



Accessibility of Communications in Canada

Presentation to Accessible Americas III: Information and Communication for ALL

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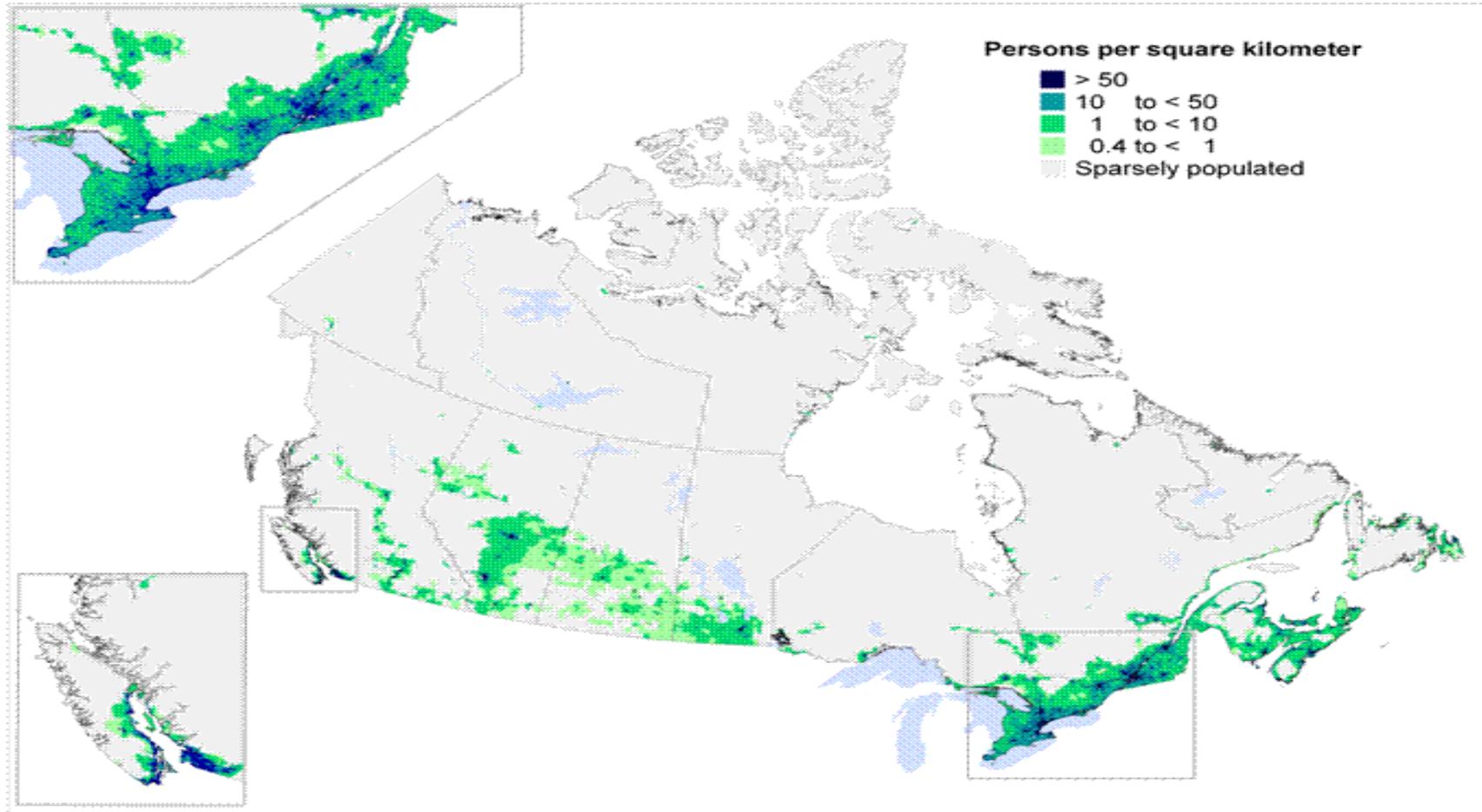


Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des
télécommunications canadiennes

Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission



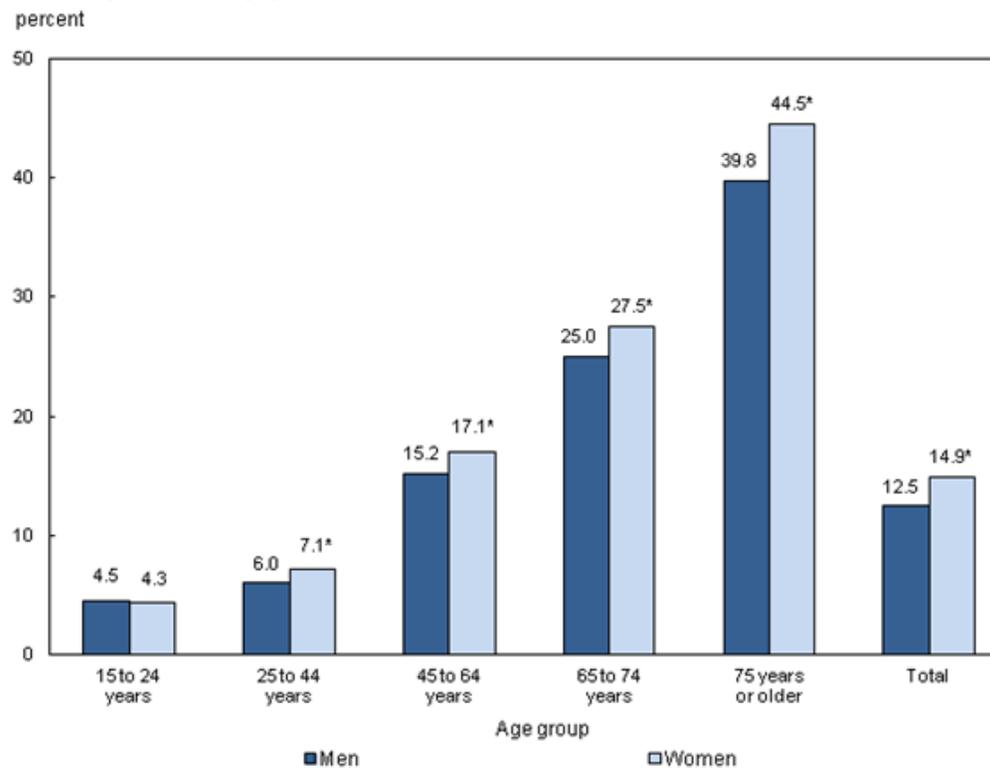
Canada - Population Density



- 4th lowest population density in the world, with 3 inhabitants per km².
- 90% of the population concentrated within 160 km of the U.S. border.
 - Rural and remote areas
 - 3 levels of Government – Federal, Provincial, and Municipal

Canadians with Disabilities

- In 2012, 14% of Canadians over the age of 15 self-identified as having a disability
 - This equals approximately 3.8 million Canadians



Responsibility for Accessibility at the Federal Level

Government of Canada

- New Minister for Sport and Persons with Disabilities, Carla Qualtrough

Employment and Social Development Canada

- Office of Disability Issues
- Consulting with Canadians for Canadians with Disabilities Act

Service Canada

- Houses information on financial benefits for persons with disabilities
- Processes benefit claims and helps Canadians with the application process

Statistics Canada

- Collects statistics on Canadian population of persons with disabilities

What is the CRTC?

- Administrative Tribunal
 - ✓ Supervises and regulates radio, television, distribution (cable, satellite and IPTV) and telephony
 - ✓ Mandate focuses on achieving policy objectives established in the *Broadcasting Act*, the *Telecommunications Act*, and *Canada's Anti-Spam Legislation*.
- The CRTC is an independent public authority and reports to Parliament through the Minister of Canadian Heritage. It is composed of:
 - A Chairperson,
 - 2 Vice-Chairpersons,
 - Up to 10 Regional Commissioners, and
 - 432 Employees.



