

# **EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING IN CANADA**

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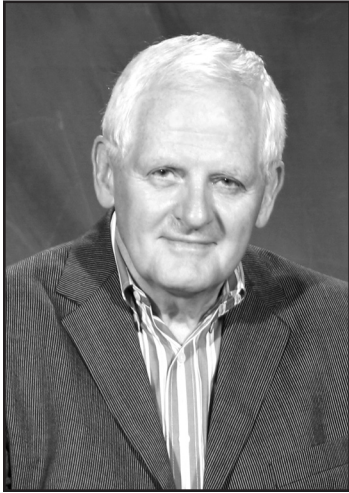
A Brief Overview by **Ron Keast Ph.D**



## **EDUCATIONAL BROADCASTING IN CANADA**

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## **About the Author**



Dr. Keast has over 40 years experience as a broadcaster and educator. Following some early experience at CKBB radio and CKVR-TV in Barrie, from 1957 to 1964 he worked as a producer/director at CHCH-TV in Hamilton. As well as a wide variety of entertainment, news and public affairs programs, he was responsible for the first university credit course offered via television in Canada, in co-operation with McMaster University. As Director of Audio-Visual Communications for McMaster University from 1964 to 1973, Dr. Keast established and managed one of the first successful closed-circuit television and audio visual operations in Canada. During this period he also produced, directed and sometimes acted as host for educational programs, usually in co-operation with McMaster University.

While working at CHCH-TV and McMaster, Dr. Keast earned his B.A., M.A., and then in 1974 his Ph.D. degree from McMaster. In 1973 he joined TVOntario, first as Director of Open Sector programming and then as General Manager of English-language programming. From 1980 to 1988 he was Chair of the School of Radio and Television Arts at Ryerson. From 1987 to 1994 he was President and CEO of Vision TV, responsible for establishing and launching this new national specialty television service in 1988, its operation and successful growth. In 1994 he became President and CEO of Learning and Skills Television of Alberta Limited (LTA), which became known as Access Media Group, and led the team that privatized ACCESS, developed and launched Canadian Learning Television and then two digital national channels, BookTelevision and Court TV Canada, as well as several learning businesses. Dr. Keast retired as President and CEO in August 2005, but remains on the LTA Board and acts as a consultant to the company.

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## **In the Beginning – Some National Issues**

Educational broadcasting in Canada developed at both the provincial and the federal levels, with ongoing tensions between the two jurisdictions. Education is the constitutional responsibility of the provinces, broadcasting of the federal government. Although experimental broadcasting by station XWA in Montreal began in 1919, radio broadcasting began officially in Canada in 1920. With the exceptions of radio station CKY, which was started by the Manitoba government in 1923 and CKUA, which was licensed to the University of Alberta's Department of Extension in 1927, as well as the stations owned by the CNR, radio stations in Canada were privately owned and relied on advertising revenue.

The first Royal Commission on Broadcasting, headed by Sir John Aird was appointed in 1928 and reported in 1929. It recommended that broadcasting be placed on a basis of public service and that the stations providing a service of this kind should be owned and operated by one national company, and it firmly established an important role for the provinces in public broadcasting. Provincial authorities were to have full control over the programs of the station or stations in their respective areas; a provincial radio broadcasting director was to be appointed for each province to have control of the programs broadcast by the station or stations in his province; the Board of the (national) company was to be composed of twelve members, three representing the Dominion and one for each of the provinces; and that pending the inauguration and completion of the proposed system, a provincial service should be provided through certain of the existing stations which should be continued in operation by the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Company.

The issue of jurisdiction developed during the 1930s and was referred to the Supreme Court of Canada by the Premier of Quebec. The Court found that the regulation of radio was within the jurisdiction of the Parliament of Canada. The decision was appealed to the judicial Committee of the Privy Council but, again, the decision was for federal jurisdiction.

When the future of Canadian broadcasting went before the Special Committee on Radio Broadcasting in 1932 the Canadian Radio League pressed for a system of public broadcasting. The Ontario Radio League, however, was one of the loudest voices in opposition to public broadcasting and in favor of a privately owned system. The Canadian Radio *Broadcasting Act* became law in May 1932 and established a national public system operated by the Canadian Radio Broadcasting Commission. A second *Broadcasting Act*, in 1936, replaced the CRBC with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC). Most of the stations on the CBC network were privately owned.

The CBC Board of Governors was chosen to give representation to the principal geographical divisions in Canada.

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The CBC began broadcasting formal educational radio programs in 1942, under the guidance of a national advisory council on school broadcasts. While education, in a general sense, was considered to be an important objective of all broadcasting in Canada, there was a distinction made between this and the more specific educational or schools programming produced by the CBC and, to a lesser extent, by some private broadcasters. Daily thirty-minute programs were designed to be listened to and used in the schools. All were produced in co-operation with educational authorities in the various provinces.

By the late 1940s and early 1950s television became a major issue in broadcasting. The Royal Commission on National Development in Arts, Letters and Science, the Massey Commission, was appointed in 1949. In its 1951 report it recommended a national public television broadcasting system, under the CBC, and it indicated two chief objectives for such a national system; national unity and education.

Television broadcasting began in Canada in September 1952, with CBC stations in Montreal and Toronto, followed quickly by privately owned and operated CBC affiliated stations in other parts of the country. At the request of the advisory council on school broadcasts, experimental educational television broadcasts began in 1954. Five provinces were involved with the CBC (Nova Scotia, Quebec, Ontario, Saskatchewan, and Alberta). These television broadcasts, as with the radio broadcasts before them, were designed to be used by students and teachers in the classroom. They were instructional “schools” or “formal” educational programs in the strictest sense, tied directly to provincial curricula. In order to satisfy their various responsibilities and jurisdictions, the provinces shared costs with the CBC and negotiated agreements.

As television broadcasting developed and expanded, educators, broadcasters, and a variety of social commentators, in Canada and internationally, saw an almost unlimited potential for television to bring education into the home. By 1960 formal university courses, began to appear on Canadian television, initially offered via CBLT in Toronto (French) and CHCH in Hamilton (Biology). Also, during the early 1960s closed circuit television began to be used to connect origination studios to classrooms and laboratories within university campuses. A new university college in Toronto was designed and built exclusively for closed circuit television teaching. Some local commercial television stations, in association with their local universities, produced and broadcast a wide variety of “informal” educational programs. A good example was the co-operation between CHCH-TV and McMaster University in Hamilton. During the 1960s and early 1970s weekly “adult education” programs aimed at the general public were broadcast. Medical education programs were produced and broadcast in association with McMaster’s new medical school, including a live and interactive professional development program following the late news on Sunday evenings targeting general practitioners, called appropriately *For Physicians*. This program attracted a substantial general audience hoping to glean some inside medical information, as a prepared documentary on a specific medical issue was followed by physicians telephoning in to talk with the subject specialist in the studio.

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During the early to mid 1960s, as well as general interest “informal” educational programming such as the popular *Nature of Things* and *Two For Physics*, the CBC presented on the national network (English) approximately sixty half hours of television programming each year for in-school use. Canadian School Telecasts were planned in co-operation with representatives from all provincial departments of education as well as the Canadian Teachers’ Federation and were broadcast twice weekly during the school year. Also, regional CBC production centres produced for departments of education in-school programming which was oriented more directly towards provincial curricula. In addition to this schools programming, the CTV television network contributed to the development of educational television and to the training of on-camera presenters through “University of the Air.” This yearly series of half-hour programs was broadcast each week-day morning from mid-September to mid-June. While these were not formal university courses, such as those produced earlier by the CBC and CHCH, they were formal-style university lectures, prepared by a variety of university teachers in co-operation with CTV stations across Canada.

The use of television for education developed rapidly in the 1960s. Its proponents envisaged a full-time formal and informal educational service for schools, colleges, universities, and adult education. Various schemes for educational television networks were proposed. A national educational television conference was held in Toronto in May 1961. Out of that meeting came a request to the broadcast regulator, the Board of Broadcast Governors, to convene a meeting to consider the issue of educational broadcasting. The BBG agreed, but their agreement was conditional on support from the provincial ministers of education. That support was given and the meeting was held in Toronto in March 1964. Ultimately the BBG was asked to formulate a policy on educational broadcasting for Canada. After some research, it was found that educators were not convinced of the value of educational television in the classroom, and there were conflicting reports as to the extent that the CBC school broadcasts were actually used in schools.

With the benefit of hindsight, one of the reasons for the failure of this early use of television to meet educational objectives can be traced to the comparatively boring, lecture-style, of the programs, but also the reticence of many teachers to have so-called “master teachers” on television intruding, and competing, in their classrooms, and finally, perhaps most importantly, the overriding concerns relating to provincial jurisdiction. Federal authorities were afraid that granting a license for a broadcasting station to a provincial government for educational purposes would give away control over a segment of the Canadian broadcasting system. Provincial authorities feared that accepting a federally licensed educational broadcasting system would give federal authorities control over a segment of the educational system. As a result of its research, and the reality of the jurisdictional issue, the BBG came to the conclusion outlined in its annual report for 1964-65, that federal officials should only facilitate educational television and that its future depended on the provinces.

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However, this by no means brought the issue to a close. The BBG believed that the extension of television broadcasting services to some areas of Canada would require the use of UHF channels. A hearing was held in October 1966 to consider the use of UHF. Thirty-eight briefs were received, the most interesting and innovative of which was from Ken Soble of CHCH-TV in Hamilton. He proposed to form a company to own and operate a national television network in both official languages consisting of a satellite feeding a series of transmitters at strategic locations across Canada. His proposal included the launching of the first communications satellite, long before the formation of Telesat Canada. Soble's proposal was referred to a federal cabinet committee and, subsequently, the BBG approved an application by a company to be incorporated, called NTV Communications Ltd., for authority to form a national television network in Canada. This would have been Canada's third national network, after CBC and CTV. Under the Board's procedure, that authority only permitted NTV to develop detailed plans for the network. Those plans provided an impetus to the educational television debate because the daytime programming of NTV was to include a minimum of fifteen hours per week of education on the English service and another fifteen hours on the French service. Although NTV invited the provinces to provide the programming, it would have been difficult for them to exercise control.

To add to the difficulty and complexity of the issue, in December of 1966 the government asked the BBG for plans for the introduction of educational television. Some plans called for a federal crown corporation that would include all educational broadcasting stations and networks in Canada. Neither of these plans was fulfilled. The untimely death of Ken Soble derailed the NTV proposal, although the application was pursued for several years under the direction of Soble's sales manager Al Bruner, who became President of NTV, and resulted finally in the licensing of the Global Television Network in Ontario. Provincial opposition stalled the formation of a national crown corporation to administer and co-ordinate the introduction of educational television.

