have lobbied for the right to negotiate for state-wide monopolies rather than municipality by municipality. This has occasionally resulted in the loss of public access in a state as a whole.

Regardless of source, two common patterns emerge when the funding level for a community TV channel is insufficient:

1) If staff resources are limited, community outreach and facilitation tends to be dropped. Programming that flows from the community unsolicited tends to come from groups that are well established, have prior histories producing, and need little support. Representation of all parts of the community and true diversity tends to be more limited.

2) If both staff AND technical resources are limited, the "channel" may be simply a playback facility or head end, with no training, no equipment for loan, and no common studio production or editing facilities (as in most parts of Brazil, New Zealand and Australia). While the availability of cheap digital cameras and computer editing over the last ten years means that some producing individuals and groups can continue under these conditions, there are two negative results for access:

ι) Only the more technically savvy are able to produce (in Western countries) and only those with sufficient resources to buy equipment can produce in developing contexts where it can't be assumed that people have computers let alone electricity. Even in "developed" countries such as the UK, only 50% of the population is estimated to have Internet access because of regional disparities in wealth.

ιι) There is no cross-fertilization of ideas as occurs when production facilities are shared, and no common sense of programming a single service for the community. Groups and individuals who produce tend to do so for a narrow range of personal or group interests, which tend not to mature over time. To the viewer, such channels can feel like a series of soapbox-programs one after the other, rather than a single service with a clear community-driven mandate. Some program managers mitigate the isolationism with specific policy. For example, in Sydney, Australia, and in Aarhus in Denmark, ethnic producers are encouraged to produce in English or at least to subtitle in English so that the larger community can share in the subculture. On the whole, however, the learning, communication, and maturation process that characterizes the experience of community TV volunteers at a traditional access channel--where they can work on a range of programming and be exposed to a cross-section of political and social ideas within a dynamic community—are lost.

Cultural and Communication Needs of the Community

There are obvious differences world-wide among the kinds of access programming produced, as one would expect. The more different they are, the more community-access as the third tier can be considered to be doing its job, serving the needs of diverse communities. (By contrast, the globalization of media has tended to homogenize much of the commercial material being produced world-wide, resulting in versions of *Who Wants to Be a Millionaire* and *American Idol*

from Canada to the Indian subcontinent.)

There are common needs that motivate communities to produce television, however:

- To express alternative political, religious or personal points of view.
- To provide local information and education tailored to the community.
- To program in a local or minority language.
- To celebrate local art and culture.
- To discuss and debate local issues and challenges.
- To "demystify technology" and develop media literacy skills, so that the community can better interpret commercial and national television services.

These needs may have different emphases and expressions in different places, but are present to a greater or lesser extent on almost all community-access channels.

In a minority of countries (Brazil, Mexico, Australia), community-access TV has also been used to:

- Document state, corporate or paramilitary violence or wrong-doing, to protect local residents.

- Document negotiations and public processes involving government officials, to ensure accountability.

These two uses tend to be most common among indigenous minorities.

Management Style

The impact of particular management personnel on the content and role of a community-access channel cannot be overstated.

Although the traditional laissez-faire N. American notion of a community or public-access channel is one in which the doors are simply opened and the public comes in to express itself however it wants, the impact of particular management and particular training programs on the resulting programming is enormous. As Marilyn Hyndman at Northern Visions in Belfast says, "You get good and bad community TV management as in any field. With good management, the programming shines and the community benefits. With bad management, you get nothing."

The appropriate management style for community-access TV is much debated. Proponents of what they call "true public access" from many Southern US channels will tell you that any influence that management exercises over content constitutes an infringement on First Amendment rights. Most community TV practitioners in other parts of the world, however, will tell you that training and leadership is the key to the programming that results, and that to try to abdicate responsibility is not a solution. Whatever approach you pick (including laissez-faire) sends a message to local producers and influences content.

At public-access centres throughout the US where more interventionist media literacy training is favoured, the programming tends to be less imitative of commercial formats. Would-be producers are given a chance to critique the media culture that has shaped their tastes before

they tackle their own topics. Proponents of aggressive media literacy training argue that they are giving community producers more objectivity and more choices through this process, not less.

As has been discussed already, NGO-managed channels in developing countries tend to have a particular programming mandate toward which they direct community effort. Such channels tend to be run by highly motivated people, and the challenges of the environment often provoke them to produce some of the most innovative and high-impact programming in the world. In such contexts, it's rare to find a volunteer who says, "Well, I wanted to do a different program, but they wouldn't let me."

