



**Dossier de preuves**  
**Comportement anticoncurrentiel de la Société Radio-Canada**

Déposé dans le cadre du renouvellement des licences des services  
de langue française et de langue anglaise  
de la Société Radio-Canada

**Avis de consultation de radiodiffusion CRTC 2019-379**

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# TANDEM : UTILISER LA CRÉDIBILITÉ DU DIFFUSEUR PUBLIC À DES FINS COMMERCIALES

## A. Article *The Globe and Mail* – “Current, former CBC employees condemn corporation’s branded-content initiative”, Simon Houpt, 29 octobre 2020

### CONTEXTE

CBC/Radio-Canada a lancé un nouveau service (dénommé TANDEM) de création de contenu destiné aux annonceurs et aux agences médiatiques. L'article du *Globe and Mail* rapporte que de nombreux employés (anciens et actuels) condamnent ce nouveau service.

Ces anciens employés expriment leur inquiétude au regard de l'intrusion de pratiques commerciales au sein d'une entité dont l'objectif est l'information. Le contenu sponsorisé équivaut à une « tromperie » selon Linden MacIntyre (ancien animateur de *The Fifth Estate*).

## CURRENT, FORMER CBC EMPLOYEES CONDEMN CORPORATION’S BRANDED-CONTENT INITIATIVE

Simon Houpt

Updated October 29, 2020

The Canadian Broadcasting Corp. is facing an uprising within its ranks for accepting advertising that critics say amounts to corporate-sponsored “fake news.”

Hundreds of current and former staff, including Peter Mansbridge, Linden MacIntyre, Gillian Findlay, Bob McKeown and Adrienne Clarkson, are expressing “grave concerns” over CBC/Radio-Canada Tandem, a new venture that works with marketers to create and publish what is known as branded content, or paid content: advertising that looks or sounds like regular editorial coverage.

Tandem was unveiled to the advertising community last month, with CBC/Radio-Canada’s new chief revenue officer, Donald Lizotte, promising in a news release it would “leverage the credibility of our network.” The pitch proposed that Tandem content could appear on most of the broadcaster’s English- and French-language platforms, including the CBC website, podcast pages and audio apps, and TV networks – among them, CBC News Network.

Branded content produced by CBC so far includes videos on Radio-Canada’s website about how HSBC, a bank, is helping entrepreneurs confront the business challenges of COVID-19, a podcast series promoting Athabasca University and Olympic-themed videos sponsored by Visa. The sponsor is identified in each case through text or a logo.

The plans alarmed rank-and-file staff and some of the network's stars, as well as high-profile former on-air personalities, who have joined a group of more than 400 to press their case through town halls and a flurry of letters to the public broadcaster's management and board of directors.

"I am very disturbed by the idea that there might be a commercial intrusion into the objective news gathering and dissemination that has always been the CBC's hallmark," Ms. Clarkson, the former governor-general who worked for CBC for almost four decades, told *The Globe and Mail* on Thursday afternoon.

Mr. MacIntyre, the former crusading host of *The Fifth Estate*, said during an interview that, while traditional advertising on CBC "is one of the realities" that has been accepted by the public, branded content is tantamount to "deception. Why do special corporate interests, institutional interests need to disguise content as something that is objective and something that is disinterested from their mercenary point of view? Why do they have to do that, other than to create an impression that is untrue, which is that they don't have a particular stake in how people respond to this?"

Many private news organizations have developed robust branded content initiatives, including *The Globe and Mail* and *The New York Times*. But the public-service mandates of public broadcasters are sometimes seen to be at odds with such undertakings. Last year, the BBC drew scathing criticism for a video series made by its branded content division, StoryWorks, lauding the Chinese telecom giant, Huawei.

Tony Burman, who served as editor in chief of CBC News from 2000 to 2007, told *The Globe* that Tandem is "a terrible initiative. They're selling the journalistic reputation of the CBC to the highest bidder. That's not what a public broadcaster should be doing. In an era where the fiction of so-called fake news is undermining trust in journalism, I think this just makes it worse."

In response to the staff actions, CBC/Radio-Canada announced this month that it would "press pause" on any further Tandem contracts, and strike a working group comprising representatives of the news, sales, podcast, digital and other departments to study the concerns that had been raised.

CBC spokesperson Chuck Thompson said Tandem had been in development for more than a year, with input from all "key stakeholders," and that the corporation had been satisfied it had established standards that would allow it to proceed. "It's everyone's concern at CBC, not just journalists, that we ensure at every step, with every execution, that we protect the integrity of our journalism."

He added that CBC/Radio-Canada had been publishing branded content "for years – not weeks, not months – years" and that it was merely Tandem's rollout last month that raised hackles. "Everybody woke up to the fact that we're in the branded content game."

The broadcaster has recently become more aggressive in its desire to commercialize its content, as traditional revenue has dried up. During its annual Upfront presentation to the advertising community last year, CBC/Radio-Canada president Catherine Tait boasted they were "making a renewed commitment to growing commercial revenue."

On Thursday afternoon, a group of six journalists spearheading the staff response to Tandem, including Ms. Findlay and investigative reporter Dave Seglins, sent a note to the group of more than 400

expressing disappointment that their concerns had fallen on deaf ears, and they were calling for a town hall meeting with Ms. Tait. A copy of the note was provided to The Globe.

“We are demanding nothing short of a complete, total halt to paid content,” it

## B. Article Le Journal de Montréal, « Publicité déguisée : gros malaise à Radio-Canada », Marc-André Lemieux, 24 novembre 2020

### CONTEXTE

L'article du *Journal de Montréal* apporte de nouveaux éléments de preuve quant à la présentation trompeuse de contenu promotionnel de la Société Radio-Canada. On apprend notamment que le diffuseur public a publié au moins quatre publireportages où il était présenté du contenu sponsorisé.

# Publicité déguisée : gros malaise à Radio-Canada

Avec son service Tandem, la société d'État crée des contenus *sponsorisés* pour ses annonceurs

**Des publicités payantes aux allures de véritables reportages créent un « grand malaise » auprès des employés de CBC/Radio-Canada.**

**MARC-ANDRÉ LEMIEUX**  
Le Journal de Montréal

Dans une lettre adressée au ministre du Patrimoine canadien, Steven Guilbault, datée du 29 octobre, la Guilde canadienne des médias dénonce « l'incursion agressive » du diffuseur public dans l'arène du contenu de marque. Le syndicat, qui représente les journalistes à CBC/Radio-Canada, décrit plus précisément l'arrivée de « Radio-Canada Tandem », un service de publicité qui vend des balados, des vidéos et d'autres types de contenus qui prennent l'apparence de nouvelles journalistiques.

La Guilde déplore que CBC/Radio-Canada ait lancé Tandem « sans considération ni consultation élargies ». Selon elle, ce contenu commandité « va trop loin » et peut tromper les gens.

« Les contenus *sponsorisés* brouillent les frontières entre le vrai journalisme indépendant et les fausses nouvelles », peut-on lire dans cette lettre.

### « DOMMAGEABLE »

La Guilde avait partagé ses premières inquiétudes en septembre. Dans un communiqué, ses membres s'étaient avoués « très préoccupés » par Tandem. Ils craignaient que cette initiative affecte « la réputation de CBC/Radio-Canada en tant que service d'information indépendant et fiable ».

Le Syndicat des communications de Radio-Canada (SCRC), qui représente non seulement des journalistes, mais également des représentants publicitaires ayant collaboré au lancement de Tandem, n'a pas encore pris position dans cette affaire.

Joint au téléphone, le président du regroupement,

Pierre Tousignant, parle toutefois d'une « forme de publireportages léchés » qui créent « un grand malaise ».

« Radio-Canada a toujours été perçue comme une référence en matière de normes et pratiques. À partir du moment où l'on joue sur une confusion des genres, on met en danger la crédibilité du diffuseur. Ça peut être extrêmement dommageable », souligne M. Tousignant.

### RÉPONSE DU DIFFUSEUR

En réponse aux questions du *Journal*, le premier directeur, Promotions et Relations publiques, de Radio-Canada, Marc Pichette, indique qu'il existe un « mur infranchissable » entre la publicité et l'information chez le diffuseur public. Selon ses dires, les contenus de marque sont « clairement identifiés comme étant des contenus annonceurs ».

De plus, CBC/Radio-Canada précise que d'autres médias publics, comme BBC et France Télévision, offrent un service semblable à Tandem.

« Le contenu de marque, les commandites, le placement de produit génèrent des revenus qui sont investis directement dans la programmation », ajoute M. Pichette.

Avec Tandem, CBC/Radio-Canada joue sur le même terrain que plusieurs médias privés qui ont développé des initiatives de contenu commandité au cours des années.

« Tous les médias luttent pour leur survie, indique Pierre Tousignant du SCRC. Que Radio-Canada vienne jouer de façon plus agressive dans des talles plus commerciales, ça peut mettre en colère la concurrence, j'en conviens. »

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**Selon le plus récent rapport annuel de CBC/Radio-Canada, son financement public s'est élevé à 1,2 milliard \$ pour l'exercice 2019-2020.**

**QUATRE EXEMPLES DE FAUX REPORTAGES SIGNÉS TANDEM**

CBC/Radio-Canada Tandem, c'est le nom du nouveau service de contenu de marque du diffuseur public. Voici quelques exemples.

■ Sur Radio-Canada.ca, on remarque *Les bourses des maîtres Van Houtte*, une page produite pour l'entreprise de cafés qui rassemble des portraits vidéo de cinq artistes canadiens.

■ Sur ICI Tou.tv, on retrouve *La recette pas plate de...*, une websérie payée par l'Association des emballeurs de pommes de terre du Québec dans laquelle des personnalités connues comme Charles Hamelin et Marilou de *Trois fois par jour* proposent des recettes simples impliquant la patate.

■ Sur OHdio, l'application qui regroupe les contenus audio de Radio-Canada, on trouve deux balados étiquetés « contenu annonceur » : *Mon été culturel à Montréal*, une série payée par Montréal dans laquelle on visite la métropole à travers ses quartiers, et *Merci infiniment*, une série payée et produite par l'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec dans laquelle l'animateur Nicolas Ouellet rencontre des membres du regroupement qui participent aux efforts pour combattre la COVID-19.

**Tollé au Canada anglais**

**Au Canada anglais, la mise en place de CBC/Radio-Canada Tandem crée beaucoup de remous.**

**Au cours des dernières semaines, plusieurs gros noms de l'information, employés ou ex-employés du diffuseur public, comme Peter Mansbridge et Linden MacIntyre, ont exprimé leurs « grandes inquiétudes » à l'égard de ce nouveau service de création de contenu de marque.**

**En entrevue au *Globe and Mail*, l'ancienne gouverneure générale du Canada, Adrienne Clarkson, qui s'est fait connaître comme reporter et animatrice à CBC, a indiqué qu'elle était « très troublée » par l'idée qu'il pourrait y avoir un flou entre la publicité et l'information.**



1. Marilou dans *La recette pas plate de...* 2. La page de présentation de Tandem. 3. La page du contenu promotionnel de Van Houtte. 4. Le balado *Merci infiniment*, payé et produit par l'Ordre des infirmières et infirmiers du Québec. 5. La Ville de Montréal commande le balado *Mon été culturel à Montréal*.

## C. Article *Cartt.ca*, « Former CBC employees turn to board of directors to stop branded-content Tandem initiative », 24 novembre 2020

### CONTEXTE

Le site *Cartt.ca* rapporte que dans une lettre adressée au Conseil d'administration de la CBC, un groupe composé d'anciens employés de la CBC (gestionnaires, journalistes, producteurs, etc.) demande de mettre fin au service TANDEM. Ce groupe d'anciens employés réitère que la crédibilité du diffuseur public ne doit pas être utilisée à des fins commerciales. Pour ces anciens employés, on mine ainsi la crédibilité du diffuseur public :

« This is a violation of the trust that Canadians have in their public broadcaster ».

## FORMER CBC EMPLOYEES TURN TO BOARD OF DIRECTORS TO STOP BRANDED-CONTENT TANDEM INITIATIVE

November 24, 2020

TORONTO — In an unprecedented move, a coalition of former CBC management executives, journalists, producers and other employees have sent a letter to the public broadcaster's board of directors asking them to end CBC's Tandem, a "dedicated service for branded content" which the letter writers say produces advertising indistinguishable from journalism.

According to a press release issued today by the former employees, the CBC board has agreed to discuss the [new Tandem venture](#) at a meeting on Wednesday with CBC president Catherine Tait and vice-president Barb Williams.

