

Videos save declining popularity of television

By JEAN LEBLANC

Videos must be a television executive's dream come true. In a time of rising costs, falling ratings and the demise of quality programming, video shows appeared. The cost of a video show is extraordinarily low compared to other programmes. With no need for big salaries or high production costs, and with the videos being given to the networks by the record companies, costs are kept at a minimum. At the same time the ratings began rising again as the video programs drew huge audiences.

A case in point is the CBC's "Video Hits". Shown on weekdays at 5 pm, this half hour programme receives an audience of almost half a million viewers.

Even though there have been other music-related television programmes concerned with the music industry, not all were well received, and only *American Bandstand* survived through the years. Video really came in force though during 1983. Television's influence was again demonstrated as the videos seemed to turn the music industry from a cycle of declining record

sales to one of record breaking sales. Videos soon were everywhere, millions of homes in the U.S. and Canada are being connected by either MTV or Much Music. The commercial networks have also appeared on the scene with their own video programmes. The CBC is one of the leaders in this field with five and a half hours of video programming every week.

Even though video shows improve the ratings of the networks, are they beneficial in the long run? Quality programming and ratings have been going down for years. The video shows brought the ratings back but they have yet to get quality programming back. Is it just part of a continual downward trend that has seen television become worse and worse over the past ten to 15 years? The networks could use the revenues generated by the video shows to bring back television that shows some form of intelligence. A first step might be replacing such shows as the A-Team and Dallas with programmes of the calibre of Hill Street Blues and Cheers. Only time will tell if television will take this opportunity to reverse the continual degradation of quality. □

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Dale Godsoe is an M.A. student in Continuing Education. As past chairperson of the Halifax District School Board, she knows that we all pay the price for years of underfunding of education. She realizes that student aid is both inadequate and badly administered.

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