

**The Community Access Programming Sector:
A Quantitative Analysis**

for the CRTC

**By David Keeble
Keeble Consulting**

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Conclusions

- Size and Contribution
- Programming Balance and Diversity
- Progressive Movement
- Imbalances in the Sector
- Financing and Support structures correlate to success
- Are there access programming “cold spots?”
- Both Volunteers and Paid staff are Fundamental

Introduction

Purpose of the Study

Describing the Community TV Access Programming Sector

The community sector receives prominent references in the *Broadcasting Act*, beginning with Section 3, the “broadcasting policy” declaration:

- (1) It is hereby declared as the broadcasting policy for Canada that*
- (b) the Canadian broadcasting system, ... comprising public, private and community elements, ... provides, through its programming, a public service essential to the maintenance and enhancement of national identity and cultural sovereignty;*
- (e) each element of the Canadian broadcasting system shall contribute in an appropriate manner to the creation and presentation of Canadian programming;*
- (i) the programming provided by the Canadian broadcasting system should ... include educational and community programs,*

To further these objectives, the “community element” has been made the subject of policy and regulation, as set out in *Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2002-61*, and the *Broadcasting Distribution Regulations*. This regulation defines local community programming, setting minimum exhibition requirements for it on the community channel, and makes particular provision for the creation and promotion of “community access” programming. The importance of this activity is articulated in the policy:

51. Access by citizens to the community channel has always been a cornerstone of the Commission’s policy. In Public Notice 1991-59 the Commission stated:

The factor that most distinguishes the content of community programming from conventional television services is the ability of community programming to turn the passive viewer of television into an active participant. From this participation flows programming of a nature that is as varied as the imagination and skills of the participants.

52. The Commission expects licensees [i.e. Broadcast Distribution Undertakings (ed.)] to give the community the widest opportunity for self-expression by actively encouraging groups and individuals to present program ideas, produce their own programs with or without the help of the licensee’s staff, and submit videotapes and films produced by them for broadcast by the licensee.

53. The Commission considers that providing and encouraging citizen access remains one of the most important roles of the community channel.

However, the community sector, and the access programming portion of that sector, is still, relatively speaking, little known and described. Licensees in the public and private television sectors report to the Commission on a regular basis. Their economic conditions and their production performance are well described in the Commission’s Communications Monitoring Report and other documents. Independent producers who work in those sectors, both French and English, are well organized and expert in regulatory and policy matters. They also create regular reports on their economic and production conditions and make these publicly available.

By contrast, there is little description or analysis of conditions in “the community element” of the television broadcasting system. Cable companies, as licensees, have a direct connection with the CRTC and may report on the conditions and performance of

their community channels. In the radio sector, community radio stations are also licensees. However, most of the participants in the creation of community television access programming have little or no connection with the Commission. Even when they are organized collectively and connected with one another – and many are not, even through the organizations CACTUS and the Quebec Federation of Independent Community Television – they do not submit data and produce regular reports comparable to that available for the private and public television sectors.

In the context of the upcoming review of the community policy, the Commission wished to have a better description of conditions in this sector, to inform participants and to supplement the data that will be made available in submissions. Therefore this report was commissioned.

Scope of the Sector for the Purposes of this Report

Broadcasting Public Notice CRTC 2002-61 provides several definitions that are relevant to this study:

28. Accordingly, for the purpose of this policy, the Commission considers local community television programming to consist of programs, as defined in the Act, that are reflective of the community, and produced by the licensee in the licensed area, or by members of the community from the licensed area. Programs produced in another licensed area within the same municipality will also be considered local community television programming.

Within that definition, in paragraph 54, the Commission specifies that:

... access programs are programs produced by members of the community served by the undertaking, either assisted or unassisted by the licensee.

This definition is the primary guideline for the scope of the report – the intention is to gather data about such programming and the groups and individuals who produce it.

The scope therefore includes the programming produced by several kinds of undertaking, such as “TV Corporations”.

60. For the purposes of this policy, the Commission defines TV corporations as:

Not-for-profit corporations, incorporated under a provincial or federal charter which provides that the primary activity of the corporation is to produce community television programming and/or operate a community television channel that is reflective of the community they represent. Board members must be drawn from the local community and the corporation must hold an annual meeting where all members of the corporation are invited to participate and to vote.

... and also the “community programming services,” created by the policy,

Licences under this new class will be available to non-profit community groups in situations where the cable company does not provide a community channel, or does not operate a community channel in accordance with the provisions of the revised policy.

... and, of course, Community-based Low Power Television Stations.

In addition, there are individuals and community groups – clubs, churches, and less formal organizations who simply want to make TV programs – who work on their own or with BDUs to create access programming.

