

## **"Embrace It with Scepticism": The Impact of New Media Technology on the Community-Based Radio Sector**

### **Introduction**

On May 17, 1999, The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) published its report on New Media, the result of a near year-long process involving a series of public hearings and consultations held across the country. The purpose of these hearings was "to explore a broad range of issues with interested parties" (The New Media Hearing--Background Information) and to answer a number of questions dealing primarily with the issue of policy and regulation with respect to new media technology. To clarify its goals to the public as well as for itself, the CRTC defined "new media" specifically as "the underlying facilities as well as the communications and interactive services offered on the Internet" (Did you know? 1). Furthermore, the CRTC narrowed its focus down even further to broadcasting on the Internet; that is, any aspect of the Internet whereby the material produced is anything but that which is neither "predominantly alphanumeric" nor that which is "significantly customizable," or easy to manipulate by the user "to create his/her own uniquely tailored content" (ibid). In the end, the CRTC concluded that regulation of New Media was not required at the present time. It cited several reasons for this, including that:

- "it would not help achieve the objectives of the *Broadcasting Act*";
- it complements, rather than substitutes for traditional broadcasting;
- "there is a substantial Canadian presence on the Internet, supported by a demand for Canadian new media content"; and

- there is a tremendous amount of "vitality and entrepreneurship" within the sector. (ibid)

This last point is telling, for it reveals that the CRTC had commercial broadcasters primarily in its mind when making its final decision on the matter. The language used in the report and accompanying fact sheets--words like "demand" and "entrepreneurship"--leads one to believe that the Commission did not consider the non-commercial prospects of the Internet. Throughout the report, there is no specific mention of the impact of new media technology on either public or community-based broadcasters. This begs the question, then: how have the non-commercial broadcasting sectors been affected by the advent of new media technology? We certainly know enough about the effect of the Internet on commercial broadcasters through this report. The ramifications of new media on non-commercial sectors, however, deserve their own scrutiny.

### **Community-Based Radio**

Community-based radio, in particular, requires special attention. It is a sector of whose existence few Canadians are even aware, partly because of its small size, partly because it is not television, and partly because its programming is intentionally outside of the mainstream. Yet the existence of this sector is vital to the health of the Canadian broadcasting system. Although it has been positioned as an "alternative" format, the concept of community-based radio really should be a mainstream idea, for it is the only format that allows the public the opportunity for full participation in the production of media. As Tim McLaughlin notes, "Interested individuals could participate in announcing, production, news, management (sic) and administration" (4). Even the CBC

and community-access television do not have the mechanisms in place for this kind of active involvement by ordinary citizens.

Moreover, community-based radio is unique for its typically activist ideals.

Michel Delorme, former president of the *World Association of Community Broadcasters* (a.k.a. *AMARC*), states that

Community radio implies a democratic dimension.... For us community radio is accessible. Community radio is neither the expression of political power nor the expression of capital. It is the expression of the population.

(qtd. in McLaughlin 3)

In other words, "[i]t is the expression of the population insofar as its voice is not organized by either state or corporate bodies," inscribed "by a heightened awareness of the issues of gender, sexual bias, ethnicity, environmentalism, and indigenous peoples" (McLaughlin 3-4). It is this unique philosophy that distinguishes this sector from the state and commercial radio sectors, both of which do not have or promote the same drive for inclusivity as does community-based radio.

The fact that all true community-based radio stations are managed as not-for-profit organizations makes them more vulnerable to social change than other kinds of stations. Lack of funding and resources can leave a station ill-equipped to handle the onslaught of a revolution such as that which the Internet purports to be. By the same token, vulnerability can also give way to flexibility; for in spite of the many hardships that community-based radio stations have had to endure over the years, they are still around today, unchanged in spirit and intent. Still, the Internet is so new and mysterious

that few people in the community-based radio sector can predict or have even bothered to analyze what sort of impact this new technology might have or already have had on these stations. This is unfortunate, as such uncertainty leaves the sector unprepared to handle any major changes that are still yet to come, which could ultimately threaten its very survival. It is for this reason that I now turn to such an analysis of the new media's impact on community-based radio.

### **Case Study--CHSR**

CHSR 97.9 FM first began its life officially on January 22, 1961 on the campus of the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton (CHSR 13), almost forty years after the first station of its kind in Canada was "born...on the campus of Queen's University in Kingston, Ontario" (Stevenson 1). Initially known as Radio UNB, CHSR developed into a fixture in the local media scene. It has survived numerous transitions and challenges over the years, including the addition of St. Thomas University as a funder, successful applications for spots on first the AM, then the FM radio dials, and numerous threats from student politicians, university administrators, and community complainants who have wanted to shut the station down (CHSR 14-16). Technically, CHSR is a community-based campus station, which the CRTC defines as a "station with programming produced primarily by volunteers who are either students or members of the community at large" (CRTC: 2000, 5). Put another way, although CHSR is situated on a university campus, its regulations are the same as those that govern all community stations--the "based" is indicative of policy, not geography.

CHSR is an ideal subject for an Internet impact study for a number of reasons. It has existed for forty years, thus making it one of the oldest community radio stations in Canada. As a result, it has witnessed and withstood its share of changes to the broadcasting system on a social, cultural, and political level. It is also considered one of the "core" community-based campus stations in Canada, having been among not only the first stations to come into existence, but among the most active in negotiating CRTC policy, as well. Furthermore, the station was one of the first to explore the possibilities of the Internet, particularly permanent online streaming. Finally, it is also a station I am extremely familiar with, as I was a volunteer for two years and employed as its Program Director for another two-and-a-half, during a particularly important period of transition.

The following is an analysis of the impact of new media technology on the community-based radio sector, using CHSR as the focal point. I have culled four hours of interviews with five different subjects to add clarity and substance to the study. The subjects are:

- **Ms. C. Tristis Ward**, CHSR's Station Manager since 1998 and its Program Director for six years prior to that. She is currently also the Vice-President, Internal for the National Campus and Community Radio Association (NCRA);
- **Mr. Pierre Loiselle**, the station's current Program Director and a well-known social justice activist who was also a volunteer at CHSR for 4 years during the 1990's;
- **Ms. Jennifer Brayton**, a CHSR volunteer in her sixth year of doctoral degree in Sociology, specializing in multimedia and feminist studies;

- **Ms. Victoria Fenner**, the Executive Director of the Canadian Society of Independent Producers (CSIRP) who has been involved in both the state and community radio sectors since 1976. She is also involved on a part-time basis with WMMT, the radio component of Appalshop, a community multimedia facility in Kentucky, where she provides support for her partner, Mr. Barry Rueger; and
- **Mr. Barry Rueger**, Station Manager at WMMT. Prior to his stint in the U.S., Mr. Rueger had also been active in the Canadian community radio sector for almost twenty years.

### **CHSR and New Media Technology**

Before venturing into the more philosophical aspects of the analysis, it is important to establish the historical context of new media technology at CHSR, and what technology is currently being used and how it is being used. Ward says that the Web was in its infancy as a mass medium when she first began at CHSR:

**Ward:** I'm from a time of billboards, to start off with, and then there was Usenet, and another forum called Web, which was an activist's set of billboards, a little grouping of billboards.... We thought that the Internet at the time would be useful as a tool to help as broadcasts and activists to talk to each other. In fact, CHSR's technical advisor Doug Beirsto started a system called Envoy, where radio stations could talk to each other and share information and programming and that sort of thing. It worked well for a very long time until... the World Wide Web burst onto the scene and Usenet became a lot more popular.... [T]his was the 'global village,' and so more people were attracted to that.

Following these initial uses of the Internet, CHSR moved on to the establishment of a website:

**Ward:** We had a website from something like 1994 or 1995.... When we first started that web page, we weren't thinking about broadcasting or netcasting at all. We were thinking about recruitment and using it for our own members to have access to things like our handbook. It was more like a calling card than anything else.

