Media & Communications
Vancouver Olympics 2010

• A media event which united Canada
• “Canada” as an athletic performance
• Led to other Olympic phenomena
  • Synchronised flushing
Water Consumption in Edmonton During Olympic Gold Medal Hockey Game

Customer Water Demand, ML

- 28-Feb
- 27-Feb

Events:
- End of First Period
- End of Second Period
- End of Third Period
- Canada Wins
- Medal Ceremony

Dates and Times:
- 28-Feb-10 12:00
- 28-Feb-10 13:00
- 28-Feb-10 14:00
- 28-Feb-10 15:00
- 28-Feb-10 16:00
- 28-Feb-10 17:00
- 28-Feb-10 18:00
Media & Communications

• Why is this geographical?
  • About connections between places
  • About how media/communications transforms place

• Federal government regulates transport and communication systems
Canadian Media

- Print Media
  - Newspapers, Magazines
- Broadcast Media
  - Radio, TV
- New Media
  - Internet
The Media

• Term coined by Marshall McLuhan

• Much influenced by economic historian H A Innis
McLuhan

• The forms the media take are more important than the messages they carry
  • “the medium is the message”
• McLuhan’s kids were supposed to mail of his latest manuscript
  • “The Medium is the Message”
• But they miss-labelled it “Medium is the Massage”
  • McLuhan liked it, and changed his title
McLuhan

• Compared to books, most network TV content originates from only a small number of urban centres
• So TV tends to promote the values, attitudes of these few places
McLuhan’s Tetrad of New Media

- New media enhance something
  - MP3s appear to enhance the listeners’ choice
- New media obsolesce something
  - MP3s diminish the commercial empire of recorded music
- New media retrieve something lost
  - MP3s revive the importance of live performance
- New media reverse something
  - MP3s reverse a previous trend towards listeners becoming passive. They can create cultural content
Creating Canada

• Canada a product of imperialism, pragmatism
  • communications vital to this
  • As McLuhan would argue
• Its sense of nation emerges after Confederation
One View

• The media a powerful producer of a distinct Canadian culture
Another View

• The media a powerful means of Canada’s assimilation into US culture
• C D Howe reads *Time*
Mass Media

- First mass medium:
  - The urban daily newspaper
Victorian Newspapers

- numerous, local, small circulation
- short (4 pages)
- weekly
- small businesses
- Politically/religiiously partisan
Later C19th, early C20th

• development of mass readership
  • Creation of widespread literacy
  • cheap paper
  • cheap graphic printing
  • Advertising, especially national brand advertising, chain & department stores
• Toronto Star 12 June 1900 p. 8
  • 1.5 full page Eaton’s ads in an 8-page paper
Circulation Growth

Montreal Star
- 1880: 15,000
- 1890: 30,000
- 1900: 57,000
- 1920: 106,000

Toronto Telegram
- 1878: 5,000
- 1889: 25,000
- 1920: 94,000
Early C20th Urban Newspaper

- Multiple daily papers in each city
- Builds to 30-40 pages daily by 1920s, two sections
- Full of graphics, cartoons, photos
- Specialty reporters, departments
- Vital for marketing campaigns of stores
1910-1920

• Mergers, closures and the creation of newspaper chains
  • Southam
• Creation of national print advertising media
• Creation of national wire service
  • standardized coverage
• Creation of a national billboard system
  • E L Ruddy
• E L Ruddy, the billboard king of Canada
Billboards

• Haphazard systems of urban bill-posting in Victorian times
  • Crude, unsightly
  • Print-focussed, not visual
  • Non-standard sizes
• E L Ruddy creates a large-scale standardised billboard system, and offers it to national advertisers, early 1900s
  • Ads become more visual
Visual Consumption

• Early C20th urban audiences were the first to be bombarded with mass-produced visual imagery
  • Illustrated newspapers, magazines
  • Illustrated billboards, advertising cards
  • Silent movies, newsreels
  • Urban landscapes, cultural life being transformed by the visual image
Visual Consumption

• Beauty regimes of Victorian women focussed on cleansing the skin
• By 1920 women being bombarded with mass-circulated images of ideal feminine beauty
  • In magazines, newspapers, movies
• 1920s women start wearing mass-produced and mass-marketed make-up
• Visual media changed how women thought of their bodies
Back in 1901 when Toronto’s Skyline “From the Bay” revealed only two buildings of 10 storeys or more . . .

