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Abstract

In this paper, the use of self-promotion and cross-promotion in news media is examined through a study of Canadian media giant, Bell Media's CTV News multi-platform news operation. Through a content analysis of four CTV News platforms; conventional television, specialty television, their website and mobile application, a pattern of promotional use emerges. This pattern, which I refer to as 'herding,' is designed to influence viewers to shift their viewing patterns towards more lucrative areas where advertising is more valued by the media owner. There are also concerns by media experts that promotions combined with advertising have a direct effect of diminishing the quantity of news available on these platforms thereby reducing the public's ability to be informed about issues of the day.

Keywords: self-promotion, cross-promotion, advertising fragmentation, news media, Bell Media, CTV News

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Introduction

With the growth of media concentration of ownership and with the emergence of new platforms, traditional news media organizations such as television now run parallel operations on at least two digital media platforms such as mobile apps and websites. More than ever before, news media is expected to turn a good profit on par with other divisions of media conglomerates. Yet profit margins are becoming narrower as advertiser spending remains the same as it has been traditionally, while at the same time being fragmented across traditional and digital media (Lightcap & Peek, p.3). Advertising budgets are simply not growing significantly with the use of new platforms (p.50). So, what strategies are being implemented to deal with the fragmentation of advertising revenues traditionally claimed by the old paradigms? And how are these strategies shaping the delivery of news? My position is that the effectiveness of news media and by extension, civic engagement, are being undermined by a systematic promotion and advertising strategy that loads news with advertising and promotion while redirecting audiences away from news content towards prime time entertainment and specials. As I will argue, this strategy is comparative to herding, where media corporations are deliberately managing viewer interest and shifting viewer attention to programs with higher profit advertiser activity.

Self and cross-promotion manifest themselves in a number of ways both towards content and to organizations themselves. Typically, self-promotion occurs within one media form, i.e. CTV promoting one of its own programs during another. Cross-promotion occurs across two or more media forms that are part of the same organization, i.e. the CTV News mobile app promoting Bell Media's Space TV channel. This paper examines how 'cross-promotion' and 'self-promotion' are used as an integral part of the profit making strategy of Canadian media giant CTV, a division of Bell Media. Bell Media is a division of communications giant BCE Inc. which owns a significant portion of communications wire-lines, wireless and media in Canada. Bell Media is acknowledged as the largest media company in Canada, with numerous broadcasting, specialty channels and new media platforms (Tencer, 2012). According to Tencer, with Bell Media's recent approved acquisition of Astral Media, it now controls 37.6% of the TV market in Canada, making it the highest media concentration of any of the G8 countries (2012). In this examination, we will see how these forms of promotion are used on CTV's news platforms, what their frequency is, what influences their use and how they work to push viewers to other parts of the Bell Media/CTV landscape where it is more profitable for Bell. We can also consider the potential effects of this strategy on viewers by following these promotions to the media destinations that viewers are guided to. CTV's news media

was content-analyzed for cross-promotion and self-promotion activity over a five day period, followed by a further analysis of a sample of self and cross-promoted content over several days. This content analysis will be considered within the framework of media economics, cultivation effects, marketing strategy and media planning.

Theory and Background

Lasswell's directive, "Who says what through which channel to whom with what effect" (Lasswell, 1948: Shoemaker & Reese, p.10) provides a necessary framework through which to start defining this analysis. Bell Media is generally the subject of the 'who', but of course it is a publicly traded media company that answers to shareholders. Bell Media's media division, according to their 2011 year-end report to stockholders, had revenues in excess of \$1.5 billion, which was attributed to "strong advertising sales in all media properties along with increased subscriber revenue in TV and digital online TV and mobile TV services" (BCE, 2012, p.46). So what is the message being conveyed? Self-promotion and cross-promotion imply that we have to dig deeper beyond the surface of the promotion. Analysis of the layers of communication must be made. What is being promoted? Assuming that self and cross-promotion are invitations to a viewer to shift their attention elsewhere, then the answer can only be found by following the shift and analyzing the resultant destinations. For example, during one day of content analysis, the CTV News mobile app featured a BNN (the Bell Media owned Business News Network) banner ad, promoting *Commodities*, a daily TV program. So this calls for us to shift our attention to *Commodities* and evaluate the advertising that appears there. We would also want to note any lingering cross or self-promotion during *Commodities*. The 'channels' under scrutiny here include: CTV News specialty channel and CTV's main channel nightly *National News with Lisa LaFlamme*. On the digital media side, this study examines their associated news website, *ctvnews.ca*, the *CTV News mobile* application, and several Twitter sites including CTV News and some of their journalists.

'To whom with what effect?' are the last pieces of Lasswell's directive (1948). Following, this study quantifies the viewing audience in Canada for television and digital media and then positions them inside the known revenue and profit data most recently reported. We must also consider that viewers of news are spread across many channels and digital locations. This content analysis may be specific to CTV news, but in many respects news media act as a whole, emulating each other's behavior, competing for the audience's attention.

According to the TV Basics report, for 2012-13, there are 13.8 million (2 person) TV households in Canada, each of which watched an average of nearly 27 hours of TV per week (TBC, 2013, p.13). In 2011, in the English language conventional broadcast sector, there were 92.7 million viewing hours devoted to watching news and analysis of news (CRTC, 2012, p.67), 43.2 million news-watching hours in the pay TV sector (p.70). According to BBM Canada, as measured in April and August 2011, CTV National News had a per minute audience reach of over 1.2 million (BBM, 2011). Also as measured by BBM and reported in TV Basics, by comparison, in 2011, CTV News specialty channel had an audience reach of over 1.4 million viewers per week (2012, p. 41). 86% of Canadians currently use the Internet (CRTC, 2012, p. 107). *ctvnews.ca* generated 4,783 page views per million (Ranking.com, 2012). Specific numbers are not available for exactly how many people are using the *ctvnews.ca* website or the *CTV News mobile* app. In 2011, there were in excess of 27 million wireless subscribers in Canada (CRTC, 2012, p.166). As we can observe here, Bell Media through CTV and their various news platforms occupy a significant viewer position in the Canadian media landscape.

