
The image shows the cover of a spiral-bound notebook. The cover is a light beige or cream color with a subtle, mottled texture. On the left side, there is a silver metal spiral binding. The text is centered on the cover in a dark red, serif font. The text reads: "THE BROADCASTING COMMISSION AND ITS WORK".

THE  
BROADCASTING  
COMMISSION  
AND ITS WORK

# The Broadcasting Commission

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 The Broadcasting Commission was established under the Broadcasting and Radio Re-Diffusion Act of 1986.

- Its role is to monitor and regulate broadcast radio, television and subscriber television.
- Its subject areas include:
- Administering the Broadcasting and Radio Re-Diffusion Act and the Television and Sound Broadcasting Regulations

# The Broadcasting Commission

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- **Evaluating licence applications and making recommendations to the Minister of Information on grant, renewal, terms and conditions of licences**
- **Ensuring that the operations and the programming of licensees it regulates meet the standards set out in law**
- **Providing media policy advice to the Minister of Information**
- **Conducting or commissioning research on all areas relating to the electronic media in Jamaica.**

# The Broadcasting Commission

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- ☞ Fully independent in its decision making, but not fully autonomous.
- ☞ Acts in an advisory capacity in relation to the grant, suspension or revocation of licenses. The Minister of Information is the final authority on licensing matters for broadcast and subscriber television.
- ☞ Spectrum Management Authority allocates spectrum and manages spectrum matters.

# The Broadcasting Commission

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- 📄 The Commission is currently engaged in an extensive media policy review.
- 📄 Policy review objective: creating a regulatory framework that encourages competition, self and co-regulation, high quality service and variety. The policy review spans recommendations on ownership, public access, public service broadcasting, advertising and indigenous programming.

# Factors Driving the Review Process

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## **Transformation of electronic media in Jamaica**

- Rapid expansion of the electronic media sector**
  - 3 national TV stations**
  - 19 radio stations**
  - 51 subscriber television providers - including a national wireless service.**
- Emerging markets: Internet radio, webcasting, provision of voice and data via cable.**

# Factors Driving the Review Process

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- ❏ No evidence that competition and expansion of media sector threaten commercial viability.
- ❏ In the absence of compelling factors let the market decide - more so in a context where increased public and private access to media and variety of content underpin the growth of Information Societies.

# Factors Driving the Review Process

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 **Convergence of broadcasting, the Internet and telecommunications are redefining the concept of broadcasting.**

- **The telecommunications policy that permits participation of cable operators and broadcasters in the telecommunications market, through the provision of Internet service is one clear indicator of convergence locally.**

# Factors Driving the Review Process

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## **Two significant developments within the subscriber television sector**

- **The medium's capabilities to drive the knowledge revolution through integrated telecommunications and information technologies**
- **Content initiatives taking place within that sector.**

# Factors Driving the Review Process

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## **Developments within the subscriber television sector**

- Limited implementation of the technology to allow subscribers to exercise their rights fully over what they watch. Only eight operators, approximately 15% of the industry, have modern subscription infrastructure that allows consumers to choose what programming enters their homes.**

# Milestones Achieved

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## **Developments within the subscriber television sector**

- Cable is emerging as a hub for innovation for production and productive enterprise. There is a revival of interest in indigenous programming production to supply for content for “local” channels.
- Challenge: Programme production requires funding
- Issue: Drafting procedures are now underway to reflect the shift in policy to allow advertising on subscriber television services.

# Milestones Achieved


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## **Developments within the subscriber television sector**

- The Commission had submitted to the Minister of Information that the decision to lift the restriction on advertising should be grounded on a quid pro quo. Anybody who can provide indigenous programming, especially of a cultural, educational and development nature should have opportunity to access support funding.

# Milestones Achieved

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 Proposed policy framework for subscriber television sector developed as part of the preparatory work for the re-licensing of subscriber television operators.