How the CRTC Works

All policies and regulations are made as a result of a process involving the public.

Public proceedings

- Public hearings
- Written processes
- Round-table discussions
- Informal forums
- Online discussion forums

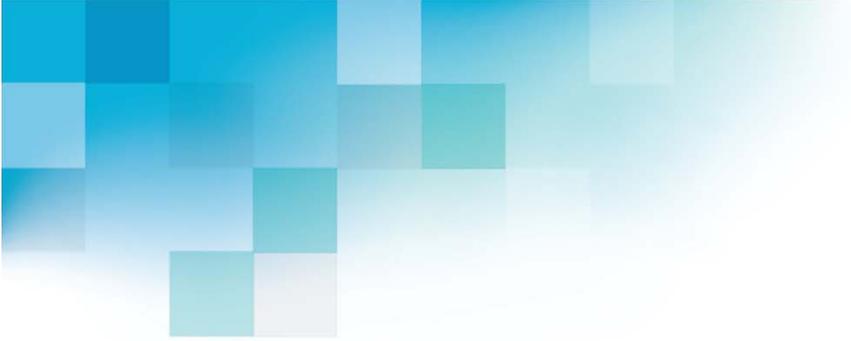
Appeal process

Final and conclusive decisions, except:

- Licensing and issues of law or jurisdiction
- Cabinet (policy)
- Federal Court of Appeal (legal)

Transparency:

- Publication of regulatory policies and decisions
- Proactive disclosure
- Access to information
- Information available on CRTC website in French and English



The Vision

*“In 2017, I see the CRTC as an institution that is trusted by Canadians. They trust us to ensure that Canada maintains and develops a **world-class communication system**. They trust us to defend their interests as **citizens, as creators and as consumers**” .*

Jean-Pierre Blais, Chairperson, CRTC October 29, 2012



Accessibility Mandate

The *Broadcasting Act*

The *Telecommunications Act*



Broadcasting Act

- Under the [*Broadcasting Act*](#), the CRTC regulates **over 2,000 broadcasters**, including:
 - ✓ conventional television services;
 - ✓ pay and specialty television services;
 - ✓ cable and satellite companies;
 - ✓ AM and FM radio, including community, commercial, ethnic; and
 - ✓ satellite radio.

Accessibility

- The *Broadcasting Act* states that as resources become available, programming within the Canadian broadcasting system should be made accessible for persons with disabilities.
 - The CRTC has created requirements for closed captioning, described video, and audio description, among other things.



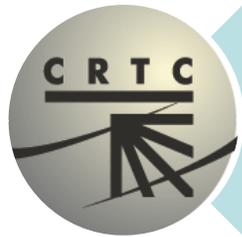
Telecommunications Act

- Under the [Telecommunication Act](#), the CRTC regulates over **1,000 telecommunications companies**:
 - ✓ from resellers to large national companies;
 - ✓ wired and wireless telephone services;
 - ✓ internet services; and
 - ✓ the National Do Not Call List ([DNCL](#)).

Accessibility

- The *Telecommunications Act* states that reliable and affordable telecommunication services of high-quality should be accessible to all Canadians, including those with disabilities.
 - The CRTC has mandated as basic telecommunications services relay services – TTY, IP relay and Video Relay Service – and expects wireless service providers to offer and promote at least one type of accessible handset, among other things.

Accessibility from Three Perspectives



CRTC Proceedings



Communication Services



Communication Devices

CRTC Proceedings

In striving to create successful policy, the CRTC...

Encourages Participation

- The CRTC created a '5-Minute Guide' and 'Rules of Procedure' for participating in a CRTC proceeding – available in ASL and LSQ

Supports Understanding

- Information filed by parties in a proceeding must be in accessible formats.
- The CRTC will provide accommodations at public hearings for participants with disabilities.