Among the former CBC employees who have signed the letter to the board are two former presidents, Tony Manera (1992-1995) and Robert Rabinovitch (1999-2007), and respected journalists such as Linden MacIntyre, Kelly Crowe, Peter Mansbridge and Adrienne Clarkson, as well as many others from the CBC's editorial and management leadership ranks.

In their letter to the board, the former CBC employees wrote: "Those who have spent 20, 30, 40 years of their work lives bringing Canadians stories from their neighbourhoods, their country and the world, have a vested interest in the reputation and integrity of the CBC. Many risked their lives to deliver news to Canadians. Now management wants to 'leverage' that work — and the credibility, trust and reputation of the CBC — to benefit corporate clients."

The letter outlines two instances where CBC's online presentation of branded content "violated the 'church and state' division" between journalism and corporate advertorials, according to the former employees. In the first example, a sponsored podcast created on behalf of Athabasca University, called *Go the Distance*, appeared on CBC's podcast page among all the other podcasts on offer, with no indication it was a paid-for product. The podcast has been removed from the podcast list, after staff raised the issue with CBC management, says the letter.

In the other case, a Gillette advertorial created for CBC.ca's Culture and Life sections in May 2019 was labelled as sponsored content but looked like a news story. It was written by a regular CBC contributor who also writes journalism. CBC published additional stories a few weeks later about the same Gillette advertising campaign, but they were not labelled as sponsored content. After employee complaints about one of the follow-up stories, the copy on CBC's website was updated in October 2020 to say Gillette was a partner in CBC's sponsored content program, but the article itself was not connected to that program.

"Where is the line between sponsors and journalism? Just saying it is not sponsored content does not negate the fact that CBC.ca has a business relationship with Gillette and produces sponsored content for the company. This is a violation of the trust that Canadians have in their public broadcaster," reads the letter to CBC's board.

"We ask the Board to be transparent with Canadians over how the decision to approve paid content within the public broadcaster was made and how you believe this does not seriously undermine the integrity of CBC's core programming, the provision of news and information."

The group of former CBC employees has also [written to the CRTC](#), asking the Commission to add Tandem to the agenda for the CBC's licence renewal hearing in January 2021.

In addition, [a public petition](#) launched by the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting has garnered almost 7,500 signatures in less than a week, according to the former employees' press release.

Criticism from the CBC's union, the Canadian Media Guild, led CBC management to announce in October a pause in Tandem's activities, says the release. However, the pause was only short-term and [Tandem's website](#) and social media accounts remained active, and client information continues to appear on the CBC's webpages, adds the release.

## D. Article *La Presse* +, « Radio-Canada n'a pas besoin de plus de publicité, mais de moins ! », Alain Saulnier, 3 décembre 2020

### CONTEXTE

Dans *La Presse* +, le professeur Alain Saulnier soulève la question de la publicité comme source de financement du service public. Il souligne que celle-ci occupe une place croissante au sein de la stratégie du diffuseur public. Saulnier appuie la proposition du rapport Yale qui vise à éliminer graduellement la publicité de toutes les plateformes de diffusion de la Société Radio-Canada. Saulnier invite le CRTC à aborder cet enjeu dans le cadre du renouvellement des licences de la Société Radio-Canada.

### DÉBATS

## RADIO-CANADA N'A PAS BESOIN DE PLUS DE PUBLICITÉ, MAIS DE MOINS !

ALAIN SAULNIER  
PROFESSEUR INVITÉ AU  
DÉPARTEMENT DE  
COMMUNICATION DE  
L'UNIVERSITÉ DE MONTRÉAL ET  
ANCIEN DIRECTEUR GÉNÉRAL DE  
L'INFORMATION DES SERVICES  
FRANÇAIS DE RADIO-CANADA  
(2006-2012)

Connaissez-vous « Radio-Canada Tandem » ? Il s'agit du nouveau service de contenus de marque de Radio-Canada/CBC. De quoi parle-t-on ? On le définit comme suit : « Il allie les meilleurs atouts de votre marque à l'expertise, la crédibilité et la qualité des productions numériques, audio et télé de CBC/Radio-Canada pour créer avec vous des contenus de marque multiplateformes intelligents et significatifs. »

Soyons clairs, il s'agit pour Radio-Canada d'une manière de faire de la publicité de marque en cachant le fait qu'il s'agit bel et bien de publicité. Depuis quelques années, c'est la tendance lourde chez les agences de publicité.

Si vous préférez, il s'agit d'une nouvelle façon d'enliser Radio-Canada davantage dans sa dépendance démesurée aux revenus publicitaires.

Que dire ? Il est temps de lancer le débat sur cette trop forte dépendance de Radio-Canada à l'égard de la publicité.

Encore plus de publicité à Radio-Canada ? Comme s'il n'y en avait pas assez ! Nous sommes plusieurs à considérer que cette publicité teinte trop la programmation du service public (télévision et services numériques) depuis plusieurs années et parfois, en appauvrit le contenu. Heureusement, la radio est à l'abri. L'effet pervers pour la télévision de Radio-Canada est, entre autres, qu'elle tend alors à copier les médias privés.

À mon avis, il est temps de discuter d'une formule de service public sans cette surdépendance à l'égard de la publicité à Radio-Canada. Le service public doit se distinguer, pas ressembler aux médias privés.

J'avais déjà proposé dans mon livre  *Ici était Radio-Canada (Boréal, 2014)* que la publicité devait être retranchée de la télévision ainsi que des plateformes numériques, comme on l'a fait à la radio dans les années 1970. Je suggèrais toutefois de conserver un faible pourcentage de publicité pour des commanditaires de prestige, comme lors des Jeux olympiques ou à l'occasion de grands festivals culturels.

En contrepartie, il faudra, bien sûr, trouver une façon de compenser les pertes de revenus publicitaires par de nouvelles formules de financement et de redevances du service public.

Le Rapport Yale, Le temps d'agir, déposé en janvier 2020, propose précisément d'éliminer graduellement la publicité de toutes les plateformes de diffusion de Radio-Canada.

J'ai salué cette proposition, car je considère qu'il est urgent d'en débattre.

Sauf que, plutôt que de se questionner, la direction de Radio-Canada multiplie les initiatives développées par son service des ventes publicitaires, le Groupe Revenus, pour s'incruster davantage dans la programmation de la télévision et les plateformes numériques.

On fait dans le déni, comme s'il n'y avait pas de problème avec la publicité à Radio-Canada.

Le prétexte est tout simplement qu'on considère que c'est la seule et unique solution au sous-financement du service public. Comme s'il n'y avait qu'une seule issue.

Entre-temps, on évite le débat et on accroît cette dépendance à l'égard de la publicité. Or, dans cet immense univers numérique, il faut plus que jamais savoir reconnaître la différence des contenus du service public. Radio-Canada peut et doit constituer un formidable rempart pour contrer l'uniformisation culturelle (principalement américaine) imposée par les géants du web.

Déjà, lors de mon départ de Radio-Canada en février 2012, je soulevais cette question : à quoi sert Radio-Canada si c'est pour faire comme les autres ? En janvier prochain, le CRTC tiendra une audience publique pour le renouvellement des licences de Radio-Canada. Quelle belle occasion pour lancer le débat.

## E. Lettre au ministre du Patrimoine canadien Steven Guilbeault, 30 novembre 2020

### CONTEXTE

Les députés du Nouveau Parti démocratique Alexandre Boulerice et Heather McPherson (critiques pour le patrimoine) ont alerté le ministre du Patrimoine canadien que le service Tandem est « un grand pas dans la mauvaise direction ». Ils rappellent au ministre que le diffuseur public doit servir l'intérêt public.



New Democratic Party / Nouveau Parti démocratique

November 30, 2020

The Honourable Steven Guilbeault  
Minister of Canadian Heritage  
15 Eddy Street, 12th Floor  
Gatineau, Quebec  
K1A 0M5

Dear Minister Guilbeault,

We are writing to express our concern over the recent move by CBC/Radio Canada to create a branded advertising and podcasting service, Tandem, that blurs the line between paid content and journalism.

At a moment in time when Canadians most need a reliable news source that is independent of corporate or other interests, this new paid service will undermine our public broadcaster's ability to provide unbiased news and reporting. If pursued, we fear it will destroy the trust Canadians have in this cherished Canadian institution.

CBC/Radio Canada must serve the public's interests, not those who have the ability to pay for its highly valued imprimatur. Rather than selling its services to the highest bidder, we should be funding CBC/Radio Canada adequately to protect the highest standards of journalistic integrity and achieve independence from advertisers. Tandem is a very big step in the wrong direction.

We trust you share our alarm at hearing Chief Revenue Officer Donald Lizotte describe Tandem as leveraging the credibility of CBC/Radio Canada, and that you share our views on the value of CBC/Radio Canada, its journalistic integrity, and the importance of protecting it from undue influence.

We look forward to your intervention to prevent this disturbing new direction at CBC/Radio Canada.

Respectfully,

Heather McPherson, M.P.  
Edmonton Strathcona  
NDP Deputy Critic for Heritage

Alexandre Boulerice, M.P.  
Rosemont-La Petite-Patrie  
NDP Critic for Heritage

## F. *Parliament Now* – Résumé de la période de questions du 23 novembre 2020

### CONTEXTE

Le résumé de la période de questions du 23 novembre 2020 à la Chambre des communes du Canada fait état des témoignages d'anciens journalistes de CBC/Radio-Canada, Peter Mansbridge et Adrienne Clarkson (voir l'encadré rouge) concernant le nouveau service TANDEM de CBC/Radio-Canada. Ils ont fait état de leur grave inquiétude à l'égard du service TANDEM. Les députés conservateurs se sont interrogés quant à savoir pourquoi la Société Radio-Canada peut vendre du contenu sponsorisé.

**PARLIAMENT NOW**

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## QP Report: November 23

### Quote of the Day

Justice Minister and Attorney General of Canada David Lametti (LaSalle-Émard-Verdun, Que.): "Mr. Speaker, what we heard going coast to coast, when we consulted with Canadians intensively, people who worked in the field as well as families and others, was that the 10-day waiting period only increased suffering. People who have made the decision, who have gone through with their doctors and with the families to decide to access MAID in an end-of-life scenario, have made up their mind. The 10-day waiting period only added suffering. We heard stories of people not taking their pain medication for the last 10 days in order to be in a position to make that final decision. We heard again and again that it only added to the suffering that people had, and we have, therefore, eliminated it in only the end-of-life scenarios."

### COVID-19 Emergency Response

- five million people have come into Canada and not isolated
- rapid tests, at-home testing
- Conservatives asked the government for access to rapid tests for Canadians and people coming over the border
- vaccine distribution plan, provinces have shared their plans
- Conservatives asked when the government will release its distribution plan for vaccines
- small businesses, most support was designed for landlords, not tenants
- NDP asked the government to provide help to small businesses retroactive to the spring
- small and medium-sized businesses can apply for the Canada emergency rent subsidy, retroactive to September 27
- BQ asked about their amendment to cut political parties from accessing the emergency wage subsidy

- 800,000 people received the CERB without even having filed their income tax return
- Conservatives asked how the government confirmed the eligibility of these Canadians without a tax return
- 2020 fall economic statement on November 30

## **Health**

- Canada's chief medical officer released an update on COVID-19 modelling in Canada; no real mention of indigenous people or their communities in this report
- Conservatives asked how the government can support these communities if they aren't included in these reports
- rise of cases in indigenous communities, lack of accurate data
- Conservatives asked if the government has a solution to get this data
- Alberta rising in most COVID-19 cases, outbreaks in long-term care homes
- Jason Kenney refusing to allow the federal contact tracing app
- NDP asked the federal government to help protect Albertans during this time
- suicide
- Conservatives asked the government implement a 988 number

## **Official Languages**

- linguistic crisis, French has been in decline in Quebec
- BQ asked the government to admit this crisis is Ottawa's fault
- Bloc wants to apply Bill 101 to federally regulated businesses
- BQ asked for support for its bill to protect French in Quebec
- modernized Official Languages Act

## **Indigenous Affairs**

- Indigenous man and daughter arrested for trying to open a bank account with status card
- Conservatives asked about this systemic racism
- indigenous-led housing strategy
- NDP asked the government why they have delayed acting on the truth and reconciliation calls to action

