

Canadian radio- television and telecommunications commission (crtc) evaluation



Out with the old, In with the New Canadian Content Requirements

In 1968, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications commission (CRTC) came about as part of the Canadian Broadcasting Act. The purpose of this act is to serve as an administrative technique to meet the needs and standards of Canadian citizens regarding broadcasting, while still upholding Canadian culture. This provision states all the rules pertaining to the amount of coverage that must be Canadian, either produced by Canadians or in Canada. Another role of the CRTC is to regulate the internet and radio. There are strict rules in place relating to this law. However, in the most recent years, these regulations have become less relevant as many Canadians wish to have more access to certain programming, and the freedom to stream, watch, or listen to whatever they want. In order to satisfy the needs of Canadian consumers, Canadian content requirements must be altered. These regulations result in the misuse of economic and financial resources, while denying many people the freedom to watch what they want. For the purpose of staying relevant in present day, the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission must be reviewed and modified.

One of the main problems that the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications commission presents is that it can lead to financial losses because of misallocation of resources. This is because producers will often put re-runs of their shows on and use content that is not of the highest standards just to meet the requirements of the CRTC. As a result of this, consumers choose not to watch the programs because they do not satisfy their needs. In the article *An Economic Analysis of Canadian Content Regulations and a New Proposal* the authors offer a solution to this problem.

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“ A new policy tool, transferable quotas, allows quotas to be sold by the government, and to be bought and sold by broadcasters” (Shedd, William, & Burch, 1990). What this means is that the government of Canada has a high chance of earning revenue, and in turn companies can sell their quotas so that premium content can be aired at the most significant times. With high quality content being premiered at the times where viewers are most likely to watch, more money is likely to be generated. The suggestion of the buying and selling of quotas proves that there are inadequate regulations in place.

Another problem with the CRTC is that only certain amounts of money can be spent on Canadian and foreign content. Most producers are profit driven so instead of focusing on what they are producing, they focus on the amount of revenue they can generate from each program. This takes away from the consumer. There is limited access to what they can watch because of this. Sports play a big role in the lives of many Canadians, but, there is limited access to many of the games. For example, with the National Basketball Association, many of the games are not aired on Canadian channels. The guidelines to qualify as Canadian programming are as follows. The broadcast must be produced by Canadians and broadcast by Canadians and if the game or event is being played outside of the country, it must represent a team from Canada or Canadian athletes (Acheson & Maule, 1990). If there are other games being played but these regulations aren't met, it just leads to people trying to find other ways to watch through means such as, illegal streaming.

This problem exists in Canada but is noted from people all over the world. In European countries there was a proposal to add a commission in place that is very similar to the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission. The authors provide a plethora of reasons as to why these regulations are not beneficial. Acheson and Maule start by saying that the new technologies that have come with satellite dishes and other the other alternative that are outside regular broadcasting can be used as a way to bypass the CRTC. When producing films and shows in other countries with multiple partners, it becomes very messy and confusing of knowing who the credit belongs to. A commission like the CRTC would only add to this problem (Acheson & Maule, 1992). Ultimately, the European nations decided against this and it is clear why they did. The commission can add unnecessary governance to an area of entertainment in which people would be unhappy with and there are multiple ways that people can get around the laws of the commissions set in place by using the tools of streaming. If other are countries are looking at Canada to see an example of government content regulations and see a problem, those living in Canada will be able to recognize it too.

The CRTC was created in a time where the internet was not an important factor. Today, the internet provides people unlimited access to millions of resources, so the regulations must accommodate this. In the article *Canadian Broadcasting Policy for a World of Abundance* the author says, "major media companies argue that new media, particularly the internet, provides a strong counterbalance to consolidation in the television, radio, and newspaper sectors since Internet video, podcasting, and blogging deliver

similar content from a diverse array of sources” (Geist, 2007). The author brings up an important point saying that the introduction of these new services begs for a revamp of the current CRTC regulations.