According to the Communications Monitoring Report, advertising revenue for English language private conventional television in Canada, in 2011 was measured at \$1.65 billion (CRTC,

2012, p.75). Digital media associated with broadcasting (web and mobile) overall generated nearly \$77 million in advertising revenue (p.104). This vast difference in ad revenues is at the heart of Bell's overall media advertising strategy. As we'll see later in this paper, advertising activity on Bell's conventional television news and prime time entertainment time slots are considerable, with up to 1000 seconds of advertising from 30 or more advertisers per prime time hour.

Overall, in 2011, wireless revenues from data use topped \$6 billion (CRTC, 2012, p.167). As mentioned above, in 2011, Bell Media's media division generated over \$1.5 billion in revenues (BCE Annual Report 2011, 2012, p.46). In 2009, Bell Media (then Bellglobemedia) was reported to have earned overall profit of \$214 million (Toughill, 2009). In 2011, CTV News Channel had over 8.6 million subscribers and generated \$5.6 million profit before taxes (CRTC, 2012, p.84). Overall profit for Canadian television was over \$1 billion. From this data it is clear that the Canadian media business and in particular Bell Media is financially lucrative and television advertising is still by far, the most profitable in comparison to broadcast related digital media. At the same time, digital media advertising is increasing significantly (CRTC, 2012, p.104). Keep in mind that the media marketplace is still highly competitive and unstable as media conglomerates fight for their share of viewership and advertising revenue.

Statistics Canada reports that in 2009, 67.7% of Internet users in Canada viewed news online (2010) and that 79% of households had access to the Internet (2011). With the growth of digital media, audiences are being studied to gauge the effect of advertising in online news. Media companies have been eager to erect pay structures around news media content. According to the Pew Project for Excellence in Journalism "public sentiment, according to survey data from the Pew Internet Project and PEJ (...), seems strongly resistant to any such model" (PPEJ, 2010). Online audiences are growing but advertising revenue partnered with online news is far from stable. In 2010, advertising revenues in online news declined for the first time in eight years (PPEJ, 2010). There are strong indications that audience attitudes towards online news are shaping the use of advertising. According to the PPEJ report, "the American news consumer is increasingly becoming a grazer, across both online and offline platforms. On a typical day, nearly half of Americans now obtain their news from four to six different platforms" (PPEJ, 2012). Canadian news consumers are likely similar in this respect, sourcing news from multiple online sites as well as television, radio and newspapers. Most typical American online news users are at the very least watching "major national television news organizations such as CNN and Fox" (PPEJ, 2012). Most online news viewers are unwilling to engage with online advertising. While 81% said that they tolerate the ads, 77% also said that they ignore them (PPEJ, 2012). Clearly, news organizations will have to study audiences more closely in relation to advertising in online news and find ways to maximize advertising reaches. Some of the content analysis in this study reveals attempts to accomplish just that. For example, my analysis of the *CTV News mobile* application revealed little actual advertising deferring instead predominantly to cross and self-promotion. By comparison, the CTV News website, *ctvnews.ca*, evidenced much more advertising, at least eight times the quantity of ads per 10 minute samples of the two platforms, mostly in the form of banners and video. The vastly different strategy between the two online sites seems to suggest that advertising may have more value currently on a website versus a mobile site and that a mobile site may be more valuable for self and cross-promotion. Advertisers are concerned with how many times they can deliver a message to the consumer. With so many platforms running concurrently, advertisers are "obsessed with finding a replacement for the traditional measure of advertising frequency" (Stewart & Pavlou, 2009, p.392). For example, one advertising strategy for digital media is to use banner ads and then measure the effectiveness of the click-throughs (p.385). With cross and self-promotion, viewers remain in an unsettled state (unexposed to the actual advertiser) until they have either clicked through to a sister site or viewed a promoted TV program. 'Drenching,' a term coined by Greenberg as referenced by Stewart and

Pavlou, means that critical images have a more pronounced effect than frequency of message (Greenberg pp.100-101: Stewart & Pavlou, p.384). This is an important consideration as we begin to analyze the nature of self and cross-promotion in relation to advertising. For example, one of the promotions noted during the analysis was a campaign by Bell Media for the premiere of a new series, *Orphan Black*. The banner ads featured a mysterious replicated face against a white background, an alluring image. The promotional video similarly mined the image adding a succession of fast cuts of mysterious scenes featuring the main actor and creating a breathtaking and suspenseful mood. Similar promotions were noted for thriller series *The Following* and *Motive*, artfully crafted promotions that captured the essence of the promoted series.

