"We know they're out there somewhere" Evaluating the audience research methods of international radio broadcasters: A case study of Radio Canada International.

John B. Hamilton

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"WE KNOW THEY'RE OUT THERE SOMEWHERE"

EVALUATING THE AUDIENCE RESEARCH METHODS OF
INTERNATIONAL RADIO BROADCASTERS:
A CASE STUDY OF RADIO CANADA INTERNATIONAL

by

JOHN B. HAMILTON III

Presented to the University of Windsor in partial fulfillment of the thesis requirement for the degree of Master of Arts in Communication Studies

Windsor, Ontario, 1987

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Abstract

Radio Canada International is Canada's international shortwave radio station. Among international broadcasters, it is ranked "small-to-medium", and conducts audience research at a level appropriate to its size (14 language sections, 160 hours of weekly programming, 200 employees) and budget ($13.1 million Cdn. in 1986). This thesis evaluates RCI's audience research strategy, providing recommendations for change and improvement.

A model of RCI's operations is built, based on the works of Schramm (1954), Riley and Riley (1959), Ono (1974), Katz and Lazarsfeld (1955), and Rosengren (1970), and others. The model is necessary to understand the importance and difficulties of audience feedback for the international broadcaster, which faces unique challenges: access to its audience, variations in culture and research abilities, difficulties of translation and distance, and self-imposed limitations of bureaucracy, budget, and mandate.

An improvement-oriented "formative" evaluation model (the "CIPP" model) is adopted to guide the research. The "input" evaluation provides the framework for data collection: a literature review, visiting "exemplary" programs, consultations with "outside" experts, and interviews with program officials.
RCI's information needs are determined by examining the organization's mandate and by interviewing management. An ideal research strategy is proposed based on the satisfaction of these needs. Strengths and weaknesses of the various research methods used by international and domestic broadcasters are taken into account. Then, the current audience research program of RCI is outlined, and a subjective comparison is drawn between the ideal and the real. Considering practical factors such as cost and organizational constraints, a number of suggestions are made:

1. RCI should initiate its own sample surveys;
2. It should implement a mailing list survey, a listener panel, and regular focus group sessions;
3. It should institute research for program development, including pre-testing and expert evaluations;
4. Other, inexpensive and innovative methods should be considered.

This study is an initial attempt at evaluating a very specific activity of RCI, one which is currently undergoing review by the organization itself. If the project were to be redone, efforts would be made to interview not only management but staff as well. Some type of data quantification would be contemplated. And more attention would be paid to the organizational reality of RCI. Several valuable proposals for program modification have resulted, and true to the nature of an evaluation, the report has been delivered to relevant RCI decision-makers.

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John E. Hamilton III
THE IMPORTANCE OF RESEARCH

"An enterprise which is research-minded ultimately becomes an enterprise which controls its activities, possessing as it does a loop for the constant feedback of the results of its own behavior" (Cno 1974: 20).
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Chapter I

INTRODUCTION

"Radio is probably the most potent medium of communication in the modern world, and its potential for international understanding... has yet to be realized in full." (Muggeridge 1983: 19)

Ours is an age of global interdependence. For breakfast, we slice a banana from the tropics. We dress in a suit from France, and step into a pair of Italian loafers. Then we zip off to the office in our German car, to work all day on a Japanese computer terminal. Similarly, foreign media products have become part of our daily life. Newsstands display magazines and newspapers from around the world. Cinema marquees boldly announce the latest foreign films. And a quick glance at the TV guide reveals a schedule crowded with American programming. As computer networks, satellite systems, and other technologies become increasingly sophisticated, it is safe to assume that the age of international communication is just beginning.

One communication channel often overlooked, though, is that of international radio broadcasting. North Americans tend to think of radio as a local medium. But every day millions of people sit by their shortwave radios, scanning the airwaves for radio signals, sometimes originating thousands

- 1 -
of miles away. Certainly there is no small choice from which
to pick: over 130 countries operate official, government-run
stations, some broadcasting in over 40 languages. Joining
this cacophony on the air are some 50 "illegal" internation­
al broadcasters and several dozen other, more specialized
stations (Bartlett 1985: B8).

In spite of these impressive numbers, international
broadcasting has been the subject of little scholarly study.
Even though North America has been one of the major targets
of international radio broadcasts since the 1930's, ours has
never been a "shortwave" society. We have rich and highly—
developed information channels (so numerous, in fact, that
we suffer somewhat from communications overload). And his­
torically, we have had a free and relatively accessible
broadcasting system. So the shortwave listening tradition
has not emerged on our continent as it has on others.
Research indicates that less than 10% of radios in North
America have shortwave capability as compared with up to 75%
of receiving sets in other regions of the world (Hibbits

Lack of attention to international radio is also due to
the perception that it is a dying medium. Its seventy-year
history has been rather unspectacular as compared with such
technological marvels as television and direct broadcast
satellite. Radio in general has been overwhelmed by the fas­
cination with other, more glamorous technologies. But iron­
ically it is its technical simplicity, coupled with low cost and portability, which experts feel will allow radio to be the "medium of the future" (DuCharme 1986).

Internationally, radio broadcasting is accepted by most nations as the only "valid" direct-from-broadcaster-to-audience means of communication, and is tolerated (although not necessarily embraced) by most governments much of the time. Other media—print, cinema and television—depend on favorable regulatory policies and accessible distribution systems to reach foreign audiences. Except for limited across-the-border spillover, television programs must either be imported into a foreign country or be picked up on satellite dishes, which can only occur with the consent of the government of the receiving nation. On the other hand, radio signals know no borders. They travel thousands of miles, directly from transmitter to receivers. They can also be easily targeted at a distant audience. New technologies have improved the viability of international television in the future, but

"No technical revolution is likely to replace radio as [an important] medium of international communication; television and satellites will at most be complementary..." (Hale 1975: 172).

And with radio set ownership estimated at over 1.5 billion (Mytton 1986: 35), including substantial numbers in the developing world, this appears to be a valid statement. Some organizations, such as the British Broadcasting Corporation [BBC], are actively exploring the possibilities of interna-
tional television broadcasting. But the technical and political limitations (not to mention the exorbitant costs) of television seem to assure the dominant role for radio in international communication for the near future, at least.

However, the purpose of this thesis is to examine the role of audience research in international radio broadcasting. Audience research enables a broadcaster to determine if its programming is useful and attractive to the audience, indeed if there is even an audience listening.

There is nothing particularly mysterious about audience research. It is, simply,

"...an aid to decision-making for TV and radio management and program-makers. It has an important part to play in the planning process, and feedback is essential...[for a] broadcasting service." (BBC 1984: 2)

This place of audience research in the broadcast process is illustrated in Figure 1.

It suggests that appealing and effective broadcasts are a result of informed planning. Planning is facilitated by solid research findings. The better the research, the easier will be the task of planning, and the greater the likelihood of reaching appropriate decisions.
Figure 1: The Role of Audience Research in the Broadcast Process. (BBC 1984: 2)
1.1 Purpose of this Study

This thesis will examine the various methods of audience research for international radio, using a case study approach to concentrate on one broadcaster in particular, Radio Canada International (RCI). RCI is the international shortwave service of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. Like many international stations, RCI conducts audience research.

Using an evaluation model, this thesis will determine an ideal audience research strategy for RCI, based on strengths and weaknesses of the various audience research methods available to an international broadcaster. Then, it will look at what is currently being done, and will examine the practical constraints of the "real life" audience research strategy at RCI. By comparing the two - the ideal situation against the real - recommendations will be made for changes and improvements to RCI's audience research strategy. Feasible suggestions and several creative ideas will also be proposed.

1.2 Organization of this Thesis

Chapter II of this thesis discusses the theoretical assumptions underlying the study. Several different communication models and theoretic approaches have been identified as applicable, but in this writer's opinion none adequately describe the unique characteristics of international
radio broadcasting. Therefore, aspects of these approaches have been combined into a new model which represents RCI, its organizational structure, operations, and audiences. Understanding this model is essential in understanding the role played by audience research at RCI. However, this model should not be confused with another model, that of evaluation, which is presented below. The former has been developed by this writer to better understand RCI and its various activities; it is a conceptual tool. The evaluation model, on the other hand, is a research tool developed by evaluator Daniel Stufflebeam, and has guided the data collection and interpretation in this project.

Chapter III is a brief overview of international radio, providing the necessary background on the subject for the North American reader. The second section of the chapter presents a short history and description of Radio Canada International. It concludes with a determination of RCI's information needs, necessary in a complete discussion of audience research.

Chapter IV focuses on audience research methods, both quantitative and qualitative, and their strengths and weaknesses. Examples are provided from RCI and other broadcasters. The methods are ranked as to their efficacy in satisfying the information needs identified in Chapter III.

The results of the evaluation are presented in Chapter V. The reader is led through the research process and conclu-
sions which logically arise from the data are presented. Recommendations for improvement are made in Chapter IV, and implications and limitations of the study are also explored.

At the outset, it is necessary to clearly define the several terms which appear frequently throughout this work. Below are the working definitions of "international broadcasting", "audience research", "audience measurement", and "program research". Following this, the research method is defined and explained in detail.

1.3 Definitions of Terms

1.3.1 International Broadcasting

It may seem rather obvious what international broadcasting is: any broadcast which crosses a national boundary. But a more precise understanding may be reached by defining what it is not. It is not only broadcasting over the shortwave band (as is commonly assumed); medium (AM) and long waves (as well as other, indirect methods) are used in the quest for international audiences. It is not the exclusive domain of government agencies; there are non-governmental international stations on the airwaves: some illegal "clandestine" operations, some religious, some commercial.

International broadcasting is also not usually considered as "spillover" broadcasting, which characterizes the situation in many places, including Windsor/Detroit: radio (and TV) signals cross the border not necessarily because of
intent but merely because of the geographic proximity of the two cities. International audiences result because of chance. True international broadcasts are

"... intended, either exclusively or in part, for audiences outside the frontier of the country from which the broadcast originates" (Bumpus 1979: 1).

1.3.2 Audience Research

Audience research is a general term encompassing any "research" into the nature of an audience. It may include developmental research (to determine how a program may better serve an audience or potential audience), feedback research (to provide data on the audience: who listens? how many? and so on), and evaluative research (was the program successful? Did the audience understand it? Did we communicate our message properly?) (Eiselein 1981: 86, 88). For the purposes of this paper, audience research has been broken into two components: audience measurement and program research.