Soon, CHSR began to experiment with audio streaming on their site, which eventually

led to a permanent full-time live broadcast on the Internet:

**Ward:** [W]e did...have several times that (sic) we went on the internet and explored that as a new form of broadcasting. We did it with a Highland Games broadcast called Highland Radio. We set up camp on the site of Highland Games and we broadcast all Scottish music and Scottish cultural programs as well as updates on the games--who was winning and what the scores were and that sort of thing.... One of our programmers, his father worked at the university's computing services, and he uploaded us and put us on the internet as an internet broadcaster...we didn't think it could be done very easily and he said, 'Oh no, I've been doing that for awhile.' It was a surprise to all of us.... CHSR was one of the first community-access radio stations on the net in Canada. In fact, we were probably the first one on the net during our intermittent netcasting, and we were something like the second or third, maybe fourth one on any kind of permanent broadcasting, at least in our sector.... January 27, 1999 was the first time. That was our launch for our permanent netcast. And the very first thing that we netcasted was a hockey game, and it was a memorial hockey game that the University of New Brunswick puts on every year.

Now the use of new media technology has become fully entrenched at CHSR. It has gone beyond merely having a promotional webpage with a live audio feed. New media has affected the station's operations on both an internal and external scale:

**Ward:** New technology in the way of something like CD-ROMS...are (sic) something that we're looking into using in the next year. We'll probably be putting together a number of CD-ROMS to have some music and some other content on them for people to use on computers to explore the station, go to our webpage. There'll be some links on it, there'll be some other stuff on there, too.... Yesterday, I signed up our board of directors to our own internal e-mail list and the day before I signed up all 90 of our members to an internal mailing list....It's incredibly easy to use and it's a useful tool for us to communicate with each other.

With respect to the controversial MP3s, however, CHSR's management has not been as quick to jump on the bandwagon as one might think, although there are plans for its usage in the future:

**Ward:** CHSR doesn't use MP3s either way, in either direction at the moment. Obviously when we re-do our studios....We may be using MP3 [then] because we may be saving in that format.

It is evident that the Internet and other related forms of new media technology have been beneficial to CHSR in terms of the convenience they provide. As a volunteer, Brayton agrees that communication within the station has been facilitated due to the presence of some of this technology:

**Brayton:** I think the use of e-mail by the radio station has increased communication between staff and between volunteers, as well as increasing communication amongst the volunteer community. So I think the station's adoption of e-mail as a new communications practice has been very beneficial.

Loiselle also affirms the benefits of e-mail, though he warns that becoming dependent on new media for such communication can have certain ramifications if one is not careful:

**Loiselle:** I guess e-mail lists can provide more communication within the membership. Similarly though, if you rely on e-mail exclusively as a form of communication...if you use a forum that's not available to everybody, then you're unfortunately bound to have some people put out from the particular club.... People are constantly creating new technologies which (sic) make things faster and easier, more convenient, more efficient, and I can't say that's a bad thing on the one hand. It's a tool, right? It enables you to do something that you might not have been able to do before. There are implications to that though. But again, becoming reliant on new technology, and the convenience of it, can take away or detract from what you were intending to do in the first place.

Therefore, new media, while certainly able to make life easier for stations like CHSR, can have their drawbacks, as well. This does not mean, though, that their potential should not be explored. In fact, Brayton feels that this technology has not been used adequately enough:

**Brayton:** I don't think that the use of Internet broadcasting has really been that effective at the radio station. Every once in a while I might look over at the computer and I might have four Internet listeners happening. It's nice in the sense that I can look at the computer and see how many people are listening in by (sic) the Internet, and I can't do that knowing how many people are listening just tuning in to their radio. We don't have those kinds of figures. But four people tuning in by the Internet is really not a huge volume of listeners.

Indeed, Rueger believes that much more that the Internet could do for us that we have not even begun to tap into yet. Pragmatics seem to be a major problem in this regard:

**Rueger:** No one has yet figured out a really good use for the net in terms of what a radio station could do. You could do charts and listings, which is pretty limited. You could stream your signal, but there's opportunities...if we're streaming our signals, we suddenly have to start thinking about time zones that can vary from 3 to 6 to 8 hours locally, and how do you change your programming to suit that? Right now at Appalshop...we've got 30 years of archival video and sound and music. How do you use a website to make that accessible to people, and how do you do that in a practical fashion? We sure don't know how we're going to do it yet.

Fenner concurs:

**Fenner:** What I've seen in terms of looking at Canadian community radio websites is that I don't think there's been an awful lot of movement in the past couple of years beyond putting up a webpage with the program schedule on it and information about the station and streaming. I think that there are more kinds of things that could be done as far as archiving, as far as time-shifting stuff, as far as profiling special

things so that people can replay it. I don't think it's been taken in as innovative ways as it could be, and I think we haven't really progressed much beyond where we were two years ago.

Within the past decade, it appears that CHSR has noticed and grabbed hold of the opportunities that new media technologies present to numerous facets of the station, particularly its administration. However, there are also those that believe that still more can and should be done to make use of these technologies to their full capacities and capabilities. One department in CHSR that has attempted to employ this technology in a more significant way is its Programming Department.

### **Programming**

Programming is obviously the most important aspect of any broadcasting medium, for without it there would be no content to consume. At community-based radio stations, program schedules tend to reflect a hodge podge of different genres and styles of music, as well as a variety of spoken word and cultural shows; CHSR is no exception. During my tenure as Program Director, listeners could hear anything from world beat to heavy metal music, from spoken word shows dealing with poetry to those touching on gender issues, and from programming celebrating Latin American culture to that promoting the Chinese language. This diversity is one of the distinct features of community radio that demarcates it from other sectors. As Lisa Monk asserts,

Because campus and community radio is participatory,  
drawing on an eclectic array of volunteer programmers, and  
broadcasting a wide variety of sounds...its operations and  
sounds are in a continual state of flux. The somewhat  
paradoxical constancy of change creates personality and

identity for many campus and community radio stations.

(89)

With this diversity being so important to the identity of community-based stations, any means to improve it is always welcome. This is one area where new technology has proved to be advantageous. The development of file sharing technology has led to a greater availability of work that can be downloaded from the Internet. For CHSR's programmers, as Loisel explains, this has meant more choice in terms of content that they can use on their shows:

**Loiselle:** There's a number of websites, for example [www.radio4all.net](http://www.radio4all.net), where programmers all across North America upload interviews they've done and it's available to download for free for anyone, and a lot of them specifically mention that you do have permission to broadcast it. For example, I'm on the air at 7 o'clock, and I start preparing for my show at around quarter after five-5:30. Now in the time I have before my show, it's a lot easier for me. I downloaded a 15-minute interview with this woman about the anthrax scare. It's a lot easier for me to get that woman's voice over the airwaves in such a short time frame than it would be for me to find someone in town and make arrangements and have them come up here and have them come on the air.

Now in terms of information, I can actually attest that a lot of our spoken word programs and our music programs get a lot of information, weird news, and information about bands from the Internet. I'm sure that that plays a really big role in collecting that kind of information, that kind of material for broadcasting. As a matter of fact we used to have--it still exists, but we're not using it anymore--bio-files on a whole bunch of different bands, and there was a time when that was actually used. And now it's a lot easier [to use the Internet] than someone going to the library and going through all the cabinets with files and folders with band names on them. I think it's easier, that people are more likely to go to a search engine and type in their favourite band and find out what pops up.

Loiselle also uses longer programs downloaded from the Internet to fill in scheduling gaps as needed:

**Loiselle:** Sometimes it comes in really handy, and it's really beneficial as opposed to having this mundane filler programming just for the sake of having something on the air. We can actually pump out some really good quality programming on the air.