## **Immigration, Refugees and Citizenship**

- spousal sponsorship
- IRCC unable to meet the minister's 14-day processing standard for extended family reunification
- NDP asked the government to renew documents that have expired since shutdown
- ISIS terrorists murdered 25 Sikhs while they attended prayer service in Afghanistan
- Manmeet Singh Bhullar Foundation is calling on the Liberal government to create a special refugee program for this community
- Conservatives asked the government to support this call

## **Foreign Affairs**

- government voted for an anti-Israel resolution at the UN

- Conservatives asked the government to restore Canada's long-standing policy of opposition to these anti-Israel resolutions

### **Canada Revenue Agency**

- pause audits of small businesses
- Conservatives asked the government to respect the motion passed to pause these audits
- Canada Revenue Agency is independent, minister will not instruct CRA

### **Justice**

- judicial appointments
- PMO intervened at least four times to talk about candidates
- BQ asked the justice minister to realize his appointments are not partisan
- Bill C-7, medical assistance in dying
- Independent MP Wilson-Raybould asked why the government is abolishing the safeguard of a 10-day reflection period and reconfirmation of consent

### **The Environment**

- climate change, net-zero emissions accountability act

### **Western Economic Diversification**

- Blue Sky Hemp Ventures, funding application for Blue Sky to deliver up to 10 jobs was approved by the Saskatoon office of Western Economic Diversification in June
- Conservatives asked why the minister only approved in this month

### **CBC/Radio-Canada**

- former CBC journalists, like Peter Mansbridge and Adrienne Clarkson, have publicly expressed grave concern over the CBC's new Tandem project
- Conservatives asked why a program to sell branded content is allowed

### **Taxation**

- taxes on Canadian wine, beer and spirits
- affects jobs, reducing our competitive trade and punishing consumers
- Conservatives asked the government to get rid of this ever-increasing excise tax on Canadian alcohol

[The full transcript for Monday, November 23, 2020, is available online.](#)

[Question Period](#)

G. Article *Le Journal de Montréal*, « Radio-Canada recadre Tandem », Marc-André Lemieux, 8 décembre 2020

CONTEXTE

Face aux nombreuses contestations du service TANDEM, la CBC/Radio-Canada a adopté de nouvelles règles relatives à la publication de contenu de marques. Daniel Bernhard, directeur général des *Amis de la radiodiffusion*, a jugé que ces règles étaient insuffisantes et que TANDEM devrait être aboli. Selon Bernhard, « on ne peut pas sauver Radio-Canada en vendant sa crédibilité ».

# Guide télé

## Radio-Canada recadre Tandem

### La publicité déguisée continue d'alimenter le débat

**La grogne entourant le service de contenu de marque Tandem de CBC/Radio-Canada a poussé la société d'État à émettre de nouvelles lignes directrices pour mieux différencier publicité et information. Certains critiques jugent toutefois ces mesures insuffisantes.**

MARC-ANDRÉ LEMIEUX  
Le Journal de Montréal

Ces publicités payantes aux allures de véritables reportages ou émissions créent un malaise depuis quelques mois.

En réaction aux inquiétudes soulevées par certains journalistes de CBC, d'anciens employés et d'autres parties intéressées, les directions des secteurs de l'information, des ventes et des programmes ont mené un « examen exhaustif des directives » touchant le contenu de marque, nous confirme le premier directeur, promotion et relations publiques de Radio-Canada, Marc Pichette.

Le sujet a également été abordé « en profondeur » lors d'une réunion du conseil d'administration du diffuseur à Toronto, le 26 novembre.

#### RÈGLES PLUS SÉVÈRES

Dans une déclaration publiée sur Internet, la société d'État souligne que, dorénavant, « aucun journaliste ou animateur » employé de CBC/Radio-Canada ne participera au contenu de marque. Ce type de publicité sera également « présenté de manière à identifier de façon claire et transparente sa source ».

De plus, les pages des nouvelles natio-

nales seront exemptes de contenu de marque.

« Nous sommes conscients qu'en tant que diffuseur public national, nous avons des normes plus élevées à respecter, déclare le vice-président principal de Radio-Canada, Michel Bissonnette, par l'entremise d'un communiqué. Nos lignes directrices doivent être plus sévères que celles de nos pairs afin d'assurer la nette distinction entre contenu journalistique et contenu commercial. »

#### PAS ASSEZ

Le groupe de surveillance Les AMIS de la radiodiffusion continue de réclamer l'abolition du service Tandem.

En entrevue téléphonique au *Journal*, le directeur général de l'organisation, Daniel Bernhard, qualifie ces directives d'« insuffisantes ».

« On ne peut pas sauver Radio-Canada en vendant sa crédibilité. Si c'est le prix à payer pour qu'ils continuent d'offrir tous les services qu'ils offrent présentement... On doit trouver une autre voie. »

Selon M. Bernhard, Tandem favorise la confusion des genres et menace la crédibilité de CBC/Radio-Canada. « Les études le démontrent, les lecteurs ne voient pas vraiment la différence entre le contenu de marque et l'information. C'est la raison pour laquelle les annonceurs aiment autant ce type de contenu. La différence de couleurs, ce n'est pas efficace pour distinguer les deux. »

Pour l'exercice 2019-2020, la publicité à CBC/Radio-Canada représentait des revenus de 254 M\$. Sans ces revenus, le

diffuseur soutient qu'il serait obligé de « procéder à des compressions majeures dans sa programmation et ses services ».

## H. Articles concernant la lettre des employés de CBC/Radio-Canada au ministre du Patrimoine canadien

### CONTEXTE

Un groupe d'anciens employés de CBC/Radio-Canada ont soumis une lettre au ministre du Patrimoine canadien, Steven Guilbeault, demandant une enquête du CRTC sur TANDEM. La lettre accuse l'obsession pour les revenus publicitaires de CBC/Radio-Canada et le silence du CRTC sur la question. Les employés ont également exprimé leur désarroi lors d'un *town hall* leur désarroi face à la quête de revenus supplémentaires de CBC/Radio-Canada.

- **H.1.** Article *National Post*, « CBC staffers revolt, call for federal intervention », Christopher Nardi, 9 décembre 2020
- **H.2.** Article *The Wire Report*, « CBC employees pen open letter, petition gov. seeking CRTC investigation of branded content », 9 décembre 2020
- **H.3.** Article *National Post*, « CRTC mulls probe of CBC, Radio-Canada », 10 décembre 2020

### 1. Article *National Post*, « CBC staffers revolt, call for federal intervention », Christopher Nardi, 9 décembre 2020

#### CBC staffers revolt, call for federal intervention

CHRISTOPHER NARDI

OTTAWA • CBC and Radio-Canada staff said there was a "strong feeling of betrayal" in a recent online town hall with top executives over plans to launch a branded content division.

Staffed questioned how they could "trust" management and told of their fears that it would tarnish the CBC as a "fake news" organization.

Now, influential former employees and Canadian public broadcasting advocates are asking Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault to make the federal broadcasting regulator "investigate" the Crown corporation's new branded content arm, Tandem.

"Faced with the CBC's revenue-obsessed determination to sell its integrity to the highest bidders and the (Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission's) deafening silence when asked to address this important issue, we respectfully ask that you intervene," reads a letter sent to the minister Monday and obtained by *National Post*.

Over 30 former CBC/Radio-Canada employees, including former governor general Adrienne Clarkson, and past CBC News editor-in-chief Tony Burman and former CBC ombudsman Esther Enkin, signed it.

In a September press release announcing Tandem, CBC promised the new ad service would be an "integrated, turnkey solution to create quality content and leverage the credibility of our net-

work" that would help brands "shape and share inspiring stories across our platforms and across the country."

A CBC spokesperson declined to comment on the internal meeting. "We heard the concerns raised by our journalists and then took the time to carefully review our guidelines for branded content. These revised guidelines will now go even further to ensure we protect the integrity of our journalism," Chuck Thompson wrote in an email.

Branded content, or paid content, is an advertisement that is designed to look, sound or read similarly to regular journalistic content produced by a media outlet.

The new arm of CBC's advertising department would be responsible for creating paid advertising content as well as promotional podcasts on both the broadcasters English and French platforms, reads the release.

That announcement was met with a significant uproar from employees and public broadcasting advocates, pushing the Crown corporation to suspend its plans temporarily.

Then last week, CBC announced it would go forward with Tandem while outlining nine new "guidelines" that would "strengthen and clarify the boundaries between our journalistic content and advertising," according to a statement.

For example, the broadcaster says the branded content will be limited to digital platforms only, that no journalists or hosts will ever be involved in its creation or publication, and that all such advertise-

ment will be clearly labelled and visually distinct from regular CBC/Radio-Canada content.

But those moves didn't satisfy both current and former employees, who are strengthening their push to have the public broadcaster drop out of the branded content space.

Many current employees also voiced their profound displeasure during a town hall meeting with CBC and Radio-Canada management last Thursday. *National Post* obtained a recording of the event.

"Why should we trust you on this? With respect, there is a strong feeling of betrayal among CBC people right now," one unnamed employee asked CBC/Radio-Canada CEO Catherine Tait.

"Since you did not have a problem with anything to do with Tandem before it was brought to our attention. How can we believe that you'll get it right now?"

At another point, an employee asked CBC top brass how they should justify this decision to Canadians in the era of fake news.

"What are journalists supposed to say to our readers when we're challenged and asked why we have sponsored content on our website. I fear this will only fuel the 'CBC is fake news movement' even more," the employee asked.

In both cases, Tait and other managers insisted that "it's not fake news, it's advertising," that the new guidelines are "better" than those of other news organizations, and that such content has existed without issue on CBC/Radio-Canada platforms for a while.

"We've actually had branded content around for a

couple of years now. We've had many successful executions of it without backlash from confused audience members," remarked CBC executive vice-president Barbara Williams.

But Tait and Williams also argued that a pivot to branded content was necessary at a time when advertising revenue throughout the media industry was plummeting, particularly since the beginning of the COVID-19 pandemic. "We're under huge financial pressures, to be able to continue to deliver the great service that we do to Canadians and that we very much want to continue to provide. And in order to do that, we need to keep our revenue stream strong," Williams told staff during the town hall.

Branded content has become relatively commonplace in private media across the world, appearing in outlets such as *The New York Times*, the *BBC*, *National Post* and *The Globe & Mail*. In most cases, the medium establishes robust guidelines to distinguish paid content from independent news produced by journalists.

But public broadcasting advocates argue that such promotional content has no place within CBC and Radio-Canada, which receive over \$1 billion in public funding from the federal government each year.

"Commercialization is a corrupting force. It changes

the character of programming, it changes the character of resource allocation decisions, and it will make the CBC more and more like a commercial broadcaster, and less and less distinct," said Daniel Berhardt, president of public broadcasting advocacy group Friends of Canadian Broadcasting.

"This focus on commercialization is really alarming. And what was said during the town hall just demonstrated yet again that Catherine Tai does not seem to appreciate the public part of public broadcasting."

Jeffrey Dvorkin, former

managing editor of CBC Radio with decades of experience in public broadcasting in both Canada and the U.S., said that CBC/Radio-Canada's decision is "deeply offensive" to its reporters and an "insult" to Canadians.

"Why is the CBC taking money out of the mouths of commercial broadcasters and newspapers? I think the CBC needs to find a better fit inside the struggling Canadian media landscape than it is now. For the CBC to take its parliamentary budget and use that to run ads is not what it was set up to do," he said.

*National Post*

2. **Article *The Wire Report*, « CBC employees pen open letter, petition gov. seeking CRTC investigation of branded content », 9 décembre 2020**

## **CBC employees pen open letter, petition gov. seeking CRTC investigation of branded content**

[NEWS](#) | 12/09/2020 5:38 PM EST

Impatient with the progress of a month-old Part 1 application at the CRTC, a group of some 500 current and former **CBC/Radio-Canada** employees have authored an “Open Letter to Canadians” demanding that the broadcaster drop its English-language branded content initiative, Tandem.

In a separate letter to Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault, 35 former CBC employees also asked the government to intervene.

The open letter refers to the branded content initiative as “insidious” and “dangerous.”

Tandem “promises corporate clients they can ‘leverage’ the CBC’s reputation by aligning their message with the ‘trust Canadians have in our brand,’” the letter reads.

“That reputation was built by people like us — generations of journalists who earned your trust by informing you faithfully and truthfully every day. ‘Paid content’ does not leverage that reputation, it makes a mockery of it. In an era of ‘fake news,’ where misinformation is already rife, it undermines trust.”

According to a Wednesday release, the letter marks a significant escalation of “their fight against their management and the CBC’s Board of Directors.”