The 1965 Report of the Federal Advisory Committee on Broadcasting, chaired by Robert Fowler, devoted a chapter to educational broadcasting. One recommendation was that provincial authorities be established to control broadcasting, on the condition that they be independent of control by the provincial governments. In a White Paper on Broadcasting, released in 1966, the Secretary of State, Judy LaMarsh, declared the intention of the federal government to deal with the issue. The government then went on to declare its intention to create a new federal educational broadcasting agency which could enter into agreements with the provinces in order to meet the needs of provincial educational systems. This was never incorporated into the new *Broadcasting Act* that emerged in 1968. The only reference to educational broadcasting was in Section 3(1)(i) which said that "facilities should be provided within the Canadian broadcasting system for educational broadcasting," thus leaving it subject to the federal regulatory authority.



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With the *Broadcasting Act* of 1968 the Board of Broadcast Governors (BBG) was replaced by the Canadian Radio-Television Commission (CRTC). (The Commission later incorporated telecommunications to become the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.) The CRTC was from its beginning a more activist regulator than the BBG had been, playing a more aggressive role in policy development and making. Very quickly the Commission became involved in the issue of educational broadcasting. The Honourable Gerard Pelletier, the new Secretary of State, announced that the government intended to open up UHF television channels and that television sets should be fitted for both VHF and UHF channel reception capacity. In March 1968 he introduced Bill C-179 for the establishment of the Canadian Educational Broadcasting Agency. This agency was to hold licenses, operate educational broadcasting facilities, and negotiate with provincial authorities for their use. The provincial authorities were to have responsibility for production and programming with the federal authorities retaining responsibility for the transmission facilities. The draft legislation for this bill defined educational programs as having three primary characteristics or objectives: 1) the systematic acquisition or improvement of knowledge; 2) the achievement of this first objective through regular and progressive programming; and 3) that the results would be subject to supervision. This definition was deemed to be too restrictive by the provinces, especially by those planning for an educational television broadcasting service in Ontario. In November 1969, under pressure from the provinces, Bill C-179 was withdrawn.

A Quebec provincial election was held in March 1969 following the death of Daniel Johnson. The new Premier, Jean-Jacques Bertrand, introduced the Quebec Broadcasting Bureau Act. In effect, this bill served to update an unused 1945 Act that constituted Radio-Quebec. The powers conferred on the Bureau under the Act, which passed in October 1969 were broader than those proposed in the federal Bill C-179. This was a major contributing factor to the withdrawal of the federal bill just weeks later. And the withdrawal effectively ended this phase of the movement for a national Canadian educational television service.

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## **Provincial Educational Broadcasting**

Educational television was developing in both Ontario and Alberta with time being purchased on existing broadcasting stations. Both federal and provincial officials foresaw the need for a full channel. Encouraged by Quebec's initiative in moving to establish a provincially owned and operated service, Ontario and Alberta pressured the federal government to change its policy of not issuing broadcasting licenses to provincial governments or their agents. A resolution to this impasse was not found until 1972, but an interim agreement was reached whereby educational television facilities were provided under a special agreement with the CBC and provincial educational communications authorities provided the programming. In addition, as broadcasting receiving undertakings (mainly cable services) were brought under the regulatory power of the CRTC they were obliged to make at least one channel available for educational programming. These two items were spelled out in federal Order-in-Council 1970-496 to the CRTC, as was the agreed upon definition of educational programming.

On August 1 1969 the CRTC granted a license to the CBC for a television broadcasting station at Edmonton for a three-year period. It was to broadcast CBC French-language programs and a schedule of programs from the Metropolitan Edmonton Educational Television Association (MEETA). At the end of this period the station would become a part of the CBC French-language network. On January 30 1970 the CRTC granted a license to the CBC for a new television station to be operated on Channel 19 in Toronto.

Throughout this period there was widespread discussion and debate surrounding an acceptable definition of educational programming. Part of this was prompted by the desire of the provinces, principally Ontario and Quebec, to have clear jurisdiction and part by concerns of the CBC and other conventional broadcasters about competition. The provinces wanted educational programming to be "distinctly different" in order to retain control and to be able to move into the broadcasting business. The public and private broadcasters wanted it to be "distinctly different" so that it would retain its "formal, lecture" format and so not be able to compete with them for audiences. The Council of Ministers of Education, through their Instructional Media Committee, was directly involved in the negotiations between federal and provincial officials regarding the definition. A workable definition was presented to the Council of Ministers and the Secretary of State in December of 1969. The creative architects of this most important definition for the successful future of educational television broadcasting were William Davis, then Minister of Education in Ontario, Ran Ide, the Chairman and CEO of the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (TVOntario) and their corporate lawyer, Don Mills. It was subsequently approved by both the federal and provincial governments, included in federal Order-in-Council 1970-496, and became a condition of license when Channel 19 was approved by the CRTC in January 1970.

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While the full definition seems somewhat long-winded when read in its entirety, its genius was to place the definition of educational programming, and what made it distinctly different from programming broadcast on the conventional television service, in the context within which the program was presented, rather than the nature or format of the program itself. This allowed the provincial educational services to use any program format, indeed any program, so long as it was presented in an educational context, that is a context that had clear educational objectives and sometimes further learning opportunities such as books or even a full formal course of study. The nature of the context varied with the program, with the educational broadcaster, and with the times. But it allowed provincial educational television broadcasting to break out of a boring, lecture-format ghetto and develop entertaining and competitive broadcast schedules.

The agreed upon definition of educational programming was as follows: “Programming designed to be presented in such a context as to provide a continuity of learning opportunity aimed at the acquisition or improvement of knowledge or the enlargement of understanding of members of the audience to whom such programming is directed, and under circumstances such that the acquisition or improvement of such knowledge or enlargement of such understanding is subject to supervision or assessment by the provincial authority by any appropriate means.” The second part added “programming providing information on available courses of instruction or involving the broadcasting of special educational events within the system.” It then went on to add the very important qualification that “the intention of the above provision is to ensure that such programming, taken as a whole, shall be designed to furnish educational opportunities and shall be distinctly different from general broadcasting available on the public or private channels.” This further emphasized the context. The entire program schedule had to be taken into account, rather than just any one specific program, when defining what was educational and distinctly different.

From its formation this definition has been interpreted liberally and creatively. Sometimes a complex “learning system” would be developed consisting of specific learning objectives and multi-media support materials; sometimes a simpler system would be developed; sometimes no system at all. In these early days, because of the opposition from some conventional broadcasters, more time and effort were given to the development and promotion of these learning systems than was the case later on, and is the case today. But, even in the early days, since the provincial body licensed to provide educational broadcasting services was the “authority,” and since the service taken as a whole was educational, it gave practical discretion to the provincial broadcasters to decide on the nature of their programming, and whether a learning system was needed. This caused controversy and turf fights with the conventional broadcasters, some of whom still remain unsatisfied with the liberality of the definition. But from its inception, still to this day, it is one of the most important reasons for the success of provincial educational television broadcasting in Canada.

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It is important to remember that the definition was intended, primarily, for the provincial use of a transmitter. It provided the connecting point between federal and provincial jurisdictions. It was not meant or intended to be some kind of universal, sacred and unchangeable definition of educational programming for all purposes. Quebec had participated somewhat reluctantly in these negotiations. Because of the importance of communications in the maintenance and development of French culture in the province there was general opposition to centralized policies and federal control. Quebec paid only slight attention to the federal-provincial definition and threatened to move ahead unilaterally with its own educational broadcasting system if the federal restriction on provincial ownership of broadcasting facilities was not lifted. This threat, combined with pressure from Ontario, moved the federal government to issue new directions to the CRTC.

By virtue of federal Order-in-Council PC1972-1569, certain exceptions were allowed in the new class of broadcast licensees. While “Agents of Her Majesty in right of province” could still not hold a license, an “independent corporation” could. The Order-in-Council explained that: “Independent corporation means a corporation that the Canadian Radio-Television Commission is satisfied is not directly controlled by Her Majesty in right of province or by a municipal government and that is designated by statute or by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council of a province for the purpose of broadcasting the following types of programming.” The definition of educational programming followed. The Order-in-Council stated further that: “Provincial Authority means a person, body or authority as may be designated by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council of a province as the provincial authority for that province for the purpose of this direction.” The rationale and need for such an Authority, or corporation, rested on the federal jurisdiction over broadcasting and a general understanding of the meaning of that term. As the concept of broadcasting was undermined by the new technologies of cable and satellite all concepts, and all definitions, were increasingly challenged. However, even when some provincial educational television services did not have “broadcasting” facilities, i.e. over the air transmitters, the concept was still used as a bulwark against federal incursion and as a lever to ensure priority carriage on cable.

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## **Ontario**

The Department of Education in Ontario co-operated with the CBC, as did departments in other provinces, for the production of radio and then television programs that could be used in the schools. These programs were broadcast by CBC affiliates and then the new CTV and independent stations across the province. Education, in a general sense, for adults in their homes was seen to be one of the responsibilities of broadcasting and the CBC, as well as some of the commercial stations, took this responsibility seriously in the 1950s and 1960s. In 1959 the Metropolitan Educational Television Association (META) was formed in Toronto. Its objective was to use television broadcasting to serve the educational needs, from pre-school to adult, of the Toronto area. The Association represented the boards of education of thirteen municipalities, the University of Toronto, the Public Archives of Toronto and the Royal Ontario Museum.

In the spring of 1961 META requested that the federal broadcasting regulator, the Board of Broadcast Governors, reserve Channel 19 in Toronto for educational purposes. This was approved by the BBG and the federal Department of Transport. The following year the BBG approved a formal contractual arrangement between META and CFTO-TV. The agreement specified that CFTO would provide facilities for META broadcasting while META retained control of program content. Between 1959 and 1969 the number of telecasts by META expanded from 42 to 732 annually. Initially, CFTO was the broadcast outlet for META programs. CBC was involved in some co-productions and as a broadcast outlet. In 1967 CHCH-TV also began broadcasting META programs.

In May of 1965 William Davis, Minister of Education, announced the establishment of an educational television section within the Curriculum Branch of his Ministry. Its objective was to develop and co-ordinate plans for educational television. In March of 1966 the Department of Education applied to the BBG for a license for an educational television station. Although the application was for a license for Toronto only, using Channel 19, the department indicated plans to expand throughout the province. The BBG replied that it would hear the application on condition that the federal government approve the granting of a license to a provincial government. The federal government refused.