Another area where new media technology has proven to be helpful is news. The World Wide Web has opened up many possibilities with respect to obtaining information from a broader spectrum of sources, as well as easing time and communication constraints for programmers with interviews to prepare:

**Loiselle:** [For] national or international related news, we're more able to find more independent sources, using for example, e-mail--I find that quite useful for preliminarily touching base with a potential person to interview, finding out information about possible candidates to be interviewed on any given topic and the like. On that end, I think [the Internet's] had a tremendous impact, where specifically for national and international news, we have much more of an immediate accessibility to get in touch with specific people, or work that other fellow campus and community radio people have put together.

This does not mean, however, that Loiselle is not cautious about the information he reaps from the Internet. It is often difficult to discern what data can be trusted, and what might be unreliable:

**Loiselle:** I still might be able to get lots of information on any given topic, or you might be able to find a plethora of information on the internet, but that information is only coming from, let's say, 5% of the population of the world. That's something I keep in mind.

The Internet is not a resource to be approached blindly. Whatever advantages it affords us can quickly turn disastrous if we are not aware of challenges that are inherent in its usage. Being cautious does not mean, though, that we should pull away from navigating this still mysterious terrain. Loiselle himself believes that more could still be done to exploit the Internet even further for programming purposes:

**Loiselle:** One of things...that has yet to be fully taken advantage of, in my opinion, is [using] the internet to actually share the work we do. I know a lot of stations across the country put out some really good programming, some really good information about what's going on in their respective communities, be it spoken word or news-related items and the like, and new technologies provide us with a vehicle to share that a lot easier (sic) than in the past where we would have to swap tapes and wait a week in (sic) the mail. I could upload an interview tonight and tomorrow someone across the country could download it. I don't necessarily think that that's something that's being taken advantage of as much, from my standpoint.

Another aspect of new media that has yet to be taken greater advantage of by CHSR is MP3 technology. As mentioned above, CHSR does not have as of yet any computers dedicated solely to programmers for the purpose of downloading MP3 files. As a result, some programmers who wish to pull material from the Internet to enhance their shows have had to take matters into their own hands:

**Loiselle:** I do know of programmers who...use their computers to download MP3s to play music over their shows, music that they would otherwise not have access to. Despite the fact we have a pretty decent library, we're unable to get everything everyone wants.

Cultural shows are among the most avid users of the Internet for this purpose:

**Loiselle:** I know one program, in particular, will access music through MP3s by downloading it. And, again, back to the other music programs, for example, they're able to obtain music from their home country that we are unable to get as expediently and to such an extent as they can.

Music originating from non-Anglophone or Francophone nations are among the most difficult to obtain, especially in the case of community-based stations. The likelihood of the station receiving such recordings are slim at best, unless artists from these nations, such as Nusret Fateh Ali-Khan or Cesaria Evora, are signed to major American or Canadian record labels or distributors. Even then this might not always be the case, for many labels are often reluctant to hand out free play copies of CDs to stations that they do not feel reach a wide enough audience to make it worth the cost. This is especially true for those labels located in places such as India or Malaysia or Kenya.

When I was Program Director at CHSR, a representative from each of our cultural shows would inevitably approach me at some point in the year and inquire about the possibility of downloading MP3s from the Internet for their shows. Most of these were international students who did not have much in the way of available resources on campus or in town, and so only had a limited selection of music to choose from. The Bengali and Chinese shows, in particular, were concerned about the redundancy of their sound. Because of our lack of facilities for this particular purpose, I was unable to help them directly, although other mechanisms have since been established at the station to enable programmers to meet their programming needs in the studio:

**Ward:** As far as downloading MP3 or using MP3 that comes from other sources, our programmers have the ability to download and they have the ability to broadcast what they download from the web. It's all done on a very informal basis. The station itself doesn't supply any of the hardware for this. The programmers are simply able to hook up their own systems to it.

For now, the solution is to allow programmers with laptop or notebook computers to bring them into the studio and hook them up directly to the broadcasting console. These programmers can then broadcast their stored MP3s directly from their personal portable computers. Naturally, only a small number of programmers are able to do this; very few own such expensive hardware. Most will simply burn their own CD copies at home on their desktop computers and use those recordings instead.

With CHSR's analog studios soon being converted to digital, though, programmers may soon find that they finally have the means to download the songs and interviews they want and need for their shows from within the station. It is a facet of new media that really cannot be avoided. Brayton, for one, feels that this issue will become especially relevant to broadcasters in the coming years:

With the proliferation of these file-sharing programs looming large, community-based radio stations are likely to face an entirely new set of challenges over the next several years. Although this technology may prove to be a wonderful aid to programming in terms of variety and of giving a voice to lesser heard artists and activists from around the world, there is still the matter of legality. As anyone working or even volunteering in the broadcasting sector knows, copyright and royalty payments are as inescapable as taxes; and they could have their own very specific impact on how community-based radio stations function with respect to their Internet operations.

### **Copyright and Royalty Fees**

Part of the "deal" between broadcasters and artists is that the latter receive compensatory payment for the former's usage (i.e., "public performance") of the artists'

creative products, whether it be aural or visual. Hence, because they play music and, in some instances, spoken word pieces, community-based radio stations in Canada are required to pay an yearly fee representing a percentage of their annual operating budget to the Society of Composers, Authors, and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN), an organization that represents Canadian songwriters. Obviously, this is money intended to go specifically to songwriters, lyricists, and their publishing companies. Common sense dictates that, since it is set at a flat rate, this fee should cover a radio station's stream on the web, as well. This is the reason why Ward is not so concerned about the issue:

**Ward:** I realize that there are radio stations out there that believe that they have to pay royalty fees. I believe in paying royalty fees. If you're already paying for your broadcast, though, just because your broadcast is on the net doesn't mean you change your royalty fees, because your royalty fees aren't based on how many people you hit. They're based on what your operating expenses are. So we're already paying royalty fees. There are radio stations out there that pay that royalty fee, and then they seem to have bought into the idea...because it happened in the United States, Canadians sometimes forget that we're a separate country. We're not under FCC (Federal Communications Commission) regulations. In the United States, they decided that radio stations should pay a royalty fee--I'm not sure if they followed through with it yet--for internet broadcasting as well as any other kind of coverage of music. There are Canadian radio stations that, because they believe the American companies that tell them they must pay these fees, are paying a separate fee down into the United States to a royalty company that claims it's going to send that money back to whatever artist they're covering. There is nothing in the (Canadian) regulations right now that would make them do that. They're just doing it because they just think that's what they're supposed to do. I think they're getting ripped off. I think it's a scam. I don't think any of this money is coming back to any Canadian artist.

While it is true that Canada does not presently fall under the American legislation, there are a number of critical aspects to Ward's argument that necessitate further scrutiny. First, the Americans have definitely enacted legislation creating new royalty fees for Internet broadcasting. It is called the Digital Millennium Copyright Act (DMCA), and it was passed by Congress in 1998.

Second, and more importantly, the DMCA establishes these new fees on behalf of the *performer*, not the songwriter, so it is therefore an additional fee. As Joel R. Willer remarks in his summary paper on these new fees to the National College Media Convention, "The previous blanket license...only covers performances of the underlying

composition (composer, songwriter and publisher); this new license applies to the actual recording (performer and label). These two distinct concepts are often confused. The new DMCA statutory license fee, unless overturned by Congress or the courts, will be in addition to the ASCAP, BMI, and SESAC fees" (2). Consequently, in the U.S., a dual fee is already in effect for traditional radio stations who are also streaming their broadcasts live on the Web.

Third, the DMCA does not actually fall under the FCC's jurisdiction. It is legislation that has been pushed by a strong recording industry lobby--a lobby that is multinational, and is likely to give just as strong a push in other countries to enact similar legislation to that of the DMCA. Thus, these new fees may not be as far off in the future for Canada as one might think.

