Let’s #TalkTV, Eh! A Flash Conference Report from
The Communications Policy Working Group
Conference Report 01/2014
January 9, 2014

Prepared by the York-Ryerson Communications Policy Working Group (CPWG):

Maggie Reid, PhD Candidate
Joseph F. Turcotte, PhD Candidate & SSHRC Doctoral Fellow
Emilia Zboralska, PhD Candidate

Contact Information:
Email - thecpwg@gmail.com
Twitter - @theCPWG

About Us:
The Communications Policy Working Group (CPWG) is a non-partisan, student-run initiative of the York & Ryerson Joint Graduate Program in Communication & Culture (Politics & Policy stream). Our goal is to put theory into practice and contribute to policy debates surrounding the communication and culture industries.
## Contents

CONTENTS ........................................................................................................................................ p.2

1. INTRODUCTION ........................................................................................................................ p.3

2. THE DISCUSSION ......................................................................................................................... p.4
   2.1 Programming ........................................................................................................................... p.4
   2.2 Technology ............................................................................................................................. p.7
   2.3 Viewer’s Toolkit ...................................................................................................................... p.9
   2.4 Special discussion – CBC TV ................................................................................................ p.11

3. BRIEF CONCLUSION .................................................................................................................. p.13

4. MODERATOR BIOGRAPHIES ................................................................................................... p.15

Appendix A: QUESTIONS POSED ................................................................................................. p. 16

Appendix B: LIST OF PARTICIPANTS ............................................................................................. p. 18
1. Introduction

The Communications Policy Working Group (CPWG) held a Flash! Conference on December 4th, 2013 at the Rogers Communications Centre in Toronto, Ontario.

The event was co-sponsored by the Ryerson-York Communication and Culture Program and the Edward S. Rogers Sr. Research Chair in Media Management and Entrepreneurship.

The Flash! Conference was moderated by CPWG members Maggie Reid, Joseph Turcotte and Emilia Zboralska, doctoral students in the Communication and Culture Program.

The conference was attended by high-ranking Ryerson and York faculty with specialties and interests in the creative industries, broadcasting, telecommunications, media policy, and technology and innovation management. Ryerson graduate and undergraduate students were also in attendance.

Joseph Turcotte opened the event with a summary of the CRTC’s Talk TV initiative, highlighting the recent changes that have lead up to the current state of affairs. The evening was organized around four principal themes: 1. Programming; 2. Technology; 3. The viewer’s toolkit; and 4. The future of CBC Television. The moderators presented a brief on each of the themes, prior to opening the floor to discussion around several pre-prepared central questions. This report provides a summary of the discussion and offers suggestions on the key issues. The Flash! Conference was conducted using Chatham House rules and quotes or remarks from individual participants will not be attributed.

During the preparations for the Flash! Conference, The CPWG decided that changing technological and social circumstances are a primary driver of the questions raised by the CRTC’s ‘Conversation with Canadians’. For this reason, the CPWG decided to begin the Flash! conference with this topic. For the sake of consistency with Broadcasting Notification CRTC 2013-563, the CPWG has structured this Conference Report according to the order presented by the CRTC. However, the CPWG’s discussion stressed that technological changes and their impacts on the television industry cannot be considered in isolation. Regulatory reforms must take broader social, cultural, economic, and political changes into account. New technological formats will become viable only if they have regulatory, economic, and public support.
2. The Discussion

2.1 Programming

Emilia Zboralska introduced the topic of programming. She brought up the previous week’s top programs in Canada, according to BBM, and pointed out that not a single Canadian scripted series made into the top 30 most watched programs. She indicated that this was “not a glitch in the matrix”, but rather, that it was representative of a long-standing trend in the English-language Canadian television market. She noted that, “During primetime hours, and now anytime and on virtually any platform, Canadian eyeballs are glued to professionally produced content that is not Canadian in origin”.

She discussed the historical barriers to the success of Canadian content including Canada's proximity to the United States, the small population of Canada and the resulting economies of scale. She discussed the way the Canadian broadcasting system relies primarily on American content for its revenue, and how this has lead to a situation where Canadian programs often “receive second tier treatment”, and are arranged like “jenga pieces around American juggernauts like Big Bang, whether it is the best place for them or not”.