In the spring of 1968 a federal task force was established to advise on problems leading to the introduction of a Canadian Educational *Broadcasting Act*. In addition to preparing legislation, designing the federal agency and solving definitional and cost-sharing problems, the task force was charged also to provide interim solutions for provincial endeavors. The task force recommended that the needs of Ontario be given temporary satisfaction by the CBC being licensed to provide the transmission facilities for Channel 19 in Toronto. The Secretary of State responded by directing such action. An agreement was reached between the CBC and the Ontario government that allowed the CBC to apply to the new regulatory agency,

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the CRTC, for a broadcasting license on behalf of the Ontario Department of Education in November 1969.

On January 30 1970 the CRTC approved the license to the CBC to act as an agent for the ETV branch of the Ministry of Education. With this approval, Channel 19 was to become the first UHF channel in Canada. Bill C-43, the Act to establish the Ontario Educational Communications Authority (OECA) was introduced to the provincial legislature in March 1970. It was passed and received royal assent in June. A provincial Authority, for the purpose of carrying out educational broadcasting, was a precedent in Canada. In August, a Memorandum of Agreement between the CBC and the Ontario Ministry of Education was formulated. It reflected the constitutional delegation of powers between the federal and provincial governments; the CBC was to build and operate a transmitter while the OECA was to be in charge of programming within the agreed upon definition. Channel 19, CICA in Toronto, began its first full day of broadcasting on September 27 1970.

In 1972 a landmark step was taken which allowed the OECA to apply for a broadcasting license on its own behalf. By virtue of the federal Order-in-Council (PC1972-1569) certain exceptions were allowed in the new class of broadcast licensees. While “Agents of Her Majesty in right of province” could still not hold a license, an “independent corporation” could. A provincial Order-in-Council (OC2314/73), in 1973, officially identified the Ontario Educational Communications Authority as the “provincial authority” for the purposes of the Direction to the CRTC contained in the federal Order-in-Council. Although the OECA was eligible to hold its own license by virtue of these 1972 and 1973 decisions, the actual transfer of Channel 19 from the CBC did not occur until 1977 with the completion and installation of the transmitter on the CN tower. However, all new licenses, beginning in 1973, as the educational network spread throughout Ontario, were awarded to the OECA. This became TVOntario (TVO).

The structure of the Authority, set out in the Act, was to encompass a Board of Directors consisting of thirteen members, including a chairman who was to be the chief executive officer. All members were to be appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council for a period of three years, but could be re-appointed. Despite the brief size of the OECA Act (5 pages), it contained landmark implications for educational broadcasting in Canada. The objectives established a wide spectrum of activities within which to operate. These, together with the federal definition of educational programming, provided a firm foundation and ample flexibility for the operation of the Authority. An important precedent was set in section 3(b). Here, research was mentioned specifically as an objective of the Authority. It is one of the few instances in Canada where research, as a separate activity, has been added to the general concern of broadcasting. It had important implications for the definition of educational programming, not just in Ontario, but in Quebec also, as well as other provinces that later developed educational broadcasting corporations.



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The OECA is a Crown corporation that reports to the provincial legislature through a Minister. The specific Ministry can, and does, vary from time to time; Education, Universities and Colleges, Citizenship and Culture, back to Education. Initial criticism of the Authority suggested that it could act merely as an appendage of the provincial government. However, the Act emphasized the autonomy of the Authority. Section 6(3) clearly sets out that: “The officers and employees of the Authority are not crown employees.” Section 12 supported the notion of an “arms length” relationship. Policy is made by the independent Board of Directors and there is no direct government involvement in policy or programming decisions. However, like all “independent” Crown corporations at both the provincial and federal levels, influence can and is affected via annual budget allocations and by appointments to the Board. For any specific “schools” programming and other multi-media products and services, the Ministry of Education writes a “priorities” letter to the OECA each year outlining its priorities and needs.

In the beginning, the Authority was criticized for being too centralized. It was located in Toronto and was composed of the former ETV branch of the Ministry of Education. Further, it accommodated parts of META when it was terminated in 1971. However, the Act sets out a provision that “the Authority shall appoint such regional councils and such advisory committees as it considers necessary to advise it in developing the policy and operations of the Authority.” The OECA implemented this section by establishing regional councils, a planning committee, and a francophone advisory council. The latter was appointed in 1975 to assist in identifying the needs of Ontario’s French-speaking population. French-language programming was always an important, if comparatively small, part of the TVO broadcast schedule. The need for and interest in such programming by the Franco-Ontario community led finally to the licensing and operation of a separate television service, TFO.

The supposed independence and “arms-length” relationship of the OECA Board of Directors from Government was tested in 1978 in a way and to an extent that had probably not been seen since the late 1950s with the “7 Days” dispute at the CBC. The programmers at TVOntario, in association with an independent producer, had financed and produced a four-part min-series called *The Jesus Trial*. It was based on an actual recent libel trial in France that had focused on the question of who killed Jesus Christ, the Romans or the Jews. The format of the series involved a dramatic recreation of the trial, along with documentary-style shooting and expert commentary. The theme was intolerance. But prior to its broadcast the intense nature of the courtroom drama and its subject generated intense opposition from nearly all the major religious organizations with headquarters in Toronto. Their leaders met several times with the Board in an attempt to stop the broadcast. When this failed they petitioned the government. The government requested that the Board delay the broadcast. The story was headlined in the *Toronto Star* newspaper. The political pressure was intense. However, the Board did not bend to the pressure and the series was broadcast as scheduled.

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This was a model test for the independence of arms-length Boards of public educational broadcasting Authorities. In retaliation for maintaining its independence and refusing to bow under political pressure, the government cut the OECA budget the following year. However, this was soon restored, with an admission on the part of the government that the Board had been right and the government had been wrong.

Since its inception, a foremost objective of the Authority was to extend the TVOntario service to all parts of the province. The first extension of service was licensed in 1973. Other areas soon followed, via VHF transmitters when they were available, UHF when they were not. Packages of programs sent to cable systems were also used. Then, after 1983, satellite was used to reach both low and higher power transmitters strategically placed across the province. More recently, DTH satellite allows the signals of both the English and the French services to reach all parts of the province, and beyond.

Distribution of its programs on video tape and successful utilization of these programs and their accompanying learning materials in classrooms across the province has always been a major service and priority of the OECA. In April of 1973, the first VIPS (Video Program Service) catalogue was published. It offered a selection of 3000 programs. The service has grown dramatically since then. In the 1970s wonderful program series, such as Read-along, and Write-on, produced by the OECA for both broadcast on TVO and use via video tape in the schools, made important contributions to the teaching of reading and writing at the elementary level in schools throughout the province. And this, with other similar series, were sold to and utilized by schools across the country and around the world. Over the years, with the development of new electronic technologies, the OECA and the other educational broadcasters, to more or less a degree, have become involved in multi-media production, marketing and utilization.

The TVOntario broadcast service, certainly from 1973 on, became a popular and competitive broadcasting service in the province. It offered the very best pre-school and early childhood programming available anywhere, and a mix of informative and entertaining adult programs during the prime time evening hours. While programming styles and certainly titles have changed over the years, it still does this. With a mix of British drama, classic movies, some of the world's, and Canada's, best documentary programs, and intelligent and contemporary talk, TVO has become a watched and appreciated public broadcasting service for a substantial number of Ontario citizens. And, while the service no longer broadcasts programs for in-school, formal, use, as it did in the early years, it still broadcasts a wide selection of the best pre-school programs during the daytime schedule. And, of course, these pre-school programs carry no advertising. In fact, although the OECA does allow program sponsorship, or underwriting, with appropriate sponsorship credit given, the service does not carry advertising messages. Its funding comes essentially from provincial government grants, some specific program or project funding, program underwriting, on-air solicitation campaigns, and the sale of its programs. In addition, there are designated funds available



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from the Education Ministry for specific multi-media projects. TFO operates in a similar way, and benefits additionally from federal grants.

When Channel 19 was licensed in 1970, the definition of educational programming quoted earlier was included as a condition of license. This prompted all kinds of discussion and debate, generally between the OECA and the public and private broadcasters, as the Authority attempted to produce and acquire programs that the audiences would actually watch, and the conventional broadcasters tried to stall competition by emphasizing the need for educational programs to be distinctly different from anything seen on their channels. The principle of this was, and remains today since many broadcasters still use it to try to limit the competitiveness of educational television, distinctly ridiculous, since there are a limited number of basic formats for television programs, i.e., drama, docs, talk, etc., and these formats are used by all broadcasters. The other principle, recognized clearly by the OECA by the early 1970s, is that if you have no audience you have no education. So the sides were drawn and the debate, which began in earnest in 1974 around the introduction of Saturday Night at the Movies, continued to the early 1980s. The CAB and several private broadcasters intervened in TVOntario's 1981 license renewal, complaining about competing programming and corporate underwriting. Indeed, objections and appeals around the use of movies and other popular programs on educational broadcasting services continue whenever aggressive programming decisions are made. The most recent appeals came when ACCESS, Alberta's provincial educational television broadcaster, was privatized in 1995 and became more aggressively competitive while still being distinctly different in the following years.

So, TVOntario, and by its example other English-language provincial educational services, has been, and is, an unqualified success. It is a fully professional public broadcasting service, meeting educational objectives as defined and enunciated by the Authority. These objectives and the programming that reflects them change from time to time, but the objectives and the programming have always been determined, finally, by the Authority, not by the government or a Ministry. This has not been an easy process, but its success ultimately reflects back to the federal definition of educational programming developed by the founders of the OECA. It is the context, not the format, that defines an educational television program. Any type of program may be used, so long as it is fitted within an educational context. And the context is what the Authority decides. This definition has been a bulwark of freedom, not just for TVO but for all English-language educational broadcasters in Canada.

The history of educational radio in Ontario must include the CJRT-FM. It began operating in 1949, long before radio receiving sets owned by the general public could receive FM signals, as an integral part of the Announcing and Radio Production course in the School of Electronics at the newly established Ryerson Institute of Technology in Toronto. But the station was licensed also as an educational service to schools

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and the general public. Ryerson held the license. Between 1949 and the fall of 1964, when the station came under professional management, it was on the air for only about 6 hours per day, mainly to train radio announcers, operators and technicians, although there were a few educational programs produced in co-operation with the community programs division of the Ontario Department of Education and the University of Toronto.

The decision by the Ontario government in 1963 to transfer responsibility for Ryerson from the Department of Education to an independent Board of Governors resulted in significant changes for CJRT. It was decided that the station should be developed into a more professional operation and that a manager should be hired. When the station began to operate in this more professional mode in the fall of 1964 the programming changed also; mostly music; mainly classical and jazz. Student produced programs declined. Between 1964 and 1973 continual attempts were made to reconcile the dual objectives of a professional station and the need to serve as a vehicle for training students. None were successful, and finally the second objective was dropped.