The professional backgrounds and identities of those who run community channels also influences content. For example, the new channel in Vienna was set up by journalists, filmmakers and artists. The result is a high percentage of independent films, artistic and cultural programs, and sophisticated political discussion. You don't see the kind of meandering live studio phone-in shows on soft topics common on many cable-operated N. American channels in the 70s and 80s... not that someone wanting to do such a program would be turned away necessarily. It's just that over time, particular channels come to be seen in particular ways by audiences and associated with certain kinds of programming. Producers tend to rise to the standards set for them.

Similarly, on channels that are supported by membership fees, programming policies are shaped by the members. (For example, to limit monopolization by a single segment within the community, many such channels limit religious programming to particular time slots or percentages.)

Juergen Linke, long-time director of the Berlin Open Channel and current director of Open Channels for Germany, made a comment about the impact of channel staffing in Germany which is equally applicable in Canada. He said that the early years of open channels in Germany were characterized by activism and the involvement of community facilitators, artists and journalists.

Similarly, the original model of community television in Canada as defined by the National Film Board evolved from a filmic model, in which first film, and later video, was used as a tool in the hands of communities that had problems to solve. Video was called a "mirror machine". NFB facilitators and equipment were sent to communities across Canada as part of its Challenge for Change project. This was relatively expensive, however, and the availability of camera and production equipment at cable companies was seen as a more efficient way to make available this new tool to communities across the land. From these experiments, CRTC legislation for community television was born. The original vision focussed on projects within the community (taping everyone's opinion on a problem for example) rather than on "programming" to fill a channel.

As the years wore on, the emphasis on community activism and awareness-building declined in both Germany and Canada because:

1) More and more of the employees of such channels were hired out of film and television production schools. Few were community facilitators or activists, nor were familiar with the Challenge for Change vision. While they understood that they were supposed to help volunteers make programming, training was usually limited to technical topics. Training in media literacy and outreach efforts to genuinely marginalized sectors within the community

became rare. The relationship to the community became one of passive service, not leadership.

As the years went by, if such staff stayed in community TV and did not move on to professional channels, many became disillusioned and demotivated with helping amateurs make their own programs.

To address this problem, post-secondary education in both Canada and the US evolved to train potential access employees with a combination of technical television and community facilitation skills. The University of Masschusetts at Boston has offered a degree program in "Community Media and Technology" since 2002 as part of its College of Public and Community Service. Lethbridge Community College in Alberta had started offering a specialized diploma program in community television by 1996. When CRTC policy mandating cable companies to offer community channels changed in 1997, the College shifted its focus back to mainstream television training. The existence of both programs indicate recognition by the post-secondary training sector that the community media tier has different needs and goals than the public and private tiers.

2) In the context of a thirty-channel cable line-up, many community program managers and staff felt that their job was to program a channel. Quick-to-produce weekly studio talk shows were often favoured. Production methods often imitated commercial formats. Time for genuine experimentation and resource-intensive documentary-style explorative projects in the community was often difficult to find.

Fortunately, the pendulum is starting to swing the other way at many access channels around the world, following trends in mainstream TV. With so many channels now available, offering repurposed programming in mulitple time-slots, channel loyalty has been de-emphasized. Viewers tend to look for the programs they want wherever and whenever. In responde to this trend, some community-access centres are becoming less concerned with filling channels than with offering a few hours of high-quality, high-impact and important community programming per week, repeating in several time slots to cater to the needs of different viewers. As Marilyn Hyndman at Northern Visions in Belfast says, "Nobody has time to watch more than a few hours of programming a week anyway. If we can get local viewers to watch the 4 or 5 hours of new programming that we produce per week, then we feel we're doing well and they have a vital link to what is going on in the community."

3) While instances of outright censorship were rare, cable corporate culture tended to favour friendly "community" shows, rather than controversial material that might generate complaints. Artists often viewed cable channels as exploiting them (airing their work for no pay) rather than as a legitimate outlet.

Juergen Linke's conclusion is that while the principle and framework for access thrives in Germany, the medium has not achieved its potential. It has not been as alternative and as hard-hitting as it might, given its extraordinary freedom.

Noam Chomsky voiced a similar opinion about public-access television in the US. He feels it has not yet reached its potential as a platform for diversity. The reason he gives, is different, however. He feels that for significant alternative voices in the US to use public-access channels, it needs a national platform. Except for rare cases like *Democracy Now*, (aired on over 300 access channels across the US because its producers are willing to mail out program copies), for many organizations and individuals with an alternative message, such as

Greenpeace or a Ralph Nader, negotiating airings with hundreds or thousands of individual access channels is too cumbersome.