Legislation such as the DMCA could have dire consequences for broadcasters who are doubling as netcasters. For community-based stations, due to their very small budgets, these consequences are magnified several times over. According to Rueger, the chill has already begun to set in the United States, and could soon be heading North of the border:

**Rueger:** The Digital Millennium Copyright Act...could make it so expensive you can't do anything on the net with audio especially. And that's coming in Canada right now. They're copying legislation up there. Down here people are scrambling--half the public community stations are pulling their signal from the web because they have no idea what the royalties will be. There's also heavy programming restriction--we basically cannot broadcast our regular stream because we're breaking a half-dozen DMCA regulations. Half the stations have pulled their signal because they don't want to take the risk. Others of us have figure that, well, until the lawsuits are done, and the lawyers are done, and the negotiations are done, we might as well just go with it and see where it winds up.... What happens down here will be more or less mirrored in Canada presumably. The companies up there probably have far more power than they probably should.

If this is the case, then CHSR and other Canadian community-based radio stations could be in for a rough ride for the next little while. The record companies appear to have more of a stranglehold on the government's neck than do radio broadcasters,

probably due to the weakened state of the radio industry arising from the strong following of television. The only possible saving grace for stations in Canada is that such

legislation might be too difficult to enforce on an international level, as Ward believes:

**Ward:** We still have our broadcast on our FM antenna. Anybody with a radio and a soundcard and a computer and a site could hook us back up, and it's not us, it's not our license, it's somebody else, and you could bounce it all over the internet. It could be anybody anywhere doing this, so long as they're within listening range, and they could send it through any server in any country, and it could come back through the Internet into Canada, and there's no way Canada, or the United States, or any single country could ever stop that from happening. And obviously if it's not coming from us, we can't be cited for it. And if it's coming from someone anonymous, they can't be cited for it. There's just no way to control that.

Ward views the Internet as being far too complex for any enforcement agency to be able to or want to track down the originating signal of a given netcast. Rueger and Fenner, on the other hand, believe the opposite:

**Rueger:** They'll still come after the originating station. In our case they would walk into our door here in Kentucky and say you're not paying your royalties. 'Write us a cheque or pay a \$50,000 fine.'

**Fenner:** 'And we don't care if you're broadcasting from Taiwan or not, because you're here.'

Rueger and Fenner are convinced that the record companies have the ability and resources to track down offenders of the DMCA, no matter where they may reside. Ward does have a valid argument, though; although mirror sites do reflect back on the originating stations, thereby making them easy targets, a faithful listener who happens to take the signal and netcast it through his or her own home computer might not be as simple to find. Admittedly, this scenario would work much better for a station located in a larger urban setting, where hundreds of thousands or millions of people live, than for one in a small city such as Fredericton; it does, however, offer some ray of hope to broadcasters who are already bearing the burden of existing fees. Still, one cannot help but view these as uncertain times, with stations taking their streams off the Internet and others opting to pay the new fee and stretching their budgets to the limit in the process. CHSR may want to prepare a contingency plan for new media, as a precaution.

Should this fee become a reality for the broadcasting industry in Canada, and should stations like CHSR wish to continue to have an audio presence on the web, then they are going to have to assess what kind of financial impact this is going to have on them. New media has already had an effect economically on some of these stations in both positive and negative ways.

### **Economics--Funding, Financing, and Budgeting**

As not-for-profit entities, community-based stations are not as concerned with the money-making possibilities of the Internet as commercial broadcasters would be. This is not to say, of course, that stations like CHSR do not need to earn any income; there are always spots reserved under "Revenue" in the budgets for these stations for money accrued through fundraising ventures and advertising for small local businesses.

Although for-profit broadcasters in Canada may view their poorer cousins as competition for the already meagre pot of advertising dollars, they need not fear, for most community-based stations find corporate advertising odious to begin with. According to former NCRA President and former CHSR Station Manager Jeff Whipple,

Most campus stations in fact already have policies in place that far exceed the limitations imposed by the CRTC.

These include not accepting advertising that doesn't fit the sound of our stations, and not dealing with sponsors whose principles and activities are not socially positive and conflict with the interests of the community. (6)

Indeed, Ward says that online-only netcasters should not feel threatened, nor should CHSR fret over the potential loss of a source of advertising revenue. CHSR prefers to seek its funding from the source that matters the most--its listeners:

**Ward:** We don't compete with [Internet broadcasters] for advertising dollars.... The majority of our funding comes from the universities and the students themselves. The rest of the funding comes from that segment of the population that feels it's important for us to stay around. As long as we continue to do a good job and they feel we're moving in the right direction and we're the answer, we will continue to get that funding. And so until such a time when all of those funding bodies cease to believe that we are a legitimate source for access to the airwaves, we don't have any worries about, for example, Internet radio.

In any case, the Internet has not been as profitable as many people thought it would be.

Dot-com companies that were so ubiquitous in the late 1990's have seen their numbers dwindle severely, with only a few key players surviving. Brayton confirms this:

**Brayton:** People are being disillusioned with the internet, realizing that it isn't the cash cow they immediately thought it was going to be. So I think people are being a lot more cautious about investing in new information technologies as heavily as they were, especially with the failure of all the dot-coms. The finances are hard.... Because we live in a capitalist economy all of our mass media costs money...to operate. I think with community radio stations, because we don't do advertising, because it's not a commercial radio station, there's definitely the fear of losing out on a financial platform compared to new information technologies.

Unlike Ward, Brayton believes that community-based radio stations are worried that they might be missing out on the financial advantages that new media technology presents. Advertising does not have to be the only means to earn funds from the Internet, however; the Web can also be an extremely efficacious tool when it comes to fundraising. Fenner has noticed this at WMMT:

**Fenner:** If you look at fundraising returns from all stations, probably including yours in Fredericton, you'll probably find that there are people that are just as loyal to the station as they were when they were sitting physically in your studio.... I think that that is a really positive thing about the internet, if we can track where people go and keep them listening, and I think that station alumni...I think that is one key group that would want to listen to an internet station. The other thing is people who have left the area who still want to be part of that area. Those are two really key groups. I think that a person would have to feel a really strong connection to that geographic area or that station.

With the Internet opening up CHSR to the world, there is every chance that listeners in faraway places would be inclined to send donations to the station during its Fundrive.

This may include former citizens of Fredericton or alumni of either the universities or the

station itself who tune in to the station's online broadcast out of a sense of nostalgia, to maintain ties with their past. CHSR would do well to capitalize on these potential donors.

Aside from the revenue-half of its budget, community-based radio has also been by the Internet in terms of the expense it incurs. Fenner finds it particularly frustrating to have to add more work on her already-full plate to devote to a website:

**Fenner:** Where are the resources going to come from in order to do this really well?... I've got my own page which is quite all right, but I've seen lots of webpages out there that are just absolutely wonderful, and I just keep thinking what I could do if, in the funding that I get, the funders would recognize that this is something that you have to hire a person to do, and not just expect us to cobble together whatever we can based on our own skills levels.

Fenner feels that to design a website properly costs money, either in the hiring of a webmaster or in extra work hours spent which could eat into her productivity. Of course, the level of frustration this creates depends on exactly what one would like done with a website. Obviously, the more bells and whistles one wants on a site, the more headaches this could produce. Having said that, funding grants do exist to hire individuals to perform these tasks. There is also the prospect of a volunteer taking on this work, though as Fenner notes, "you have the issue of continuity then, and who oversees the work of this person." Most likely the easiest way to combat any break in continuity would be to establish a template that volunteer designers could follow without confusion.

Capital expenses such as equipment purchases are not as big an issue as one would think, according to Ward. Because new media technologies are still fairly new, they can be quite expensive; however, this has helped to bring down the price of machinery and devices that radio stations still use, enabling these stations to stock up on equipment they may have found unaffordable beforehand:

**Ward:** The technology is getting cheaper. It's so easy to buy transmitters and to buy a lot of the analog stuff and that sort of thing. At this point there's a lot of it being dumped. Eventually it may become a little

more difficult. We're converting to digital studios anyway. By the time we can't buy any more analog materials, or production facilities, we'll be using digital versions of those same things.

