



LEADERSHIP AND LONGEVITY

PUTTING REGION
ON ARTISTIC MAP



LAST CHANCE TO RIDE
WITH LANCE

EXCHANGE

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INSIDE

- Emotions and Money
- Cambridge honours the best
- Conestoga - full growth mode

XQuote

"Canada isn't in a crisis situation, but there are clear warning signs of potential threats to our environment and wellbeing, and we ignore them at our peril. We are huge consumers of natural resources with a seemingly endless and unsustainable appetite for fossil fuels, water, metals and energy. We have an unsustainable economic model built around producing, consuming and throwing away things – many of which we don't actually need. Some of these trends could eventually result in poorer health, a weaker economy, lower standard of living, and diminished quality of life."

– The Honourable Roy J. Romanow,
chair of the Canadian Index of Wellbeing Advisory Board

IS THE INTERNET SAFE FROM BIG TELECOM?

BY ADAM SMITH



Did you know the Internet in Canada may be undergoing some significant changes that will directly affect your pocketbook, and potentially your freedom to access the information that is important to you?

Since the issue is largely ignored by the mainstream media, you may not have heard any discussion of Usage Based Billing or Internet Metering and the impact this may have on you.

What is Usage Based Billing? Actually, you're already familiar with it – just have a look at your cell phone bill. Every minute you talk, every text message you send and every megabyte of data you use is accounted for and added to your bill.

On the face of it, this doesn't seem like a bad idea. It is, after all, how we pay for everything else we use in our daily lives. Similar to a cell phone plan, Internet Usage Based Billing is sold with a limit, or cap (in most cases its quite low – perhaps 50GB, or in some cases only 25GB), and every extra gigabyte used beyond that cap is charged at a much higher rate.

Big Telecom initially justified this change in billing by saying that power users of the Internet were putting more strain on their networks and harming the experience of the average user, and therefore they should be charged more than the average users. Some of the power users gave in and paid (significantly) more for their internet connection, while others cancelled their accounts with Big Telecom and moved to one of the many independent Internet Service Providers.

Seeing their most profitable customers leaving in droves spurred them to action: In November the CRTC approved a proposal by Bell Canada and other large players from Canada's telecom oligopoly that would allow them to impose Usage Based Billing charges upon independent Internet Service Providers. This meant Big Telecom could essentially dictate what and how these competing, independent companies could charge for their services!

If that doesn't sit right with you, you're not alone. Social media networks exploded with news of this development, many people rallying around an organization called OpenMedia.ca, whose mission is to advance and support a media communications system in Canada that adheres to the principles of access, choice, diversity, innovation and openness.

As they gained both monetary and public support (over 416,000 people have already signed the anti-UBB petition) they've been able to actively lobby the government to take action. In February they had their first victory when the CRTC was instructed to go back to the drawing board and reverse its Usage Based Billing decision. Bell has since drafted a similarly damaging, re-branded proposal known as Aggregated Volume Pricing that is currently before the CRTC.

The issue has since been picked up by Rick Mercer and featured on his show, The Rick Mercer Report, in a sketch titled, Our Gouge-Based Heritage (<http://youtu.be/qOZGkqQvAw>), and at the time of this writing, Canada was going into a Federal election with three party leaders registered as Pro-Internet candidates with OpenMedia.ca: Michael Ignatieff, Jack Layton and Elizabeth May.

You may be wondering why, with the support of politicians and celebrities, the issue has been so poorly reported on in the mainstream media? This brings us to perhaps the more corrosive effect of Usage Based Billing, which is that it moves control of content up the channel, away from consumers and into the hands of Big Telecom.

In Canada, the Big Telecom companies have significant control over what information is available to us, and how we can access it. Whether that's newspaper, radio, television, magazines or even video rental stores, chances are that content is controlled by one of a few large companies. As for how we get that information, its a simple matter of the connection we're using: Cell phone towers, phone lines, cable lines or satellite signals. All are controlled by Big Telecom.

You may recognize the ties to net neutrality here as well. Paid services such as Netflix would essentially be billed twice – once by Netflix, and again by your

New Head for L.S. Hallman Foundation

Hulene Montgomery, founding Executive Director of the Lyle S. Hallman Foundation, will leave that position this month. New Executive Director is Laura Manning, who comes to the Hallman Foundation after serving as Director, Advancement at the Health Sciences Campus & School of Pharmacy, University of Waterloo, a position she has held since the opening of the School of Pharmacy.

Nancy M. Waite, Interim Hallman Director and Director Health Science Campus, announced Manning's departure, lauding her for "her leadership, great personality and communications skills, and knack for professional relationship building with prospective donors... She has also been a key link to one of our biggest supporters, the Kitchener community."

Manning explained her move to the Hallman Foundation in enthusiastic terms: "It's a once in a lifetime opportunity. The Lyle S. Hallman Foundation has an incredible reputation of integrity and thoughtful, principled funding."

That reputation has much to do with the leadership of Montgomery, who has led the Foundation since its inception.

Montgomery told Exchange that the Foundation was building on the work of Lyle Hallman, known for his community generosity throughout his life. "We were building on a history of Lyle's philanthropy," she said. "Lyle left us very specific wishes about where he wanted to see the investments go in the community."

Montgomery credited Hallman with "great instincts" that led him to focus on causes that promoted prevention, children's issues, and literacy. His goal was "to try and invest

before problems began," she said. The foundation that carried on Hallman's vision following his death is also committed to communication with the community, seeking input before suggesting solutions. This has led to what she calls "broad-based community investments."

Those are principles that have attracted Manning to the position. She is eager to work with an organization dedicated to improving the overall health of the community, she says.

Manning assumes the new position on June 20; she left the School of Pharmacy in May.

Montgomery describes her new role as "retirement", but with some qualifications. "I'm going to take a mini-sabbatical," she said, "then do some contract work, spend more time with family, travel, maybe improve my French." Prior to her work with the Hallman Foundation, Montgomery was involved in international programs concerning fair trade and international development, still issues close to her heart.



Hulene Montgomery and Laura Manning

PHOTO: EXCHANGE MAGAZINE

Internet Service Provider for the downloading of the content. These companies can (and do) control the speed with which we can access certain types of services. As we the consumers continue our migration to online content, the bottom-line of the Big Telecom companies suffers and they're left seeking new ways to reign us back in. A short video titled, The UBB Deception (<http://youtu.be/6peRQV5hFEQ>), describes these implications quite well.

Fortunately people are taking action. Along with the many individuals supporting OpenMedia.ca, are independent ISPs like TekSavvy and Acanac – both of which matched donations to the tune of several thousand dollars. The May 2 Federal election also brought some much needed light upon the subject, which will hopefully translate into the next government taking a more proactive role in protecting consumers' interests.

If the Internet in Canada can be saved, you won't ever have to think twice about the cost (or the possibility) of watching two short online videos you read about in an article in an independent magazine.

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