

DRAFT

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COMMUNITY MEDIA IN THE DIGITAL AGE:
RELIC OR RENEWAL?



A REPORT BY THE
COMMUNITY MEDIA POLICY WORKING GROUP
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

What follows are the results of a national, online survey about community media in Canada undertaken as part of SSHRC-funded research to renew Canada's community media policies. The goal of the research is to generate new proposals to support community media in the digital environment. The culmination of this process is a conference to be held at Carleton University Nov. 22-24, 2015, at which community media stakeholders across sectors (TV, radio online and gaming) will have the opportunity to debate and finalize the policy. The research was also undertaken with the opportunity to submit it for consideration to the CRTC as part of its review of community TV regulations. The survey was organized by the Community Media Policy Working Group (CMPWG), an informal association of community media stakeholders including practitioners, policy advocates, and academics. Survey results were gathered between Aug 23 and Sept 20, 2015. The questions in the survey addressed the following themes: (I) Sources of Local Information. (II) Awareness of Community Media and Involvement in Production (III) Perceptions of Community Programming and Its Impacts (IV) Community Media Policy: Continued Relevance and Goals.

The survey was open to anyone and promoted through community media networks (i.e. through member lists of CACTUS, the Fédétvc, the NCRA, the ARC du Québec and ARC du Canada, community newspapers, independent media websites with national profiles (e.g. rabble.ca, The Media Coop), and community video gamer associations. The intent was to generate policy proposals among Canadians who were familiar with or informed enough about the goals and practices of community media to contribute practical observations and proposals regarding the changing role of community media in the digital environment.

There were 419 respondents to the survey from 152 communities in all ten provinces, the Yukon and NWT. One half of the respondents were from urban centres; the remainder from rural and mid-sized communities. Three-quarters of respondents had direct experience with community media either as a volunteer or through exposure to the programming.

Most respondents were aware of a community media organization in their communities. Community newspapers had the highest profile, followed by campus and community radio, followed by community television. One-third of respondents came from communities that had experienced the closure of a community media organization. Among those, half said that a community paper had closed, slightly less than half said that a community TV organization had closed, and still fewer indicated that a community radio station had closed. Reasons cited for closures included financial pressure, corporate reorganization and loss of license. The highest number of community TV closures were in mid-sized towns, consistent with CACTUS research indicating that cable companies have tended to consolidate their operations in large urban centres following technical interconnection of cable systems.¹

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The smallest communities (defined as having under 10,000 in this survey), may never have had cable community studios and therefore are not reporting their loss.

A large majority of respondents (86%) indicated that they access community media at least once per week. Almost half of respondents said that they access community media on a daily basis.

A large majority of respondents agreed that community media in their area provide a platform for artistic and cultural expression, advertise local events, provide visibility to community groups, provide media training, provide alternative points of view, and provide communication services that strengthen the community. There was also strong agreement that community media increase civic engagement, profile local jobs, economic opportunities and businesses and at times provide local weather and emergency warning services. Respondents identified a range of local impacts from community media operations. For two-thirds of respondents, the most significant impact was on their community's awareness of local issues and events, access to local information, celebration of local culture and preservation of heritage. Respondents also identified positive impacts in terms of bringing the community together, increasing levels of engagement, coverage of local government proceedings, expanding political involvement, and skills training and capacity building.

When asked how community media organizations could improve or what kinds of help they need to better fulfill their mandates, 93% indicated that they need more resources, and 78% wished they were available on more platforms. Some viewers and users referred to the need for more balance and diversity in programming, more management training in order to better manage volunteers and limited resources, and to keep up with technological change.

Respondents were nearly unanimous (96%) in their support for the continued need for formal policies and financial support for community media going forward, despite the prevalence of the Internet and social media as platforms for individual self-expression. Principal reasons cited included the on-going need for media training in new tools, production support to cover local issues and events, and co-ordinated management and community networking to ensure that local, alternative and marginalized voices have a place in an increasingly globalized media landscape. Respondents also pointed to the importance of production support and oversight by a board and staff to give more authority to community media as sources of community information compared to the random, unmonitored and unregulated posting of information on the Internet.

The policy priorities identified by respondents corresponded closely to their perceptions of what is needed for community media to be more effective going forward. For 98% of respondents, the policy priority was stable funding. The majority of respondents were concerned about the lack of transparency regarding the control of community TV budgets in particular, and the dependency of community media funding and distribution on the private sector in general. More than three quarters of respondents support developing a more holistic approach to community media policy. Numerous individual respondents pointed to inequities in current funding approaches by region (urban versus rural), by province, by medium, and by BDU licencing areas.

Other policy priorities for respondents include community media's roll in offering a diversity of opinions and voices, local information, digital skills training, and availability

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/sgc/notice/sgc-06>

to all Canadians on all platforms. Respondents also want more access to specialized training and professional networking for community media.

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INTRODUCTION

Overview

Community media make up one of three elements in the Canadian Broadcasting Act that contribute to one integrated system². Regulated community media comprise campus and community radio stations, BDU-administered community channels, and community-owned independent community television broadcasters. Community media are also increasingly distributed via unregulated online platforms, including audio podcasts, streamed video, and interactive games.

What follows is the summary of a national, online survey undertaken in the period Aug 23 – Sept 20, 2015 asking community media practitioners, networks, viewers, and researchers about community media effectiveness and policy needs. Focus groups were also held in four Canadian cities during September and October, 2015. The survey and focus groups were organized by the Community Media Policy Working Group (CMPWG), an informal association of community media advocates, academics, policy experts and activists constituted to conduct research into community media policy in connection with a SSHRC-funded research program. The questions asked in the survey and focus groups addressed the following themes:

- (I) Sources of Local Information.
- (II) Awareness of Community Media and Involvement in Community Media Production
- (III) Perceptions of Community Programming and Its Impacts
- (IV) Community Media Policy: Continued Relevance and Priorities.

Unique among the different types of community media in Canada, BDU-administered community TV channels are supported with more than \$150 million annually in mandatory expenditures by cable companies. This mandated contribution reflects policy priorities for local information, local reflection, citizen participation and diversity in programming. In response to technological and other changes in the Canadian broadcasting system, the CRTC indicated in 2014 that it would undertake a review of community television regulations and contributions in the 2015/16 work year.³ Indeed, the public process has been launched under Broadcasting Notice of Consultation CRTC 2015-421. Among questions to be discussed is the role of community television in a digitally networked world. In consideration of the coincident timing of this proceeding, additional questions specific to community TV policy were added to the survey.

The CMPWG undertook the present study to answer the following questions:

- * Where do Canadians get local information?
- * What are the roles and impacts of community media programming in local communities?

² *Broadcasting Act*, s.3(b), RSC 1990. The other two elements are public broadcasting and private broadcasting. “BDU” stands for broadcast distribution units, the regulatory term for cable companies.

³ *CRTC Three-year Plan 2015-2018*

* Is community media policy still relevant in the age of the Internet, and if so, what goals should community media policy strive to achieve in the future?

Background

Recent studies in the US and UK suggest a growing awareness of the importance and enduring relevance of local media content across multiple platforms in the digital 21st century. In a study by Ofcom in the UK (*The information Needs of Communities: The changing media landscape in a broadband age*), the relevance of local content included the provision of news and information, informal learning, strengthening cultural identity, exposure to a diversity of viewpoints, and democratic engagement (Ofcom 2006). In a study by the FCC in the US (*Informing Communities: Sustaining Democracy in the Digital Age*), community media were lauded for producing hyperlocal information, expanding digital and civic literacy, vocational training, community building and cross-cultural communication (FCC 2011). Knowledge outcomes from both reports included a better understanding of what kinds of information audiences get from community media, the demand for citizen-generated content, and creative responses to multiplatform opportunities for production, circulation and consumption of community-generated content. *No such comprehensive study has been undertaken in Canada.*

The CMPWG was established to conduct research and to generate policy proposals that could be considered by community media stakeholders at the Community Media Convergence, a national gathering of community media stakeholders scheduled for Nov. 19-22, 2015, and funded in part by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council. The Convergence was planned as both offering professional development opportunities for community media practitioners, as well as an opportunity to discuss needed updates to community media policy in the digital environment. The Policy Working Group was tasked with gathering data from the community media sector (including researchers in that sector) and a drafting policy based on that data to be presented at the conference.

Data collection was planned to include an online survey (in which Canadians in both urban and rural areas could participate) as well as focus groups in major cities where multiple community media are present and therefore cross-sectoral brainstorming could occur in person.

There were 419 respondents in the survey, with an 80% completion rate (i.e. 71 surveys were partially completed). Percentages presented in the result below reflect the total number of responses to each question.

Methodological Considerations

A web-survey was undertaken in order to capture community media knowledge and experiences on a national scale with limited resources. Web-surveys are an increasingly common social science approach to non-probability data sampling (Bethlehem and Biffignandi 2012, Couper and Miller 2008, Dillman and Bowker 2002, Janse et al. 2007, Pew Research Center 2015). Advantages of web-surveys include reach, response times and cost efficiencies. The CMPWG worked with community partners across Canada to promote the survey through community networks, email lists, and websites, as well as

<http://www.statcan.gc.ca/eng/subjects/standard/sgc/notice/sgc-06>

with national not-for-profit organizations with wide readerships and national audiences. The complete list of survey questions can be found at <http://www.surveygizmo.com/s3/2294748/Community-Media-Policy-Survey-23-08-15-br-Sondage-Politique-des-m-dias-communautaires/>.

WHO FILLED OUT THE SURVEY

Regional Representation

There was representation among respondents from almost every region of Canada.