Eventually, one can expect the price of digital equipment to go down in price, as well.

Good quality computers, with all the hardware and software necessary to produce an online broadcast, are already much cheaper than they were only a few years ago, and will continue to go down in price as newer devices are invented. Although they may not be able to get the very latest technology as it comes out, community-based stations will still be able to find the electronic tools they need that they can also *afford* to create a solid infrastructure for new media usage. For CHSR, it also certainly does not hurt that some of that infrastructure is already in place, care of the University of New Brunswick:

**Ward:** CHSR is incredibly lucky. We get a website for free basically from one of our campuses because we are in part their radio station. There are of course community access radio stations across Canada and even some campus-community radio stations across Canada who do not have that luxury, and unfortunately because they have to use commercial sites, they also have to tolerate the ever-growing commercialization of the web--the banner ads, the pop-up menus, the tags on all the e-mail, and all the other stuff that comes with that. It's sad but it's true. It's only going to get worse. It turns out it's incredibly profitable, and so other radio stations who are not as fortunate as us have that taint now of commercialization and association with people that we wouldn't normally associate with.... We're all non-profit, we're all under-funded. We don't have much in the way of choice about how we get onto the net. That's a huge problem. Also, CHSR lucked out when we found our second audio server. Our first audio server, when we first got onto it, it cost us a couple of hundred dollars. Then we found out it was going to cost us upwards of 7000 dollars a year just to get enough ports for our listeners to be able to pick up our netcast. That was a very scary proposition. We were looking at the possibility that we wouldn't be able to continue on the net. If it wasn't for the fact that we were able to find this free service, we would have had to sign off. There wouldn't have been any way to continue, and I think that when it started off, because it wasn't all that profitable, that company, that first server, didn't mind allowing us to do this for virtually free. When it realized the potential, like any other capitalist company, it started to increase its cost.

Evidently, CHSR is one of the more fortunate community-based stations in Canada. Because it is a part of a university that values its existence, and because it managed to find an online audio service whose primary goal is not profit, but access, CHSR finds itself in the enviable position of being able to save some much needed money without having to compromise its ethics. Few other community-based stations can make this claim.

New media technology has definitely had an affect on CHSR economically, but not in as dramatic a way as one would assume. Through circumstance and careful planning, the station can boast of being in a financially secure state while being at the forefront of technological development in the community-based radio sector *and* while maintaining its principles. These principles include not only a steadfast stance against corporatization and commercialization, but also the assurance of accessibility to the airwaves for the pluralistic population that comprises the Fredericton community. What is interesting to note is how this principle of accessibility and its ties to the concept of community have been utterly transformed by the arrival of new media in the community radio sector.

### **Access and the Community**

Accessibility, along with the promotion of diversity, is a fundamental part of CHSR's mandate, indeed of all community-based radio stations. As its mission statement asserts, "CHSR FM's primary goal is to provide access to the airwaves to promote free artistic, cultural, and socio-political expression by members of the community through the medium of participatory radio." In the world of community media, this means that audience members are not just listeners, but they are also "the producers, managers, directors, evaluators and even the owners of the stations" (Girard 2). This is what makes stations like CHSR so special in broadcasting circles, according to Ward:

**Ward:** Community access radio is the only free media left. Private radio will only put on the air what fits into their agenda. The community doesn't have any way to express itself...it's always instead programmed to. The CBC, which is state radio, and which is usually said to be the voice of the 'people', so to speak, is actually the voice of Canadiana, and very effective for the common voice of what is perceived to be the common Canadian.

However marginalized groups remain marginalized on the CBC airwaves. They don't have a mandate to hear from...the assorted communities and minorities, people who are already disenfranchised, they don't get a voice at all on the CBC, and the marginalization continues. With community access radio,

not only is the programming directed to and intended to entertain and inform all varieties of communities within the larger community, it also is the place where those people can come in and access the airwaves to become the programmers themselves and get their opinions out. So it's much more of a two-way kind of street than either [commercial or state radio] are.

With community-based radio, what is most important is that citizens, whether they are average or not, have a forum for their voices. Communication, in this sense, is not hegemonically construed; instead, it is pluralistic, multi-directional, and, thus, absolutely egalitarian. It is very much a poststructuralist way of approaching the media, in keeping with the Foucauldian tradition of destabilizing hegemonic power structures. In her reading of Foucault's theory of governmentality as it pertains to community radio, Lisa Monk says that "Foucault reorients polarisation (sic) of power over (sic) by focusing on strategies--negotiating a place, and identity within the systems and structures and recreating them and their logic as participatory, not dominating" (97). Providing access to community members so that they become the subjects as well as the objects of communication is, therefore, the strategy community-based radio stations use to throw the existing relations of power in society into a state of flux. This theoretically puts everyone on the same footing, and so makes accessibility in community radio something worth fighting for:

**Ward:** It's important on a number of different levels. The first thing is that Canadians own the airwaves in Canada, and therefore they should have a right to access those airwaves and take ownership of them. But on another level, it's very important that real actual Canadians get heard from because our society in general relies far too heavily on what corporations tell us to think and believe and feel, and that civilization can't maintain itself on that. Eventually we're going to become simple receivers of somebody else's agenda, and that agenda is not based on culture it's based on money.

New media has contributed enormously to the improvement of accessibility at CHSR, according to Ward, particularly in terms of participation at the campus level:

**Ward:** There are people who are attracted to UNB and St. Thomas through us, we're on the net, they hear us, they come to the campus specifically because of us and so they join. There are some more sports people this year than ever, and I think that has to do with our hockey games on the net. So there's some effect, I'd say. And obviously we use the Internet as a recruitment tool for frosh.

Ward does note, however, that there has been a slight difference in the skill levels of those new volunteers drawn to CHSR by the Internet:

**Ward:** People are used to doing things on keyboards and we have to teach them how to handle things that are not electronic. People are used to CDs, now we have tell them what vinyl is, tell them what a groove is, tell them that they can't touch either side of a record. Some of them have never handled records before.

Though new media technology has made people more aware of CHSR's existence and has increased participation at the station, the generation many of these people belong to are not familiar with the kind of analog technology that is still prevalent at many community-based radio stations. In this case, it is a matter of teaching a new dog old tricks.

There are other instances where new media makes all the difference in terms of accessibility at the station for some new recruits. As Loiselle explains,

**Loiselle:** Without these new technologies, there are certain programmers who are differently-abled that would otherwise actually not be able to do programming to the same extent as all of our other programmers. For example, what we'll do with our blind programmer is we'll e-mail a list of music that the programmer requested. He'll e-mail a list of music he wants to play on his show, and we'll say what track number it is, and we'll e-mail that back to him, and then using his brailler he'll braille up a playlist.

The programmer about whom Loiselle speaks is actually a former trainee of mine. After he had been trained on the console and began to do regular shows, we realized how difficult it was to choose music for him given his limited CD collection, the way our music library was formatted, and the short amount of time I had available to devote to him during my day. When we hit upon the e-mail idea, it saved us both a lot of time and allowed the programmer to do a better version of the kind of show he wanted to do. Things should be even better improved once CHSR music library catalogue is made available online, as Ward proposes to do.

Rueger and Fenner see other ways in which new media might improve accessibility for community radio stations, especially in the area of training and education:

**Fenner:** I can see for...having a volunteer training program which includes programming skills for the radio but also in the creation of webpages. So for example if somebody was doing a special program on whatever subject, then they could create an integrated package where you broadcast the radio piece but you can also tell your listeners go to the website and you'll see a lot of background information, photos and things like that. And so it becomes more of a learning module....[O]ne thing we're doing at CSIRP is that we're launching a radio training website at the end of November that has information about how to do an interview, how to host a radio program, things like that, with the idea that the people who work at community radio stations don't usually have the time to do all of the training that they need to do. So what this is going to be is a site for self-directed learning, and I think that if there are self-directed learning sites out there too then I think that programmers can help train themselves, as well.

