

Event Date: Wednesday November 2, 2016 (Media Literacy Week)

Location: Regent Park Focus, 38 Regent Street, Toronto, ON M5A 3N7

Organizer: Canadian Association of Cable Television Users and Stations (CACTUS) & Regent Park Focus

Number of Participants: 11

Warm-up

(0 minutes - Insufficient Time to Conduct Consultation)

1) Focus on respecting citizen choice and supporting creators in making great, compelling content.

A cultural system that supports creators and respects citizen choice will:

- a) To make compelling community content and develop a cultural system that supports community-producers, development and investment into community media infrastructure, that operates within community neighbourhoods is necessary. Dedicated resources [funding, support, training, bricks and mortar spaces, channels for promotion] is essential. It was mentioned that “compelling content” does not always mean car chases and explosions. Compelling content, in the community media sense, is content that is timely and relevant to those who share a common, binding interest.
- b) The new online broadcasts, ones that can be viewed on a smartphone - the kind of productions that are happening more frequently; often the citizen groups are contributing content that they are contextualizing and framing to match the content/tone of BDU programming in order to make it fit the program, i.e. local newscasts that invite the viewer to submit cell phone video footage (vehicle accidents, traffic reports, weather).

The BDU takes “Canadian Content”, reframes it, and creates a news item around the submission, as if the citizen groups are contributing journalists to their newscasts. Citizen groups are not paid or acknowledged for their submissions.

- c) Development and support of community media networks to cross-promote content. The concept of an aggregate site, listing the various hyper-local media, under one banner would increase the visibility of the individual community media organizations was mentioned. Use of CBC’s national platform was also raised. Utilizing the resources of the publically-funded broadcaster to support community media, by either listing them on their webpage or treating them like a newswire service would be profitable and beneficial to both entities.

2) Reflect Canada's incredible diversity in the content that we produce and support the production of news information and local content that is credible and reliable.

How can we meet the challenge of promoting Canada's creativity in the digital world, and how can we use digital content to promote a strong democracy?

- a) Support a network of community media facilities to train resident producers to produce professional, peer-reviewed and reliable work.

The additional benefits of a community television facility include social cohesion and inclusiveness.

The question was posed to one of the younger members in the group who utilizes the production facilities at Regent Park Focus: "Why do community producers come here instead of staying home [and uploading videos]?" The response: "It's like an extended family. It's like being in the media field and growing and meeting new people. I've been here for a year and it's been great...I built up my interest [in creating media] in high school, in the creative arts. Participating in the production program has really helped me with my self confidence. I'm not afraid to say what's on my mind anymore. It's helped me come out of my shell."

As opposed to being at home uploading to You Tube:

"I would be missing out on the support of my community."

b) The model of community-based media centres is to train people to be cultural creators. They produce professional work and the Internet is insufficient to provide this training. Funding is the key to support a platform for democratic discussion. You Tube is an uncurated platform, with no filters or censorship. The values there are not "human values". For example, Regent Park Focus promotes "basic human values", and social justice to ensure there's no racism, homophobia, transphobia, misogyny, violence; inclusivity, no discrimination; free, but responsible [programming] and provides ethics guidelines. It brings people together and defines their community.

- c) It was posited that the financial resources are available to support community based media centres and these resources should be dedicated to support diversity and multilingual programming for non-partisan media; create platform where, e.g., Police Chief Saunders can address his constituents.

Media literacy helps teach people how to communicate in ways social media cannot. The resources are needed in order to effectively share ideals. Multilingualism also serves to strengthen democracy, especially in Toronto, one of the most diverse cities in the world, give people the opportunity to speak in their own language. Community media can assist in creating a strong democracy.

A platform like You Tube is like the "wild west" and you do whatever you want. You come into a community facility and you want people to feel free, but responsible. The correlation was drawn to the previous use of the words "Support" and "Respect". The conclusion drawn

that all the ingredients are available to produce professional, peer-reviewed and reliable work, the only thing missing is the will.

3) Drive social and economic innovation by forging strong links between creativity, economic growth, and social resilience.

How do we support Canada's creators and cultural entrepreneurs and help them reach beyond our borders?

- a. Provide support for young people, seniors and newcomers in the arts [most arts grants are for mid-to late-career artists, and school is expensive]. This will encourage development of new voices and new points of view that can benefit the larger society. Develop an organized system to advance tiered systems would ensure training is barrier-free and advance interconnectedness; strengthen industry in Canada so people don't go elsewhere for opportunities
- b. Make CanCon cool - Make Canadian producers feel that audiences want Canadian productions. It's part of the cultural system, as previously mentioned, and thus, should be a notion that becomes entrenched in promoting CanCon. Canada is a great country and we need to embrace that and realize that our producers and CanCons they are a reflection of that.
- c. Redistribution of funds from government funding agencies [regional, provincial and national] to further support education, distribution and promotion of CanCon. It was mentioned that a portion of revenue from for-profit, screen-based industries filming in Canada can be directed to community media and emerging artists.

Audience development is key to widening market opportunities. A large part of that formula is cultural diversity. Cultural programming strengthens community engagement - on the local and international level. CBC's comedy sitcom, 'Kim's Convince' is an example of a cultural integration vehicle, that can be profitable and a marketable reflection on the Canadian experience. The creators of the show are first-generation Korean whose immigrant parents ran a convince store in Regent Park. They drew upon their Korean, Canadian and neighbourhood culture to create programming that is uniquely Canadian and marketable due to its quality and fosters hyper-local engagement that radiates not only to the physical community but to the online community as well.

ADDITIONAL COMMENTS

Ensure transparency/accessible language to increase access and participation [essentially, level the playing field to democratize access]; More transparency, in regard to the questions, was noted. The reason; to increase access to participation in the consultation process. There was little confidence expressed in the CRTC's will to assess community action proposals, developing and maintaining community-centric media centres and to protect current community media versus protecting and furthering the interests of big business.

The issue of quality was also raised. Cell phone and/or low end consumer audio/video recorders produce a notably substandard quality compared to high-end broadcast quality equipment. This can lead to a distorting of message being crafted and delivered.

Particular note of the use of the words, "Respect" and "Support" was made. The fear is that these words have been watered down, due to their overuse in the mainstream. It was said that the words must be taken in their literal form in order to create a true cultural system, you have to do exactly what those words say. If you are really trying to build a cultural system, you have to *support* creators and *respect* them.