She also provided a brief summary of some of the regulatory efforts aimed at overcoming these difficulties including foreign ownership restrictions, Cancon quotas, subsidies, and the requirement for Canadian distributors to contribute to the system by devoting a portion of their revenue to the Canada Media Fund.

She then shifted to ways in which she believes the Canadian industry could be improved. She discussed the way that women and ethnic and racial minorities are underrepresented both on and behind the Canadian screen. She also touched on the effects of increased horizontal and vertical integration in the media system. She suggested that the increase in consolidation has lead to “a situation where…only the bottom line counts for Canadian broadcasters” which has had an impact on the quality of local news. She remarked that Canadian broadcasters still invest little into the promotion of Canadian content, even though promotion has been recognized as an important factor in the success of original content. She suggested that broadcasters need to take better advantage of the increasingly globalized marketplace, which gives them access to more potential partners and wider audiences. She cautioned however, that often times, a lot of Canadian creative control is sacrificed in American-Canadian co-ventures and that a balance must be struck in this regard. She also insisted that innovation in programming is more important now than ever before, as traditional business models are increasingly threatened by over-the-top options. She said broadcasters must be ready to adapt
to the new trends in viewing, and find ways to monetize them. She then encouraged participants to contribute their views on several key questions.

The first question asked participants to rate the health of the Canadian television system, and its long-term prognosis if nothing is changed.

The group decided that there is no ‘one-size-fits-all’ answer to this question. One participant pointed out that the health of Canadian television varies depending on whether you are examining French-Canadian programming, or English-Canadian programming. The participant noted that French-Canadian programming is highly successful, and that it is likely the cultural and linguistic cohesion among French-Canadians that makes the Francophone programming so strong.

The group was also in agreement that Canadian children and youth programming is ‘healthy’ and is successful both within Canada and internationally.

Most agreed that Canadian dramatic programming is the ‘unhealthiest’ with respect to domestic viewership, critical acclaim and international success. One participant pointed out that American programming is one-tenth the price of Canadian original programming and that Canadian broadcasters simply look at the economics. He noted, “if you are in this to make money, there is only one thing to do” and insisted that broadcasters should see the merits of original Canadian production outside of solely financial concerns. Another participant shared this view when he asked Canadian screenwriters to name their favorite television shows in one of his research programs, they overwhelming pointed to American content. The group then briefly discussed the problem of ‘brain drain’ and how many successful Canadian creators aspire to create Canadian content that is good enough to get noticed and offered opportunities in the United States. The group generally agreed that there need to be incentives for top Canadian creators to stay and continue producing high-quality programming in Canada. One participant suggested that the CRTC should consider policies that incentivize the creation of Hollywood-Canadian linkages with respect to the development phase of the value chain.

There was also discussion about how the regulatory system and certain policies have contributed to an attitude of complacency amongst Canadian English-language broadcasters. Said one participant about the general health of Canadian English-language television: “It’s the patient that’s been smoking and drinking and is 95 years old, and is healthy as can be.” Another participant remarked that the Canadian system is in a perpetual “state of remission” due to the policy framework that has been built around it.

The group was generally in agreement that over-the-top video presents a legitimate threat to the Canadian system, and that if American content creators see the opportunity and the business case to cut out Canadian broadcasters, they
may indeed decide to pursue that route. One participant noted that although over-the-top is challenging television business models globally, Canadian broadcasters are in an even more precarious position than American broadcasters, since they have no native rights to the content that generates them the most revenue (American content).

Another participant suggested that the size of the Canadian English-language market is too small to be able to properly fund hit programming and that Canadian content creators need to look for partners and audiences outside of Canada. In response, another participant pointed out that Quebec has a very small market and that its programming has been highly successful. The group then discussed how ‘quality’ and ‘success’ should be defined in the Canadian context. There was some disagreement here amongst the group with some participants suggesting that success should be defined according to viewership and revenue, and others insisting that there are other ways to define it including critical acclaim.

The group then turned to the topic of simultaneous substitution where there was significant disagreement. One participant insisted that this policy has seen its “best before date” and although it intentions were to help build up the system, it encourages broadcasters to fill in prime scheduling slots with American shows in order to ensure that they run in cohesion with their American air times. The participant noted that this creates fewer opportunities for Canadian shows to find an audience.

Another participant argued that simultaneous substitution is the “financial underpinning of the Canadian system” and that without it, “the Canadian system is doomed”.