Major Challenges

While community-access television has made enormous progress around the world in recent years, with a growing understanding by governments that it constitutes a third tier distinct from the public and private sectors, it still faces two major challenges: reliable funding and guaranteed distribution, particularly during the conversion to digital.

Reliable Funding

In several countries, while access television has received formal recognition to the extent that it is licensed and assigned a frequency or must-carry status on cable television, there is no source of non-commercial funding. While such channels generally succeed in bringing some voices to the screen for which access to private and public channels is difficult, they nonetheless tend to be well-organized groups with resources. The principle of non-discriminatory access and active outreach to marginalized groups and individuals tends to be limited. Without stable funding, such channels tend to be just playback facilities. They do not function as a meeting place for the community to develop its culture, a sense of common identity, and a safe place for debate. Contributing groups tend to remain isolated in their production activities, as well as the viewers they recruit.

Guaranteed Distribution

Many access channels that have fought to get on the air with analog signals are now having to fight to stay on the air with the transition to digital. While the introduction of satellite TV and digital channels should have multiplied channel capacity and reduced competition for scarce frequencies, the transition to digital is happening simultaneous to the introduction of HD. Larger stakeholders, typically public and private broadcasters, are asking for greater channel bandwidth so that they can offer HD.

In addition, the transition to digital in many countries is more than just a switch from analog transmission towers to digital ones, under the control of individual broadcasters. A new level of gate-keeping has arisen in the form of networks of digital transmission towers, often controlled by a single or a few companies with national or regional contracts. Governments, as they once regulated access to cable tiers, are now having to regulate space on the new digital networks. In several countries such as Australia, no space has been made for community media. Channels such as the one in Perth, Western Australia, (reliant on advertising for survival), have already had to shut down because they've lost too many viewers who have made the switch to digital.

While the long-term opportunities for video distribution on the Internet are enormous and are recognized by commercial, public and community broadcasters alike, for the moment, most community broadcasters do not view the Internet as a viable stand-alone alternative, although many use it for archival playback. Like most private and commercial broadcasters, they recognize that visibility in their communities depends on access to television for the foreseeable

future.

RECOMMENDATIONS

These observations regarding community television around the world, and the history, accomplishments, and recent challenges for the sector in Canada lead to the following recommendations. These recommendations are consistent with those made by the 2003 Lincoln Report, *Our Cultural Sovereignty*.

1. Create a License Class for Community-ACCESS Television

CRTC policy 2002-61 was confusing for all stakeholders because it failed to distinguish between local broadcasting undertakings that were for profit, those that were not for profit, and what the difference was between a "community TV license" and a traditional local broadcasting license.

A new "community-access" license class should be created, characterized by:

- At least 80% access production, meaning programming produced by individuals and groups within the local community, with or without the help of employees of the community-access channel. Twenty percent leeway is recommended for three reasons:

    i) Certain kinds of productions benefit from co-ordination by access channel staff. The best example is the community news magazine, often a staple in the programming week. It can be beyond the resources of a single volunteer to produce such a program on a weekly basis. It often works better if many volunteers report on different sectors within the community, and the magazine as a whole is co-ordinated by experienced staff. Other examples include fora for short films, in which films are submitted by the community, but the presentation format is created by channel staff. A third example might be coverage of city council meetings or local elections, often considered a core service of community TV channels, which no single volunteer may elect to produce, but to which volunteers could contribute. Such multi-participant projects led by staff provide important training and community-building opportunities.

    ii) In the interests of motivating and promoting leadership and experimentation by access channel staff, there should be flexibility for them to initiate programming projects. These may be artistic pet projects, in which the community can participate and learn, or programming that fills particular needs for the community which are recognized by staff but not necessarily advanced by the community itself. As Marilyn Hindman commented from Northern Visions in Belfast, volunteers come and go, and it is often helpful for channel staff to be able to follow the threads of long-term key community issues.

    iii) There should be leeway to air non-local productions considered relevant to the local community; for example, community-access productions from other regions, or government or NGO PSAs and documentaries.

- Regular training for the community, including technical training as well as media literacy and content training, at no cost.

- The availability of equipment for loan to the community for program production, including ENG and mobile production units, and studio and editing facilities at a central location. "Local" community as defined by the license should mean that members of the community can reach the facility and access equipment within 30 minutes on public transportation. The trend toward regionalization of community TV offices across Canada has seriously damaged this aspect of access.