1.3.3 Audience Measurement

Audience measurement is to radio what circulation or readership figures are to newspapers and magazines, what box office receipts are to the film industry. It is quantitative in nature, a "numbers oriented" approach that builds a picture of the total audience or segments of it. Audience measurement is conducted from the point-of-view of the media, because individuals do not usually consider (or care) that
they are part of a "mass" audience. It is summative; in other words, it is conducted after a "communicative act", to determine how many or "what kind" of people listened to a particular broadcast or a particular station at a particular time.

1.3.4 Program Research

Audience measurement is in some ways a contrast to program research, the qualitative arm of audience research. Program research is concerned with individual responses of audience members. It is audience-centered, seeks personal opinions, and is usually conducted with much smaller groups of people than are normally used for audience measurement purposes. Program research is often conducted before a program is actually broadcast. Its purpose is to assist in the design, presentation, and modification of a broadcast program. It is thus forward-looking in nature; that is, it is useful for making improvements and changes.

1.4 Research Method

1.4.1 Evaluation Defined

Evaluation is "an exercise of insight and informed judgment to assess program effectiveness" (Mayo 1980: 267). It is a directed research process which seeks to establish relationships between programs of activity and the impact of these programs on human behavior, social conditions and
organizational environments (Holec 1978: 30). Evaluation is a research tool which involves the systematic collection and manipulation of information. Historically, it is derived from the philosophy of liberalism, which assumes that, when presented with a range of options, the individual has freedom to choose the "best". By systematically examining a situation, an evaluation presents the various options for a course of action and makes recommendations for future decision-making. Decision-makers can thus choose the "best" for their particular situation.

Evaluation is a type of feedback, similar to feedback described in communication theory:

"...[feedback is] a reverse communication process initiated by the receiver and directed back toward the communicator...largely nonverbal, largely verbal, or both...usually provided on an ongoing basis...[so] it can have a substantial influence on message formulation by the communicator" (DeFlleur and Ball-Rokeach 1982: 133).

But while interpersonal communicative feedback is generated spontaneously, formal evaluative feedback is planned and integrated into a program. Evaluative information is also most often compiled and reported by an outside evaluator, a third party who plays no role in the normal functioning of an organization. The outsider thus mediates between a program user and program management.

Figure 2 shows the role of evaluation in the decision-making process. The monitoring of programs leads to the discovery of discrepancies between actual and planned per-
performances in programs. This information, fed back to management, allows informed decision-making: it leads to either a revision of initial program goals or to changes in programs, or both.
Discrepancies are found between actual and planned performances in the programs which are then monitored ("Evaluation") which are incorporated into actual programs or activities who establish goals and standards

Management either revises its goals or implements changes in programs

Discrepancies are interpreted and communicated to management (Feedback)

Figure 2: Evaluation in the Decision-Making Process
(Bechrest et.al. 1984: 758)
1.5 Why Evaluate?

The point has been made that evaluation provides information to those empowered with making decisions in an organization. This has an impact on both policy-making and planning:

"At the policy level, decision-makers are dealing with broad plans, and general principles and priorities from which programs stem. Hence policy makers attend to large questions, and act in situations of great uncertainty. By providing policy makers with information, evaluators can help to reduce uncertainty and enable them to obtain a clearer picture of the problems they face, be more aware of the consequences of particular policies, and decide what is significant and should be focused on.

At the planning level, where decision-makers are dealing with specifics, the evaluator can facilitate planning by providing background information on alternatives and giving a much broader analysis of their implications (political, social, etc.) than the cost-benefit type of analysis on which planners might tend to focus." (Cuthbert 1985: 6-7).

Another reason that a government program (such as RCI's audience research) should be evaluated is that it is supported by taxpayers, who deserve some report on of the efficacy of the operation. It is appropriate to examine how an international broadcaster allocates its resources and to evaluate if it does so efficiently. As one organizational activity among others, then, an audience research program is a valid target for evaluation.

Traditionally, evaluation has been defined as either summative (after Scriven 1967, a term which asks retrospectively how well a system or project has performed), or
Formative (where the primary focus is on how an on-going process or program can be improved). Formative evaluations are more useful in practical terms, oriented as they are towards program modification. Thus, the evaluation approach selected for this project is both formative and improvement-oriented: Daniel Stufflebeam's "CIPP" evaluation model.

"...CIPP is intended to promote growth and to help the responsible leadership so as to excel in meeting important needs, or at least, to do the best they can with the available resources" (Stufflebeam and Shinkfield 1985: 166).

1.6 The CIPP Model Explained

"CIPP" is an acronym which stands for the four types of evaluation Stufflebeam has defined: context evaluation (which assesses the goals and objectives of a program), input evaluation (which looks at the design and strategies of a program to meet organizational needs), process evaluation (which examines the actual implementation of a program), and product evaluation (which judges the outcomes of a project to decide whether to continue, terminate, modify, or refocus an activity) (Stufflebeam 1983: 129).

Why was this model selected as an evaluation framework? First, Stufflebeam has presented a very clear and step-by-step process for data collection for each of the four types of evaluation he has defined. It appeared to be a model well-suited to the goals of this writer.
Second, the goal of CIPP is not to prove, but to improve. This seemed appropriate for evaluating the audience research strategy of RCI. Because the research program is on-going, presumably RCI management is interested in improving it. Any modifications which will result in more comprehensive or more useful data (or cost savings) would probably be welcomed.

Third, CIPP appeared appropriate because of its "systems view". CIPP looks at a program to be evaluated as just one component in a large and complex organization, and assumes that the formal evaluation is only one part of the total mosaic of evaluative information available to decision makers. The CIPP evaluator is cautioned that the ultimate decisions of change almost always reflect dynamic forces—irrational or rational—that extend far beyond the evaluator's sphere of study and influence. Recommendations thus are made in full recognition of organizational, financial and political constraints.

1.7 The Input Evaluation

Of the four types of evaluation which CIPP advocates, the author has adopted the goals of an input evaluation, which is a description of current and possible program practices. By seeking out, identifying, and critically examining potentially relevant activities (as well as examining program elements already in place), an input evaluation will
"help clients consider alternative program strategies in the context of their needs and environmental circumstances, and [will] evolve a plan that will work for them" (Stufflebeam 1983: 173).

An input evaluation uses a number of different information gathering techniques, including questionnaires and interviews. Stufflebeam has outlined the four basic steps in data collection for an input evaluation. First, a literature review illuminates the program to be evaluated and places it in an overall context. Then, by visiting "exemplary programs", the evaluator will discover how other organizations are dealing with the problem in question. In addition, outside experts should be consulted for their comments and opinions. Evaluators are often generalists, and the gathering of informed ideas is crucial to the relevance of the final evaluation. Finally, interviews with program officials ("staff") are necessary to gather information about the organizational context and the program itself, and to collect and generate "ingenious" or creative ideas for improvements (Stufflebeam 1983: 170-171).

Very little literature was located on RCI's audience research strategy was located. In fact, there is a lack of published material on international broadcasting as a whole, especially on audience research strategies. However, by visiting other international broadcasters (the BBC in London, England, and Radio France Internationale in Paris), and by conducting interviews and corresponding with outside experts (from the Voice of America, Radio Luxembourg, domestic CBC
Radio, and the University of Minnesota), the critical ques-
tions became apparent. These initial interviews generated a
series of questions which were sequenced into an evaluation
strategy (which is presented below). Suggestions for devel-
oping this strategy were incorporated from Stufflebeam
(1985) and two other evaluators, Morris and Taylor Fitz-
Gibber (1978).

1.8 Evaluation Strategy

1.8.1 Primary Questions

1. Given the information needs of Radio Canada Interna-
tional, what methods of audience research could best
meet them?

2. Is Radio Canada International currently using these
research methods? If not, why not? How possible is it
that they could be implemented?

1.8.2 Question Sequence

1. Information Needs: What are the goals of RCI? What
information does RCI require to assess its effective-
ness in attaining these goals? In other words, what
are RCI's information needs?

2. Ideal Strategy: Given these needs, what audience
research methods best supply the required information?

3. Current Situation: What is the current situation at
RCI with respect to audience research? What is the

organizational situation? What audience research methods are being used? How frequently or infrequently? What are the costs, practical considerations, and potential problems with these methods? Which information needs are being adequately addressed? Which are being inadequately addressed?

4. **Recommendations:** Considering the information needs of RCI, as well as organizational and practical concerns, how can its audience research strategy be improved? What audience research projects should be dropped or added? What other alternatives are possible?

The two primary questions that this thesis poses conform to the improvement-oriented objective of an input evaluation. They will be answered by logically working through the question sequence.

1.9 **Methodological Issues**

Several issues deserve mention at this point: the validity of the question sequence, the selection of the respondents, the possibility of response bias, the meta-evaluative, and the final use of the evaluation.

The evaluation strategy and question sequence was, as stated above, developed by this writer with input from experts in the area, and from evaluation literature. The questions were not pre-tested in any formal sense but outside experts commented on the soundness of the design and
indicated that the questions were indeed appropriate to the study.

The respondents chosen for questioning were members of RCI management and of the CBC Research Department. They were selected because of their accessibility, their overall knowledge of the area, their decision-making responsibilities within RCI, and their willingness to co-operate with this writer. No RCI staff members were available for interviewing.

It is possible, then, that the limited sample of respondents has led to response bias. However, some RCI comments were double-checked for accuracy with outside experts or with other RCI interviewees (who of course may have biases of their own), but with generally positive results. As well, this writer has fairly extensive interviewing experience (as a journalist), and it is felt that responses were on the whole honest, open, and complete. And considering the nature of this project (conducted by a student, outside the CBC, with no official role to play in RCI operations), there appears to be no reason for subjects to evade the truth. Nevertheless, there may be hidden agendas which did not surface during the interview process, and this must be kept in mind.

Additionally, this writer had little personal stake in evaluating the audience research program of RCI. Of course, the project is unavoidably biased by the evaluator (that is...
why it is normally inappropriate for a staff member or "stakeholder" to evaluate his or her own program; an outsider may be less favorably biased). One way to minimize possible bias is to conduct a meta-evaluation (an evaluation of the evaluation itself). This is a method to examine the final results for their soundness and relevance (Shinkfield 1985: 325). This project will ultimately be meta-evaluated by the thesis committee.

The last concern — the eventual use of the evaluation — is of great importance. Many evaluations remain unread and ignored. To avoid this, the final evaluation report must make useful recommendations, ones which are feasible, ethical, accurate, and reflect some measure of reality. And, of course, the report must reach the proper individuals, those who are responsible for the decision making. These people have been identified by this writer, and every attempt will be made to ensure delivery of the project to them.