Former head of CBC Radio Gloria Bishop said in the release that the broadcaster “has never created advertising for clients in such secrecy.”

“What’s at stake are the basic principles of transparency and accountability. It’s bad enough that the CBC’s Board of Directors and its senior management approved branded programming behind closed doors but, even worse, they are now ignoring the thousands of Canadians who have objected to Tandem,” Bishop said in the release.

The letter to Guilbeault expressed frustration with the CRTC’s process. “Faced with the CBC’s revenue-obsessed determination to sell its integrity to the highest bidders and the CRTC’s deafening silence when asked to address this important issue, we respectfully ask that you intervene,” the signatories wrote.

The letter said that a number of employees had presented a petition with 11,000 signatures to the CBC’s board of directors in late November, but that CBC president Catherine Tait informed them that the CBC was pushing ahead with the branded content initiative.

In a Part 1 application [filed](#) with the regulator on November 13 but still not posted to the CRTC website Wednesday, the former employees want the CRTC to force the CBC to answer several questions about the practice: when it was first approved, when did it first begin, whether the branded content is subject to the CBC's advertising standards policy, and whether or not the activity is permitted under the Broadcast Act.

If the CRTC declines to hold a standalone investigation into the practice, the Part 1 application's signatories wrote that the issue should be added to hearings on CBC's broadcast license renewal, scheduled for January 2021.

The letter to Guilbeault also complains that the CBC failed to disclose its branded content activities in fall 2019 filings with the CRTC, related to its license renewal.

"Apart from not disclosing to members of Parliament the CBC's decision to produce and sell branded advertising content, the CBC apparently also withheld this information from the CRTC, the quasi-judicial tribunal that the Broadcasting Act establishes as the 'single independent public authority' responsible for regulating and supervising the broadcasting system, including the CBC," the letter to Guilbeault read.

In October, a CBC spokesperson [told](#) The Wire Report that the Tandem initiative had been put on a "brief pause."

"We feel there are more insights to be gained on this initiative and to that end, we are taking a brief pause on booking any new branded content campaigns while we dig a bit deeper," Chuck Thompson, CBC's head of public affairs, said in an email at the time.

3. Article *National Post*, « CRTC mulls probe of CBC, Radio-Canada », Christopher Nardi, 10 décembre 2020

# CRTC mulls probe of CBC, Radio-Canada

At centre is use of controversial branded content

CHRISTOPHER NARDI

Canada's broadcasting regulator says it is considering requests to "investigate" CBC/Radio-Canada's use of branded content, which has caused a revolt among current and former staff.

At the same time, hundreds of staff from CBC and Radio-Canada, its French-language broadcaster, have signed separate petitions demanding their employer put an end to its plans for a new branded content division called CBC Tandem.

"The Commission is reviewing these letters and will respond to them in due course," said Anne Brodeur, a spokeswoman for the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

The *National Post* reported Tuesday that a group of 35 influential former CBC/Radio-Canada employees had filed a request with the CRTC to study Tandem as part of the public broadcaster's upcoming licence renewal.

If the CRTC agrees to investigate, the probe would be included in hearings already scheduled for January.

But according to former CRTC vice-president and current Macdonald-Laurier Institute Fellow Peter Menzies, the commission may be limited in what it can do in this case.

"They can do a little bit of what we used to call 'regulation by raised eyebrow' though," he said, adding that he thinks that CBC should get out of the advertising business "entirely."

Branded content is an advertisement designed to look, read or sound nearly identical to a news story produced by a media outlet. It is generally identified as "paid content" or "sponsored content" and has become increasingly common in private media such as *National Post*, the *Globe and Mail* and the *New York Times*.

In a response posted online by non-profit Forum for Research and Policy in Communications (which filed a separate request for the CRTC to study CBC's branded content), the public broadcaster argues that branded content is irrelevant to its broadcasting licence.

"CBC/Radio-Canada does not broadcast this type

of branded content on its traditional platforms; this content is not part of our licence renewal proposal and therefore, is not relevant to the licence renewal process for our traditional platforms," reads CBC's response signed by Bev Kirshenblatt, executive director, corporate & regulatory affairs.

A group of over 500 current and former CBC and Radio-Canada staff disagree. They published an open letter and launched a website on Wednesday demanding their employer put an end to its new branded-content arm.

"Its purpose is to sell corporations the opportunity to disguise their advertising as our journalism. CBC is using its resources to help advertisers trick Canadians. They call what they produce 'paid content'. And it's insidious," the letter reads. "We believe strongly it must stop."

Letter signatories include the former host of *The National*, Peter Mansbridge, ex-CBC president Anthony Manera, current host of radio show *As It Happens* Carol Off, and Debra Arbec, host of CBC Montreal's flagship 6 p.m. newscast.

Wednesday, *National Post* obtained copies of another open letter circulating among Radio-Canada staff with an identical request addressed to CBC/Radio-Canada executive vice-president of French services Michel Bissonnette.

Organizers say it had received support from over 100 employees, including all "hosts of primetime TV and radio news shows" within hours, according to images of the petition. That claim

could not be independently verified.

"We believe that this form of advertisement, where the obvious goal is to imitate journalistic content, undermines our independence and our credibility in the eyes of the public," the petition reads in French.

"As studies shows that this type of advertisement dupes people, we should set a good example and abstain from it. We ask you sincerely, Mr. Bissonnette, to abandon the Tandem program."

When Tandem was first announced in September, pushback from staff and public broadcasting advocates was so strong that CBC/Radio-Canada executives decided to suspend the program for review.

Last week, management announced it would go forward with Tandem, but announced nine new guidelines that would limit how and where the branded content would be presented, as well as who could advertise.

CBC said the branded content will only appear on digital platforms, that no editorial staff will ever be involved in its creation or publication, and that all

such content will be clearly labelled and visually distinct from regular editorial content and would not feature the broadcaster's logo.

But the open letter circulating amongst Radio-Canada staff cited multiple examples where those guidelines were not respected. It pointed to a sponsored podcast that appeared unmarked in Radio-Canada's podcast feed and an October "paid content" story on HS-BC that originally featured the public broadcaster's logo (it was removed after complaints from staff).

Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault warned in a statement Wednesday that there can be no doubt in Canadians' minds about what CBC content is news and what is advertisement.

"We expect the public broadcaster to hold itself to the highest standards in terms of journalistic norms and practices.

"That means making sure that there is a clear distinction between paid content and news content," Guilbeault said in a statement pointing to CBC's new guidelines.

*National Post*

## I. Articles concernant la lettre ouverte de 500 employés (anciens et actuels) de CBC/Radio-Canada à propos du service TANDEM

### CONTEXTE

Plus de 500 employés de CBC/Radio-Canada ont publié une lettre ouverte dénonçant le service TANDEM. La lettre est publiée sur le site *Stop Paid Content on CBC*, créé spécifiquement pour dénoncer ce service hors mandat du diffuseur public (voir I.4.). Dans sa lettre, le groupe s'insurge contre l'utilisation de la crédibilité journalistique du diffuseur public à des fins commerciales.

- I.1. Article *Cartt.ca*, « Some CBC employees escalate fight against branded-content Tandem », 9 décembre 2020
- I.2. Article *The Globe and Mail*, « Hundreds of CBC staff sign open letter against broadcaster's paid-content plans », 9 décembre 2020
- I.3. Article *La Presse Plus*, « Des journalistes dénoncent leur employeur », 10 décembre 2020
- I.4. Site *Stop Paid Content on CBC*

### 1. Article *Cartt.ca*, « Some CBC employees escalate fight against branded-content Tandem », 9 décembre 2020

#### SOME CBC EMPLOYEES ESCALATE FIGHT AGAINST BRANDED-CONTENT TANDEM

December 9, 2020

TORONTO — A group of more than 500 current and former employees of CBC/Radio-Canada who oppose the public broadcaster's Tandem sponsored-content initiative today launched a social media campaign and website where they've published an open letter to Canadians to amplify their efforts to stop paid content on the CBC.

In the letter on the website ([www.stoppaidcontentoncbc.ca](http://www.stoppaidcontentoncbc.ca)), the group of mostly journalists asks for the Canadian public's support in demanding CBC put an end to Tandem, the broadcaster's new marketing division which was [launched in September](#).

The [open letter](#) is signed by current CBC journalists, including Carol Off, Michael Enright and Gillian Findlay, and former employees Peter Mansbridge, Mellissa Fung and past-president Robert Rabinovitch.

"If you value strong, independent, trustworthy journalism please stand with us in saying 'Stop Paid Content on CBC'," reads the letter.

"There are so many problems with Tandem that it's hard to know where to begin," said Hana Gartner, former host of *The Fifth Estate*, in a press release issued today. "The whole point of Tandem is to produce and distribute content that is advertising in disguise. Canadians have a right to a national

public broadcaster that puts their news and information needs ahead of the desires of corporate clients.”

The group also released a December 7th letter from 35 of CBC/Radio-Canada’s most experienced former broadcast executives, producers and reporters to Minister of Canadian Heritage Steven Guilbeault. In the letter, they call on the minister to order the CRTC to investigate Tandem and the production of branded content by the public broadcaster.

On November 13, several of the same former CBC employees [filed a Part 1 application](#) with the CRTC, asking for the Commission to investigate the broadcast of branded programming by CBC. They note in their letter to Minister Guilbeault that the CRTC has still not responded to their request and has not posted their application to its website.

The group also said in its application to the Commission that if the regulator did not choose to initiate a proceeding to investigate Tandem, they wanted the issue of branded content on the CBC to be added to the agenda at the public broadcaster’s licence renewal hearing which starts January 11, 2021.

Having not initially received acknowledgement of its application from the CRTC, the group followed up with several letters to the Commission, which finally resulted in a response from CRTC secretary-general Claude Doucet on November 27. However, in a letter to Doucet on November 28, the group says it’s unclear to them, due to Doucet’s “very succinct responses”, if the Commission is aware of their application’s procedural request. They also reiterated their request for their application to be posted to the Commission’s website.

In asking for Guilbeault’s intervention in the matter, the group’s letter to the minister says: “Approximately five weeks remain until the CRTC’s hearing begins. This leaves little time for the CRTC to amend the procedures for its January 2021 hearing, especially given that the CRTC’s *Rules* establish that the period from 21 December 2020 to 7 January 2021 cannot be considered in calculating time periods.”

The former CBC employees also note the CBC has been offering branded content since before September 2020, when Tandem was officially launched, as confirmed by CBC spokesperson Chuck Thompson, quoted in a [Globe and Mail](#) article in October. The group argues the CBC did not include information about its branded advertising content in its licence renewal application in the fall of 2019, and the public in general didn’t know about CBC’s branded content when they submitted comments about the CBC’s applications before the February 2020 intervention deadline.

In the group’s press release today, Gloria Bishop, former head of CBC Radio, is quoted as saying: “The CBC has never created advertising for clients in such secrecy and with such disregard for the public interest. What’s at stake are the basic principles of transparency and accountability. It’s bad enough that the CBC’s board of directors and its senior management approved branded programming behind closed doors but, even worse, they are now ignoring the thousands of Canadians who have objected to Tandem.”

“The CRTC is denying Canadians their right to a fair process,” added Maureen Brosnahan, former senior national correspondent for CBC News. “We are asking the Minister of Canadian Heritage to intervene to ensure that Canadians’ concerns about CBC’s secretive advertising practices are heard.”

In another move in the fight against Tandem, the [Friends of Canadian Broadcasting](#) revealed today it has obtained a “leaked recording” of remarks made by CBC CEO Catherine Tait to an online town hall with employees, in which Tait says advertising “makes us stronger”.

## 2. Article *The Globe and Mail*, « Hundreds of CBC staff sign open letter against broadcaster's paid-content plans », Simon Houpt, 9 décembre 2020

# Hundreds of CBC staff sign open letter against broadcaster's paid-content plans

SIMON HOUPT

More than 500 current and former CBC staff are appealing directly to the Canadian public to press the corporation to stop selling the type of advertising that is known as paid content, releasing an open letter on Wednesday that calls the activity "insidious" and says it "makes a mockery" of CBC's journalistic reputation.

"In an era of 'fake news,' where misinformation is already rife, it undermines trust. That is dangerous," the letter says.

The letter – and a new website – mark the first time current employees have taken a public stand on the issue, which has roiled the public broadcaster since it unveiled plans in September to pump up its sales of the controversial form of advertising.

"Our job is to cover the news, not be the news. But today we are crossing that line to appeal for your help," the letter reads. "CBC is using its resources to help advertisers trick Canadians."