Content analysis is a long established method of measuring a range of media effects. In Jim Macnamara's "Media content analysis: Its uses, benefits and best practice," he summarizes a wide range of literature detailing the methodology of content analysis. According to Macnamara, Berger infers that content analysis means measuring how much a particular media occurrence happens in a fair sampling (Macnamara, 1991, p. 2). Macnamara summarizes the variables that researchers most commonly measure as "Categorization" "Prominence", "Positioning", "Size" and "Sources" (p.10). However, Shoemaker and Reese remind us that researchers will always find new things to measure and new objects of study to quantify (Shoemaker & Reese, 1996, p.31). In the case of cross and self-promotion, the quantity of messages was measured against time, date and resultant advertising targets. And as prompted by Neuendorf through Macnamara, the content and form of these objects must be considered as, "form characteristics are often extremely important mediators of the content elements" (2002, p.24: Macnamara, p.3). In the future, research should include qualitative analysis and track particular issues and their effects which would require audience research, an area that was beyond the scope of this study.

Media companies are in business to make money. In Canadian conventional television alone (CBC and private), news media accounts for the largest expenditure genre (CRTC, 2012, p.89). For this analysis, it is therefore important to take into account some aspects of media economics. In Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield, & Greco's book, *Media Economics*, pure economics is described as the concerns of "what is produced, the technology and organization of how it is produced, and for whom it is produced" (2004, p.5). Media economics, they describe, "is concerned with how the media industries allocate resources to create information and entertainment content to meet the needs of audiences, advertisers, and other societal institutions (Picard, 1990: Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield & Greco, 2004, p.5). 'Macro-economics' theory, as applied to media, looks at the big picture and how media functions within the overall economy of society (p.6). How Bell Media and other Canadian media companies operate and generate profit is a complicated mix of forces. It's how they produce content, harness audiences, use technology, promote their cause, manage financials and use information systems (p.26). During Bell Media's recent merger with Astral Media, the two companies collectively launched a public relations campaign to frame the merger that would make them, as the largest media provider in Canada, even larger. On the website, *canadiansdeservemore.ca*, the two companies portrayed their responsible investment into the media community and into creating new content for Canadians (2012). Clearly, this is Bell Media playing out the macro-economics benefit to the merger. At the same time, Bell Media acknowledges the fragility of their profit-making, which is largely based on advertising (BCE, 2011, p.67). As stated in their year-end report, "A significant number of advertisers base a substantial part of their purchasing decisions on audience ratings. If Bell Media's television and radio ratings were to decrease substantially, Bell Media's advertising sales volumes and the rates that it charges to advertisers could be adversely affected" (p.67).

Prime time programming is the evening slot where the most people watch television and where advertising achieves the deepest audience reach. It is also the area most promoted during

news media presentations. According to the *Analysis of the Economics of Canadian Television Programming*, in 2009, the Sunday to Thursday prime time advertising revenue for a one-hour Canadian drama was \$215,400 per episode (Nordicity, p.11). In this report prepared for the Canadian media industry, it becomes clear that TV advertising does not return investment until a Canadian program has repeated several times on the conventional channel and numerous times on a specialty channel under the same media ownership (p.21). This suggests an advertising strategy that is dependent upon the broadcaster owning a range of conventional and specialty channels, in order to be able to amortize the cost of the program against projected ad revenues. 3.

As prime time programming slots cost the most to fill, they must also attract the most numbers of viewers. There is also a suggestion here, that Canadian programming costs more to recoup than American programming, which when offered on a Canadian channel is, in effect, a secondary window to the US primary broadcast.

'Micro-economics' media theory drills down to the daily front-line economic activity of media companies and individuals in the media industry (Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield, & Greco, 2004, p.6). Self and cross-promotion are an integral part of the micro-economics that Bell and other large media organizations are using to steer viewers to sites that have the most economic value to them. Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield & Greco state, "Promoting a program or service on other media owned by a company can produce increased demand (p.77)." Overall, promotion in the cable television industry accounts for between 1 and 2% of operating budgets (p.116), which in the U.S. in year 2000 was estimated at over \$170 million a year (p.184). The economics of advertising are affected by the size and nature of the audience. As Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield, & Greco recount, "first, advertisers are interested in particular audiences, based on demographic characteristics. Second, the cost of a program that would reach the maximum audience in a competitive situation might exceed the profit potential. Broadcasters can only spend enough to maintain overall profitability" (p.159). One could argue that broadcasters are filling unsold advertising slots with self or cross-promotions. While this may be the case from time to time, in the content analysis conducted for this paper, a very different picture emerges, one where self and cross-promotions are deliberately and consistently used in a way that promotes a constant awareness of prime-time product available to viewers, while maximizing the advertiser messages. While we are not privy to the deals that might be made by advertising sales agents for Bell Media, we can see evidence of a distinct advertising strategy across the various Bell Media news properties, one that maximizes advertising with promotions towards high yield audience prime time slots.

While news media has always been 'corporatized' to some extent, it must now deliver its proportional share of profit rather than being partially underwritten by entertainment programming. According to McManus, as referred to by Fengler in "Journalists and the Information Attention Markets," "news production is no longer determined solely by journalistic norms, but rather by the self-interest of advertisers, investors, sources, and media consumers, and the influence they exert on journalists" (McManus, 1994: Fengler p.668-9). Fengler goes on to quote Hamilton, who says we need to ask: "Who cares about a particular piece of information? What are they willing to pay to find it, or what are others willing to pay to reach them? Where can media outlets or advertisers reach these people? When is it profitable to provide the information? Why is this profitable?" (p.668-9). It is also important to look at the self and cross-promotion activities as a process that I have referred to as 'herding', where viewers are driven like cattle to prime viewing grounds where advertisers and the media organization wants them to be. This process falls under a range of behaviour called 'cultivation processes'. According to Morgan, Shanahan and Signorelli, cultivation processes are a valuable way to look at a variety of media systems (2009, p.37). Given that cultivation examines "what people absorb from their exposure to massive flows of messages over long periods of time" (Morgan, Shanahan, Signorelli, 2009, p.37), there is good reason to apply this to the idea of

persuasive promotions herding viewers to other channels and at other viewing times typically prime-time, high advertising target zones.