These are, finally, supplemented by formal institutions who make television programming as an adjunct to their regular work – such as educational institutions and

municipalities. (However, the community policy specifically excludes municipal council meetings from the scope of access programming¹.)

Issues in determining the scope

The methodology of the study was simple – produce an electronic questionnaire, distribute it as widely as possible to the concerned parties, and compile the results when they arrived. Because of the nature of the sector itself, however, both distribution and collection provided challenges.

A reasonable number of questionnaires were returned in the initial stages, largely from those organizations who are organized in groups. However, there are many “community producers” who do not usually communicate with the Commission, and who could be found only through the cable companies who distribute their programs. Some cable companies responded quickly, and circulated information about the questionnaire to their contacts, while others did not, so it has taken some time to compile a reasonable number of such questionnaires.

Moreover, it is evident that the definition and nature of “community access” programming is not well understood, and is subject to variable interpretation. Some responses were based on an understanding that “access” could include programs in which members of the community had little or no role in the television production, though they were involved in the event covered. Questionnaire responses often revealed this and other misunderstandings, and it was necessary to follow up with respondents to determine the status of their programs.

In the end, a workable number of responses were received in this first version of the dataset, but there are significant regional gaps, whose cause cannot be definitively determined. It may be that the BDU responsible for that region did not encourage their contacts to participate, or it may be that participation in access programming itself is very low in those regions. The result is that, in this initial version of the report, only top-level, and not regional, conclusions can be drawn on some questions. Hopefully, future versions of this exercise will be able to resolve those issues, and a more detailed description of national and regional activity will become possible.

The Results

The DataSet

Who are the community access producers in the dataset²?

In this report, it has proved useful to separate the producers of community access programming into several categories. (We should note at the beginning that BDUs are not included as producers in the dataset – the reason being that “community access

¹ 57. The Commission agrees with ICTV that live coverage of municipal council or other community government proceedings not be considered access programming. Such programming, if considered as access, could dominate the access portion of the schedule to the detriment of access programming that is more reflective of citizen self-expression.

² In this report, the term “dataset” refers to all of the data collected via questionnaires and used for compiling statistics.

programming, by definition, is produced by someone else, though the community producer may make extensive use of a BDU's facilities.)

- At one end of the scale, there are formally organized and licensed groups with capital infrastructure, and complete control over their own schedules, such as low-power over-the-air stations.
- At the other end are individuals and community groups, who produce programs but have no responsibility for the channel itself. In this report, these are referred to as "Community Producers."
- Between the extremes lie institutions, such as municipalities, other government bodies, and educational institutions.
- The fourth category, "Community Channel Affiliates" (CCAs) consists of community groups who report some scheduling responsibility for the channel itself. They are not cable companies, nor are they licensed by the CRTC, but they share responsibility for the scheduling of programs on the BDU-run community channel. This category usually includes the "TV Corporations" referred to by the Commission in the Community Policy, but excludes – for the purposes of this report – co-operatives who produce programming but have no control over the scheduling of the community channel itself³.

Do some provinces encourage certain categories?

As can be seen in Table 2 below, 82% of respondents from Quebec are "Community Channel Affiliates." No current respondent from outside Quebec is in this category, though the status of some co-operatives may be reconsidered. In general, however, if they are not licensees, groups outside Quebec apparently do not have significant responsibility for scheduling the channel. The reasons for this difference lie in policy matters that lie outside the scope of this report.

Quebec's Community Channel Affiliates are a significant part of the dataset, since Quebec is the source of 49% of the current responses, and a very large amount of programming, as will be seen below.

Moreover, outside Quebec, the number of returns from each province was too small to make category breakdowns meaningful. In the current dataset, there are no returns from several provinces and none from any territory. As a result, many tables will not show provincial breakdowns, both because the detail will not be meaningful, and in some cases, to maintain confidentiality.

³ In this, as in other cases, some degree of judgment and follow-up questioning was needed to determine the amount of any group's reported control over scheduling.