1.10 Limits of the Study

There are a number of outside groups which might be expected to have some interest in and possible influence over RCI (for example, various government agencies, immigrant groups, foreign governments, etc.). This thesis will not deal with possible influences from outside, not because they are unimportant, but because of the enormity of the project should these factors be considered.
An attempt will be made to describe RCI's audience research in terms of operational and organizational constraints. Some opinions will arise from this description, but in no way does this writer presume to engage in a study of organizational communication. However, a minimum of such information must be gathered for the purposes of the evaluation.

Third, a five-year time limit has been imposed on this study. That is, in collecting information, emphasis was placed on projects discussed or conducted later than 1982. In fact, very little data was available from before that time, but this writer felt that a five-year period was long enough to include a variety of examples of RCI projects, and short enough to be researched thoroughly.

Finally, even though this writer has attempted to conduct as genuine an evaluation as possible, there are several areas of uncertainty. RCI management was extremely receptive and co-operative in this project, but it was not possible to meet any production staff for their opinions and input. As mentioned above, all information has been gained through interviews and correspondence with management. As well, some of RCI's more recent audience research reports were not available for inspection, not because of any policy of secrecy but because they could not be located or were still being processed at the time of interviewing. And one study, a self-evaluation of RCI's operations, including its audi-
ence research methods, is being completed at the time of writing. This report would undoubtedly be of use to this writer but will not be available before final presentation of this thesis.

III Summary

Like international broadcasting, international audience research has rarely been studied. It is hoped that this thesis will be a small step in dealing with some of the problems encountered in the area. Clearly there is a need for attention to the field:

"Current audience research methods do not tell broadcasters nearly enough about their listeners. Radio continues to use survey tools designed primarily to measure huge audiences for a mass medium, which radio is not. Researchers should...measure the quality and intensity of listening...and the results should be used in the making of programs and program policy" (Bruce 1977: 27).

In addition to assisting in policy-making and planning, there is another, perhaps more personal reason for studying audience research. Radio broadcasters, relating as they do in an intimate way to their listeners, need reassurance that there is indeed someone "out there". Isolated in a sound-proofed radio studio, among a sea of electronic equipment and in front of an open mike, even domestic broadcasters sometimes forget that their listeners are friends, neighbors, people sharing the same community and the same culture. But when audiences are half a world away, how easy it...
is for an announcer to feel removed and distant. Any reliable picture of those people out there as individuals can only assist a broadcaster in more effectively communicating with his or her audience.
Chapter II

BUILDING A MODEL OF RCI

The need for an overall model of RCI was mentioned in the previous chapter. An organized view of the organization and its activities is required to understand the operations of an international broadcaster, to map out the various activities and influences in a bureaucracy like RCI, and to depict the factors and constraints which might reflect the evaluation. It is also needed to understand the position and role of audience research within the organization. This model is derived from the work of a number of communication scholars, broadcasters, and research practitioners. No single theoretic proposition or communications model presented in the literature adequately takes into account the unique characteristics of international broadcasting, but elements of several have been combined to produce the RCI model. Each is briefly described below, with a discussion of its relevant component for this writer's model.
2.1 International Broadcasting: Communication Across Cultures

2.1.1 Schramm's Model of Mass Communication

A number of communication models might locate international radio broadcasting within a theoretic framework. The Schramm model of mass communication (1954), for example, is simplistic but embodies several salient concepts (see Figure 3).

It points out that individuals belong to primary and reference groups and that media messages may find their way from the individual receiver to members of surrounding groups. But the weakness of this model is its assumption that feedback from the audience is only of an inferential type; it leaves little room for a larger role for audience research in the system.
Figure 3: Schramm's Model of Mass Communication. (From McQuail 1984: 31)
2.1.2 Riley and Riley's Sociological View of Mass Communication

The work of Riley and Riley (1959) is more suitable in this regard, but not without its own problems. While some theories give the impression that the communication process takes place in a social vacuum and that influence from the environment is minimal, Riley and Riley propose that mass communication is just one social system among others, all of which influence the individual in some way. Figure 4 below illustrates their proposition.

This model frames international broadcasting in sociological theory. It acknowledges the differences in social structure between the environments of the communicator and the receivers. Both exist "within or alongside other social institutions" (Katz 1977: 40).

Riley and Riley indicate the direct influence by primary groups (such as family, friends, and colleagues) on each party in the communication process. They also take into account the influence and identification with reference groups (those groups with which a person may or may not have direct contact, but which represent salient attitudes, values, and behaviors to the individual). In other words, messages are selected and shaped by senders according to personal and peer group influences (among other factors). Receivers are likewise guided by social relationships to perceive, interpret and react to these messages in certain ways.
Figure 4: The Communication Model of Riley and Riley.
(McQuail 1984: 35)
ways. This has become a basic tenet of the communication process, and is of special significance when the two communicating parties are of different cultures. Chances of misinterpretation and communication breakdown are high. But, irrespective of cultural differences, Riley and Riley's model emphasizes that ultimately, social groups are important in influencing an individual's world view. Thelma McCormack comments that

"...the world is in very small part shaped by the media. It comes to me through social networks: through my friends, through my colleagues, through my neighbors...In other words, what the media do and what they only can do is set the agenda. How we select from that agenda politically, socially, psychologically, is beyond the competence of the media" (Bruce 1977: 67).

But Riley and Riley appear to ignore the fact that spontaneous feedback is absent in most mass media situations. Messages from communicator to receiver and from receiver to communicator appear to be equal in number and intensity in their model. This is certainly not the case in reality; information from the audience must be generated, at great difficulty and expense to the broadcaster. And it never approaches the same level, in quantity or quality, of messages communicated from broadcaster to audience.
3.1.3 **A Model of Research in the Broadcasting Enterprise**

Other models acknowledge spontaneous feedback[1] but few in communications literature treat audience feedback in the mass communications process with the importance it deserves. However, emphasis on the role of research is found in the work of Ono (1974), a researcher who has developed a model of research in the broadcasting enterprise (Figure 5 below).

In this model, "III" represents the international society, "II" the specific society of the broadcaster, and "I" a broadcast enterprise. There is interaction between each. The various activities of the broadcaster are illustrated: "A" (corporate planning); "B" (the planning of broadcast programming); and "C" (the production process). Together, the three lead to the broadcast of material to an audience located in society. Research is shown as feedback information contributing to the adjustment of the activities of not only "C", but for "A" and "B" as well.

"Since the production and composition of broadcast programs constitute specialized work, there is often the likelihood that the work is based on self-justification of the [producer or announcer] as a professional. It may be dangerous to rely on the personal judgment of a broadcasting specialist. It is necessary to ascertain opinions, likes and dislikes of people in a larger context so that broadcast programs can respond and reflect such changes in the information desired by people. And this can only be achieved by research...[that is] scientific, systematic and continuous" (Ono 1974: 17).

Elements of the models of Schramm, Riley and Riley, and Ono have been incorporated into the theoretical framework of
Figure 5: Functions of Research in the Broadcasting Enterprise.

"A" = corporate planning; "B" = planning of broadcasting; "C" = the production process.
(Ono 1974: 19)
RCI presented below. They provide, however, a somewhat removed view of the mass communication process. It is felt that in order to humanize it, the receiver of the message must be identified. Following is the development of a concept of the individual audience member within the mass audience.

2.2 Defining the Audience

2.2.1 The Two-Step Flow Hypothesis

It was indicated above that audience members should be regarded in their social roles rather than as isolated consumers of the mass media. A hypothesis that satisfies this suggestion for international broadcast communication is the "two-step flow". Proposed before the popularity of television, it says that ideas often "seem to flow from radio and print to opinion leaders and from them to the less active sections of the population" (Katz and Lazarsfeld 1955: 32). Certainly societies are socially stratified; in different ways the two-step flow theory suggests a stratification based on information use. This has been accepted by most international broadcasters as a valid model for their communication flow.[2]

Radio broadcasters, both domestic and international, have in recent years identified specific sub-groups within the population and have attempted to target these groups with specially designed programming. This "narrowcasting" has in
International broadcasting assumed the existence of a group of listeners who actively seek information from afar. While the numbers of such internationally-minded individuals may be small, it has been assumed that they are among the most influential members of their respective societies. As Delauzun and Wilding (1985: 265) write, some broadcasters console themselves by saying that "the audience may be small - but the Prime Minister listens".

McQuail and Windahl (1984) point out that a multi-step model may be a more accurate description of the process, but, whatever the case, the theory ascribes predominance to the mass media as the primary or only source of ideas or information in a society, which is ordinarily seen as a weakness of the hypothesis. However, it is an assumption which reflects the reality of shortwave radio in closed societies (such as Communist countries). Access to information outside of official government sources may be difficult or impossible. And, where only a few have shortwave radios (or bother to listen), information from international broadcasts may be passed on directly or via the underground press. This has been proven; several studies have shown that international broadcasting has its biggest input in countries with restricted access to independent news sources (Mytton 1986: 38), and in times of crisis (Silvey 1974: 95).
But, as much as broadcasters want to believe they communicate with an influential audience, there is another group of regular listeners who are probably not "opinion leaders": the "aficionado audience". These are the "DX" hobbyists (those who try to pick up as many stations and countries as possible), armchair travellers, shortwave club members, and other, more technically-minded shortwave fans. Elliott (1987) has suggested that this group may actually be somewhat anti-social in behavior, more interested in discovering new stations that in listening to program content. In general, though, the two-step flow theory appears to be useful in building a model of the audience.

2.2.2 The "Constraint" Model of the Audience

Information disseminated by a broadcaster will reach various individuals, either directly or via word-of-mouth. How, then, should a broadcaster attempt to define and categorize its audience? Should it identify only those individuals who actually listen, or can it also include those other, indirect audience members?

One way to define the audience is a practical method based on physical, economic, and linguistic constraints. This has been developed by an international television broadcaster, the Sky Channel, a British-based satellite station which broadcasts in English to fourteen European countries (Sky Channel 1986: 1). Sky Channel's original model is presented in Figure 6.
Target Area
Households with cable TV availability

Households cable connected
Sky "aware" (those aware of Sky Channel)

Sky audience

Figure 6: The Constraint Model of the Sky Channel television Audience. (Tydeman and Lloyd 1985: 27)
This shows the audience as a clearly-defined sub-group of the target area's total population. Within the universe of potential listeners, a station such as Sky Channel can hope to reach only a small number of people. This model emphasizes some of the real-life factors which complicate the successful delivery of international radio programming: restrictions of a technical, economic, linguistic, and personal nature. It also indicates the substantial body of non-listeners, a reminder to researchers that those defined as audience members are often a "vociferous minority who are prepared to take that initiative in making their presence known" (Delauzun and Wilding 1985: 258).

