

16.2.1 Cable television

Basically, cable television is an antenna system linked to the individual subscriber's set by cable through a series of amplifiers, making it possible to bring in signals he could not otherwise obtain. Cable systems are capable of carrying AM and FM radio as well as VHF and UHF television signals. For this service, the subscriber customarily pays an installation fee and a monthly rental of about \$5. In 1972 there were 344 licensed cable television systems operating in Canada. The largest number, 131, was in Quebec with 108 in Ontario and 65 in British Columbia. These systems were operated by 268 cable television companies with 1,346,783 direct subscribers and 342,552 indirect subscribers.

Cable television is recognized as an integral part of the Canadian broadcasting system and policies and regulations that concern it must take into account the effects on other aspects of the national system. Cable television systems (CATV) are operated by private companies, each of which must be approved technically by the Department of Communications and licensed by the CRTC.

In July 1971 the CRTC announced its policy on cable television, emphasizing its mandate to provide the best possible service and widest choice from every source for the Canadian viewer. It is recognized that cable television provides an improved picture quality and extends the service area of companies dealing with broadcast transmissions. It has given viewers a greater variety of programs and has made possible a greater information flow. The policy established the composition of the basic services that cable television must provide, including CBC and other Canadian local and regional stations, a community channel and, where requested by provincial authorities, access for educational programming. The CRTC will authorize cable television systems to carry distant stations using microwave or other electronic communication systems which technically extend the receiving system. However, the number of channels carrying signals which are received by microwave from commercial stations not licensed by the Commission will generally be limited to three. The CRTC may limit the authorization to fewer of these signals if it considers that local television service would otherwise be jeopardized.

The capacity of cable television systems to import distant signals can fragment local audiences and can have an adverse effect on local broadcasting outlets. Cable systems take programs off-the-air from locally licensed television stations and distribute them in numerous other areas without contributing to the production cost of these programs. The CRTC has concluded that cable television systems should pay for the Canadian programs and services received over the air by buying additional Canadian programs from local and regional licensees as well as from network sources for play or replay on their systems, thus providing additional exposure for Canadian programs. A policy of program deletion and replacement, where identical programs are scheduled by stations already serving the community, will enable stations already licensed to serve an area to regain their portion of the local audience without reducing or restricting viewer choice. The CRTC also encourages a similar policy for commercial messages. Although cable licensees will not be permitted to sell advertising, they may remove the commercial content of signals not licensed to serve Canada and insert replacement commercial messages sold by Canadian television stations.

16.2.2 Television broadcasting

Television programming began in Canada in 1952 in Montreal and Toronto, and colour broadcasting in 1966. Of the estimated 6.3 million households in the country, approximately 6.0 million are equipped with one or more television sets. An estimated 33.2% of Canadian households had colour television sets in 1973 with highest colour ownership in Alberta at approximately 40%, and lowest in Newfoundland at 15%. Two of the four Canadian television networks are operated by the CBC, one in English and one in French. The other networks are the English-language network of the CTV Television Network Limited which extends across Canada, and the French-language network TVA, at present serving only Quebec. In addition, the CRTC has licensed a third Canadian television network, Global Communications Limited, which began operations on January 1, 1974. Initially, this network will cover Ontario.

As at December 31, 1972 Canada had 100 originating television stations, and 418 rebroadcasting stations. The CBC owned and operated 19 English- and 10 French-language originating stations, as well as 108 English and 28 French rebroadcasting stations. There were 36 privately owned English-language affiliates of the CBC, with 152 rebroadcasting stations,