In the rapidly altering skyline of Toronto we have had our share.
Newspapers & geography

• Strong local traditions
  • small towns lose out to big cities
  • Small town papers unable to compete on visual content
• But difficult to create a “national newspaper”
  • But Toronto Globe tries
Expansion of Print Media

• Generates huge demand for Canadian pulp & paper
• US companies become big players in pulp, paper and power developments in the Canadian north in the 1910s-1920s
  • Iroquois Falls ON, Kapuskasing ON ....
National Newspapers

• Globe & Mail goes national from 1980 with satellite system
  • branch printing, regional bureaux
• National Post launched 1990s
  • required creation of national media giant
  • Floundering despite being on life support long-term
• Nationalism of national newspapers is questionable
CONRAD BLACK STEPS DOWN AS HEAD OF HOLLINGER...

WHAT DO THEY MEAN BY UNAUTHORIZED PAYMENTS? I AUTHORIZED THEM...
Magazines

• Cheap mass-marketed national magazines emerge in USA in 1890s

• Develop large circulation in Canada
  • *Saturday Evening Post* 1907 60,000 copies in Canada
  • Mid 1920s: US magazines outsell Canadian magazines 8:1 in Canada
Canadian Magazines

• Successful trade publications
  • *Canadian Grocer*
• Remodelled as *MacLean’s* in 1911
• *Chatelaine*
  • Launched 1928
• *Saturday Night*
  • Founded 1887, remodelled 1925
Canadian Magazines

• Achieved mass audience 1930-35 under tariff protection
• US magazines dominant otherwise
  • even with postal subsidies
Radio

- Wireless telegraphy in Toronto by 1906
- Broadcasting begins 1910s-1920s
  - 4 radio stations in York County by 1914
- End of 1920s: stations in all Canadian cities
Radio

- Early national radio hook-ups via US phone lines
- Canadians listen to CBS and NBC mostly in 1920s
  - NBC, CBS buy Canadian stations
- Newspapers shut Canadian radio stations out of news wire services
- Newspapers acquire radio stations
Radio

- CNR begins broadcasts 1923
  - First national network broadcasts
  - Cultural content
  - Connected to tourism promotion
  - Takes TSO national in 1929
Radio

• Grass-roots movement to control Canadian radio in 1920s
  • exclude US programming
  • regulate religious broadcasters
Aird Commission 1928

- Recommends creation of a Crown Corporation to operate national radio broadcasting
  - supported by user fees, advertising
Opposition

• Private radio broadcasters
• Major industrial corporations
Creation of CRBC 1932

• Forerunner of CBC
• Establish high-power transmitters, national network
• National phone link 1932 means all-Canada route for broadcasts
• By 1933 2.5 hours of national network broadcasting each day
CBC

- Created 1936
- Main medium forging a national consciousness
- Remains important especially for non-metropolitan audiences
Radio

- National AM radio network from the 1930s
- National FM radio network launched Nov 1975
  - Anchored by Peter Gzowski
TV

- American imports from 1948
- CBC enters the field from 1949
  - broadcasts from 1952
  - National network from 1959 (microwave links)
TV

• Inner-city Toronto becomes crucial for CBC TV drama and current affairs programming, panel shows

• Strong links to Stratford Festival, Crest Theatre on Mount Pleasant

• North Toronto/Bloor Yorkville/Cabbagetown/St Jamestown emerge as residential areas for actors and TV creatives
  • Helps anchor 1960s gentrification
TV

- Very rapid take-up of TV in Canada
  - twice as fast as in USA
- Very rapid take-up of Cable TV in Canada
TV

- Strong audience preference for US dramas, entertainment
  - Canadian sports and news
  - Canadian kids shows
- US multinationals purchase much of the advertising
- Canadian TV networks flourish on US content
Satellite Communications

• Equatorial positions are best for satellites
• International allocation of satellite orbital slots is allocated by longitude
  • Canada has a lot of longitude
• Canada’s satellite slots can also serve the USA
  • Lucrative
Satellite Communications

• Broadcast use of satellites well established by the 1970s
• Hamilton’s CHCH-TV became one of the first to distribute via satellite
  • For a while CHCH-TV evening news became the “most watched” in Winnipeg MB
• Bandwidth limited
Satellite Communications

- Satellites also handle long distance phone traffic
  - National, international
- Toronto to London UK passes through only a couple of switching stations
  - Makes long distance phone quite cheap
- Most oceanic call traffic via cable
Media Empires

