

“Domestic Genre Definition in Canadian Specialty Channels”

A Program Content Analysis

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Introduction

In CRTC Public Notice Broadcasting 2008-100, the Commission determined that, with a few exceptions, it intended to maintain genre exclusivity for Category A specialty services. It did so in order to maintain program diversity, based on the conclusion that *“an open-market approach could encourage the competitors in a given genre to **acquire the most popular and profitable programs. This could reduce the diversity of programming offered to viewers”*** (emphasis added)

Accordingly, the application form for Category 2 services lists all of the protected analog and category 1 (henceforth, Category A) services, and requires new applicants to propose a distinctive “nature of service” description plus limitations on the amount of programming they will carry in specific CRTC program categories.

The reasoning underlying this mechanism is that, even though services may carry some programming that appears elsewhere – on other specialties or on conventional television – if the blend of programming is different, and if some programming is unique, then the genres will be distinct and program diversity in the system will be preserved.

The Commission further proposed to introduce competition in some genres, using a test based in part on the *“degree of brand recognition”* accorded to services in the genre. In this sense, “brand recognition” depends on a kind of “secret sauce” approach. Each channel’s “sauce” is drawn from the same list of ingredients, but if the proportions are different, or if some sauces must avoid some ingredients, then each of the sauces will be recognizably different to the consumer. This approach serves to protect the “declared genres” of Category A services from new entrants.

But there is a potential flaw in the approach: existing Category A services are also subject to the pressure to acquire the most popular programming, to alter their program mix to attract larger audiences than they may be able to do within their existing “declared genre”. Many of them – Slice, MTV, Viva, etc. – have changed their commercial branding since their inception. What if the existing Category A services have in fact altered their “secret sauce” recipe over time, so that their program mix has begun to resemble each other’s or that of conventional television?

If so, the existing protected “declared genres” may have blurred and eroded, and the “brands” of those services may have become difficult for the public to recognize. A “declared genre” can only be protected if it continues to be definable and perceivable.

Purpose of this Study

The purpose of this study is therefore to assess to what degree distinct brands can still be perceived among existing Category A services, and to what degree these brands reflect their “declared genres”.

To make this assessment, we have analyzed the programming of 21 English-language Category A specialty channels to determine

- (a) whether the program mix offered by each channel is truly distinctive from others, and reflective of its “brand” or genre, and
- (b) whether the audience, on the evidence of its viewing patterns, recognizes the “brand” of each channel, or whether it simply uses it as another supplier of general interest programming. (That is, if only 10% of the audience to the “Widget Channel” is achieved by programming about widgets, while 90% is to general interest programming, we would conclude that it is used and perceived by the public as a general interest channel.)

Methodology

We have examined the prime-time programming from one week (January 10th to January 16th, 2011) for each of 21 English-language Category A networks owned by large corporate groups out of the 34 (excluding sports and news) listed on the CRTC's Category 2 licence application form¹.

1. For each program, we noted its CRTC program category, and have also assigned a subject from a list of "subject categories" (see Appendix) intended to reflect aspects of the "brands" under consideration (food, homes, arts, etc.) This list also includes subjects that reflect the offering of conventional television networks.
2. Secondly, we noted the average minute audience (AMA²) of each half hour in each schedule.
3. We used this data to calculate the time allocated by each network to each CRTC category and subject category, (the "offer") and also the audience achieved by each of these categories (the "audience").
4. We then compared the networks' program mixes to determine whether a distinctive and recognizable brand was offered and perceived by the audience. We used a measure of audience performance to determine whether a network successfully branded itself:
 - a. a "**defining brand**", for the purposes of this study, is a subject category that attracted 50% or more of the network's overall audience;
 - b. "**secondary brands**" attracted 24% or more; and
 - c. "**tertiary brands**" attracted 12% or more.
5. We then considered whether the brand, if present, reflects the "declared genre" of the network.
6. From these considerations, we were then able to place each of the 21 networks into one of four groups that reflect different branding or "genre" results:

Group A – "Branded Specialties"

- These channels' programming reflects their declared genres in both offering and audience, and does not resemble the typical fare of current conventional television networks.

Group B – "Drama-dependent"

- The programming offer and audience of these channels reflects their branding; however, because their "genre" typifies a kind of programming that is common and popular on conventional television, their offer is not as distinctive nor does it contribute as much to program diversity.

¹ We used the application form appendix as the definitive list of what genres are excluded from Category 2 licensing, and the source of the most recent "nature of service" descriptions for each network.

² Source: BBM Analytics

Group C – “Confused Branding”

- These networks’ programming is distributed in smaller amounts over several subject categories and therefore does not define a recognizable genre or brand.

Group D – “Not Branded or Mis-Branded”

- These are channels whose offer and audience do not significantly reflect their branding or declared genres.
7. Finally, by comparing and grouping the networks studied on the basis of their branding performance, we were able to determine whether the non-news, non-sports Category A channels studied, as a group, reflect their declared genres and provide programming diversity in the way envisioned by the Commission’s “genre exclusivity” policy.

Methodology Considerations

It is important to note that a study of this kind is necessarily somewhat subjective.

In order to compare the programming of different channels, it was necessary to establish subject categories and apply them consistently to programs. For the great majority of programs, the choice is clear. However, when a program mixes subjects – one program might have elements of adventure, travel and food, for example – three reasonable observers might choose three different categories.

Equally, the “declared genres” of specific channels, while generally clear, also present some challenges, and in some cases, a judgment call must be made. For example:

- one service may have no prose description in its conditions of licence;
- another may have a description that contains terms susceptible to different interpretations;
- a third may contain a variety of subject categories that do not necessarily have a close branding relationship;
- a fourth may be defined by the demographics of its audience, making its genre difficult to distinguish from others defined by their programming.

“Declared genre” is therefore drawn from a combination of sources, including the ways in which the channel brands itself to its viewers, its nature of service description, and the classification into broad genres that the Commission uses in the Category 2 specialty service application form. Where there is any issue, it is explained in the “Specific Channel Notes” below.

Having noted this element of subjectivity, we recognize that there may be legitimate disagreement over details of classification. However, as we also note from time to time in the “Specific Channel Notes”, we have found very few instances where detailed re-classification of programs could change the overall assessment of a channel.

Finally, it is important to note that the conclusions of this study can not be used to determine whether individual channels are in compliance with their nature of service. That is not the subject of this study, and it was not designed with that question in mind. This is a study of branding and how branding relates to genre – nothing more.

Overall Findings

Of the 21 networks in the study, only 7 were placed in Group A – with a recognized and distinctive brand consistent with their “declared genre”. 2 were in Group B – their programming reflects their genre, but their genre is drama/comedy, and therefore less distinctive from conventional television.

The analysis placed the majority of the channels – 12 of the 21 - in Groups C or D, because of confused branding or branding different from their declared genre.

With the majority of the studied networks demonstrating a large degree of brand confusion, it is clear that the existing Category A networks as a whole are exhibiting genre erosion. The definitions of quite a number of “exclusive” genres have been significantly blurred.

That said, it must be noted that the 12 channels with branding issues still have different program mixes, as can be seen by comparing the graphic profiles under “Specific Channel Notes”. While some of these 12 channels have entered each others’ territory, and none match their “declared genre”, they have not all trended to the same programming solution.

This is not to say that there is not considerable overlap between the networks – there is. Figures 3 and 4 below show that most subject categories have strong contributions from a number of channels.

The Place of Drama and other CRTC Categories

The drama/comedy category (CRTC Category 7) plays a special role in the erosion of genre definitions. Because of its popularity with audiences, there is a natural tendency for broadcast networks to move toward this category. Drama made up 45% or more of the audience for 10 of the 21 networks in this study.

However, conventional drama and comedy is the common fare of general interest networks – a strong presence in that category therefore weakens the branding of most specialty channels. Other subjects under drama and comedy may also weaken a network’s brand, since they are also common on conventional networks, particularly if they do not reflect the network’s declared genre.

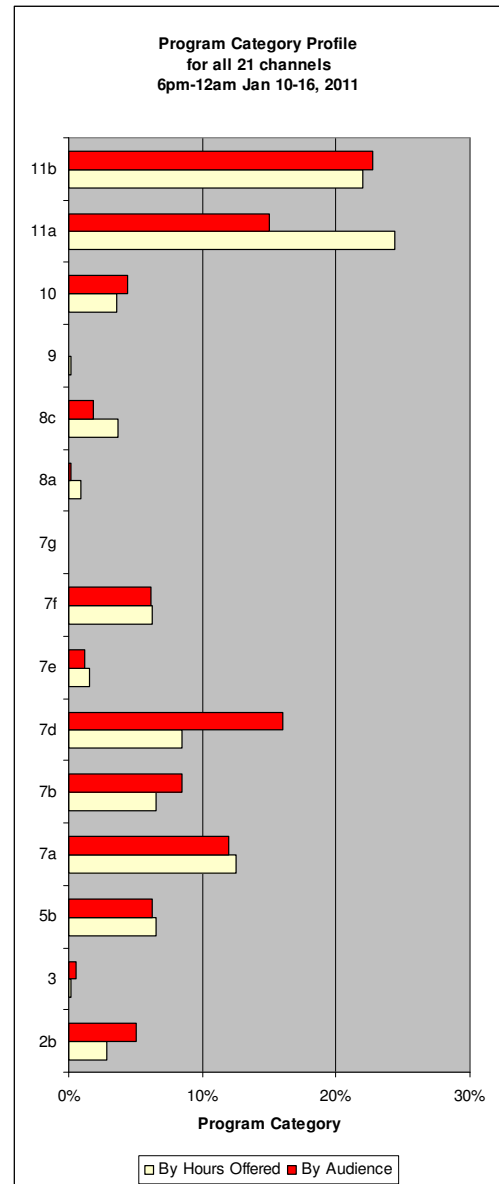


Figure 1

Figure 1 shows the performance of different categories in the prime time schedules of all the networks in the week studied. The chart shows both the share of the 21 schedules occupied by the category, and the share of audience (by total AMAs) achieved by the category.