Survey results reflect respondents from 152 communities located in all 10 provinces, Yukon and North West Territories. In terms of regional distribution, 44% of respondents were from Central Canada, 41% were from Western Canada, 14% were from Eastern Canada, and 1% of respondents were from Northern Canada. How this compares to regional distribution of population in Canada is as follows⁴:

<u>Regional distribution of respondents</u>	<u>Canadian Population</u>	
Eastern Canada	14%	6.7%
Central Canada	44%	61.8
Western Canada	41%	31.2%
Northern Canada	1%	0.3%

Province	Survey Respondents	Canadian Population % (2013) ⁵
Alberta	3.2%	11.2
British Columbia	25.4%	13.2
Manitoba	5.0%	3.6
New Brunswick	6.7%	2.2
Newfoundland & Labrador	0.3%	1.5
Nova Scotia	6.1%	2.7
Ontario	21.4%	38.7
Prince Edward Island	0.9%	.4
Quebec	23.1%	23.1
Saskatchewan	6.4%	3.1
Nunavut	0.0%	0.3%
North West Territories	0.3%	
Yukon	0.9%	
Other	0.3%	

Discrepancies between survey respondents and regional population distribution in Canada may reflect the degree of activity in the community media sector in different regions.⁶

4 (2013) Canadians in Context – Geographic Distribution. Employment and Social Development Canada. Retrieved Oct 4, 2015 from <http://well-being.esdc.gc.ca/misme-iowb/.3ndic.1t.4r@-eng.jsp?iid=34>

5 Ibid.

6 For example, British Columbia has a strong history of community-owned co-operatives that offer communications services in isolated mountainous regions, By contrast, Alberta has relatively fewer community media organizations. The proactive quality of survey participation selects for those with an interest in the subject matter, a conjecture supported by the fact that 100% of survey respondents consume community media, and 86% of respondents had participated in community media.

Rural versus Urban

The rural / urban distribution reflected the different kinds of communities that Canadians live in - urban (population in excess of 100,000), mid-sized (population between 10,000 and 100,000) and rural (populations under 10,000): 20% of respondents were from rural locations, 54% were from urban centres, and the remaining 26% were from mid-sized towns. This distribution was similar to the broader Canadian population as follows.

Size of Community	Survey Respondents	Canadian Population % (2013) ⁷
> 100,000	54%	59%
10,001 to 100,000	26%	> 9%
< 10,000	20%	<32%

Male / Female / Undisclosed

Respondents identified themselves as 53% male, 41% female, and 7% preferred not to specify.

Age

There was also a diverse range of ages among survey respondents as follows:

Survey respondents age	Canadian population ⁸	Canadian population adjusted to exclude children (<18) 2015	
0 -24	8%	29%	9%
25 – 40	30%	21%	25%
41 – 65	51	34%	42%
over 65	11%	16%	19%

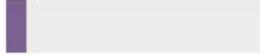
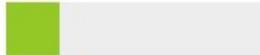
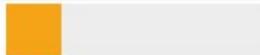
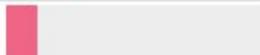
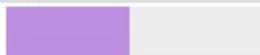
While the distribution of ages initially appears not to be representative of the general Canadian population, given that survey participation would have been unusual for respondents under age 18, the adjusted proportion (removing children < 18) is roughly reflective of broader Canadian demographics. This indicates that community media is consumed and produced roughly equally by Canadians of all ages, with slightly more in the 25-65 age group, and slightly fewer over 65. In other words, younger Canadians are tending to consume and produce community media more in the digital era, rather than less.

7 . StatsCan figures are provided under 30,000 and between 30,000 and 100,000; further analysis is needed to match the survey category boundary at fewer than or greater than 10,000.

8 2015 Population By Sex and Age Group. Statistics Canada. Retrieved Oct 4, 2015 from <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/101/cst01/demo10a-eng.htm>

Minority and Underserved Groups

Almost a third of respondents (136) identified themselves as belonging to a group that is underserved by commercial media. About half of these indicated that they belonged to Aboriginal, racial, linguistic, or a sexual minority, or have a disability.

Aboriginal	7.4%		10
Official language minority	14.7%		20
Other racial or linguistic minority	20.6%		28
LGBTQ	21.3%		29
Disability community	11.8%		16
Other - Write In	47.8%		65
Total			136

Almost half identified a range of other factors that caused them to feel underserved by commercial media, including age, political views, residence in a remote region, or low socio-economic status.

Education

Twelve percent (12%) of survey respondents ended their educations in high school, 20% attended college, and a 70% attended university. Among 25-64 year-olds (the age group for which data about education are available from Statistics Canada), the education of survey respondents compares to the general population as follows:

Level of Education	Survey Respondents	Canadian Population % (2013) ⁹
University	70%	19%
College	20%	45%
High School	12%	36%

Survey respondents are therefore significantly better educated than the average Canadian.

⁹ Statistics Canada <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-012-x/2011001/tbl/tbl01-eng.cfm>

Income

The income of survey respondents compares with the general Canadian population as follows:

Income	Survey Respondents	Canadian Population % (2013)¹⁰
> \$100,000	19%	40%
\$50,001 to \$100,000	29%	35%
\$25,000 to \$50,000	35%	18%
< \$25,000	17%	7%

Survey respondents, while being significantly better educated than the general population, have significantly lower household income. This departure from the usual linkage being higher education and income, may be explained at least in part by the fact that survey respondents include staff of community media organizations. The technical and community facilitation skills required for these roles typically demand higher education. Yet many respondents voiced frustrations about underresourcing of community media, resulting in staff burnout and overall organizational instability.

10 Statistics Canada <http://www.statcan.gc.ca/tables-tableaux/sum-som/l01/cst01/famil106a-eng.htm>

WHERE RESPONDENTS CURRENTLY GET LOCAL INFORMATION

When asked where they get local information, survey respondents ranked the Internet first, radio second, print third and television fourth.

1. How much local information do you obtain from each of the following types of media?

	A lot	Some	A little	None	Responses
Internet	234 69.2%	77 22.8%	23 6.8%	4 1.2%	338
Television	63 18.8%	86 25.7%	91 27.2%	95 28.4%	335
Radio	111 33.3%	112 33.6%	82 24.6%	28 8.4%	333
Print or Other	95 28.4%	135 40.4%	91 27.2%	13 3.9%	334

Community media ranked as the second most important source for the categories of online (after social media), radio (after public radio) and television (after public television). Here is a detailed summary of the responses:

■ Among those who indicated a preference for local information from the Internet:

2. Please identify the specific Internet sources that you consult for local information.

	A lot	Some	A little	None	Responses
Listserves	51 16.9%	68 22.5%	68 22.5%	115 38.1%	302
Websites of commercial media organizations	89 28.0%	112 35.2%	85 26.7%	32 10.1%	318
Websites of community media organizations	119 37.1%	123 38.3%	63 19.6%	16 5.0%	321
Municipal web site	41 13.1%	103 32.8%	116 36.9%	54 17.2%	314
Other web sites	82 26.1%	125 39.8%	90 28.7%	17 5.4%	314
Social media	183 55.8%	83 25.3%	34 10.4%	28 8.5%	328

■ Among those who indicated a preference for local information from TV:

3. Please identify the specific TV sources that you consult for local information.

	A lot	Some	A little	None	Responses
Commercial television	33 14.2%	80 34.5%	83 35.8%	36 15.5%	232
Public television (CBC, TVO, the Knowledge Network, , BBC, PBS)	103 44.2%	71 30.5%	48 20.6%	11 4.7%	233
Community television	50 21.6%	60 25.9%	68 29.3%	54 23.3%	232

- Among those who indicated that they get most of their local information from the radio:

4. Please identify the specific Radio sources that you consult for local information.

	A lot	Some	A little	None	Responses
Commercial radio	25 8.7%	71 24.8%	89 31.1%	101 35.3%	296
Public radio (CBC, NPR)	147 49.0%	93 31.0%	43 14.3%	17 5.7%	300
Community / campus radio	82 27.6%	75 25.3%	62 20.9%	78 26.3%	297

- Among those who indicated a preference for local information from the internet:

Sixty-three percent (63%) live in urban communities
 Twenty-three percent (23%) live in mid-sized communities
 Fourteen percent (14%) live in rural communities

- Among those who indicated a preference for local information from the TV:

Fifty-eight percent (58%) live in urban communities
 Twenty-three percent (23%) live in mid-sized communities.
 Nineteen percent (19%) live in rural communities

- Among those who indicated a preference for local information from the radio:

Sixty percent (60%) live in urban communities
 Fifteen percent (15%) live in mid-sized communities
 Twenty-five (25%) live in rural communities

- Among those who indicated a preference for local information from print or other sources:

Fifty-two percent (52%) live in urban communities
 Twenty-six percent (26%) live in mid-sized communities
 Twenty-two percent (22%) live in rural communities

- Among those who indicated that they get no local information from the Internet:

Sixty-seven (67%) live in rural communities
 Thirty-three (33%) live in mid-sized communities

- Among those who indicated that they get no local information from the TV:

Sixty percent (60%) live in urban communities
 Twenty-three percent (23%) live in mid-sized communities
 Seventeen percent (17%) live in rural communities

- Among those who indicated that they get no local information from the radio:

- Sixty-three (63%) live in urban communities
 - Thirty-two percent (32%) live in mid-sized communities
 - Five percent (5%) live in rural communities

- Among those who indicated that they get no local information from print and other sources:

- Forty-six percent (46%) live in urban communities
 - Thirty-nine percent (39%) live in mid-sized communities
 - Fifteen (15%) live in rural communities

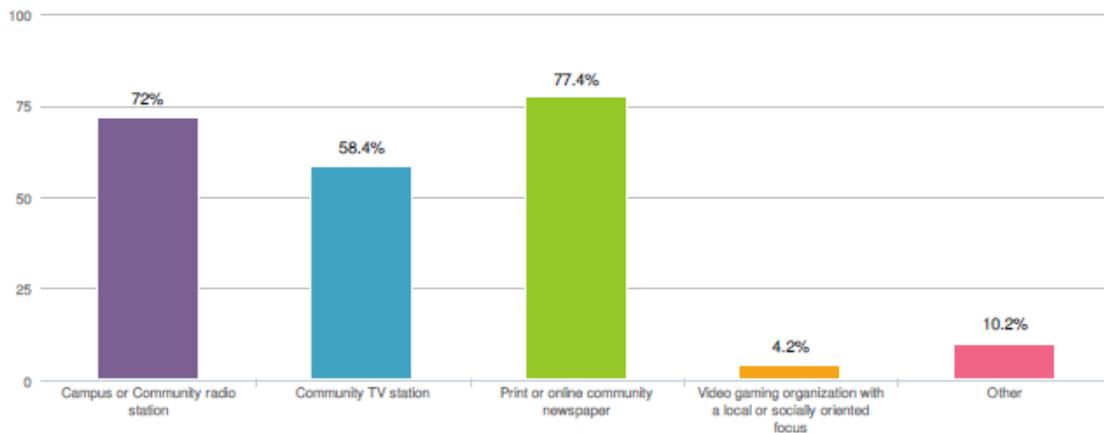
Those who rely on the Internet for the most local information tended to live in urban communities. Less than 15% of rural respondents indicated that the Internet was a significant source of local information, and 2/3 of rural respondents said that they get no local information from the Internet. By contrast, 2/3 of urban respondents said that they get no local information from either television or the radio. These results reinforce the characterization of community media by many respondents as an important source of local information for communities who do not have broadband access.

