

Telecom Policy Review

What's it all about?

Communications in Canada

Telecommunications Act -- Industry Canada

Broadcasting Act -- Canadian Heritage

CRTC -- regulator of industries operating in these areas.

The CRTC reports to Canadian Heritage but Industry Canada, through its power in Cabinet, appears to hold a dominant position.

CRTC decisions can be overruled or sent back for reconsideration by the “Governor in Council” i.e. the federal cabinet.

History since last review of Telco Act -- 1973

Attempts to deal with recent technological changes:

IHAC vers. 1-4 -- 1994-97-- “not talking about the internet”

- major players -- industry
- Major recommendation: don't interfere with the market

CRTC Convergence Hearing -- 1994

- major players -- industry (although public interest groups did make a bit of a splash)
- major recommendation: don't interfere with the market

What has happened in the meantime?

Generalized access to the Internet

-- the birth of ISP's

The birth of the web

-- the world at our fingertips

Expansion of broadband

-- finally the "killer app"

Telecom deregulation

Free Trade (1988) and more free trade

Where are we now?

TPRP Review -- 2005 -- initiated by Emerson (Liberal?)

Major players: Industry

Major recommendation: don't interfere with the market

New government in power -- appears to be ready to move on this file (despite the fact that it is not one of their 5 priorities)

-- likes the panel recommendations

Pressures on the panel

Convergence, convergence, convergence -- broadcasting and telco.

Foreign ownership rules

Network neutrality

Free trade rules

Very few resources and very little time to consider such a large question -- limited consultations

Limited mandate -- look for a regulatory environment that serves consumers & businesses

What have we got to lose?

Parts of Section 7 of the Telecommunications Act:

- promote the ownership and control of Canadian carriers by Canadians (deleted)
- promote the use of Canadian transmission facilities for telecommunications within Canada and between Canada and points outside Canada (deleted)
- stimulate research and development in Canada in the field of telecommunications and encourage innovation in the provision of telecommunications services (deleted)

A big omission!!

Deleted from Section 7 of the Telecommunications Act:

- telecommunications performs an essential role in the maintenance of Canada's identity and sovereignty
- Section 7a – goal of the telecommunications sector is to serve the social and economic development needs of Canada.

Who's winning and who's losing?

Canadians might have the luxury of viewing communications as a work of high art, but Americans don't wear cultural blinkers: **communications is war.**" (Arthur Kroker. "Hacking the Future")

Canadians losing the ability to pursue a "made in Canada" communications policy

Convergence means that carriers are also content creators.

If the carriers are American-based, they will create content for the largest market.

If you think about it...

Roads are useful because they get you somewhere. The road is about who you meet on the way and what you will do at the other end.

Telecom Policy is really about relationships, networks

... the facilitation of knowing and collaboration in a knowledge society.

(yet in 392 pages the phrase “knowledge based society” is only used once, and the phrase “community based” is only used 3 times.)

A new paradigm - missed

Railroads were originally held in the public domain

Roads still are held in the public domain – essential to local economic development

Dollars are increasingly being made on services and content that ride on the Internet, yet the panel exclusively focuses on infrastructure

Four Layers

Pipe

IP

Applications Layer

Services Layer

What have we done so far?

Before the report was released:

TC submissions to TPRP

CRACIN submissions to TPRP

Both highlighted the “public good” nature of telecommunications and specifically the Internet and the need to retain our own perspective on this issues

What the Minister Does Not Have

Is a blueprint for how, in a knowledge-based society, the uses of information and communications technologies can be made to serve Canada's socio-economic development.

It is not about technology.

It is about the use of technology.

What do we need?

What do you think is needed for the Internet to become a true economic driver for everyday Canadians?

What is needed for you to create and grow online?

I need _____ to do _____ in my community so that _____ will happen.

What is our role in effecting these changes?

A next step....

Alternative Telecommunications Policy Forum

October 19(evening), 20-21

Victoria Park Suites

Ottawa, ON

An opportunity to create a broad based response to the report:

50 - 60 people representing various public interest and community groups

Strategy (still under consideration) for pre-conference on-line discussions