Table 1 – Number of Reporting Groups, by Category and Province

	British Columbia	Alberta	Saskatchewan	Manitoba	Ontario	Quebec	Prince Edward Island	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Newfoundland and Labrador	Yukon	Total
Community Channel Affiliate	-	-	-	-	-	28	-	-	-	-	-	28
Institution	4	1	-	-	6	3	-	-	-	-	-	14
LPTV Station	2	-	-	-	-	-	-	1	1	-	-	4
Community Producer	7	1	-	1	8	3	2	-	2	-	-	24
Total No of reporting groups	13	2	-	1	14	34	2	1	3	-	-	70

Table 2 – Percentage of Categories in each Province

	British Columbia	Alberta	Manitoba	Ontario	Quebec	Prince Edward Island	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia
Community Channel Affiliate					82%			
Institution	31%	50%		43%	9%			
LPTV Station	15%						100%	33%
Community Producer	54%	50%	100%	57%	9%	100%		67%
Total No of reporting groups	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%	100,0%

Table 3 - Percentage of Categories, by Province

	British Columbia	Alberta	Manitoba	Ontario	Quebec	Prince Edward Island	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Total
Community Channel Affiliate					100%				100%
Institution	29%	7%		43%	21%				100%
LPTV Station	50%						25%	25%	100%
Community Producer	29%	4%	4%	33%	13%	8%		8%	100%
Total No of reporting groups	19%	3%	1%	20%	49%	3%			100%

Programming

Service in Two Languages

The first concern of this report is programming – what does the sector contribute to the broadcasting system? Respondents were therefore asked to describe the programs they produced in various ways, first of all, by language and genre.

A total of 316 programs were reported under these categories, and an initial look at the numbers shows several interesting features:

- In this dataset, there were no programs reported in aboriginal languages, and only one in a language other than French or English⁴. Access programs in those languages may well exist, but they were not included by respondents to this questionnaire.
- The dataset also contains more access programs in French than in English. One possible reason is that the groups reporting from Quebec produce more shows. However, because of the resources available to Quebec's access program groups (described below), it may well be that there are, in reality, more access programs produced in French.
- In both French and English, the diversity of genres is remarkable.

Table 4 – Numbers of Programs by Language and Genre

	Bingo	Current Affairs	Drama or comedy	Educational	Lifestyle	Meeting coverage	News	Other	Religious	Sports	Music or variety	Total
Aboriginal	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-	-
English	3	22	1	13	9	3	2	9	10	10	7	89
French	20	44	5	29	14	2	28	18	13	10	42	225
"3rd language"	-	1	-	-	-	-	-	1	-	-	1	3
Total No of programs	23	67	6	42	23	5	30	28	23	20	50	317

The same diversity can be seen when programming is reported by hours produced -

Table 5 - Hours of Programming Produced by Language and Genre

	Bingo	Current Affairs	Drama or comedy	Educational	Lifestyle	Meeting coverage	News	Other	Religious	Sports	Music or variety	Total
English	234	476	1	555	202	6	6	355	122	182	60	2,198
French	1,083	5,578	681	855	389	21	3,428	165	1,419	748	2,244	16,609
"3rd language"	-	10	-	-	-	-	-	45	-	-	8	63
Total Hours	1,317	6,063	682	1,410	591	27	3,434	564	1,541	929	2,312	18,870

⁴ Languages other than French, English and aboriginal languages are often referred to in the regulatory context as "third" languages

– and when that same programming is represented in percentages of production hours per language. Current Affairs accounts for 34% of the hours produced in French, but the next highest percentage is 22%, and all genres are represented in each official language, though the amount of drama is understandably low, since scripted drama and comedy are normally expensive and exacting to produce for television.

Table 6 – Percentage of Program Hours by Language and Genre

	Biopic	Current Affairs	Drama or comedy	Educational	Lifestyle	Meeting coverage	News	Other	Religious	Sports	Music or variety	Total
English	11%	22%	0%	25%	9%	0%	0%	16%	6%	8%	3%	100%
French	7%	34%	4%	5%	2%	0%	21%	1%	9%	5%	14%	100%
"3rd language"		16%						71%			13%	100%

Regional and Language Differences

A feature – perhaps an anomaly – of this dataset is that 99.9% of the French program hours are produced in Quebec, and 99.9% of the English hours are produced outside Quebec. In future reports, with a greater number of respondents, one would hope to see greater representation of official language minority communities, as well as greater representation of aboriginal and “third” languages.

Table 7 – Percentage of Program Hours by Language and Province

	Alberta	British Columbia	Manitoba	New Brunswick	Nova Scotia	Ontario	Prince Edward Island	Quebec	Total
English	3.8%	54.6%	3.4%	4.5%	2.1%	26.0%	5.0%	0.7%	100%
French					0.1%			99.9%	100%
"3rd language"		15.9%				84.1%			100%

Types of Programming carried by specific Distributors

Are some genres of access programs encouraged by certain cable companies?

One cannot come to that conclusion based on this dataset alone. Where there are enough programs reported to allow one to see a trend, the access programming carried by specific distributors shows a balance of program types. There are some imbalances in the table below, but they tend to occur when only a few programs, offered by a few access groups, are reported.