AWARENESS OF & INVOLVEMENT IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

Awareness

When asked to identify local community media, a large majority of respondents could identify one and often more than one local community media organization:

6. Which community media are you aware of in your area? (Check all that apply)



Despite the prevalence of video gaming in the larger culture (numerous articles over the last 5 years have documented the fact that video game sales outstrip Hollywood movies¹¹) survey respondents were aware of relatively few exclusively online or gaming organizations that fall within the community media sector: that is, defined as offering training and production support to the general public to produce content about local themes and issues. While there are a few (organizations such as the Media Coop, the Hand Eye Society, and Dames Making Games were mentioned by respondents), the rise of a recognizable 'community media sector' within new media appears to trail the development of commercial media on new platforms. Part of the reason for this may be that the CRTC does not regulate the Internet and does not recognize community media on new media platforms per se nor provide for its support. The federal regulator's relationship with community media is mediated by the licencing process, which applies only to the 'traditional' community media: radio and TV, even though the latter may be available on the Internet in addition to their licenced distribution method (over-the-air, digital cable and so on).

11 For example, <http://www.theguardian.com/technology/gamesblog/2009/sep/27/videogames-hollywood>

If awareness of community organizations is presented by province and territory, the breakdown is as follows:

	Campus or Community radio station	Community TV station	Print or online community newspaper	Video gaming organization with a local or socially oriented focus	Other	Total
I live in:						
Alberta	8 80.0%	3 30.0%	8 80.0%	1 10.0%	1 10.0%	10 100%
British Columbia	58 67.4%	57 66.3%	66 76.7%	4 4.7%	11 12.8%	86 100%
Manitoba	16 94.1%	6 35.3%	15 88.2%	0 0.0%	1 5.9%	17 100%
New Brunswick	19 90.5%	12 57.1%	16 76.2%	0 0.0%	1 4.8%	21 100%
Newfoundland & Labrador	1 100.0%	1 100.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100%
North West Territories	1 100.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	1 100%
Nova Scotia	18 85.7%	8 38.1%	19 90.5%	0 0.0%	2 9.5%	21 100%
Nunavut	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Ontario	54 81.8%	30 45.5%	55 83.3%	6 9.1%	9 13.6%	66 100%
Prince Edward Island	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	3 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 100%
Quebec	41 51.9%	58 73.4%	48 60.8%	3 3.8%	6 7.6%	79 100%
Saskatchewan	20 90.9%	15 68.2%	22 100.0%	0 0.0%	2 9.1%	22 100%
Yukon	3 100.0%	1 33.3%	3 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	3 100%
Other	1 100.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100%
Totals	240	194	256	14	34	331

There was comparatively high awareness of community media generally in British Columbia. There is also a relatively large awareness of community TV in Quebec compared to other provinces (more than double awareness levels in Ontario, for example) and in British Columbia. These higher levels of awareness may be linked to the greater number of community-owned and -operated TV organizations in Quebec, which in turn is likely linked to the availability of provincial funding to support both community-owned and -operated TV and community radio. British Columbia is home to the highest number

of community-operated TV production groups in English Canada, which may explain high levels of awareness there.

Stronger national awareness of community radio compared to community television in every province *except* Quebec is surprising given the significant budget spent on community TV (more than \$150 million annually according to the CRTC's recent community TV policy review notice, CRTC 2015-421), compared to an estimated \$40 million spent on community radio country-wide. The reason could be that production studios at which the public can access training and production support for community TV have been shuttered in many communities, with the consolidation of more resources at fewer access points¹². An additional reason could be that cable companies might not be promoting the access mandate of community channels outside Quebec, while Quebec is home to over forty not-for-profit community TV corporations with explicit community access mandates.

If awareness of community media is broken down by community size, community radio stations make a proportionately larger contribution to local media ecologies in large urban centres, while community TV stations play a proportionately larger role in mid-sized towns or cities. Video gaming organizations with a community focus are unknown in smaller communities, and most known in large urban centres.

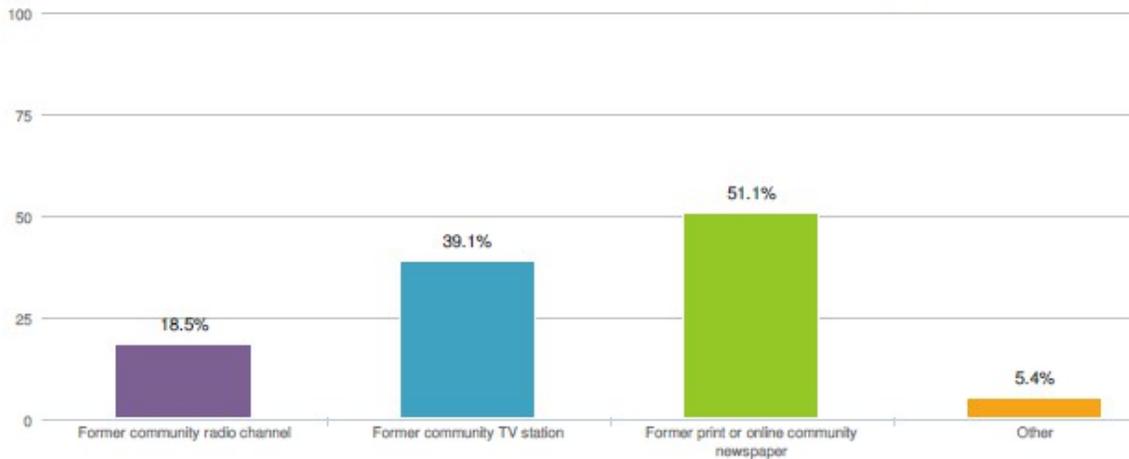
	Campus or Community radio station	Community TV station	Print or online community newspaper	Video gaming organization with a local or socially oriented focus	Other	Total
I live in:						
A large urban centre (population 100,000 or more)	147 82.6%	97 54.5%	140 78.7%	10 5.6%	18 10.1%	178 100%
A mid-sized town or city (population between 10,000 and 99,999)	51 58.0%	61 69.3%	64 72.7%	4 4.5%	9 10.2%	88 100%
A rural village, municipality or First Nation (fewer than 10,000)	41 65.1%	34 54.0%	50 79.4%	0 0.0%	7 11.1%	63 100%
Totals	239	192	254	14	34	329

Loss of Community Media

Twenty-nine percent (29%) of respondents reported that they had lost access to a community media organization. The table below shows the type of organization that they reported they had lost access to.

¹² Source: CACTUS intervention to CRTC 2009-661.

16. Which media in your community are no longer accessible to you? (Check all that apply)



Community media closures affected communities across Canada:

	Former community radio channel	Former community TV station	Former print or online community newspaper	Other	Total
Alberta	0 0.0%	1 33.3%	2 66.7%	0 0.0%	3 100%
British Columbia	0 0.0%	15 57.7%	9 34.6%	4 15.4%	26 100%
Manitoba	4 50.0%	3 37.5%	3 37.5%	0 0.0%	8 100%
New Brunswick	1 20.0%	2 40.0%	2 40.0%	0 0.0%	5 100%
Newfoundland & Labrador	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	1 100%
North West Territories	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Nova Scotia	0 0.0%	1 20.0%	4 80.0%	0 0.0%	5 100%
Nunavut	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Ontario	8 32.0%	8 32.0%	15 60.0%	0 0.0%	25 100%
Prince Edward Island	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	1 100.0%	0 0.0%	1 100%
Quebec	4 26.7%	5 33.3%	8 53.3%	1 6.7%	15 100%

Saskatchewan	0 0.0%	2 50.0%	3 75.0%	0 0.0%	4 100%
Yukon	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%	0 0.0%
Total	18	37	48	5	93

When asked for the reasons for the loss of access, respondents reported ¹³:

- lack of financial resources, affecting all media types (35%)
- cable company restructuring, affecting community TV (13%)
- unspecified internal organizational issues, affecting all media types (8%)
- corporate reorganization (including buy outs by commercial media and mergers), primarily affecting newspapers (8%)
- fragmented access, with the proliferation of digital platforms, primarily affecting community TV (7%)
- CRTC cancellation of licenses, primarily affecting community radio (4%)
- ceased distribution in the area, primarily affecting community TV (2%)

In all three sizes of community, half of the community media closures were newspapers. The fact that the greatest loss occurred in a traditional medium (print) might not be of concern if these organizations were being replaced by new media equivalents, but such replacement was not reported by respondents. Losses in traditional community media taken in combination with the relatively small number of nascent new community media platforms may point to the need for a refocussing of policy attention on community media in the digital environment in order to better leverage new platforms.

Respondents in both rural and urban areas indicated that, in addition to the preponderance of newspaper closures, community media closures affected radio and television more or less evenly. But in mid-sized communities, the number of community TV closures was significantly higher; 50% of respondents from mid-sized communities reported a community TV closure in their community as compared to 29% and 38% respectively for rural and urban communities.