- Consultation underway on the proposed “Open Communication Innovation for subscriber television and broadband access to media and information”. Information available at [www.broadcom.org](http://www.broadcom.org)

# Milestones Achieved


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## Re-licensing of subscriber television operators

- Application forms have been dispatched to cable operators who wish to renew their licences
- Applicants have sixty (60) days, (until November 9), to complete and return forms
- Communities will have an opportunity to provide feedback to the Commission about the service of operators who are desirous of having their licences renewed. Feedback forms for this purpose will soon be available.

# Key Media Policy Issues

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 **New and dynamic media framework present challenges that are different from those that previously obtained.**

- **Carriage vs content debate. Global experience suggests that the form of delivery will become inconsequential to a large extent. Content issues will remain as the dominant concern**
- **Greater empowerment of audiences is now necessary given the pervasive nature of electronic media and easy access to a range of problematic content, especially by children**

# Key Media Policy Issues

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## Changing role of media regulators

- **Key policy question: what constitutes the “public interest” in a knowledge and communications economy?**
- **Social indicators appear to be pointing to regulatory intervention that has as its purpose the enhancement of the communication sector’s capacity to inform and educate.**

# Key Media Policy Issues

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## **Co-regulation and self regulation**

- **The Commission encourages self-regulation. However, self-regulation will not always be in the public interest - unless “self” is given a liberal interpretation to include civil society in the regulatory process.**
- **Where the licensed industry fails to regulate itself, the Commission will not resile from its obligation to intervene.**
- **It is against this background that the broadcasting Commission introduced the Children’s Code for Programming on January 13, 2003.**

# Electronic Media and Children and Challenges of Modern Societies

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- 📄 The ubiquity of electronic media allows for easy access by children to potentially harmful content
  - 87 radios per 100 members of the population
  - Jamaican study of urban & suburban children found that 95% had a television in the home; and
  - 56% had access to cable or satellite TV

# Electronic Media and Children and Challenges of Modern Societies

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- 📄 Work done by the research community about the impact of electronic media on children has been useful for highlighting the dangers of exposure, especially to certain types of content and mobilising effort to contain the negative effects of media.
- 📄 Media violence, highly sexualised programming and bad language known to be particularly harmful to children.

# Types of Harmful Programming

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## Portrayals of violence that


- encourage dangerous imitation
- are shown as the preferred way of solving problems
- do not accurately portray the physical, psychological and economic consequences of violence
- are linked to sexual intercourse
- are shown as glamorous
- are shown as heroic


# Types of Harmful Programming


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## **Portrayals of sexual activity that**

 are used purely for titillation

 do not accurately portray the physical, psychological and economic consequences of sexual intercourse

 do not demonstrate a need for maturity and responsible behaviour by sexually active people

 show persons as objects whose main purpose is the sexual gratification of others

# Types of Harmful Programming

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## Use of language that is

- profane (tending to corrupt/offend against community accepted standards)
- racist
- obscene
- sexist




# Findings of Research in Jamaica

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- 📄 A longitudinal study by Dr. Maureen Samms-Vaughan, Senior Lecturer in Child Health and Development, UWI, involving Jamaican children has produced important findings pertaining to the effects of media on children.
- 📄 Cognition, Educational Attainment and Behaviour in a Cohort of Jamaican Children. Planning Institute of Jamaica, Policy Development Unit: Kingston, Jamaica: 2001

# Findings of Research in Jamaica

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-  **Children who watched 20 or more hours of television each week suffered academically.**
-  **The more time children (especially boys) spent watching action films, the lower they scored in reading, English and Maths tests.**
-  **Children who regularly watched soap operas (especially girls) got lower scores in verbal comprehension and reasoning tests.**

# Findings of Research in Jamaica


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 **Children who watched more than 20 hours tended to:**

- • **be anti-social**
- • **be fearful**
- • **experience sleeping problems, e.g nightmares.**

