

Introduction of 16 May Workshop on Building Resilience in Telecommunications – In Canada and Beyond

by Erik Bohlin, Ivey Business School

Hello everyone!

It is my great honor and privilege to welcome you all – Speakers, Guests, Students in presence and Webinar Participants – to the third Ivey Workshop on telecommunications policy, on the theme “Satellites and Beyond”, here at the Ivey Donald K. Johnson Centre.

My name is Erik Bohlin and I am a Professor at Ivey Business School, Chair in Telecommunications Economics, Policy and Regulation. And this is the third workshop that is co-organized by me and Romel Mostafa, Director of Lawrence National Centre for Policy and Management at Ivey Business School. We are intending to build a series of policy relevant workshops, over several years.

But before continuing the agenda and meeting details, let me pause for a moment to consider a Land Acknowledgement. At Ivey Business School, we have started to build Land Acknowledgement as a moment to make some personal reflections, which I will do here.

I was very touched by a scene in the recent film of Bob Dylans Rolling Thunder Tour in 1975 when he sang the Ira Hayes Ballad at the Tuscarora Reservation in Niagara City on the US side. (Ira Hayes was an Indian soldier for the USA who was part of the famous photo at Iwo Jima at the Second World War, raising the US flag there.) There is a clip on Youtube but missing important comments from one of the chiefs at the reservation, also named Rolling Thunder:

“Columbus did not discover America, there were people here already. Even though they stole most everything that they could lay their hands on - the land, the women, the children, whatever, they took it. That left us very poor people, and a lot homeless in our own country. But the best thing of all had no value to them, and it was our way of life.”

In Canada, many were stolen of their way of life and heritage. Canada was regrettably influenced by the more systematic colonialism that was part of the Commonwealth, with big impacts on education and forced adjustment.

So, this brings us to consider the values in our lives, and our heritage. We live now in very difficult times around the world, where so much that we cherish is being stolen.

(On a lighter note, I can certainly recommend the movie - Rolling Thunder Revue: A Bob Dylan Story by Martin Scorsese! I think that I have seen it about 10 times now! It is fascinating.)

Our ambition with the Ivey Workshops on telecommunications policy is to invite government and industry to reflect on the pressing situation for the telecom infrastructure for Canada. There is a need for an increased dialogue between industry and government about the fundamental objectives for developing a strong, viable Canada, and the enabling role that telecom infrastructure may play in achieving that vision.

And this leads me to our current meeting and agenda: Our workshop banner is denoted Satellite and Beyond, but the main title is New Frontiers for Broadband and Resilience in Telecommunications. With this, we are trying to build a conversation on the importance of telecom networks for Canada – a conversation between major stakeholders, experts and users. Our first workshop was focused on broadband wholesale access, convened right before the momentous decision by CRTC last November on moving forward with unbundling broadband networks. Our second workshop was focused on resilience in telecommunications, also this in tandem with many ongoing initiatives by government and industry to strengthen resilient networks for Canada.

Today's workshop is centered on satellites, with implications for how satellites can improve the state of broadband access and resilient networks in Canada. The Canadian government is initiating several ways forward to support satellite networks, such as the recent loan guarantee of more than 2 billion Canadian dollars to Telesat, and an on-going consultation on how satellites can support mobile access, particularly in very remote areas. Satellites are also being integrated by industry in their various service offerings. Some are even speculating that satellites will transform our communication landscape fundamentally, with big industry upheavals and changes for government policy.

We have the great fortune of gathering a lot of informed speakers - from industry, government, research and independent experts. We are very honored for your presence, and it has been a privilege to work with you, for preparing this program.

You know the program already, but just let me mention the flow of our program:

We start with Canadian government outlooks for satellite by Director General Andre Arbour of Innovation, Science, and Economic Development Canada. ISED.

Martin Doczkat who is Chief at the Office of Engineering and Technology of the Federal Communications Commission, will provide an update of satellite initiatives in the United States.

Moving on to expert views and research, Professor Bronwyn Howell of Victoria University of Wellington will review some aspects of satellite for rural areas in New Zealand.

The final presentation before the break will be Emeritus Professor Peter Cramton who will provide us with a novel perspective on an open access model. for wholesale inter-satellite communications in space, by optical mesh networks.

So we have started with government perspectives and moving to expert analysis, and after the break we will have an even grander agenda, with both expert views, an industry panel and implications for Canada from the workshop.

But let us return to these speakers after the break!

Some administrative points are that we are running a webinar in parallel for a few participants who otherwise could not join. The webinar function also allows for recording.

The room is suitable for questions from the audience, and we encourage you to ask questions. We have a microphone in case of need, but the room microphones at the ceiling will take care of audio to the webinar participants.

There is an additional fire exit at the back and washrooms also close to this exit.

Let me finally acknowledge and thank the wonderful support from Ms. Laura McLeod, Ms. Stephanie Scanlan, Ms Vicki Zielinski, and Mr Ivan Langrish for supporting the event so diligently and with expert competence. I am so relieved to work with you!

Now, I wish to give the floor to my dear colleague and co-organizer, Professor Romel Mostafa, Director of the Lawrence National Centre for Policy and Management. He understands well the many challenges that Canada faces across several sectors and industries, and he will lead much of the discussion today. I am so glad for his engagement and that he has agreed to moderate much of the discussion today!