Signatories include dozens of the network's top on-air talent, among them Anna Maria Tremonti, Michael Enright, Bob McKeown, Gillian Findlay, Mark Kelley, Carol Off, Katie Nicholson and Nahlah Ayed.

On Monday, dozens of former staff, including Adrienne Clarkson, former *Fifth Estate* host Linden MacIntyre and the former editor-in-chief Tony Burman, sent a letter to Minister of Canadian Heritage Steven Guilbeault asking him to order the Canadian Radio-

television and Telecommunications Commission to investigate the CBC's paid-content activities.

In going public with their concerns, some current employees have told *The Globe and Mail* they fear censure under the corporation's Journalistic Standards and Practices guidelines (the JSP), which state: "CBC journalists do not express their own personal opinion because it affects the perception of impartiality and could affect an open and honest exploration of an issue." The JSP also notes employees' obligation to "maintain professional decorum and strive to do nothing that could bring CBC into disrepute."

But in pushing back against the paid-content plan, the journalists are also pointing to the JSP to bolster their case. It states: "Ads should be clearly defined in appearance and placement so that the public does not confuse them with CBC news content."

Paid content, also known as sponsored content, is advertising that is designed to mimic regular editorial coverage. Its use stretches back decades, but it has become more sophisticated in recent years, and it is now common and used by outlets including *The Globe*, *The New York Times* and the BBC. But its growth has prompted concerns that the public is being hoodwinked by sales pitches that appear to be objective journalism.

CBC/Radio-Canada had been selling paid content since 2017, but when it unveiled plans in September to increase such activities under a new initiative called Tandem, hundreds of former staff ob-

jected, saying it put the broadcaster's reputation in danger. The CBC announced it would temporarily halt accepting new contracts while it studied the objections.

Last Thursday, CBC/Radio-Canada president Catherine Tait and the senior management of the English-language news services held a town hall with current staff announcing nine new "guard rails" that they said would ensure lines between editorial and advertising were not blurred.

Staff were not satisfied, prompting them to step up their dissent. The open letter released Wednesday says: "We have appealed to CBC management and the Board of Directors to end CBC Tandem. Apparently they still believe the money they will earn from paid content is worth the damage to our credibility. We do not."

In last week's town hall, Barbara Williams, the CBC's executive vice-president of English-language services, told staff that changes in the advertising landscape meant "we have to do [paid content]" because marketers are looking to buy "a suite" of ads rather than restrict their presence to traditional 30-second TV commercials.

Many of the CBC's paid-content activities are tied in to its entertainment or lifestyle programming. Last winter, the broadcaster's cooking show *Fridge Wars* featured the use of appliances manufactured by the sponsor Whirlpool Canada. As part of the company's sponsorship, the lifestyle section of the CBC's website carried an article about how

Whirlpool's "smart appliances" could come in handy for busy home cooks. The article was labelled "Sponsor Content," and, in the place of a byline, carried the Whirlpool logo.

During the town hall, Ms. Williams told staff one of the new "guard rails" stipulates "there will be no CBC or Radio-Canada journalists or hosts involved in the creation or the presentation of branded content in any way." However, one of the paid-content executions the broadcaster touted as part of the Tandem roll-out in September, a six-part podcast about Athabasca University, was hosted by a co-host and creator of the CBC podcast *The Secret Life of Canada*.

Ms. Tait told staff that the CBC's branded-content activities bring in revenue that supports about 300 jobs – implying tens of millions of dollars – and appealed to them to keep their conversation in-house rather than airing the issue in public "when we have so many people – call them the 'defunders,' or call them the 'haters,' or call them what you will – who would like to see our services trimmed, the scope of our activities cut."

She said that she welcomes "an ongoing and robust conversation, but let's have that conversation together as colleagues and if I dare say, as a family, rather than in the streets. Because in the public square we invite a lot of other noise, and I'm not sure that it's that productive. And I'm not sure that it contributes to the overall well-being of our organization."

A copy of the town hall was shared with *The Globe*.

### 3. Article *La Presse Plus*, « Des journalistes dénoncent leur employeur », Louise Leduc, 10 décembre 2020

## ARTS ET ÊTRE

# DES JOURNALISTES DÉNONCENT LEUR EMPLOYEUR

LOUISE LEDUC  
LA PRESSE

Dans une rare montée au créneau, quelque 500 artisans de Radio-Canada et de la CBC – notamment des journalistes et des producteurs – dénoncent par lettre leur employeur pour ce qu'ils estiment être de la « publicité déguisée ».

Les signataires en ont plus précisément contre Tandem, la nouvelle division marketing de Radio-Canada/CBC qui vend des balados, des vidéos et d'autres types de contenus. Il s'agit de publicités, mais qui, aux yeux des signataires, sont présentées sous une facture beaucoup trop semblable aux reportages journalistiques sur des plateformes de Radio-Canada/CBC.

« C'est insidieux, s'insurgent les auteurs de la lettre. Ce ne sont pas des nouvelles. C'est de la publicité qui prétend être de l'information. »

À une époque « marquée par la désinformation », cette confusion des genres « doit cesser », protestent-ils.

Parmi eux se trouvent d'anciens employés comme Alain Saulnier, qui a été directeur de l'information de Radio-Canada, Raymond Saint-Pierre, ancien correspondant à Moscou, et des employés actuels (certains du Canada anglais, où la contestation a commencé).

Kim Trynacity, présidente de la Guilde canadienne des médias à Radio-Canada/CBC, tient à préciser d'emblée que le syndicat convient parfaitement que « la publicité fait partie intégrante du financement pour le diffuseur public ». « Nous estimons cependant que le service Tandem va trop loin. »

## **DES BALISES JUGÉES INSUFFISANTES**

Devant la grogne, la direction de Radio-Canada/CBC a mis en place de nouvelles balises. La direction nous a transmis ses commentaires par courriel. Il est de fait « impératif que CBC/Radio-Canada protège son intégrité journalistique et qu'il n'y ait pas de confusion entre ce qui relève de la publicité et ce qui relève de l'information, a écrit le porte-parole Leon Mar. C'est exactement pour cela que nous avons des lignes directrices strictes pour assurer cette séparation bien distincte et identifier clairement le contenu de marque ».

La Guilde, qui est en train d'étudier les nouvelles balises, estime qu'« à première vue, elles ne semblent pas suffisantes », note la présidente Kim Trynacity.

Du côté du Syndicat des employés de Radio-Canada à Québec et à Moncton, on n'a pas encore pris position, explique son président Pierre Tousignant, « parce que nous ne représentons pas seulement des journalistes, mais aussi des employés qui ont participé à la création de Tandem ».

À titre personnel, à titre de journaliste, M. Tousignant s'inquiète de cette « confusion des genres qui risque de porter atteinte à la crédibilité de Radio-Canada et du travail journalistique ».

Le débat en cours n'est pas propre à Radio-Canada. Parce que de nombreux médias d'ici et d'ailleurs peinent à trouver des revenus, la façon dont est présentée la publicité (traditionnellement bien distincte de l'information journalistique) donne souvent lieu à des discussions entre les journalistes et les employeurs.

En autres exemples de publicités nouveau genre, le quotidien français *Le Monde* présente sur son site internet des « contenus sponsorisés » identifiés comme tels, avec une typographie légèrement différente des articles journalistiques. Mercredi, l'un de ces « contenus sponsorisés » faisait état du fait que le prince Harry remettrait en question son mariage avec Meghan Markle.

C'est en cliquant sur l'hyperlien que le lecteur constatait clairement que l'article en question n'était pas écrit par un journaliste du *Monde*, mais qu'il était publié sur le site internet d'un tiers.

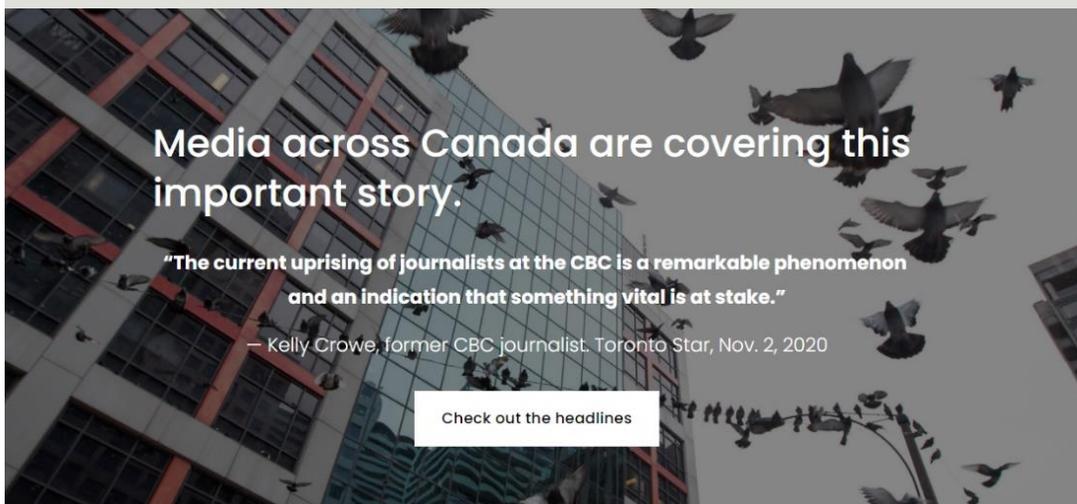
#### 4. Site *Stop Paid Content on CBC*



Standing up against an unprecedented threat.

Respected journalists speak out: watch

“Stop Paid Content on CBC” is a determined effort by CBC journalists past and present to protect the integrity of CBC journalism from ads disguised as news. “Paid content” undermines the trust and confidence Canadians have placed in CBC News for almost 80 years.



## J. Articles concernant la réponse du CRTC à la contestation de TANDEM et sur le climat interne de CBC/Radio-Canada.

### CONTEXTE

Le CRTC a accepté d'aborder le service Tandem dans le cadre du renouvellement des licences de CBC/Radio-Canada. Le groupe d'anciens employés pourra témoigner lors des audiences publiques. Linden MacIntyre, ancienne présentatrice de l'émission *The Fifth Estate* sur CBC, décrit le climat de « guerre civile » au sein de la CBC causé par la controverse du service TANDEM.

- **J.1.** Article *National Post*, « CRTC allows question on CBC's Tandem », Christopher Nardi, 11 décembre
- **J.2.** Article *The Globe and Mail*, « A civil war is erupting at the CBC », Linden MacIntyre, 11 décembre 2020

### 1. Article *National Post*, « CRTC allows question on CBC's Tandem », Christopher Nardi, 11 décembre 2020

## CRTC allows questions on CBC's Tandem

### BRANDED CONTENT

CHRISTOPHER NARDI

OTTAWA • Canada's broadcasting regulator says it will allow questions on CBC's new branded content division during regulatory hearings scheduled for next month, but stopped short of saying it would investigate the issue specifically.

"This is excellent news. We're delighted that the issue has now reached the level where the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission has to acknowledge it," commented Jeffrey Dvorkin, former managing editor of CBC Radio.

Dvorkin is one of many current and former CBC and Société Radio-Canada (SRC)

employees, as well as public broadcasting advocates, pushing to get the CRTC to "investigate" the public broadcaster's new controversial branded content division, Tandem.

They wanted the study to be done as part of hearings for the renewal of CBC/Radio-Canada's broadcasting license slated to begin next month. Critics complain that Tandem, which was initially announced last September, was not part of the broadcaster's original licence renewal application earlier in 2019.

Branded content is an advertisement designed to appear in a style very similar to editorial content produced by a media outlet. It is generally identified as "paid content" or "sponsored content" and has existed for years in private media such as *National Post*, the *Globe and Mail* and *New York Times*.

On Thursday, the CRTC's Secretary General Claude Doucet published a note partially acquiescing to advocates' demands. In short, he said groups already slated to intervene during the hearings would be allowed to make oral and written arguments about Tandem and branded content.

Of course, the Crown

corporation would also be allowed to reply to comments on Tandem, and the Commission "may choose to question the CBC/SRC further at the oral phase of the public hearing."

Advocacy group Friends of Canadian Broadcasting also applauded the CRTC's decision, saying it would allow the group to better address the "aggressive pursuit to commercialize CBC's digital platforms."

"We will now be adding Tandem to the list of unsavoury measures that CBC management is pursuing to chase profit. We want to keep the CBC as a public good, and that means scrapping Tandem," said executive director Daniel Bernhard.

A CBC spokesperson declined to comment on the CRTC's decision.

