

established by RCI, TVOntario (TVO), and the CBC,<sup>4</sup> but we would also tap into what's considered by some to be a gold mine of credibility. We are not the United States. We are not Great Britain. And, to many, that means that we have a kind of independent status that gives our reporting a special integrity. I remember when I was reporting from around the world, I could often breeze through doors closed to my American Broadcasting Corporation or BBC colleagues. China and Syria are but two examples.

By either airing an existing Canadian news service (including Canadian news) or producing a new program that might air on a network or be on a WebNet, we would not only attract an audience, but strengthen the view of Canadians as reliable filters for what's taking place around the world. This approach fits with who we are and how others see us. In addition, we might air some of that information in other languages which would not only increase our visibility and relevance to a region, but also bolster our multicultural and multilingual national heritage.

Woven through all these points is a vision of demonstrated Canadian values. By using that identity to not only shape the content but also the format of that content, we would be using our national strengths to naturally place us in a global context. We would stand out and we would be doing things in our own unique way.

## Shaping the Message

By now, you see where I am going. The technology is changing at a rat-a-tat rate so that it might be unwise to put all of our efforts into one medium. You don't gamble by playing only one hand. In addition, not only are our resources insufficient to set some new splashy broadcasting initiative in motion, but more important, they could not sustain it over a period of time. Rather, we should focus, focus, focus. And that leads me to three conclusions.

First, we should think in terms of "programs" or single initiatives rather than whole networks or broadcasting. Programs and single-subject projects will be the currency of the future. Besides, they're cheaper than setting up a whole broadcasting infrastructure,<sup>5</sup> and they can be pulled down quicker when technology or the politics of a given country shifts.

Second, given that we can't be all things to all people, we should single out regions and target specific audiences rather than "the world." Yes, we may prefer the ocean to the small pond, but we could be more effective if we tie the choices of those regions to some event or other project we might be involved in. If, for example, we had such a strategy in place, we might have been targeting some of the member countries of the Asia Pacific Economic Co-operation (APEC), given that Vancouver will be hosting its annual meeting in September 1997.

Third, we should think in terms of multi-platforms and consider which platform is best suited to some specific content.

4. CBC's Journal documentaries routinely aired on PBS, BBC in addition to ARD in Germany, and also in Italy, Japan and elsewhere. Often because of their topicality, they ran on the same night as the CBC broadcast.

5. One suggestion has been to join with other Commonwealth countries to establish an English broadcasting equivalent to TV5. My impression, shared by others, is that we might not get the kind of visibility-clout to merit the dollars spent. This has been a continuing issue in the case of TV5: that the Canadian content gets lost in the mix, and that its biggest audience for Canadian news are travelling Canadians.