

In 1957 the Soviets launched the first Sputnik, a tremendous accomplishment at that time. Since then, several hundred communications satellites have been placed in earth orbits providing an increasing array of communications and broadcasting services. On September 29, 1962, Canada launched Alouette 1. We became the first western country to have its own domestic communications satellite.

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In 1976, we launched Hermes, an experimental communications satellite, to demonstrate new broadcasting techniques. Our technical expertise was recognized when Canada received an Emmy Award for this achievement.

[*Translation*]

ITU regulations which govern the international use of radio have been updated 20 times since 1938 to take account of technological development and international demands for radio frequencies.

Every industrialized nation has a state-controlled spectrum management system. This fact alone reflects the tremendous value of the spectrum. Many nations in Europe still exercise proprietary control over the companies which provide telecommunications service. The spectrum manager and the manager user of the spectrum are also both government agencies.

In Canada, there has been a prosperous history of keeping the management of the spectrum and the commercial interests of the big spectrum users separate in order to encourage innovation in the marketplace.

The department of communications is the manager of the radiofrequency spectrum for all Canadians, for all interests of the country.

Competing applications of radio technology cannot contribute to a healthy economy unless the spectrum resource is properly managed.

In the case of cellular telephones or the broadcasting industry, for example, the existence of a healthy competitive industry which offers good service to the Canadian public is dependent on good management of the radio frequency spectrum by the department of communications to ensure this.

Radio Act

Effective and efficient management of the radio frequency spectrum is necessary to ensure that regulatory incentives are created which will foster the interests of Canadians and Canadian businesses.

[*English*]

There was a time when telecommunications was synonymous only with wire-line communications, telephone and telegraph. This is no longer true. The entire Canadian telecommunications infrastructure, one in which we can take great pride, is today critically dependent on the radio frequency spectrum. Indeed, without the radio links provided by microwave and satellite, the capacity and versatility of communications throughout all of Canada would be severely diminished.

Telecommunications, broadcasting, microwave systems, long distance telephone service, emergency services such as police and fire departments, aeronautical and marine communications, industrial machinery and consumer devices all must have interference-free access to radio frequencies in order to operate successfully. The importance of the spectrum in communicating culture, ensuring sovereignty and supporting commerce cannot be overestimated. The need for interference-free spectrum management is imperative.

Radio frequencies are public property and are a limited resource. Their application and use, to be of value, must be managed judiciously. This task is the responsibility of the Canadian Government and in particular, that of the Minister of Communications.

Two objectives are of primary importance: first, to ensure that the spectrum is made available to meet the needs of all Canadians for their social, economic, industrial, cultural and technical benefit; and also to ensure that any use of radio causes minimum interference to other radio users and to the public at large. To manage this valuable and fragile resource, we have relied on both technical and statutory tools.

Radio communications were first regulated in Canada by the Wireless Telegraphy Act of 1905. This provided the legislative framework until 1938 when the Radio Act which dealt specifically with spectrum regulation was proclaimed.