It can be seen that most subject categories have a share of the network's audience that is roughly equivalent to their share of schedule. However, movies (7d) massively outperform their exhibition, while category "11a – general" (talk shows, magazine programs, etc.) underperforms³. Music videos (8c) are also a good performer by this particular measure.

We have noted above that in our studied group of 21 networks, two thirds of them have confused branding or mis-branding (Groups C and D). Among those networks there is frequently a skew towards category 7 – drama and comedy – because of its popularity.

On average, those Group D networks which offer Category 7, offered it across 51% of their prime-time schedule, but it achieved 72% of their audience.

In Group C the equivalent average offering was 25% of schedule, but the audience was 31%. "7d - Theatrical Feature Films" were the best performers in this respect.

Detailed Findings

The placement of networks into Groups was done based on a detailed analysis of each schedule and the resulting AMAs. While we looked at both the "offer" and the "audience", audience was usually the deciding factor, since a brand is what it is perceived to be.

Also, like all broadcasters, these specialty networks have a tendency to schedule the most popular fare in the time slots that experience the highest viewing, in order to maximize their impact. For that reason, we have concentrated on prime time. And also for that reason, we have tended to look as much or more at share of audience rather than share of schedule to determine which programs and subjects create the brand.

As noted earlier, networks are grouped largely on the basis of their achievement of a "defining brand" (50% or more of audience), and whether that brand matches their "declared genre".

Branding by "Offer"

The following four tables illustrate what is offered (Figure 2 and 3) and how the audience to the channel's programming responds to the "brands" (subjects) offered. (Figure 4 and 5) We have separated the networks in the tables by Groups for legibility.

³ In this particular week, all of the theatrical movies presented on these networks in prime time were US productions.

Branding by Offering	SHOWCASE	COMEDY	YTV	SPACE	SLICE	MUCHMORE	E	HGTV	FOOD
arts									
dance						4%	5%		
music						63%			
entertainment									
stars					12%	17%	71%		
beauty					13%				
fashion					2%		18%		
life issues			5%		55%				
competition									
game									
adventure			2%						
nature									
science									
history									
antiques									
pets					7%				
food									100%
homes					1%			100%	
paranormal									
true crime									
other									
d/c - adult	1%	7%							
d/c - standup		20%							
d/c - crime	37%			7%					
d/c - fantasy/horror	37%			7%					
d/c - SF			2%	86%					
d/c - youth			79%						
d/c - conventional	25%	73%	12%		10%	17%	6%		
sum	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
B - Drama-de A - Branded									
All Drama/Comedy	100%	100%	93%	100%	10%	17%	6%		

Figure 2

The table above shows how the channels in Group A and B divided their prime-time “offer” to the public. In the case of Comedy, for example, one can see that 73% of the schedule was devoted to “d/c – conventional⁴” (drama and comedy that has no special feature and could easily appear on a general interest network), 20% to stand-up comedy, and 7% to comedy with specifically adult appeal.

The dark highlighted figures show that 50% or more of a given schedule was devoted to one subject on that network. All of the channels in these two groups share that characteristic. Showcase is a slight exception – its brand is in drama, which is 100% of the schedule, but the dramas were spread over several different subject categories.

⁴ “d/c” is an abbreviation for drama and comedy.

Branding by Offering	CMT	BRAVO	G4	MUCH	VIVA	MTV	BIO	W	TVTROP	DISCOVERY	HISTOR	OLN
arts		4%										
dance				1%								
music	10%	20%		31%								
entertainment			33%			4%			7%			
stars	7%	20%		6%	5%	50%	64%	5%	6%			
beauty								2%				
fashion							7%					
life issues	2%					46%	5%		14%			12%
competition					5%			2%	5%			2%
game	10%								10%	11%		
adventure			10%							24%	17%	38%
nature							2%			5%	2%	
science			12%							51%	7%	
history											36%	
antiques									4%	5%	10%	
pets	17%											
food					5%			20%	17%	2%		12%
homes							5%	42%	12%			
paranormal					25%		14%	1%			11%	31%
true crime			10%		13%							
other		2%			1%		2%			2%	7%	5%
d/c - adult			2%									
d/c - standup												
d/c - crime		7%			19%			2%				
d/c - fantasy/horror			4%		21%							
d/c - SF			1%									
d/c - youth				57%								
d/c - conventional	55%	46%	29%	5%	6%			25%	26%		11%	
sum	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
	D - Not Branded or Mis-Branded							C - Confused Branding				
All Drama/Comedy	55%	54%	36%	62%	46%			27%	26%		11%	

Figure 3

By contrast, this table shows how Group C and D channels divided their schedules. Most of the channels in Group C – Confused Branding – do not show a subject that is more than 50% of the offering. In Group D this is more common, but the predominant subject is not the same as the channel’s declared genre.

Branding by Audience Perception

Branding by perception	SHOWCASE	COMEDY	YTV	SPACE	SLICE	MUCHMORE	E	HGTV	FOOD
arts									
dance						4%	4%		
music						58%			
entertainment									
stars					6%	15%	84%		
beauty					10%				
fashion					5%		6%		
life issues			4%		55%				
competition									
game									
adventure			0%						
nature									
science									
history									
antiques									
pets					5%				
food									100%
homes					1%			100%	
paranormal									
true crime									
other									
d/c - adult	1%	4%							
d/c - standup		24%							
d/c - crime	37%			7%					
d/c - fantasy/horror	24%			9%					
d/c - SF				85%					
d/c - youth			83%						
d/c - conventional	37%	72%	12%		18%	23%	6%		
SUM	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
B - Drama-de A - Branded									
All Drama/Comedy	100%	100%	96%	100%	18%	23%	6%		

Figure 4

Figure 4 shows what portion of each network’s audience is watching programming devoted to a particular subject, for the channels in Groups A and B. The story is very similar to the “offer” chart – for these channels, shares of audience are very similar to shares of schedule, except for E!, where the defining brand – the “stars” category, has an even higher share⁵.

⁵ We have taken the AMA (Average minute audience) for each half-hour, and totaled them for the week for each network. The AMAs for programs in a given subject category were then totaled, and the sub-total compared to the overall total to calculate the percentage of viewing.

Branding by perception	CMT	BRAVO	G4	MUCH	VIVA	MTV	BIO	W	TVTROP	DISCOVERY	HISTOR	OLN
arts		1%										
dance				1%								
music	4%	5%		17%								
entertainment			23%			1%			1%			
stars	2%	5%		2%	2%	21%	88%	3%	1%			
beauty								2%				
fashion							0%					
life issues	3%					78%	1%		15%			14%
competition					4%			2%	9%			0%
game	11%								28%	9%		
adventure			7%							27%	24%	27%
nature							1%			7%	6%	
science			12%							46%	5%	
history											26%	
antiques									5%	9%	15%	
pets	8%											
food					2%			17%	6%	1%		26%
homes							1%	31%	8%			
paranormal					14%		7%	0%			9%	30%
true crime			4%		15%							
other		2%			1%					2%	4%	3%
d/c - adult			2%									
d/c - standup												
d/c - crime		5%			35%			3%				
d/c - fantasy/horror			3%		22%							
d/c - SF			0%									
d/c - youth				77%								
d/c - conventional	73%	83%	49%	3%	5%			42%	27%		11%	
SUM	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%	100%
D - Not Branded or Mis-Branded								C - Confused Branding				
All Drama/Comedy	73%	88%	55%	80%	62%			45%	27%		11%	

Figure 5

This final figure shows Groups C and D, and again, the branding picture for perception is similar to that of the offer, but exaggerated.

The Networks, and how they Divide into Groups

Group A includes networks whose viewing largely reflects their declared genre. There are 5 in this group, plus 2 who achieve their branding through drama.

- The Food network achieves all of its viewing from programs about food.
- HGTV achieves all of its viewing from programs about homes.
- The viewing to E! is devoted to “stars”: programs of celebrity gossip, features about entertainers, etc.

- MuchMoreMusic achieves 58% of its viewing from its defining category, “music”, and 15% from “stars” but is not as defined as the others in Group A, since 23% of its viewing comes from conventional drama and comedy. Nonetheless the 58% is a “defining brand” and is strong enough to keep it in this group.
- Slice has a defining brand in life issues (relationships, budgeting, weight reduction etc.) and the closely related lifestyle subjects, beauty and fashion, but also receives 18% of its viewing from conventional drama and comedy.
- YTV is highly dependent on drama/comedy, but does skew its programming enough to achieve a defining brand in “d/c – youth” at 83% of its audience.
- Likewise, Space achieves 85% in the science fiction drama category.