In the summer of 1968 an informal “Radiostudy” series was initiated. These programs were written and produced by Ryerson faculty members, and used an informal conversational format to cover subjects such as consumer affairs, Canadian politics and the arts. The Radiostudy series of programs continued until 1974 when CJRT broke its formal relationship with Ryerson. In January 1971 the station presented its first credit course in “Introductory Sociology.” This was produced by Ryerson’s newly organized “Open College.” Many other courses followed over the succeeding years.

Throughout the period 1949-1972, CJRT-FM had been funded “as a special budget item within the framework of (the) general budget” for what became known as Ryerson Polytechnical Institute (now Ryerson University). In 1972 the Ministry of Colleges and Universities changed the nature of funding to a grant system based on the number of full-time students. This made no allowance for CJRT. The result was an announcement in March 1973 that CJRT would cease operations on June 1. This began a flurry of political activity to save the station. A solution was finally found.

On December 3 1973 the Premier, William Davis, announced that the government “had decided to establish CJRT-FM as a separate and independent corporation with the capability to operate the present CJRT radio station and to continue its educational broadcasting activities.” A new Board of Directors was established and while Ryerson retained representation on the Board it no longer had any direct involvement with the station it had founded and operated for 25 years.

The CJRT-FM Inc. corporation was formed in November 1974. It was a private, non-profit corporation

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with no share capital. It had its own, independent, Board of Directors. The Board was responsible for fund-raising, which could be done via on-air solicitations, program underwriting, or other means. However, unlike the OECA, there were no yearly grants. A President and General Manager was responsible for the day to day operation of the station. It was licensed by the CRTC as a non-commercial, educational station, in the “Classical-Fine Arts” music format, dedicated to providing programs that enrich and inform. While it was education only in the most general and informal sense, it did provide university-level courses through its Open College, which became a part of CJRT rather than Ryerson after 1974. However, its program schedule consisted mostly of classical and jazz music, with some music festivals, news and commentary, and other similar programs. Recently, the station has included sponsorship and advertising messages and has focused its programming on jazz. But the station continues as a valuable alternative for radio listeners in Toronto, and across the country via the satellite delivery of music services.

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Radio-Quebec (now Tele-Quebec) has described itself as *l'autre television*, the alternative television. This was meant to distinguish it from the other television services available to viewers in Quebec. But it also served to distinguish it from the other provincial educational broadcasting agencies in Canada. While it adhered to the concept of educational programming in a general sense, it did not feel the need to be bound by any federally imposed definition, or to clutter up its programming objectives with much of any type of context. While it did a bit of this, especially in the beginning, it justified its mandate, essentially, through its programming alone. While it saw itself as educational in the broadest sense, the major objective was, and is, to reflect, to participate in, and to influence the culture of Quebec. Education was seen to be part of culture. Of all the provincial educational communications agencies only Radio-Quebec had this cultural focus; in fact, except for some peripheral references by the others, only Radio-Quebec even used this term.

Radio-Quebec, or more formally the Societe de radio-television du Quebec (SRTQ), is a corporation created and funded by the government of Quebec “to establish and operate an educational television network reaching all parts of Quebec.” It is mandated to reflect the culture of Quebec in all of the province’s regional aspects. The name change to Tele-Quebec more accurately reflected its television broadcasting focus. It has never operated radio stations. Its major directions are defined by a Board of Directors, which includes a Chairperson and the chief executive officer, all appointed by the Lieutenant Governor-in-Council.

Although the present form of Tele-Quebec dates from 1979, it began in 1968 as L’Office de la radio de Quebec. However, as early as 1945, the government of Quebec had recognized clearly the need to use electronic communications to serve its provincial purposes. On March 2 1945 a bill concerning radio broadcasting was introduced to the legislature. It would have created a provincial service to be called L’Office, to possess and exploit a radio system under the name Radio-Quebec. Because of federal jurisdiction over broadcasting this would have created a serious federal-provincial dispute. Apparently, a secret compromise was reached between the federal government and the Premier of Quebec, Maurice Duplessis, whereby Quebec was allowed to have its own provincial income tax in return for staying out of the radio business. In any event, nothing happened between 1945 and 1968 when the then premier, Daniel Johnson, decided to go ahead with the bill and create Radio-Quebec, not with the primary objective of offering educational services but to ensure Quebec’s position in the use of electronic communications.

It is important to reference a very innovative, experimental project, called TEVEC, which was taking place just at this time. Conducted by the Continuing Education Branch of Quebec’s Department of Education, it had the task of providing a poorly educated population in the Saguenay-Lake St. John region with individual and collective socio-cultural and educational training. The TEVEC program had to correspond

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to the general level of knowledge for the regular grade 9 course for adults, but the school subjects, such as French, Mathematics, English and Science, were linked with socio-economic themes in order to appeal to the interests of the population. The originality of the two year experiment was in using a combination of media with “social animation” techniques. Television was used to motivate and inform. Programs were produced and broadcast through the facilities of the two television stations serving the region. They helped create awareness and a desire to learn. A correspondence course provided adults with educational materials in the subject areas; examinations were offered to all those who considered themselves qualified whether they had enrolled in TEVEC or not. “Social animation” involved meetings, discussions, conferences, and leadership training at the local level. Revision centres were open once a week for people to meet and receive assistance from teachers. The project came to an end in June 1969.

In the beginning Radio-Quebec was not a broadcaster at all, but an audio-visual production house making video, audio, records and slide presentations of an educational and informative nature for various government departments and agencies. However, this lasted for only twenty months. In late 1969 the original Act was amended and the name of the corporation was changed to L’Office de radio-telediffusion du Quebec. Its mandate was expanded from production to distribution of its materials by the most appropriate means. By this time a new premier, Jean-Jacques Bertrand, had created a Ministry of Communications and Radio-Quebec was directed to report to its Minister. However, the budget came directly from the National Assembly.

Except for the brief TEVEC experiment, educational television never gained the prominence in Quebec that it did in other provinces. Television developed as a cultural resource, rather than as a means of revolutionizing the business of traditional teaching and learning, which was certainly one of its objectives in the early days throughout English-speaking Canada. The Quebec Department of Education did establish an audio-visual section, but it never had a very clear mandate and television was never featured the way it was elsewhere. In the 1980s the department was integrated into Radio-Quebec.

In early 1970 the President of Radio-Quebec organized a task force of employees to develop a mission and mandate. Some of these employees came from the now defunct TEVEC project, but many came from the youth division of Radio-Canada. They were used to producing distinctive, educational programs without any written educational mandate. The mandate of the task force was to conceive a schedule of educational programs that would induce the viewer to want to learn. No formal, classroom oriented programming was envisaged. The educational mandate and terminology was retained in order to focus the programming effort. Education was, and is, a means of consolidating Quebec’s cultural identity. The task force came up with four general guidelines. Radio-Quebec was to produce programs that would assist the viewer to face the challenges of everyday life, that would promote the Quebec identity, and that would help the viewer

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acquire a general cultural understanding. In addition, the Office was to facilitate access to reference material and resources in order to prolong the impact or educational value of the program. This was a little like the context of the federal-provincial definition, but it was allowed to lapse as informal educational programming proved its effectiveness, even without support material. And, unlike other provincial television broadcasters, Radio-Quebec was never pressured by the federal broadcast regulator to justify its existence on the basis of the federal-provincial definition. From this time Radio-Quebec, and then Tele-Quebec, has been firmly in the broadcasting business, competing for audiences with conventional broadcasters. It receives a comparatively large yearly government grant, but now also sells advertising time, has program sponsorships, and raises money any way it can.

However, before all this could happen, and it could evolve into the successful public broadcasting system it has become, it first had to win licenses for actual broadcasting undertakings. Following the establishment of the guidelines by the task force, by 1972 Radio-Quebec began to distribute a schedule of television programs directly into cable facilities in Montreal, Quebec City, and later Hull. This had the advantage of avoiding any jurisdictional dispute concerning the issuance of a broadcasting license by the CRTC. It was politically astute provincially because once the service was made available to these few areas other regions in Quebec demanded it as well. In 1975 two UHF television stations were established in Montreal and Quebec City. A third was established in western Quebec in 1977. Like TVOntario, this expanded over the years, and now includes satellite transmission to transmitters and direct to home throughout the province, and via DTH transmission to the whole country.

From its real beginning, with the task force, the introduction of a schedule on cable, and then the building of transmitters, satellite distribution, etc., Radio-Quebec has developed its own version of educational television broadcasting. Other modes, even those developed by TVOntario, especially in its early years, were judged to be inappropriate because they were too close to the traditional models of the department of education. In Quebec there was hardly any interaction with Education and a general disinterest, if not ignorance, of official definitions. However, because Radio-Quebec needed a clear educational framework, the programmers adopted the description of educational programming developed by the European Broadcasting Union. This description stated that educational programming is that which aims to help people assimilate a range of knowledge or to acquire certain capabilities in a specific field, or to better prepare them to actively participate in community life. This description provided latitude to do any kind of programming that was desirable.

The power in Quebec, i.e. the Authority that determined what is “education,” between 1973 and 1979 consisted of the Minister of Education and the Minister of Communications. Since one of the reasons for the 1972 federal Order-in-Council was to establish an arms-length relationship between provincial



governments and provincial Authorities, it was somewhat embarrassing to have two Ministers playing this role. As a result when the Act was once again amended in 1979 to constitute the Societe de radio-television du Quebec (SRTQ) as the Corporation, in 1980 the Regie des services publique (the Public Service Board) was established as the provincial Authority. The main object of the Corporation was to establish and operate an educational broadcasting firm to cover the whole territory of Quebec. (3) The Societe had to submit its educational programming to the Regie in accordance with the Act respecting educational programming. The relationship between Radio-Quebec (now Tele-Quebec) and the Regie was stormy in the beginning, but the process resolved itself in favor of programming freedom. There was no clear indication in the Act when Radio-Quebec must appear before the Regie. Appearances were to be made “regularly” or if there was a “major change” in programming. However, there was no definition of a major change, and no dates were given.

Tele-Quebec is very much in the business of competing for mass audiences. The movies it purchases are contemporary rather than old classics. It does not feel any need to contextualize them. Neither it nor the Quebec government has felt any need or obligation to adhere to, or even to acknowledge, the federal definition of educational programming. Likewise, its variety and drama programs are meant to be popular, to compete actively with other broadcasters in the market. Right from the beginning, programmers and producers have been in charge, not educators or bureaucrats. There has always been a genuine desire to produce and acquire “real” television, that which is professional and competitive, that which deals with Quebec themes and culture and features Quebec personalities, but also television that is different and distinctive. It has always seen its distinctiveness as a competitive advantage rather than a disadvantage, and in this it has always been quite modern in its appreciation of the continually fragmented marketplace.

