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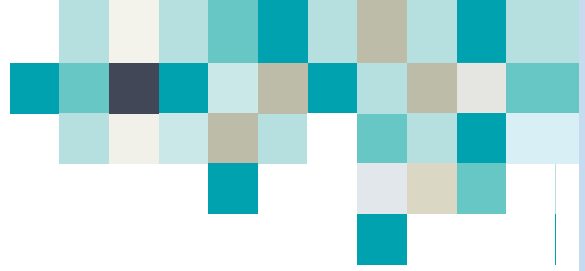
TRANSFORMING MEDIA:

Data Driving Production
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NEWSTALK 1010 in New Home
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COVER PHOTO

*This photo is
Provided by Mediaco*



As with many of its peers, Mediaco, the Alberta-based media company involved in high-end video and live events, encountered major growth in the amount of data that its production teams must handle.

Confronting the Data Tsunami

Centralizing and sharing digital media assets for optimal productivity

BY PAUL CHAN

The digital media onslaught continues. Rich, new digital video content, such as rendering and special effects, along with advances in video technology and higher resolution files are challenging the performance levels of many storage systems. Be it the current 1080p HDTV standard, or the growing popularity – and data demands – of 4K video, important storage consolidation trends are emerging because of the need to centralize and share ever increasing digital media assets.

New emerging technologies such as private clouds are providing shared storage resources for improved business workflows. For instance, highly available storage platforms (SAN and NAS devices) are being deployed in production studios: providing a fault-tolerant shared storage pool from which all collaborators can access digital media files; downloading them to their local workstation for editing; and then uploading the files back to the shared storage device for further collaboration.

IT managers will appreciate how storage arrays, when part

of a consolidated network storage solution, can boost system performance, and offer more visibility and control of important digital media assets.

Making the Transition to Storage Consolidation

The Alberta branch of Mediaco, a technical media company specializing in live events, was seeing major growth in the amount of data they were handling, and the company's IT manager, Ron Dyck, realized it was time to adopt a longer term strategy. As with many of the company's peers, data was stored on external drives, kept in a cabinet and moved from workstation to workstation.

Dyck's first concern was the risk of data loss. Hard drives are particularly vulnerable because they can be easily dropped, lost, stolen, or damaged by static electricity, and the inconvenience of backing up collection of separate devices causes back-ups to fall between the cracks.

"The problem with discrete drives is that each one is a single

point of failure,” Dyck described, “and there is no efficient way to back up all of your data.”

Dyck was also concerned that there was no way to assign access rights to individual files. Once somebody had a key to the cabinet where the drives were stored, they could potentially access any data in the company.

After considering several possibilities, including connecting the existing drives through a drive bay, and networking storage to individual workstations, Dyck saw the sensible answer was to migrate to a centralized storage solution that could accommodate all of the company’s data storage problems.

The company then decided on two Storageflex 3945N-24 NAS central storage arrays – one for the Calgary office and the other for Edmonton. Essentially, this made all media assets available on the network and allowed Mediaco to move all of their data to an integrated storage system that could be accessed and controlled through a single interface.

The first storage system was 48TB; the second one purchased is 30TB, and both have room for expansion. Each drive in the unit is a 3 TB 7,200 RPM SATA-600; they’re set up in a RAID6 hardware configuration.

The arrays immediately transformed the way Mediaco Alberta handled its media assets, and key improvements were realized, like removing the single point of failure for discrete drives are replacing it with the array’s RAID fault protection system. Files are nevertheless easy to find using the familiar Windows file tree, and permissions can be assigned by the administrator using the Windows Storage Server.

The admin can also set up automated backups for all data on the centralized system.

Mediaco’s editors and producers also noticed the improvements immediately. With as many as five people able to work on a ‘deadline due’ project simultaneously, the new centralized storage system “blows away” the performance that creative workers were used to with the older system, Dyck added.

As well, file transfers that took hours now take minutes. This means that an editor can quickly copy a completed project into the archive section without having to keep an eye on the task for a large part of the day.