	Former community radio channel	Former community TV station	Former print or online community newspaper	Other	Total
A large urban centre (population 100,000 or more)	9 18.0%	19 38.0%	25 50.0%	4 8.0%	50 100%
A mid-sized town or city (population	5 17.9%	14 50.0%	15 53.6%	0 0.0%	28 100%

¹³ 29% of the comments to this question were vague and/or not applicable to the question asked (e.g. they referred to the CBC, Conrad Black, Irving monopoly, etc.)

between 10,000 and 99,999)					
A rural village, municipality or First Nation (fewer than 10,000)	4 28.6%	4 28.6%	7 50.0%	1 7.1%	14 100%
Total	18	37	47	5	92

The significance of a higher number of closures of community TV channels in mid-sized communities likely reflects the pattern of restructuring and centralization by cable companies over the past 15 years as formerly distinct cable systems, head ends, and production studios have been fibreoptically interconnected. Relatively few communities with fewer than 10,000 people ever had cable community channels, so the reported losses are lower.

Comments by specific respondents support this view; for example

Shaw ended it because they have their own Community station in Kelowna 125kms away which "serves" this area.

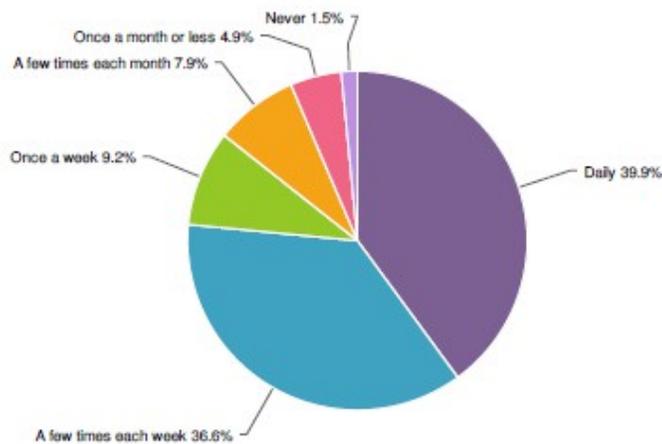
Involvement with Community Media

A strong majority (73%) of respondents had been involved with community media in some way, as a production volunteer or in making an appearance in programming (i.e. as an interviewee).

VIEWERSHIP PATTERNS & WHAT RESPONDENTS THINK ABOUT COMMUNITY MEDIA

Most respondents (86%) access community media programming at least once per week, and 40% of respondents access community programming daily.

12. How often do you read, watch, listen, play or consume content produced by these community media organizations?



Respondents believe community media fulfill the following roles in their communities.

18. Do community media in your area ...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Responses
... advertise local events?	177 52.4%	131 38.8%	7 2.1%	3 0.9%	20 5.9%	338
... offer media training?	75 22.1%	118 34.8%	44 13.0%	28 8.3%	74 21.8%	339
... express alternative points of view?	145 43.2%	145 43.2%	19 5.7%	11 3.3%	16 4.8%	336
... provide weather and emergency information?	84 25.0%	135 40.2%	54 16.1%	16 4.8%	47 14.0%	336
... profile local jobs, economic opportunities and businesses?	80 23.9%	157 46.9%	43 12.8%	9 2.7%	46 13.7%	335
... give visibility to community organizations, such as sporting, religious and social service organizations?	157 46.7%	150 44.6%	7 2.1%	3 0.9%	19 5.7%	336
... provide a platform for artistic and cultural expression?	173 51.5%	135 40.2%	11 3.3%	4 1.2%	13 3.9%	336
... increase civic engagement (for example, by airing council meetings)?	133 39.6%	129 38.4%	40 11.9%	11 3.3%	23 6.8%	336
Overall, provide communications services that strengthen your community?	177 52.4%	115 34.0%	28 8.3%	4 1.2%	14 4.1%	338

In descending order of importance, respondents believe that community media in their locality:

- (92%) provide a platform for artistic and cultural expression
- (91%) advertised local events
- (90%) provide visibility to community groups
- (88%) provide media training
- (86%) provide alternative points of view
- (86%) overall, provide communication services that strengthen the community
- (70%) increase civic engagement
- (69%) profile local jobs, economic opportunities and businesses
- (64%) provide local weather and emergency warning services

Understanding Impacts Through Community Capacities

When asked an open-ended question regarding positive impacts community media have in their communities, survey respondents identified an array of specific outcomes.

A third of respondents (32%) reiterated local information and coverage of local issues and events as a positive impact. Ways of describing this included:

- visibility for local events
- visibility for local organizations
- coverage of local issues
- celebrating local culture
- serving local interests
- reflecting the community
- information about local highway closures

Quotes:

“With the commercial stations in the area increasingly being bought out and run by cities in Eastern Canada, community media is the only way we have of informing local people of what's going on. It's the only way we have of promoting local events, local celebrities, providing local news, and so much more. Positive impacts are everything from learning about the candidate running for election in your community, to your kid seeing his/her picture on the front page of the paper or hearing their voice on the radio. Non-profits have ways of promoting their events, asking for volunteers, raising money. New businesses have an outlet to promote their opening day and let the town know they exist. These are all things big city or Eastern city media won't cover, and are integral to smaller centres.”

“Community Events are well covered and information is provided regularly over the radio. Updates on hwy closures are well covered.”

“They can provide a local organizations an opportunity to heard by the larger community.”

A fifth of respondents (20%) elaborated further on the provision of alternative points of view as a positive impact. Ways of describing this included:

- coverage of other-than-mainstream issues, and stories not in the national papers
- diversity of programs and programming

- alternative voices and points of view
- youth voices

Quotes:

“I believe it helps create a sense of community over a variety of different community and cultural groups that span a diverse group of people.”

“People feel more empowered when they have their own voice, and people get to recognize the voices of the other members of their community.”

Some respondents (13%) elaborated on connecting people as a positive impact. Ways of describing this included:

- bringing respondents together
- social experience
- fostering dialogue among different cultural groups, and bringing people together from diverse backgrounds
- presenting information in ways that diffuse polarization
- including marginalized groups

“It is a major reason that the community feels like it is a community. It provides awareness of what neighbours are doing, thinking, and planning. It can also open the doors to community involvement — which might be volunteering, competing in sports, running for office or supporting candidates, attending public meeting, becoming aware of available services.”

“Sentiment d'appartenance et motivation à participer localement”

“I think it does help foster dialogue with the different cultural groups.”

“Rétention de la langue française, briser l'isolement entre les francophones.”

“C'est un endroit où nous avons une voix et tous sont invités de partager leurs opinions.”

“Hearing voices I would never meet that are so close to my home. We share a space, it's good to hear how we are all using it, for better or worse. Communication is the most important piece of living together.”

Some respondents (11%) elaborated on media skills capacity building as a positive impact. Ways of describing this included:

- journalism and media training for the professional industry
- creating producers from consumers
- capacity building for collaboration

“Possibilité d'une implication bénévole. Apprentissage des métiers de la télévision.”

“UN TREMPLIN POUR LA FORMATION DE FUTUR TRAVAILLEUR DANS LE DOMAINE”

“Community media, by presenting alternate forms of media, increase media literacy amongst viewers. Watching media that does not follow mainstream forms allows viewers to have insight into what these forms are and helps them to understand how media is shaped.”

“Encouraging involvement in media production among a wider group of people - getting past the traditional “gatekeepers”

Some respondents (8%) described creating an informed and engaged public as a positive impact. Ways of describing this included:

- knowledge sharing
- connecting local with provincial with national issues
- promoting democracy
- increasing media literacy
- building support for community movements
- coverage of local governance

Quotes:

“Promoting democracy and democratic communications through peer-to-peer communications on mainstream broadcast formats.”

“Highlighting issues that are of public interest and that are not being talked about in the mainstream media due to politics or lack of comprehension of the situation.”

“It most often creates community that otherwise wouldn't exist. That seems to me the very purpose of community media: to enable people to freely "assemble" and express themselves.”

“Community media is best at getting to the finer points of discussion allowing a deeper understanding and appreciation of different points of view. This strengthens the community and leads to more informed decision making and a greater participation level in seeing decisions through to fruition.”

Six percent (6%) provided details about the role of community media in spotlighting local arts as an example of celebrating local culture.

“A lot of cultural spotlighting on an awareness and educational level.”

“Promotion des organisations non-lucrative et artistes”

Six percent (6%) elaborated about creating a sense of community identity and belonging as a positive impact. Ways of describing this included:

- giving form to the community
- strengthening community engagement
- creating a sense of belonging

Quotes:

“Sentiment d'appartenance et de fierté”

“Elle tiens la population Acadienne en vie!”

Four percent (4%) elaborated on the support for the local economy as an impact of community media. Ways of describing this included:

- fundraising for local groups and events
- support for local businesses

Quotes:

“Participe au développement économique, culturel et socio-communautaire de sa région.”

“Fundraisers for local non-profit groups, a free-postering and promotion service for non-profit events.”

One way to make sense of these wide-ranging responses is by organizing them into thematic clusters based on an asset-based community economic development approach to understanding community capacity (Kretzmana and McKnight 1993; Lithgow 2008; Markey et al. 2005; Roseland 2005; UPDATE SOURCES). The goal in this approach is to identify community-based strengths in the form of what is referred to in the literature as *community capital*. Widely recognized forms of community capacity include: human capital (skills, education, training health, etc.), social capital (relationships, trust, cultural participation, etc.), cultural capital (cultural expression, heritage, identity, knowledge and information, etc.), political capital (ability to make levels of government responsive to needs, ability to influence policy outcomes, etc.), economic capital (savings, local enterprise, access to credit, etc.), physical capital (community facilities, public transit, infrastructure, etc.) and natural capital (clean air and water, green space, etc.). Taking these kinds of community strengths into consideration, we can reorganize the open-ended comments from survey respondents as follows:

Fifty-eight percent (58%) elaborated about **cultural capital** outcomes from community media in their regions, including local information, coverage of local events and issues, spotlighting local artists, and providing alternative points of view.

Nineteen percent (19%) articulated **social capital** outcomes from community media in their regions, including creating a sense of community identity and belonging, and connecting people together.

Eleven percent (11%) pointed to **human capital** outcomes from community media in their regions, including media skills capacity training.