Supports Participation

- Telecommunications Cost Awards
- Broadcasting Participation Fund

Communications Services - Telecommunications

- With input from Canadians over the years, the CRTC has established a regulatory framework to ensure Canadians of all abilities are able to equitably connect with the broader Canadian society.

1980's – TTY

Text-based
analog
communication

2010 – IP Relay

Text-based
digital
communication

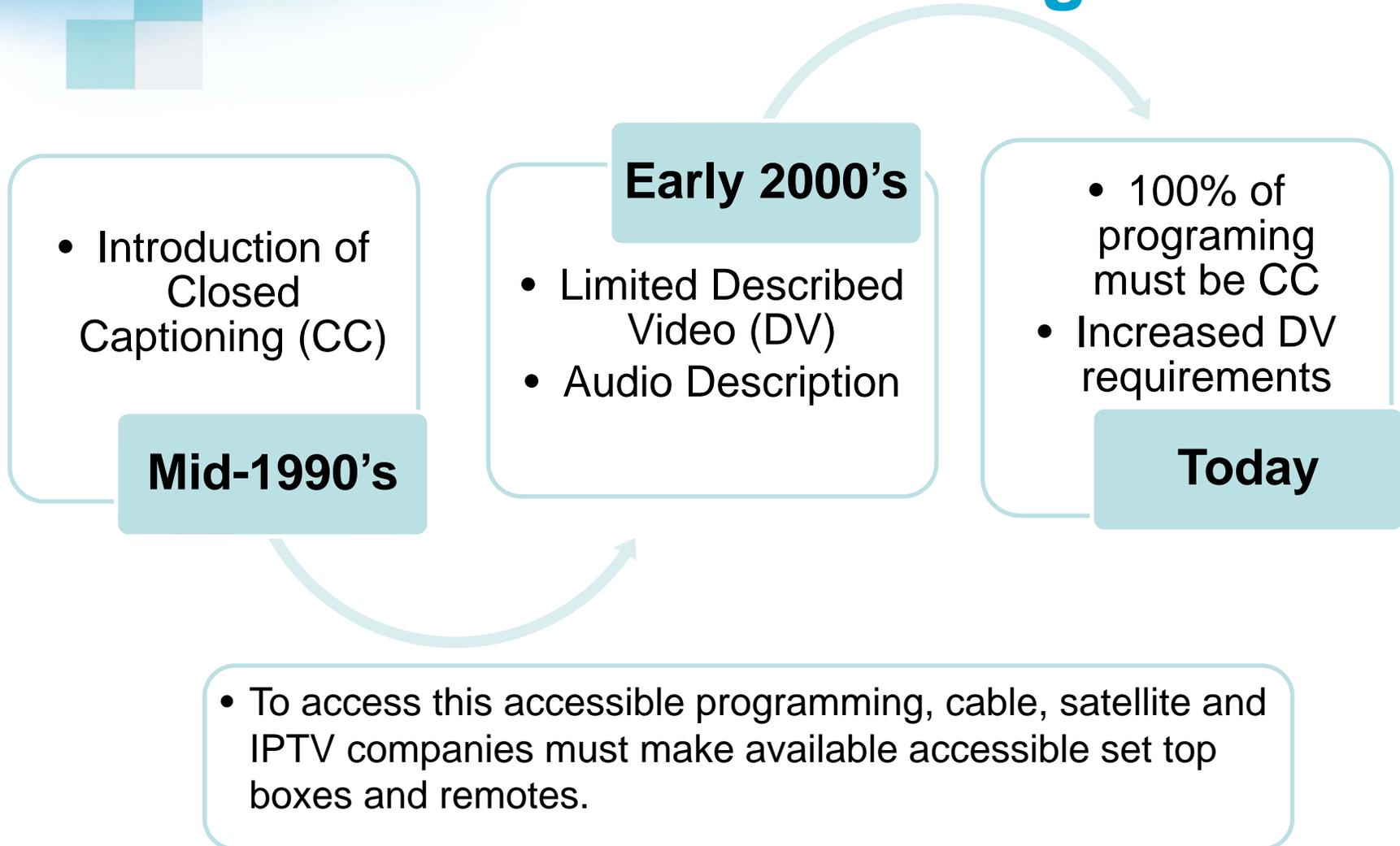
2016 – VRS

Sign-language
based video
communication

Did You Know?