It is also much easier to cut and paste file segments – a practice that is becoming much more common for the business. For example, excerpts from a training video might be included in a webinar,

podcast, or web promotion. A CEO’s speech at a conference might be excerpted for presentation at a charity event. Or a Mediaco account manager might bring a customer employee up to speed by showing clips from the company’s previous annual meeting.

Mediaco’s creative workers are now saving hours each week that might have otherwise been spent waiting for files to copy over, going back and forth between separate physical drives, searching for files, or setting up backups on an individual basis.

Creating a Media Asset Retention Strategy

For broadcast companies with growing data repositories, the centralized array is a powerful tool that enables media asset data to be stored in hierarchical fashion according to frequency of use. For example, ongoing projects can be stored in quickly-accessible hard drives, long term files unlikely to be accessed within a 30-day window can be stored on inexpensive optical storage with slower access speeds, and items that fall in between can be stored on drives with medium access speeds. The array can also segment data according to its sensitivity.

By making data management seamless, storage systems let users take good care of the valuable media assets found in any busy broadcast environment.



Integrated storage systems that can access and control huge amounts of digital data through a single interface help manage busy production workflows. Mediaco moved all its data to dual Storageflex central storage systems, with 78 TB of current capacity and room for expansion on both arrays.



Media companies must deal efficiently with an ever increasing amount of digital data, whether generated during live sports coverage or as part of project archiving.

NEWSTALK 1010 CFRB

Talks Up New Home, Long Heritage

The tools and technologies change regularly in the radio business, while the goals and objectives remain consistent:
'It's about people – getting their attention, and keeping it.'

In a unique combination of architectural heritage and state-of-the-art radio broadcasting, NEWSTALK 1010's move from its long-time CFRB home at Yonge St. and St. Clair Ave. to new digs on Richmond Street West begins a new chapter in Canadian broadcast history.

CFRB is the longest-running broadcast radio station in Toronto,

founded in 1927 by Ted Rogers Sr., at the helm of the-then Rogers Vacuum Tube Co. It started operations in a mansion on Jarvis Street; the station moved to 2 St. Clair W in 1965, and to its current home in May of this year.

By that time, of course, CFRB was NEWSTALK 1010, and while the call letters remain a part of its heritage, the new name conveys a new focus in its future.

There's now a new owner, too: the station was acquired by Bell Media in the buyout of Astral Media. Shortly after the purchase, Bell announced that it would be moving its new properties.

Walking through the old structure-slash-new facilities, one soon "crosses the threshold" with a single step between one building and another, one purpose-built workspace and other, in fact, one floor and another (different floor-to-ceiling heights are found among the buildings that house multiple Bell Media broadcast radio and TV, specialty channel networks and digital media properties).

Mike Bendixen leads this particular tour. From a long and accomplished career, he knows change is a constant in radio broadcasting. From CFRB to CJAD and back to CFRB and 1010, Montreal to Toronto, Standard to Astral to Bell, the long-time Program Director and also now Brand Manager says a move to the downtown core was expected from the moment the Astral/Bell sale was announced. "We knew we'd have to move, but that was



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exciting because we could tap into a lot of expertise here, as we re-built our entire plant.”

The new studios are not merely an improvement over the old home; they're state-of-the-art in their own right. “The station is now a digital platform end-to-end,” describes Lane Steinhauer, Senior Director, Engineering. A drastic change? “An evolution, not a revolution,” he says. Lots of interaction among on-air broadcast and engineering staff, IT people, facility designers and architectural consultants. Yes, some growing pains with new equipment to master, and a “huge change in sound quality”, but in the end, radio does have other constants.

“That part hasn't changed,” Bendixen underscores. “Every single day, it's ‘What's happening, what are people talking about?’”

Some say digital technology tends to speed things up on-air, almost unconsciously driving the pace faster and faster, but to Bendixen, the tools are there for another reason: “It's about getting people's attention, and keeping it.”

Mike Toth knows how that works. The TV and radio sports reporter's been with NEWSTALK 1010 CFRB since 2009, and he's written online about the radio business in general, and on occasion, about his boss in particular.