Eight percent (8%) provided examples of **political capital** as an outcome from community media in their region, including helping to create an informed and engaged public, coverage of local governments and building community movements.

Four percent (4%) of respondents offered examples of **economic capital** as an outcome from community media in their region, including support for local businesses and fundraising for local groups and events.

STRENGTHENING COMMUNITY MEDIA

Respondents were also asked **how they thought community media could be more effective**.

20. Could community media in your area improve if they...

	Strongly Agree	Agree	Disagree	Strongly Disagree	Don't Know	Responses
... offered more relevant content?	81 24.3%	164 49.2%	47 14.1%	7 2.1%	34 10.2%	333
... offered better media training?	71 21.3%	158 47.3%	39 11.7%	5 1.5%	61 18.3%	334
... were accessible on more platforms?	109 32.9%	151 45.6%	31 9.4%	4 1.2%	36 10.9%	331
... had better production values?	78 23.6%	131 39.6%	63 19.0%	12 3.6%	47 14.2%	331
... were better managed?	61 18.5%	101 30.6%	68 20.6%	21 6.4%	79 23.9%	330
... promoted content and services more?	86 25.8%	148 44.4%	50 15.0%	12 3.6%	37 11.1%	333
... had more resources?	218 64.9%	94 28.0%	5 1.5%	2 0.6%	17 5.1%	336
... had more community support?	182 54.8%	118 35.5%	13 3.9%	4 1.2%	15 4.5%	332

Answers can be divided into five categories, in descending order of importance to survey respondents:

- Over 90% of respondents believe that community media would be more effective if they had access to more resources.

“It's very hard for community media organisations to be effective and develop regular programming/publications when finances are such a struggle. When the board and contributors are putting most of their energy into keeping the organisation afloat, it's almost impossible to focus on content development. More financial support is definitely required.”

“What is missing most is funding and logistical / administrative support. They do a lot with little means, artisans are sometimes in precarious situations and creates instability. Volunteers are often more stable than the workers, for lack of financial resources. This instability harms some development and a relative cohesion.”

- Just under 80% of respondents believe that community media would be more effective if they were available on more platforms.

“En fait, localement, les télévisions communautaires sont affiliés qu'à un distributeur. Dans mon cas, j'ai été longtemps avec Vidéotron mais je suis nouvellement avec Bell. Malheureusement, je n'ai plus accès à mon contenu local. Trouver une politique de partage entre distributeur pourrait être bien.”

- Just under 70% believe that community media would be more effective if they promoted their services more (which is linked to their availability across platforms). Ten percent (10%) elaborated about the need for more community awareness, outreach and support, and more advertising and promotion for programming.
- Between 60% and 70% of respondents agreed that community media could be more effective if they offered better training and programming, but these sentiments were expressed less strongly than the need for more resources, and more community awareness and visibility.

Sixteen percent (16%) of respondents elaborated regarding **organization and training issues** that need to be addressed in order to make community media more effective, including:

- better training in media production and journalism
- more volunteer opportunities
- more diversity among staff/volunteers
- more democratic governance; governance by the community
- more administrative support

“Volunteers have to be better trained and managed, the content better edited and monitored and more divergent, and the volunteers and paid staff need to be more serious about the content produced (more planning as to what needs to be created and how and by whom)”

“More diversity in the team would be great.”

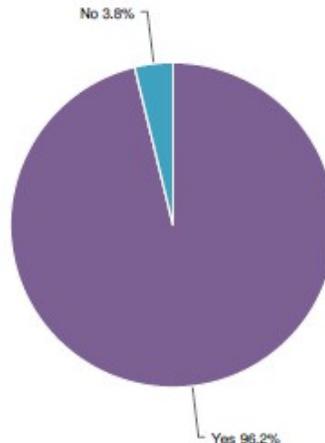
“Community media currently (especially television) is mostly focused on the BDU corporate objectives. They are not a vehicle for local expression and are not fulfilling their mandate. The funding for the community channel has, in essence, been hijacked and is used as a marketing tool and seen as a way to placate the CRTC in order to renew licenses. A real commitment to community programming would begin with an advisory group that has the ability to influence programming decisions and transparency in budget allocations. Neither of which exist currently.”

- Eighteen percent (18%) of respondents suggested specific ways that **programming** could improve, including:
 - more diversity of views
 - more local, community coverage
 - more timely news programming
 - less editorial and more fact-based programming
 - more accessibility with respect to closed-captioning and described video

COMMUNITY MEDIA POLICY: CONTINUED RELEVANCE AND PRIORITIES

When asked about the continued relevance of community media in a time when most Canadians having access to the Internet and social media as platforms for personal self-expression, almost all (96%) of respondents said that formal policies and funding are still necessary to support community media organizations.

22. Given that most Canadians have access to the Internet and social media, do you think that formal policies and funding are still necessary to support community media organizations?



Reasons for this included:

■ **need for non-internet based media** for low-income households, households without digital access, for people with low digital literacy, for access in cars, and for the elderly. Comments included:

Do not presume that most Candians have access to internet. i am a low income senior woman on disability and I pestered Shaw Cable for a year before they offered me a reduced monthly rate of \$70 which is still excessive. the local library (mount pleasant) is always crowded cuz men line up to use computers early in the morning - most women have childcare and eldercare responsibilities so they do not get out in public as much other than to do domestic responsibilities. [sic]

Because (1) far too many Canadians are still denied access to affordable broadband internet service. If you live outside the most urbanized areas of this country, it is literally impossible to obtain affordable broadband internet service. So you're stuck with mainstream commercial media unless community media is somehow able to reach you by other means...

Not all Canadians have consistent internet access or are completely computer literate.

Not everyone can afford access to the internet and other platforms like radio are needed for people especially those in special circumstances.

Not everyone uses social media or is comfortable surfing the net. also many isolated communities have dial up.

Online access is still costly enough that it cannot be said to be available to all social strata. As well, it will be some time before internet and online services will be common in cars and available everywhere. As well the internet is global and broad, there is still need for aggregators to filter for local content and bring local under represented groups forward.

Reserves are not like most Canadians and the infrastructure is not in all places.

Smaller rural communities have no way to get their news out to the local people. The only media we hear from is from larger cities and it seldom has anything to do with us/our issues.

■ **need for non-internet based media** to ensure coherency, editorial responsibility and the localness of content.

Les réseaux sociaux offrent beaucoup de désinformation et d'opinion personnelles. Un diffuseur réglementé par le CRTC s'assure de la qualité de l'information et du contenu transmis."

Internet and social media do not necessarily curate local content, nor do they provide training to create said content.

■ **need for local coverage in the absence of commercial or public media.** Comments included:

Commercial media doesn't come close to serving the needs of the community in which community media is found.

Social media is no substitute for community media. It is disconnected from real life, often lots of racist crap and bullying on it. Internet is okay for following national and international stuff, but I still need my community radio to hear local music, and to know about events.

The community media outlets in Nelson support a large population that do not have Internet connectivity. As well, A local commercial media outlets, specifically commercial radio, do not have a strong enough focus on local events, people, and happenings

■ **need to offer a diversity of voices, a voice to the underserved, and depth of commentary not available on other media.** Comments included:

More funding would lead to better resources and training for community media giving a stronger voice to otherwise unheard/seen/read groups and information.

The diversity of voices and the space provided by community media are even more needed in today's globalizing world, to ensure we continue to hear each other and speak to each other in our diversity, in our communities.

There are much, much fewer viewpoints and perspectives available thanks to the growth of media monopolies, and few of them as well. We need small, local and independent media to bring difference to these audiences and to provide new sources of information to the larger and more mainstream or legacy medias. Indigenous communities are especially isolated because there are nowhere else in the world that might provide news and information or entertainment to them. If Indigenous communities are not part of the conversation, have no clear access to the mediums, they have no voice at all.

Everyone deserves a chance to be "heard" by a larger audience, not everyone can do that on their own.

Viewers and listeners who believe there are more than two points of view to controversies, but it's hard for most news media outlets to accommodate more than the usual s/he says/s/he says structure... the old for or against format.

*Community TV reflects real peoples views and is independent of large companies *community TV is important to share local info that is rarely covered on commercial TV news.*

Les médias communautaires sont nécessaires pour offrir une variété, une diversité qui n'existe nulle part ailleurs. Ne pas avoir de médias communautaires serait comme voir la vie en noir et blanc. Les

médias de masse sont très pauvres en information de toutes sortes, en musiques de toutes sortes et surtout n'ont pas d'information locale. On ne fait que les gros titres, les gros tubes et rien d'autre. Ce sont comme les cinémas de masse vs les cinémas de répertoire.

Internet and social media do not afford the time or space to address and share complexities of most community issues. For example, an hour long community radio show about human rights issues is able to pinpoint specific topical conversation and information and offer relevant conversation for the listener. Internet /Social Media is more likely to only hold the interest of the user for quick, short, interest before the user moves on .

The term 'social media' is a horrible misnomer. As John Downing suggests, 'digital connective media' would be better - and add corporate/commercial to that. Such commercial networks do not automatically generate public-oriented info or the thoughtful presentation and exchange of ideas, or the monitoring of power. Those tasks require resources, investment, ongoing and collective effort, and dare I say, a certain amount of expertise. I.e. journalism.

Yes - because with ownership for corporate media resting in the hands of so few, more than ever public policy is needed to regulate and ensure community needs are met.

Social media tends to be short blurbs rather than in depth enough to really inform. Social media is used more for strengthening current beliefs and finding others that agree rather than changing perceptions. People are not taking time to understand and end up being extreme (trolling and band wagoning).

Community media organizations offer training, community, networking, support, curation, local content, the voices of the community in way that is overseen by a board and staff (not just individuals posting random information), which gives it more authority as a source of information and content. Policy frameworks and regulation also keep organizations accountable for their content in a way that doesn't exist on the internet.

■ need for financial support for original production. Comments included:

Community based organizations, as any business, need consistent, key personnel to keep day-to-day operations running, plan, train, make & keep connections with community, market, distribute & archive works.

The internet is just a medium. Funding is still needed to create and promote informative and/or high quality content that is relevant to communities.