In response to initial backlash at Tandem's launch in September, CBC executives suspended the project before launching it again last week with nine new "guidelines" it says will better distinguish branded content from news.

But that has not quelled critics' concerns, and pressure has been mounting against the public broadcaster.

*National Post*

2. Article *The Globe and Mail*, « A civil war is erupting at the CBC », Linden MacIntyre, 11 décembre 2020

# A civil war is erupting at the CBC

The public broadcaster's plan to 'leverage' the credibility of its journalism for money crosses an ethical red line

LINDEN MACINTYRE

OPINION

Former host of the CBC's *The Fifth Estate*

There is a struggle under way within the Canadian Broadcasting Corp., and it's becoming perilous to careers and to personal and professional relationships – as well as, in the end, the future of the public broadcaster.

It's become a struggle for the soul of a venerable public institution. Hundreds of employees and ex-employees are at war with their former supervisors, bosses, their employer, even friends on an issue that, if unchecked, could compromise the corporation's journalistic credibility – a priceless asset, nurtured and financed by many generations of Canadians.

For as long as I can remember, there has been debate about how to pay the bills for as daunting an enterprise as operating the CBC.

Public funding has always been inconsistent and vulnerable, which makes the corporation hard to manage. Politicians, who control the public purse,

seem to like the CBC only when it makes them feel good. The solution has been a mix of public money and commercial revenue. It has never been easy, and it has never been enough.

Commercial advertising on CBC Television has been contentious from the outset. Why the need for ads when there is public funding? But the current uproar goes far deeper than a debate about the legitimacy of advertising in a public-service medium.

It started when the corporation crossed what many journalists consider an ethical red line: moving well beyond old-fashioned advertising into a money-making scheme called sponsored content. Such content allows clients to pay the corporation to run commercial propaganda that might easily be mistaken for objective information, even journalism. To explicitly declare upfront the true nature of the so-called "branded content" would defeat the purpose of the sponsorship – and therein lies the peril of deception, deliberate or otherwise.

To make this bad idea worse, a CBC initiative called Tandem – another word for partnership – was explicitly designed to "leverage the credibility of our network," according to a CBC press release, a notion that was bound to raise hackles in a profession that has traditionally demanded unquestioned independence from the business side of media.

The venture into this grey area has generated more passion in the ranks than any issue I recall from my 38 years working for the

CBC. More than 500 employees of past and present have signed a petition to stop the project before the "leveraging" of the journalistic prestige of the CBC does fatal damage to the integrity that now seems to be a selling point for the commercial marketplace.

Top management – shocked by the passions of reporters including many of its most familiar personalities, plus two past presidents of the CBC – seemed to make some significant concessions. No journalists will be required to prostitute themselves, they said. Efforts will be made to prevent confusion about what is journalism and what is propaganda.

But the project will go ahead. The corporation needs the money. That the federal government has recently been urged by an advisory panel to make the CBC "a public media institution with a singular focus on serving the public rather than a commercial purpose" – in short, an ad-free zone – seems not to be of reassurance to corporation management.

Appeals to the CBC's board of directors have been ignored. While calling for submissions leading up to the CBC's licence renewal in 2021, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission brushed aside the principled concerns of CBC journalists who asked for a hearing on the Tandem issue.

It seems that, among the mandarins in Ottawa, there is a not-unreasonable expectation that the disgruntlement of journalists

will inevitably fade away, like most of the controversies we report on.

The responses from senior CBC managers during this uprising have been, at best, paternalistic. The offer of superficial concessions, in the absence of any willingness to back away from a bad idea that is the antithesis of journalism, inevitably boils down to condescension.

No matter what the CBC might do to mitigate the peril of confusion in the minds of viewers, listeners and online readers about what is information and what is commerce, the journalists are left to grapple with Tandem's admitted goal of "leveraging our network's credibility" for mercenary reasons.

The credibility of "our network" is embedded in "our" journalism.

For many, the Tandem project raises the unfortunate if unintended spectacle of parents leveraging virtue for a transaction that will, in the long run, mortify the family.

The CBC will be diminished by this project. Indeed, anything that threatens to tarnish the reputation of its journalism will only erode the rationale for continuing an expensive but essential public service for a scattered population in a vast geography.

K. Article *National Post*, « CBC Watch: Even its own people think the swollen public broadcaster has gone too far this time », *National Post Comment*, 10 décembre 2020

## CBC Watch: Even its own people think the swollen public broadcaster has gone too far this time

*The controversy over a branded-content plan shows that the CBC is trying to be too many things to too many people*

Author of the article:

**National Post**

Publishing date:

Dec 10, 2020 • Last Updated 1 day ago • 4 minute read

***Who’s watching the CBC? Not too many Canadians, going by ratings. But someone has to keep an eye on what antics our publicly funded broadcaster gets up to. That’s why the National Post is reviving CBC Watch, an occasional feature, and long-time reader favourite.***

The CBC just can’t catch a break. Here it is, with thousands of employees rising every morning to implement its ambitious mandate, spending billions of dollars to “be predominantly and distinctly Canadian,” striving “to be equivalent quality in French and English,” etc. Then along comes a Sen. Leo Housakos with some sobering second thought, claiming that all this effort is actually a “make work project.”

Housakos’ remarks last Wednesday were in reaction to the precipitous drop in CBC’s TV ad revenue — 19 per cent over a six-month period this year. For a normal enterprise, this would be a wake-up call, a signal that something was seriously amiss, requiring real action. Mothercorp’s CEO has stated that a “financial contingency plan” has been implemented, so stay tuned.

Whether the plan will meaningfully shrink CBC’s massive footprint remains to be seen. Thus far, its “business model” has amounted to being all things to all people. This can be challenging, even for CBC, and of course expensive.

With modern media content so varied and ubiquitous, it’s fair to ask how much of it — if any — CBC should be providing. There are after all so many privately owned Canadian options. In answer to this question, CBC seemingly wants to do everything.

So if there’s a local a.m. “wake up” or “drive home” show, there has to be a CBC one. Three local, private TV weathermen are not enough. There has to be another one from CBC, waving at the weather map in a distinctively Canadian way. Is the private traffic helicopter not sufficiently Canadian? What about the ads for erectile dysfunction treatments?

And in terms of new media, CBC clearly hasn’t met one it doesn’t like. One look at its website reveals this. Like an old, soft onion, you can peel back layer after layer revealing one swollen service after another.

Want to start a podcast? Too bad for the young kid in her basement trying to create and monetize content, building viewership, while living from one small Patreon donation to the next. CBC can deploy a creative SWAT team to crush her like a bug. At last count, CBC had over 100 podcasts and brags of 19 million downloads a month. One is called “This is not a Drake Podcast.” Apparently, it’s not about Drake.

Watch out satellite radio; CBC is there, “on demand.” Even making a playlist may be a waste of time because the CBC has already done it for you. CBC Listen has scores of genres at your fingertips

And if you’re tired of Netflix, there is always CBC Gem. Its basic content is free, or you can upgrade to “premium” for \$4.99 per month. Of course, this is what might be called “government-free,” not “free-free.” Only government could call something that costs \$1.3 billion per year “free.”

If you’re in advertising or marketing — beware. CBC just revived plans to provide comprehensive branding and marketing services. CBC Tandem is to be CBC’s “media solutions branded content service.” It purports to “combine your brand’s subject expertise with our credibility and experience in digital, audio and TV production to create intelligently designed multi-platform branded content.” In other words, the CBC brass are leveraging a taxpayer-funded corporation to compete with private agencies.

Ironically, the rollout of Tandem was delayed due to concerns expressed by Mothercorp’s unions. They are apparently worried that the new service could “impact CBC’s work and reputation,” and want unambiguous “separation of news and commercial interests.” Even CBC luminaries like Peter Mansbridge, Linden MacIntyre and Gillian Findlay, as well as vice-regal alum Adrienne Clarkson, have expressed “grave concerns” about Tandem’s launch.

When the rollout was paused a CBC spokesman was quoted as saying that this was simply the CBC living up to the promise of “getting it right.” Now it appears that the effort will proceed, warts and all. In a news release Thursday, the corporation stated that “the public’s trust is (its) most precious asset.” It pledged to “ensure ... no confusion among the public between ... journalism and commercial advertising on (its) platforms.” Well, we can all rest easy now, except perhaps you people in the ad biz — you get to be undercut by your own tax dollars.

CBC is clearly trying to do more with more, and even this analysis only begins to describe its ambitious reach. But to what end? A case can be made for subsidizing innovation, despite the obvious dilemma of picking winners and losers. CBC’s plan appears to be the opposite of fostering innovation. It seems primarily to involve observing new trends, trails blazed by innovators, then using tax dollars to compete with them and put them out of business. To be fair, even the cloth-eared dirigistes in the Trudeau government have clued into this. But no surprise, their solution has been to throw around even more tax dollars, this time at private media.

There are many calls these days for “resets” and grand, visionary government. Grand visions are rarely in short supply when there is generous access to public funds. Well, let’s contemplate a new one for public broadcasting.

As CBC was created (as the CRBC) in 1932, how about “zero by ’32”? That has a certain ring to it. Rather than have the state broadcaster expand into every new niche industry creates, only to use our taxes to smother the innovators, how about the opposite? Let freedom reign.

National Post

L. Article *The Globe and Mail*, « It's not a civil war that threatens the CBC. It's complacency », Konrad Yakabuski, 12 décembre 2020

## It's not a civil war that threatens the CBC. It's complacency

KONRAD  
YAKABUSKI

■ OPINION



Canada's public broadcaster is in the throes of a civil war. This is a fight between the good and the grubby – between those risking their careers to protect the CBC's soul and those who would sell it on a whim in exchange for incremental digital advertising dollars. The very survival of a cherished national institution is at stake. Whose side are you on?

You might think this sounds like the plot for a CBC pilot that aims to check off as many Canadian-content boxes as possible, no matter how big of a stretch. In truth, the above describes the real-life drama playing out within the walls of the public broadcaster over a decision by senior executives to accelerate a push into paid content on its digital platforms.

More than 500 current and former CBC staffers, including on-air journalists Carol Off and Gillian Findlay, have signed an open letter calling on Canadians to stand with them as they put pressure on management to abandon an "insidious" initiative that "makes a mockery" of the broadcaster's hard-won reputation for journalistic integrity. They argue that Canadians could confuse the paid content on CBC websites and podcasts with its journalistic of-

ferings.

"We have appealed to CBC management and the board of directors to end 'paid content' and Tandem," the letter says, referring to the name of the digital advertising initiative. "Apparently they still believe the money to be earned is worth the damage to our credibility. We do not."

Exhibit A in this affair consists of an article on Whirlpool's "smart appliances" that appeared in the life section of the broadcaster's website while the appliance manufacturer served as the main sponsor of *Fridge Wars*. This show ran on the CBC's main network earlier this year and can currently be streamed online.

CBC president Catherine Tait and the board of directors thought they addressed the concerns of disgruntled employees last month when they established strict parameters for Tandem. They insisted paid content will not be allowed on other CBC platforms, such as television or radio, and that "branded content will not appear on national news digital pages."

There are good reasons to worry about the lengths to which CBC management seems willing to go to bring in ad dollars as it seeks to sustain a bloated organizational structure and compete with popular private broadcasters. But it is not the journalistic integrity of CBC news programming that is threatened by initiatives such as Tandem.

Indeed, Canadians should wor-

ry a lot less about a CBC that runs online paid content in connection with a show such as *Fridge Wars* than a CBC that runs a show such as *Fridge Wars* in the first place. CBC promotional material describes it as a show that "pits two top Canadian chefs against one another with a challenge to create extraordinary meals using only the ingredients taken from the ordinary fridges of Canadian families."

Enough said.

Yet, *Fridge Wars*, like *Family Feud Canada*, demonstrates the CBC's continued slide into irrelevance. The CBC decided long ago that Canadians do not want to be challenged and that all programming must be kept light and breezy. Not that this dumbing down has made the CBC a ratings success; not a single CBC show made the weekly Top 30 programs in October or November, according to Numeris.

As for the idea that the CBC is an incubator for Canadian talent, the best domestic-made dramatic programming is not to be found on the public broadcaster. CTV's *Cardinal* and *Transplant* are just two examples of how the CBC is consistently outdone in this department.

As for CBC news programming, management's first reflex when the COVID-19 pandemic hit was to cancel local news broadcasts to save money. It was forced to reinstate them when an uproar ensued. But the incident spoke volumes about the broadcaster's pri-

orities.

