

regarding children's programming, adult education, news or material on democratization and governance, or whatever. However, the expertise to create the content should come from people outside the government whether they're from industry, news organizations, hospitals, universities or independent producers.

Undoubtedly, at times, independently produced programs will cause the government some discomfort. So be it. In fact, I would argue that such a situation would, more often than not, enhance Canada's profile as a country that encourages differences of views.

It is very tempting for any government to want to control what is said and what information is disseminated, but I would vigorously oppose it. As mentioned, audiences these days are very smart. If the United States were to start up a Voice of America today, I think it would fail. Not only has the position of the United States substantially changed in the minds of people around the world, but their

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sophistication in recognizing and rejecting "state-sponsored" information has significantly grown in the past three decades. Too often they have received "other" sources of information from the notorious faxes of Tiananmen to the shortwave broadcasts of RCI and the BBC. And

if we want to reach the people who want and need accurate information, they will be precisely the ones who will be sceptical and want to know the source.

Paying for It

So let's say it's a go. The government comes up with a layered, multi-platformed, geographically-focused strategy that adapts medium to content. Who pays? Quite simply, the government would pay a lot of it, but it would work with partners who either would also pay a lot when they see a benefit, or would make substantial in-kind contributions to the development of content. Again, a few examples will illustrate how it might work.

A company is targeting a foreign market for high technology sales. The federal government is targeting that same country for its next focused communications initiative. The company might be very eager and willing to set up some kind of demonstration project whose value would be greatly enhanced by a partnership with the Canadian government. Such a company would foot a substantial part of the bill to put the technology infrastructure in place, or to buy broadcasting time, or make satellite space available. Many countries look more favourably at industries and companies that are being backed and boosted by their governments. That has been part of the success of the "Team Canada" approach to trade promotion.

It is vital, however, to consider the process of partnership in addition to the financial advantages. It is common knowledge at some corporate headquarters that a federal minister wrote a number of chief executive officers asking them to contribute half a million dollars to a partnership project with Ottawa. The problem was