It’s hard to describe the last 2 channels, whose brand is popular drama/comedy programming, as having distinctive genres in quite the same sense as the first 5, but they are identifiable destinations for a particular kind of drama/comedy programming, and can be seen as distinctive in that sense.

Group B consists of 2 drama-dependent channels, networks whose “declared genre” permits them to fully exploit the drama category. These networks have no need to deviate from their declared genre, since it is strongly reflective of the most popular programming on conventional television. However, by the same token, they cannot be considered well-defined and distinctive genres.

- Comedy is probably the least distinctive, with 72% of its viewing coming from conventional comedy series: sitcoms, sketch, standup and some animated shows.
- Showcase is also similar to reflective conventional television, with its week’s programming more or less evenly split between crime drama, fantasy/horror drama (paranormal) and conventional drama/comedy.

Group C is a group of 5 networks whose audience does not cluster sufficiently to create a defining brand in any subject category, but exhibit instead a mix of secondary and tertiary brands, confusing the question of what genre they are in.

- OLN has a “secondary brand” – 27% - in “adventure”, but is actually stronger in “paranormal” programming – 30% - and equal in “food” programming at 26%. There may be some classification issues with this channel, as noted below.
- History shows a similar split: a secondary brand in “adventure” and tertiary brands in “history”, “antiques” (including pawnshop reality programs) and conventional drama/comedy. It is, of course, a judgment call to what degree the movies of that week – “*Generation Kill*”, “*Body of Lies*” and “*Master and Commander*” contribute to the history branding. The last could be seen both ways, as contributing to the History genre and as quite comfortable in a general interest schedule. However, even with this program included as “history”, “history” is not close to being a defining brand.
- Discovery comes the closest in this group to having a “defining brand” in the terms used in the study, with 46% of its viewing and over 50% of its offer arising from programs about science and technology. However, it has an additional “secondary brand” in adventure programming, which confuses the issue. Both of these are mentioned in its “description of service” – the question is whether the 5 subjects named in that description are sufficiently similar to form an identifiable “brand” or whether they are sufficiently different to be easily split into other genres. The degree of subject overlap (see next section) demonstrates that this sub-splitting has happened, even within the group of 21 channels in the study.

- Neither TVtropolis nor W has a declared genre that can be clearly distinguished from conventional television. And certainly neither has a defining brand in the view of its audience in this week. Both show similar profiles – with a strong showing in “d/c – conventional”, a secondary brand in one other subject and a tertiary brand in – “Game” and “life issues” for TVtropolis; “Homes” and “Food” for W.

Adding to the confusion is that the subjects that attract audience to these channels are the defining brands for other networks – HGTV, Food, and Slice have staked out these subjects as their own with defining brand performance. And of course Showcase and Comedy hold the “declared genres” for drama and comedy (not to mention the contribution of conventional networks.)

The final Group, Group D, consists of 7 networks whose audience’s views of their programming do not reflect their declared genres. With the first two (Biography and MTV), there is the additional problem that what could otherwise be a “defining brand” is occupied by another channel. With the last 5, their only audience numbers over the “defining” threshold are in the drama/comedy area, which is not their genre.

- Biography has defining brand performance in “stars”, (88%) which is the territory of E!. This may be an artifact of this particular week: a classification issue arose because the program “*Biography*” was devoted entirely to profiles of actors and entertainers.
- MTV is also in the “stars” brand, but most of its audience (78%) is tuning in to reality programs around “life issues”. Again, it may be argued that the reality and gossip programs are different in this context than when they appear on Slice or E!, but on a program-by-program analysis, they are in the same categories.

and finally,

- CMT’s audience is dominated by conventional drama/comedy at 73%. No other subject comes close to even secondary performance, though “pets” and “game” achieve something. Music is only 4% of audience.
- Bravo! is similar, with a 1% performance to its arts programs, 5% to its music, and 90% to conventional and crime drama. Its popular movies in this week, like *Kindergarten Cop* and *Back to the Future III*, did not add to the Arts branding.
- MuchMusic is strong in drama/comedy (80% overall), with a youth spin that resembles YTV. Its music shows are a tertiary brand, at 17% of viewing.
- G4 has 48% of its audience to conventional drama and comedy, with a tertiary brand (23%) in entertainment – largely shows about “digital culture” including video games etc.
- Viva’s drama/comedy is in the crime and fantasy/horror area. Together, these two attract 62% of the channel’s viewing. A programming theme emerges from this week with tertiary brands in “true crime” and “paranormal”, but it is not clear what it has to do with the declared genre of the network.

Subject Overlap

While acknowledging that the combination of subjects – the ‘secret sauce’ approach – may be what defines a genre, it is worth noting the degree of overlap among subjects in these channels. Of the 26 non-conventional-drama subjects used in the survey, 10 showed a degree of overlap that could confuse branding issues. That is, the following subjects were tertiary, secondary, or defining brands on more than one network:

- music: 2 networks
- stars: 4
- life issues: 4
- adventure: 3
- food: 3
- homes: 2
- paranormal: 2
- crime drama: 2
- fantasy/horror drama: 2
- youth drama: 2

Summary Conclusions

The overall conclusion of this program survey, then, is that only 5 of the 21 channels can be said to have truly distinctive brands of the kind contemplated in the Commission's genre-exclusivity policy. 2 others have a clear brand, but one that veers toward the conventional because of its dependence on drama. Altogether, 7 of 21 can be said to be genre-specific in some sense.

Of the remaining 14,

- 2 look very much like specific day-parts on conventional television, because of their reliance on conventional drama/comedy.
- 5 have confused branding in which no subject category achieves the status of a secondary brand;
- 5 achieve the bulk of their viewing from conventional drama, although that is not their declared genre, and
- 2 have a non-drama secondary subject brand that also does not reflect their declared genre.

Moreover, the 14 non-specific channels overlap into the specific defining brands of the 7 specific networks.

From this survey, one cannot conclude that the programming of these Category A specialty services reflects the intention of the genre exclusivity policy. Rather, one can say, based on their prime time programming in the week studied, that the brand, or actual genre, of two-thirds of these networks is either:

- too confused to define,
- not reflective of the declared genre,
- not truly distinctive from conventional television, or
- some combination of these three.

Specific Channel Notes

This section gives specific notes and descriptions of those channels in Groups C and D, i.e. those channels whose branding is confused or which does not match their declared genre.

It is not considered necessary to give detailed descriptions of the networks in Groups A and B. In both cases, the channels' programming matches their declared genre. Group A are well-branded specialties with which there is no issue, and in Group B, the issue is not the specific program mix, but whether the declared genre as it stands (based on Category 7 drama) is distinct from conventional television.

Group D

- Bravo!
- CMT
- G4
- MuchMusic
- VIVA
- MTV
- Biography

Group C

- W
- TVtropolis
- History
- Outdoor Life Network
- Discovery

Bravo!

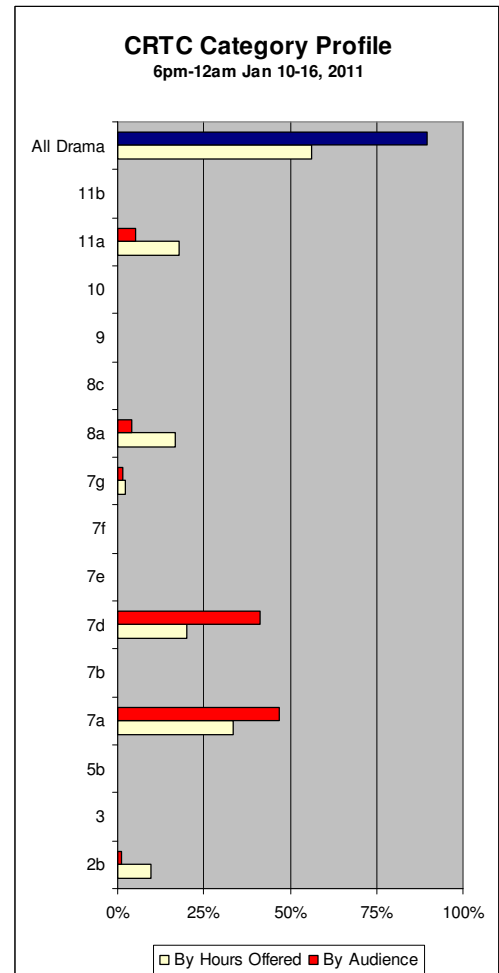
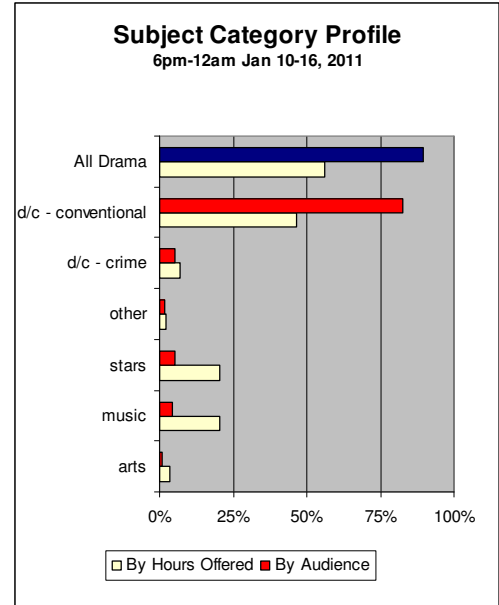
Bravo! can be seen to make an effort to match its prime time offering to its branding of an arts channel, since 45% of its offering is made up of documentary, performance programming, and general entertainment magazines and interviews about performers. There is also a small contribution from “Wingfield” which can be placed in “7g – Other Drama”, since it is a televised version of the theatrical production.

