

ACCESS TV, Vancouver Feedback

“Canadian Content in a Digital World” Consultation



“The proper governing unit in the 21st century...is going be the healthy community, that’s close enough to people, to their lives, adaptive enough, can help them with that life-long-learning – and allow more and more people to be...connected, protected and respected...that’s what the community can do at it’s best.”

Thomas Freidman

Date: November 24, 2016

Re: “Canadian Content in a Digital World” Consultation

Dear Mme. Joly and Staff,

Please accept these comments from **The Full Figure Media Society**, producers of the monthly, volunteer produced, community program, **ACCESS TV**, originating in Vancouver, British Columbia. In May 2011, **ACCESS TV** was re-built from Fearless TV; former neighbourhood television volunteers and joined by other local community media producers. This is our response to the questions and consultation paper posted as part of the “Canadian Content in a Digital World”.

First, let us show you a bit of what we produce. Here is a 5 minute video highlight of ACCESS TV:

<https://youtu.be/VEC8eUZ2M0I>

Each month, in the Shaw Studio, is the culmination of hours of collaborative work by these volunteers who distill and document their lives into an hour of storytelling. In so many ways, our efforts have brought about positive change. This diverse production team is inspiring and enabling each of us to navigate the digital landscape; to reach out to our neighbours; form new alliances while building stronger, connected communities. While we appreciate the use of the Shaw Cable studio facilities imagine what we could accomplish with consistent funding for content production and training? We acknowledge and appreciate each crewmember and guests for their contributions.

- 1) **Full Figure Media Society** provides continuous and consistent video training, support and local media access to underserved residents within Vancouver and area neighbourhoods. Our volunteer crew ranges from newly enrolled to those with close to 40 years of media experience spanning different countries, cultures and demographics. We average 30 to 35 active members.
- 2) We develop stories with diverse community members, groups and organizations, sometimes for years, before these issues are picked up by other media sources. Even in this urban landscape we are, often, the only media source regularly distributing points of view from marginalized groups.
- 3) We train members from organizations we work with on research techniques, preparing and telling their stories to media sources, funders and help them to recruit volunteers. We develop ongoing relationships with our neighbours by building supportive community networks. We are the hub for gathering and disseminating local information and stories on who are making a difference.
- 4) In the past four years, we have covered critical issues within our communities helping to bring

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personal struggles to the forefront such as: **Chinese Head Tax**. Since 1986, crew members have been documenting the campaign for Re-Dress; we have produced special first person reports on the effects of **rapid urban re-development and gentrification** in established neighbourhoods; brought the **alarming increase of homelessness** in Vancouver forward in 2011 with personal stories of those fighting for better conditions in Single Room Occupancy Hotels in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver and from the tent city in Openheimer Park.

These stories were early indicators that residents were facing a rapid increase in loss of affordable rental stock in Vancouver where over 50% of residents are renters. In 2016, this situation was officially acknowledged, by all levels of government, as a critical problem in this region.

5) We produce monthly reports with **local Indigenous producers** on Inherent Treaties, reconciliation, land rights, community health, cultural understanding and uphold stories of personal successes within their communities.

6) **We regularly welcome new crew** from all backgrounds, age groups and various skills providing them with ongoing training in production creation and management tasks. Some have gone on to pursue careers using their new skills.

7) Neighbourhood television offices began closing in the late 1990's, and community TV production staff lay-offs continue so we, at ACCESS TV, are an increasingly important meeting point for local, diverse stories. We have formed community partnerships with Co-Op Radio, CTR Radio, Red Jam Slam Society, The Disability Network Ismaili & African communities, etc... and have taken on the lion's share of technical and story production training for our crew with almost no funding.

8) 3 years ago, we realized that the community channel field production equipment was no longer being properly maintained, so we applied for grants to buy some of our own camera and editing gear. We were able, through a funding grant for The Carnegie Community Centre Project, to purchase a camera, laptop and a hard drive. Then Shaw changed their editing software from Final Cut Pro to Adobe Premiere so we submitted a request for a loan of a laptop with Final Cut Pro so our crew could continue to edit on the software that matched our 3 lead Editors personal computers. We had no funding to replace software or the expertise to train them in Adobe Premiere. Some crew did attend an Introduction to Adobe Workshop at Shaw but there was no hands-on training. Many volunteers do not have computers and found that they were not successful trying to use the software on their own when they booked time in the Shaw suites. It proved to be difficult to arrange further coaching when fewer cable staff are available to assist them so our ACCESS TV volunteer Editors stepped up to train new post-production crew on their own time & equipment.

9) Beginning in March of 2015, ACCESS TV supported and trained community members taking part in The Carnegie Community Centre Project. This yearlong grant was to record and archive stories of elders and seniors who regularly visited The Carnegie Community Centre. We produced and trained some of our most challenged neighbours and supported them in telling these stories. We also invited them to join ACCESS TV. Some are part of our regular crew staying on after this project wrapped in March of 2016. Applying for, and getting grants, is, at best, short term, time-consuming and inconsistent. Our goal is to have consistent, ongoing production funding so we can hire core staff to continue building on our strong foundation, produce and train more efficiently.

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10) The most critical shortage, in the current model of community television, is the day to day support of Community Producers from staff based in neighbourhood community offices (which could be in community centres or libraries and who offer 24/7 access to coaching, goal setting, maintain facilities, book out gear that support the creative, interactive networks within their communities. As an example, Rogers Vancouver Studio grew from about 30 volunteers in 1986 to over 200 volunteers producing 60 to 80 hours of original, local content each month by the year 2000 when Shaw and Rogers swapped assets.

11) Some ACCESS TV Producers have valuable community video archives from over 30 years of collecting stories in their communities. One example is the Chinese Head Tax. This footage is unique its in depth - a record of this ongoing campaign that is valued, historical stock footage.

12) Contrast this positive reflection of our community with cuts in other forms of local media. The Full Figure Society distributes ACCESS TV'S monthly content:

On the web: <http://www.accesstelevision.ca/>

On Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/ACCESSCOMMUNITYTV/>

We are expanding our views as we attract more crew (10-12 this month); build inclusiveness while lacking resources and CRTC attention; halt the regression in local, neighbourhood communications. Thank you to the Minister for initiating this consultation. She has our full support in seeking modernization of communications policies and making them more local, democratic and inclusive.

Our final comments are from Thomas Friedman, American author:

‘THANK YOU FOR BEING LATE. An Optimist’s Guide to Thriving in the Age of Accelerations’.

(These comments compiled and paraphrased from recent interviews with Charlie Rose on PBS.

*(Source: <https://charlierose.com/videos/29497>).

“...in a connected world, the dumbest thing you can do is disconnect...you have to learn how to leverage the large platforms (Google, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft & Apple)...the healthy community is the ‘eye of the hurricane’ that can build healthy stability within...it’s a dining room table that has no sides.’

Sincerely,

The Full Figure Society

Producers of ACCESS TV, Vancouver

‘Shamelessly promoting our friends and neighbours’

Community Television in Vancouver, BC with a focus on marginalized voices.

e-mail: info@accesstelevision.ca; website: <http://www.accesstelevision.ca/>; Facebook: ACCESS Community Television

Full Figure Board Members:

Sid Tan, Immediate Past Chair, Executive Producer

Mark Freeman, Chairman/Treasurer, Director/Editor

LJ Meijer, Member of the Board, Post-Production Supervisor

Wendy Havens, Member of the Board, Line Producer

Deborah Angrave, Member of the Board, Content Producer

Dave Howard, Treasurer, Producer/Editor/Advisor