Like all other provincial educational broadcasters Tele-Quebec is constantly in search of more revenue. Like the other public broadcasters, it receives a substantial yearly grant from the provincial government and like the others it pursues corporate underwriting, really a synonym for program sponsorship. However, unlike the others, it has been allowed to sell advertising, up to eight minutes per hour. This has co-existed nicely with its popular programming and with its program sponsorships. It has earned the service substantial additional yearly revenues. And the “commercial imperative” has helped Tele-Quebec to retain a schedule of popular and competitive programming.

A decision taken by the CRTC in January of 1985 to license a second educational television station in Montreal and a satellite to cable educational network was thought at the time to have implications for Radio-Quebec, but turned out not to have much of an impact. CANAL (Corporation pour l’Avancement de Nouvelles applications des Langues Ltee.) was a non-profit corporation composed of Quebec collegiate and university educational institutions. The corporation’s aim was to administer the broadcasting of programs provided entirely by member institutions. “Tele-Universite” offered televised and correspondence courses. The programs were strictly “formal” in nature, and therefore had no competitive impact in the marketplace.

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## **Alberta**

Alberta's role in public/educational broadcasting goes back to 1927 when radio station CKUA was licensed to the University of Alberta's Department of Extension as an educational station. In 1943, because it could no longer afford to operate the station on grants from the provincial government, the university applied to the federal regulatory agency, at that time the CBC Board of Governors, for permission to obtain a commercial broadcasting license. The application was granted but the conditions were such that the university rejected the commercial license. It then had to appeal for assistance to the government of Alberta, which provided it via an arrangement with the Department of Telephones.

In 1944 the Department was authorized to purchase and operate the CKUA facilities, with the university retaining the license and providing the programming for a certain number of hours each day. The Alberta government applied to have the license transferred to itself and to have a private commercial license but this was rejected on the grounds that the original license had been issued for educational purposes. Attempts by the province to become directly involved in broadcasting were effectively ended in 1946 when the federal government stated that since broadcasting was the sole responsibility of the Dominion government broadcasting licenses would not be issued to other governments or to corporations owned by other governments. However, CKUA continued to be owned and operated by Alberta Government Telephones with the license held by the University of Alberta.

This was challenged by the Canadian Radio-Television Commission shortly after it was established by the *Broadcasting Act of 1968*. The Commission stated that it would not renew CKUA's license since the Department of Telephones was an agency of the provincial government. In fact, the license was renewed in 1970 but only until 1972 and with instructions that a new structure would have to be devised in order to comply with federal regulations. A solution was found in the 1972 federal "Directions" to the CRTC. Provincial broadcasting could occur if provincial governments set up organizational structures deemed to be "independent" by the federal government. In December 1972 an announcement was made that the Alberta government would set up an Alberta Educational Communications Corporation. CKUA's license would be transferred from the university to the Corporation. In addition, the Corporation would take over two local educational television projects that had been established earlier; the Metropolitan Edmonton Educational Television Association (MEETA) and the Calgary and Regional Educational Television Association (CARET). Both these were pilot projects set up by the previous Social Credit provincial government.

Educational television had begun in Alberta much earlier, in 1956, when the Department of Education began co-operating with the CBC in offering a half hour per day of programming to the schools. Following



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the commissioning of a number of studies and reports, the Alberta Pilot Projects for Television in Education were established in June 1966. These were coordinated by the Alberta Department of Education through its Audio-Visual Services Branch. CARET was incorporated in 1967. Members were the Calgary Public and Separate School Boards, the University of Calgary, Mount Royal Junior College, three rural school jurisdictions, Southern Alberta Institute of Technology, and the Alberta Department of Education. Four channels from the Instructional Television Fixed Services Band (ITFS), in the 2548-2686 MHz range, were used to transmit programs to 25 Calgary locations, mostly elementary and junior high schools. 2500 MHz is “point-to-point” communication and, therefore, considered “closed-circuit” and not broadcasting. Programs were both produced and acquired.

MEETA was incorporated in 1967. Its members included the Edmonton Public and Separate School Boards, the University of Alberta, the rural jurisdictions of Strathcona, Leduc and Stony Plain, and the Alberta Department of Education. Backed by local experiment dating from 1958 and by a major study in 1968 MEETA applied for Canada’s first ETV broadcasting license. The application, for Channel 11, was based upon a desire to serve the whole of the community with “open-circuit” broadcasting. It, therefore, required federal approval. A compromise was reached in 1969 and a license granted to the CBC to broadcast French-language programming, and a schedule of programs from MEETA. While waiting for the license, MEETA produced, acquired and distributed programs on videotape to 17 Edmonton schools.

Several smaller ETV pilot projects were also conducted during this period. COMET (County of Mountain Educational Television) went “on the air” in September 1968 using one channel in the 2500 MHz band to distribute programs to seven schools in the county and to gather information on the validity of educational broadcasting in a rural setting. SAETVA (Southern Alberta Educational Television Association) concentrated exclusively on videotape distribution to evaluate the advantages of allowing teachers to control the pacing and timing of their presentations. With the recognition of the importance of videotape in the classroom, a library of educational programs from Canada and abroad was assembled and copies made available on request to the schools. This “dubbing” service, which began in 1970, was the first such major service in Canada.

The Alberta Educational Communications Corporation was established as an independent statutory corporation with its own Board of Directors in 1973. Its purpose was “to provide a framework within which educational broadcasting and the production of educational programs and materials can take place.” The Alberta Educational Communications Corporation Act was patterned after the one enacted in Ontario in 1970. However, it was different in one important respect. Whereas the Ontario Education Communications Act created only one organization (the OECA), the Alberta legislation created two; an “independent” corporation, the Alberta Educational Communications Corporation (ACCESS) and a

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provincial authority, the Alberta Educational Communications Authority, through which the corporation would report to the government. The “independent” Corporation satisfied the federal legislation and the Authority was to exercise the province’s responsibility for education. This turned out to be an unsatisfactory arrangement.

Following the enactment of the Act, the Ministers of Education and Advanced Education and Manpower were designated as the Authority, with a Director and an Assistant. It later added the Associate Minister of Telephones. The major responsibility of the Authority was to identify educational needs and priorities that could be met by the activities of the Corporation. The Corporation consisted of 15 directors, one of which was Chairman. These were appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council who also appointed a President and Chief Executive Officer. The Corporation did the work of operating the broadcasting undertakings as well as producing, acquiring and distributing the educational programs and materials. There was constant tension and misunderstandings between the two groups, which was not resolved until December 1982 with the creation of a single organization similar to that of Ontario. The Board of Directors of the Corporation was designated as the provincial Authority. The Board was made up of representatives of government and the general public. They were appointed for a three year term. A President was appointed as Chief Executive Officer.

The Alberta Educational Communications Corporation, ACCESS Alberta, was established as an independent statutory corporation. The television service later became known as ACCESS NETWORK. It was funded by the provincial government and reported to the Alberta legislature through a designated Minister. Once it was licensed and had broadcasting stations it added on-air solicitation and program underwriting, as well as some program sales, as additional sources of revenue. But the vast majority of its revenues came from provincial government grants.

From its beginning ACCESS has been involved in the production, acquisition, distribution and delivery of educational communications in Alberta. Through its status as an “independent corporation” it was able to hold a broadcasting license. The first few years of the life of the Corporation, after its establishment in 1973, consisted of a process of consolidation and the development of programming services for both radio and television. It owned and operated radio station CKUA AM-FM but purchased airtime on existing television stations, as well as having access to daytime on the French-language CBC station for several years, for the placement of its television programs. In 1978 it accepted a set of guidelines written by the Program Policy Advisory Committee of the Authority. These stated that the principle role of ACCESS was to be complementary to the total educational enterprise within the province; that it was to provide services that would support education generally. These were to include: a) a programming service in various communications media; b) production facilities as these were required; and c) the making and acquiring of a variety of educational materials which would serve the educational needs and objectives of the four major

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educational sectors. These were: 1) Early Education, for pre-school children and their parents; 2) Basic Education, for school children in grades 1-13; 3) Higher Education, offered by all formal post-secondary institutions; and 4) Further Education, for those beyond school age. This was to be done in any appropriate manner, including broadcasting, but also videotape and audiotape distribution to the schools. As with the OECA, ACCESS developed a large catalogue of educational program and support materials that are distributed to schools throughout the province.

All of this made for a rather strict, formal program offering, certainly for television. However, especially after the rationalization of the roles of the Authority and the Corporation in 1982, ACCESS began to take a more aggressive and leadership role in the development and utilization of communications technologies in education. In the light of developments at TVOntario and elsewhere a clearer distinction was being drawn between formal and informal learning and the major sectors or markets to be served, identified as children/youth and adult. In addition, more emphasis began to be placed on “lifelong learning,” most of which occurs outside the classroom. This translated into a greater emphasis on informal learning opportunities for people at home and, in turn, to more general interest or “popular” styles and formats of programs. However, this change did not manifest in any major way on the television service until ACCESS became a real broadcaster in the mid-1980s.

ACCESS Network radio, CKUA, originated from Edmonton, and broadcasts province-wide through a single AM and 14 FM transmitters. The program schedule consisted of three broad categories: 1) School broadcasts that had direct relevance to the grades 1-12 curricula; 2) Educational programs not directly related to school curricula, including programs for adult further education and for post-secondary students; 3) General interest programs that cover a broad range of subjects, including music, news and information, community information. CKUA has always had a very “public broadcasting” sound. Only about 12% of the programming has historically been formal education, broadcast in association with schools and universities. Overall, the service has provided, and still provides, a unique “eclectic” mix of music, as well as cultural and community oriented programming that has made it an important and valuable mix in the radio services available in Alberta. Up to 1995, the service was funded by a combination of yearly provincial government grants and on-air-solicitation.

From the beginning of the ACCESS television service, reflecting its origins with MEETA and CARET, there were two production centres, one in Edmonton where the head office was located and one in Calgary. These were consolidated in the early 1990s to one centre in Edmonton. Since the full channel service has been available, ACCESS Network Television has provided a full schedule of schools programs, university and college course-related programs, and general interest or “enrichment” programs during the prime evening hours. A variety of formats and styles have been used; movies, drama, documentary, music and talk. From

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the beginning of the service, up until 1995, funding came principally via a yearly grant from the provincial government, supplemented by on-air-solicitation, some program underwriting and a few program sales.