**Rueger:** A website is a place where you could put a lot of training material that they would ordinarily have to come in, learn from. It is possible to produce at home on your own PC, and then e-mail a file in--I mean they've been doing that down there in Ecuador and Peru for ages with small community stations where they would just shoot sound bytes over dial-up telephone lines, and it's worked very well for them. One of the obstacles for a lot of campus stations is that there are a lot of people who either don't want to go on a university campus, or who don't want to pay the godawful parking fees to go on a university campus, or who live on the outskirts of Toronto and really don't want to have to take an hour and a half subway ride to go do a radio show. If they can do it from their own locality, and hook up with the internet back and forth, that suddenly makes it a lot more accessible.

As Rueger and Fenner see it, new media technology opens up a number of opportunities in terms of geographic accessibility. Those who live in remote rural areas would not have to waste as much time receiving their training by traveling to urban centres; instead, they only need to go online and download the materials from the web in advance. This kind of access facilitates participation in community-based radio no matter where a person lives.

Internet-only radio, on the other hand, adds a whole new twist to the concept of access. One might think that, with the opportunities available to broadcast one's own radio show via such audio servers as Shoutcast and RealAudio, community-based radio has suddenly become irrelevant. Why bother with old analog equipment when you can simply turn on your home computer and conduct a netcast from the comfort of your

home? Ward contends that making that choice is all well and good, but it ultimately does nothing for the community as a whole

**Ward:** [B]ecause we rely on community access, people actually coming in and volunteering, and we need those people, we can't go on and just...double programs or repeat constantly. We're a licensed establishment, we have to broadcast at least this many hours a week, 126 hours minimum a week, we have to broadcast it. We need to fill that with live people. It's a mandate, and because it's a mandate that keeps us out there recruiting and educating people and finding ways to tweak their interests, so they don't become just consumers of this product. If it's very easy for you to just set the computer on, sit here for ten minutes and record your voice track, and then let the computer play it for 8 hours or 24 hours or something like that, then there's no need to actually do radio yourself and there's no need to involve the community in radio. They become consumers, and that's just as bad as the commercial sector. So I think what we bring to this is active involvement and some kind of participation that you don't get anywhere else.

Brayton is not as negative about Internet radio's possibilities for participation as Ward, although she does see other difficulties in comparison to community radio as far as access is concerned in:

**Brayton:** : I'd say there'd be advantages to both depending on the group and what their agenda is. Given that most people still don't actually have internet access *per se* in their home--they might have a computer without actually having access--I know people wanting to get involved with radio would probably find it easier to walk into a physical radio station and get things started there....[I]t's easy to walk into a community radio station, do training, and begin to have a voice right away...I mean your level of technical knowledge is not that much of a barrier. On the other hand, the internet is a wonderful place for anyone being able to participate but they have to have a higher degree of technical knowledge in the sense that they have to know how to connect to the internet, they have to have the money to set aside for having an internet connection in order to have their voice being present on the web, and they have to know how to communicate on the web, be it designing a website, or how to communicate effectively in discussion groups or community bulletin boards. So I think community groups or marginalized individuals can have voices in either forum, but I think probably a lot depends on the individual and what their agenda is, and who they would like to have their voice heard by. And certainly what degree of financial access and technological knowledge they have is really going to impact.

In the end, Internet-only cannot offer the same kind of access that community-based radio can. It is only affordable to some, and even those that can afford it need some technical expertise to get the job done. Moreover, people may have a voice with new media technology, but it does not offer them any real connection to a community proper--at least, not a community in the traditional sense.

The notion of the community, in fact, has been completely blown wide open by the presence of the Internet in the world of broadcasting. In the context of community-based radio, "community" is conceived as being "bounded by spatial borders. That is to

say that a radio transmission is only able to broadcast to a finite population" (Kushnier 3). Thus, prior to its Internet broadcasts, CHSR was heard only as far as Fredericton's city limits, which is where the reach of the station's 50 watt transmitter ended. That changed dramatically once the Internet broadcasts began. Suddenly, there were people listening from as far away as Pakistan and New Zealand. The listenership expanded and, the community CHSR served along with it. This has given CHSR a new sense of purpose in a number of ways:

**Ward:** One of the things, of course, that CHSR has to do is to maintain contact with our universities and the universities are very wrapped in sports. In particular, on these two campuses, it's hockey. Hockey is a passion for the alumni who are spread all around the world. Also because the teams are put together by students and students come from all places across Canada and from other countries. Their families are spread across the world, and CHSR has, because we broadcast the hockey games over the Internet, the ability to provide alumni and the family of the team players with that connection to the campus and to the hockey team. We get a lot of really good feedback from that. It's obviously a very important part of our broadcast. It's changed us into a more useful tool to the alumni and to the families.

In one instance, broadcasting online even rescued CHSR from being shut down. In fact, it was the same day the station went online for the first time--the day of the memorial hockey game. As Ward explains,

**Ward:** We were broadcasting and netcasting this game, and we had local media covering this historic moment when we got news that the undergraduate student union of UNB had voted in a meeting that was happening simultaneously to reduce CHSR's funding from \$68,000 to nothing. Their assumption was that nobody would care, nobody would notice, and that they would be able to close down the station. That's the rumour, that that's what their assumption was. Of course, as soon as we found out about it, we sent a message up to the announcers who were announcing the hockey game. It was a simple announcement, just to notify the listeners that CHSR's funding had been cut by the undergraduate student union and this may actually jeopardize the station and it may end these hockey games as well as anything else on the net and on the FM band. There were 300 phone calls and messages left in the next day...to the president of the undergraduate student union telling her to reverse the decision and not to tamper with the radio station. As well, the President of the university got e-mail by the hundreds from alumni as well as local listeners and current students telling her to do something about saving the station should the president of the student union not pay any attention to the request. And of course there was also e-mail that came to us by the hundreds, there was e-mail that came to the undergraduate student union by the hundreds, and needless to say, by the time they dealt with the situation they were pretty much forced to let us have our autonomy and allow us to seek funding which was even greater than what we had before. So it was the internet broadcast actually that saved us.

This is community action taken literally, with the community re-defined to include not only those living within the geographical boundaries of Fredericton, but also those

without--the alumni, family members, and otherwise unattached listeners who all felt connected to each other through these hockey games online and collectively came together to help subvert the Student Union's influence for the sake of salvaging this sense of community. As Kushnier says, "In the case of Internet radio, its broadcast is infinitely available to any user on the Internet, and thus a simple definition of bounded community is irrelevant" (3). Brayton elaborates even further:

**Brayton:** Certainly, from the sociological standpoint, the way that we use community, our understanding of the term has changed because of new information technology. It used to be the notion of community was based on physical proximity and geographic location. And so the notion of community itself has disappeared with new information technologies because we now have communities forming in the Internet, and the connection is actually content and interest, not geographic location. So I would say the concept of community is changing unto itself with the advent of new information technologies.

I'd say if you look at the instance of CHSR... I mean it's an on-air broadcaster. The community I'm broadcasting towards I still would think of as being the community that can be exposed to my broadcast using traditional airwaves. Even though we broadcast on the Internet, I still don't identify that as being my community of listeners because I know not a lot of people are actually connecting to the radio station taking advantage of that medium. So certainly from my end as a broadcaster my concept of community is still a very traditional sense of community. On the other hand, the fact that the radio station is connected to the Internet and we have e-mail, means that I'm actually connecting to more record labels, more artists, more musicians through e-mail than I would have beforehand. So I'm actually finding that you have a higher degree of communication. I can make access to a more global techno music community than I would have had available without new information technologies. So I think that definitely in that sense...I mean, I e-mail regularly with independent musicians in the states and in Europe and in places like that, and I certainly have a sense of community in the sense that they send me music, I'll be playing it, I'll be talking about them, and we wouldn't have had that without e-mail. I certainly wouldn't have had that sense of personal connection with other artists.