In response, another participant asked why we need Canadian broadcasters at all if all they are going to do is prioritize American programming. He noted, “We have to decide on whether the reason that we subsidize our media system is because we want to subsidize distribution, or because we want to subsidize content”. He remarked that simultaneous substitution allows us to subsidize Canadian production, while at the same time encouraging its second-rate status on the primetime schedule. He concluded: “As long as there’s simsub, there’s no real motivation to produce Canadian shows that have an audience.”

We then turned to broader questions about funding Canadian content. We discussed the way currently, subsidy for Canadian production is built around traditional distribution systems like cable and satellite. As subscriptions to these services decrease, the portion of the revenue that they devote to the CMF will also decrease. The group was in agreement that alternative funding models must be found. One participant summarized the group’s thoughts well: “We’re going to have to rewire this somehow and how we are going to do it, is really up in the
air—except that we know that in the long-term, the system we have now is not tenable.”

The group then discussed the important question of whether Canadian television is reflective of the diverse makeup of Canadian communities. One participant indicated that through his research he has discovered that women, and visible minorities are extremely underrepresented both on and behind the screen. He indicated that his research has found that white, middle aged males do best in the Canadian screen industry and that there are barriers to breaking into the business if you are outside of the elite networks that lead to the best jobs.

Another participant attempted to make a business case for making Canadian television more diverse behind the screen and suggested that letting in people that have traditionally been left out is key to developing new and innovative programming.

The group then shifted into a discussion about what it means for a program to be Canadian. Are Canadian themes important? Is displaying Canadian geography important? Most participants agreed that the nationality of the production and its contributors is the most important factor in determining whether a cultural product should be considered Canadian. Most also agreed that there should not be restrictions on the content of the production because this is akin to censorship.

2.2 Technology

Joseph Turcotte provided a brief introduction to the topic of technology. He noted that changes in technology and the way in which people access content is disrupting current business models and shifting revenue streams.

He suggested that the CRTC, along with industry and public stakeholders need to find ways to feed and develop the production of Canadian content regardless of the screen they are created for. He noted that the CRTC will need to think about what the mandate of particular creators and distributors are and to ensure that a diversity of perspectives (corporate/industry, community, amateur, etc) exists. He also insisted that the CRTC can no longer wait to decide whether over-the-top services and other online distributors must play by the same rules (and funding contributions) as other conventional players.

He then turned to participants for input on several key issues. The discussion about technology began by focusing on how to define ‘television’ amidst changing circumstances and delivery models. Participants noted that television must be defined with complexity and taking into account industry, regulatory, social, and cultural norms and practices. The group recognized that the definition of television has already morphed and that this has been acknowledged by ratings agencies,
which have incorporated new models into their calculations. The group agreed that television cannot be defined by the screen that content is viewed on or how this content is developed; instead, the definition of television should focus on the content that is being watched. For the purposes of the conversation, \textit{television was defined as professionally produced programming, however, most participants agreed that there needs to be definitional and regulatory space to account for community and/or amateur-based or created content as to not alienate regions, languages, demographic groups.}

A number of participants argued that there is clear evidence that watching television (under this new definition) is rising. There was agreement that the CRTC should work to ensure that professionally produced as well as community and amateur productions are viable and accessible. However, the regulator will need to address these different interest groups separately.

The group decided that it will be \textbf{important for the CRTC to think about content rather than technological formats or a specific medium.} As one participant put it, “for users, television is increasingly becoming ‘any thing on any device at any time’”. Another participant commented that, regarding shifting and creating cross-platform content, we must remember that this is not entirely new: radio and television content have overlapped throughout history. The group acknowledged that for the CRTC, it will be important to distinguish between amateur (‘YouTube’) and professionally produced pieces of media. The group also agreed that there are regulatory reasons to draw such a distinction: \textbf{the CRTC should not become involved in regulating the online activities of individual users, which would risk creating a ‘chilling effect’ on cultural creativity and innovation.} Instead, \textbf{the CRTC should focus on regulating the activities of professional industry-based actors to ensure that these parties contribute to the overall health of the Canadian television industry.} Many participants argued that the CRTC should ensure that citizens and consumers are able to access the content that they seek regardless of who their service providers are.