Corporations are obliged to grow. Cable television, for example, has continuously added capacity, which in turn has added more production costs, which in turn has added more demand for revenues (Alexander, Owers, Carveth, Hollifield & Greco, 2004, p.177). Cross-promotions between new media and old media demonstrate that, “Utilizing the synergy among media in this way can provide a more compelling and involving impact upon the target audience” (p.261). This synergy is also evident in the way that consumers are now using two or more screens (devices) at once. As Stewart and Pavlou note in their 2009 article, “Marketing Communications,” “almost half of all personal computers are in the same room as the television set” (p.384). This is confirmed by Aaron Bar, in the *Marketing Daily* article, “Official Hashtags Help Keep Conversation Going” (Bar, 2013), where he reports that in a KPMG survey of 1000 U.S. consumers 42% watched TV while simultaneously using a computer. Future studies in cross-media news consumption will help shed light on this evolving phenomena.

Newspapers have struggled with their relationship to new media platforms (Cervanka, p.122). R. C. Alves in “The future of online journalism: mediamorphosis or mediocide?” says that newspapers have struggled with the loss of revenue in the wake of coping with new media (2001, p.64). Various authors have looked into a range of concerns in the newspaper media and advertising including bias in reporting (Gal-Or, Geylani & Yildirim, 2010, p.7). Different conclusions have surfaced in studies of television news and its online versions. Glenn Enoch and Kelly Johnson, in a study of media cannibalization found that “the heaviest in-home users of the Internet watched more TV than other groups and vice versa: The heaviest TV viewers were also above-average in-home consumers of the Internet” (Enoch & Johnson, 2010, p.4). Enoch and Johnson’s study focused on sports cable giant ESPN, so their findings are limited in scope in relation to news. Nevertheless, their findings revealed seven cross-media principles: new strata of users, a closer look at metrics, how users use cross-media, heavy use consistency, balance of use, simultaneous use and available screens (p.11). Future audience studies could shed light on this in relation to news media. While the large television organizations seem to function reasonably with fragmentation, independent online news has made its own mark and is further luring advertisers to the online platform. No longer is there a virtual monopoly of the news media (Downie & Schudson, p.3). To fully understand the routines of the mega media organizations, their competition must also be evaluated. Do advertisers ally themselves with media organizations who tailor media content to the advertiser? (Reuter, 2006, p. 197). Cindy Price from the University of Wyoming looked at advertiser influences on journalists and found that “20% felt some ownership pressure to report or censor stories and 7% reported some advertiser pressure” (Price, 2009, p.175).

The fine art of self-promotion has a checkered history. Mark Twain was an acknowledged master of huckstering. For example, to draw a crowd to one of his lectures he produced a poster with the following lines: “A Splendid Orchestra Is in town but has not been engaged. (...)
Magnificent Fireworks

Were in contemplation for this occasion, but the idea has been abandoned” (Walker, 2007). Modern Mark Twains take the form of on-air hucksters, some evident in newscasts as news anchors or edited segments, presented as news stories. The web site *tvtropes.org* is keeping track of these, to some extent as a tongue-in-cheek exercise, but their existence causes us to really pay attention to what is being said in TV newscasts. One overt example is how local CBS news affiliates ran real-life stories related to issues raised in CSI drama episodes right after a CSI episode aired (*tvtropes.org*, 2013). Even Bell Media’s CP24, the local news station, recently threw to a 3 minute live report of a local dance group who happened to be starring in a TV dance show on a sister channel within a few days. These and other examples are just part of the routine of media organizations meshing brands

together and milking them. Take media giant, Fox who, every year during American Idol, has local FOX news channels champion their local Idol contestant (*tvtropes.org*, 2013). It seems like a natural angle for a local story, but ultimately is about heightening mega brand awareness. As indicated by Fuller, there is good reason to call for mechanisms to limit cross-promotions (2011). Fuller is concerned about the ambiguity of certain promotional strategies that might be construed as content rather than as advertising, and therefore compromise journalistic integrity. He's also concerned about the "illusion of choice" for audiences when one sub-brand of a media conglomerate refers to another of its own brands (Fuller, p.1). While my study does not include direct audience research to examine audience choices, there is ample evidence that audiences do respond, not always in a positive way. For example, M. Cardwell, as stated in on the Australian web site, *The Punch*, was critical of cross-promotion, "Promotional departments shamelessly hijack mostly live TV, from sporting events to the news, sneakily forcing the hosts to endorse shows that need a bit of a ratings oomph." (Punch, 2012).

In Canada, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission governs how many minutes of advertising can be used per hour of programming. In Canada, specialty cable TV is limited to 12 minutes per hour while commercial TV and new media have no limit (CRTC, 2013). In the U.K. (Ofcom, 2013) and Canada, the quantity of promotional content is not regulated and is not considered part of any advertising quota limit.

Discussion and Analysis

There were some limitations encountered during this analysis. Intercoder reliability was beyond the scope of this study. Two additional coders were used during this research who provided 'spot' coding which confirmed the main research coding. The study would also benefit from a longer sampling period, by conducting continuous daily sampling over an extended period, with a large pool of coders across a wider number of news presentations from more media owners.