The exception might be a trend toward current affairs programs on Shaw systems – with 22 programs reported, 55% are in the Current Affairs category, with nothing in the Sports

or Religious categories. Again however, more extensive reporting might show more even balance.

Table 8 – Percentage of Programs by Distributor and Genre

	Bingo	Current Affairs	Drama or comedy	Educational	Lifestyle	Making coverage	News	Other	Religious	Spots	Music or variety	Total	N=
Beauce distribution TV	14%	14%					14%	14%	14%		29%	100%	7
Cablevision du Nord de Québec	17%	17%					33%	33%				100%	6
Cogeco	9%	16%		9%	11%		11%	20%	7%	9%	9%	100%	45
Copper Valley Cable		20%			60%	20%						100%	5
Déry télécom	10%	5%		15%	20%	5%	25%			10%	10%	100%	20
EastLink	10%	30%	5%	25%	10%		5%		5%		10%	100%	20
Internet only										100%		100%	1
Novus			100%									100%	1
persona	9%	27%		36%			9%			9%	9%	100%	11
Rogers	5%	26%		16%	5%		5%	11%	16%		16%	100%	19
Shaw	5%	55%		5%	5%	9%		14%			9%	100%	22
Télédistribution Amos Inc	7%	29%		7%		7%	14%		7%		29%	100%	14
VDN DIVISION BELL CANADA		25%		17%	17%		8%		8%		25%	100%	12
Vidéotron	8%	18%	4%	15%	5%		9%	7%	5%	4%	23%	100%	98
Westman								8%	31%	54%	8%	100%	13

Editorial Control of Programming

Respondents were asked to specify who makes decisions about program content for particular programs: the access group, the distributor, both working together, or a third party.

As can be seen in Table 9, the “normal” mode for the 303 programs reported was for the Community Group to have sole control over program content, and in some cases, to share that control with the distributor. No cases of Distributor control were reported, though in 28 cases, the access group reported that control was exercised by a third party.

Table 9 – Program Decisions, Percentage of Programs, by Distributor

	Both Group and Distributor	Community Group only	Distributor only	Other
Beauce distribution TV		100%		
Cablevision du Nord de Québec		100%		
Cogeco	31%	60%		9%
Copper Valley Cable		100%		
Déry télécom		100%		
EastLink	15%	85%		
Internet only		100%		
Novus		100%		
persona		100%		
Rogers	5%	95%		
Shaw	26%	74%		
Télédistribution Amos Inc		100%		
VDN DIVISION BELL CANADA		92%		8%
Vidéotron	1%	76%		23%
Westman		100%		

How is programming distributed?

Is access programming local-into-local or does it get wider distribution?

Respondents were asked to describe the coverage that each of their programs received. That is, were they distributed beyond their originating neighbourhood or market? Did they cover the whole province or several provinces?

As it turned out, very few programs – 7 out of the 300 for which data was provided – were distributed beyond the level of “region within a province”. There were, however, a large number of programs in the “region within a province” grouping. Such regional distribution did not seem to be typical of any particular distributor for access programming, so a provincial analysis was applied in Tables 10 and 11.

These tables show that “region within a province” distribution is typical, for the most part, of Quebec. Since many of Quebec’s CCAs are rural entities that cover a wide geographic area, this distribution is, in fact, within their normally-served markets and can be considered local.

Table 10 – Program Distribution Areas by Province

	area of low-power transmitter	originating neighbourhood	surrounding city or town	region within a Province	whole province	several provinces	Total
Alberta	-	-	5	-	-	-	5
British Columbia	-	3	16	10	-	-	29
Manitoba	-	-	13	-	-	-	13
New Brunswick	13	-	-	-	-	-	13
Nova Scotia	-	-	-	14	-	-	14
Ontario	-	-	4	8	-	1	13
Prince Edward Island	-	-	-	-	2	-	2
Quebec	5	19	54	129	2	2	211
Total No of programs	18	22	92	161	4	3	300

Table 11 – Percentage of programs receiving specific distribution, by province

	area of low-power transmitter	originating neighbourhood	surrounding city or town	region within a Province	whole province	several provinces	Total
Alberta			100%				100%
British Columbia		10%	55%	34%			100%
Manitoba			100%				100%
New Brunswick	100%						100%
Nova Scotia				100%			100%
Ontario			31%	62%		8%	100%
Prince Edward Island					100%		100%
Quebec	2%	9%	26%	61%	1%	1%	100%
Total No of programs	6%	7%	31%	54%	1%	1%	100%

TV and Internet Video-on-Demand

Respondents were asked whether programs were provided on television Video-on-demand, and also on Internet Video-on-demand.