– *When compared to*

 ✓ *reading* ✓ *extra-curricular activities* ✓ *attending church*

 × *Television proved to be the only activity that did not help children's school performance, the greater the exposure.*

# Global Search for Solutions

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- 📄 Societies increasingly being driven to find ways to protect children from the harmful effects of electronic mass media.
- 📄 Increasing use of Codes to lower risk of harmful effects on vulnerable audiences, especially children

# A Code for Jamaica

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- ☰ Arose from local electronic media's lack of adequate safeguards to protect children from potentially harmful programming
  
- ☰ The Commission started discussion about a Code in November 2001 and consulted widely on it with range of interest groups in Jamaican society up to June 2002.
  - Parties consulted: broadcast radio and television licensees, advertising community, child protection and advocacy groups, Paediatric Association
  - Public also given a chance to comment on its development at two public fora that were held.

# Factors considered in developing a Jamaican Code

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## **The country's high murder rate**

- Jamaica Constabulary Force, Planning and Research Division

## **High level of youth-on-youth violence**

- more than half of the arrest for major crimes involve the 25 and under age group
  - Jamaica Constabulary Force, Planning and Research Division

## **Shift system in many schools**

## **Rising incidence of teenage parents**

- Between 1960 to 1997 the birth rate for women 15 -19 years doubled that for women 20 -24 years
  - University of the West Indies and National Family Planning Board

## **High incidence (40%) of children in single parent households or not cared for by either parent (19%)**

- National Policy on Children


# What is the Children's Code for Programming?

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- 📄 A system of standards for the treatment of problematic violence, sex and language transmitted by broadcast radio, television and subscriber television services operating in Jamaica.

# Charter for Children and Programming

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 The Charter is a set of principles, meant to work along with the Code, to guide media's treatment of content.

 The principles address:

- portrayals and descriptions of violence
- portrayals of sexual activity
- use of profanity, obscenity, violent, sexist and racist language
- gender stereotypes
- portrayals of disabled persons
- portrayals and descriptions of adherents of any religion

# Application of the Code

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## **Broadcast stations are now required to:**

- evaluate or rate all programming to determine whether it contains any problematic violence, sex or language, as well as the nature and amount.
- Schedule programming appropriately
  - during day and evening for wider audience
  - late evening and night adult audience.
- advise audiences before airing any programmes with problematic material

# Application of the Code

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## **Subscriber television services must now:**

- apply prescribed ratings to each local and foreign channel transmitted on their systems
- inform new & existing subscribers of those ratings
- provide channels meant specifically for adult audiences only at subscribers' request

# Ratings and Advisories

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 **The Children's Code for Programming utilises widely understood rating designations .**

- **G** - programme or channel is suitable for viewing by the entire family. Does not include violence, graphic sex or offensive language .
- **PG** - programme or channel may contain some violence, sex or language that may not be suitable for children younger than 14 years. Parental discretion is advised

# Ratings and Advisories

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- **A** - suitable for adult audiences
  - Cable channels with programming suitable for range of audience types attract an “A” rating if programmes with violence, sex and and/or offensive language appear throughout the programming day. Transmission includes times when adults may not be available to supervise exposure of children under 13 years to this material.
- **X** - explicit sex and graphic language present

# Treatment of special genres

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## *News*

- Journalists expected to pay attention to possibility of traumatising children with graphic material. Editorial judgement is not fettered but the manner of news presentation must be appropriate to the time of broadcast

## *Sports*

- Sports programming should be appropriately scheduled based on the nature of the sporting event e.g. boxing.

## *Advertising*

-  Commercials meant for adults to be scheduled for the audience for which they are intended

# Public Feedback on Standards for Electronic Media

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 Commission welcomes comments on broadcasting and STV matters.

## **Contact:**

email: [info@broadcom.org](mailto:info@broadcom.org)

tel (toll-free): 1-888-99-CABLE

website: [www.broadcom.org](http://www.broadcom.org)