Bendixen is “cut from cowboy cloth,” Toth said. “He never sugarcoats anything and if he's got something to say, he shoots straight from the hip.”

Toth tells a story about the time the boss wasn't happy with coverage of a special sports event, and had immediately sent an e-mail



Equipment for the all-digital platform at the new Newstalk studios includes production and edit consoles from Lawo, audio editing tools from Adobe, Audion and Avid, Denon players and an assortment of top mics, audio processors, speakers, headphones, on-air phone systems and more.

saying move the item up in the broadcast and provide more details.

Bendixen smiles at descriptions of his management style - “I drive ‘em bananas, yeah” - and those regular air check meetings with a show's producer, host and operator. They are short, not necessarily sweet, but – shall we say – attention-getting.

continued on page 8

FS1-X Spectacular Frame Rate Conversion

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The Bell Media broadcast complex in downtown Toronto has a 299 Queen Street West address but it embraces other buildings on the block, including the historic building at 260 Richmond, an old (c. 1915) warehouse once owned by Tip Top Tailors.

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That's the point. They are radio people. Not so much has changed after all. It's just that getting and keeping attention means adding other cards to the radio deck.

"We're not just radio, we're media."

Radio reporters are multi-platform broadcasters now: websites, social media, online video, it's all part of the mix now, and a lot of that capability is empowered by the new technology. The newsroom is

built around one of the leading computer newsroom systems for radio, developed by B.C. based Burli Software. It delivers tools for every step of the newsgathering process to the hands of the news team, from generating story ideas to archiving completed shows.

The system is open to all kinds of ideas and inputs, including social media tweets, live audio feeds, e-mail, RSS feeds, audio files and more. Material filed from repor-

ters in the field appears instantly and automatically on any Burli workstation screen.

On a wider scale, the Wide Orbit Station Automation system that's in play lets Traffic and Program staff deal with last minute schedule changes to any programming element over the 'Net, and they can see multiple tabbed schedules and make immediate log changes.

Bell Media's been using Lawo consoles and routers in its Toronto radio operations for several years, with new and existing units connected via MADI fibre to a Lawo Nova 73 router, with backup routers giving radio ops a robust and scalable backbone to serve a growing stable of users.

IT-based digital asset and broadcast management tools like these bring operational speed, sure, but also programming flexibility and creativity.

"We're not IT people, we're media."

From the moment planning started, that interaction among on-air broadcast and engineering staff, IT people, facility designers and architectural consultants led to daily meetings and a lot of changes along the way.

When mock-ups of the announcer's desks and interview tables were brought

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into newly constructed broadcast spaces, Bendixen described on the tour, it quickly became apparent changes were needed. Another constant of radio: good sound. The best and most consistent audio quality possible. One both long-time radio listeners and newer streaming media fans can feel comfortably familiar with. One the station is constantly working to improve.

That huge change in audio quality Steinhauer mentioned was at first perceived not only in different live, production and commercial sound, but in the tonality of the new spaces and new gear inside them.

At first, as John Moore described it, “[T]he rooms were tuned so you could hear a shirt crinkle! The mics were sucking everything that makes sound.” He asked engineers to “iris down” everything.

Moore’s worked as an entertainment reporter and film reviewer with CFRB 1010 since 1999, and in 2009, he launched Moore in the Morning, which he now hosts from the new digs.

By his own admission, it features “the most important talkers in town.”

The show’s joined by, among others, National Post columnist Christie Blatchford, Maclean’s National Editor Andrew Coyne, movie critic Richard Crouse, and business reporter Rubina Ahmed-Haq.

Certainly, a mix of opinion, attitude, and vocal qualities. Moore may sow the seeds of trouble, but everyone seemed to be growing anxious – “freaking out” he

said – about their voice, and a snap crackle pop new environment.

“You get used to a certain sound, a room tone, the proper tuning. It’s hard to think of a metaphor, he said, but let’s face it, the audience wants predictability, not in terms of content or what will be said, but so people sound like themselves. They want an aural comfort level. We all do.”

