

# Culture vs. competition

Court challenge over Globalive decision pits cheaper bills against Canadian content, say groups

By ANDREA HAYLEY  
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VANCOUVER—A coalition of groups is opposing an unprecedented federal government decision to overrule the CRTC's rejection of an application for wireless services by a foreign owned company.

The CRTC, an independent regulator, ruled last October that Globalive is controlled by Egyptian phone giant Orascom Telecom, and therefore does not meet the ownership requirements set out in Canada's Telecommunications Act.

That ruling was overturned by the government, which concluded that Globalive—most of whose voting shares and board seats are owned by Canadians—meets Canadian ownership and control requirements.

**‘The government has done something that it doesn't have the right to do.’**

— Ian Morrison

However, Ian Morrison, spokesperson for Friends of Canadian Broadcasting (FRIENDS), says the government's decision is “not valid.”

“The very act of over-turning the decision is not illegal, but our position is that the government exceeded its authority, that the government is also bound by the law and the law is pretty clear on this matter. The government has done something that it doesn't have the right to do.”

The coalition, which includes FRIENDS, the Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists (ACTRA) and the Communications, Energy and Paperworkers Union of Canada, has been granted intervenor status by the Federal Court in a judicial review of the decision.

The groups are backing mobile phone company Public Mobile in its bid to challenge the government's approval of Globalive and its mobile brand Wind. Vancouver-based Telus, which also wants the CRTC ruling upheld, is backing Public Mobile as well.

Globalive began offering mobile services in Canada in December, becoming the first new entrant in a decade into a market dominated by incumbents Bell, Telus, and Rogers.

The new cellular companies, Public, Mobility, and Wind have already started making waves with plans that offer unlimited talk and text for the same rate as the base plans of the incumbent providers.

It's a deal that has left many Canadians, according to comments on chat forums and news articles, anticipating slimmer bills as the new providers get up and running in their cities.

The government's decision to overrule foreign ownership rules outlined in the Telecommunications Act appear to be part of a deliberate conservative strategy of opening up the market to global competition.

“This government made a decision a couple of years ago that we wanted more competition in the wireless space, that this was important for consumers, it was important for our economy,” Industry Minister Tony Clement said in a Canwest interview.

The government said in the throne speech that it would open key sectors, including the satellite and telecommunications industries, to both venture capital and foreign investment.

In the Globalive case, Clement said it was not undermining the credibility of the CRTC, but rather that it was simply a different interpretation of the Act.

“It is a case where reasonable minds could differ,” he said.

The coalition argues that opening the door in this way to foreign ownership could threaten Canadian content and will make protecting Canadian cultural assets extremely difficult.

“We're adjacent to such a powerful, cultural force—the United States,” says Morrison.

“It's almost always cheaper to purchase programming in the United States and import it to Canada and wrap Canadian ads around it than it is to create programming domestically. So if the marketplace were to operate freely, high-production value Canadian content outside of areas like news—current affairs—would dissipate.”

Morrison says it is next to impossible to differentiate between content providers today, with companies like Rogers owning property in wireless, broadcasting, digital—and even a football team.

Globalive chairman Anthony Lacavera said opening up to foreign ownership will give consumers more choices.

“Canada has got one of the least competitive wireless markets in the world demonstrated by the high pricing and low penetration (of mobile phones),” he told Yahoo News.

Critics of the current system say wireless services are more expensive in Canada than in many EU countries, and that Canadians will be better served with competitors like Globalive in the field.

The coalition however says it is more important that Canadian companies be encouraged to compete. They say the Canadian market is ultimately too small for the global giants, and foreign ownership will only result in the smaller players, including Canadian incumbents, getting bought out—resulting in less, rather than more competition.

A 2007 opinion poll found that most Canadians—61 percent—hold an unfavourable view of foreign ownership of telephone companies.

The Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology, which has been holding hearings on Canada's telecom foreign ownership rules, heard from five groups concerned the Globalive decision could affect Canadian content controls.

“We know that there have been other reviews and studies of foreign ownership in the past,” Rebecca Schechter, president of the Writers Guild of Canada, told the committee on April 1.

“However, we are now in the midst of a digital revolution where carriers and content providers are becoming one and the same. The government is right to consider consumers' interests but consumers have more than money at stake here.”

Stephen Waddell, national executive director of ACTRA, and others pointed out that Canada is not alone in maintaining foreign ownership restrictions on broadcasting.

“Almost all of the OECD countries have restrictions on the ownership of telecommunications and broadcasting, including the United States,” Waddell said.