The conversation also addressed the new opportunities emanating from changing technological circumstances. One of the participants pointed out that one of the problems for amateur or community based content has been a lack of funding mechanisms or the ability to produce community and non-professional television. This means that potential markets have been underserved. The group acknowledged that digital technologies open avenues for creating and distributing this amateur-based television content. As one participant noted, there are now more opportunities to facilitate these avenues than ever before (even more than with similar pushes in the 1970s with the advent of cable television). \textbf{Over-the-air digital television technologies (eg. Those occurring in Leamington, ON) can be used to do this if it is given a regulatory environment within which it can flourish.}
The group discussed whether regulatory support can use local and/or community news ‘stations’ as a testing ground for further innovations.

The discussion of technology also addressed the role of conventional broadcasters. Several participants pointed out that broadcasters and content distributors remain powerful and their influence is not over yet and likely won’t disappear for some time. The group also raised concerns that there might be a move towards shifting Canadian content to online platforms as a way to reduce the amount of CanCon that is or must be presented on conventional television. There was general agreement that the CRTC should ensure that content requirements are maintained or respected in conventional as well as emerging contexts.

The discussion then shifted to a conversation about the types of distribution services participants subscribe to and whether they intend on maintaining their subscriptions in the near future. In general, participants were satisfied with their ability to access content through different media. However, it was cautioned that if conventional sources for content become prohibitively expensive, this could impact or increase the likelihood of people moving to ‘grey markets’ and ‘pirating’ sources for content.

The group also discussed the way ongoing technological changes are altering industry business practices. The participants were asked whether they were concerned about targeted ads and/or content based on tracking of their viewing habits. In general, participants were open to these technological measures as a means of generating new revenue streams. As one participant noted, there is something to be said for targeting advertising and audience tracking in order to supplement traditional revenue models and to enable ones, however, this must be balanced with concerns over privacy.

2.3 The Viewer’s Toolkit

Maggie Reid introduced the theme of the ‘Viewer’s Toolkit’. She noted that this theme was really about consumer issues and consumer freedoms. She began her introduction to the topic by noting that there has been considerable debate about whether service providers should incorporate what has been referred to as ‘skinny basic cable’ or whether they should offer even more consumer freedom through ‘a la carte’ style packaging services. She remarked that in 2011, Rogers launched a trial run of the first ‘Digital Starter Pack’ in London, Ontario that would run until April of 2012. She noted that this package was meant to address the problem of inflexible packaging and lack of consumer choice by offering a low cost basic package to consumers which consisted of more of an ‘a la carte’ style for subsequent add-ons. She noted that the results of this trial showed that Canadians want more flexibility and choice and asked why did Rogers not institute this change more broadly.
She reiterated the response of Rogers’ Chief Marketing Officer who maintained that **there are structural barriers that were keeping the company from enacting real change.**

She suggested that some cable and satellite companies may choose to support the opportunity to provide more choice and control to consumers but the vertical integration that exists between broadcasters and broadcast distributors in Canada has the potential to undermine this type of competition. **She noted that because Rogers, Bell, Shaw and Videotron are distributors and broadcasters—there is economic incentive for these companies to prioritize their own content within the bundled packages in their distribution arms.**

She explained that due to the considerable discussions that have been occurring surrounding the problem of packaging services in the Canadian television market, the moderators for the discussion have chosen to focus on this as a point of departure for discussing consumer choice, the potential benefits and drawbacks of ‘unbundling’ cable packages, and what potential solutions might look like.

She then opened the discussion to the audience, and asked for input on several issues.

The discussion began with a question posed by the moderators regarding the costs and benefits of unbundling cable packages in Canada. **The biggest problem that arose through the discussions was the potential that many niche/specialty channels would disappear if cable were to become unbundled. Considering that the specialty channels are the primary buyers of Canadian lifestyle and reality series, the group agreed that a significant risk of job losses exists as a result of this unbundling.**

One of the participants suggested that unbundling of cable would not in fact save consumers a great deal of money, but instead that the price per channel would be raised and that this may lead to a migration of consumers to over-the-top services. Another participant argued that the value of every channel would not increase, but instead that the most popular channels would become prohibitively expensive, while the less popular channels would become essentially valueless. Either way, it was agreed in the general discussion that the cost would not change very much as the providers would be incentivized to push other services onto consumers to cover other costs. **That being said, if content becomes too expensive for users, this could lead to increased downloading and streaming of content from unauthorized websites.**

It was suggested that unbundling of cable packages may have some benefits, such as enabling a more efficient method of selling to advertisers. Rather than catering
advertisements to the hundreds of thousands of people who may choose a particular bundle, advertisements can be sold to people who chose a specific service. However, a participant raised the objection that the only way specialty channels survive is through bundling, and they are the major buyers of Canadian content as well as providers of roughly 60,000 Canadian jobs.