Parce que la multiplication des sources d'informations n'est pas synonyme de qualité, loin de là! Nous pouvons diffuser de 'information sur n'importe qu'elle plateforme, ce qui importe s'est d'avoir des normes qui régissent les auteurs de l'informations véhiculées. Et cela est nécessaire. Il y aura toujours un prix pour une information de qualité.

Pour permettre aux permanences d'effectuer leur travail adéquatement sans avoir à se casser la tête pour le budget. Pour éviter l'essoufflement des bénévoles.

There still needs to be funding to operate any kind of media outlet. There's things to buy like equipment, promotional material, etc.

In my own experience, staff and volunteers are highly dedicated but often overworked and in need of further resources to help with everything from ferrying equipment across town (not everyone has access to a car, and must use a taxi with large equipment!) to confronting unpaid overtime. Social media increase community media's reach, but it does create work as well as staff and volunteers work to populate these channels with relevant content. While on the whole it is "easier" now to reach new readers and listeners, we still need the funding and supportive policies in place.

■ **need for media training.** Comments included:

Parce que les médias communautaires n'ont pas toujours assez de financement pour former leur bénévoles et employés.

Because the social engagement and production training afforded by funding community access television is not the same as having access to information on the internet.

Community media organisations can make intentional, in-depth, focused content that achieves more significance than social media and more local grounding than corporate media. When community media organisations are supported, more community members have access to quality local content and can themselves become trained in media-making, which in developing practices of critical inquiry alone is a substantial benefit.

Community media organizations offer training, community, networking, support, curation, local content, the voices of the community in way that is overseen by a board and staff (not just individuals posting random information), which gives it more authority as a source of information and content. Policy frameworks and regulation also keep organizations accountable for their content in a way that doesn't exist on the internet.

Internet and social media do not necessarily curate local content, nor do they provide training to create said content.

Social media and the internet, unregulated to the degree that broadcast is through the CRTC, provides little to no relevant training to employability regarding teamwork, taking direction, being accountable beyond one's username and ip address, and thus lends itself to higher levels of content being produced, less quality though per capita of information disseminated and less value infused into the community.

There is still a need for community media, especially in the media literacy department. Simple consuming media does not make one's life richer in content.

■ **need for local engagement.** Comments included:

Community TV aides us in weaving a tapestry of multiculturalism which results in a cohesive understanding of our neighbors and new Canadians.

Community media has the potential, at least, to do something the internet and social media are less able to accomplish, and that is to directly reflect and engage the community (including those without internet access) in which the medium is situated. In my community, most people are more likely to connect with media via print than using the web.

Social media tends to work in isolation with its production, and with fairly narrow-cast perspective. Community television invites a more integrated approach in both production and content with a larger community and/or province.

Firstly, most Canadians doesn't mean all Canadians. Many who have less access to digital media are those that use and benefit from community media (I'm thinking of Megaphone right now, which I forgot to mention earlier). With more funding, those who are active in digital community networks can do more to interact with public space (host events, offer workshops or training, ect.)

I strongly believe that community media organizations should be funded and promoted, not only to provide alternatives to conventional news reporting (which is often biased towards corporations and for-profit) but also as a way to make communities stronger and link people together in local initiatives.

Stories need to be told and heard about our own communities to strengthen connection and strong mutual values

Strong communities build stronger nations.

Unlike the Internet and social media, community media organizations provide 'in person' or 'face to face' interaction among content providers and content consumers. This personal contact is a mechanism for community action that requires communities of interest to take responsibility for their messaging, rather than just expressing a 'digital opinion' as exemplified by most Internet and social media outlets.

local information has a local agenda. It is by the locals for the locals. We need to share, feel engage and use collective intelligence to overcome the next decade.

■ **need for support in a market environment** to maintain public-service focus.
Comments included:

"free market" demand is not sufficient to support community media, given the oligopolistic tendencies of media concentration

Because community media has to compete.

Because those with more money and power still have the ability to produce much more media, which skews political points of view in their favour

Community media will have difficulty covering their costs through advertising sales. They can't compete with corporate sellers.

Without regulations, I think community stations risk turning into pseudo "for-profit" organizations. They would run the risk of prioritizing profits over public service needs.

Dans la mesure où les medias communautaires déservent, promulguent et forment leur communauté, un financement public devrait les soutenir en tout ou en partie afin de leur permettre d'atteindre leurs objectifs.

■ **to make the transition to digital / Internet distribution.** Comments included:

Community media needs funding to branch onto the internet!

Respondents assessed policy priorities for community media as follows:

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
Provide a platform for diverse views to be expressed?	212	65.4%	96	29.6%	8	2.5%	0	0.0%	8	2.5%	324	100%
Offer digital media skills training?	134	41.6%	144	44.7%	20	6.2%	0	0.0%	24	7.5%	322	100%
Offer hyperlocal information in a global economy?	158	49.1%	121	37.6%	8	2.5%	0	0.0%	35	10.9%	322	100%
Adequate funding?	263	81.4%	52	16.1%	5	1.5%	0	0.0%	3	0.9%	323	100%
Availability on all platforms?	170	52.5%	117	36.1%	15	4.6%	0	0.0%	22	6.8%	324	100%
Availability across Canada?	157	48.6%	120	37.2%	23	7.1%	3	0.9%	20	6.2%	323	100%
Access to specialized training?	131	40.6%	136	42.1%	21	6.5%	1	0.3%	34	10.5%	323	100%
Access to professional support and networking?	145	44.9%	139	43.0%	17	5.3%	0	0.0%	22	6.8%	323	100%

Ninety-eight percent of survey respondents (98%) believe it is a policy priority for community media to be adequately funded. The fact that survey respondents as a whole are better educated yet less wealthy than other Canadians is consistent with a sector whose organizational employees are less well paid than in the public or private sectors.

Ninety-four percent (94%) believe that community media policy should aim to ensure that community media provide a platform for a diversity of views. This is consistent with the profile of survey respondents, a high percentage of whom felt they were ill-served by other sources of media.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) believe that community media should be available on all media platforms.

Eighty-eight percent (88%) believe that community media needs access to opportunities for professionals support and networking and 86% believe that community media need access to specialized training. This is significant given the high educational level of most survey respondents and the fact that many of them work for community media organizations. Despite university educations, they persist in identifying the need for opportunities for professional development, perhaps because of the rate of change in media tools and platforms in the digital environment.

Eighty-six percent (86%) believe that community media should offer digital media skills training to the Canadian public.

Eighty-six percent (86%) believe that community media should be available across Canada.

Eighty-four percent (84%) believed community media should offer hyperlocal information.

Respondents who elaborated about the need for adequate funding for community media offered some specific suggestions:

■ Regarding Funding for Community Radio

“Community radio is left out of the government advertising plan. The government doesn't take advertising contracts with community radio stations at a level that shows support for those stations. People who listen to community radio have the right to hear what the government is advertising on commercial stations.”

“Community radios are non profit organizations and should a community have a small population self-generating revenues are very difficult, the advertising market is non-existent. More Government funding must be made available to community radios especially those playing to a small population.”

■ Regarding Funding for Community TV

Since more money is earmarked within the Canadian broadcasting system for community TV than any other single community medium and its deployment is the subject of an on-going CRTC review, respondents were asked what they thought policy priorities for the deployment of this funding should be:

	Strongly Agree		Agree		Disagree		Strongly Disagree		Don't Know		Total	
Increased transparency and accountability for spending?	106	55.8%	51	26.8%	15	7.9%	1	0.5%	17	8.9%	190	100%
Create an agency independent from cable and satellite companies to manage community TV funding?	92	48.2%	56	29.3%	10	5.2%	5	2.6%	28	14.7%	191	100%
Create an ombudsperson position to oversee compliance?	79	41.6%	71	37.4%	16	8.4%	3	1.6%	21	11.1%	190	100%
Ensure that these resources continue to support community media? (At last year's "Let's Talk TV" CRTC consultation, it was suggested that community TV funding could be used to support local commercial TV.)	117	61.3%	41	21.5%	11	5.8%	9	4.7%	13	6.8%	191	100%
Approach radio, television and Internet-distributed community media more holistically, reflecting trends in digital convergence?	87	46.8%	56	30.1%	11	5.9%	3	1.6%	29	15.6%	186	100%

Eighty-three percent (83%) of respondents believed that there should be increased transparency and accountability for community TV spending.

Eighty-two percent (82%) of respondents opposed the possibility that community TV funding might be used to support commercial over-the-air TV stations.

Seventy-nine percent (79%) of respondents believed that there should be a community television ombudsperson's office to oversee community television regulatory compliance.

Seventy-seven (77%) of respondents believed that an organization independent from broadcast distribution undertakings should administer community television funding.

The concern about accountability for BDU funding for community TV is consistent with the concern voiced by community media practitioners that community-based media organizations themselves should have adequate funding, and the relatively low household income of survey respondents, many of whom work for these community-based media organizations. This finding is consistent with resistance to the proposal that these resource might be directed away from the sector.

Several respondents elaborated about community TV funding:

“Plus de souplesse pour les médias communautaires serait bienvenue. Plus d'équilibre dans la distribution des \$\$\$. Trop de variation des argents alloués aux télévisions communautaires d'un cablodistributeur à l'autre. Ex: pour un même bassin de population desservit par 2 télés communautaires, l'une reçoit annuellement 60 000 et + et l'autre 23 000\$ (inacceptable)”

“Our cable provider is more interested in using money for their own concerns that make more money for them rather than providing a voice for my community. Having a separate body to administer and make sure the money is used for the community channel would be helpful. Keep the corporate interests away from managing this channel.”

À mon sens, ils ne souhaitent pas la poursuite des opérations des TV communautaires. Les embuches sont constamment pelleter dans la cours de nos médias communautaires. Les ressources sont minimales en comparaison avec les médias commerciaux et publiques. Ce n'est pas sérieux! Je suis persuadée qu'il en est ainsi. C'est une "game" et nous ne sommes pas à la table.