The units of analyses (objects) for this study are the instance of cross and self-promotion used by Bell Media in news programming. During the sampling period, objects were noted for conventional television (CTV's *National News with Lisa LaFlamme* at 11pm), specialty television (CTV's *Direct* news at 11:30pm), the web site (*ctvnews.ca*) and the mobile application (*CTVNews mobile*). Additionally the CTV News and journalist Twitter feeds were sampled for links. Results of the coding are charted below in Table 1. Characteristics of the objects that were noted in the coding included: a content description, the type of content (i.e. graphics, host, banner, video), the category (i.e. self-promotion of content within the same organization, cross-promotion of content to a related organization, self-promotion of organization and cross-promotion of related organization), the duration, dimensions, placement and frequency. A second unit of analysis was recorded and characterized, that of the actual paid advertising. As the content of the self and cross-promotions were noted in the coding, so a subsequent layer of analysis was made to include a sample of the target sites expressed in the promotion. So, for example, if, during a news broadcast, another program was promoted, the promoted program was noted and considered amongst the samples for analysis. During the analysis of the associated digital media, (*ctvnews.ca*, *CTV News app*), a minimum of four menus were sampled, from which each top story was coded along with the top story video (if present). These were coded according to the instances of the both the primary (promotions) and secondary (advertising) objects and their characteristics. Finally, the Twitter (*@ctvnews* and several CTV employees), were spot sampled and analyzed. Typically, these required a click-through to start, in most cases leading to the same web pages as those already coded.

CTV's National News with Lisa LaFlamme broadcasts for 30 minutes Monday to Friday at 11pm. During the broadcast, there were an average of 352 seconds of commercials, 51 seconds of

self-promotion of content on CTV's main channel, 7 seconds of cross promotion to a Bell owned media outlet (*CTVnews.ca*) and 160 seconds of self-promotion of CTV itself. Notably, there was an average of only three seconds of cross-promotions (for content on CTV News channel). The self-promotion of content during the broadcast was directed towards upcoming news reports in the future (i.e. *News at 11:30, Budget 2013*), and towards prime time drama programs (i.e. *Motive, American Idol, The Following*, etc.). Prime time drama promotions were consistently programmed in every show half-way through and immediately following the news and ranged between 5 and 15 seconds long. By contrast, CTV's self-promotion consisted of repeated use of the CTV logo an average of 29.2 times during each broadcast, some versions on-screen continuously. For example, the logo animated across the full screen just before each content promotion, and was strategically placed as a graphic on-screen in a range of ways to accompany reports. Wernick as quoted by Harding in *Cross-Media Promotion* alerts us to the idea that newspaper mastheads act as promotions to 'hook' viewers (Wernick 1990, p.101; Harding, 2010, p. 91). The CTV logo is very much a masthead that continuously reminds us of the channel we are watching and systematically reinforces the CTV identity in association with key content.

On the specialty cable side, the CTV News Channel *Direct* program was monitored at 11:30pm each day from Monday to Friday. Here we see a very different strategy in play with negligible self-promotions of content (2.4 seconds) but a significant 66 seconds average cross-promotion to content on related channels (i.e. *Orphan Black* on Space channel, *W5* on CTV main channel). The masthead concept continued with the CTV logo continuously displayed (but much smaller) throughout the program. There were very few cross-promotions solely to related organizations (7 seconds). On average there were 291 seconds of commercial advertising. The *CTV News mobile* application yields another important aspect of the strategy. Over five days, the home page and four menus were sampled for about ten minutes with click-throughs on top level content in each menu. This was considered sufficient enough time to achieve a fair sample of the advertising and promotion activity. While the number of click-throughs varied day to day, patterns emerged that favored cross-promotion to content at related CTV organizations. On each successive day these content cross-promotions dominated the advertising space on the mobile site with only one or two occasional commercial ads and other promotional content. On average, each day's sample yielded 30 seconds of video cross-promotion (i.e. *Orphan Black* on Space, *The Voice* on CTV) and 10.6 page banners cross-promoting a wide range of content (i.e. *Commodities* on BNN, *Motive* on CTV, *Orphan Black* on Space). A *CTV News* masthead banner stayed in place throughout. On the CTV news website (*ctvnews.ca*), there is a much higher concentration of advertising with a daily average of 14.2 banner ads and 51 seconds of commercials per 10 minute sampling. There was also a consistent use of banners to cross-promote content (3.8 banners), self-promotions (1.2 banners) and organizational cross-promotions (2 banners). As expected there was one continuous masthead logo banner. A secondary 10 minute sampling of the CTV News live video feed on the site revealed a pattern of two commercials either 15 or 30 seconds in length at the beginning of each ten minute block.

PROGRAM	CTV National News with Lisa LaFlamme (30min)	CTV News Channel Direct (30min)	CTV News Mobile Application (10min)	CTV News Website ctvnews.ca (10min)
CATEGORY	Conventional TV	Specialty TV	Mobile	Internet
Content self-promotion	(6.8), 51s, [1:6.9R]	(0.2), 2.4s, [1:121.3]	(0.4), 0.2B, 3s, [1:4, 2:1]	(1.2), 1.2B, [1:11.8]
Content cross-promotion	(0.4), 7s, [1:50.3]	(2.2), 66s, [1:4.4]	(12.4), 10.6B, 30s, [13.3:1, 5:1]	(4.2), 3.8B, 3s, [1:3.7, 1:17]
Organization self-promotion	(29.2), 160s, [1:2.2]	(3.4), 7.6s, continuous, [1:38.3]	(.2), 0.2B, continuous, [1:4]	(0.2), 0.2B, continuous, [1:71]
Organization cross-promotion	(0.6), 3s, [1:117.3]	(0.4), 7s, [1:41.6]	0	(2.2), 2B, continuous, [1:7.1]
Advertising	(14.6), 352s	(12), 291s	(0.6), 0.8B, 6s	(16.4), 14.2B, 51s
TABLE 1 (5 day average)	<i>s=seconds of full frame video</i>	<i>B=banners</i>	<i>(Numbers) in brackets = incidences of objects</i>	<i>[Numbers] in brackets = ratio to advertising</i>