This point led to a discussion of Canadian content and how the unbundling of cable packages might impact this as well as the diversity of voices in Canadian television more broadly. If a great deal of Canadian content and jobs may be lost as a result of efforts to unbundle cable packages, it was argued that these channels must find new ways to monetize their content and make it available, whether it be through over-the-top services or websites. One participant argued that as monetization schemes adapt to online platforms, traditional television stations would not be necessary to deliver content and instead there could be online ‘channels’ to host particular programs.

2.4 Special discussion – CBC TV: What do you think the future of CBC Television should be?

This Flash! Conference took place shortly after Rogers Communications and the National Hockey League (NHL) announced an exclusive deal for the NHL hockey rights. With the CBC having lost NHL broadcast rights, the future viability of the CBC emerged as a topic during the conversation.

The moderators asked the group to comment on what the role of the CBC should be given Rogers’ acquisition of 12 years of NHL rights, and an upcoming review of the CBC by the Canadian Senate.

As one participant noted, the CBC (and CBC TV) receives less money per ‘subscriber’ than Netflix and other distributors and the CBC remains constrained by budgetary restraints. While the group acknowledged that the loss of NHL broadcast rights poses challenges to CBC TV, participant agreed that the CBC now has an opportunity to become a major player in the creation of other forms of original Canadian content and to continue to explore alternative, online distribution platforms.

As a number of participants noted, the CBC is focusing on becoming a content producer instead of being confined or restrained by adhering to a particular medium. Another participant asked: If the private broadcasters do not want to produce Canadian content, especially for prime-time, why not fund the CBC properly so that it can become a leader or all-Canadian content provider?

It was mentioned that growth or the logic of consolidation is the argument that is consistently made by the private broadcasters. If there is growth, there can be better
content production. It was argued that this same logic can be applied to the CBC. The more funding that they receive, the better and greater amount of content they produce. It was agreed that this raises the CBC’s chances of producing an exportable global hit.

It was noted that Canadian content is not what private broadcasters ‘do’, it is what they are obligated to do. A participant mentioned that Canadian content is like a tax on private broadcasters for being allowed to broadcast U.S. television. Another participant argued that this is a tax that they should pay and many others agreed. Several participants suggested that if private broadcasters are only producing Canadian content because of regulation, then they are not doing it effectively nor do they have incentive to produce quality Canadian content. As a participant mentioned, private broadcasters complain about Canadian content but only to a point because they are a gifted business via simultaneous substitution.

Another participant noted that if private broadcasters are not effectively producing quality content, then they should be out of the ‘business’ of producing Canadian content altogether while still being required to subsidize the content or alternatively, all of their protections should be removed.

The moderators then asked whether it was strange that the Talk TV conversation does not mention Canada’s public broadcaster. Our discussion noted the problems associated with including the future of CBC TV in the CRTC’s national conversation about television. For example, participants noted that it is hard to change the CBC’s rules after having just gone through a license renewal process and if the CBC had been a part of the ‘conversation’, it could begin to overshadow the other discussions as pro- and anti-CBC groups focus on this one area.

However, the group agreed that while it may be expedient to remove the CBC to do so, the CBC retains a privileged position in the Canadian television landscape and needs to be addressed in concert with the other issues relating to the future of television in Canada.
3. Brief Conclusion

The CPWG applauds the CRTC’s efforts to include Canadians in the discussion about the future of television in Canada. The CPWG notes that while this first phase of the CRTC’s investigation on the matter is worthwhile, it is perhaps even more important to step back and ask Canadians what kind of a system they would like to foster.

What does the ideal Canadian system look like? Before determining any policy directives, the CPWG believes it is important to determine which components are most important to Canadians, and what a ‘healthy’ Canadian system should look like.

The CPWG thanks all participants for their input and the CRTC for the opportunity to have a say in the future of television in Canada. The CPWG looks forward to future occasions to offer input into this ongoing conversation.