- Assistance to the community to produce programming of whatever genre and type it chooses, within the resources of the channel.

- Airing of programming completed by individuals and groups within the community without discrimination or censorship, so long as the contents conform to broadcast law.

- Advertisement on the channel and via other means of the availability of training, program production opportunities, equipment and distribution opportunities.

- The seeking out of underrepresented and/or marginalized groups within the community for training and production opportunities.

- Participation from all major sectors within the community, including local government, NGOs, community service organizations, local business, educational facilities (primary, secondary, tertiary), artistic and cultural groups, and individuals. License applications should be assessed according to this broad representation.

- Accountability to local boards of directors with broad representation from the community (the groups named above). There should designated board positions for local journalists and artists. Television provides a communication, journalistic, and cultural service for the community. Leadership by specialists in these fields has been demonstrated to raise production quality and community participation and debate at channels world-wide.

- The production of programs on local topics and from local points of view not available to the community via other means.

- Regular monitoring, similar to what used to be done by the CRTC prior to 1997, but more extensive. Monitoring prior to 1997 included number of hours of production per week, volunteers trained, and individuals and groups using the service. This encouraged at least minimal compliance with policy expectations, but was essentially passive. To justify the investment of public funds in community programming, regular reporting should in addition cite examples of projects that:

  - Benefit the community in concrete, measurable terms.
  - Stimulate community debate on important issues.
  - Capture and promote local culture or history.
  - Involve previously excluded groups.
  - Approach the use of media from new or alternative perspectives.

  As the "professionals", it behooves channel staff to provide leadership in fulfilling the communication needs of that community. Channels that receive public monies should be accountable in the same way that the Canada Council and other arts administration bodies expect accountability for public funding.

- The amounts of sponsorship and forms of advertising permitted need to be carefully defined. There are currently different points of view on advertising among community-access practitioners in English and French Canada, primarily because independent community TV corporations in Quebec have had to rely on advertising in recent years to survive and have recruited significant representation from the business community on their boards.

It is useful to return to first principles and re-examine why channels with public and nonprofit mandates tend to restrict full-blown advertising in favour of sponsorship (e.g. PBS and many public broadcasters).

The basic goal of access television—providing voices for niche groups within the community—is generally at odds with advertising, which seeks to recruit the largest audiences. Nonetheless, businesses are essential parts of any community and their participation and support for community-access channels is both necessary and desirable.

At its heart, community-access television is about allowing space on a non-competitive basis for alternative voices to express themselves. These voices are authentic and "non-professional" in the sense that they speak only for themselves. Anyone can say anything without censorship or coercion. There is no question that businesses are an integral part of any community, but there are better ways that they can enjoy channel time and contribute to a community-programming service than through traditional advertising. As long as businesses represent themselves in the context of informational programming, such as participating in interviews that may showcase their history, achievements, contributions to the community, or by sponsoring programs that relate to their services, they represent an authentic voice.

If, however, businesses pay third-party agencies to employ actors and craft messages to promote products (full-blown ads), a wholly different ethic and relationship to the audience comes into play. Advertising, as a genre, violates most of the principles of good journalism as defined by balance and objectivity.

The usual definition of a "sponsorship message", on the other hand, is one which identifies financial assistance given to a program in an up-front way with no hidden agenda. It may name a business and identify its products and services, but typically cannot give an opinion about them, nor show moving video that might imply such an opinion.

Where sponsorship messages and ads can be placed have also been well thought through by public-service channels such as PBS. Moving video (such as an ad) that interrupts the video content produced by community volunteers places itself on the same footing as that content... as part of the flow of programming and messages being presented by the channel. It blurs the lines of authenticity between programs presented in good faith by volunteers versus programs paid for with commercial intent. Sponsorship that is presented either at the head or the tail of a program, on the other hand, is immediately recognizable as part of the informational frame and infrastructure of the channel, and not part of the program offering. This is a key distinction.

Lastly, sponsorship should be local (come from businesses whose headquarters are within the license area).

A compromise for Quebec would be for existing community channel licenseholders who

may have developed positive working relationships with businesses in their communities to be given the opportunity to apply for licenses AND funding (Recommendation 2) under the new guidelines. If they win public funding that is adequate for their maintenance, they would give up the right to show ads and focus on showcasing local businesses in ways more fully integrated with their programming and reflective of public-service journalism. If they elect to retain their autonomy, they would remain in their current license category, the undifferentiated for-profit/not-for-profit over-the-air local category created by 2002-61.