2.2.3 The Audience as a "Public"

But how to categorize the audience? Demographic data (describing characteristics such as age, education and income) is often used, but it is relatively sterile and cannot necessarily be generalized across cultures. As well, demographics may be useful for statistical analysis but do little to help broadcasters design better programming. One way audiences can be defined is in terms of their personal likes, dislikes and tastes. Herbert Gans offers the concept of the "taste public":

"...people are not receptacles who will accept any facts or ideas poured into them. Rather, people tend to act only on matters that concern them directly and they then select the kind of information they think is relevant...[information] that relates to their own experiences, interests, and problems... [information] which accepts their goals and values and speaks to their aesthetic standards and art forms" (Gans 1974: 143, 134).
McQuail (1983: 152) also uses the concept of the "public" in his definition of the audience:

[The audience is made up of a number of] active, interactive and largely autonomous social groups which are served by particular media, but which [don't] depend on the media for [their] existence" (McQuail 1983: 152).

In our society, for example, publics are evident in various audience formations, like the "informed" public, the "political" public, and "special interest" publics (McQuail 1983: 152). These groups first exist in society (they are not creations of the media), have some degree of self-consciousness and common identity, and have possibilities for internal interaction and for influencing the communication supply. In other words, they are active shapers of their world, internal and external, and are capable of providing feedback or opinion to the media channels which they use.

This implies that focusing on an audience's "media behavior" to the exclusion of its other social roles is somewhat limiting. Some broadcast researchers agree with this. Katz (1977), for example, mentions the need to study people even if and when they are not listening. And, in a cautionary note to researchers to avoid the erroneous axiom "Those who do not listen, do not count", Delauzun and Wilding write:

"One thinks of the parable of the lost sheep: of the shepherd who leaves his flock of 99 to find the one that is lost. The difference in [international research] is that we may often concentrate on the flock of one and ignore the lost 99" (Delauzun and Wilding 1985: 258).
2.2.4 Audience Activity

The audience as "public" embodies the concept of audience activity. Gone is the "magic bullet" theory, which proposed an across-the-board, direct from source-to-receiver transmission model of mass communication. It presented the audience as a passive sponge with a willingness to absorb and believe every bit of media content to which it was exposed.

Audiences, however, exhibit quite the opposite:

"...[We see a] voluntaristic and selective orientation by audiences toward the communication process...[M]edia use is motivated by needs and goals that are defined by audience members themselves, and...active participation in the communication process may facilitate, limit, or otherwise influence the gratification and effects associated with exposure...Audience activity is best conceptualized as a variable construct, with audiences exhibiting varying kinds and degrees of activity" (Levy and Windahl 1985: 111).

Levy and Windahl state that kinds and levels of activity depend not only on individual differences but social factors (class, mobility) and media considerations (such as message availability, style, and complexity) (Levy and Windahl 1985: 120).

2.2.5 Uses and Gratifications

Accepting that members of the audience are active and influenced by individual differences leads to the mention of the "uses and gratifications" approach. It focuses on the individual's uses of the mass media for obtaining gratifications or need fulfillment. Behavior is to be explained to a large extent by the needs and interests of the individual. The model looks at the receiving process:
“...even the most potent of mass media content cannot ordinarily influence an individual who has "no use" for it in the social and psychological context in which he lives. The "uses" approach assumes that people's values, interests, associations, and social roles are pre-potent, and that people selectively "fashion" what they see and hear to these interests" (Katz, quoted in McQuail 1969: 71).

Among the several models of the uses and gratifications approach, the most widely-cited is that of Karl Rosengren (1974) (Figure 7 below).

He relates eleven elements, beginning with the needs of the individual (based in part on Maslow's Hierarchy of Needs (1970),[5] which result in problems, created by both individual characteristics and the surrounding social conditions. Perceived problems and their solutions may give motives for actions, which are then directed towards a wide range of goals of gratification or problem-solving types, media usage among them.

The approach assumes a goal-directed, active audience member, living in a social group (or public), who links need gratification with media choice, and who is sufficiently self-aware to be able to identify his interests and motives when asked (or, at least, to recognize them) (Katz, Elulser and Gurevitch 1974: 21). As Rosengren's diagram shows, not only the individual but the media and other social and economic structures may be affected by the uses and gratifications process.
1. Certain basic human needs of lower and higher order

2. Differential combinations of intra- and extra-individual characteristics

3. The structure of the surrounding society, including media structure

4. Differential combinations of individual problems, being more or less strongly felt,

5. Perceived solutions to these problems;

6. Differential motives for attempts at gratification-seeking or problem-solving behavior,

7. Differential patterns of actual media consumption

8. Differential patterns of other behavior,

9. Differential patterns of gratifications or non-gratifications

10. The individual's combination of intra- and extra-individual characteristics

11. The media structure and other social, political, cultural and economic structures in society.

*Figure 7: Rosengren's Model of the Uses and Gratification Approach. (From McCull 1984: 77)*

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Criticalisms that the approach is vague, inconclusive, and too individualistic in nature have been countered by McQuail and Gurevitch (1974), McQuail (1985), and Mendelsohn (1974), among others. Mendelsohn sees uses and gratifications as an instrument for media policy-making, as a catalyst for qualitative research, and as a means of evaluating media performance (Mendelsohn 1974: 316). Chaney and Chaney write that, since in-depth interviews are a particularly appropriate method for obtaining uses and gratifications information, the approach allows researchers to "grasp the subjective meanings of those concerned" (Chaney and Chaney 1979: 135). Uses and gratifications is judged by this writer to be a valid view of the audience, and is incorporated into the RCI model as part of the description of the individual audience member.

2.3 Development of a Model of Radio Canada International

From the various theoretical propositions outlined above comes a comprehensive model which represents Radio Canada International, its activities and influences, its audiences and the various influences on them which have been identified as important in this study. As well, the possibilities for audience feedback—generated through research—are shown, entering into the broadcast organization at specific points for different purposes (Figure 8 below).
Figure 8: A Model of the Operations of Radio Canada International

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This model is loosely patterned after One's work (Figure 5), showing RCI as an organization located within Canadian society, which is in turn surrounded by the global social system. On the left hand side is RCI and a diagram of its various activities; on the right, its target audiences are shown. At the extreme right is a sample target area, highlighting the individual listener within the area, and listing some of the influences and constraints on him or her.

Again based on the work of One, RCI's principal goal has been defined as the production of programming ("messages") for transmission to its several target areas around the world. Message production is guided by broadcast planning, and by on-going formal and informal evaluation conducted by both management and the production staff itself. The messages are eventually broadcast ("message transmission") according to several factors, some of which are under RCI's control while others are not. There is the possibility of "noise" interfering with the transmission process, including actual "noise" in the form of atmospheric interference, as well as other factors which vary according to the nature of the target area and audience itself.

The various factors influencing the activities of RCI (identified through extensive personal interviews conducted by this writer at RCI, described in more detail below) are shown: RCI's policies and its mandate, financial considerations, and political, structural and bureaucratic realities.
These organizational considerations govern to a great extent the behavior of RCI management and staff. These people are also affected by their personal relationships (in ethnic groups, with other journalists and broadcasters, and so on) and by their attitudes as "professional journalists". These latter influences were suggested by the works of Schramm and Riley and Riley.

The right-hand side of the model represents the various audiences RCI is targeting. The fundamental differences in the three politico-socio-economic systems mean that RCI must target these audiences in very different ways. For example, in the developed world there is a lack of a shortwave "tradition" and an abundance of media competition. And since much of RCI's programming is aimed at Canadians living in other developed countries or to "Canada-philes," the presentation of information may be quite different than that broadcast behind the Iron Curtain, where individuals may not have other information sources. However, they may feel that shortwave signals beaming in from outside are as propagandistic and biased as the official government news channels. (There may be some truth to this). And, of course, it is Communist governments which attempt to electronically "jam" the radio signals from foreign countries. In the developing world, economic hardship (i.e., people do not have the financial resources to buy shortwave radios) may be a serious constraint to successful message delivery. Cultural factors
(like the submissive role of women) also affect the audience.

It is clear, then, that the individual radio listener is influenced by the social, political, and economic characteristics of his or her situation. This is seen in the picture of the sample target area at the extreme right of the model. The work of Katz and Lazarsfeld, Sky Channel, Gans, Levy and Windahl, and Katz has been synthesized in developing the picture. A number of influences on the individual which are present in every cultural context are identified. The individual listener is seen as existing among a much larger population of non-listeners. And a number of attributes (both technical "constraints", derived from the Sky Channel model, and personal characteristics, taken from Riley and Riley, the uses and gratifications approach, and so on) are presented as significant influences on the listener. While not exhaustive, this list combines elements from the aforementioned theoretic approaches and is thus fairly comprehensive in giving a view of the pressures and influences on the individual audience member.

At the top right corner of the model, audience research (as one form of "audience feedback") is shown as a communication loop from the audience member back to the broadcaster. As defined by Ono (1974), it may influence the organization in one of three activities: message production, broadcast planning, and corporate planning by management.
As a communication channel back from the listener to the broadcaster, it is difficult to overestimate the importance of audience research in the system of international broadcasting presented in this model. If it is acknowledged that true and effective communication can occur only in a circular system (that is, when messages can flow in both directions), then the significance of audience research can be understood. Therefore, evaluating the audience research process can also be considered worthwhile.

The various theoretic stances presented in this chapter have each contributed to the model of RCI in Figure 8. As stated earlier, this model has been developed in order to reach a clear understanding of a little-known organization and its activities, and to depict the role of audience research within the organization. As well, it has summarized the various influences on the individual listener, setting him or her in a social system. Assumptions made throughout this project are based on relationships established in this model, therefore the reader should refer back to it as necessary.
Chapter III

A SHORT OVERVIEW OF INTERNATIONAL RADIO BROADCASTING

3.1 Origin and Development

"The history of international broadcasting is a microcosm of world history and the Cold War, the Korean War, and the many subsequent worldwide upheavals have ensured that interest in international broadcasting has remained very much alive" (Bumpus 1979: 5).

Radio amateurs were experimenting with long-distance broadcasting before World War I, but it was political rather than scientific motivation that ultimately accelerated the growth of international radio communication. Technology was too primitive for radio to play much of a role in the war, but in 1922, Lenin, who had described radio as "a newspaper without paper...and without boundaries" (Hibbitts 1981: 8), established the most powerful broadcasting station in the world, Radio Moscow.

The first permanent radio services directed at overseas listeners arose from the needs of the European powers to maintain and strengthen the links with their overseas possessions. In the 1930's a number of commercial stations emerged in Europe, aimed at international audiences and advertisers. One (Radio Luxembourg) remains successful today.
(Bumpus 1979: 3). But the most dramatic development of the Thirties was the gaining political prominence of international radio. The Axis powers had vigorously seized and exploited the opportunities that radio offered, using it "...for ruthless and insistent indoctrination at home, and for psychological warfare overseas, preparing for the aggressions of World War II" (Abshire 1976: 19).