Even beyond Internet radio, new media has had a transformative effect on the definition of community as we know and understand it. It has become more intangible; *imagined*, as Benedict Anderson would call it (59). Fenner and Rueger find this added complexity confounding, but fascinating:

**Rueger:** We're webcasting to thousands of people who moved away from this region but still feel a strong connection. Is there a place, say, for a studio in Cincinnati or Detroit or Chicago, broadcasting back to the people who still live here? I don't know. It sort of turns the whole community concept on its head. We haven't really figured that one out. They're still really connected, the people who have moved away from here. They're really tied to family, really tied to place, and they're back to visit a lot. And maybe they should be broadcasting back to their families that are still back in the hills.

**Fenner:** [W]e're talking about other communities outside of our communities, but then again our own communities where we live and broadcast...are such complex communities made up of different facets, too. What we're doing is adding whole new dimensions to something which is already multidimensional. So really, when it comes right down to it, we have a much harder job in community radio than a commercial radio station does because they choose a community, they choose a group of consumers that they want to

broadcast to. We don't choose our communities, our communities choose us.... Who is our community, I think, is a huge issue that I think is at the whole root of how are we going to represent ourselves on the internet.

**Rueger:** We had that happening in Ottawa, particularly with our Somali language show. They had a really large Internet audience because for the majority of the Somali population in North America, there was no Somali language media anywhere of any kind. So people all over the place were tuning into it to get news from home, primarily.

**Fenner:** So CKCU had a community in Somalia, too!

The greater accessibility that the Internet provides for community-based radio stations leads to a wider audience that could be "tuning in" from anywhere in the world. This affects not only the number of listeners, but the very idea of what exactly constitutes a "community." Geography no longer sets the boundaries; the boundaries no longer exist. One could view this positively, in that it means more extensive promotion for unheralded musicians, the universities, the city, and even the ideologies the drive stations like CHSR. Yet one might also question what this broadening of community does to active participation at these stations? This is a question that station managers and program directors will have keep in mind as new media technology continues to evolve and change the broadcasting scene. One thing is for certain: community radio will never be the same.

### **New Media Technology and the Future of Community-Based Radio**

After surveying the impact of new media technology on community-based radio's present and past, it is now time to look towards the future. Doomsayers would probably contend that the extinction of community-based radio is imminent, and that stations like CHSR should be thinking more about servers than transmitters. Ward thoroughly disagrees with this assessment. She believes that Internet radio stations cannot hold a candle to the kind of things CHSR does:

**Ward:** If someone's going to listen to internet radio, and if that's their choice, well the more power to them. If they're looking for something like what we can provide--like I said, all of this art, this real person talking to you in real time, sitting in a studio, you call them up and chat with them, this accessibility that any of the people who are at least within our FM range, can come into the studio themselves and actually be one of us--those are the people we're interested in. And if there's fewer and fewer and fewer, then that's going to be okay for a fairly long time, because we never expected it to be the majority of the population. And we don't compete with all the people who want to listen to commercial radio....And sometimes there's maybe one, maybe two, maybe three listeners on a particular show [at CHSR], and if it's a new show and it hasn't gained an audience yet, that's okay, we're all right with that so long as these other things remain intact. Besides that, we're using the internet, too. And we do a really good Internet broadcast because of who we are and how we're trained. Because we have standards we have to uphold because of the CRTC, that makes us really fabulous Internet broadcasters. Someone sitting down at their house, being an Internet-only broadcaster or some slick commercial production which is simply an internet jukebox doesn't compete with us because they don't have what we have, they don't have that magic.

Brayton agrees:

**Brayton:** If you look at the history of media, as each new medium has developed, it hasn't replaced old media but has typically built upon it or incorporated it. They kind of build and expand off one another. Television certainly supplanted (sic) radio in terms of being more popular with the public, but at the same time radio has never disappeared. Television was its biggest threat and television certainly didn't eliminate it. I think that because there are characteristics that are specific to each mass media, I don't see that new information technology as a new medium is necessarily ever going to replace ones like radio.

I'm sceptical that the Internet could ever replace traditional media. It certainly integrates all the media that exist, such as film, such as radio, such as television, such as print. It brings it all together but it's not replacing it, it's just conveying information through a different set of signals. And again, new information technology is not accessible to everybody. When you start looking at the digital divide in terms of who has access and who hasn't, it's the disenfranchised groups in society that don't have access, and these are the people that campus and community radio stations are typically trying to give a voice for. I think that community radio stations are always going to have a demand.

Community-based media offers something that Internet radio cannot: broadcasting in the truest philosophical sense. That means appreciating all the skill and finesse that go into putting a radio program together:

**Loiselle:** People are constantly creating new technologies which make things faster and easier, more convenient, more efficient, and I can't say that's a bad thing on the one hand. It's a tool, right? It enables you to do something that you might not have been able to do before. There are implications to that though. But again, becoming reliant on new technology, and the convenience of it, can take away or detract from what you were intending to do in the first place.

We're talking about radio. It's the art of broadcasting....If you have a computer, and you can generate it to rotate and play a number of songs, and broadcast those songs over the internet, and maybe work in some voice and some advertisements, and then you attach that computer to a transmitter, you're technically broadcasting that signal from your computer. But is that really broadcasting, is that what broadcasting is all about, having a computer attached to your transmitter? I tend to say no. I tend to say that that particular aspect, taking the technology to that degree, is actually destroying the art of broadcasting as opposed to contributing to it or enhancing it. Its convenience makes it easier, these different technologies make great tools. But they can also render us quite lazy and we can potentially overskip [sic] the art of what it is we intend to do in the first place.

The Internet, then, should not be viewed as a technology that will compete against or replace the radio. Instead, it should be considered as a complement to the kind of things radio can do. For community-based radio, this means taking this new technology and incorporating it into a station's operations, which will help that station to adapt to the ever-changing conditions of the digital age. CHSR is already deep into this process, and has plans for more changes in the future:

**Ward:** I see us heading towards something that's much more multi-disciplined where we accompany our audio with graphics and text. I see us as having multiple feeds to the Internet, which will allow us to broadcast a variety of different things, for example, hockey games and our FM broadcast. We don't always pre-empt our FM broadcast for the hockey games, but it would be nice if our listeners around the world got to choose whether they wanted to listen to the game or whether they wanted to listen to the FM cast. I see us using our Internet service to provide more audio service to a lot of different departments on the campus and eventually...we also need to get us down into the community and I can see us as being a good launching pad for a community access multimedia netcaster.

[In] the city of Fredericton, for example, there used to be an Internet service--well, about.com still exists, but they used to have a thing on Fredericton, they don't anymore. It had a lot of information. Lots of community perspective. All that's gone now because about.com has recently reduced itself because of hard times and they dropped Canadian cities. We should be providing the same service that about.com used to provide because people will tune into our broadcast to hear the hockey game or whatever, they'll also see this other information on our webpage while listening to us, and they can read up more about what's happening in Fredericton. Maybe if they're from here or have spent any amount of time here, they can interact with people who are in Fredericton on a discussion page or something like that, and have us much more as a community access point. I see that as being one of the things that CHSR can evolve into in the future.

We have recently had meetings with the journalism program at St. Thomas University and asked the journalism students if they would help us participate in something that goes beyond both radio and newspapers. And we've entered into negotiations with the Aquinian--we're going to open up a common web page. That webpage will be [chsrandtheaquinian@sthomasu.ca](mailto:chsrandtheaquinian@sthomasu.ca). It will contain audio, both a live stream of our broadcast but also archived audio, and it will contain written reports, much like a newspaper, to accompany the audio or independent of it. And it will be linked to the homepage for St. Thomas University, so politically it's a very good move for both us and the Aquinian. It allows us to be more useful to the journalism students which allows us to be able to justify our funding. Also, it's a development of radio and newspaper into this new media; rather than giving up and letting web-only institutions start up here and take over, we're allowing this newspaper and this radio station to adopt the net as a second form of publication, which I think is much better.

