

It is time to get down to work folks – we need a vision for Canada and methinks telcom policy could be at the core.

CAP sites want to engage in the telecom policy stuff & we have to figure out how to make the language accessible.

So much is about bandwidth and penetration. I think we miss the point. I am not saying these things are not important – I just want to refocus for 10 minutes.

Telecom policy is really about people.

- not industry
- not technology

Telephone Policy needs to consider that many, far to many of the working poor cant afford phones – still today. And many communities in the north are just getting them – seriously – THE PHONE

So lets talk about the internet.

To ensure Canadians had access we created – through policy – CAP, the community access program.

Motherhood and apple pie – in the bosom of Industry Canada – CRAP, they thought – what do we do with this? The answer was tours and balloons!

But don't get me wrong – the local IC Staff – get it – big time and have been our greatest advocates.

Because they did not get it they did NOTHING and thank god because look what happened.

You See CAP is about:

- access – well yes
  - o (and we have in Canada a larger footprint than Starbucks and Tim Hortons Combined!) – but not really
- Adoption of Technology – well yes
  - o CAP Networks leverage \$150 million in order to meet the needs of the “digital divide” dare I say the Poor.
- Networks – sure
  - o In some cases broadband access, certainly pooled resources.

BUT IT IS REALY ABOUT SOCIAL CAPITAL – and CAP has been a catalyst to create it.

Telecom policy is about Social Capital.

When people get online – in an open system – the same types of things happen that happened with CAP. (So I am not talking about just a program)

So – how does that work.

WELL

- 3,600 cap sites leverage over 20,000 partnerships. Each of those has a board of directors of 10 and average staff of 5 – what's that 300,000 decision makers!
- Federal contributions to the operation of ACCESS ONLY represent only about 50% of the costs of operation (and number is decreasing)
- They still exist – after a 50% cut 2 years ago, and a further 25% this year, with money lagging up to one year behind.

WHO PAYS FOR THIS?

WHO COVERS THE CASH FLOW?

WHO HAS PAID THE BILL FOR 12 YEARS?

300,000 decision makers – that is who.

WHY DO THEY DO IT?

Because it is not simply about access.

It is not simply about Adoption (we raised the money to cover that one)

IT IS ABOUT SOCIAL CAPITAL.

– that is why they do it.

Where else exists regional and neighbourhood networks that are cross sectoral – think about where cap sites are – libraries, health centres, legal clinics, employment agencies, settlement organizations.

WOW – THIS IS HORIZONTAL MANGEMENT AT ITS BEST – but not controlled by government – in the hands of communities. Silo busting at its best. Citizen engagement at an amazing level, Community Economic Development at its core.

And upon reflecting on Shelia Copps – well quite frankly – these groups know how to make noise when the money runs dry. We need to leverage this – and why not add a few artists in the mix.

300,000 decision makers is significant.  
20,000 partner are relevant

So how do we do it ... well I would agree with Monica from the Cdn Council of the Arts

People matter more than structures. And somewhere in the mix we should have access to decision makers

But structures matter – it creates a lens and sets up a dynamic.

CAP RESTS WITH INDUSTRY CANADA BECAUSE IT IS CENTRAL TO TELECOM POLICY.

TELECOM POLICY IS BEING DEFINED IN TERMS OF THE NEEDS OF INDUSTRY BECAUSE IT RESTS WITH INDUSTRY CANADA...

BUT

Telecom policy is only relevant if Canadians:

- adopt technology
- innovate with technology.

We NEED NEW POLICY BENCHMARKS – and CAP proves the point because it exceeded outcomes at every level.

We need benchmarks that address the uses of the infrastructure – not the infrastructure itself.

SO CAP IS SLATED TO END

WILL ACCESS DIE FOR MARGINALIZED POPULATIONS DIE ?

- not that much – more in rural areas.

But what a waste

Think about the agony that goes into one partnership  
= multiply that by 20,000 – yes 20,000

Think about the power of the cross sectoral relationships.

And CAP has innovated far beyond its mandate.

- the third sectors technology needs are far more sophisticated and integrated than the private sector. Trust me – it's a triple bottom line.

So who are the allies in trying to change Telecom Policy.....Mmmmm

When those of us working at the grass roots, us 70's retreads (I am actually a conservative 80's retread) look at Telecom Policy we have four questions

- 1) Will Market Forces pay, even 50% of the cost of access for marginalized populations?
- 2) Will market forces leverage and nurture 20,000 relationships to ensure proper adoption of technologies?
- 3) Will market forces cough up 150 million to do the job and enable innovation and adoption?
- 4) Will market forces tackle the technology needs of the 3<sup>rd</sup>/voluntary sector?

The current telecom policy walks away from a decade of social capital development.

Social Capital – that is ready for and on the brink of innovation at a scale that will surpass your wildest expectations.

For \$25 Million we are going to throw it away.

I hope not.

But Probably – unless we can change our language

Unless we can redefine things in terms that are relevant and in terms people understand.

We need a vision for Canada – perhaps as the most active internet users in the world – and not the ones with the biggest pipe. Not just receiving information – contributing.

I have had enough of the big boys and their pipe envy.

I am fed up with the techno mumbo jumbo.  
Its time to get back to work.

People are shooting each other in my community – I work in Toronto at the foot of shotgun ally.

Telecom Policy is relevant to us – I need the tools to show others how it is. I need a vision drive their action.

I need to define the policy in terms of USE – they will get that.

As my hero Winnie the Pooh wisely pointed out “I am a bear of little brain and big words bother me”

So please help....

Explain to me why the sky is falling.

Show me a Canada that leverages the pipe.

Develop policies that show how lives will change.

Together we can nail the vision.

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