Similar to the OECA, complementary to the broadcast services, ACCESS has acted as a purchasing agent and distributor for multi-media material for the formal education sectors. ACCESS clears the rights for everything it produces and as many acquisitions as practical for tape duplication and distribution. A catalogue is printed each year of all the available material and distributed to schools throughout the province. All the new multi-media technologies have been adopted over the years, and currently the catalogue information is available via the Internet. Ordering can be done electronically, and the educational material can be duplicated and shipped to the schools in whatever digital format is appropriate.

In the 1980s ACCESS Network television became fully involved in television broadcasting, meeting informal as well as formal learning needs and interests. The earlier broadcasting endeavors, either during the day on the French-language CBC station, or during the day time purchased on commercial stations, the emphasis was on formal “schools” programming, with a bit of informal programming thrown in. But in January 1985 ACCESS began a 12 hour-a-day service of educational, cultural, and informational programming delivered via satellite to cable companies throughout the province. The reach of the television service expanded as cable penetration expanded. The broadcast day was also expanded to a full 18 hours. Then ACCESS was licensed for two VHF transmitters, one in Edmonton and one in Calgary. These transmitters reached those homes without cable in these two metropolitan areas and the fact of the transmitters plus the fact the ACCESS is the designated educational broadcaster guaranteed priority carriage on cable, although not without some struggles with the cable companies. The reach was augmented further with DTH satellite, so that ACCESS television, like TVOntario and Tele-Quebec reaches virtually all households in the province.

The ACCESS television service consisted of a mix of high quality children’s programming aimed at the pre-school market, still some school’s programming for grades K-12 and post-secondary, and a mix of classic movies, British drama, documentary and talk shows, all informal education, in the prime time evening hours. This mix of program types and formats became a staple of English-language provincial educational television in Canada. The model reflected to a large extent the type of program schedule featured on the PBS network in the United States, considered to be a model as well as prime competitor for educational television in Canada. And it worked politically. It was popular, but not too popular. So the criticism from the conventional broadcasters was quieted. Except for the pre-school programs, which parents felt assured were valuable for their children without them having to screen them, and which conventional broadcasters did not carry because they could not include commercials, provincial educational television broadcasting, like PBS, appealed to an older demographic, basically 55+, a demographic of secondary

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interest to commercial broadcasters. So, a live-and-let-live quiet embraced educational television, in Alberta and elsewhere, for most of the 1980s and the first half of the 1990s. This quiet was shattered by events in Alberta in the mid-1990s.

In the early 1990s the Government of Alberta undertook a re-evaluation of all government-funded activities in the province. As a result, in 1993, after careful examination of its objectives and a rationalization of what “businesses” it should continue to be in, the government announced that it would not provide funding for ACCESS beyond 1994. The Board of Directors of ACCESS was charged with finding an alternative means of financing the service or closing it down. At the same time, September 1993, an application for a new national educational specialty television service, Canadian Learning Television (CLT) was filed with the CRTC. Its creators were Ron Keast and Moses Znaimer, who were minority shareholders, and it was backed by CHUM Limited as the majority shareholder. In the process of making contacts and building partnerships with educational institutions and organizations across the country, Keast and Znaimer met with the ACCESS Board, and in early 1994 were invited to make a proposal to purchase, privatize and save the ACCESS television service. Other plans were being developed for the CKUA radio service. A new private sector company, Learning and Skills Television of Alberta (LTA), with the same ownership as CLT, was established in 1994 to do this. LTA put forward a proposal that allowed the government to get out of the television broadcasting business but still maintain the well-established benefits of educational television. Negotiations involving government officials from the two Alberta Education Ministries, the Ministry of Municipal Affairs (which was the so-called “privatization” ministry) and the Chair of the ACCESS Board resulted in formal contracts being signed in November 1994.

An application by LTA was filed with the CRTC in November 1994 for authority to privatize and acquire the assets of ACCESS television and for a broadcasting license to operate ACCESS as a private sector provincial educational television broadcasting service. Following a hearing in April 1995 a seven year license was granted to LTA. (This has been renewed for another seven years.) LTA introduced a fresh programming vision and business model for ACCESS television, based on the changing learning needs and interests of the people of Alberta and an educational and financial partnership with the two education ministries, Alberta Education and Advanced Education. These included: a new, modern and more youthful look and style, with a broader range of programming to appeal also to a younger audience; working in partnership with the education ministries and educational institutions in enhancing access to formal and informal learning; helping to promote and provide lifelong learning opportunities; introducing a new private sector business model for the financing and efficient operation of educational television in Alberta which would see revenues generated through the sale of broadcast air time to the two education ministries, limited advertising in half of the 18 hour broadcast day, program sponsorships, and the sale of educational products and services.

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This was a groundbreaking and policy-setting decision by the Commission. It was the first time in Canadian broadcasting history that a public television broadcaster had been privatized. And it was the first time that a private sector company was designated as the provincial Authority and educational broadcaster for the purposes of the *Broadcasting Act*. Besides the broadcasting and educational experience and credibility of the LTA team, the support of the Alberta government and education ministries, and a well researched and presented application, there were two very important elements at the hearing and in the decision by the CRTC. The first was the establishment of the unique partnership, both educational and financial, between LTA and the two Alberta education ministries that created the new model for educational television. The second was the designation of LTA, by Order-in-Council, as the Provincial Educational Broadcaster and Authority for the Province of Alberta.

As well as insisting on more stringent Conditions of License than for any of the other provincial educational broadcasting services, such as the condition that all drama be connected to formal courses of study at an educational institution, and that 60% of the overall schedule be “formal” in this sense, the Commission required assurance on four major licensing issues of concern: 1) The role of the partnership in the long-term educational and financial viability of LTA as an educational broadcasting service; 2) That LTA should not be forced to rely too heavily, certainly not exclusively, on advertising revenues; (This was the main concern raised in objection to the licensing by Alberta conventional broadcasters.) 3) That this new private sector service, as the provincial educational broadcaster, be publicly accountable for its educational programming; 4) That there be a clear “arms-length” relationship between the provincial government and LTA. The principals of LTA, with representatives from the education ministries who participated in the hearing, assured the Commission on all these points.

Indeed, regarding point number four, it was pointed out and accepted by the Commission that there was a clearer arms-length separation between government and LTA than there had ever been previously between the public corporation or the Authority and the government. Also of importance was the assurance of a long-term commitment of the educational and financial partnership, past the five-year license, by the education ministries. This was given and reiterated in the license renewal at the end of the first seven-year license. Interestingly, and true to form, the conventional broadcasters intervened negatively even more strongly during the license renewal than they did during the initial licensing, and for the same traditional reasons; the popularity and success of the educational television service. But importantly, it was the federal definition of educational programming based on the context that won the day again. Any drama, including contemporary movies, could be used so long as they were connected to formal courses of study. ACCESS was able to connect all its drama to various course of study offered by Alberta institutions. These courses were promoted during the programs and registration information was available on the ACCESS website.



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This new model for educational television in Alberta has worked exceedingly well and the new ACCESS television has been very successful, both as an educational television broadcasting service and as a private sector business. In the traditional model of public educational broadcasting the government through a specific ministry or ministries gives a yearly grant of money to an arms-length corporation or Authority who decide how to spend it, with little input or influence from the financing source. In the new ACCESS model the government gives no grants at all. Rather, contracts for services were established between ACCESS and the education ministries. This new partnership involves meticulous consultation and interaction with educators and the ministries. The key is that the ministries and educators are ACCESS's clients. This is the basis of real accountability. In addition, the new ACCESS is a private sector commercial educational broadcaster. It must reach and satisfy its audiences in order to generate revenues. To do this effectively its programming and the overall look of the service have to be appealing.

ACCESS has been successful on both fronts. It has a professional working relationship with the education ministries, not just in terms of the programs produced or acquired for the ministry times in the broadcast schedule but also in terms of the multitude of other educational services provided by ACCESS, including the acquisition, marketing and distribution of a wide variety of multi-media products. Its schedule features non-commercial pre-school programming during the morning, a mix of ministry course-related programs with ACCESS's own informal programs during the day, and a very popular prime time mix of drama, reality docs, documentaries and magazine shows. Ministry time includes some hours of prime time as well as daytime. And all the popular dramas are connected to and promote formal courses of study.

Around the same time that ACCESS television was sold to LTA, and licensed by the CRTC, CKUA radio was given a transition grant by the government and established as an independent not-for-profit corporation with its own Board of Directors. Unfortunately, this did not work out as successfully as did the transition of ACCESS television; at least in the beginning. CKUA was awarded a new license by the CRTC under the new management structure. This allowed the radio station to sell advertising and have program sponsorships as well as to continue with the on-air solicitation of financial support from its listeners. However, the station was unable to secure sufficient revenues and when the transition grant ended the station went off the air. This caused great concern on the part of a limited but very dedicated and vocal segment of the Alberta population that loved the station, and loved the history of the station. This support was tapped by the staff of the radio station, themselves a very dedicated group, by a new Board. This led very quickly to the station returning to the air, where it remains today, existing on the direct support of its listeners, with additional advertising and sponsorship revenues. While it still carries a bit of formal education, including programs connected to post-secondary courses offered by Alberta's distance university, Athabasca, its schedule consists mostly of a very eclectic mix of music and talk.

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## **Saskatchewan**

To understand the role of Saskatchewan in public/educational broadcasting it is useful to look briefly at its role in telecommunications generally. From the beginning the province has played an active and activist role in providing a full range of communications services to the public. Commercial profitability has always been balanced against social benefits in the construction and operation of communications systems. Since the arrival of the first telephone in Saskatchewan, just after the railroad, the development of communications has been a constant struggle to provide good service at reasonable cost to a vast, sparsely populated area. The first government in the province, between 1905 and 1909, made the takeover of private telephone companies and the consequent public provision of telephone service one of its major objectives. In 1947 the Saskatchewan Government Telephones was established as a crown corporation. In 1969 the corporation's name was changed to Saskatchewan Telecommunications (Sask-Tel, later modified to SaskTel) to reflect the growing diversification of its many services. Over the years service expanded into radio, television, cable, satellites, fibre options, you name it.

In 1976 the Government of Saskatchewan appeared before the CRTC to argue for the inclusion of cable television service as part of SaskTel. The argument was only partially accepted and SaskTel won the exclusive right to provide all long-haul and distribution hardware in the province. This included all wiring save for actual house wiring. This created some problems for some local cable companies, which were eventually resolved.