Moving forward, the CPWG and the participants at the Flash! Conference identified several key action items for the CRTC to address:

1. Programming
   a. The CRTC should re-evaluate existing policies like simultaneous substitution to determine whether they are beneficial or detrimental to the system in the contemporary context.
   b. To prevent ‘brain drain’, the CRTC should provide incentives for top Canadian creators to stay and continue working in Canada.
   c. The CRTC must do more to ensure that the broadcasting system is representative of Canada’s diverse makeup, both on and behind the screen.

2. Technology
   a. The CRTC will need to think about what the mandates of particular creators and distributors are and to ensure that a diversity of perspectives (corporate/industry, community, amateur, etc) exists.
   b. The CRTC can no longer wait to decide whether over-the-top services and other online distributors must play by the same rules (and funding contributions) as other conventional players.
   c. Participants noted that television must be defined with complexity and taking into account industry, regulatory, social, and cultural norms and practices.
3. Viewers’ Toolkit
   a. The CRTC needs to fully examine the implications of unbundling cable packages in Canada. They must first and foremost consider the vertical integration that exists in Canada and the incentive for privileging one’s own content when establishing packages. They must also consider consumer choice and expense as well as the potential loss of both Canadian content and jobs with particular attention to some of the niche and specialty channels that may be under threat.
   b. The CRTC must ensure that if cable packages become unbundled that channels do not become prohibitively expensive to the average user.
   c. The CRTC will need to evaluate the current role private broadcasters possess in producing Canadian content and seek solutions where there are clear shortcomings. Participants suggested restoring funding to the CBC for Canadian content production.

4. The Future of CBC TV
   a. While the group acknowledged that the loss of NHL broadcast rights poses challenges to CBC TV, participant agreed that the CBC now has an opportunity to become a major player in the creation of other forms of original Canadian content and to continue to explore alternative, online distribution platforms.
   b. While it may be expedient to remove the CBC to do so, the CBC retains a privileged position in the Canadian television landscape and needs to be addressed in concert with the other issues relating to the future of television in Canada.
4. Moderator Biographies

Maggie Reid is a second year PhD student, an Ontario Graduate Scholar and Edward S. Rogers Sr. Graduate Fellow. Her research interests deal with the political economy of communications in Canada with a particular focus on intellectual property and surveillance policies in digital contexts. She is a radio host and producer for a daily news show on CHRY 105.5FM. She can be reached at margaret.reid@ryerson.ca or on twitter: @maggiemreid

Joseph F. Turcotte is a PhD Candidate and SSHRC Doctoral Fellow in the Communication & Culture Program (Politics & Policy). He works on issues related to the human and economic development impacts of intellectual property law, digital media, access to knowledge (A2K), and the ‘digital divide’. Previously, he was a researcher at The Centre for International Governance Innovation in Waterloo, ON. He is also a Nathanson Graduate Fellow (2013-14) at the Jack & Mae Nathanson Centre on Transnational Human Rights, Crime and Security as well as a Contributing Editor for the IPilogue. He can be reached at jfturco@yorku.ca or on Twitter: @joefturcotte.

Emilia Zboralska is a PhD student and an Edward S. Rogers Sr. Graduate Fellow. Her research focuses on the political economy of communications in Canada, broadcasting and telecommunications policy, the creative economy, and creative labour. Prior to commencing her PhD, she worked in the Canadian television industry on productions for broadcasters such as CBC, Slice, W Network and HBO Canada. She is currently a Research Assistant on a SSHRC funded research project about diversity behind the Canadian screen, and an Associate Editor for the Public Policy and Governance Review. She can be reached at emilia.zboralska@ryerson.ca or on Twitter: @emiliazboralska
Appendix A. Questions Posed During the Flash Conference

**Topic 1 – Technology**

1. In light of changing technological circumstances, what does “television” mean to you? Is there a distinction between how you watch content in different circumstances and/or on different devices?
2. How do you prefer to watch television—on a traditional television set, online, on a smart phone, etc.? Why? How do you usually watch television programs—live, on-demand, recorded on a PVR, other? Why?
3. Do your viewing habits change depending on the device you’re using?
4. What type of television service do you subscribe to—cable TV, satellite TV, Internet Protocol TV (IPTV) or other? Do you intend to stay with your type of television subscription in the next few years or switch to something else? What would make you stay? What would make you switch? If you subscribe to cable TV or satellite TV, how satisfied are you with the way your channels are packaged?
5. If you use ‘over-the-top’ services, are you concerned that they are primarily American-based companies? Should such services be regulated and contribute to Canadian production funds? Are Canadian BDUs and industry players already falling behind with respect to these services?
6. Ongoing technological changes are altering industry business practices. Are you concerned about targeted ads and/or content based on tracking your viewing habits?
7. How do you think we will receive and watch television in Canada in the next 5 to 10 years? Why? Would you be satisfied with that situation? Why?