International radio effectively ended a nation's ability to insulate its population. By 1945, fifty-five states were broadcasting some four thousand hours of programming a week, much of it emotional, contradictory, and passionate (Hibbitts 1981: 10).

Peacetime brought a crisis of another kind to international broadcasters. When hostilities ended, governments were reluctant to continue pumping money into what they considered primarily a political weapon. But services from the many newly-independent nations have emerged, and established broadcasters have added, deleted, and modified various language services in synchrony with domestic and global political developments.

3.2 Purposes of International Radio Broadcasting

"De tres nombreux pays entretiennent des radios internationales, de l'Italie au Canada, de la Suede a la Chine, de la Suisse a l'Australie. Parmi elles, nombreuses, les radios de propagande pure, qui ne cherchent pas a informer, mais a diffuser un message a fort contenu ideologique et a exprimer la voix d'un gouvernement. C'est notamment le cas de Radio-Moscou, qui diffuse plus de deux mille heures de programme chaque semaine. Mais il exist aussi d'autres modeles de radios internatio-
males qui se prevalent d'une mission d'informa-
tion, malgré une contrôle gouvernementale plus ou

The primary purposes of international radio have, since
the outset, been political, either offensive, propagandis-
tic, or revolutionary:

"From the Arbeiterradiobund of the Weimar republic
to the radio libres of France, Belgium, West Ger-
many and Italy in the 1970's, radio has been con-
stantly used as a means of social and political
intervention in Western Europe. At the same time,
from Algeria to Latin America, from Vietnam to
Afghanistan, radio has been an important weapon in
revolutionary struggles against colonial powers" (Rabcy 1984: 28).

Following the terminology of Browne (1982), government
broadcasters sometimes attempt to "coerce" or "intimidate".
For example, Radio Moscow and Radio Havana (Cuba) are well
known for using propaganda to toe the government line.

But stations do not always attempt to influence the
affairs of other states. They may instead act as "diplomats"
on the international stage. Dr. Heinz Fellhauer, Administra-
tive Director of Germany's Deutsche Welle, writes:

"Broadcasting, which like no other medium...is
assigned an important role in foreign
affairs...Only broadcasting can portray on many
levels...the situation of nations and their polit-
ical profiles, even aspects that are not visible
at first glance...[External services] thus fulfill
their peaceful mission as the diplomats of broad-
casting" (Fellhauer 1978: 10, 13).

Some countries have introduced international services as
a symbol of their newly independent status, thus (it is
thought) enhancing their prestige. As Ghana's Director of
Sound Broadcasting observes:
"An external broadcasting service, like a national airline, presents a nation to the outside world at once directly and subtly" (Bumpus and Skelt 1978: 108).

Perhaps the most extreme example of the desire for prestige is Radio Tirana, the voice of Albania. Surely one of the minor players in international politics, Albania supports the seventh-largest international radio service in the world, transmitting over 550 hours of programming a week in 22 languages (Browne 1982: 252).

An international radio station may also be a public relations tool. One way is to be a "mirror of society": to project a picture of daily life via the airwaves. Some stations present portraits of ordinary citizens, such as Radio Japan's weekly program One_in_a_Hundred_Willing. (Browne 1982: 33). However, the "mirror" held up to the society may be highly selective, and many facets of daily life can remain largely unreflected, depending on official government policy.

Another function of shortwave broadcasting remains from colonial days: to retain contact with citizens living abroad. As ties with colonial homelands weaken, this role may diminish (although even non-colonial countries, such as Canada, want to keep in touch with nationals travelling overseas; this is part of RCI's mandate).

One important purpose of international radio is to disseminate accurate news and information. The BBC may be best known for this. It also broadcasts educational programming,
such as language lessons. Other international broadcasters are classified as "converters and sustainers," in their attempts at religious or political indoctrination (Boyd 1983: 143). Most government stations engage in political rhetoric at some level. The religious stations are characterized by a strong evangelical fervor (much like TV evangelists) and most are Christian, although several have been established in the Islamic world.

A more immediately practical purpose of international broadcasting is as a seller of goods and promoter of commercial interests. A station may either be commercial in nature, or as a government-sponsored station attempt to sell its country's economic policies, exports, or tourist attractions.

Finally, some international stations attempt to entertain their audiences. Some take to the airwaves merely to preserve a frequency allocation on the broadcast band. A nation which leaves a frequency unused risks losing it permanently, either through official reassignment or to an aggressive opportunist who realizes that the channel is empty.

3.2.1 Methods of Delivery

While the specific purpose of a particular international radio station varies according to its operating agency, all are on common ground with respect to methods of delivery. Most international broadcasters transmit their signals via
shortwave, because these are able to travel extremely long distances. But shortwaves are subject to fading and interference. To ameliorate this situation, some broadcasters use relay stations to boost their signal strength. These relays may be costly both financially and diplomatically: because they are located extra-territorially, relays exist only by courtesy of a host country.

Broadcasters use two other methods to get their message to listeners: retransmission of programs on foreign domestic stations and transcription services, which send tape and disc recordings to stations in other countries.

3.2.2 Problems of International Broadcasters

International radio broadcasters face a number of serious challenges. For one, broadcast frequencies are scarce. And although the International Telecommunications Union [ITU], a United Nations body, assigns and regulates frequencies, like the UK it has no formal authority to enforce regulations. Richard Meesham of the BBC sums up the situation:

"Shortwave radio these days is like being at a wild, crowded party...where the one who shouts the loudest gets heard" (Bale 1975: 111).

Similarly, all international broadcasters face challenges in their quest to effectively communicate ideas and information. These problems may be financial, political, or psychological. As government agencies, most broadcasters are easy targets for budget cuts, located at the fringe of government or broadcasting organizations. Second, they appear una-
ble to prove their influence and impact. Since many stations do not conduct appreciable audience research, bureaucrats may remain unconvinced of the existence of a listenership.

Political barriers to broadcasters are erected by foreign governments. One of the most obvious is to make listening to certain stations illegal. Another tactic is to limit the availability of radio sets which can receive the unwanted frequencies.[6] But the most commonly used method to block incoming broadcasts is by jamming:

"...the deliberate interference with a broadcast transmission with the intention of making it unintelligible to listeners in certain areas. Even this, however, is unlikely to be entirely successful for it is not possible to blot out reception throughout the entire target area. Jamming is very costly to operate, too, and it normally has the perverse effect of making listeners more determined to try and hear the broadcasts. Forbidden fruits are often thought to be the sweetest" (Bumpus 1979: 14).

Broadcasters must also surmount psychological barriers of their listeners. There is increasing competition for the listener's attention, and shortwave services must consider their "listener psychology" when developing formats and designing programs:

"[The listener] feels no sense of proprietorship towards a station outside his country. The station owes him nothing, and any information or entertainment it provides is like a gift — not to be subjected to harsh criticism. If he doesn't like a station, he won't bother to write a letter of complaint: he will simply turn the dial" (CBC 1978: 353).
3.3 Radio Canada International

3.3.1 History

With the emergence of broadcasting in the 1920's as a feasible technology, there were those who saw it as an ideal means with which to address the perennial-Canadian problems of cultural accommodation and self-definition. The geographic enmity and linguistic and cultural duality of Canada created a unique situation to which an instantaneous and economical medium like radio was remarkably appropriate. This was evident to the government which, in the mid-1930's, made a formal and financial commitment to national unity and regional identity with the establishment of the English and French radio networks.

Politicians were also interested in winning for Canada a larger role on the international stage. Canada had not been actively involved in meaningful diplomatic relations with many countries outside the United States and the Commonwealth. Canadian leaders wanted to change Canada's image as the giant sleeping in the north of the American continent. International radio was identified as one way of announcing to the world that Canada had "arrived" and was now a power worthy of notice. Government officials were seeking a means to enhance Canada's prestige and were interested in promoting Canada's raw materials and manufactured products to foreign markets.
Two events were instrumental in the decision to launch the Canadian International Service (the I*S.): the allocation of shortwave frequencies to Canada, and the start of the Second World War. The ITU warned that if Canada's reserved frequencies were not used, they would be reallocated to another country (Hall 1973: 288). More importantly, the war in Europe put pressure on the government to inaugurate an international service. This demonstrated Canada's support of the "psychological war of broadcasting" (Hall 1973: 66), which the other Allies were conducting against Germany, and also guaranteed back-up transmission facilities for the BBC should theirs be destroyed or captured by the enemy. Thus, after a decade of debate, the voice of Canada finally went out to the world on February 25, 1945.

After the war ended, international political complications and internal constraints began to limit the I*S.'s ability to function as intended. The growing fear of Communism created problems; it was questioned whether the I*S. should follow the strident anti-Communist line of BBC and VOA. The I*S. was attacked as a "propaganda instrument", and because a number of I*S. staff were recent immigrants, the service had an unavoidable "foreignness" about it which reinforced the growing mistrust. As well, it was rightly felt that the service was poorly-supervised and poorly-managed.
Due to its extreme, sometimes abusive anti-Communist broadcasts in the early Fifties, the I.S. faced another problem: its signals were being completely jammed by the Soviet Union. The service was thus perceived by Ottawa as virtually useless. Unless new policies were imposed, Parliament was going to disband it. A new restraint was imposed on producers and announcers, but not until June 1963 was Soviet jamming permanently suspended.

The dominant feature of the 1960's was the need to cut back expenses. The service had to that point conducted no audience research so had no evidence of the existence of a body of listeners. It was also impossible to predict the possible effects of its broadcasts, so its credibility with government officials was low. As well, the CBC was developing the Northern Service at this time, which was going to use the same New Brunswick transmitter as the I.S., therefore it could expect to lose a substantial portion of broadcast time to domestic radio priorities.

But, in 1965, the Fowler Committee reviewed Canada's international communication policies, and made this comment:

"External broadcasting is more than an international status symbol. It is an important instrument for the propagation of western ways of thought; it brings information, enlightenment, and is adjunct to external aid to the developing countries. For Canada, which is and should continue to be a leader among the middle powers, ... international broadcasting is an activity that should commend itself, to politicians, idealists, and hard-headed businessmen alike, as a necessity" (Hall 1973: 197).
3.3.2 RCI's Mandate

In 1972, the service was renamed Radio Canada International. In 1973, a new policy statement was approved by the CBC Board of Directors:

"RCI is directed by the CBC to provide a program service designed to attract an international audience with the purpose of further developing international awareness of Canada and the Canadian identity by distributing, through shortwave and other means, programs which reflect the realities and quality of Canadian life and culture, Canada's national interests and policies and the spectrum of Canadian viewpoints on national and international affairs" (CBC 1878: 350).