2. Fund Community-Access License-Holders from a New Community-Access Centre Fund

The winning of a community-access license should trigger funding for a community-access production centre commensurate with the size of the community. While the cost of production equipment has fallen in the last ten years, the need for adequate staff to train and facilitate community production is as great as ever... typically between 3-5 people in smaller communities and as many as 8-12 in larger towns, with the possibility of 2 or 3 such centres in the largest cities. A fund specifically for community-access channels is needed, using the 2-5% BDU levy that currently exists, and possibly with the addition of or participation of municipalities as noted in Recommendation 6 below. Funding levels need to take into account distribution equipment, including over-the-air transmitters, and in the near future, any switchover to digital transmitters.

This fund should be separate from the Local Programming Improvement Fund because the economics and goals of community-access channels are different than those of private and public local broadcasters. Access television has the unique capacity to multiply the power of production funding through the use of volunteer labour. As such, this production model is the only one with the potential to use scarce public funding to address the shortage of local programming in significant quantity. The volume and kind of programming resulting from such funding cannot therefore be directly compared or evaluated, although overlap exists. (For example, magazine programming produced through the access system may fill a similar need to a news program produced by a local private broadcaster, but could typically be produced for a fraction of the cost).

The rationale that was developed in the 1970s to justify the cable industry (now BDU) levy still applies:

- As evidenced by continuing BDU profitability (particularly compared to traditional broadcasters), the holding of a BDU license is still "a license to print money". Control of distribution platforms conveys enormous power to BDUs, which are still near monopolies in many parts of the country. Their business model consists of the redistribution of signals that have usually demonstrated their profitability in other markets. The BDUs themselves are required to absorb none of the risks of program production.

- BDUs make most of their profit by flooding Canadian homes with non-Canadian programming. To balance this effect, they should contribute to the Canadian production sector.

- BDUs continue to use public resources (both rights of way as well as limited

frequencies) to distribute their services. They should have to contribute to the system for this right.

3.   Reassess the Status of Current License-Holders

It is questionable whether it was ever appropriate for private corporations to administer funds held in the public trust to facilitate community-access programming. No other country has this history, not even the United States, whose access system has a largely common history. While the partnership may have been functional in the early development of the cable industry (characterized by many small companies headquartered in the communities they served), the growing abuse of community-access channels by the country's largest cable companies in the last ten years demonstrates that such a partnership is untenable in an environment in which the CRTC has shown itself unwilling or unable to monitor them.

Consequently, while private BDUs should be free to continue to operate "community (local) channels" if they wish, they should no longer be allowed to use the 2-5% levy for public access to do it. The money needs to be liberated for the new Community-Access Programming Fund.

Since cable now enjoys only 60% penetration in most parts of Canada and is accessible only to a bare majority of Canadians, over-the-air frequencies should simultaneously be assigned to these services and they should be carried on any other platforms that are offered in the service area, including V.O.D. services.

Similarly, the 2-5% levy should be paid by all BDUs operating in the local service area, not just cable. The monies provided by BDUs should be pooled into a single multi-platform access centre per community. Resources should not be split.

Under this system, as was anticipated in policy 2002-61, community organizations will be able to apply for the licenses and the levy.

Exceptions:

Cable co-operatives, which are characterized in their constitutions by one member, one vote, within the communities they serve, should be allowed to keep the levy and continue to operate community-access channels directly if they wish. Their record during the last ten years of media concentration has generally been good. Both small co-operatives such as Valemont, B.C., Campbell River, B.C., and larger ones such as Westman Cable and Access Communications on the Prairies have continued to be faithful to the spirit of CRTC policy for community-access programming, even in the absence of monitoring.

An argument may be made that smaller private cable companies who are headquartered in the communities they serve and which have honoured their access obligations should also be allowed to keep the levy. They may make the case that the smaller communities they serve lack the management or leadership skills to run a community channel. The status of these companies could be considered case by case by the licensing/funding authority, with these considerations:

- While these operators may have to give up the 2-5% levy under this new system, they will no longer be responsible for programming or operating the channel, which would

be taken over by a community-run board. The channel would still be carried in the basic cable tier, and there would be thereby no overall financial loss or reduction in the competitiveness or range of local services that such a cable operator could offer.

- If companies with excellent access records made the case "If it ain't broke, why fix it... and besides, there's no one else here who could or would do this job," they might be allowed to retain the levy if they agreed:

    - To move toward platform-independence, so that parts of the community that don't subscribe to cable could access the channel both as viewers and producers; for example, by broadcasting and webcasting the signal as well as cablecasting it (as per Recommendation 4 below).