**Topic 2 – Programming**

1. If you were a doctor, how would you rate the health of Canadian television and the wider Canadian system? What is the long-term prognosis if nothing is changed?
2. What television programs are most important to you (children’s programming, comedy, documentaries, drama, feature films, news, sports, reality TV, variety, other)? Should certain types of programming be given priority?
3. Do you know which of the television programs you watch are Canadian? If so, how do you know? Is having access to Canadian programming important to you?
4. What programs do you consider to be local television programming—programs about your city, your province, other? How important is local news to you? Why? How important is community access programming and “community TV” to you? Why?
5. Do you think the programming on television is fully reflective of Canada’s cultural, ethnic, linguistic, geographic and demographic diversity? If not, what’s missing? How important is reflection to you? Why?
6. What do you think programming will look like in the next 5 to 10 years? Why? Would you be satisfied with that situation? Why?
7. What is Canada’s role in the cinematic universe?

**Topic 3 – Viewers’ Toolkit**
1. How satisfied are you that your television service provider supplies the information you need to understand your service options, including packaging and pricing?
2. If you have a service bundle, are you aware of the breakdown of how much you are paying for each service? Is that information easily accessible? Are you experiencing barriers that prevent you from changing your television packages or switching to another television distributor? If so, what are those barriers? (examples: contracts, services are bundled- would lose discount, etc.)
3. If cable becomes ‘unbundled’ and many niche/specialty channels disappear, are we likely to see Canadian job losses considering the specialty channels are the primary buyers of Canadian lifestyle and reality series? Is the potential loss of this type of content, or jobs an area of concern?
4. Do you know where you can voice your concerns over television content, your television services and bills? If yes, where would you do this? Does voicing these concerns ever amount to any substantial change that addresses your concerns?
5. Would you support a CRTC led or independent platform for assessing your television choices with respects to billing, packaging, and content from all possible service providers?
6. Does/do vertical integration/vertically integrated companies have a role to play in hindering the progress of more affordable and consumer driven services? Has the CRTC done enough to safeguard against vertically integrated companies privileging their own content through cable packages?
7. Is it problematic that Rogers has become such a huge facilitator of the ‘Talk TV’ discussions when these talks are meant to engage with consumers?

**Topic 4 – The Future of CBC Television**
1. In light of the recent announcements by Rogers and the NHL (re: the next 12 years of NHL rights) and the Canadian Senate (re: an upcoming review of the CBC), what should the role of CBC Television be in the current and future media landscape?
   Is it strange that the ‘Talk TV’ conversation does not mention Canada’s public broadcaster?
Appendix B. List of Participants

Moderators:
Maggie Reid, PhD Candidate, Ryerson University
Joseph F. Turcotte, PhD Candidate & SSHRC Doctoral Fellow, York University
Emilia Zboralska, PhD Candidate, Ryerson University

Participants:
Irene Berkowitz, PhD Candidate, Ryerson University
Charles H. Davis, Edward S. Rogers Sr. Research Chair in Media Management and Entrepreneurship, and Associate Dean, Scholarly Research and Creative Activities, Faculty of Communication & Design, Ryerson University
Paul Goodrick, MA Candidate, Ryerson University
Anne F. MacLennan, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, Graduate Program Director, Communication & Culture Program, York University
Paul S. Moore, Associate Professor of Sociology, Graduate Program Director, Communication & Culture Program, Ryerson University
Jeremy Shtern, Assistant Professor of Creative Industries, Ryerson University
David N. Skinner, Associate Professor of Communication Studies, York University
Gregory Taylor, Postdoctoral Fellow, Ted Rogers School of Management, Ryerson University
Miles Weafer, PhD Candidate, York University
Dorris (no last name provided), Undergraduate Student of Communication Studies, Ryerson University