So those talks between on-air and engineer continue. Internal pop filters for close-in voice work can be tuned, shock-mounts to reduce vibration-induced noise adjusted, analog-to-digital delays tweaked, additional signal mixing performed in the digital domain, mics and voice processors checked for ‘gender bias’ – and if they’re too bright or thin for a female’s, or too dark and muddy for most men’s voices, adjusted accordingly.

Now, everyone’s sounding better and, Steinhauer smiled with anticipation, “more compressor and other signal path adjustments to better balance incoming phone, live on-air and pre-produced audio sources are coming; listen in next week!”

There’s the sound coming from that old building with the spanking new interior– voices speaking together with pride and passion and professionalism. A strong sense of history with eager anticipation for the future.



As part of the planning for the new studios, windows had to be moved for better lines of sight so operators and announcers could better connect visually. Tables and chairs were changed for proximity and interaction among the on-air hosts and their in-studio guests.

Long-time broadcaster and newsman Dave Agar is the morning news anchor and commentator on NEWSTALK 1010 CFRB. In his blog post on the day of the move, he began writing that next chapter before it happened:

Now we move on to Richmond and Duncan. In the early days, get ready for some laughs at our expense as we acclimate ourselves to our new home and new equipment. Along the way we will build a mountain of new memories.

(Agar is among the seven journalists named to receive an RTDNA Canada Lifetime Achievement award this year, honouring them for having distinguished themselves in broadcast journalism.)

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MZ Museum Tracks the Course of TV Development

The recently reopened MZTV Museum of Television charts the history of TV, and clearly demonstrates how even the latest digital devices stand upon the analog shoulders of yesterday.

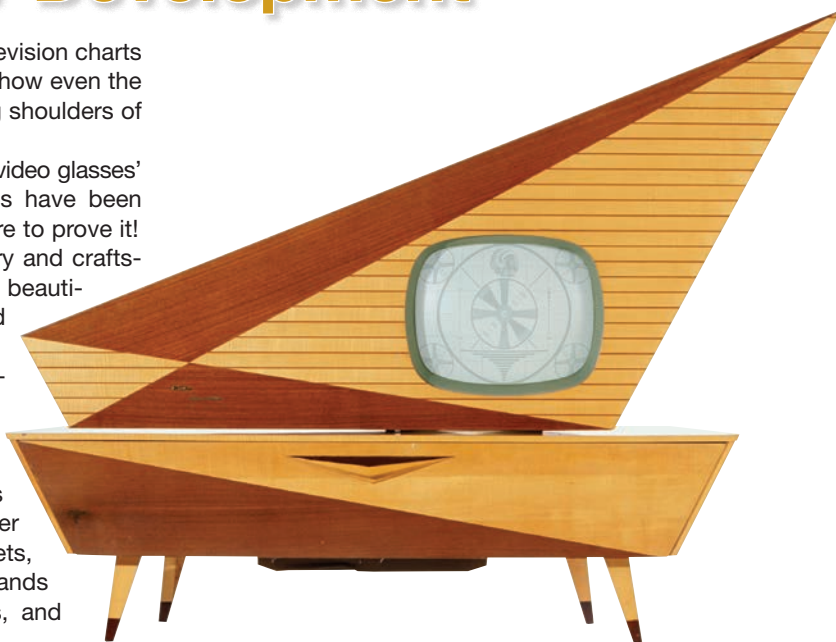
Think Google Glass is cool? The museum has 'video glasses' from Sony that are decades old. Smartwatches have been available for years, and there's a small device here to prove it!

There are also gorgeous TVs that show artistry and craftsmanship on a much larger scale, making use of beautifully-grained and stained wood, clear plastic and transparent Lucite, as well as highly polished metal. Some of the objects on display are complete home entertainment centres (today's multi-platform media environment) with built-in radio tuners, record players and large screens.

Media mogul and classic TV collector Moses Znaimer and his team have put together over the years now consists of more than 360 TV sets, receivers and devices, along with literally thousands of assorted television tubes, lamps, capacitors, and much more.