And, in acknowledgement of the growing number of Canadians travelling abroad, RCI was also given the mandate to provide

"...more Canadian news and information in those areas already served under the primary objective of broadcasting to foreign audiences...[to serve these Canadians living and travelling overseas]" (RCI 1985c: 1).

Presently, RCI receives policy guidance from the Department of External Affairs, advice on target areas and languages to be considered. But RCI is wholly responsible for program content. There are daily broadcasts in fourteen languages to Europe, East and West, the USSR, the USA, the Caribbean and Latin America, and Africa. There are weekly half-hour broadcasts via satellite to Japan and Hong Kong. RCI is among the "small-to-medium" participants on the shortwave stage.[7] It is similar to the services of Sweden, Switzerland, and the Netherlands, and in fact has participated with these three broadcasters in a number of ways. In 1976 they formed the "International Broadcasting Group of
Four*, co-operating in program production, policy sessions, personnel exchange, audience research projects, and collaboration in promotional activities and news coverage.

3.3.3 Determining the Information Needs of RCI

By its very nature, audience research is designed to address certain questions posed by the researcher. Presumably, these questions emerge out of some perceived needs for information. To start this evaluative project (and to begin answering the first primary research question ("Given the information needs of Radio Canada International, what methods of audience research could best meet them?")), it is necessary to determine the information needs to RCI.

As an international broadcaster, RCI has many of the same information needs as similar organizations. And as an arm of the publicly-owned CBC, it has several specific needs which reflect its organizational mandate. In fact, Director of RCI Program Operations Allan Familiant feels that RCI's information needs are primarily defined by its policies. In other words, "RCI's research is guided by [its] own mandate" (Familiant 1986).

The mandate (which is presented in Section 3.4) has three thrusts. Canada's shortwave station is responsible for

1. developing international awareness of Canada;
2. for distributing programs which reflect the realities of Canadian life, Canada's national interests and policies, and the spectrum of Canadian viewpoints; and
3. for broadcasting programs to the growing number of Canadians abroad.

In order to assess the degree to which these objectives of RCI's mandate are being met, research is conducted with certain informational needs in mind. These include

1. A need to determine audience size (for example, is there anybody actually listening?);
2. A need to know what in fact RCI is saying in its programming; are its objectives being met?; and
3. A need to discover if Canadians abroad are aware of and use the service.

3.3.3.1 A Need to determine audience size

Director Betty Zimmerman has expressed the importance of determining audience size. In an era of severe financial cutbacks at the CBC, she believes the best way to emphasize RCI's importance to the government is to make a persuasive case that RCI has captured a substantial audience, and the best way to do that is through statistics.

Zimmerman has also indicated that of the seven target areas to which RCI broadcasts three are of special importance: the Soviet Union and Eastern Europe, the USA, and the Pacific Rim. These are zones of particular political or economic importance to Canada as determined by the Department of External Affairs (or, as with the USA, previous research has shown a substantial audience has already been built, therefore RCI has a vested interest in monitoring its per-
formance with this, its largest single body of listeners. Audience research in these areas is thus significant because of the extra importance given to these regions.

3.3.3.2 A Need to know if RCI's objectives are being met

Zimmerman has also realized a need for determining whether programs have attained the mandated objectives of the international service. She has underlined the importance of "knowing what the various language sections are saying and how they are saying it" (Zimmerman 1986). She believes this information is important for self-evaluation for both production staff and management.

3.3.3.3 A Need to discover attitudes of Canadians abroad and at home

RCI Manager of Development and Communication Keith Tandall has stated that it is important for RCI to determine the awareness and attitudes of Canadians toward the service. He has pointed out that the future financial security of the organization depends on the awareness and support of Canadians and that audience research must determine if this support exists.

RCI is not only interested in the awareness and uses of the service by Canadians overseas. There is recognition that the service must be better known at home, among Canadians, to give it the political leverage to withstand budget cuts in an era of restraint. Therefore, although RCI is primarily
interested in researching Canadians abroad, the actual
"users" of their product, there is also a movement towards
probing the attitudes of Canadians within Canada.

Through interviews, and following from the theoretical
discussion presented above, two additional information needs
have been identified. The uses and gratifications approach
has indicated that effective communication must fulfill some
needs or perceived needs of audience members. Therefore, a
broadcaster has a need to determine if its programming is of
appropriate design and presentation, and if program content
is appropriate and of use or interest to the audience.

And, from the two-step flow theory, from McCuail's defi-
nition of the audience as active and capable of choice, and
from the suggestion that it is also important to examine the
"non-audience" for clues to its non-participation, RCI has a
need to determine who in a particular society is actually
listening to RCI, and why; conversely, who is not listening,
and why not.

In summary, then, RCI's five information needs have been
identified as follows:

1. A need to determine audience size and characteristics
   in all target areas, but especially in the Soviet
   bloc, the USA, and the Pacific Rim;

2. A need to know how many Canadians living or travelling
   abroad tune to RCI, and how they feel about the ser-
   vice; as well, a need to know how Canadians "at home"
   feel about RCI, if indeed they know of its existence;
3. A need to ascertain the "effectiveness" of RCI programming in communicating the Canadian viewpoints it is mandated to convey; and whether program content is reflective of the organization's policies.

4. A need to determine if programming is of appropriate design and presentation; if program content is of use and/or interest to the audience; and

5. A need to determine audience make-up in a particular area or society, and to determine exactly why people are listening. Conversely, who is not listening in the target area, and why not?

3.3.4 Evaluating RCI's Audience Research Setting

RCI appears to have few organizational barriers to audience research. Management has shown a sensitivity towards research and a willingness to experiment within certain boundaries. The recent move of research responsibilities from Ottawa to Montreal has meant a closer working relationship between RCI and CBC Research; and RCI management has ensured that good organizational and personal relationships have been maintained with other broadcasters, an important element for effective co-operation. Channels of communication within RCI appear to be open, as well.

However, there are some other concerns. Even though researcher Louise Gagne is located across the hall from RCI management offices, RCI work constitutes just a part of her job, and often takes second priority to domestic research.

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projects. As well, Gange indicates that her superiors and research colleagues do not understand or appreciate the intricacies of international research; she has no one from whom to seek advice, and at times finds herself working in the dark. For example, with RCI's on-going extrapolation project, Gagne must do a great deal of background research on her own time on the countries and societies in question. While interesting, this research is incredibly time-consuming for her.

Financially, of course, RCI is limited in what it can do. At the moment, emphasis is on the more expensive quantitative methods. While Familiant (1986) has said that it is doubtful that the research budget will be increased, the management's open attitude towards innovation suggests that modifications could be made in the research strategy. In recent years, alternative techniques have been tested out (such as Sherman's studies), Zimmerman has indicated a need for area research, and Randall has suggested a radio contest be tried in conjunction with listener mail research. Without doubt financial restrictions exist, but there is the will to develop and implement a number of low-cost alternatives on an experimental basis.
Chapter IV

AUDIENCE RESEARCH: TOWARDS AN IDEAL STRATEGY FOR RCI

4.1 Introduction

This chapter explores the various methods of audience research available to international broadcasters, with the purpose of identifying the most useful methods for RCI. In order to develop this "ideal" strategy (and thus satisfying the first primary question of the evaluation strategy presented in chapter 1), each research method is ranked as to its possibility of satisfying the several information needs of RCI (presented in the previous chapter). Rankings are of a high/medium/low nature and are based on information gathered in the literature review and through consultation with outside experts and RCI personnel. The various research methods and possibilities for satisfying the information needs are summarized in Table 1.

First, however, a general introduction to the problems facing international radio researchers follows. It will orient the reader to the discussion to come.
4.2 Problems for International Broadcasters

A radio audience is shifting and ephemeral, yet to a broadcaster it is finite, fixed in terms of composition and preferences. Some broadcasters think they have an audience simply because they are putting out programming. But most require proof of that listenership, and attempt to expand or modify their intuitive feelings in three areas:

1. How many people are in the audience?
2. What are they like?
3. What do they think about our programs? Is our programming successful?

These questions - about audience size, composition, and reaction - are the building blocks of audience research. They appear deceptively simple, and, living in a research-conscious society, we may find nothing particularly difficult in imagining how they go about finding the answers. But for international broadcasters, things are more complicated: audiences are farther away, less homogeneous and more culturally diverse, "with different levels of media sophistication" than domestic audiences (Gupta 1984: 76).

As well, there may be other motives for undertaking research which can complicate the picture. Administrators may request studies of audience size in order to justify funding, or to justify an organization's very existence. They may also want data that will raise the fewest indications of problems, or may simply institute research projects "because it's always been done that way" (Browne 1982: 325).
Audience research for domestic radio broadcasters is commonplace in most Western nations. Many organizations, both governmental and private, want information on public opinion, and are willing to pay research firms to collect it. But most domestic research is one-dimensional:

"...the simple twist of the wrist of people switching their sets on or off or tuning from station to station often provides the single most important piece of information about audience behavior" (Beville 1985: xii).

Domestic broadcasters rely on this data to build a composite of the size and make-up of their audiences. Such "ratings" are especially important to commercial broadcasters, because advertising rates are set according to audience size. And agencies who place advertising with radio stations need audience estimates to help in media planning and buying (BBM 1985: 1). But the "on/off" nature of broadcast research has been criticized:

"Information of the size and composition of the audience for a given medium or program is a measure of "Switch On". This information is necessary...however, the residual dimension, "Switch Off", is more trenchant [because] this indicates...a shortfall in communication...A missing audience may indicate "Switch Off" - audience rejection. It is clearly of fundamental importance for policy-makers...to know the size and composition of the non-audience, i.e., the number and type of people for whom, in other terminology, the medium or program is providing inadequate use, or inadequate gratification, or both" (Grenfell 1979: 11).

Beville (1985) has suggested other weaknesses of ratings: that they are crude estimates at best, that they are not necessarily representative of the true situation (for exam-
People, radio stations stage contests, promotions, and other "hype" during ratings periods to artificially inflate their audience size, and that they are misused by over-emphasizing the "bottom line": audience size.

In Canada, the Bureau of Broadcast Measurement [BBM] conducts regular surveys of Canadian radio audiences. It uses a diary method to collect information on "how many people of different ages are listening during each quarter-hour of the broadcast day" (BBM 1985: 1). Respondents are asked to keep track in a diary of their listening patterns for a three-week period. The completed diary is then mailed to BBM for coding and analysis with others received from the same geographic area.