However, these efforts add little to the audience of the network – in this week, about 12%, including the featured profiles of entertainers.

On the other hand, 54% of the prime time schedule is devoted to scripted drama and movies. The commercial tendency of the drama programs is borne out by audience response – 88% of the channel’s primetime viewing comes from continuing dramatic series and movies.

Moreover, it is quite clear that “*Kindergarten Cop*”, and “*Back to the Future III*” contribute little to any arts branding – the same might be said of “*Criminal Minds*” and “*Da Vinci’s Inquest*”, which are stripped daily.

In short, in both offering and audience, Bravo! is a channel that is branded by conventional movies and drama series, not an arts channel. As such, it is placed in Group D – those channels that are mis-branded or not branded at all.



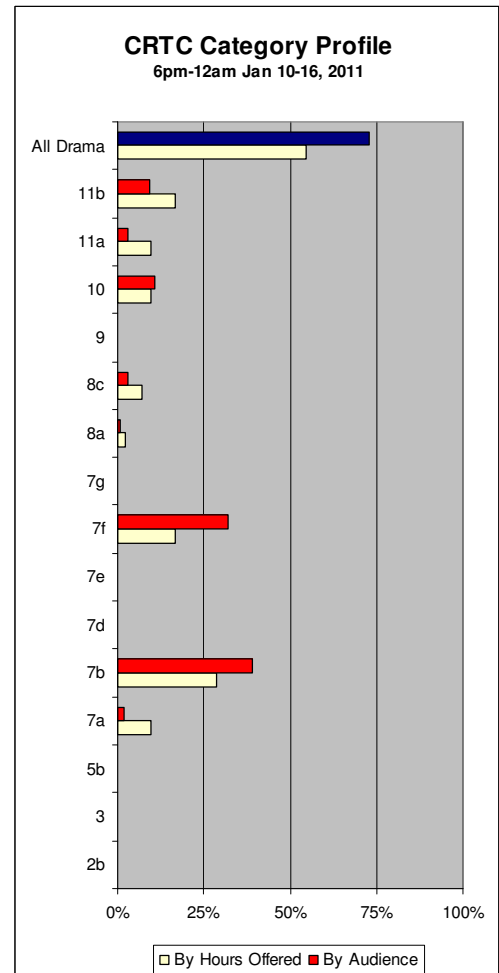
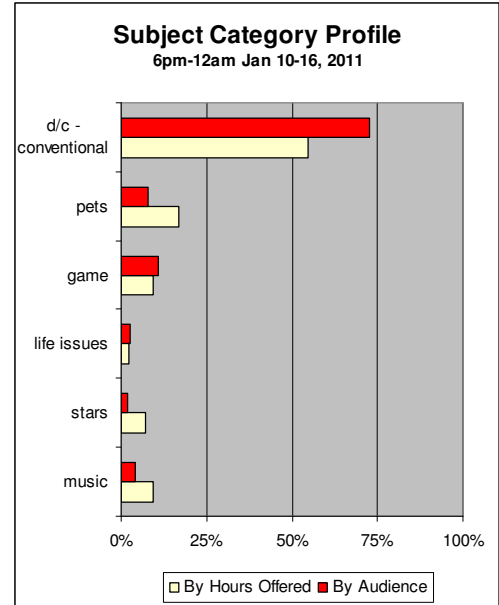
CMT

US sitcoms – *Home improvement*, *According to Jim*, *8 Simple Rules*, *Reba* – and 7 hours of *America’s Funniest Home Videos* lends a pervasive presence (55%) of conventional drama/comedy to the primetime schedule of CMT in the week studied.

These are popular programs for the channel. In all the subject “d/c – conventional” produces 73% of the channel’s primetime audience, effectively preventing any other subject category from becoming a defining brand.

All other potential brands are tertiary at best. While CMT remains in the “music” genre on the CRTC’s list of genre-protected networks, the Music Video Program category (8c) represents only 7% of the prime time schedule and 3% of the audience. Music as a subject category is at 9.5% of the offering and 4% of the audience. Other categories such as pets (17% / 8%) and game shows (9.5% / 11%) do slightly better.

CMT therefore fits into the “no branding / misbranding” group – D.



MuchMusic

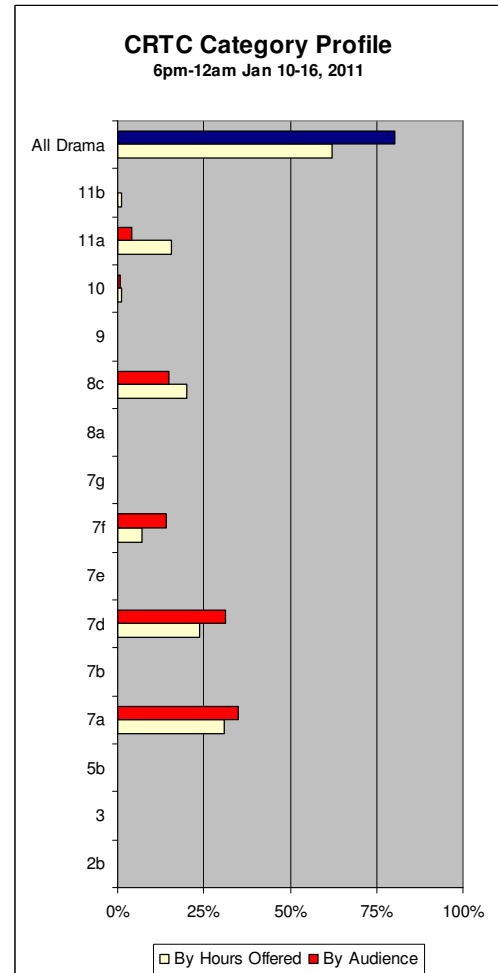
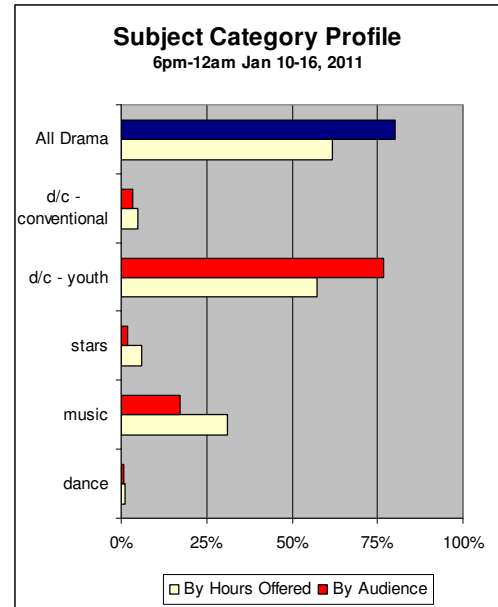
With such programs as *One Tree Hill*, *Pretty Little Liars*, *Degrassi*, and such movies as *American Pie 2*, *Little Man*, and *Down to Earth* during the week, MuchMusic shows a schedule heavy on CRTC Category 7, and the subject category “d/c – youth”.

It may be arguable that there is a music relationship to some of these programs, but within this study, the principle is to apply consistent categorization across networks: if *Degrassi* is not a music program when shown on other networks, then it isn't one in this context either, but rather a youth-oriented drama.

By this principle, drama/comedy is 62% of this schedule, and 80% of the audience. Music videos make up 20% of the schedule and 15% of the audience.

It might be possible to consider that MuchMusic is well-branded as a network for youth drama, but YTV is already in that space, and Much's Description of Service does not declare drama as its genre.

From the point of view of branding, then, Much has to be considered in Group D, mis-branded networks.