Brayton, too, believes that community-based stations must think in terms of convergence; if they do not bother to acknowledge the potential and influence of new technology, they may be doing so at their own peril:

**Brayton:** I think that community radio as well as commercial radio and all the other mass media are going to have to begin to address the impact of new information and communication technology simply because they are part of the world. Areas like the Internet do bring together all of the mass media in a new way. So to ignore its presence, I think, would work against community radio. Nowadays you'd at least expect a

community radio station to have a website up at a minimum or have e-mail access. If campus stations don't incorporate new information technologies, more and more I do think they will possibly be left by the wayside. But that's not to say that necessarily you have to be jumping on the bandwagon and broadcasting everyday through Shoutcast 7/24 and all of these kinds of crazy things.

This does not mean, however, that stations should approach these technologies blindly, as advantageous as they may be:

**Brayton:** I think [stations must] embrace it with scepticism. People need to incorporate new information technologies in part because the world is forcing us to incorporate new technologies by simply thinking that this is really something that everyone needs to be involved with...the snowball rolling out of control...more and more people jump on.... It becomes something that people do really need to address and incorporate if they're going to stay on top of things. On the other hand, a lot of people have jumped on the Internet bandwagon without any kind of criticism or analysis or awareness, and I think that this is where people need to be sceptical and really look at what new information technologies could provide, specifically campus radio stations. What would a radio station get from having e-mail access, what would a radio station get from having a website, what would a radio get by providing a listserve service about broadcasts.... There are so many different ways that new information technologies could be incorporated into community radio stations that would be positive and effective, but I think there needs to be a process of reflection and evaluation about what they can provide campus stations.

The Internet can certainly enhance what a community-based radio station does, but it is important to remember that one should not get ahead of oneself and "jump on the bandwagon," as Brayton says, before checking to see if the technology is actually necessary for every facet of the operations. The technology, after all, is only a medium-- and in the community-based radio sector, the medium is only a means, not the message, despite what McLuhan would have us believe.

### **What About Regulation?**

Given the preceding analysis, the question still remains: should new media be regulated with respect to broadcasting? In terms of expanding the availability of Canadian content, Brayton believes regulation might help, as she feels the CRTC's original reasons for not regulating were somewhat flawed:

**Brayton:** When the ruling came down, the report had initially said that [the CRTC] felt that there was enough Canadian content presence on the web. From the research they had done, they found evidence of Canadians who were using the Internet, and they were using it in order to promote Canadian identity. However, the examples they gave were things like, one individual who'd had an Anne Murray fansite

where he'd broadcast the song "Songbird" [sic] 24 hours a day, and this was considered to be Canadian content. So the original motivation was keeping a hands-off approach on the Internet to encourage more diversity of opinion.

She does have some conflicting feelings about this, however:

**Brayton:** I'm against censorship of the Internet because I do believe that if the government begins interfering with content on the Internet, then the agenda of dominant social groups will be pushed forward and the voices of marginalized groups or less powerful groups won't be heard. On the other hand, my experience working with the Internet--I work for a Canadian electronic feminist organisation, and certainly being their web administrator and dealing with other Canadian electronic feminist organizations--we believe that there's actually not a high degree of Canadian presence on the Internet. And if you look at the diversity of Canadians, francophones in particular are very poorly represented on the Internet, and in many ways having government support would encourage other groups to make their presence possibly more prevalent.

Unlike Brayton, Loisel veers more towards cynicism when the question of regulation is brought up:

**Loiselle:** I think [the laissez-faire attitude of the CRTC is] desirable, for sure, from my standpoint. Of course you're going to have people coming from horrible places or with horrible agendas and attitudes about people in the world that are going to use [the Internet], but simultaneously there's a lot of stuff out there on the Internet that's both good and bad.... I think the openness is a good thing in such an era of restrictions on a lot of things we do. I don't necessarily have a lot of faith and trust in the direction society's going in the regulatory bodies.

In any case, Loisel asserts, the question of regulating the Internet to protect community-based radio is irrelevant, because it has no affect on the principles of the sector, particularly when it comes to the issue of discrimination:

**Loiselle:** Our mandate for responsible and respectful programming doesn't come because of our licensing agreement. It comes because of the membership and the history of CHSR as an independent institution regardless of what the CRTC has regulated us to do. Regulation or not, if there wasn't a regulation against discriminatory broadcasting I would still hope that CHSR would insist that there isn't any and would not allow it. I really think that the trust should be placed in the radio station itself to decide what kind of responsible and intelligent programming it has, and the members that run that particular station.

Ward concurs, arguing that the lack of regulation of the Internet does not put CHSR at a disadvantage:

**Ward:** It's not unfair because what [bigoted websites are] doing is wrong in the first place. Their ability to get away with it versus our ability to get away with it--I don't want to get away with it. It's not in radio's best interest, and it's not in the Canadian citizen's best interest, and the Canadian citizen in the end is the one who owns the FM airways. It's not in any of our best interest to allow us to get away with pornography or abuse of content or hatred. We should have rules against that. The fact that Internet-only broadcasters get around those rules is disgusting, but I would not therefore want [the CRTC] to slack on us because of it. I recognize that they can't enforce it, but that doesn't mean that I want us then to march right in and be allowed to be allowed to be abusive as well. One of the things that makes us different from the United

States is that we do put restrictions on freedom of speech when it comes to abuse, and I don't think that that should ever be relieved just because there are people out there who are Internet-only who are able to get around that.

Ultimately, Ward believes that regulation of new media would be a lost cause, anyway:

**Ward:** Internet broadcasting will never be regulated. It's silly to try. And I think the CRTC recognized that which is why they said they're not going to touch it. There may come a time sometime in the future when some new advance in technology will allow for that sort of thing, but I'm betting no.

The nature of the Internet, with its multi-directionality and its randomness, makes it impossible on a practical level to regulate. Although Brayton asserts that the promotion of Canadian content on the Internet has suffered without regulation, she also feels, along Loiselle, that regulation could ultimately do more harm than good. Ward expresses similar sentiments, but also believes that it is pointless to talk about it, anyway, since regulation would be an exercise in futility. One can only assume from these opinions that the CRTC made the right decision in 1999.

## **Conclusion**

Judging from the experiences of CHSR, the introduction of new media into the world of community-based radio has had a positive effect on the sector, for the most part. Fundraising has improved, awareness has increased, and stations have become more accessible to community members. Some uncertainties do exist over issues such as copyright and the effect of the community's changing dynamic on the philosophies of community radio; however, these will probably smoothed over within the next few years. The CRTC's decision not to regulate new media appears to have been a sound one; while commercial stations have obviously benefited from it financially, community-based stations like CHSR have also benefited by having full access to all the un-censored materials that Internet technology provides. Furthermore, because the passion behind the

mandates of these stations is so strong, they have no fear of the presence of Internet-only radio stations on the scene.

As Rueger states, the community-based radio stations find new media comfortably positioned within the sector's historical continuum:

**Rueger:** In terms of being a medium which is accessible to "ordinary people", I think it fits extremely well. That has been the whole track of community broadcasting for the last 50 odd years, is taking what was a privileged medium and making it accessible to anyone who had a message to get out. And I think that the Internet does the same thing except it does it in spades and it does it in a global direction. They fit together just so nicely in my mind because it's the same sort of ideas, that they're both facing encroaching commercialism, more regulation, and things like that that sort of comes with the turf.

Community-based radio is a resilient creature, and new media technology can only help it evolve into something greater--as long as stations like CHSR keep their eyes open.

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