While the numbers for television video-on-demand were not large, they amounted to 10% of the programs described in the dataset by the access groups, which is sufficient to indicate a real level of activity.

SaskTel, of course, is a BDU who provides its community programming solely on-demand – there is no linear channel. However, none of the access producers working through SaskTel submitted a questionnaire response, so there is an unknown quantity of video-on-demand activity that is not represented in the dataset.

Table 12 – Programs also carried on video-on-demand, by Distributor

	No	Not applicable	Yes
Beauce distribution TV	7	-	-
Cablevision du Nord de Québec	6	-	-
Cogeco	37	1	7
Copper Valley Cable	3	2	-
Déry télécom	16	-	4
EastLink	18	-	2
Internet only	-	1	-
Novus	1	-	-
persona	11	-	-
Rogers	17	-	2
Shaw	19	2	1
TCSV	5	-	-
Télédistribution Amos Inc	14	-	-
VCTV	3	-	-
VDN DIVISION BELL CANADA	2	-	10
Vidéotron	92	-	6
Westman	13	-	-
Total No of programs	264	6	32

On the question of whether programs were also provided on the Internet for later on-demand viewing, the positive responses were quite strong. There was some correlation with distributors, but the strongest correlation was to the category of access programmer. Fully 40% of programs provided by Quebec's CCAs were made available on demand on the Internet, while community producers made 22% of their shows available. Institutions and LPTV stations reported providing relatively few programs, at 3% and 6%.


Table 13 – Percentage of Programs also provided on the Internet

	Yes
Community Channel Affiliate	40%
Institution	6%
LPTV Station	3%
Community Producer	22%
Total programs	32%

Is Access programming broadcast live?

A surprising number of access programs are broadcast live, in all categories, led by Bingo (necessarily at 100%), meeting coverage and religious services.

Table 14 – Are access programs broadcast live? (by genre)



Bingo	100%
Current Affairs	11%
Drama or comedy	20%
Educational	5%
Lifestyle	33%
Meeting coverage	40%
News	17%
Other	14%
Religious	36%
Sports	5%
Music or variety	9%
Total No of programs	21%

Resources in the Sector

Overall Capital Expenditures


All respondents were asked to estimate their annual operating budgets and their capital expenditures on production equipment over the last five years, as well as the sources of their funding over that period. (The 5 year period was used to “smooth” atypical results arising from funding sources that might be available only in specific years, such as capital grants.)

Capital expenditures varied enormously. Some groups reported no spending, some as little as a few hundred dollars for the acquisition of a single camera. At the opposite extreme, an institution reported spending over a million dollars, though probably not for the sole purpose of community programming. Even LPTV stations showed a wide range of expenditure on production, anywhere from fifty thousand to over a million.

In such a context, one should be guarded in the use of averages to indicate trends. However, it is worth noting (Table 15) that Quebec’s Community Channel Affiliates reported average spending of over \$130,000 on capital for production over the five year period, a number similar to LPTV stations (bearing in mind that transmission equipment is not included).

In general, community producers had much lower expenditures than other categories, though the presence of some relatively large co-operatives in this sub-sector raised the average.

Table 15 – Overall Average Capital Spending by Category and Region



	Quebec	Other Provinces
Community Channel Affiliate	132 763	
Institution	507 667	18 091
LPTV Station		356 575
Community Producer	1 000	22 165

Operating Budgets

Respondents were also asked to estimate operating budgets for the year 2007-08. 24 respondents did not report. The 56 groups who did reported total spending of \$8.8 million, with, again, the great bulk of it in Quebec.

Operating budgets also exhibit a wide range in spending – anywhere from a few hundred dollars, for small groups who produce one program, to \$200,000 for larger groups who produce many programs. LPTV stations also vary from large (for the sector) to the very small.

Table 16 – Total Annual Operating Budget by Category and Region

	Quebec	Other Provinces	Total
Community Channel Affiliate	4,497,534	-	4,497,534
Institution	2,030,000	334,800	2,364,800
LPTV Station	-	539,000	539,000
Community Producer	330,000	1,063,800	1,393,800
Total	6,857,534	1,937,600	8,795,134

How well are community producers equipped?

Most community access producers in the dataset have invested in production equipment, although 18 of the 70 groups (25%) reported owning no cameras or edit suites of any kind, and no expenditures on production equipment.

The kind of equipment used by these groups varies greatly in amount, type, and cost. All 28 CCAs in Quebec reported owning studio facilities, but only 2 LPTV stations, 2 community producers, and one institution outside Quebec owned their own studio.

All LPTV stations reported owning a master control, and 20 of the CCAs in Quebec did as well. This is as expected, given their responsibility for scheduling the channel and outputting programs.