Viva

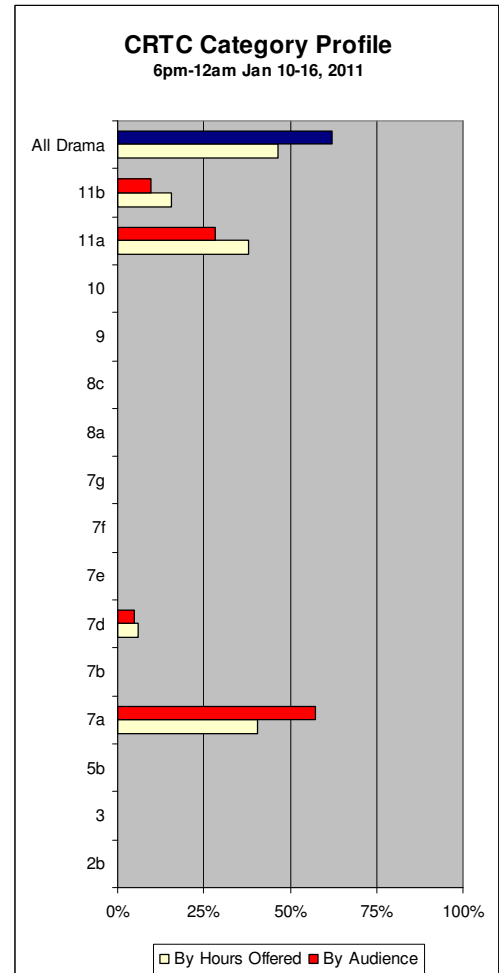
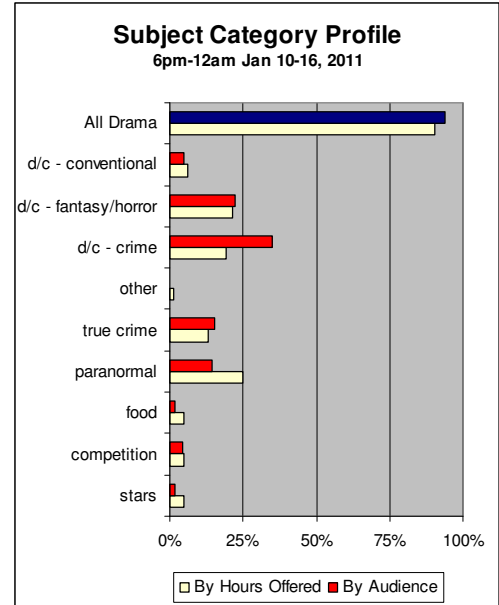
On the non-drama side, Viva offered such programs as *Rescue Mediums*, *Ghostly Encounters*, and *Psychic Investigator*, alongside true crime programs like *Murder She Solved* and *The Devil You Know*; within the drama categories, it offered *Medium*, *Cold Case*, and *The Thomas Crown Affair*.

The channel originated as the Learning Channel, and still puts mortarboard graphics beside programs in its web guide to show that they are in some way connected with a course at an institution of formal learning. Yet, if these programs were to be found anywhere else, they could not be classified as formal or informal education – and they have not been so classified here. There is a 2 hour Saturday block of food programs that might be declared as informal education, or formal if combined with a course, but can also be seen as 11a, general entertainment. In any case, this is only 2 hours, and represents 1.8% of the weekly audience, so a reclassification would not alter the overall conclusion.

It is in any case probably more fruitful not to concentrate on the CRTC categories and instead consider the subject categories, and here we find potential branding in two areas: paranormal and fantasy drama, taken together, represent 46% of the schedule, and 37% of the audience. True Crime and Crime Drama, put together, are 32% of the schedule and 49% of the audience. Perhaps this could be seen as a mystery/crime network.

However, that is not its declared branding. Moreover, Viva is in the process of morphing into the Oprah Winfrey Network, and several shows from OWN are on the schedule we studied.

On the basis of this schedule, then, Viva would have to be considered to have no branding, or be mis-branded away from its declared genre – and is therefore in Group D.



G4

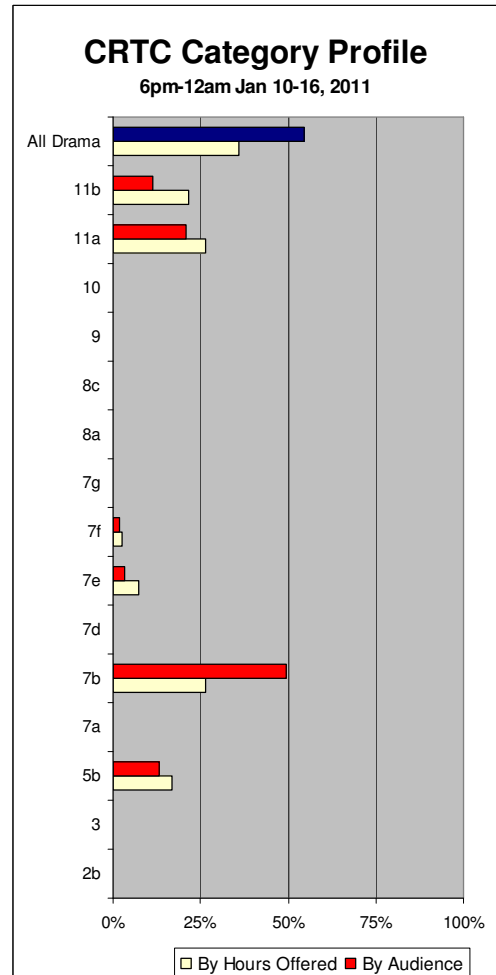
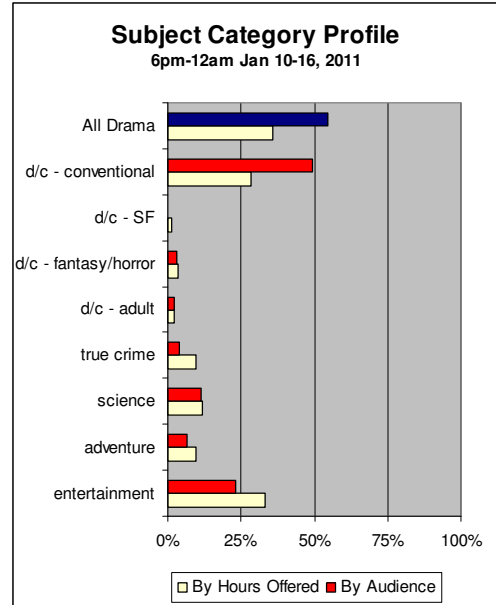
From an audience point of view, the best performing programs on G4 are the nightly stripped sitcoms, *How I Met Your Mother* and *The Office*. It's not surprising, then, that sitcoms make up 49% of the audience, though only 26% of the schedule. With some additional animated shows and comedy sketch programs, the drama area provides 36% of the schedule and 55% of the audience.

That is, over half of G4's audience experiences the channel through sitcoms and other drama.

The closest subject to the declared genre is in the entertainment category, since shows about digital culture, including video games and reviews of video games are a third of the schedule – but only 23% of the audience. Science/technology is represented by the *Attack of the Show*, at 12% of both schedule and audience.

Looking at the program titles, it appears that G4 is one of a number of channels in the study – W and Viva are others – whose offer may be better branded by the demographics of its audience than by the subject matter of its programming. However, only YTV and TVtropolis have demographics as part of their declared genre as described by the Commission.

Consequently, the result of the heavy audience use of sitcoms and other drama types is that G4 must be considered unbranded or mis-branded away from its genre, and therefore in Group D.



MTV

The MTV prime time schedule in the week studied was highly uneven in audience response, more so than any other channel in the study. Most half-hours produced very little, but two programs – *Jersey Shore* and *Teen Mom* – produced 59% of the total audience for the week.

These programs, and many others on the schedule, are in the “life issues” subject category - about relationships, marriage, pregnancy, weight reduction, etc. Altogether, these shows occupy 46% of the primetime schedule and produce 78% of the audience.

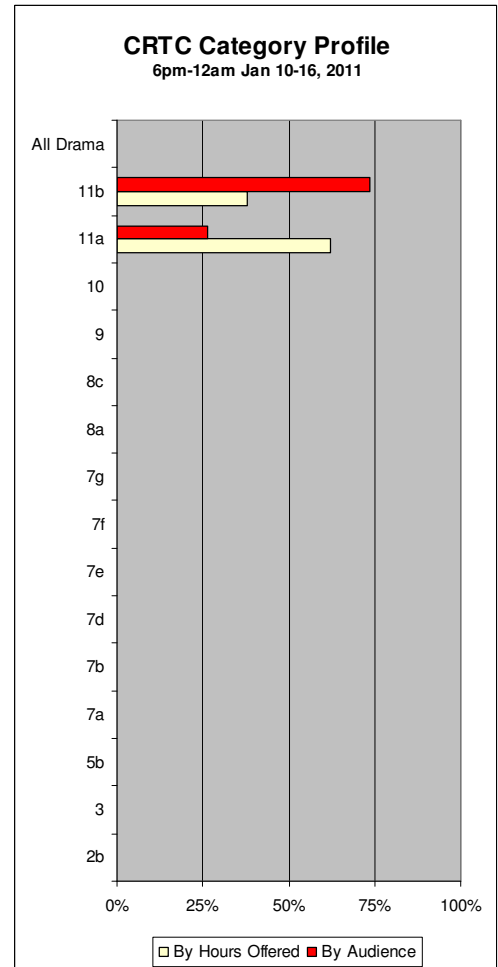
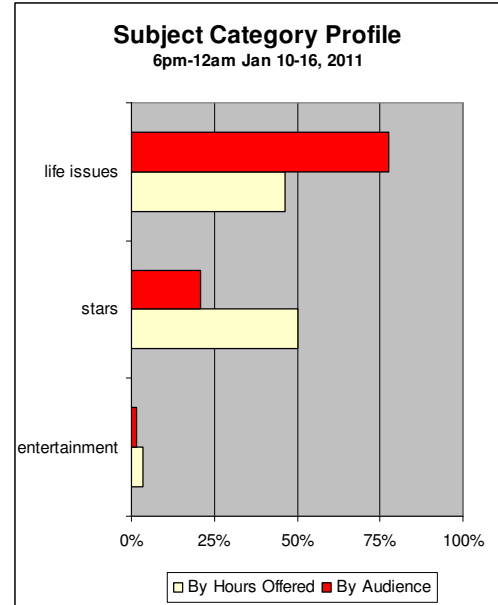
The “stars” category – consisting of entertainer profiles and celebrity gossip – could be considered a secondary brand for the channel, but while it occupies 50% of the schedule it produces only 21% of the audience. In terms of brand recognition, then, it is only a tertiary brand.