Conservative MP Mike Wallace, a member of the Standing Committee, argued that government regulation would handle concerns over Canadian identity in broadcasting should the problem arise.

“Are you telling me that we cannot, as a government, regulate to be effective in making sure that broadcasting for Canadian content is protected, even though we have examples of other industries where the government is capable of doing it?” he asked.

“Let's hope that you do,” answered Waddell.

## GG presents Order of Canada



Lawyer David Matas poses with Governor General Michaëlle Jean at Rideau Hall in Ottawa on Wednesday after being awarded the rank of Member of the Order of Canada. Matas was recognized for his contributions to human rights legislation as well as to immigration and refugee law. Other recipients include Olympic speed skater Clara Hughes; Willie O'Ree, the first black NHL hockey player; Barry Strayer, who played a principal role in writing the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms; Marc Kielburger, co-founder of both Free the Children and Me to We; and quadriplegic Gary Birch of the Neil Squire Society, for his tireless work to improve life for people with disabilities. SGT SERGE GOUIN, RIDEAU HALL

## Journalists increasingly turning to PR, social networks: Study

58 percent of Canadian reporters perceive their workload as heavier than in 2009

By HELENA ZHU  
Epoch Times Staff

VANCOUVER—In today's reality of budget cuts, shrinking newsroom staff, and the growing popularity of social media, journalists may be relying on public relations more than ever before, says a new study.

Sponsored by PR Newswire and CNW (Canada Newswire), the online survey asked 2,174 journalists, bloggers and PR professionals in the United States and Canada to provide insight into the changing media landscape.

While journalists are expected to develop timely and abundant content, PR professionals are finding a more receptive audience for their pitches—and more of these pitches are occurring through social media channels.

PR professionals offer journalists story ideas and access to subject matter experts with the end goal of promoting their clients through coverage in the media.

“Social media and convergence have fundamentally changed how the newsroom operates and the way content is created and delivered,” David Milliken, senior vice president, CNW Group, said in a press release.

“The PR professionals finding the most success are adapting and tailoring their pitches so they are relevant to multiple channels. They are learning to serve the needs of an evolving media.”

While journalists admit a slight increase in frequency of interaction with PR professionals, most report there is little change in the frequency of their use of PR professionals. However, just over one-third of PR professionals in both countries say they are receiving more proactive inquiries from journalists than in the past.

Although both U.S. and Canadian PR professionals report pitching to bloggers and going directly to consumers more often than two years ago, U.S. practitioners are doing so at the expense of traditional media, whereas Canadian practitioners report a slight increase in pitching to traditional media outlets as well.

**CANADIAN JOURNALISTS WORKING MORE**  
Despite reported workload increases and staff and budget cuts, media outlet performance has shown stability and some improvement in the past year.

Still, the survey found that 58 percent of Canadian journalists perceive their current workload as heavier than last year. Canadian journalists more often cite the “tightening of budgets” as affecting them the most. This is most prevalent at traditional media outlets where journalists report an increased expectation to contribute to online news sections as well as blogs.

Canadian journalists report filing an increased number of stories per day (ranging from one to three) and are expected to contribute to online news sites, blogs and Twitter feeds. Filing stories across mobile devices is not yet a requirement, as reported by 85 percent of journalists in the study.

When asked to measure success, 20 percent of respondents selected “Break news and chronicle events as they happen.” This result was significantly greater than in 2009 (five percent), which indicates a growing premium on being first with news. This is likely driven by the growth of online reporting and the 24/7 news cycle.

“Heavier workloads, shorter deadlines, and increased competition are causing journalists to seek out new sources of information to help them get their jobs done, including social networks,” said Erica Iacono, executive editor of PRWeek.



Journalists are increasingly incorporating social media into their work to keep pace with a changing media landscape. TOM PENNINGTON/GETTY IMAGES

Iacono stressed however that “there must still be a focus on the basic tenets of good journalism.”

### BLOGGERS AND SOCIAL MEDIA

The survey also showed that journalists are penning more blogs, and more bloggers are characterizing their work as journalism.

Canadian journalists are most likely to use Facebook, followed by LinkedIn and Twitter. Personal updates are the most common type of content posted among all journalists.

About half of journalists use Twitter as part of their research, more so in the U.S. than in Canada. Most often used to track top issues of the day and to measure sentiment around a topic, one-in-three journalists report having quoted a Twitter post in a story.