Only 4 community producers owned lighting equipment, though virtually all CCAs and LPTV stations did.

Cameras and editing equipment, however, were more widely in use. The tables below show that on average, Quebec's CCAs reported 8 cameras and 3 edit suites purchased over the 5 year period, with LPTV stations showing similar numbers. Meanwhile community groups ranged from 4-7 cameras and 1-3 editors.

Table 17 – Average Number of Cameras in use by Categories, by Region

	Quebec	Other Provinces
Community Channel Affiliate	7.9	
Institution	7.0	1.5
LPTV Station		5.5
Community Producer	-	3.1

Table 18 – Average Number of Edit Suites or PC editors in use by Category and Region

	Quebec	Other Provinces
Community Channel Affiliate	3.1	
Institution	2.0	1.0
LPTV Station		2.3
Community Producer	-	1.6

Do they use professional or “prosumer” equipment?

One might expect to see a significant difference among categories of community producer in the cost of the cameras employed, and this is true to some extent. Community production groups use a mix of professional and high-end consumer (“prosumer”) cameras, and the result (Table 19) is that average costs of cameras are somewhat comparable across groups, but the Quebec CCAs are higher due to a greater use of professional cameras. The results for Institutions are clearly anomalous in this case due to a single entry from Quebec which is evidently very well equipped, though perhaps not, as noted earlier, for the sole purpose of producing community programming.

Table 19 – Average Cost of Cameras, by Category and Region

	Quebec	Other Provinces
Community Channel Affiliate	\$ 5 042	
Institution	\$ 23 810	\$ 1 674
LPTV Station		\$ 2 792
Community Producer		\$ 2 774

A clear difference can be seen when comparing the cost of editing facilities. Here, the professional gear appears to be accessible only to the better funded, more professional operations. This includes some LPTV stations and some production co-operatives outside Quebec, as well as the CCAs in Quebec.

Table 20 – Average Cost of Editing Facilities, PC and Professional Suites

	Quebec	Other Provinces
Community Channel Affiliate	\$ 11,792	
LPTV Station		\$ 4,938
Community Producer		\$ 3,887

How is the sector resourced and financed?

Sources of Funding

So where does the money come from?

Respondents were asked to estimate their top three sources of funding, and the amounts received over a 5 year period.

- The total funding reported in this way was just over \$20 million for the 50 groups reporting, or an average of \$5 million per year for the sector.
- Funding reported in Quebec was 66% of the total funding for the country.
- No subscription funding was reported.
- The largest source was “self-financed”, including advertising (where permitted, as for LPTV stations) and other revenue-generating activities such as Tele-bingo, when this kind of programming was used to raise funds for the production operation, rather than a local charity.

Table 21 – Sources of Funding over 5 years by Region, (in \$ thousands)

\$ 000s			Total
	Quebec	Other Provinces	
Sponsorship	453	6	459
Cableco	2,219	27	2,246
Federal government	-	750	750
Membership	173	0	173
Municipality	15	1,737	1,752
other	2,273	1,062	3,335
Province	2,477	22	2,498
Private donations	748	37	785
Subscription	-	-	-
Self-financed	5,038	2,980	8,019
Total	13,396	6,620	20,016

Notably, over the 5 years, Community programmers in Quebec reported a total of almost \$2.5 Million in Provincial funding. Only \$22,000 was reported from other provinces for community access programming or capital funding. Funding from cable companies was also almost exclusive to Quebec, with Manitoba the only other province reporting BDU funding.

However, 99% of the municipal funding in the country was granted in British Columbia.

Table 22 – Sources of Funding: Percentages by Region

			Total
	Quebec	Other Provinces	
Sponsorship	98.7%	1.3%	100.0%
Cableco	98.8%	1.2%	100.0%
Federal government		100.0%	100.0%
Membership	99.8%	0.2%	100.0%
Municipality	0.9%	99.1%	100.0%
other	68.2%	31.8%	100.0%
Province	99.1%	0.9%	100.0%
Private donations	95.3%	4.7%	100.0%
Subscription			
Self-financed	62.8%	37.2%	100.0%
Total	66.9%	33.1%	100.0%

While once again urging caution in drawing conclusions from the small number of reporting groups in individual provinces, one can note that the mix of funding sources was heavily toward the municipal in BC, self-financing and private donations in the eastern English provinces, and more balanced in Quebec, with self-financed activities taking the lead over nearly equal contributions from the province, from cablecos, and from “other” sources.