In order to have any significance, the incidence of primary objects (cross and self-promotions) should be considered in relation to the amount of advertising in each category and also take into account whether there was significant activity in the category. Self and cross-promotions fell into two broad categories: banners and video. Variations on these forms included size, placement and animation. As we can see from Table 1, content self-promotion is significant on Bell's conventional television channel, CTV. Content cross-promotion is significant on the CTV News specialty channel and *CTV News mobile* app. The organization's self-promotion is a constant across all platforms. Cross-promotion of the organization was not as significant overall but had some noted presence on the web site (*ctvnews.ca*).

The content of the promotions revealed that, at this point in time, specific programs and platforms were being promoted. For example, during *CTV National News*, over the five days, six prime time programs were promoted (*Motive*, *American Idol*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *Grimm*, *Once Upon A Time* and *The Following*) as well as two news programs (*Budget 2013* and *News at 11:30*). CTV News Channel *Direct* promoted five prime time programs over the five days (*Orphan Black*, *Motive*, *Grey's Anatomy*, *The Amazing Race* and *Once Upon A Time*), three news programs (*Canada AM*, *W5* and *Budget 2013*) and two sports programs (*NCAA*, *TSN Basketball*). The *Orphan Black* promo ran four out of five days, likely because it was premiering its first episode within a week. On the *CTV News Mobile* application, banner ads proliferated. Over those five days there were 27 banners for prime time TV programming on Bell owned television platforms. Interestingly, Bell-owned, Business News Network (BNN) TV programming was the second most promoted with 23 banners over five days. What the reason for this is unclear. We could speculate that Bell conceives of its *CTV News mobile* app as a tool for people who are business focused. In any case, on the mobile news app the promoted programs included *Orphan Black*, *The Voice*, *American Idol*, *The Following*, *Motive*, *The Amazing*

Race, Stranded, Much VJ and *Arrow*. There were also promotions for sports (*TSN Tournament*) and news (*Power Play*). Again, *Orphan Black* was the most promoted, in anticipation of its premiere on Space Channel, followed in succession by *The Amazing Race* and *The Following*. It is worth considering that *Orphan Black* and *Motive* are Canadian-produced and that their first run is on CTV, making CTV the original license holder. It would be useful to know what the license fees that were paid for these in relation to the advertising revenue of the programs, likely that US programs are licensed for lower fees than original Canadian programming. It's also worth noting that the range of promoted prime time programs are among the top watched programs on network TV. According to BBM Canada March 11-17 Report (BBM, 2013), many of these were in the top thirty in Canada (*Amazing Race, Grey's Anatomy, The Following, American Idol* and *Once Upon A Time*). Also, the promotion of news itself was a factor, with several news shows being promoted. Two factors may be at work here; one that CTV is serving its Canadian Content obligation for the CRTC, the other that CTV's news operation is a considerable expense to run and that any facet of it needs promotion (and advertising) to sustain it. That news itself was promoted may be a good sign as at least two of the promoted news shows were in-depth coverage (*W5, Budget 2013*), which at least provides a viewer an option for more informed viewing.

Program	The Voice on CTV (60min)	Motive on CTV (60min)	The Amazing Race on CTV (60min)	The Following On CTV (60min)	The Following on ctv.ca (50min)	Orphan Black on Space (60min)	Commodities on BNN (30 mins)
Category							
Content self-promotion	(16), 230s, [1:4.5]	(18), 235s, [1:3.4]	(9), 155s, [1:5.6]	(5), 75s, [1:11.2]	(7), 90s, [1:1.6]	(7), 135s, [1:4.9]	(2), 20s, [1:18.4]
Content cross-promotion	(4), 65s, [1:16]	(3), 50s, [1:15.9]	0	0	(3), 90s, [1:1.6]	0	0
Organization self-promotion	(2), 10s, continuous, [1:103.9]	(5), 45s, continuous, [1:17.7]	(2), 30s, continuous, [1:29]	(2), 15s, continuous, [1:55.8]	1B	(6), 25s, continuous, [1:26.7]	(1), continuous
Organization cross-	(1), 5s, [1:207.8]	0	(2), 30s, [1:29]	(1), 15s, [1:55.8]	(1), 30s, [1:4.9]	0	(1), 5s, [1:22.9]

promotion							
Advertising	(32),1039s	(32),795s	(33),870s	(35),837s	(8),147s	(32),667s	(16)367s
TABLE 2	<i>s=seconds of full frame video</i>	<i>B=ban ners</i>	<i>(Numbers) in brackets = incidences of objects</i>	<i>[Numbers] in brackets = ratio to advertising</i>			