Although many were built before WWII, some of the TVs on display do still work; even when turned off, however, they convey stories about global trends in electronics manufacturing and sheer industrial power.

The earliest TVs were made in England and Europe, for example, but soon the growing dominance of the American manufacturing muscle becomes apparent, with models from companies like RCA, Philco and Magnavox in the '50s and '60s.



KUBA KOMET
1957, West Germany

The Komet is one of the first multi-platform devices, with TV, radio and a phonograph in a single unit. The upper rotating 'sail' houses the TV and main speakers – the radio and phonograph are concealed by the front door of the lower cabinet.

Japan's growing electronic profile from the '70s and '80s is seen on the screens made by Panasonic, JVC and Sony. Now, one supposes, it's Korea's turn, with products from LG and Samsung.

And yes, Canada has a small part on this stage: there are TV sets from Electrohome, a Canadian manufacturer that began making B&W sets back in the late 1940s, and did so until 1984.

Znaimer's new temple to what he calls "this astonishing technology; the most important cultural phenomenon of the twentieth century" also houses an extensive reference library with books, magazines, photographs and other support material.

(Objects from his collection have been housed and displayed elsewhere over the years, including in the city's east end Corktown district, next door to Citytv on Queen St W – Moses of course launched City many years ago, and he has his own long and colourful TV history!)

Materials in the Museum's collection (and posted online at an engagingly interactive companion website) describe

RCA, TRK-12 Phantom Teleceiver
1939, USA

Built for the 1939 World's Fair, using one of the Fair's theme materials, Lucite, this rare 'teleceiver' exposed its inner workings to dispel any doubts that trickery, and not TV, was at work inside. To prove the images were live, visitors were escorted outside to some NBC TV cameras, and encouraged to wave back to the folks viewing them inside.

the technological history of TV, and they paint portraits of the people whose inventiveness and entrepreneurial drive gave us what Moses calls “the most important cultural phenomenon of the twentieth century”.

Not just the 20th – Moses believes the TV still reigns as the dominant medium of our time. He says the world is waking up to the epic impact and significance of television, and he wants the story of how this strange new appliance became what many regard as a “necessity of life” to be more fully and widely understood.

As such, the Museum will not only welcome individual visitors, but it will host school students on educational tours, research groups and industry analysts.

The MZTV Museum of Television is located in the Zoomer-Media complex in Toronto’s Liberty Village neighbourhood, where Znaimer’s other media properties – including print, TV, radio, digital, consumer shows and live event platforms – are housed.



New TVs Show the Future: Forget 4K, Embrace 8K

A look at recent developments in TV display and image technology brings added resolution and detail, if not clarity for equipment purchasers and program producers.

Skip 4K, it’s being said – 8K is just around the corner, and there’s no need to invest in a stepping stone technology!

Equipment manufacturers like Sharp and Samsung have already shown prototype 8K sets, with an eye-opening sixteen times the resolution of full HD (the specifications cite 7,680 x 4,320 pixels, totalling just over 33 million: on a 42-inch television, that means 8K can deliver image density of 210 pixels per inch; 1080p offers 52 ppi, 4K UHD offers 105 ppi.).

So 8K has been dubbed Super Hi-Vision in Japan, although 4,320p is an alternative name meant to emphasize the superiority over 1080p.

Samsung has shown off its 98-inch LED 8K television, and Sharp has demo’d an 85” version – neither has mentioned a shipping date or price point. Transmissions to the sets have been successfully trialed, albeit over short distances with highly-processed video. Nevertheless, Japanese broadcaster NHK is embracing the technology and it has plans for at least experimental broadcasts to consumers as soon as 2020.

NHK’s head of Science and Technology Research Laboratories, Dr. Keiichi Kubota, has noted the speed with which this new TV format has come of age: It took some two decades for HD to make it out of the labs and into public demonstrations; 4K took half the time, so NHK is eager to bring 8K forward “as soon as possible”, he said.