This research approach is not appropriate for international radio. International audiences are not necessarily literate, may not be served by a postal service, and may not understand how to keep an accurate record of their habits. As well, listening to shortwave broadcasts does not lend itself to such detailed time-period-by-time-period measurement and reporting methods. Most international services broadcast discontinuously and for limited periods (CBC RD 1979: 7).

As stated in an internal memo of the International Broadcasting Group of Four:

"Theoretically, international audience research is the same as national audience research. In practice, application of research methods on an international level is extremely difficult, and sometimes ever impossible. So compromises are
inevitable, especially for financial reasons. No information can be better than wrong information! In this sense no research should be done, unless it provides reliable data for satisfying a specific information need" (IBGF 1977: 1).

International broadcasters face a number of problems: first, how to conduct research in distant countries, in different cultural environments and in different languages? Translation distortion may be the most obvious concern, with potential misinterpretation arising from differences in the meaning of words, in syntactical contexts, or in the cultural context of the survey respondents (Ervin and Bower 1952: 596). Translating surveys in one country for implementation in another requires a knowledge of dialects, bilingualism, and back-translation (Sechrest et.al. 1985: 218). Each of these increase the cost of any proposed study. And researchers must work in areas with poor road systems, inadequate telecommunications, racial or religious tensions and even war.

Second, in much of the world — particularly the developing nations — there is little need for audience research. Consequently, if research capacity exists, it may be "haphazard, piecemeal, and lacking in long-term perspective" (Gupta 1984: 76). In some countries, market research has historically been sponsored by manufacturers, so any expertise will be in the cash economy of the society, which is not necessarily representative of the population in which the broadcaster is interested (BBC IEAR Feb. 1984: 2).
In many countries, asking questions about listening to foreign radio stations would be foolhardy, to say the least. But audiences may not be accessible in the first place. The Soviet Union, China, Eastern Europe and certain other countries are for all intents and purposes completely closed to outside researchers. Some of these nations carry on domestic research, but researchers there are limited in what they can ask. And, as Browne (1982) has noted, the results of such research are rarely made public.

Thus, international broadcasters are in a unique situation: they can find out the most about audiences in the countries with well-developed research traditions, those in the West. But these audiences are also the best-served by the mass media and are less interested in listening to international radio. The subjects of most interest, those in closed societies, remain shadowy and inaccessible. This has led to a number of alternative research approaches, some quite different from those in domestic audience research.

4.3 Audience Measurement

Audience measurement has been previously defined as mostly quantitative in nature. [10] Broadcasters feel that "head-counting" is necessary. This section examines the techniques traditionally used for measuring audiences: survey research, mailing list surveys, the analysis of listener mail, and the simulation of audiences by computer, and the "people meter".
Each discussion includes an example of the research method to highlight practical strengths and weaknesses by indicating which information needs of RCI can best be met by the method. Table 1 at the end of the chapter summarizes the discussion.

4.3.1 Sample Surveys

There is almost unanimous agreement among international broadcasters that "the only reliable method of finding out how many people listen...is to commission sample surveys in target areas" (BBC IBAR Feb. 1984: 1). There is also agreement that, for international broadcasters, it is the most difficult and most expensive research to conduct.[11]

International survey researchers encounter the same problems as their domestic colleagues: locating respondents, designing valid and reliable questionnaires, ensuring that interviews are conducted properly, and that the final results are representative of a larger population. They face additional challenges, too: those of a cultural and linguistic nature.

Locating proper respondents is an initial difficulty. Entry into some societies is problematic; it may also be difficult to use proper sampling techniques, the backbone of valid surveys. Up-to-date census or voting lists or street plans may not exist. Therefore the "universe" of possible respondents may be impossible to define. Some areas pose even more unique challenges: some have no street addresses,
for example, like shanty towns and communal compounds. These require special sampling techniques.[12] And in some countries (like the USA), door-to-door surveys have become impractical to conduct (people do not open their doors to strangers); telephone surveys meet with better response.

Even in shortwave countries, perhaps nine out of every ten survey contacts will be "wasted" because the respondent does not listen to international radio (Browne 1982: 320). Or, they may be confused; an RCI-sponsored study examined a group of American respondents which had been originally identified as shortwave listeners. After questioning them a second time, about 60% were found to have confused listening to shortwave with listening to CB radio, ship-to-shore (marine) radios, and police scanners" (CBC Memo, Sept. 21, 1984).

So some researchers have considered using snowball sampling (described in Endnote 8 below) to avoid the prohibitive costs of total methodological purity.

Another way they lower costs is by buying in to an "omnibus" survey: a multi-faceted survey, often conducted regularly, in which various clients include their questions. This means that questions on radio listening and foreign stations may follow or be followed by questions on laundry detergent or political preference. The broadcaster is but one sponsor among many, and the opportunity for special treatment or placement on the omnibus rarely arises. But it is a less expensive way to locate respondents for later, more in-depth interviewing.
Researchers may also "piggyback" onto the surveys of other international broadcasters. Stations regularly share research data and contribute financially in exchange for inclusion on each other's surveys. Most often the larger stations conduct the research, and the smaller ones piggyback onto it.

Included in Appendix A is the BBC Standard Questionnaire, from which all regular BBC surveys are developed. But even medium-length questionnaires such as this reveal only basic data about a listener (such as radio ownership, awareness of various stations, and tuning habits). It must be redesigned and translated for each application, remembering the broadcaster's information priorities, local demographic variables, and "the degree of technological literacy of the target area" (BBC IEA No. 4, Sept. 4, 1984). The BBC attempts to ensure accuracy by back-translation, and by conducting pretests and encouraging interviewer feedback and "color" material. If interviewers encounter certain problems or unusual situations, they are asked to record it in their diaries.[13]

4.3.1.1 RCI's Survey Strategy

RCI conducts or commissions regular sample surveys on its own, with other broadcasters, and most frequently, by piggybacking onto BBC projects. In 1986, RCI participated in three BBC surveys, in Morocco, Venezuela, and on seven English-speaking islands in the Caribbean. The total cost
was about $8000. Louise Gagné of the CBC Research Department has said that BBC surveys are always methodologically sound, based on the standard EEC questionnaire (Appendix A), and conform to the Survey Checklist (Appendix B), a composite tool developed by this writer to determine the validity of a questionnaire and the overall merit of a survey project. It is based on similar checklists put out by BBC IBAR (Feb. 1980) and IFA (1970).

RCI has begun an extrapolation of all survey data. It involves the calculation of probable total audience figures. Based on a BBC technique, audience figures are extended from actual data collected in a limited area to represent the probable audience in a larger geographic area. Gagné uses social, economic, cultural, and linguistic factors as guidelines. For example, extrapolating the audience in Zambia might be based on survey results from its capital city. Audience projections could then be compiled for other Zambian cities of similar size, as long as cultural and other factors are similar (and, of course, if RCI's signal beams in clearly to the other areas). Famillant (1986) hopes this will "fill in the holes" of current survey research; certainly this method would be unacceptable for domestic research but has become accepted among international broadcasters.

No reports were available from the most recent RCI surveys, so a 1980 survey of Mexico was randomly selected for
examination by this writer. It was conducted by Gallup Mexico, under the direction of Constance McFarlane at CBC Research, as part of a monthly omnibus survey of 35 Mexican cities excluding those near the US border. The report is complete, the project methodologically sound (according to Appendix E), and includes a copy of the original Spanish questionnaire and the English translation. It reports the size and composition of audiences of RCI, American and Cuban stations, and other shortwave broadcasters, as well as listening behaviors and interests of shortwave users. The cost of the report is not disclosed (CBC RD Feb. 1984).

From this report, it is obvious that survey research is an ideal tool to determine audience size and audience composition. Properly designed, surveys can also discover attitudinal variables (of Canadians abroad, for example). They are not, however, very useful in determining if ECI is properly reflecting Canadian viewpoints in its broadcasts, or if programs are appropriate to individual audience members. See Table 1 for a summary of these ratings.

4.3.2 Mailing List Surveys

Sometimes broadcasters want quick and inexpensive information on listener reactions to new transmissions, whether they find it difficult to tune in, or what they think of the coverage of a particular news issue (BBC IBAR Feb. 1984: 7). Such research can be done by sending questionnaires to recent correspondents, or to those on a program guide or other relevant mailing list.
Voice Magazine is the Voice of America's English-language program guide. Kim Andrew Elliott of VOA writes:

"Listener mail, and the Voice mailing list, provide useful bases for survey projects. These may not be representative samples of VOA listeners, but these questionnaires provide a quick and economical way to determine the listening habits and program preferences of the more devoted VOA listeners. We are using this method more and more to complement the sample surveys" (Elliott 1986).

The BBC uses a somewhat different method, printing a questionnaire (a "listening diary") inside their monthly program guide. It is thus sent out to all subscribers, but the response rate is generally lower than if individual letters were sent (although the promise of prizes may be an incentive for response; see Appendix C for an example).

Another method of finding mail respondents is to obtain an appropriate mailing list from which to select names, depending on what target group of respondents is desired. This might include subscribers to shortwave journals, news-magazines, or limited-interest publications.

Mailing list surveys depend on the interest and motivation of the receiver to respond. Some broadcasters attempt to extend mailing list results to larger populations, to derive audience size from the information they gather, but mailing lists are not a microcosm of the general population. They are most appropriate for collecting information on preferences and listening habits from identifiable sub-groups than for estimating total audience size.
4.3.2.1 RCI's Mailing List Strategy

RCI has conducted one mailing list survey to date, "Canadians in the USA: Results of an Omnibus Mail Survey," executed by Barry Sherman of the University of Georgia in July 1983. A mail questionnaire was sent to 2468 American-address subscribers of two Canadian newsmagazines, *Maclean's* and *L'Actualite*. The goals of the study were to identify and describe this group of people, to measure their expressed interests and desires for Canadian information, to assess their awareness of shortwave in general and RCI in particular, and to identify the most appropriate media and methods needed to reach Canadians or "Canada-phones" in the USA with Canadian news and information.

Findings were illuminating, although they cannot be generalized to the entire Canadian population residing in the United States. The recommendations following include a suggestion to continue efforts to popularize shortwave and RCI to the USA, to explore possibilities of other means of broadcasting (such as syndication, and to develop and test pilot programs targeted for US television, cable, and radio). The survey was commissioned by Keith Randall (who was at that time responsible for "Other Means" of broadcasting of RCI, so it may reasonably be wondered whether the recommendations were made in recognition of his mandate. However, the recommendations seem to be logically derived from the survey results. The project cost $3000 US (about $4200 Canadian).
One of RCI's current projects is to develop a public relations plan to promote itself as a "tie to home" for vacationing Canadians or as Canada's "voice to the world". But first, it must determine a starting point for the F.R. project, by determining the current awareness of its existence by Canadians. One project has involved a questionnaire mailed to a limited number of "opinion leaders" in Canadian society, mostly business people. No information was available as to the cost or success of this project.