LE FINANCEMENT BASÉ SUR LES REVENUS DU SERVICE DE BASE EN TÉLÉ EST RÉVOLU, LE CRTC DOIT REVOIR A FAÇON DE FAIRE AVANT QUE LE MANQUE DE FINANCEMENT CAUSE LA DISPARITION DU RÉSEAU DE MÉDIAS COMMUNAUTAIRE

■ Regarding Support for Other Community Media

Several respondents commented upon the need for support for other kinds of community media, besides radio and TV:

“Funding for media not restricted to radio and television. Prime example is printing pocket-sized resource guides, available to everyone from transients, homeless to long-time residents. The majority of people in the DTES do not have a computer or cellphone. Saying "it's online" as a dismissing response to requests for funding is arrogant & closed-minded.”

“Each community needs funding to rent/purchase/maintain a local building, and the equipment necessary to get the news to the people via radio, TV, internet, bulletin board etc.”

“Community space for the production of video game content would be very helpful.”

“Other sources of community media funding have really taken a hit - the magazine fund, aboriginal broadcasting funds, arts funding, is all down. And community and First Nations organizations that advertise have also been impacted by funding cuts, so they can't afford to advertise in community media as much as they used to. Canadians rely more and more on community media for delivering local information, but there is less support for it at all levels. Coupled with CBC cuts, the information and communications needs of Canadians are in deep trouble.”

Consistent with an awareness that community media are not restricted to traditional licenced platforms, seventy-seven (77%) of respondents agreed that the amount of resources currently administered by BDUs for community TV raises the question whether funding for community media could be approached more holistically, reflecting trends in digital convergence. The need for a more holistic approach was reflected also in comments that revealed perceptions of rivalry among community media about the resources available:

“Support of community television has a danger of and should not at any point impact negatively the resources being dedicated to community radio from the commercial sector.”

When asked what other issues affecting community media in Canada should be taken into consideration when updating Canada's community media policies, respondents offered wide-ranging suggestions, some elaborating on the issues they had been asked to rank, as well as additional issues. The suggestions can be organized into two categories, perennial issues affecting community media effectiveness, and new issues that have arisen in the digital environment.

Perennial issues affecting community media included:

■ **a stronger focus on local journalism**

“A stronger focus on local journalism, to offset the cutbacks to local news in CBC and commercial broadcasting, while giving voice to alternative views and sections of the community not of interest to commercial media; and investing in investigative/ accountability journalism.”

■ **improved standards and better training for community media staff**

“The problem of community media groups becoming fiefdoms for a few and their lack of democratic operation is an important issue.”

Most community media are very poorly managed. They over-rely on the dedication of volunteers to the point of exhaustion. Manager training that includes volunteers in team or station building would go a long way to alleviating so much of the pressures faced by most.

■ **diversity in programming and staffing**

“Ensure that show hosts and journalists are diverse in gender, sexuality, race, etc and take an anti racist approach”

La programmation et une politique d'accès aux micros devrait avoir pour priorité un accès égal aux femmes et aux hommes dans les choix effectués et le financement des projets.”

■ **greater independence of community media from corporate media**

“The influence of commercial media on community media in order that community may access available funding, content production and distribution.”

■ **wider and more equitable distribution of community media**

“Spectrum scarcity on the fm dial for community radio”

“Community radio seems to suffer from lower power than commercial stations.”

It would help if the large companies - Bell, Rogers et al, were obliged to make space in their systems for local television to be distributed and promoted. Currently, Rogers does not include CHCO TV in its system in New Brunswick. Bell does, but was a coincidence due to Fibre Op installation in the Saint Andrews. None of them promote CHCO in their system. In addition, no print media (TV Listings) include CHCO in their weekly guide. Why?

“When a large org takes over a broadcasting area, it shouldn't be shutting down smaller local media because it's only required to have one community outlet within a certain range. One size does not fit all, and the city life discussed on one main outlet may mean nothing to the rural community it now serves.”

Need to look at the regions funding goes to and ensure all communities have access. Having one City Council meeting a week televised by Shaw doesn't cut it.

Regional support for community media initiatives would be really important, given that the conglomeration of media had made it increasingly difficult for smaller initiatives to access funding/the market.

In rural and remote areas, it seems more difficult to sustain community media.

■ greater respect for community media

“Independent media and community media need to be recognised as legitimate media and allowed same access on the ground as main stream media to events and by security officials who tend to usually disregard them”

New Issues in the Digital Environment

■ transition to digital

“Eventually all media will be digitalized, let's help the transition in a most democratically agreed way. The current funds will have to be transferred over as well, or we'll end up only with commercially biased information! - No more cuts for a service that provides transferable values throughout society, overall!”

“L'avangardisme au sujet de la numérisation des radios. Beaucoup de radio communautaire n'auront pas les moyens de faire le transfert.”

■ digital skills and new media training

“Community space for the production of video game content would be very helpful.”

■ archiving for community media

“Financial assistance for transition to digital, and for archiving”

“Community television is often the first platform that issues, persons and visuals of importance to the community emerge and are documented. It can be a months or 20-30 years later that this material

becomes critical to understanding and reflecting on how community, ideas and people have changed. This documentation should be made available in a central archive (server) for all to access.”

■ **more opportunities to share content nationally**

“There needs to be a renewed commitment to establishing and supporting Indigenous radio across the Yukon, Northwest Territories but especially Nunavut where there no territory-wide community radio system. In effect, other than CBC Radio and Northern Service TV, there is no means for Inuk in one community to speak to or listen to another Inuk in another community about what THEY feel important and vital to their changing societies and lives.”

“For community radio, local spoken word content requirements are stifling the kinds of innovative and necessary national cross-collaborations made increasingly possible by advances in digital technology. If the goal is to establish a strong third pillar of national broadcasting that supports healthy communities, content requirements should be national (rather than a local silo that creates a fishbowl effect in terms of dialogue on significant issues) across the board: local requirements could be placed in terms of ownership and operation instead.”

■ **emergency broadcasting**

“More effective community media would provide an outlet to broadcast emergency situations in a timely fashion” ...

Some of these issues are interrelated. For example, the issue of diversity in staffing and programming might conceivably be addressed via better programming and hiring standards, and more access to professional development and networking opportunities

Additional funding might enable more networking and professional support, equipment upgrades to digital, comprehensive archiving, and integration into the emergency broadcasting system. The development of effective archiving could in turn facilitate the sharing of content nationally, and among isolated populations with common interests (such as in the north).

Focus Groups

Focus groups were held in Montreal, Calgary, Vancouver, and Victoria to bring interested Canadians to together to discuss the same issues covered in the survey. The goal of the focus groups was to elicit more detailed and qualitative responses to questions about the policy priorities for community media, and to enable practitioners from different community media to pool their ideas.

Demographics

Focus group participant demographics were similar to the wider survey results **in terms of age, education, and income.**

Reinforcing Survey Results

Because the focus groups were facilitated by different moderators, methods of both eliciting and recording information varied: quantitative tallying was inconsistently applied, and discussion notes were not always arranged in the order that questions were asked.

Responses to questions about the use of community media, awareness of community media, frequency of access, and volunteer involvement were reflective of survey results; no significant anomalies emerged. For example, in every focus group, participants accessed community media on a variety of platforms including online, television, radio and print; community media usually ranked first or second for participants as sources of local information, ahead of commercial media. In every group, participants were aware of community media organizations and could identify them by name; and all participants accessed community media content on a regular basis. Also like the survey results, a high proportion of participants had experience as volunteers in the sector¹⁴.

An important finding that echoed the survey was that in all but one location (Calgary), participants identified community media organizations that had closed.

The most interesting discussions to emerge from the focus groups concerned the value of community media, its relevance in a digital age, and policy priorities for the future. These discussions both reinforced the findings of the survey as well as introduced new ideas.

Reinforcement of the Survey

Reinforcement of the survey results occurred in all categories: the value of community media, the continued relevance of community media, and policy priorities going forward. For examples:

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Solicitations for focus group participants were circulated through the same community and alternative media networks as the invitation to take the survey, so this is not surprising.

- Community media was valued for its ability to cover local events, culture and organizations; engage the community and build social networks; media training; alternative points of view; weather and emergency information.
- The continuing relevance of formal policies and funding for community media in a digital age was defended in terms of community media's vulnerability in an unregulated market, and unique abilities to provide media literacy training, social opportunities, community building, and a platform for marginalized points of view. Formal policies and funding were also viewed as necessary to support the production of quality content, and for providing programming for people without access to the Internet.
- Community media policy priorities moving forward identified by participants included adequate funding, transitioning to digital, and policy standardization. Community TV policy priorities identified included independent administration of community channel spending and transparency and accountability in the sector. In Victoria, emphasis was placed on finding ways for community media organizations to share technology, knowledge and skills.

Unique Outcomes

In addition, issues were identified that were unique to certain regions and several new ideas emerged.

The focus group in Montreal, in particular, presented two proposals relevant to community TV that did not emerge from the survey:

- to allow government advertising on community channels
- a caution against putting all emphasis on the transition to digital: "In Quebec," one participant said, "the MCCQ finances TVCs based on their programming on TV. Not for those on the Internet."

In Calgary, emphasis was placed on ensuring creative control over content and that volunteers should be compensated for productions and 'not exploited'. It was not clear from the focus group notes whether a concern regarding exploitation of volunteers arose because of the unequal access to resources between the cable community channel and the campus TV channel. A confusion has arisen in more than one place in Canada in recent years regarding what constitutes 'community channel programming' in an environment where cable staff produce much of the community channel content despite clearly worded CRTC policies to encourage access by average citizens.

In addition, there were a number of interesting and original suggestions that emerged from focus group discussions:

- Allowing government advertising on community channels

- A suggestion for a “community media Netflix” where all community programming could be accessed via one platform
- Community media standards organization (self-organized by the community media sector)
- Safer space initiatives targeting the community media sector
- Building relationships between media professionals and community media sector

DETAILED RESULTS

(“-“ reflects survey findings, “■“ indicates new finding)

Montreal (10 participants)

A unique language situation

In Montreal, there are two language communities each with different local mediascapes. Participants in francophone Montreal (Ville-Marie, South Shore, North Shore) source local information mostly from community TV (Television communautaire Frontenac, MATV, CSUR LaTélé, COGECO), and some radio (Radio Centre Ville, CIBL). Local weekly papers used to be more prominent sources of local information, but participants indicated that there had been recent shifts to more regional rather than local coverage (New Eastern).