Dr. Kubota has spent more than 30 years at NHK and more than 15 years

with its Science and Technology Research Laboratories, working on satellite transmission systems and signal processing for HDTV. In that time, he has overseen research activities into digital coding of HDTV, the launch of NHK’s digital satellite broadcasting service, and the nationwide rollout of its terrestrial digital broadcasting services.

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Intelligent Music Mastering Tool from LANDR

The Canadian media industry recognized the changing nature of music production when it named the online mastering tool called LANDR as the winner of Canadian Music Week's Music Technovation Award for 2014.

LANDR is an intelligent online mastering tool that helps musicians and producers achieve professional sound instantly and affordably. Developed by MixGenius in Montreal, the innovative audio engine is designed to improve as it analyzes user feedback and continues to refine its processes, using the power of big data and machine learning.

LANDR currently offers an unlimited service for MP3 mastering, perfect for uploading for streaming applications; pro paid accounts give access to uncompressed WAV files.

MixGenius says the founding technology is based on Ph.D. research in signal processing and has been developed and refined over years at a number of world-leading universities. The CMW Music Technovation Award focused on companies that made a big impact on the art and business of music using technology in the past year.

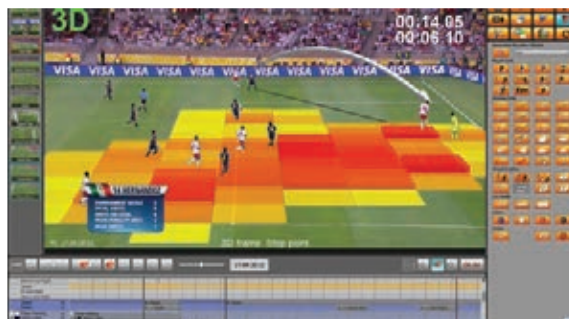
CMW will next be held from April 30 to May 9, 2015.

World Cup Coverage Heats up with Magma Pro

New virtual graphic capabilities for sports broadcasters have been unveiled in preparation for the upcoming Soccer World Cup, aka the Football World Championship.

Italy-based sports media and technology company deltatre and Vizrt have expanded deltatre's Magma product offering typically used for TV graphics and tournament statistics (including tracking data) with the virtual graphic capabilities and 3D camera flights offered by Viz Libero.

Viz Libero, Vizrt's 3D sports analysis tool, accesses the Magma database to attach and display deltatre statistics to a player within the Viz Libero analysis, either by applying tied-to-pitch graphics such as heat maps, or with player pointers to tag the players on the field. The integration of Magma's player tracking data allows for very-fast turnaround analysis clip preparation, as well as direct and easy interactive analysis by the studio



Augmented reality graphics give sports broadcasters and presenters new ways to highlight key players and match-ups

expert. In addition, Magma Pro powered by Viz Libero enables a very smooth and fast workflow for accessing the game events and video footage stored in Magma within Viz Libero.

deltatre has been using Vizrt broadcast graphics products since 2004. Earlier this year the company added several new Vizrt products to their production setup. Viz Trio, Vizrt's character generator (CG), is being used extensively for live production of all real-time graphics, including lower thirds, match-ups, and score boards. Viz Virtual Studio creates augmented reality graphics on set, providing presenters with a new way of highlighting key players and match-ups.

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Kelowna's Homepage

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In the mid 90s, he was taken with another innovative way to use new technology, as he recalled: "Dick, I realised the Internet could be like a transmitter which could reach everyone in Kelowna and beyond..."

No wait for approvals this time: he quickly launched and established castanet.net, and supported it for three lean years with the success of SILK-FM and SILK.NET, which he finally sold in 2007.

He held on to castanet, and again his belief has proven to be well-founded: it tracks more than 300,000 unique visits each week, many drawn by its ability to be a vital part of the local news and media scene (such as through its reports on the terrible Kelowna area forest fires of 2003).

Local advertisers have realized its power and reach, and the ability of its now 24 full time staffers to keep the audience connected and engaged

What advice does he have for other budding entrepreneurs: "Dick, I tell people to find something they're passionate about, and never stop dreaming about being successful. Use every waking moment to "imagine yourself achieving your goal," he continued, and soon "other people will pick up how serious you are. That circles back to re-affirm your own goal."

FOR 30 YEARS DICK DREW HAS BEEN REPORTING CANADIAN ACHIEVERS STORIES ON RADIO, IN SYNDICATED NEWSPAPER COLUMNS, A BEST-SELLING BOOK, AND HIS REGULAR COLUMNS FOR BROADCASTER MAGAZINE.

Editor's Note: At the May meeting of the BC Association of Broadcasters, Dick Drew was among the honourees inducted into the Half Century Club, recognizing their many years of service to the industry. Congratulations, Dick!

He also underscores the value of importance of mentorship, and the ability to save so much time and effort when learning by follow in their footsteps.

One of his early mentors was the late Jack Stark of CHQM-FM, Vancouver, known to many (this writer included) as an outstanding person, great broadcast owner and knowledgeable mentor and friend.

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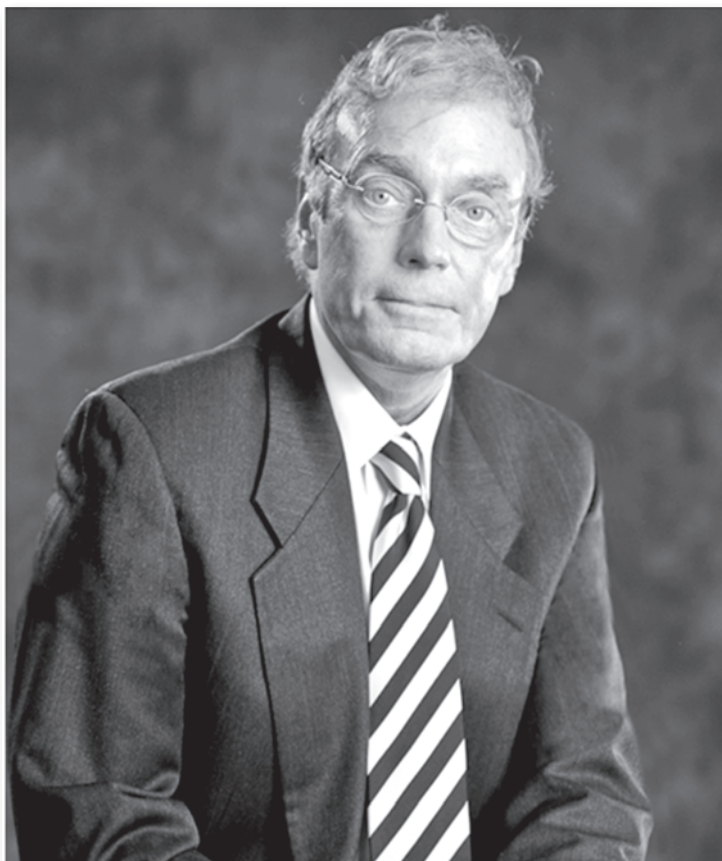
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He's Cast a Silk Net Over the Market

"We are not half way towards full utilization of the Internet. Our success has been simply adapting very conventional media rules to these new platforms."



That's Nick Frost, a unique and innovative Canadian Achiever with a lifelong vision for using new technology to deliver great content.

He started in radio as late night announcer at CKIQ, Kelowna for Walt Gray [now his Worship Walter Gray, Mayor of Kelowna] right out of the Notre Dame University Radio Club in Nelson B.C.

Like every young radio announcer Nick wanted to own his own radio station. Eleven years and three CRTC applications later, he signed on at CILK-FM Kelowna in 1985.

He branded it SILK-FM, and it became known for delivering its smooth as silk soundtrack for Kelowna, and for proving Frost's belief in FM radio to be well-founded.

He's always been an innovator, and early on he also recognized the potential of email, creating a local dial up service called SILK.NET and making sure all of its subscribers had @ SILK.NET as part of their email identity: he received revenue for the service and promotion every time someone sent an e-mail.

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