Canadians with a hearing or speech disability now have the ability to text with 9-1-1.

Communications Services - Broadcasting



Communications Services - Broadcasting

Our Private Sector Partners – Ensuring Space



ACCESSIBLE MEDIA INC.

AMI-audio | AMI-tv | AMI-télé

- A 24-hour digital specialty service
- Programming features Open Described Video and Closed-Captioning
- Must be offered in all basic cable packages.



- Equitable Portrayal Code
- Release in 2008
- Intended to overcome negative portrayal and stereotyping in broadcast programming

Communications Services - Devices

Telecommunications



- Wireless services providers are expected to stock at least one type of accessible wireless mobile handset.
- Also required to promote information on

all of their disability-specific products and service.

Broadcasting



- Distributors of TV programming are required to make accessible hardware, like set-top boxes and remote controls, available to subscribers.





Supporting Innovation

Broadcasting Accessibility Fund (BAF)

- Provides grants to projects that will support innovation of platform neutral solutions to increase accessibility to all broadcasting content
 - Ex: New speech-to-text technology to post daily transcripts of a popular radio program of Canada's public broadcaster (CBC), allowing Canadians who are deaf or hard of hearing to access this programming.
- \$6.32 million independent fund created with private sector resources from the sale of private Canadian broadcasters from one media company to another

Deferral Accounts

- Created with excess revenues when CRTC required telephone service providers to charge minimum rates to encourage competition
- Goal to increase accessibility of telecommunication services for persons with disabilities
- Have been successful in:
 - Subsidizing accessible mobile handsets
 - Video Relay Service trial
 - Upgrading service provider websites to be more accessible
- 4 providers had \$36M collectively that was to be spent by 2011 (extended)



Challenges meeting expectations of Canadians with disabilities

- The CRTC faces some challenges with respect to accessibility, namely:
 - No jurisdiction over original equipment manufacturers (OEMs)
 - Limited targeted tools under the *Broadcasting Act*
 - Unclear jurisdiction

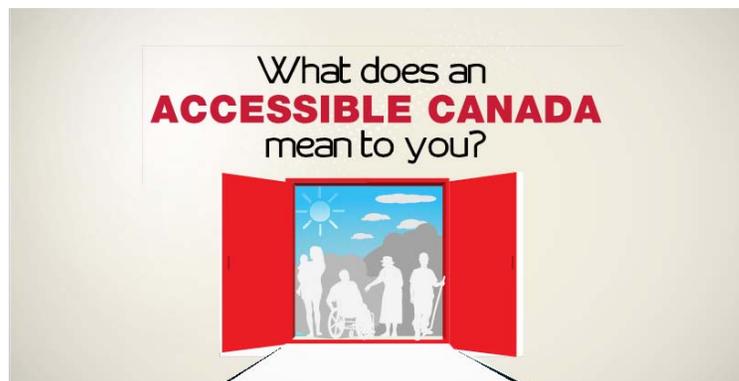
Next Steps

Telecommunications - Next Generation 9-1-1

- The CRTC has announced that it will hold a public hearing starting in January 2017 examining the issues of offering Next Generation 9-1-1 in Canada (9-1-1 is Canada's national emergency line)

Broadcasting - Increased Described Video

- As of 2019, Canadian broadcasters who are part of a vertically integrated company will be required to broadcast up to 35 hours of described programming a week
 - almost nine-fold increase from the current 4 hours per week requirement.



Federal Government - New Minister for Persons with Disabilities

- Creation of New Federal Accessibility Act
 - consultation open until February 2017

<http://www.esdc.gc.ca/en/consultations/disability/legislation/index.page>