A sample of the target TV programs that were promoted on the CTV news platforms were viewed and coded and charted in Table 2. These included: *The Voice*, *Motive*, *The Amazing Race*, *The Following*, *Orphan Black* and *BNN Commodities*. These programs were sampled from CTV's main channel; the Bell owned channels Space and Business News Network; and CTV's streaming website. Not surprisingly, commercial advertising dominated in all cases. On the television side between 667 and 1039 seconds of advertising were presented per hour of programming. This was followed by content self-promotions that ranged between 40 and 235 seconds per hour and content cross-promotion which ranged from zero to 65 seconds per hour. The organization's self-promotion was continuous with the ever-present lower right hand logo 'bug' of the channel and a variety of full frame promotions from 10 to 45 seconds per hour. By comparison on the CTV main website (*ctv.ca*) streaming video of *The Following* yielded 147 seconds of advertising, 90 seconds each of content self and cross-promotion and 30 seconds of the organization's cross-promotion. Self-promotion was significant and common across all the programs. Content and organizational cross-promotion while not consistent, do play a small part of ongoing strategy. Given the view that audiences are 'herded' to prime time sites, CTV's strategy seems to be to keep them returning there by promoting yet more prime time programming. For example, during *The Voice*, CTV ran 17 content promotions: 13 for prime time programs (*Golden Boy* (3), *Motive* (4), *American Idol* (3) *Arrow* (2) and *Criminal Minds* (1)), 1 for CTV News and two for entertainment programs *E Talk* and *Much VJ Search*. The intensity of this is matched by the high volume of promotional content on the *CTV News mobile* app as charted in Table 1.

While the incidence of these promotions is high, we must not lose sight of their purpose: to herd the most number of viewers to a common place to consume advertising. During the week of March 11-17, *The Amazing Race* gathered a viewing audience of nearly 2.5 million people on prime time broadcast (BBM, 2013). During the March 24th episode of the *The Amazing Race*, 870 seconds of advertising was presented. The list of advertisers included seven car companies, four drug products, seven major food brands, two clothing retailers, a movie trailer, an investment company, two government ads and individual ads for car rentals, travel, cosmetics, smart phones and laundry products. The program also included 155 seconds of content self-promotions (*The Following* (2), *The Voice* (2), *Motive*, *Amazing Race*, *Golden Boy*, *The Mentalist*). Promotional strategy here is continuous and consistent for every program that was coded. Every CTV prime-time program contained a wide variety of promotions. Occasionally, the news itself was promoted, circling viewers back to be herded up again by more promotions.

What about the ads played during the news itself? *CTV National News* averaged just over 1 million viewers per broadcast in the week of March 11-17, placing it in the top 30 programs (BBM, 2013). During the March 18th broadcast of the program, 367 seconds of commercials were presented. Advertisers included three car companies, three drug companies, two oil industry ads, two government ads and spots for first-aid products, car rentals, a major fast food retailer and mouthwash. On the same day, CTV News Channel *Direct* ran 240 seconds of commercials

representing two car companies, two drug products, a newspaper, the oil industry, home heating, a travel destination, a credit card company and a used car website. As expected, the prime time program slots sell the most advertising, the specialty news channel, the least. *CTV National News with Lisa LaFlamme* contained a similar quantity of advertising as prime-time programs. This 30-minute program contained 9 and a half minutes of advertising and promotions.

The quantity of advertising and promotions in news broadcasts raises another set of concerns. In Jonathan Hardy's *Cross Media Promotion*, he argues that the forces of commercialism are in opposition to those of good citizenship (Hardy, 2012, p.280). As news media is a primary way for citizens to stay informed, the sheer quantity of advertising and promotion in news media (on *CTV National News*, almost a third of the program) raises questions about the ability of the news to cover a sufficient enough agenda. And although advertising far outweighs promotions, there is concern that self and cross-promotion erodes news output (Hardy, 2012, p.106).

Social Media Implications

Social media also has a part to play in CTV News advertising and promotional strategy. A full analysis of how Twitter and other social media function with this strategy is beyond the scope of this paper. However, there are a few indicators noted during samples of Twitter made of CTV news platforms. During the *CTV National News with Lisa LaFlamme*, the program promoted the Twitter accounts of most of the reporters and Ms. LaFlamme herself. LaFlamme's Twitter posts often included links to CTV News. Depending on whether a viewer accesses Twitter from a mobile device or a computer, a viewer will end up either on the *CTV News mobile* application or *ctvnews.ca*. Occasionally field reporters' Twitter accounts herded a viewer over to CTV, but not as a rule. Instead, many reporters' Twitter sites contained story content and related material, an indication that audiences who chose to, could be more civically engaged if they wanted. Lisa LaFlamme's Twitter activity included many instances of viewer engagement with her, about issues of the day. On the other hand, the official *CTV News* and *CTV National News* Twitter feeds more often than not linked back to the web and mobile news sites. For CTV therefore, Twitter is acting as a promoter, sometimes inviting viewers back to these news sites that contain the more overt promotions and ads. Social media and the newspaper industry have struggled with their relationship. Social media expert, Jodi Gersh of Gannett Publications is looking to move media cross-promotion to a more sophisticated level,

“The goals are obviously to promote the journalism that we’re doing. That’s the easier one, (...) sharing their links and posting what they’re working on and what they’ve written (...) we’re really trying to change that model and look at a metric that isn’t just page views but engagement with our brands and what that can lead to” (Social Pros podcast, 2012).

Gersh is often called on to champion social media in the newsrooms of Gannett's publishing assets such as *USA Today*. Although the trend is for journalists to use social media to promote their activity, Gersh feels that social media can be a more functional part of news reporting, linking to sources and social media interest groups. However, social media is also being harnessed as a promotional tool with automated Twitter feeds and behind-the-scenes social media software forklifting brands into place (2012). Journalists who are using social media as part of their job are building their own brand, and by association, the brand of their employer. Journalist Twitter posts are, by nature, a form of self-promotion. In some cases it is more obvious such as, when Lisa LaFlamme tweets, she is doing it as part of her job as a CTV employee. Likewise, the CTV News social media department generates regular tweets as part of their self-promotion.

Mike Mikho, in *Ad Age Digital*, says that the relationship between TV and social media is evolving bi-directionally (October, 2012). As Mikho elaborates, brands are using social media to increase exposure to product on TV, while at the same time monitoring social media chatter about their product or brand (2012). Networks (and advertisers) are eager to find out personal information about viewers that can give them an edge on how to advertise to them, especially on digital platforms (Morgan, Shanahan, Signorelli, 2009, p.46). Facebook, for example, monitors users' activity with *EdgeRank*, an algorithm that ranks what is being displayed and how high up it is in Facebook newsfeeds (edgerank.net, 2013). Twitter also monitors users' activity and interprets it. According to Ori Allon on the Twitter Engineering blog (2013),

“when a user tweets, that Tweet is indexed and becomes searchable in seconds. (...) we extract and expand any URLs available in Tweets, and then fetch the contents of those URLs (...) To generate the stories (...) that we believe are most interesting to you, we (...) identify your connections and rank them according to how strong and important those connections are to you.”

If we take the point of view of a brand manager, we would want to know if our latest ad campaign is reaching the masses and how much the brand is being talked about and by whom. Similarly, a broadcaster might want to know if a particular TV episode is creating a buzz. If it is, this might drive advertisers to buy commercial time. Facebook and Twitter can make suggestions to users about what they might like, or what banners to display on home pages. According to *edgerank.net*, “(Mark) Zuckerberg mentioned in an interview with TechCrunch that Facebook users found it eerie how well Facebook knew what they were interested in, so they started randomizing the newsfeed slightly” (2013).

It is worth noting that TV is still considered the Holy Grail by advertisers because of its reach and ability to rivet the attention of viewers. According to the web site, *howmuchisit.org*, in the U.S., local TV advertising ranges from \$3 to \$8 per 1,000 viewers and national commercials up to \$400,000 for a 30-second ad (How much is it, 2013). Combine this with the fact that Nielsen's Cross-Platform Report, as quoted by Don Seaman on the *Jack Myers Media Report*, summarizes that “97% of all video is watched on television. Online viewing only accounts for 2% of all video viewing, mobile, 1%” (Seaman, Feb. 7, 2013).

Jonathan Hardy, in his book, *Cross-Media Promotion*, draws attention to the unsettling effect that cross-promotion creates in news journalism. On the one hand he laments that promotions get in the way of delivering news by shrinking the time or space allotted to news. On the other hand, he believes it could be useful if it guides a viewer to other ways of accessing news (i.e. a documentary with in-depth reporting). Cross-promotion, he says, “is bound up with two broader processes: convergence and commercialism” (Hardy, 2010, p.91). Wernick, as referenced by Hardy, identifies self-promotions as strategies of ‘hooking’ the audience (Wernick, 1990, p.101; Hardy, 2010, p.91). Hardy references Ofcomm, the European broadcasting regulator who looked at what percentage of advertising during TV news was self or cross-promotional. In the UK, for example, 63% of commercials during the news were self-promotions and of these, one third were cross-promotional (Ofcomm, 2005b, p.12; Hardy, 2010, p. 93). According to Hardy, there are many skeptics who are still not convinced of the value of cross-promotions across convergent platforms (p.94).

Conclusions

Advertising within news media is threatened by the fragmentation effect across multiple platforms. So advertisers are looking for ways to better spend their money when related to news

(Hardy, 2010, p.96). Corporate owners have, as quoted by McChesney through Hardy, “been grinding away at (TV) news divisions to play commercial ball” (2004, p. 83) (Hardy, p. 96). With the concentration of media ownership in Canada, there is now more pressure than ever on news media to financially account for itself and for the mega companies to leverage the daily consumption of news towards advertising concentrated programming. Shoemaker and Reese contend that marketing media content is all about improving ratings (Shoemaker, Reese, 1996, p.244). High audience ratings means larger audience share, which in turn keeps advertisers paying for airtime.

Large media companies such as Bell Media in Canada are using specific strategies to ‘herd’ audiences consuming news programming over to high yield advertising locales, predominantly prime time drama and reality programs. As we observed with Bell’s conventional television news and specialty channel news, advertising and promotion occupy a significant amount of screen time with a lot devoted to self-promotion of prime time programming. The sheer quantity of advertising and promotion content in news media raise concerns about limited screen time for news stories, and the effects of saturated advertising and promotion on audiences. Cross-promotion was rampant on the digital news platforms, especially the mobile application. It would appear that the mobile application exists almost solely to promote CTV main channel programming. Organizational self-promotion played a continuous role on all platforms, reinforcing the CTV identity. Future studies could measure the long-term effect on the viewing public of these digital platforms and the use of advertising and promotions on them. Analysis could evaluate embedded content, on-air references and other forms.

From what we have seen, promoted prime-time programming has the highest proportion of advertising content per hour and herds audiences with even more self-promotions for future prime-time programs. Prime time is the most lucrative advertising sales target, so it is not unexpected that CTV or any other broadcaster should be herding viewers there. However, it is interesting to note the unique strategy that is used to get viewers there, one that promotes repeated awareness of prime-time product. While self-and cross-promotions remain unregulated in Canada and as advertising quota is largely unregulated, the impact of advertising and promotion on audiences viewing news media should be considered by regulating bodies. Given the changing media landscape, in both ownership and emerging technology, media scholars need to keep a close eye on how these promotional forms evolve over the next few years, what their effect is on audiences and how they shape the content and presentation of the news.

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