In 1974 the government created, by statute, the Saskatchewan Educational Communications Corporation, known as SaskMedia. The Act also led to the creation of an Educational Communications Authority that consisted of an Executive Council (or Board of Directors), appointed by the Lieutenant-Governor-in-Council. SaskMedia reported to the Authority as well as to the Minister responsible for the Corporation, normally the Minister of Education. The Authority determined all matters of policy as well as assessing the educational priorities of the province and making sure they were met by the Corporation. There appears to be no good reason for the establishment of an Authority, except as a hedge against technological and jurisdictional developments. SaskMedia never involved itself in broadcasting and never applied for a license. Rather, it extended the audio-visual library and distribution services of the Ministry of Education. Its objectives were to encourage the use of educational media, to increase and improve the learning resources available in the province, to recognize the needs of minority groups, to provide opportunities for people involved in the arts, to support "public access" to production facilities and to develop materials that would support all levels of education.

SaskMedia produced, acquired and distributed educational materials on audiotape, videotape and 16mm film, as well as in print form. This was done in co-operation with agencies such as the Department



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of Education, the Saskatchewan Safety Council, Credit Union Central, and other community based organizations and associations. The corporation was funded by the provincial government. In 1980/81 the government began to consider broadcasting, or really electronic distribution because no transmitters were envisaged, as well as tape distribution by mail. The mail option won out. In 1982 a new government reduced the role of SaskMedia and put tape distribution back into the hands of the Ministry of Education.

In 1984 a White Paper outlined optional types of television-based communications for the province. It proposed the creation of an organization to be called the Saskatchewan Communications Advanced Network (SCAN) to carry a variety of new communications services to the public, including community television, cultural information, educational services and access to computer data bases. Services would be delivered either via SaskTel's cable/broadband network or via the provincial telephone system. Well over 80% of the briefs and oral presentations were supportive of the SCAN proposal. Many presenters saw benefits for education, as well as for culture, health, agriculture, local production, libraries and the programs of various associations. During the process the SCAN Public Hearing Committee saw the need for a complete system, a system which would promote and ensure articulation and co-operation among existing resources, facilities, organizations and agencies in education, communications and culture; a sort of super educational/cultural Authority under which all provincial electronic communications would occur. However, this time it would be a distinctly provincial matter, done for provincial objectives, with no deference to federal jurisdiction. It was an independence worthy of Quebec, and based on the use of new non-broadcast electronic communications technologies which Saskatchewan was then arguing fell within provincial rather than federal jurisdiction. A similar argument was going on in British Columbia. While the argument was never fully resolved to the province's satisfaction, it was finally put to bed with federal jurisdiction over cable and satellite distribution as well as traditional broadcasting.

Since it appeared that nobody even tried to estimate the cost of SCAN the vision was never implemented. However, educational television in various forms developed in the province during the 1980s and into the 1990s. A project that began in the fall of 1984 involved the University of Regina in the delivery of credit courses to five centres in southern Saskatchewan. To do this the university used the fibre optics network of SaskTel. Instruction was transmitted live from a classroom on the Regina campus to classrooms in the five communities. This formal instruction service to small communities was expanded in succeeding years and became part of the service offered by a new agency, Saskatchewan Communications Network (SCN) when it was incorporated in the late 1980s.

SCN offers two educational services; the formal, closed circuit, post-secondary courses from the University of Regina, described above; and a traditional provincial educational television service, similar to services in Ontario, Alberta prior to 1995, and British Columbia. The broadcasting service is licensed by the CRTC

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and, while it doesn't have the budget of Ontario, contains the familiar mix of children's programs during the day, classic movies, British drama, a variety of foreign and Canadian documentaries, and talk in prime time. One priority that the service tries to emphasize even with its limited budget is to help fund and then broadcast locally produced documentary programs that reflect the regional character and priorities of the province. The service has no transmitters but is distributed via satellite to cable across the province, and by DTH to the whole province, and like the other provincial services, to the whole country. The funding for SCN comes largely via a yearly government grant, supplemented by on-air-solicitation and a bit of program underwriting.

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## **British Columbia**

The Department of Education in British Columbia, through its audio-visual branch, co-operated with the CBC in producing radio and then television school broadcasts. About half the materials used in the British Columbia schools were produced locally, as well as on a wider western regional basis in co-operation with Alberta, Saskatchewan and Manitoba. About half were part of the CBC's national production activities. During the 1960s, while waiting for a resolution of the federal-provincial impasse over educational broadcasting facilities in the provinces, British Columbia took a very pragmatic view that the immediate educational needs at the local and regional level would dictate the means of transmission used, and, importantly, that any electronic transmission, save traditional over-the-air broadcasting, did not fall within federal jurisdiction. The province persisted in this view far longer than any other province; indeed, well into the operation during the 1980s of the province's educational television service. The Knowledge Network Of The West (KNOW), or just The Knowledge Network as it came to be known, operated for several years, distributed via satellite to cable throughout the province, without a broadcast license from the CRTC. This was later resolved of course, and it now operates under a CRTC license.

The early period saw relatively minimal and rather traditional use of television in education. In 1976, with Alberta, Ontario and Quebec actively involved in educational television, the Ministry of Education initiated three feasibility studies to see how the province could use educational television to better serve the educational needs of a dispersed population in the mountainous province. A common conclusion in each of the studies was the need to provide more educational programs to adults in their home communities. To address this need the provincial government advanced a plan for the development of an open learning enterprise in the province. In 1977 it created the Open Learning Institute to develop and deliver courses of study. This was followed in 1980 with the establishment of the Knowledge Network.

The Knowledge Network of the West Communications Authority was established in May 1980 by a Cabinet Minute under the Societies Act of British Columbia. It was incorporated as a non-profit society. There was no legislation to incorporate it or to outline its function. There was no reference made to the federal government or to the CRTC, although the Authority designation was used to ensure cable carriage and to protect against contingencies. There was not, nor was there until well into the 1980s, any license requested or granted by any federal agency. The Authority and the Network was completely a provincial matter. No broadcast transmitters were used. Distribution was by satellite to cable. The Knowledge Network was the public television service of the Authority and was governed by the Authority's Board of Directors. Until 1985 the Chairman of the Board was also the President and CEO of the Network. These roles were then separated. Members of the Board were drawn from the ranks of government officials, educational institutions and the private sector. All programs and services required Board approval. The Board made

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its decisions based on advice from Learning Systems Working Groups comprised of representatives of the various formal educational constituencies, as well as from network staff. The Authority was accountable to the provincial government through the Minister of Universities, Science and Communications. Funding came from this Ministry and the Ministry of Education.

The role of the Knowledge Network was to work closely with the educational system to ensure that every British Columbian had access to quality educational programming. It was part of the institutional or formal education system of the province and everything it did had to be complementary to the rest of the system. Essentially, the programming mandate for the Network was vested in the institutions. All programs, with the exception of family and children, had to be sponsored (i.e., developed and supported) by an educational institution and/or government ministry. The Network's role was to advise and assist in the production and utilization of the programs and support materials. The result of this structure meant that for many years the broadcast service of the Knowledge Network was much more formal and structured than other provincial services such as TVOntario or Tele-Quebec. For this reason, except for its daytime children's programming, it was of very limited interest to the general public. It operated, in effect, almost like a closed circuit service in delivering formal course of study. And it was probably for this reason that it escaped the scrutiny of the federal broadcast regulator and the federal government.

This began to evolve in the 1990s when the Open Learning Agency of British Columbia was formed, with segments dedicated to open college, open university, and open learning at the secondary school level. All the new electronic delivery systems were used to deliver this learning at a distance throughout the province. Indeed, the Agency had plans to be Canada's premier distance learning institution. The Knowledge Network became one part of the Open Learning Agency, and, while maintaining its connection to and involvement with the formal courses delivered by the Agency, began to pay more attention to open, informal, learning and to better utilize the broadcast service to reach the population in their homes. The result of this was the evolution of a provincial educational broadcasting service much like that of Alberta, prior to 1995, TVOntario, without Ontario's budget, and SCN. This included, and includes, Children's programming during the day, with classic movies, British drama, documentaries and talk in prime time. And, like the other services, it likes to support the work of the province's independent producers with programs that reflect the nature and social character of B.C.

Early in the new century, the government of British Columbia was forced to review its expenditures and decided to close down the Open Learning Agency and transfer its distance education services to other parts of the existing educational system. The question was what to do with the Knowledge Network. While some thought was given to the Alberta model of privatization, in the end the government decided to continue to fund the service, as a traditional provincial public educational broadcaster.

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## **Manitoba**

Commercial broadcasting was introduced in Manitoba in 1922 by the two Winnipeg newspapers. Each operated a radio station. However, the stations lost money and the newspapers suggested to the provincial government that the Manitoba Telephone System (MTS), a provincially owned utility, take over broadcasting in the province. After receiving assurance from the federal government that no commercial stations would be licensed without provincial approval, and after negotiating with Ottawa on a 50-50 split of radio licensing revenues, MTS opened radio station CKY in Winnipeg in March 1923 and CKX in Brandon in 1928. With the passing of the Radio Act in 1932, the federal government determined to regulate the Canadian Broadcasting System and to no longer grant licenses to provincially owned undertakings. Ottawa went back on its assurance in 1933 when it granted a license to a private Winnipeg broadcaster without consulting provincial authorities. For some years Manitoba tried to work within a co-operative framework and carried early CBC programming on its two stations. However, in 1948 it sold CKX to a private consortium and CKY to the CBC.

MTS got back into the broadcasting business in the 1950s by providing microwave service to extend the CBC television network throughout the province. During this period, and later when the CBC was implementing its accelerated coverage plan, MTS provided services at rates below those in other provinces, in order to encourage the extension of broadcast service to more remote areas of the province. In addition to its ownership of microwave facilities, MTS, like SaskTel, owned the cable television wiring in the province. Between 1967 and 1976 Manitoba's ownership of cable precipitated a number of jurisdictional concerns over the regulation of broadcasting (federal jurisdiction) and the responsibility for telecommunication matters of a non-programming nature (provincial jurisdiction). These issues were largely resolved in 1976 when the two governments signed the Canada-Manitoba Agreement on Broadcasting and Telecommunications. This agreement permitted the expansion of cable services through co-operation between MTS and private cable operators licensed by the CRTC.