Moreover, in terms of CRTC categories, “11b – reality programming” attracts 74% of the network’s audience.

In summary, the overall branding must be seen on this evidence as reality programming about life issues.

From this schedule examination, it is not possible to tell to what degree the network permits interaction with its audience through “*telephone, fax or Internet, as well as live television hook-ups,*” (as required in the service description) but it is fairly clear that the subject focus of the audience to the TV channel, and the defining presence of reality programming (11b) is a different brand than “*discussion and debate about topics and issues that interest and affect all Canadians.*” This channel is being viewed by a quite specific audience.

We therefore consider this network to be branded away from its declared genre, and place it in Group D.



Biography

It may be that the week in which we measured was unusual for Biography, since the entire “*Biography*” program strip was occupied with profiles of well-known entertainment stars: Brad Pitt, Whitney Houston, Olivia Newton-John, etc. These are biographies, but in keeping with the policy of categorizing programs in the same way, whatever channel they appear on, these were categorized as star profiles: 11a – stars.

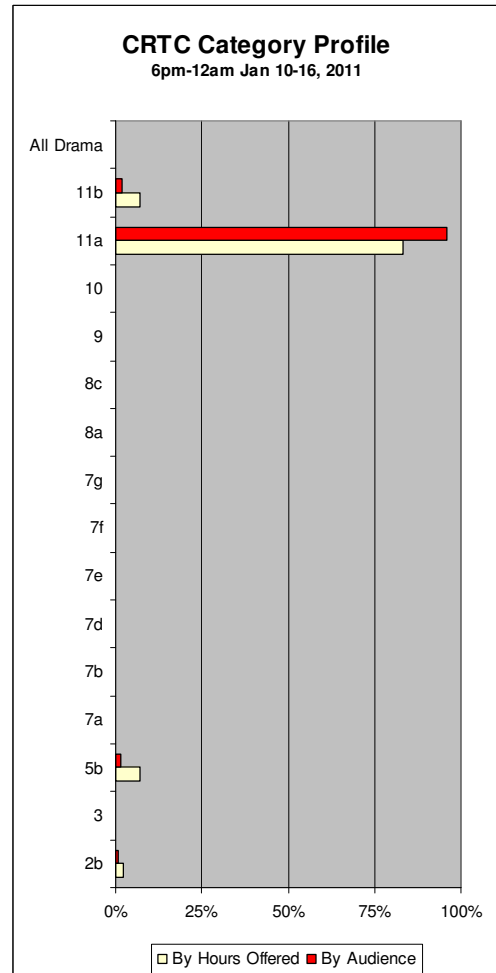
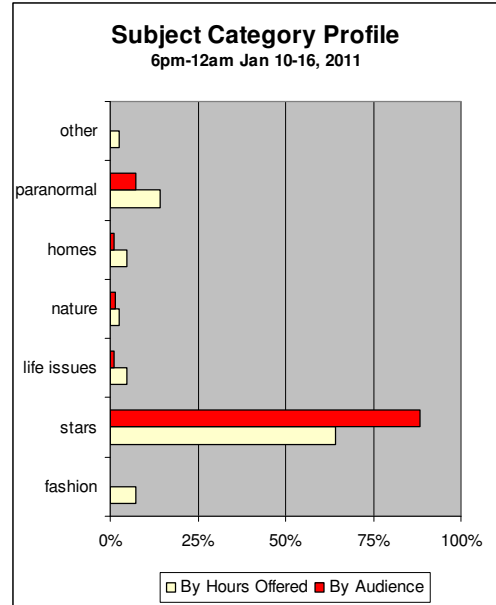
11a was used because the CRTC’s standard for documentary – in-depth analysis – is a difficult standard to achieve; but in this case the CRTC category is not the defining factor, but rather the subject category, which was, in this week, clearly dominated by entertainers.

This categorization was a difficult decision. In a different week, Biography might have had a different theme – one requiring a new subject category of “biography”. If so, and if that theme had achieved the same audience, then “biography” would have been a defining brand, and the classification of the channel would have been quite different. However, the study had to work from the schedule as it was.

Combined with other programs, this *Biography* strip resulted in 64% of the schedule in the “stars” category, with 88% of the audience.

The channel also had tertiary branding in the paranormal – 14% of schedule and 8% of audience.

For genre protection purposes, Biography is listed by the CRTC in the “Social Studies” broad genre, along with Discovery, History and the Documentary Channel. The branding from this week is, instead, closer to the branding of E! Consequently we have placed Biography in Group D.



W

The W network's offer and audience show no clear brand.

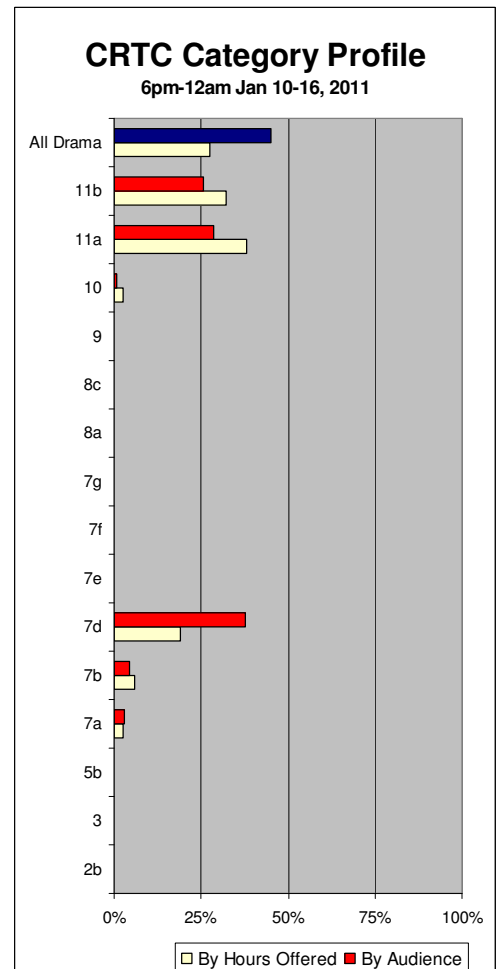
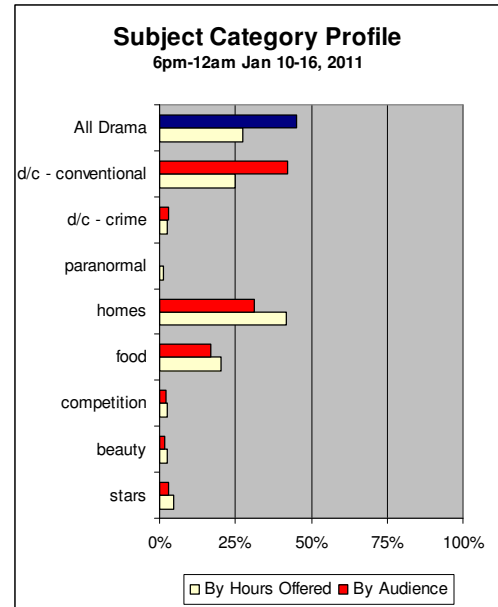
The best performing programs in the week's primetime are the weekend movies – Category 7d movies occupy 19% of schedule and achieve 38% of audience. However, movies in the crime and romantic comedy areas are conventional fare, and in any event do not reach the threshold of a defining brand.

Homes, food, and other lifestyle subjects were also present, but none of these subject categories achieved more than 32% of audience – that number belonged to “homes” with 42% of schedule; however, that subject is the declared genre and defined branding of HGTV.

In the renewal decision CRTC 2001-151, no prose “description of service” was given for W, only restrictions on program categories. While it is mentioned in the decision that the applicants consider the service to be directed toward women, that is not a requirement.

Moreover, a great deal of conventional television programming is directed to women: consequently it is not clear that W has a defined genre in regulation to protect. Many other channels appeal predominantly to women – even in this group of 21.

This factor, together with the absence of a defining brand in any subject category leads to the conclusion that W should be in Group C – confused branding.