Along with the increased use of the internet today’s society comes the introductions of streaming sites such as, Netflix and Hulu. Considered the future of broadcasting, these platforms pose a threat to regular cable and satellite. One of the main objectives of the CRTC is to encourage and promote Canadian cultures but these websites make it harder to safeguard this. The licensing section of the CRTC is how they intend to do so. In the article *High Noon at the CRTC*, the author suggests that to ensure Canadian talent and Canadian broadcasting are prioritized, one must have a licensing deal and in order to keep that agreement, all rules must be followed. (Doyle, 2011). Instead of trying to find a way to prohibit Netflix and other similar sites, the CRTC should find a way to better incorporate these resources into their act so that instead of trying to compete against them they can increase revenue and appease their consumers. In *Strengthening Canadian Television Content: Creation, Discovery, and Export in a Digital World*, the authors provide valid arguments as to why the CRTC is flawed. If television that is streamed over the internet grows at a steady rate like it is today, the amount of regulated Canadian content will face a problem. If sites like Netflix are not regulated, Canadian broadcasters will be at an unfair disadvantage and will struggle to stay relevant if foreign services face no taxes (Hunter, Engelhart, & Miller, 2017). If Canadian providers continue to face this problem, it will be almost impossible for them to compete against foreign streaming sites.

The CRTC has been in place for 50 years. Over time these ideas turn into traditions. The problems with traditions are that people are often scared to stray away from them and make their own new rules. This is one of the problems that can be seen in the CRTC, people are comfortable with it and are afraid to go outside of the norm. In an article by Patricia Goff and Barbara Jenkins, about reexamining Canadian cultural policy they say that there are many different ways to approach cultural policy. To begin there are many people who rather follow guidelines because of their traditional and nostalgic feelings. Because of this there is no evolution in cultural goals (Goff, & Jenkins, 2006). It is important to be able to expand and grow in all aspects of life, especially when technology is involved. Every year, new models of different devices come out with new software. This makes it crucial to advance the administrations because if everything else in the world is advancing, and the CRTC stays the same, it will not be compatible with the rest of society and their technologies.

There is no doubt that there is need for the Canadian Radio-Television Telecommunications Commission. What this does not mean is that it can stay how it is. In order to support Canadians, the CRTC must be used within a certain limitation and it must support the relevance of today's world. In *A Matter of choice: toward a more creative Canadian policy culture*, the author says, " the definition of Canadian content used for tax, subsidy, or broadcasting content rules should be less focused on Canadian ownership and production expenditures per se, and more on Canadian creative output and Canadian interests" (Schwanen, 1997). When the focus is shifted from the monetary side of things and the government really starts focusing on

what the people want, that is when the potential to generate excess revenue and satisfy Canadians comes about. People are willing to watch programs and support homegrown initiatives if they serve a purpose.

As previously mentioned, in order for content to be considered Canadian it must meet the specific requirements. The MAPL standing for: Music, Artist, Producer, Lyrics section of the CRTC is what governs these regulations for music. For a song or musical composition to be deemed Canadian it must fulfill two of the following requirements. The music must be created by a Canadian, the lyrics must be mostly performed by a Canadian, the performance has to be in Canada and broadcast live in Canada, and the lyrics must be written by a Canadian (The Government of Canada, 2009). For example, when Brian Adams, a famous Canadian singer and songwriter found out that his songs on his new album did not qualify to be played on the radio as Canadian content he was furious. It seems bizarre that a song written by a Canadian, would not be classified as Canadian. Adams recommends going to the United States to produce songs because one will get a better deal and will never be accused of being unpatriotic (Edwardson, 2008, p. 4). The MAPL regulations are driving Canadian artists away. Why would an artist put in time and money on producing content that could potentially not be recognized by their native country? This is a clear example of how modifying the regulations of the CRTC would benefit every party involved. A revision would make Canadian artists want to produce content, it would give consumers quality content thus resulting in profit.

Nowadays, there is a wide variety of platforms for people to access Canadian content. Whether it be regarding music or television these media forms can <https://assignbuster.com/canadian-radio-television-and-telecommunications-commission-crtc-evaluation/>

be reached internationally and nationally in Canada with the use of the internet. In the article *Radio Free Canada*, the author suggests convergence to remove all foreign restrictions, to partner with institutions all over the world so that content can be shared globally along with regular updates of the CRTC supporting cultural growth (Munro, 2013). Munro's article provides ways that the CRTC can be modified so that it becomes compatible with the shifts of society and technology. These new forms of technology should be capitalized on instead of taken for granted.

It is evident that the current regulations in the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission are not suitable for the target audience in today's society. As a result of the inadequate regulations there is a loss in economic profit, along with the restriction of materials that Canadians have access to. These problems hinder the advancement and growth of Canadian content. However, with the right modifications this can be reversed. In order to keep the CRTC applicable in today's day and age, the requirements must be modified.

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