Pitches received via social networks have also increased since 2009, specifically via Twitter. About six in ten U.S. journalists say they welcome pitches via social networks.

As many as 64 percent of bloggers and 36 percent of online reporters confirmed employing Twitter as a research tool, whereas Google search (82 percent) and company websites (90 percent) are most commonly used during the course of research for a story. Canadian journalists were more likely than those in the U.S. to get the most information from conversations at 77 percent, 6 percent higher than their U.S. counterparts.

The majority of bloggers, 52 percent, now view themselves as journalists, up from just one in three in 2009. Despite viewing themselves as professional, only 20 percent derive the majority of their income from their blog work, a small increase from 16 percent in 2009.

Despite industry changes including increased workload and staff/budget cuts, media outlet performance has shown stability and some improvement in the past year, the study said. Concerns for the coming three years include a shift from print to digital and a reduction in full-time staff, although the level of concern appears less than last year.

The shift from print to online reporting is seen as the primary industry driver for the next three years, with 57 percent of magazine and newspaper journalists indicating that this trend will continue in earnest.

## Ontario's doctors want tanning bed restrictions for minors

By JOAN DELANEY  
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In an effort to dispel the common misconception that tanning beds are safer than the sun, the Ontario Medical Association (OMA) has called for age restrictions on the use of artificial tanning equipment.

The OMA seeks to ensure that tanning beds cannot be used by those under 18 years of age.

“Exposure to ultraviolet rays from tanning beds is no safer than exposure to UV rays from the sun,” OMA president Dr. Suzanne Strasberg said in a statement Monday.

“Regardless of the source, UV rays damage the skin and increase your chances of getting skin cancer, which can be deadly.”

The OMA's move comes on the heels of a bill introduced in the House of Commons last month seeking stronger labelling on tanning beds to communicate the cancer risks of indoor tanning, especially to youth.

Conservative MP James Bezan's bill calls for larger and more visible radiation warning labels that draw a clear link between skin cancer and ultraviolet rays. The labels would recommend that those under 18 not use tanning beds. Current labels do not include such warnings and are often not clearly visible.

“According to a recent study, in 87 percent of tanning salons radiation warning labels could not be seen,” Bezan said in a press release. “Canadians need to know that tanning beds increase your risk of cancer, especially during your younger years.”

In July 2009, the International Agency for Research on Cancer, a branch of the World Health Organization, elevated ultraviolet-emitting tanning beds to its highest cancer risk group and labelled them as “carcinogenic to humans,” along with cigarettes, arsenic, and asbestos.

The agency also stated that the risk of skin cancer is increased by 75 percent when a person starts using tanning devices before the age of 30.

The Canadian Cancer Society, World Health Organization, and the International Commission on Non-Ionizing Radiation Protection strongly recommend the restriction of minors under 18 from using tanning beds.

However, the Joint Canadian Tanning Association (JCTA) has criticized Bezan's bill and says there is no data to suggest that tanning is more dangerous for any specific age group.

JCTA favours a looser rule that would require parents of those under 16 to sign an approval form in the salon, saying skin type, rather than age, is more important in determining whether tanning is damaging. It advises people with fair skin against using tanning beds, regardless of age.

The agency wants to work with the provinces to help regulate industry operating standards across the country.

“For years the JCTA and its members have acted as pioneers in developing comprehensive salon guidelines on the responsible use of indoor tanning equipment. With the support of governments we can most effectively extend these safeguards and programs for all Canadians,” JCTA president Doug McNabb said in a release.

The Canadian Dermatology Association (CDA) says one of the busiest seasons for indoor tanning starts in January when many teens tan before spring break.

CDA has been running a campaign called “Indoor Tanning is Out” to warn people—especially young women—about the link between skin cancer and sunbeds. The association says one Canadian dies of skin cancer about every seven hours.

Bezan said the inspiration for his private member's bill came from personal experience after his wife, who used both tanning beds and natural sunlight, was twice diagnosed with melanoma.

“Like so many Canadians, my family has experienced the devastating impacts of skin cancer,” he said. “It's time we strike back against this hidden health risk and make Canadians aware of the hazards of regular and repeated exposure to ultraviolet radiation through tanning.”

The Medical Society of Prince Edward Island has also called for a ban on the use of artificial tanning equipment for people under the age of 18. New Brunswick, which introduced a ban in 1992, is so far the only province in Canada that restricts those under 18 from using tanning beds.

### 4 PUZZLES IN PEACE

Guess the hidden saying, phrase or word(s) suggested by the graphic below



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