Table 23 – Sources of Funding: Percentages within Regions

	Quebec	Other Provinces
Sponsorship	3.4%	0.1%
Cableco	16.6%	0.4%
Federal government		11.3%
Membership	1.3%	0.0%
Municipality	0.1%	26.2%
other	17.0%	16.0%
Province	18.5%	0.3%
Private donations	5.6%	0.6%
Subscription		
Self-financed	37.6%	45.0%
Total	100.0%	100.0%

Human Resources

40 of the 70 groups report having full-time or part-time paid staff. Volunteers appear to have been the mainstay of program production, however, with groups reporting a total of 1,474 volunteers working with them in the year 2007-08.

Table 24 – Numbers of Volunteers by Category and Region

	Quebec	Other Provinces	Total
Community Channel Affiliate	888	-	888
Institution	45	50	95
LPTV Station	-	26	26
Community Producer	11	454	465
Total	944	530	1 474

Moreover, hours of volunteering were estimated at a total of over 93,000 for the year.

Table 25 – Volunteer Hours by Category and Region

	Quebec	Other Provinces	Total
Community Channel Affiliate	36 138	-	36 138
Institution	8 000	3 486	11 486
LPTV Station	-	4 100	4 100
Community Producer	5 667	35 959	41 626
Total	49 805	43 545	93 350

Respondents were asked whether the bulk of training for volunteers was provided by the group's staff, the BDU, an educational institution, or other volunteers. 57 groups answered this question, and the weight was toward the group's own staff and other volunteers.

- Of course, LPTV stations do not work directly with BDUs, and the bulk of their volunteer training was provided by other volunteers.
- Community Producers, on the other hand, do work with cable companies, and while 26% reported that the bulk of their training came from BDUs, 58% reported that other volunteers did the training.
- Quebec's CCAs relied heavily on their paid staff.
- Institutions relied the most on BDUs for training.

Table 26 – Who provides the bulk of training for volunteers?

	BDU (e.g. cableco)	Educational Institution	Paid staff of group	Other Volunteers	Total
Community Channel Affiliate			82%	18%	100%
Institution	43%	14%	14%	29%	100%
LPTV Station			33%	67%	100%
Community Producer	26%		16%	58%	100%
Total No of reporting groups	14%	2%	49%	35%	100%

BDUs also have a role in providing volunteers to groups who come in to make a production. That is, a community group may not have sufficient people to handle all of the roles, and the cablecos may then provide other volunteers – sometimes students from television production courses in a nearby educational institution – to complete the needed complement of production staff.

Respondents were asked to what extent they relied on the BDU or an educational institution for volunteers, and to what extent they provided production volunteers from their own ranks.

53 groups responded to this question, and again, the weight was toward self-reliance for production groups generally. Almost half of Community Producers, however, shared responsibility with the BDU for providing volunteers, and a tenth of them relied entirely on the BDU. These may represent situations where a group produces an event for television – like Bingo, again – but all of the technical production is handled by the BDU.

Table 27 - Who provides volunteers?

	Both Group and Distributor	Community Group only	Distributor only	Total
Community Channel Affiliate	8%	92%		100%
Institution	20%	40%	40%	100%
LPTV Station	33%	67%		100%
Community Producer	47%	42%	11%	100%

Paid staff and volunteers

In many ways, the size of the community access sector is surprising. Although it is divided unevenly across the country, the total of almost 19,000 hours of programming produced in a year, and 93,000 volunteer hours devoted to that production, indicates both that the sector is – in places – very active, and that it is dependent on its human resources as much as on its financial resources.

In addition to the overall “Volunteer Hours” figures, respondents were asked to estimate both volunteer and paid staff hours that were devoted to individual programs. These figures are equally revealing. Tables 28 and 29 break down volunteer hours per genre. These show that certain genres of programming are extremely labour intensive, from both volunteers and paid staff.

Table 28 – Average Volunteer Hours Per show or Series, by Category and Genre

	Bingo	Current Affairs	Drama or comedy	Educational	Lifestyle	Meeting coverage	News	Other	Religious	Sports	Music or variety
Community Channel Affiliate	251	56	53	231	76	4	92	28	149	60	90
Institution		696		213	-	40	800	449	-		
LPTV Station		53	-	9	21	35		51			7
Community Producer	261	441	100	25	650	-	-	2 661	90	177	123

Table 29 – Average Paid Staff hours Per Show or Series, by Category and Genre

	Bingo	Current Affairs	Drama or comedy	Educational	Lifestyle	Meeting coverage	News	Other	Religious	Sports	Music or variety	Total
Community Channel Affiliate	408	70	214	92	78	42	868	72	84	190	139	2 256
Institution		340		32	-	-	-	283	40			695
LPTV Station		12	20	24	12	-	-	45			6	119
Community Producer	85	1 121	-	-	-	100	-	52	30	60	-	1 206

However, analysis involving average hours per program is once again misleading in this case, because of the wide variations in hours required.