TVtropolis

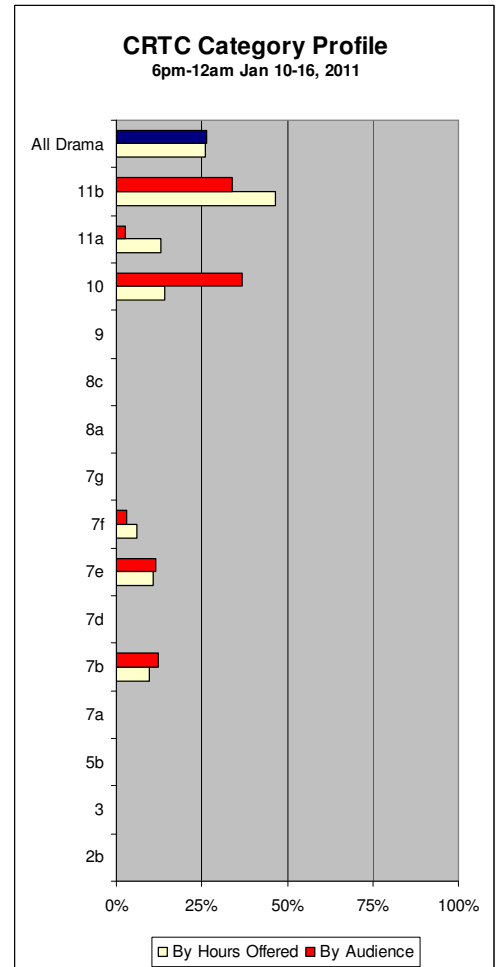
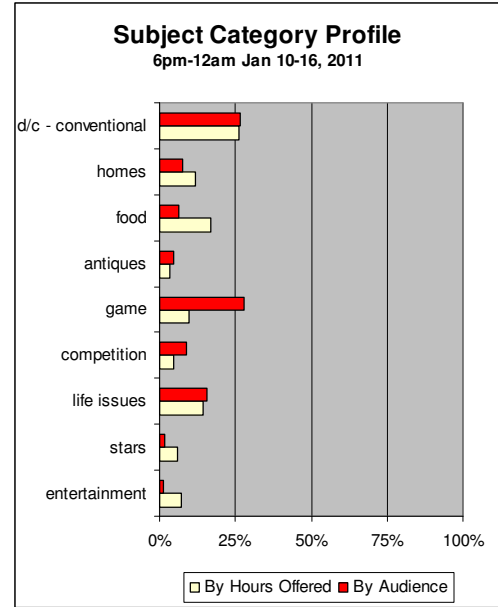
Like some other channels in Group C, TVtropolis (the former Prime) spreads its programming over a large number of subject categories. Of the nine subject categories present, two achieve the status of secondary brands in audience – game shows (28%) and conventional drama (27%) – made up for the most part of sitcoms at 17%.

TVtropolis is in the genre “Drama” on the CRTC’s list of protected channels, and in CRTC 2004-18 it is given a demographic, not a program-oriented description, “*programs of particular interest to adults over 50 years of age.*”

This in itself creates some confusion – but accepting for the moment that “over 50” is a declared genre, the programming is still a mix: *Tooned*, *Fear Factor*, *Family Guy*, *Friends*, *Wipeout*, *Entertainment Tonight Canada*, and so on seem as likely to appeal to those under 50 as those over, while *King of Queens* and *That 70s Show* may have older appeal.

In short, there is no distinct identity to this programming mix, and the “declared genre” is not like other genres, since it is based on demographics.

For those reasons we have placed this network in Group C.



OLN

OLN's program mix is received by its audience in three roughly equal parts – viewing to adventure programs, viewing to paranormal programs, and viewing to programs about food.

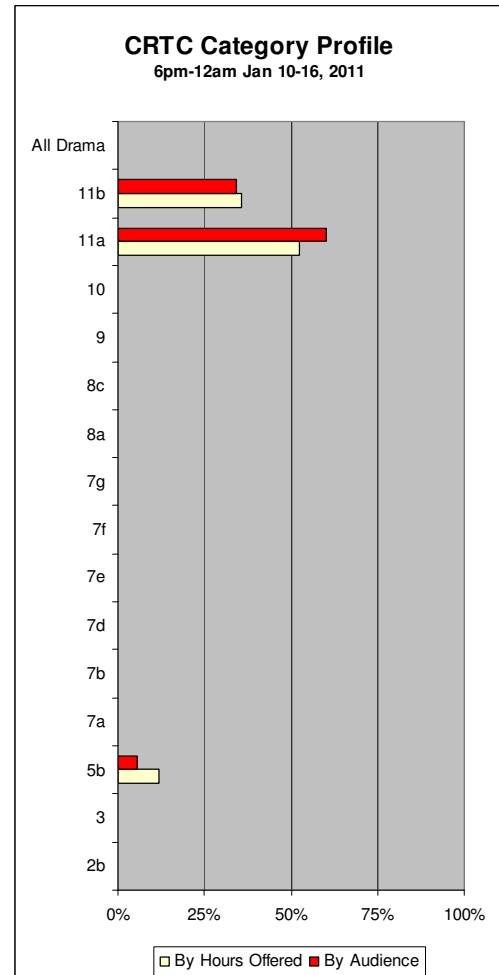
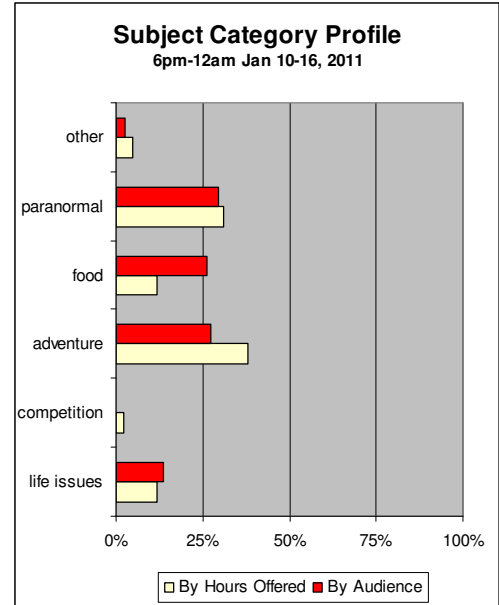
None of these amounts to a defining brand – all are secondary. In addition, there is a tertiary brand in Reality TV: “life issues” due to *Operation Repo*.

Like other channels, OLN presents some issues of classification. In the context of the channel, some programs could be considered to be ghost-hunting “adventure”, but since we have had to define the subject “paranormal” for other channels, a consistent classification puts them there.

Likewise, it is our judgment call that “*Man vs. Food*” belongs with other food programs, though clearly this is not a cooking show, and could be seen as travel or adventure.

Finally, we must consider that in the context of 21 channels in the study, and others outside it, the subject overlaps between channels can contribute to confused branding. Discovery also has adventure and nature; History carries adventure. OLN then overlaps others with life issues, the paranormal, and programs where the host travels and samples the food of different locales.

For all these reasons, we put OLN in Group C – confused branding.



History

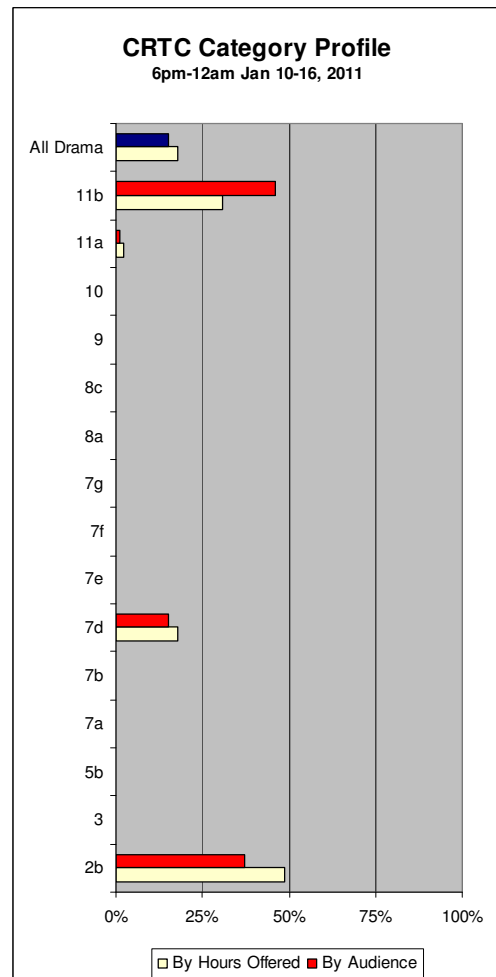
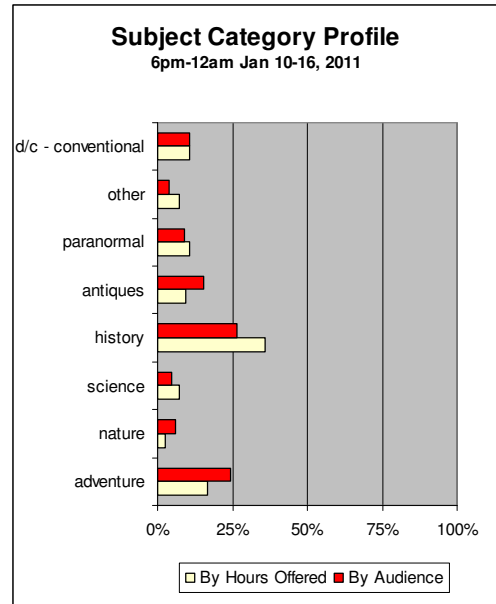
CRTC Decision 2004-13 gives History a broad mandate, i.e. “historical documentaries, movies, mini-series and history programs which embrace both current events and past history, with a special emphasis on documentary and dramatic programs related to Canada’s past.”

