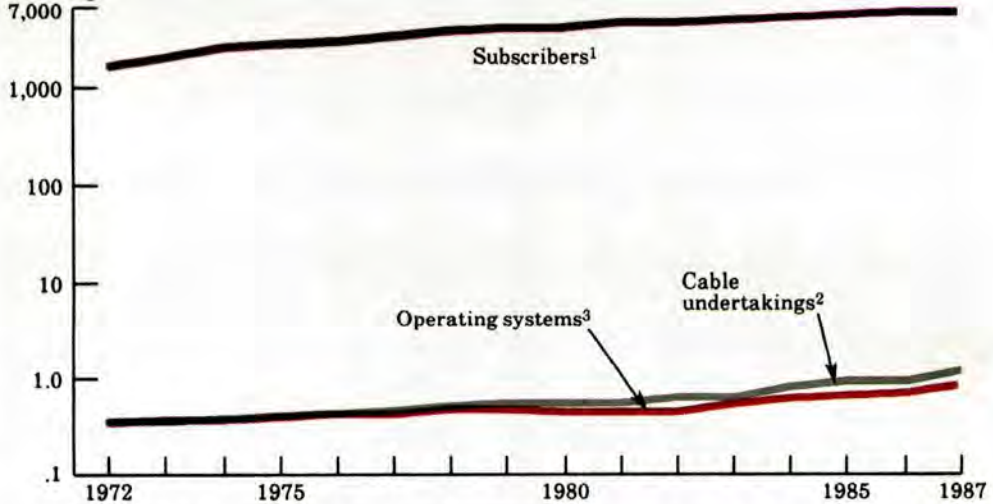


Chart 14.2

Growth of cable television in Canada

Number in thousands
(semi-logarithmic scale)



¹ 1987 subscriber data are estimates.

² 1983 figure excludes Cancom.

³ Systems that submit an annual return.

Cable television has spread steadily throughout the country and beyond its borders. In 1986, it was available to four out of five Canadian homes, and three out of five households subscribed. The country has close to 1,000 licensed cable operators, and cable penetration in some Canadian cities has reached 89%.

A cable-TV system consists of a head end (comprised of satellite down-links, antennas for assured reception of TV signals and studio facilities) and cable passing to the homes in a given area. Service drops are used to connect a subscriber's TV set with the cable.

A major reason for the popularity of cable service is that it offers excellent reception of an ever-increasing variety of programming, including basic and specialty services. For example, some cable companies, providing 35 channels in 1986, were preparing for expansion to as many as 54 channels.

Special news and weather channels, university channels offering credit courses, parliamentary coverage, multicultural service, channels with captions or sign-language for the hearing-impaired and shopping channels are available to Canadian cable subscribers, in addition to public and private networks from Canada and the United States.

By the mid-1980s, over 270 community channel studios each produced an average of five hours per day of original programming, or, on a national basis, about 1,300 hours of programming daily. The proliferation of community channels is the result of regulations made by the federal regulatory body, the CRTC. In 1968, regulatory responsibility for the cable television industry passed from the Ministry of Transport to the Canadian Radio-Television Commission, which was renamed the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) in 1976 when it was given the additional responsibility for regulating telecommunications.

Discretionary services were first licensed by the CRTC in 1982. By 1986, over 90% of Canadian cable subscribers could pay additional monthly fees to receive such services as movie channels, the MuchMusic rock video service, and The Sport Network (TSN). About one in five cable households subscribed to one or more discretionary service.

Satellite transmission. Canada also pioneered satellite distribution of television signals. Hermes, the communications technology satellite launched in 1976, was a milestone in Canadian space history. Its innovations, including telehealth, tele-education and direct broadcasting by