Manitoba has always seen the CBC as providing the "public broadcasting" service, including what is described by provincial educational broadcasting services in other provinces as "informal" or general interest, adult learning and cultural programming. It has argued that the Corporation should be producing more and originating more in the province, in order to reflect the regional culture. It points to the *Broadcasting Act* to support its case that the national broadcasting service serve "the special needs of geographic regions, and actively contribute to the flow and exchange of cultural and regional information and entertainment." Historically, Manitoba has not been very active in developing public/educational communications. This may be due, at least in part, to the fact that it signed the 1976 agreement and so expected the federal government to look after much of this for it. Like the other provinces, its Department

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of Education co-operated with the CBC in providing schools programming and it distributes learning materials to the schools. The CRTC, for some years, reserved a VHF frequency in Winnipeg in case the province wanted to use it for educational broadcasting, but this was never done. Some tentative steps were taken in the mid-1980s by the Department of Education to use daytime offered by a Winnipeg commercial television broadcaster, but this never developed very far. Essentially, there has been no provincial educational television broadcasting in Manitoba.

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## **The Atlantic Provinces**

Memorial University in Newfoundland was an active centre in the Atlantic region since the 1960s in the production and distribution of educational television programs. It has produced programs for closed circuit use within the campus, for outside use via the university's continuing education division, and has pioneered in using television for distance education and teleconferencing. The government of Newfoundland, through its Department of Education, has co-operated with the other Atlantic provinces in providing educational television programs to schools, and in providing post-secondary programming designed to use in the home and broadcast on the Atlantic Satellite Network (ASN), a satellite-to-cable commercial broadcasting service. As in most other provinces, the Department co-operated with the CBC in providing radio and then television programs to be aired over CBC and commercial stations for use in the schools (K-12). But most of the impetus for public/educational television in Newfoundland over the years has come from the Educational Television Centre of Memorial University. Over the years, proposals have been submitted to the government for everything from a provincial television broadcasting service to the underwriting of the distribution of Memorial University Television to all cable operators on the Island, but to no avail.

Since the early 1960s Nova Scotia's Department of Education was involved in providing educational television programs to teachers and students in classrooms throughout the province. Production facilities owned by the CBC and, beginning in 1974, by the Department of Education, have been used for the production of these programs. The Department's facilities have been used for the production of educational programs for distribution via cable. Videotapes were delivered to the cable operations and teachers scheduled them for their own convenient use. The facilities were also used to produce post-secondary programs for use on the Atlantic Satellite Network.

To a lesser extent, Prince Edward Island and New Brunswick have used videotape and film to provide educational programs in classrooms. There has been some activity in the area of adult and continuing education, co-operating with the other provinces in providing educational programs to the Atlantic Satellite Network, but the majority of programming has been of the traditional schools variety.

Even though all four Atlantic Provinces had been co-operating since the 1950s in the co-production and sharing of media resources, the process that began with the Therrien Committee in 1980 provided a catalyst for creative thinking and prompted more co-operative planning among the provinces. In January 1980 the CRTC announced formation of a committee to study and report on "how the number and variety of television services to northern and remote communities might best and most expeditiously be increased." Nova Scotia's submission to this committee, that same January, urged "that the definition of remote areas



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in the context of extension of services should include those parts of southern Canada that do not now receive adequate television services or any at all.” In October 1980 the CRTC called for applications for the extension of services to remote and underserved communities. The commercial television service, the Atlantic Television Network (ATV) filed an application for ATV-2, which was to be an alternative service providing satellite to cable television programming to the Atlantic region, unscrambled and commercially supported. One distinctive feature of this service, in some ways reminiscent of the NTV national service proposed by Ken Soble many years earlier, and something that had been worked developed in co-operation with all four governments of the Atlantic provinces, was to be four hours each weekday of educational programming. While the number of hours have been reduced over the years, this has been an enduring provider of adult learning opportunities, and is the only educational broadcasting originating in the area. (The TVOntario French service is available in parts of New Brunswick, and all the provincial educational television services are available via DTH.) Various universities still today produce formal credit connected courses for broadcast on this service.

Nova Scotia took the lead in all of these negotiations and planning activities. In April 1980 the government created, by Order-in-Council, the Nova Scotia Educational Communications Authority. It consisted of the Deputy Ministers of Education and Transportation or their designates. The Authority was created for the specific purpose of complying with federal order PC 1970-496, in order to reserve a channel on cable operations for use by the Department of Education or interested school boards. However, since there was never any “broadcast” use, it was never needed. During these early planning stages, although the government of Newfoundland was involved, Memorial University chose not to participate. Memorial still had plans for an independent Newfoundland originated service. There was no opposition to the ATV proposal or to the co-operative effort among the provinces, but because of the history of leadership achieved by the University, the desire persisted to go it alone. Eventually, economic realities made going it alone impossible and the opportunity to participate in an efficient distribution system moved Memorial to co-operate fully. The CRTC hearing was in February 1981 and the decision approving the Atlantic Satellite Network was released in April. It made particular note of the educational time available. Because of difficulties in securing satellite space operations got underway in May 1983 and has been going strong ever since. While there has been some “comings and goings” in the provincial co-operation, educational programs are still being provided, and broadcast mostly during the mornings on the weekend.



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## **National Educational Television Broadcasting – Post 1990**

As we have seen in the previous section on provincial educational television broadcasting, during the 1970s and into the 1980s it developed strictly on the provincial level. Provincial educational communications authorities, “arms-length” public corporations, were established which allowed the CRTC to license provincial educational broadcasters. The only national initiative was through the formation of the Agency for Tele-Education in Canada (ATEC). This was made up of the four major provincial educational communications corporations that operated their own production and distribution systems (Radio-Quebec, TVOntario, ACCESS Network in Alberta, and the Knowledge Network in British Columbia – the Saskatchewan Communications Network joined later). The Agency was established to promote an advance the interests of each member (including co-production and co-acquisition) to provide a national voice to the CRTC on educational broadcasting policy issues, and to establish relations with other national and international broadcasting organizations. ATEC’s success was, and is, very limited, although it remains as a loosely knit association of educational broadcasters.

With the development of specialty television services in the 1980s, delivered nationally via satellite to cable, the latent interest in national educational television re-surfaced. Some of the provincial educational broadcasters, most notably TVOntario, believed their service could and should be extended nationally. This never happened, partly because of the problems and costs of securing national program broadcast rights, but also because, while each provincial educational broadcaster believed it should go national, nobody was prepared to admit another service into its territory, even into those territories that had not educational broadcasting. Provincial jurisdictional jealousies continued to rule the day.

By the early 1990s specialty television was undergoing rapid expansion, in terms of both the importation of U.S. and the licensing of new Canadian specialty services. Preliminary development work for a Canadian national educational television specialty service began in 1991, continued through 1992, and resulted in a formal application to the CRTC in September 1993. The application was by Canadian Learning Television (CLT), a private sector company headed by Ron Keast and Moses Znaimer with CHUM Limited as the majority shareholder. CLT was to be an adult-oriented educational service, emphasizing continuing lifelong learning and including post-secondary course-connected programming. The application included the participation of two of the provincial educational broadcasters, TVOntario and the Knowledge Network of British Columbia. A hearing was held in the winter of 1994 for CLT and a wide range of other specialty television services, none of them educational. Even though there were not competing applications, CLT was not successful. A negative intervention, again on the basis of provincial jurisdiction over education, from Tele-Quebec, even though there was no schools programming, plus the opposition from several provincial teachers’ unions that were opposed to the private sector getting into education, and some

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other licensing issues that arose specifically at this hearing but were not connected directly with the CLT application, doomed this first ever national educational television application.

Because of its belief in the need and the opportunities for a Canadian national educational television service, and because of the practically universal support from post-secondary institutions and other educational organizations and associations from all across Canada CLT re-applied in 1996, this time without the participation of any of the provincial educational broadcasters; indeed, with their covert as well as overt opposition. The reason for the opposition from the provincial broadcasters this time was that in the interim period, during the fall of 1994 and the first part of 1995, as described earlier in section on Alberta, the CLT ownership group, via a new company Learning and Skills Television of Alberta Limited, had purchased and privatized the Alberta provincial educational television service, ACCESS Network. This was the first time in Canadian broadcasting history that a public broadcaster had been privatized. The fact that it happened to a provincial educational broadcaster gave rise to considerable fear on the part of the other provincial broadcasters, including in Ontario where the newly elected Conservative government was promising to follow the Alberta lead. Also, it added to the fear of the teacher' unions that had opposed the original CLT application. Tele-Quebec, this time joined formally by the Saskatchewan Communications Network, opposed the application and the subsequent licensing of CLT on the basis of the same old provincial jurisdictional arguments. They wrote negative interventions, appeared at the hearing to oppose the licensing, and even after the license had been awarded they appealed to the federal cabinet. However, this time CLT was able to convince the CRTC, as well as the cabinet, that these arguments were simply not valid any more.

Canadian Learning Television, Canada's first national educational television broadcaster, a specialty television service distributed via satellite to cable and via DTH to homes, was licensed in 1996 and, after much negotiation with the major cable companies, was launched September 1, 1999. This was Canada's first, and still only, national educational broadcasting service. CLT is working co-operatively with universities and colleges across the country, and with the provincial educational broadcasters. No other provincial educational television broadcaster has been privatized, so ACCESS remains Canada's first and only private-sector provincial educational television broadcaster.

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This paper was written by Dr. Ronald G. Keast. Most of the early references were taken from a study done by him for the Federal Task Force On Broadcasting Policy in January 1986. All formal references are available in this study, *The Role Of The Provinces In Public Broadcasting*, Contract No. 36100-5-0378.

Dr. Keast has over 40 years experience as a broadcaster and educator. Following some early experience at CKBB radio and CKVR-TV in Barrie, from 1957 to 1964 he worked as a producer/director at CHCH-TV in Hamilton. As well as a wide variety of entertainment, news and public affairs programs, he was responsible for the first university credit course offered via television in Canada, in co-operation with McMaster University. As Director of Audio-Visual Communications for McMaster University from 1964 to 1973, Dr. Keast established and managed one of the first successful closed-circuit television and audio visual operations in Canada. During this period he also produced, directed and sometimes acted as host for educational programs, usually in co-operation with McMaster University. While working at CHCH-TV and McMaster, Dr. Keast earned his B.A., M.A., and then in 1974 his Ph.D. degree from McMaster. In 1973 he joined TVOntario, first as Director of Open Sector programming and then as General Manager of English-language programming. From 1980 to 1988 he was Chair of the School of Radio and Television Arts at Ryerson. From 1987 to 1994 he was President and CEO of Vision TV, responsible for establishing and launching this new national specialty television service in 1988, its operation and successful growth. In 1994 he became President and CEO of Learning and Skills Television of Alberta Limited (LTA), which became known as Access Media Group, and led the team that privatized ACCESS, developed and launched Canadian Learning Television and then two digital national channels, BookTelevision and Court TV Canada, as well as several learning businesses. Dr. Keast retired as President and CEO in August 2005, but remains on the LTA Board and acts as a consultant to the company.