    - To work with a community advisory board (as has been stipulated over the years in CRTC policy in any case).

    - To participate in a new national association to represent, help rebuild and modernize the sector (Recommendation 7 below).

4. Encourage License Applicants to Create Multi-Platform Access Centres

The winning of a community-access license should be platform-independent and not limited to broadcast and cable television. For example, many communities could benefit from the efficiencies of simultaneously operating a radio license. The license should include an over-the-air frequency as well as must-carry status on basic BDU tiers so that the signal is maximally accessible. License applicants should be encouraged to think outside the box and create synergy among existing community resources, including partnerships with libraries, community newspapers, community theatres, high school and university media facilities, and the Internet. The focus should not be on encouraging the community to "make TV shows" so much as on providing the community with a range of resources to get messages out and create debate and exposure for the community, regardless of platform. Television, for the present, happens to continue to be the most influential and easily accessible for most people.

The ability to multicast live on all platforms must be maintained to promote the direct audience interactivity that has been one of the strengths of community-access television in N. America over its nearly 40-year history.

As was recommended by the Lincoln Report, DTH technologies should be explored that could enable more region-specific and local channels to be carried.

There should be co-ordination to ensure that over-the-air transmitters that are being abandoned or dismantled in the public and private sectors be made available for community use.

5. Community Tier Should Be a "Tier", not a Single Channel

The "community tier" as defined under the Broadcasting Act should no longer be envisioned

as a single channel (television or radio) per community, but as a percentage of bandwidth set aside for community use, as it is in the US.   This would ensure going forward onto new platforms (such as digital), that space is guaranteed for the tier to enable it to benefit from and develop services in the same way as the public and private tiers. For example, as HD and the potential for richer or interactive data streams become available, they should be equally available to the community tier.   Official legal recognition of community broadcasting as the "third tier" has recently been endorsed by the EC, and is necessary to avoid its exclusion from the digital transition, as has occurred recently in Scandinavia and Australia.

6.   Offer Space to Local Government and Educational Institutions

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7   Following from Recommendation 5, space on the community tier should be offered not just to individuals and groups within the community on a "community-access" channel, but also to local government, and to educational institutions, as has occurred in the US for more than thirty years with the PEG system (**P**ublic access, **E**ducational access, **G**overnment access). In the US, part of the cable levy money (up to the maximum cap of 5% of gross revenues) may be given to the administration of a public-access channel (for citizens and groups in civil society), part to local government to set up its own channel, and part to coalitions of educational interests, often under the leadership of a local university media department.

Government Access

This tripartite system has resulted in a rich mix of local information, education and dialogue spread over several channels. Canadians have enjoyed similar benefits only in fragments. For example, it has been common for local council meetings and the occasional *Dial Your MP* program to facilitate feedback between residents and politicians.

Most Americans, on the other hand, enjoy a range of municipally produced programs that inform citizens about government services, enable debate on local issues such as the environment, transportation and health, and notify citizens in times of emergency.

The goals of the Challenge for Change philosophy spear-headed by the NFB envisioned that community TV should facilitate dialogue between "the government and the governed", but this part of the philosophy has never been fully realized in Canada.

Government-access channels in the US typically use volunteers in production, just like public-access channels, thereby benefiting from the same economically efficient production multiplier effect, and providing similar training opportunities to volunteers. In Canada, this option should be explored with local governments and their input should be solicited in preparing license applications for local access channels. Small towns may not feel they need a separate channel, but larger ones may be willing to supplement BDU levy money to take advantage of this unparalleled means of communicating directly with residents.

Educational Access

Similarly, while there is a tradition in Canada of university closed-circuit television, their signals are rarely carried outside of campus. Provincial channels televise some courses from universities, but the the impact of the public money that is put into post-secondary

education could be maximized by televising more content to the community at large. In most cases, little further funding would be required to distribute university television over the air and via cable... just channel space on a broadened community tier.

There is already a natural collaboration in Canada between university media departments and community television. The backbone of production volunteers have tended to be young people, interested in careers in television production, either about to enter or already taking media classes. Formal participation by universities in the community media tier would facilitate the development of post-secondary education for community media, to address the lack of community outreach skills among channel staff.

In the US, educational access channels are also often operated or shared by high school media departments. In towns with no university, it is not uncommon for a high school media department to take on the role of a community channel, in assigning students to cover a range of community events, not just those inside the school. In the last ten years, it has also become common for Canadian high schools to have media production facilities. The material produced by these facilities, as with universities, is largely inaccessible by the larger community.