• Newspaper chains acquired radio, TV stations
  • John Basset’s *Telegram* acquires CFTO-TV in the 1960s

• Media convergence:
  • Rogers
  • BCE/Globemedia

• The empire building continues
  • Telus trying to become a TV carrier
Media Empires

• The recent fuss over saving local TV
  • TV companies want a subsidy from the cable companies
• But Cable companies own most of the TV stations
• Advertising revenues in recession are not covering the costs of leveraged takeovers in the industry
• All connected to media empire-building
Internet

• From 1990 fibre-optic phone trunk Vancouver to Halifax
• Some satellite links
  • Expensive, bandwidth limited
• Deregulation of telecoms means that Canadian internet access is largely run out of the USA
Internet

• At one time most internet traffic went through big public networks

• Brian Tobin (industry minister in the Chretien government) proposed a national public internet backbone to boost Canada’s web presence
  • never built
Internet

• In recent years the traffic has changed
  • Becoming dominated by video, audio feeds
  • These require fast connections
• Convergence of TV, Cable, telephone well under way
  • Netflix is killing Blockbuster
• Cloud computing, web-based applications will dominate
  • Must be on-line to compute at all
Internet

• Connection speeds are still slow in North America
  • Up to 10 megabits/second in theory
• Bell Sympatico promised 7 megabits/second
  • Delivered 3.5 most of the time
• South Korea already offering 100 megabits/second as standard
  • Our networks will have to be expanded, rebuilt
Internet

• The routing structure is changing
• Big, public networks are being bypassed by major private players
  • Google moves most of its data through its own private network
• Major players connecting directly to each other
  • Peering together in “meet-me” rooms
Internet

• Changing architecture of the web suggests that busy hubs will become busier
• All electronic media and communications will soon depend on vast, expensive private networks
• Diminishing Canada’s ability to regulate
• Budget for one Netflix show exceeds the total annual budget for CBC English-language programming
Internet

• Legacy of the key network infrastructure being telephone-based
• Major telephone hubs become key points of internet accessibility
  • Ideal for server farms
• Urban neighbourhoods around phone hubs become key internet spaces
  • Toronto’s Two Kings
Internet

- Gets blamed for media shifts
- Clever people get much of their news from the internet
  - Ceasing to buy newspapers, watch network TV
- Remember McLuhan’s tetrad:
  - Enhance, obsolesce, retrieve, reverse
Internet

- Newspapers, TV face leveraged capitalism
  - Bought out, merged, milked for cash
  - Content downgraded
Internet

- Australian survey estimates 55% of newspaper articles originate from public relations entities
  - Newspapers essentially republish press releases
  - Business, auto, entertainment, travel and fashion sections notorious for this
- Mainstream news entities drawing heavily on bloggers, twitter
- Traditional news media draining of real content
  - Filling out with opinion columns, syndicated material
Internet

• Internet content becomes more attractive
  • Rapid growth of news blogging
• Traditional media more costly, less interactive, less probing in the questions asked
• McLuhan:
  • TV and newspapers promote passive consumption
  • But Internet is active, interactive
Internet

• Steady demise of print media
• Reduced demand for newsprint, magazine paper
  • Implications for Canadian North
• Expanding demand for electronic media
  • Cable-show production, webcasting, podcasting, blogging, flogging, social media, digital radio
• Advertising shifts from print/broadcast to web/social media: Google/facebook
Internet

• CBC centre in Toronto is doing less and less TV production
  • News, Newsworld, sports
• Increase in outsourced productions:
  • Little Mosque (Westwind Productions)
  • Murdoch Mysteries (Shaftesbury Films)
• CBC has eliminated many traditional in-house departments such as scenery
• Developing a big streaming/GEM/webcast/podcast/internet/satellite radio presence
Internet

• CRTC allowed telecom deregulation but did not force new telecom players to build their own infrastructure
  • Allowed them to rent cheap it from the big players
• Existing infrastructure crowding with increased data traffic
  • CRTC now allows big telecoms to limit bandwidth, downloads sold to small competitors
• Monopoly strikes again
Geography

• Canadian media characterised by
  • the importance of local urban markets
  • the dominance of American media images
• National Media in Canada
  • Weakly developed outside of the CBC
Geography

• The concept of the nation state
  • Canada as a nation state
• Based around the production of a national identity
  • Influenced by the media of the day
• But the media are being reconfigured
  • Identity and nation state will likely change too