



Writers Guild of Canada

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

New Study Shows Canadian Programming Can Pay its Way
Broadcasters do get bang for their bucks

Ottawa, May 7, 2009 – A new study prepared by consulting firm Nordicity Group Limited shows that Canadian television programming can be, and is, profitable for Canadian broadcast groups. Released today, the study into the economics of certain types of Canadian English-language TV programming reveals that with consolidation and the emergence of large corporate broadcast groups that own conventional and specialty TV channels, broadcasters are well-positioned to generate positive financial returns from Canadian programming.

The study was commissioned jointly by ACTRA, the Canadian Film and Television Production Association (CFTPA), the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC), and the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC). It reflects the fact that broadcast groups repeat Canadian programming multiple times across not only their conventional TV but also their specialty TV platforms.

Canadian broadcasters have been arguing that their spending on American programming subsidizes their ability to make Canadian programming. Last year, private English-language conventional TV broadcasters spent over nine times more on foreign drama than they did on Canadian drama.

"This Nordicity analysis reveals that the broadcasters shouldn't use Canadian programming as an excuse for gross overspending in Hollywood. Canadian programming can pay its own way," says Stephen Waddell, ACTRA's National Executive Director.

"We accept the fact that foreign programming is largely more profitable than Canadian programming," says Norm Bolen, President and CEO, CFTPA. "That's a function of the fact that it's far cheaper to acquire foreign content than to produce domestic programming. But in an environment where broadcasters now receive unlimited plays on multiple channels and platforms while paying minimal licence fees, the suggestion that Canadian content is a financial albatross cannot be taken at face value."

Brian Anthony, National Executive Director and CEO, DGC, says "this jointly commissioned study makes a valuable contribution to current discussions about Canadian programming."

Maureen Parker, Executive Director, WGC, says "The study shows that Canadian broadcasters have historically aired most Canadian prime-time television programming on Friday and Saturday evening, and that such scheduling reduces a program's audience by 25%

on average. Such scheduling also means advertisers will demand deeply discounted rates. When broadcasters make these choices for Canadian programming, it makes it even more difficult for the shows to turn a profit. Despite this, the study shows broadcasters can make money from Canadian programming, and they can make even more money from it by putting it on when more people are watching.”

In the absence of empirical evidence or detailed financial data from broadcasters, Nordicity interviewed representatives from six leading media buying agencies, analyzed audience data, examined the implications of consolidation on the licensing of programming, and factored in available data on broadcaster costs associated with programming in preparing its analysis.

About us:

ACTRA (Alliance of Canadian Cinema, Television and Radio Artists) is the national organization of professional performers working in the English-language recorded media in Canada. ACTRA represents the interests of 21,000 members across Canada – the foundation of Canada’s highly acclaimed professional performing community.

The **Canadian Film and Television Production Association** (CFTPA) is a non-profit trade organization that works on behalf of almost 400 companies engaged in the production and distribution of English-language television programs, feature films, and interactive media products in all regions of Canada. More specifically, it promotes the general interests of its members provincially, federally, and internationally; negotiates and manages labour agreements with guilds and unions; administers copyright collectives; trains new industry entrants through seven national internship programs; and undertakes a number of other specific initiatives that help increase awareness and enhance communication within the Canadian and international production communities.

The **Directors Guild of Canada** (DGC) is a national labour organization that represents key creative and logistical personnel in the film, television and digital media industries. Its membership includes over 3,800 individuals drawn from 47 different craft and occupational categories covering all areas of direction, production, editing and design of film, television and digital media production in Canada.

The **Writers Guild of Canada** (WGC) represents 2,000 professional English-language screenwriters across Canada. These are the talented people who create the distinctly Canadian entertainment we enjoy on our televisions, movie screens, radios and computers.

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