With annual government funding of \$1.2-billion and more than \$500-million mainly from advertising and subscriber fees, the CBC has vastly more news-gathering resources than any other media organization in Canada. Yet, *The National*, arguably the most esteemed news franchise in Canadian broadcasting history, has been reduced to a mixture of service journalism, politically correct drivel and the awkward banter of its mismatched hosts.

Heritage Minister Steven Guilbeault copped out last month in tabling long-awaited amendments to the Broadcasting Act that left the CBC's mandate untouched. This gives CBC top brass essentially free rein to interpret the mandate to "inform, enlighten and entertain" Canadians as they see fit, with likely the same embarrassing results.

When was the last time you were enlightened by anything you watched on the CBC, *The Nature of Things* excepted? It is not a civil war that threatens the CBC. It is the complacency of the people who run it. Their political overlords seem to prefer it that way.

## Radio-Canada invitée à respecter son mandat



Rédaction Laval

**Un sondage Léger révèle que 78% des Québécoises et des Québécois sont favorables à la complémentarité des chaînes de télévision publiques et privées.**

Mandaté par le Groupe TVA, l'étude survient à la suite du dépôt du projet de loi visant à moderniser la *Loi sur la radiodiffusion*.

Dans cette optique d'une complémentarité des mandats pour l'intérêt public, plus de 50% des Québécoises et des Québécois sont d'avis que les chaînes publiques de Radio-Canada et de CBC doivent diffuser plus de documentaires, de journalisme d'enquête, de nouvelles locales et internationales et de productions québécoises et canadiennes que leurs homologues au privé.

### **Contenu payant**

L'autre constat du sondage est que l'offre de contenus payants est jugée inacceptable par la population du Québec.

Effectivement, 93% des personnes sondées considèrent que CBC/Radio-Canada devrait être totalement transparente sur la gestion financière de ses activités et l'utilisation des fonds publics.

C'est également 74% des personnes sondées trouvent inacceptable que la chaîne publique financé par l'État, Radio-Canada, offre du contenu payant réservé aux abonnés via son service Tou.tv Extra.

«Il est fondamental que les diffuseurs publics et privés apportent une contribution distincte et complémentaire afin de continuer à innover et de préserver l'auditoire québécois, a mentionné France Lauzière, présidente et chef de la direction de Groupe TVA et chef du contenu de Québecor Contenu, via communiqué. Il est donc important de traiter de cette question et d'agir sans délai, au bénéfice de notre système de radiodiffusion et des téléspectateurs d'ici.»

À la lumière de ce sondage, Québecor est d'avis que CBC/Radio-Canada doit mettre fin à ses pratiques anticoncurrentielles, telles que le dumping publicitaire, la surenchère en acquisition de contenus et son nouveau service de marketing de contenu aux visées commerciales, Tandem.

Dès le 11 janvier 2021, le Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes (CRTC) tiendra des audiences sur le renouvellement des licences de CBC/Radio-Canada. (C.R.)

# P.E.I. senator to push for ban of CBC umbrella

IT IS ADRIFT

Bill amendments would 'prevent' new content

CHRISTOPHER NARDI

OTTAWA • Irked by recent decisions by CBC/Radio-Canada management, a Canadian senator plans to push for legislative changes that would ban the use of branded content by the public broadcaster.

Prince Edward Island Senator Percy Downe is frustrated. Since the beginning of the pandemic, the veteran parliamentarian has seen CBC management cut some local dinnertime news broadcasts, and then announce a controversial new plan for a branded content division starting this fall.

"I certainly get a sense that the CBC is adrift," the senator explained. "The use of branded content creates the impression that although CBC can't be bought and paid for, they certainly can be rented."

"And at the beginning of the pandemic, they an-

nounced the local TV newscast would be cancelled all across Canada. It's amazing decision," he added. "In this case, it really was a case of life and death."

Downe says he will be proposing a series of amendments to Bill C-10, which the Liberals proposed last month to update the laws governing broadcasting and the powers given to the industry's regulator, when it arrives in the Senate early next year.

The senator says the changes he will push would "prevent" both the use of sponsored content by the public broadcaster, as well as any future cancellations of local supertime newscasts in the future.

"It's a Crown corporation, so we can anticipate and expect a certain level of service. And then that's not there, then look to the government to fix it," said the senator, especially "given the substantial funding CBC received from Canadians."

CBC/Radio-Canada management has come under increasing fire recently from staff (both current and former) and critics since it announced a new advertisement division focused on branded (or sponsored) content called Tandem.

Branded content is an

advertisement that is presented similarly to regular editorial content.

It is generally identified as "paid" or "sponsored content" and is increasingly popular in private media such as National Post, the Globe and Mail and the New York Times.

CBC and Radio-Canada management have argued that a pivot to branded content is necessary because of "huge financial pressures" caused by the significant drop in advertisement revenue in the media industry.

They've also touted new "guidelines" for Tandem put in place since an initial uproar in September that they say "strengthen and clarify the boundaries between our journalistic content and advertising."

But opponents to Tandem say such advertisement, which they've described as "incredibly insidious" and "unsavoury," have no place in a public broadcaster who receives over \$1.2 billion in public funding every year.

In an open letter published online last week, a group of over 500 current and former CBC/Radio-Canada staff urged management to abandon any plans to pursue branded content.

"Its purpose is to sell cor-

porations the opportunity to disguise their advertising as our journalism. CBC is using its resources to help advertisers trick Canadians. They call what they produce 'paid content.' And it's insidious," the letter reads. "We believe strongly it must stop."

A petition posted online by advocacy group Friends of Public Broadcasting against CBC's Tandem had also accumulated over 15,000 signatures as of late last week.

In response to repeated demands by critics of Tandem, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) also announced last Friday it would allow questions on CBC's new branded content division during regulatory hearings scheduled for next month.

*National Post*  
cnardi@postmedia.com

**ALTHOUGH  
CBC CAN'T BE  
BOUGHT AND  
PAID FOR, THEY  
CERTAINLY  
CAN BE  
RENTED.**

O. Article *Le Journal de Montréal*, « Le fédéral court après sa queue », Guy Fournier, 17 décembre 2020



## Le fédéral court après sa queue

**Le gouvernement fédéral a tellement tergiversé en matière de radiodiffusion et de télécommunication qu'il n'arrive plus à rattraper son retard.**

Le projet de loi C-10 qui doit mettre sous la houlette du CRTC tous les services par contournement (Netflix, Disney+, illico, Crave, etc.) est encore loin d'avoir force de loi. Il devait être présenté en 2e lecture avant l'ajournement des Communes. Poussé au pied du mur par un ukase de la Cour suprême, le gouvernement l'a mis de côté pour amender d'urgence la loi de l'aide à mourir.

La Chambre recommencera à siéger le 25 janvier. Après son adoption en 2e lecture, le projet de loi sera étudié par le Comité du patrimoine avant de retourner aux Communes pour son adoption en 3e lecture. Le Sénat interviendra ensuite avant que la loi ne reçoive la sanction royale. À moins que des élections ne soient déclenchées entre-temps!

Le CRTC, auquel C-10 donne-

ra des pouvoirs plus étendus, ne pourra les exercer du jour au lendemain. Il devra d'abord consulter l'industrie et les associations avant de finaliser son nouvel arsenal de règles et de pénalités. Ce CRTC « nouveau » devrait être opérationnel en 2022. Peut-être juste en 2023.

### A-T-ON OUBLIÉ RADIO-CANADA ?

Le 1er janvier 2022, c'est la limite que s'est fixée la ministre des Finances Chrystia Freeland pour imposer les géants du numérique, si les pays de l'OCDE ne se sont pas encore entendus. Son prédécesseur, Bill Morneau, avait déclaré que l'OCDE en viendrait à un accord d'ici à la fin de cette année. Pas facile de mettre 37 pays d'accord. Il y a donc de grosses chances que madame Freeland doive exécuter sa promesse.

Mijotant au moins deux autres projets de loi, l'un sur les discours haineux en ligne et l'autre sur la rémunération des médias dont Google et Facebook exploitent le contenu, le ministre Steven Guilbeault semble avoir oublié Radio-Canada.

Le rapport Yale est pourtant explicite. Il faut que le gouvernement précise le mandat du diffuseur public et qu'il revise le processus de nomination de ses administrateurs et du PDG. Yale recommande aussi que Radio-Canada se défasse d'ici à cinq ans de toutes ses activités publicitaires en commençant par ses émissions de nouvelles. Mais le diffuseur public aura besoin de crédits compensatoires de 400 à 500 millions \$ par an!

### TANDEM, ET QUOI EN SUITE ?

Le gouvernement étant en situation minoritaire, je le vois mal augmenter les crédits d'un diffuseur que les conservateurs ne portent pas dans leur cœur. La crise que provoque dans le propre personnel de Radio-Canada la création de Tandem, ce service de promotion déguisée, n'en démontre pas moins que le gouvernement doit absolument statuer sur les limites qu'il faut imposer au diffuseur public.

Radio-Canada doit rendre compte de certaines de ses activités au CRTC à chaque renouvellement de ses licences. Elles viennent à échéance dans quelques mois. Mais Radio-Canada a la partie belle en ce qui concerne ses services numériques. Ceux-ci ne sont assujettis pour l'instant à aucune obligation. Rien n'empêche alors le diffuseur public de nous facturer pour CBC Gem et tout.tv extra, en même temps qu'il dépense des millions pour occuper de nouveaux marchés (comme celui des balades), au détriment du secteur privé.

Si Steven Guilbeault arrive à mener à bien tous ces dossiers, je propose qu'on rebaptise la tour du CN en son nom. Cet exploit vaudra au moins cent fois celui qu'il a réussi en l'escaladant.

## AFFAIRES

# RADIO-CANADA TIENT À TANDEM ET À L'EXTRA D'ICI TOU.TV

VINCENT BROUSSEAU-POULIOT  
LA PRESSE

Malgré les critiques, Radio-Canada tient à conserver son service publicitaire de contenu de marques Tandem et son service d'abonnement payant Extra d'ICI Tou.tv.

Tandem, un service publicitaire qui propose des balados, des vidéos et d'autres types de contenus publicitaires sur les plateformes numériques de Radio-Canada, est particulièrement critiqué depuis plusieurs semaines. En décembre, 500 artisans et ex-artisans de Radio-Canada et CBC ont demandé son abolition. Devant le Conseil de la radiodiffusion et des télécommunications canadiennes (CRTC), l'organisme Les Amis de la radiodiffusion et Québecor demandent aussi l'abolition de Tandem (Québecor demande le retrait de la publicité à Radio-Canada).

CBC/Radio-Canada, qui a révisé en décembre les lignes directrices de Tandem, n'a pas l'intention d'abandonner son service de publicité de contenu.

« [Ce type de publicité] fait partie de la boîte à outils que les annonceurs utilisent aujourd'hui pour rejoindre les consommateurs. Nous offrons ce genre de publicité depuis 2016. Nous avons été un peu surpris par ce tollé, parce que presque tous les organismes de presse respectés comme la BBC, France Télévisions, le New York Times, The Globe and Mail, La Presse ont accepté ce type de publicité. Les médias ont été bouleversés par la technologie. Il y a

une énorme fragmentation des auditoires. Les annonceurs utilisent donc plusieurs outils pour rejoindre leur public [dont le contenu de marque sur les plateformes numériques] », a dit Catherine Tait, PDG de CBC/Radio-Canada, en entrevue avec La Presse.

Radio-Canada veut toutefois s'assurer que la distinction soit claire entre le contenu journalistique et le contenu publicitaire (Tandem) sur ses plateformes numériques. La société d'État indique avoir revu les lignes directrices de Tandem le mois dernier pour s'en assurer.

« Il faut protéger l'intégrité journalistique à CBC/Radio-Canada, nous sommes 100 % d'accord. Nous avons des lignes directrices très strictes, beaucoup plus exigeantes que celles de nos collègues dans les médias canadiens. On accepte que le diffuseur public devrait avoir des normes plus élevées que le reste du système. »

— Catherine Tait, PDG de CBC/Radio-Canada

Le contenu publicitaire de Tandem préoccupe la directrice générale de l'information de Radio-Canada, Luce Julien. « Dans l'absolu, bien sûr que je préférerais ne pas avoir de publicité de contenu de marques. Est-ce qu'on peut baliser ce type de publicité ? C'est à voir. Ce qui est fondamental, c'est qu'il n'y ait pas de confusion, il faut que ce soit clair pour le citoyen que c'est de la publicité. [...] Il ne faut surtout pas mélanger le contenu journalistique [et le] contenu publicitaire », a dit Mme Julien en entrevue à la radio de Radio-Canada la semaine dernière.