Of course, the resources needed for television programs are always variable – the effort that goes into an hour of documentary can vary tremendously with the subject matter and the approach. But these variances are accentuated in the access sector. Some programs of current affairs documentary “shorts” in the dataset are reported as extremely labour intensive and require many volunteers. Institutions, like municipalities, may decide that a program is needed for policy reasons and report literally thousands of staff hours to create a few hours of television production. At the other extreme, a single producer with a camera and a PC may produce tens of hours of current affairs interviews in a year.

Only a general, overall conclusion is possible in this case: that both volunteers and paid staff, whether provided by a BDU, an educational institution or the group itself, are fundamental to access production as it is practised.

Conclusions

As noted elsewhere in this report, the figures provided should be treated with caution. Because of gaps in the current dataset, they are capable of providing broad overall description of the community access sector, not detailed conclusions.

Questionnaires are still being returned as this is being written. It is our hope that enough will arrive to fill certain gaps; if this is the case, then a second version of this report may be issued in time to be useful in the upcoming policy discussion.

On the other hand, it may be that these gaps reflect reality: that community access groups do not flourish across the country, but only in those places where conditions, such as the availability of financing, are conducive.

Until that question can be settled, it would be prudent to treat this dataset and the figures drawn from it as a useful basis for further exploration, rather than a definitive description of the sector. That said, there are some broad conclusions that can be drawn, even from this dataset.

Size and Contribution

The community access sector of the broadcasting system is so little known that any measures are bound to be novel. Nonetheless, its reported overall size, even in this incomplete dataset, is impressive and surprising. The production of nearly 19,000 program hours in a year, and involving 1,474 volunteers in over 93,000 hours of production effort, indicates a level of activity in the sector that argues well for its strength and growth potential.

Programming Diversity

Equally, the diversity of program types available from access sources indicates a wide group of interests and the ability of the sector to provide a source of diversity in the broadcasting system.

Progressive Movement

It was also interesting to note the degree of adoption of new technologies. With the aid of BDUs, a significant amount of programming is available on the VoD platform, and groups are making even more significant use of Internet distribution.

These groups are not funded in a way that makes new technologies like HDTV readily available; on the contrary, these groups use a mix of professional and “prosumer” gear for cost reasons, but many appear to be able and ready to adopt new technologies that are within their reach.

Imbalances in the Sector

However, the glaring imbalances in the system cannot be ignored.

Of the 18,870 hours of production, 16,609 were produced in Quebec and in French. In terms of volunteer hours, Quebec is as large as the rest of the country combined.

Financing and Support structures correlate to success

It is evident in all the measures that the community access sector is a great deal stronger and more active in Quebec than outside. The availability of significant funding from the province and from BDUs in Quebec is also striking, and may form the basis on which even greater self-financing activity is built.

The ability of organized “TV Corporations” in that province to have some degree of control over the schedule may also be a source of stability. That most of these entities serve rural regions makes their levels of activity even more impressive.

It is not the role of this study to make policy recommendations. However, the data strongly suggest a correlation between the dramatically different levels of activity in Quebec and the funding sources and structures that are unique to that province.

Are there access programming “cold spots?”

The dataset available, with less than 100 respondents, cannot lead directly to this conclusion. It is true that no community access producers have reported from some provinces, but that, in this early stage of reporting, may simply indicate a lack of awareness in those areas.

Possibly, the BDUs responsible for community programming in those areas have not notified community access groups sufficiently of the availability of the questionnaire. Equally possibly, those BDUs may have few access groups working with them.

As it stands, however, there is no data reported from any territory, Newfoundland and Labrador, or Saskatchewan. Some other provinces have only one or two reporting groups. No programming has been reported in aboriginal languages, and very little in languages other than French or English.

The conclusion is that evidence should be sought to determine whether these, and other under-reporting areas, are actually “cold spots” for access production, or whether potential respondents exist, and can be found to describe the situation in those areas.

Both Volunteers and Paid staff are Fundamental

A final conclusion from the data is that a great deal of access programming is dependent on the contribution of both volunteers and paid staff, however provided. While there are grey areas in the question of exactly when programs are “access” and when they are produced by the BDU, nonetheless the presence of professional help from groups, institutions and BDUs is clearly a cornerstone of true access programming, and as fundamental as the hours provided by volunteers.

Moreover, the use of these professionals does not appear to unduly influence program content. Responses from producers indicate that they exercise editorial control over every access program, sometimes alone, and sometimes in company with the distributor.

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