

1.7.2 Programming

Canadian Content

All Canadian broadcasters are required under the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's (CRTC) regulations to broadcast no less than 60 per cent of Canadian-originated programming throughout the day. During prime time, 6 p.m. to midnight, the Canadian content quotas are 50 per cent for private broadcasters and 60 per cent for the CBC.

Much of the current "Canadian content" airtime is devoted to information programs such as news and public affairs. So when Canadian television viewers support the notion that there are "not enough television programs which reflect a Canadian point of view" they may be referring to entertainment programs; that is, Canadian counterparts to American programs such as made-for-television movies, serial dramas and situation comedies which have definitively, if not accurately, painted a portrait of American culture both for Americans and Canadians.

Sixty per cent of Canadian television viewers agree that there are not enough television programs which reflect a Canadian point of view; only 33 per cent disagree. Almost as many - 58 per cent - believe that American television programs have too great an influence on the Canadian way of life; only 35 per cent disagree.

Language and television viewing behaviour have little influence on people's attitudes toward the question of Canadian content and influence of American broadcasts. English and French-speaking Canadians; heavy, medium and light television viewers; people who watch public and private Canadian networks, public and commercial American television networks are all equally supportive of more Canadian programming and are equally concerned about the impact of American programming on Canadian audiences.

Canadians do respond somewhat differently according to their age. Young people aged 18 to 24 are most likely to agree that there are not enough Canadian-oriented television programs. This group plus the 25 to 34 year olds are most likely to be concerned about the negative influence of American television.

Canadian broadcasters have maintained that the size of the Canadian market is too small and the competition from American networks too pervasive to support extensive production of Canadian-originated programming without government funding or tax incentives. While it is outside the range of this report to analyze the feasibility of increasing the volume or quality of Canadian programming, the study does measure current perceptions of Canadian versus American television productions.