## « UN MODÈLE D'AFFAIRES MIXTE »

Au cours des trois prochaines semaines, Radio-Canada se présente devant le CRTC afin que l'organisme réglementaire détermine ses conditions de licence pour les prochaines années.

Au nombre des sujets qui seront débattus : le diffuseur public peut-il continuer d'offrir son service payant, l'Extra d'ICI Tou.tv?

Québecor demande l'abolition de l'Extra d'ICI Tou.tv, prétextant que ce service payant n'est pas dans le mandat du diffuseur public. « Les Canadiens qui s'abonnent à Tou.tv Extra se retrouvent à payer deux fois le contenu [avec le financement public de Radio-Canada et avec leur abonnement] », écrit Québecor au CRTC.

Radio-Canada estime au contraire qu'elle doit continuer de pouvoir offrir l'Extra d'ICI Tou.tv - comme elle exploite déjà des chaînes spécialisées à la télé (RDI, CBC News Network, ICI ARTV, ICI Explora).

« Nous avons toujours un modèle d'affaires mixte [fonds publics et revenus commerciaux], explique Catherine Tait, PDG de CBC/Radio-Canada. Nos homologues dans d'autres pays comme France Télévisions et la BBC ont tous des revenus commerciaux. On sait très bien que ça va continuer [les revenus commerciaux], on ne peut pas dépendre seulement des fonds publics. On essaie de trouver des moyens de gagner nos revenus commerciaux. Chaque dollar gagné est réinvesti. On ne paie pas des

actionnaires. Nos actionnaires, c'est le public canadien. Si on gagne 1 \$ sur un abonnement à l'Extra d'ICI Tou.tv, c'est pour acheter encore plus de contenu canadien, pour rendre plus de services.»

En 2018-2019, 71 % des revenus de Radio-Canada provenaient de fonds publics (1,2 milliard) et 29 %, de revenus commerciaux (490 millions, dont 249 millions en publicité et 124 millions en revenus d'abonnement).

# MARCHÉ PUBLICITAIRE : *DUMPING* ET CONCURRENCE DÉLOYALE

## Q. Présentation : Saine concurrence ou pratique déloyale ?

### CONTEXTE

Les diapositives ci-dessous résument les tactiques de ventes publicitaires de la Société Radio-Canada qui seront détaillées davantage dans les prochaines pages. Elles démontrent que le diffuseur public attire les annonceurs en se livrant à du *dumping* du prix de ses espaces publicitaires.

**Types d'achats**

<p><b>COÛT PAR MILLE (CPM)</b> Coût pour rejoindre mille impressions</p> $\text{CPM} = \frac{\text{COÛT PAR OCCASION}}{\text{AUDITOIRE}} \times 1\,000$ <p>Pour les ventes <b>RÉSEAUX</b> et les chaînes spécialisées, les ventes sont négociées en CPM (impressions)</p>	<p><b>COÛT PAR POINT (CPP)</b> Coût pour rejoindre 1% de la population</p> $\text{CPP} = \frac{\text{COÛT PAR OCCASION}}{\text{COTE}}$ <p>Pour les marchés sélectifs tels que celui de <b>QUÉBEC</b>, les ventes sont négociées en CPP (PEBs)</p>
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### D'autres tactiques prédatrices

Ajout bonification garantie

Ajout d'invendus à bas prix

Ventes de feu (mars-période forte demande)

Soutien de la radio non-commerciale dans les partenariats

Envoi d'infolettres agressives et fallacieuses

Extension de paiement à 120 jours

### Quelles sont les conséquences?

- ⇓ Pertes de revenus directs
- ⇓ Pertes de revenus indirects: ces tactiques ont limité nos hausses de tarification dans le marché de Québec malgré des taux d'occupation très élevés (limitation du Yield)
- ⇓ La crise de la Covid nous a obligés à réajuster notre tarification à la baisse à des tarifs non-rentables
- ⇓ Crédibilité & intégrité: l'écart de prix trop important a amené certains clients locaux à se sentir floués

## R. Situations inhabituelles sur le marché publicitaire – 23 juillet 2020

### CONTEXTE

La Société Radio-Canada s'est livrée à des pratiques de *dumping* sur le marché publicitaire, en offrant des escomptes totalement hors des normes du marché à des annonceurs. Le tableau ci-dessous catalogue les multiples preuves de ces pratiques anticoncurrentielles.

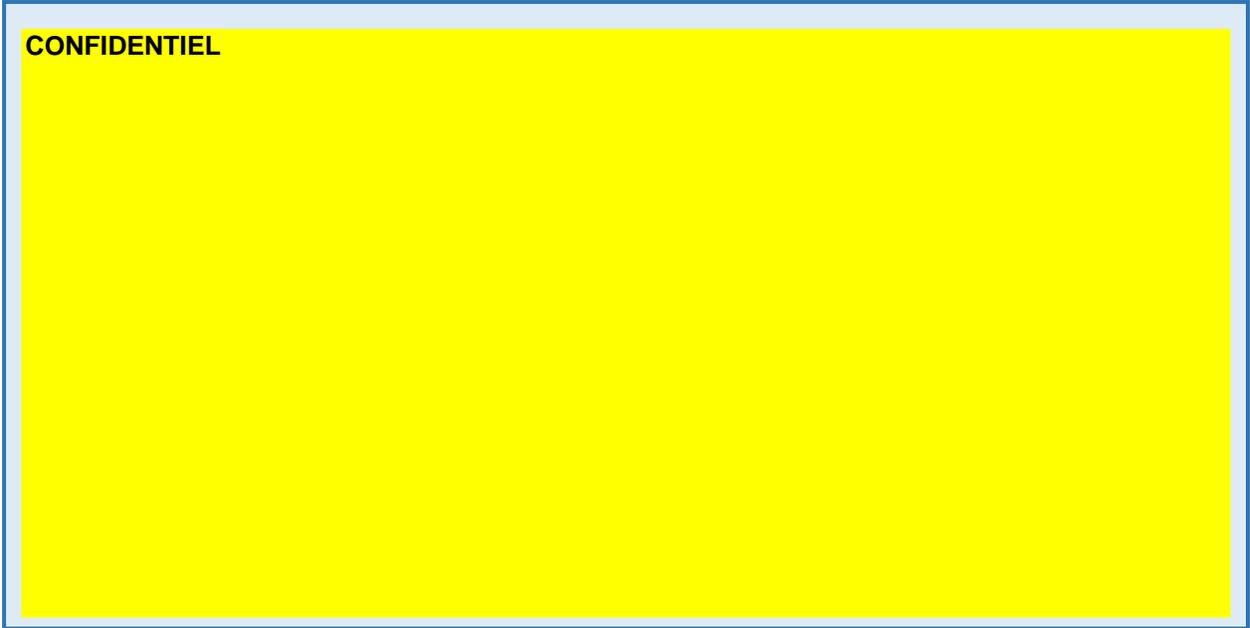
CPP : Coût par point | Coût pour rejoindre 1 % de la population

CPM : Coût par minute | Formule : (Coût par occasion/auditoire) x 1 000

	Annonces		
	CONFIDENTIEL	CONFIDENTIEL	CONFIDENTIEL
Comparaison des offres de Radio-Canada et de Groupe TVA	CONFIDENTIEL	CONFIDENTIEL	CONFIDENTIEL

**S. Publicité #CONFIDENTIEL# : preuve de l'offre de la Société Radio-Canada à l'annonceur**

**CONTEXTE**



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T. Publicité #CONFIDENTIEL# : preuve de l'offre de la Société Radio-Canada à l'annonceur

CONTEXTE

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## U. Publicité sur l'application OHdio

### CONTEXTE

OHdio est une application mobile de la Société Radio-Canada qui permet aux utilisateurs d'écouter des émissions d'ICI Première, ICI Musique (en direct et en rattrapage) et ICI Musique Classique, des balados et des livres audios.

La Société Radio-Canada diffuse de la publicité sur cette application au cours d'émissions déjà diffusées à la radio et qui ne devraient pas inclure de publicités en vertu de ses conditions de licence. La société d'État fait donc indirectement ce qu'elle ne devrait pas faire directement. Le diffuseur public rivalise également avec le secteur privé pour l'obtention de droits de diffusion des balados.

### **Éléments soulevés dans l'intervention de Québecor Média soumise au CRTC dans le cadre de l'avis de consultation de radiodiffusion CRTC 2019-379-3, *Renseignements additionnels ajoutés au dossier***

- Alors que les stations de radio du diffuseur public ne devraient pas vendre de la publicité en vertu de ses conditions de licences, la SRC aurait utilisé lesdites stations en vue d'obtenir le compte de certains annonceurs importants dans le domaine de l'événementiel, du spectacle et du tourisme. Il est donc juste de dire que la SRC s'adonne à faire indirectement ce qu'elle ne peut plus faire directement, et ce, en contournant la réglementation en place.
- La SRC profite déjà de son nouveau service de radio numérique OHdio pour vendre de la publicité sur des émissions qui ont déjà été diffusées sur ses stations de radio et qui ne devraient pas inclure de la publicité en vertu des conditions de licences de la SRC.
- À titre d'exemple, des publicités du gouvernement du Québec, d'IKEA, d'Hydro-Québec et d'Odysée ont été diffusées sur OHdio le 8 juillet 2020 (**les enregistrements de ces publicités seront déposés en annexe**).
- La SRC fait, encore une fois, indirectement ce qu'elle ne peut pas faire directement avec ses stations de radio, et ce, en raison des CDL auxquelles elle est assujettie depuis 2016.
- La SRC rivalise avec les autres services de radio numérique, comme QUB radio, pour l'obtention des droits de diffusion de balados pour son service OHdio et, outre cela, ne prend même pas la peine de négocier les prix élevés demandés par les boîtes de production pour l'obtention de ces droits, ce qui entraîne forcément un déséquilibre des prix dans le marché.
- Nous craignons donc que la SRC adopte des pratiques toutes aussi anticoncurrentielles en utilisant davantage à l'avenir ses services numériques pour concurrencer les radiodiffuseurs privés en matière de ventes publicitaires.

# PROGRAMMATION : SURENCHÈRE, CONTENU ÉTRANGER ET CONDITON RESTRICTIVE

## NOTE

Grâce aux crédits parlementaires, la Société Radio-Canada bénéficie de revenus considérables qui ne dépendent pas de sa rentabilité, comme radiodiffuseurs privés. Le diffuseur public utilise ce confort financier pour faire de la surenchère et de l'acquisition de contenus hors de son mandat (productions étrangères).

La négociation d'ententes de diffusion étant confidentielle, l'accès aux preuves démontrant les multiples surenchères de la Société Radio-Canada est restreint. Cependant, au regard de l'augmentation des prix d'acquisition auquel fait face Groupe TVA, il ne fait aucun doute que la Société Radio-Canada nuit au secteur privé.

## V. Récapitulatif des émissions étrangères et hors mandat

### CONTEXTE

La Société Radio-Canada a acheté les droits de diffusion des émissions listées ci-dessous. Ces productions étrangères sont à l'extérieur du mandat du diffuseur public. En diffusant de plus en plus de productions étrangères, la Société Radio-Canada se positionne comme un concurrent direct des télédiffuseurs privés.

- *Why Women Kill*. Série premium offerte sur la chaîne principale et sur TOU.TV Extra.
- *Normal People*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Looking For Alaska*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra.
- *The Twilight Zone*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Harlots (filles de joie)* Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra.
- *This is Us*. Série offerte sur la chaîne principale et ARTV
- *The Truth About The Harry Quebert Affair*. Série offerte sur la chaîne principale, TOU.TV Extra et ARTV
- *Grey's Anatomy*. Série offerte sur la chaîne principale, TOU.TV et ARTV

- *Outlander*. Série offerte sur la chaîne principale, TOUT.TV Extra et ARTV
- *Jane The Virgin*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *New Amsterdam*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Blue Bloods*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Rizzoli & Isles*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Bull*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Hawaii 5-0*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Un Million de petites choses*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Whiskey Cavalier*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Seal Team*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Chicago Med*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Chicago Police*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Supernatural*. Série offerte sur TOU.TV Extra
- *Qu'est-ce qu'on a fait au Bon Dieu?* et *Qu'est-ce qu'on a encore fait au Bon Dieu?*

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## W. Condition restrictive en matière d'acquisition de contenu

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