The decision defines neither “historical” or “the past”. Therefore, while the movie, *Master and Commander* is clearly a period drama, *Generation Kill*, and *Body of Lies*, dealing with the Iraq War and terrorist bombings, are certainly current enough to be classified as conventional drama, rather than programming that is primarily of historical interest. In the non-fiction category, programs about military weaponry are often seen as history – but if the weapons are current, the programs should be classified as science/technology. Likewise, pawnshop reality programs are classified here as “antiques”, as they are on other channels that carry them.

For this channel we have made one exception, to classify *Master and Commander* (with its 5% of weekly audience) as “history” rather than create a drama subject category (e.g. “d/c – history”) for this single program.

This addition brings “history” to 26% of total audience – still a secondary, not a defining brand. “Adventure” is also a secondary brand (*Ice Road Truckers*, etc.), with 24.5% of the audience, and there is representation from nature (6%), science (5%), and the paranormal (*Weird or What? Ancient Aliens*) at 10%.

Because 73% of the network’s audience is tuning in for something other than its declared genre – but not to any other defining brand – we find that this network belongs in Group B, confused branding.



Discovery

CRTC Decision 2001-833 requires Discovery to be “dedicated to the exploration of science and technology, nature and the environment and adventure.”

Discovery’s programming explores that territory in the week in question. While no individual subject is a defining brand, the combination of the five categories listed above – conflated into three for the study (science, nature, and adventure) – achieves 79% of audience.

In that sense, Discovery could be in Group A. The question, however, is whether a description listing 5 subjects amounts to a distinctive and recognizable brand.

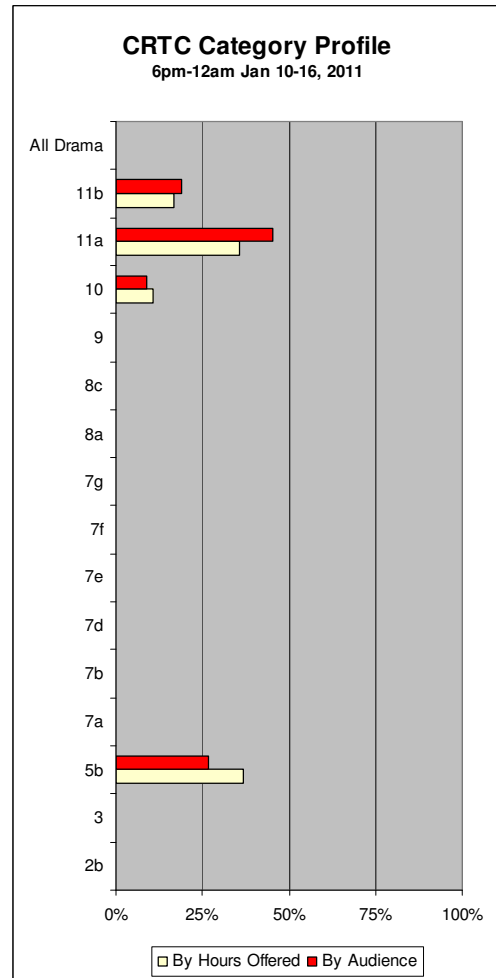
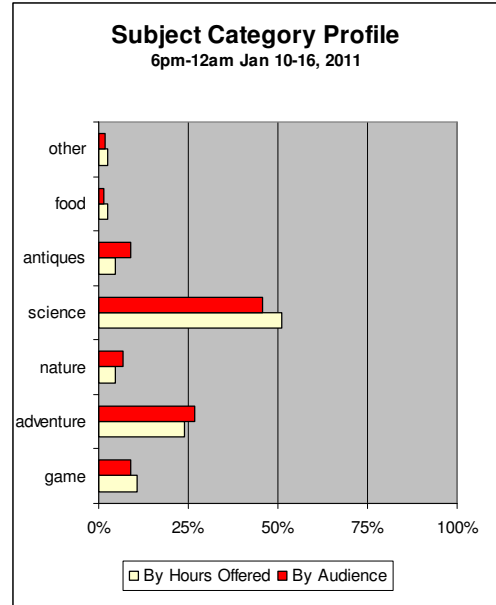
Like other early analog specialty channels, Discovery defined itself as distinct in relation to conventional television, rather than other specialties, and therefore has a description with several facets.

Even within Category A, other channels now overlap this description: G4 has technology, OLN has adventure, plus nature and the environment. (2004-9 gives OLN “outdoor recreation, conservation, wilderness and adventure.”) Pieces of Discovery’s declared genre appear in its own spin-off channels, and many Category 2 channels have some part of this description. Even History has science and adventure programs.

OLN’s profile on CRTC categories is almost identical to that of Discovery – the difference being the classification of *Cash Cab* as a game show rather than informal education. The audience that each achieves for adventure is nearly identical.

Does protecting Discovery’s genre mean that no other channel can mix all 5 subjects? Is that the “secret sauce” in this case? Or are the proportions the key – perhaps no other channel can have 50% science.

For these reasons, we have placed Discovery in Group C, not because its programming does not represent its service description – it appears to do so, unlike Group D channels – but because it is not clear that its service description amounts to a defined genre, and is therefore “confused branding”.



Appendix: Notes on Subject Classification

The determination of the “subject” of any given program was conducted according to two main principles:

1. If a program appeared on more than one channel, or very similar programs appeared on several channels, we gave a consistent CRTC category and subject category to that program.

For example, reality programs about pawnshops, in which the valuation of old objects was the theme, were always classified as “antiques”. They were not classified as “homes” on one channel and as “history” on another.

2. Apart from those occasions, we have generally resolved uncertainties in favour of the channel’s acknowledged branding, so as not to exaggerate divergences away from the “declared genre” in the measurements.

Classification was usually evident, but there were some cases where programs mixed subjects, and within the limitations of this study, one subject had to be chosen.

For example, if a program idea is that its host travel to exotic locations and sample the food, is the program a food program, a travel program or an adventure program? If a program combines ordinary people with famous people in a dance competition, is it a variety show, a game show, a show about celebrities or a “reality TV” program about competition or about dance? Is “Celebrity Ghost Stories” about the paranormal or the celebrities?

These cross-over examples illustrate a strong trend in contemporary television programming. That is, to create a distinctive show, programmers are combining genres and breaking out of old patterns. Even to determine what CRTC program category a show belongs in is often a difficult issue for Commission staff – to go beyond that and determine whether a program contributes truly to a channel’s “nature of service” is to some degree a subjective decision that can legitimately be seen differently by disinterested observers.

However, in this study similar programs are categorized the same way on different channels, for the sake of consistency, and because that is how viewers perceive them. Whatever a program’s appeal is, it remains the same on different networks. The “interpretation” may justify the show in terms of service description, but it’s still the same show and viewed for the same reasons.

Choosing the Subject Categories

Choosing one option in spite of these uncertainties has therefore led us to treat subject categories a bit broadly, not as specifically as some might choose to do – particularly if one were to get into the sub-genres typical of many Category 2 services. For this study, we have tried to strike a balance between categories that are broad enough to show similarities where they exist, and narrow enough to distinguish between the brands in the 21 channels in the survey. Where possible, we have chosen words from the service descriptions of the channels.

The subjects and their inclusions are delineated in the following table.

Subject Category	Includes
arts	Includes books, painting, etc, but not music or dance
dance	Programs of dance performance, or where the subject is dance
music	Programs of musical performance, or where the subject is music
entertainment	Programs about the world of entertainment; reviews of new movies and video games, but excluding celebrity gossip (see below) etc.
stars	Celebrity gossip, features about entertainers, reality programs featuring celebutantes, etc.
beauty	Programs about being or becoming beautiful
fashion	Programs about clothing and style
life issues	Includes a variety of themes relating to ordinary life: relationships, weddings, pregnancy and babies, expenditure reduction, weight reduction; includes reality programs where the interest is the participants' relationship and other issues.
competition	Reality shows whose main subject is the drama of the competition
game	Game shows
adventure	Programs about survival, traversing wild terrain or with other elements of danger.
nature	Programs about the wild, animals, exploration
science	Includes technology and weapons technology; how things work, etc.
history	Programs about distant past events
antiques	Shows about old objects and their value, including pawnshop programs
pets	Programs about household pets
food	Programs with food as a subject, including cooking shows and contests,
homes	Design, decoration, renovation, real estate, repair.
paranormal	« Non-fiction » "ghost" stories, psychic investigations, unexplained occurrences etc.
true crime	Non-fiction programs about crime.
other	Whatever doesn't fit into a category
d/c - adult	Programs, particularly cartoons, that are not for children
d/c - standup	Standup Comedy
d/c - crime	Crime, police, law, espionage
d/c - fantasy/horror	Supernatural or paranormal as well as magic-related and general horror
d/c - SF	Science fiction
d/c - youth	With special appeal for youth or children
d/c - conventional	Drama or comedy fare that is typical of conventional television. In some cases these have a specific appeal that allows for the subcategories shown below: