

Fauteux, Brian. Concordia University, Montreal. "From Closed-Circuit to the Internet: The Development of Campus Radio Broadcasting in Canada"

In May 2008 the Community Radio Fund of Canada (CFRC) was created for the support and development of "not-for-profit, local radio," helping "community broadcasting reach its full potential as an independent, diverse, and accessible part of Canadian media." Funded by Astral Media, the CFRC is the result of a three-year partnership between Canada's largest community radio associations. Considering that community and campus radio stations have been broadcasting for decades, what factors have initiated the establishment of the fund at this time? This paper provides an overview of my upcoming dissertation project: the history of campus and campus-community radio in Canada, specifically, its development from closed-circuit systems to broadcasting on the FM band and online, considering technological, economic, and political changes that have shaped the Canadian broadcasting environment. I am interested in the relationships and tensions between campus radio broadcasting practices/operations and government broadcasting policy, as well as music programming on campus radio and music programming on other radio systems, namely commercial radio.

An additional goal of this research is to highlight ways that key terms and concepts are utilized to define positions/identities in broadcasting discourses throughout this development. Examples of key concepts include 'alternative,' 'community,' and 'independent.' How have these concepts been used by practitioners and advocates of campus radio, and how have they been deployed by policy-makers and commercial broadcasters? I intend to relate this research to contemporary broadcasting debates, including central issues such as spectrum scarcity and the review of campus radio policy that is taking place this year. In other words, how does the history of campus radio in Canada speak to its current place in the Canadian media environment, and our understanding of its social and cultural contributions?

Brian Fauteux is a Ph.D. Candidate in Communication at Concordia University, whose current research explores the development of Canadian campus and community radio broadcasting, independent music production and distribution, alternative media, and the intersection of popular music and cinema.