These relationships and the best configuration for each community considering operating channel(s) under the new guidelines should be explored by each community. The strongest license applications should be the ones that integrate the broadest cross-section of existing resources and stakeholders.

## 7.	Establish a National Co-ordination and Professional Body to Represent Access Channels

To help rebuild the community tier and co-ordinate implementation of these new guidelines, Canada needs (as most other countries with well-developed community tiers already have) a strong body to provide leadership, much like the Fédération des télévisions communautaires autonomes du Québec, but national. Some of the functions of this body should include:

ι)	Working with the CRTC to assess license applications and to administer funding.

ιι)	Advertising the existence of the new guidelines and fund.

ιιι)	Helping license applicants to prepare applications.

ιϖ)	Lobbying to protect the community tier, particularly through the impending transition to digital.

ϖ)	Helping new license holders to establish community boards of directors, hire personnel, liaise with local government and educational institutions, and establish effective training and volunteer recruitment.

ϖι)	Holding yearly awards to encourage excellence and innovation.

ϖιι)	Operating a national public-access channel to exchange programming and help

promote and build the sector (see Recommendation 8 below).

Historically, the NFB and the now defunct CCTA provided much of this co-ordination. The NFB, through its experiments and *Challenge for Change* newsletter (still read by media activists world-wide), established the early methodologies for community access. The CCTA enabled some tape-bicycling, and opportunities for community TV staff to meet for professional development, and the national Galaxy Awards. To justify the public investment in the sector ($80,000,000 annually, as noted by the Lincoln Report, *Our Cultural Sovereignty*), co-ordination, leadership, and accountability are needed once more.

CACTUS, the Canadian Association of Community Television Users and Stations, was established in early 2008 with this potential role in mind, but it would need funding, preferably from the new Community-Access Centre Fund.

8.   License a National Public-Access Channel within the Third Tier

The community tier has had two parallel goals: to facilitate both individual and community expression on TV. Community TV channels have facilitated both individual and community expression AT A LOCAL LEVEL only.

Many media activists, including Noam Chomsky, point out that there is also a need for individuals and organizations with alternative views to be able to express themselves at a national level on national issues via broadcasting, and also for isolated communities to be able to share issues of common concern. These needs have been recognized around the world. It is increasingly common that countries have a national public-access channel that operates in parallel to local access channel(s). In Canada, this channel could air programming in the following categories:

- Programs sent directly to the channel by individuals or groups that have national relevance, but which may not have found distribution on public or private channels. Examples include independent feature films and documentaries.

- Programs sent to the national channel from local community-access channels, which have national relevance. Vision TV's program *Over the Fence* (produced by Dorothy Forbes) provided this service in Canada throughout the 1990s. The *Over the Fence* production wrap-around explained the source and context of the original production, with the idea that Canadians in one part of the country could see what was going on in other parts.

- Programs produced directly by such a national channel; for example, giving air time to marginalized national election candidates. The attempt to exclude Elizabeth May from the recent national televised debates by the major political parties and broadcasters testifies to this need.

- Programs to support the activities of the local access channels; for example, informing communities how to apply for a local license, how to set up a channel, how to recruit volunteers, and how to provide technical and media literacy training.

Such a national channel would be mostly a playback facility for access productions produced

country-wide, either getting a second airing after airing at a local level, or getting a first airing on a national issue. As such, the channel would need little production funding.   The local access centres country-wide would be the access points for independent producers wishing to produce for the national channel.

9. **Create an Ombudsman's Office at the CRTC to Monitor the Impact of Decisions and Policies on the Community Sector**

Much of the damage that has been done within the community television sector within the last twelve years stems from a lack of expertise within the CRTC in the methodologies and goals of the sector as well as from a lack of co-ordination. For example, several recent CRTC policy decisions that have damaged the sector (such as the recent decision to allow Shaw to buy the cable co-operative Campbell River TV) have resulted from a lack of co-ordination between CRTC departments.

Community-access channels and corporations across the country deal with different local CRTC representatives, few, if any, of whom is an expert on the sector or is in a position to track central decision-making that impacts the sector.

10. **Before the hearing in the fall of 2009 on community television:**

ı) Conduct research to capture the real state of the sector, including how many BDU-operated channels are still meeting the access expectations of their licenses, as well as the number and welfare of low-power license holders and community producing corporations.