Anglophone participants source local information mostly from community radio (CKUT, Radio Centre-Ville)

Community Media / TV policy priorities

- Allowing government advertising on community channels
- Overcoming public/government perceptions of community media as having insignificant reach. The example given was a partnership between TCF and an arts group, who in their report to the Canada Council for the Arts indicated that community TV was “null and void” as a method of dissemination.
- Digital platforms should NOT replace conventional distribution for community TV ... they will continue to exist alongside, and “In Quebec, the MCCQ finance TVs based on their programming on TV. Not for those on the Internet.”
- A suggestion for a “community media Netflix” where all community programming could be accessed via one platform
 - adequate funding
 - assistance with transition to digital: digital knowledge & skills
 - administration of community TV resources emanating from Broadcasting Distribution Undertakings by an independent agency

Toronto (6 participants)

Value of community media

- For video gaming in particular:
 - access to physical spaces for collaborative work
 - access to diverse knowledge and viewpoints.

More generally:

- media spaces to experiment
- collectives (less hierarchical)

- absence of commercial / professional pressures
- education and media skills learning
- opportunity for marginalized voices to access media
- access to skills and equipment for young people
- multi-lingual programming
- promoting social inclusion
- promoting local events
- increasing civic engagement
- cultural expression
- community strengthening

How could community media improve

- more easily accessible (i.e. community tv only available through cable subscription, via mobile platforms)
- more widely promoted
- more inclusive production spaces
- more community outreach (i.e. working with schools)
- more creative production
- higher production values

Relevance of formal policy and funding for community media in a digital age

- longevity of community media organizations
- paying core staff
- record keeping and archiving
- long term planning
- need for physical space (for production, for learning production skills ... emphasis on skills training for marginalized populations in a city with a screen-based production economy exceeding \$1 billion)

Policy priorities for community media

- community media standards organization (self-organized by the community media sector)
- safer space initiatives
- building relationships between media professionals and community media

sector

- redistributing revenue from commercial media to community media
- increased transparency for community media monies
- ensuring platforms for diverse points of view
- ensuring training for non-professionals

Policy priorities for community TV

- independent management of community channel resources
- more accountability for community channel spending
- digital convergence
- community channel ombudsperson

Calgary (5 participants)

Value of community media

■ creative control over content

- opportunities
- showcase local talent
- coverage of local events
- media training
- alternative points of view
- visibility to community organizations
- expression

How could community media improve

- more public awareness
- expand operations (subject to funding)
- better technology
- participate in more community events
- more budget for staff
- better management

Relevance of formal policy and funding for community media in a digital age

- media literacy
- spreading stories
- makes community feel important
- unrealistic to think that it could exist without funding
- to continue making quality content
- media training
- not everyone wants Internet and social media

Policy priorities for community media

- Internet distribution
- more funding

Policy priorities for community TV

- wages for content producers / no exploitation of volunteers
- support for hyperlocal content
- ensure high production values
- transfer to internet distribution because that's the future for TV

Vancouver (4 participants)

Value of community media

- engage community
- building local social networks
- political resistance / dissent
- alternative to dominant media
- weather / emergency information

"To engage community -- one of the top issues right now is to engage the community. I think engaging the community is a big way to gauge public sentiments."

How could community media improve?

- funding
- transition to digital / multiplatform

"Fund it! Do what the law says. Do what the rules say, how about that. That would mean funding, less censorship, more training like you're supposed to."

Relevance of formal policy and funding for community media in a digital age

- training
- social aspects
- community building
- include marginalized points of view

"Yes -- for the training, for the social aspects of it, and for the community building."

Policy priorities for community media

- community control (of community TV resources)
- multiplatform
- policy standardization

“I think a policy platform is standardization across Canada. Why is it that Quebec has policies where Cable Companies fund shows but we don't?”¹⁵”

Policy priorities for community TV

- transparency of cable community TV operations and spending
- the establishment of an independent agency to administer community TV resources

Victoria (9 participants)

Value of community media

- true reflection of local situation
- strengthen community
- inform the community

How to improve community media

- share talents, assets, collaboration, opportunities for professional networking
- community control over community TV resources

Relevance of formal policy and funding for community media in a digital age

- mostly yes – depends on the policy

Policy priorities for community media

- community management of community TV resources (i.e. independent from cable co's)
- more relevant programming from cable community channel
- Telus system in Victoria should be required to give money to community production groups since they do not provide community channel themselves

15 Note: Cable companies do not have a policy of funding programs by volunteers, but rather of funding not-for-profit community TV corporations to carry out training and and facilitate production. The community producers of the shows are not compensated. A recent finding of non-compliance by the CRTC against Videotron maintained this principle (that the production facilities of TVCs may be funded, but not the community-based producers themselves.)

Summary and Conclusion

While it is difficult to apply results from a non-probability sample to wider populations, there are nonetheless valuable insights to be gained from the preceding data

Among those who use community media (everyone who answered the survey either had in the past or does currently access community programming), **there is a high level of support and appreciation** for the content, especially for local information and local coverage. **Community media ranked above commercial television as a source for local information in all three categories of electronic media: Internet, radio and television**¹⁶. The age groups of survey respondents were slightly younger overall than the broader Canadian population, indicating that community media remain relevant (and perhaps more relevant) to younger populations than commercial media moving forward.

There **was also a strong belief in the continuing relevance of community media** in the digital age for its role in bringing people together, in providing services to non-digital demographics (due to financial, geographical, skills and knowledge-based barriers), for community / local coverage and for media training in the digital environment. For respondents of this survey, community media continues to serve a vital role, if not more—in the digital environment. Many respondents pointed to the increased need for alternative voices in an environment of media ownership concentration, and to the increase need for hyperlocal voices in a global economy. They were articulate about the need for co-ordinated and trained local staff, familiar with local issues, to offer the networking and production leadership to create viable sources of local reflection on both traditional and digital platforms.

While the primary purpose of the survey was to source policy proposals to strengthen community media in the digital environment, anecdotal evidence for the impact of community media included local reflection and the reinforcement of cultural identities, skills training, political engagement and support for local economies. The anecdotal evidence points to **a need for more comprehensive and detailed research** on the effects of community media in the communities they serve.

Respondents' suggestions for making community media more effective included:

- more funding, and more stable funding
- more effective administration and management of volunteers
- higher quality and more diverse programming, including more fact-based content
- higher local profile for community media, including more promotion for programs and distribution on more platforms

Respondents' observations with regard to areas in which community media could improve are consistent with their policy proposals for community media.

When asked about the continued relevance of community media in a time when most Canadians have access to the Internet and social media as platforms for personal self-

¹⁶ The survey did not ask for a similar breakdown between community and non-community sources of local information in print media.

expression, 96% of respondents said that formal policies and funding are still necessary to support community media organizations.

Clear and specific policy priorities were identified by substantial majorities of survey respondents and focus group participants:

- **Community media need to be adequately funded.**
- **Community media should provide a platform for a diversity of voices.**
- **Community media should be available on all platforms**, and policies to support them should be more holistic, reflective of digital convergence
- **Community media should offer digital media skills training.**
- Community media practitioners should have opportunities for professional development , including support, networking, and specialized training.
- **Community media should offer hyperlocal information.**
- **Community media should be available across Canada.**

Significantly, the highlighted priorities are part of existing community media policy in some form. This suggests that outcomes may be falling short of policy objectives, and/or that policy objectives may not be consistent among community media. The challenge for the sector and for agencies whose policies impact community media is therefore not only to update policy goals in the digital environment, but to review the methods for achieving existing goals.

Funding shortfalls were of concern in all community media sectors. The majority of respondents were concerned about the lack of transparency regarding the control of community TV budgets in particular, and the dependency of community media funding and distribution on the private sector in general. More than three quarters of respondents support developing a more holistic approach to community media policy. Numerous individual respondents pointed to inequities in current funding approaches by region (urban versus rural), by province, by medium, and by BDU licencing areas.

Additional issues that some survey respondents and focus group participants indicated they want addressed in future community media policy include:

- transition to digital standards of production and distribution, including emergency broadcasting
- archiving for community programming
- better standards for governance and administration, programming balance and diversity
- the sharing of content across platforms digitally and nationally
- a stronger focus on local journalism
- making up funding shortfalls through relaxation of rules restricting advertising, and access to government advertising revenues

- addressing the fact that funding in Quebec is tied to traditional distribution models
- creative control over content
- exploitation of volunteers

Community media closures emerged as widespread across Canada (with the exception of gaming and online media, which are new). Community media closures were referenced in nearly every region, underscoring the need for more research in the sector. How many community media organizations are there in Canada? How many were there 10 years ago? 20 years ago? How well do we understand the origins of community media groups, succession patterns and why they disappear? What role do online platforms and nascent gaming organizations with a local / social orientation play in community media ecologies? **None of these questions has been studied in a Canadian context.**

The extent of the closures underscore the need for updated policies to support community media in the digital environment, and reinforce the sector's call for adequate funding.

The current policy approach by the CRTC to community media is a legacy of analogue, mass media broadcasting technologies and practices that isolated community media according to their platform of distribution; for example television (rather than video, however distributed), radio (rather than audio, however distributed), satellite, cable, VOD, and so on.

There is a lack of policy leadership and funding support for new community media genres including online community media and socially oriented and locally reflective gaming, including media literacy training around gaming. A more integrated policy approach is already being applied to commercial and public-sector media; for example via mechanisms such as the Experimental Stream in the Canada Media Fund. No such provision has yet been applied to new media created by community-based organizations. While respondents were clear that an unregulated Internet alone does not replace the need for community media, individual comments showed a high awareness of the need for established community media organizations to leverage the Internet as an auxiliary platform for distribution. A more comprehensive inquiry into digital technologies and the community media sector that takes into account technological convergence is indicated.

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