ıı) Hold a conference or series of stakeholder meetings is needed in which all contributors to the community sector can come together to debate and design strategies to strengthen the sector going forward. The original CRTC policy set the standard for the world at the time, and evolved from several **years** of NFB and cable industry experimentation. It would be unrealistic to expect adequate policy to emerge within the combative context of a single CRTC public hearing.

As the Lincoln Report, *Our Cultural Sovereignty* pointed out in 2003, $80,000,000 is spent in this sector every year. Would it not be reasonable to spend some small percentage of this money (even 1% for one year would be $800,000) to bring together the best brains and media thinkers in the country (and perhaps internationally) to make sure we get the policy right for the new millenium?

For example, the recommendations above suggest a way forward that interrupts the current tri-partite broadcasting system as little as possible. They suggest continuing to use the 2-5% levy for community programming, with the relatively minor modification that the new access channels be administered by the communities they serve, rather than by cable BDUs.

Other, more comprehensive solutions to address the lack of local programming across all three broadcasting tiers might be possible, however. For example, a think-tank of stakeholders might re-examine our basic assumptions that it is even possible to maintain

three distinct tiers (public, private, community) with distinct sources and types of funding in such a geographically dispersed country as Canada. Might hybrid solutions work?

As just one example, could CBC channels in small population centres be kept open if they trained volunteers? What if the 20% of employee-driven programming (as suggested in Recommendation 1) were CBC network programming, and the 80% local programming were ideas initiated by the community, but executed with CBC leadership and training? At least both the CBC and community-access channels are public-service broadcasters with a mandate to serve local communities. Such a partnership might be more natural than it has recently seemed between cable operators (with no commercial incentive to program for smaller communities) and community producers.

We need to think outside the box. This is unlikely to happen in the context of a CRTC hearing. It is more likely to happen within working committees that include all interested stakeholders: municipalities, educational institutions, community radio stations, ISPs, BDUs, community groups, media thinkers, the business community, and cultural organizations.

Appendix: Summary by Country (in order presented)

Country	License Category	Funding	Distribution
Canada	Community cable, low-power	Cable subscriptions, provincial (Quebec)	Cable/OTA analog (UHF/VHF)
USA	PEG (Public/ Educational/ Government Access)/ national satellite	Cable subscriptions	Cable/satellite/some Web
The Netherlands	Local public	Primarily federal	Cable/some Web
Germany	Open channel	State	Cable/some Web
Austria	Private cable	Municipal	Cable/Web
Belgium	Public nonprofit	Municipal	Cable
The United Kingdom	Restricted Service License (RSL)/cable/ national satellite	Municipal/Cultural	OTA analog (UHF)/Cable/Web, digital satellite
Denmark	Shared commercial/ community	Federal	OTA analog, UHF
Norway	Cable/university/ national nonprofit	Federal/advertising	Cable/OTA/digital OTA
Finland	Cable	Municipal/ Advertising/viewer donations	Digital cable/Some Web/mobile phone
Sweden	Open channel	Memberships	Cable/Web
Spain	Local nonprofit	Municipal/ads/ Donations	OTA analog, UHF
Italy	Unlicensed (pirate)	NGOs/hobbyists	OTA analog, UHF
France	Local, nonprofit/ national cable & satellite	Donations/ employment programs	Digital OTA, UHF/ cable/satellite/ Web
Mexico	denied	NGO/video sales	Screenings
Venezuela	Community	Federal/municipal/ advertising	OTA analog, UHF
Brazil	Community	Membership/NGOs	Cable/screenings
Uruguay	Community/municipal/ closed circuit cable	Cable subscriptions	OTA analog and digital, UHF/cable/ screenings
Bolivia	Private community	Advertising/ viewer donations, video sales, international aid	OTA analog, UHF and VHF/screenings
Peru	Local commercial	Advertising	OTA analog
Colombia	Community	Cable subscriptions	Cable
Israel	Community (local cable and national satellite)	Federal/municipal	Cable/satellite
Nepal	Cable	Cable subscriptions	Cable
Australia	Community/national satellite	Memberships/ads federal	OTA analog, UHF/satellite/some Web
New Zealand	Community	Memberships/ads/ federal	OTA analog, UHF/satellite
Fiji	Community	NGO/donations	OTA analog, VHF
South Korea	National public/ private/cable	Federal	OTA digital VHF /cable/satellite/ Web
Japan	Cable	Occasional municipal	Cable
South Africa	Community	Federal/ads	OTA analog, UHF
Benin	Local public	NGO	OTA