With regards to RCI's information needs, mailing list surveys appear to best provide information on Canadians abroad and at home, although they may also provide feedback on the appropriateness and uses of programming by the individual, assuming the questionnaires are properly worded and targeted at relevant individuals.

4.3 Analysis of Listener Mail

If there is one controversy among international audience researchers, it concerns the analysis of listener mail. A large station may receive over half a million letters each year. Many letters request broadcast schedules or selections of popular music, and tell the station little more than listener names. But mail from overseas may offer fascinating glimpses into the daily lives of listeners, and has a strong attraction for the researcher. As compared with verbal answers to questions posed by interviewers,

"...such letters represent an act of responsiveness by people abroad. In addition, they consti-
tute data which are collected continually and without cost from countries all over the world" (Herzog 1952: 608).

The arguments for analysing mail are based on three assumptions: that it is economical, that it is sometimes the only available information, and that despite the fact that letter-writers are "biased", they are reasonably representative of the population or sub-group for which the broadcast service is intended. Certainly the first assumption is true: letters are a cost to a station only if it offers prizes or other promotional incentives to writers (in addition to any salaries to staff for handling the mail, of course). And, sometimes letters are in fact the only contact between listener and broadcaster when alternative, more reliable sources of information are either unavailable or too expensive.

But it is the representativeness of letter-writers that is problematic. Arthur Laird, former Director of CBC Research, wrote:

"...I was struck once again by the great reliance that seems to be placed by most foreign broadcasters of 'what the letter writers say'! - this despite the fact that we all seemed to agree about the dangers of assuming that such correspondents necessarily reflect the characteristics and views of the actual audience" (Laird 1978).

Several investigations have looked at this problem. One concluded that "the public letter file in itself is not a sufficiently accurate reflection to [audience] needs and interests" (McGulre and LeRcy 1977: 85). Both the BBC and

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CBC Research have conducted methodological studies comparing survey contacts with letter writers and mailing list respondents.[14] The latter concludes in its comparison of West German survey and postal contacts that

"...mail contacts are quite untypical [sic] of ICI listeners in general - not only demographically, but in other characteristics and habits relevant to listening, perhaps most notably in their preferences for certain types of program. Nor can it even be assumed (as it often is) that letters and mailing lists at least provide a reliable 'pool' from which an international broadcaster's regular listeners can be identified: here the mail contacts who listened regularly...were quite unrepresentative of the cross-section of regular listeners...as identified in the sample survey..." (CBC RD Feb. 1983: 14).

The BBC report is more optimistic about the use of listener mail. While recognizing the problems of self-selection, BBC researchers said that "it may be felt that the wishes of committed, frequent listeners are more important than those of casual listeners" (BBC IBAR Sept. 1983: 14). However, the assumption that letter-writers are more committed or more frequent listeners is unwarranted; as the aforementioned CBC report has stressed, there has been no evidence to prove that letter-writers are representative of a group of regular listeners.

Nor are the opinions expressed in letters necessarily wide-ranging. Browne (1982), for example, suggests that letter writers are by nature more complimentary than critical. He also notes that the very act of writing may be discouraged in some countries where it is regarded as a "hos-
tile" act, and that there is no way for broadcasters to verify if letters are genuine. And there are certain categories of listeners which "are generally very important to international stations but which rarely appear in the ranks of letter writers" (Brown 1982: 321), such as business people and government officials.

Is the analysis of mail of any use at all, then? Elliott (1987) has said that it is rather time-consuming and inefficient because of the small proportion of letters with suggestions or comments. But shortwave hobbyists (who sometimes request QSL cards, souvenir postcards issued by the shortwave station which serve as a confirmation of reception to the hobbyist) do generate technical information useful to engineering departments, since a QSL request usually contains information on the quality of the broadcast received. And views expressed in letters about program content or transmission times may, at the very least, indicate trends or focus attention on possible changes of attitude in the audience at large (Herzog 1952: 610). Letters may also serve as points-of-departure for future questionnaires. McFarlane writes:

"...I do think there is a place for letter writers - they can provide one with hunches and creative ideas, they can inform one about specific problems and certainly they are useful to demonstrate that there is an audience out there. I do not, however, think they should be used as a source for quantifying information about listening behavior or about opinions on programs..." (McFarlane 1983).
The CBC report *Those Who Write* and *Those Who Listen* recommends that when information from letter writers is the only available, programmers "would probably do best to ignore it and to rely instead on their own experience and personal judgment" (CBC RD Feb. 1983: 14). Even statistical manipulation by weighting is not likely to improve a non-sampled, self-selected group of informants such as postal contacts.[15]

4.3.3.1 RCI's Mail Analysis

As discussed above, RCI has committed considerable effort to the question of listener mail analysis. Two full-time staff are employed at the Montreal headquarters to open and answer all letters, which arrive at the rate of about 4000 a month, 50,000 a year.[16] Part of their duties is to record critical and evaluative comments from writers; these are passed along to section heads and management. Each month an "Audience Mail Comments" report is circulated to all staff. It is a tally of all letters received to date and includes excerpts from a selection of them. The report states that "It is our editorial policy to include all negative comments and criticisms" (RCI Communication Dept. Feb. 1987: 16). A sample of comments follows.

"I especially enjoy the news from Canada as I hear virtually nothing about Canada here from other news sources." (Oakland, California)

"Votre programmation est fort appréciée. Mais j'aimerais bien entendre plus souvent des chansons francophones." (Charleston, SC)
"You succeed in presenting to the Polish listeners a country that is so geographically distant that many people still regard it as an exotic place." (Translated from Polish)

"I'm a sailor and during our long trips abroad RCI has kept us well-informed." (Montevideo, Uruguay) (Translated from Spanish) (Sources: RCI 1985-86 Program Schedule. Feb. 1987 Audience Mail Comments)

Is information from audience mail perceived as important? Randall (1986) has said that it provides another, inexpensive source of feedback, and that sometimes valuable suggestions are made by letter-writers. Occasionally even one letter can have a profound effect. For example, Randall said that one writer suggested that he would like to hear a wrap-up at the end of the newscast for a re-cap of the news headlines. This was done on some RCI language services but not all. In fact, it is a broadcast practice common to the electronic media. The idea was accepted and management has decided to make it a standard policy across all language services. This may be the exception rather than the rule, but Randall has also indicated that because of comments made by letter-writers of the amount and scheduling of French programming to North America, RCI is considering suitable changes.

The analysis of listener mail is a low-cost research method, but since letter-writers discuss the topics they want, in the manner they want, letters cannot be systematically used to meet RCI's information needs. Perhaps the only need they can satisfy (and just moderately at that) is...
the need to determine the appropriateness and uses of programming by the listener.

4.3.4 Computer Simulation of Audiences

To counter the inaccessibility of audiences in closed societies, a somewhat unorthodox research process has been developed: the simulation of audiences by computer after interviewing a very small number of people from the target population. Each year millions of citizens of the USSR and Eastern Europe travel for business or pleasure to Western Europe (McIntosh 1986: 245). Several market research organizations attempt to contact and interview a number of these visitors. This research is done primarily through the RFE-sponsored Eastern European Audience and Opinion Research bureau in Munich, and the RL-backed Soviet Area Audience and Opinion Research agency in Paris. Information gathered from these interviews is then fed into a computer model, which transforms the data into a simulation of the population of the area in question.

The model, developed originally at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, extends the demographic variables (education, age, sex, urban/rural residency, geographic region, and membership in the Communist party) of the input onto the population as a whole. Thus a simulation of the entire society results.

Special interview techniques have been adopted to counter the tendency of Soviet citizens to respond negatively if an
interview is conducted in a traditional research manner. An informal, conversational approach helps to develop a personal rapport between interviewer and subject. Although it is estimated that 15% or more of potential Soviets subjects refuse to be drawn even into casual conversation (Parta et al. 1982: 583), recent studies have succeeded in gaining opinions on topics such as the war in Afghanistan, the Polish Solidarity movement, nuclear war, and the Korean airliner incident, as well as on radio listening habits (Parta 1986: 235-241).

It is obvious that, even with carefully-conducted interviews and sophisticated computer analysis, these surveys cannot claim to be random samples of the population. Travelers are not representative: they are privileged, either economically or politically, or have closer ties or stronger interests in the West than the average Soviet citizen. Certainly people of average income and education travel outside the USSR, but it is safe to assume that there is some "privilege factor" involved.

Another criticism of computer simulation is aimed at both the interviewing methods and the mathematical projection (Browne 1985: 330). An official with the USIA writes:

"A major difficulty [with]...Radio Liberty's "indirect interviews" of Soviet visitors to the West is that the resulting data under-represents non-Russian nationalities. We have much more confidence in what they can tell us about the radio listening habits of Mr. Ivanov in Moscow than those of Mr. Perchuk in Kiev or Mr. Muhammedov in Tashkent" (Demitz 1985)."
However, the resulting audience information seems remarkably consistent over time for both the USSR and Eastern Europe (McIntosh 1986: 245). And, according to an eminent former Soviet sociologist, Vladimir Shlapentokh, the most experienced expert in Soviet survey research before going into exile, computer simulation methodology is both "interesting and valuable" (EBC IEAR Feb. 1984: 8).

4.3.4.1 RCI’s Simulation Involvement

RCI purchases simulation data from both RFE and RL, at a cost of $6000 per year for each. No reports were available to this writer, but Gagne (1987) has said that the data received must be processed, standardized, and interpreted very carefully. She also has indicated that RFE/RL do not always include information such as respondent selection or interviewing procedures, and that the final results are thus limited.

Based as it is on a form of survey research, computer simulation is useful for compiling information on audience size and make-up (information needs 1 and 5), but has little utility otherwise.

4.3.5 The "People Meter"

The 'people meter' is a relatively new method for quantifying an audience, used primarily by television broadcasters:

"People meters are electronic gadgets with rows of colored lights that record information at the push of a button on a hand-held remote unit. Viewers
push a button to record their presence in front of the TV and again to record their departure. By pressing buttons, users are able to record which family members are viewing as well as the sex and age of visitors. The A.C. Nielsen computer...[will collect the] data nightly through telephone hook-ups" (Ratliff 1987: 4C).

This system gives next-day information, but depends on telephones and computers for data collection and analysis. Radio broadcasters have no need for such immediate information, and in certain countries would not find the necessary infrastructure for such a project. As well, it is a rating system dependent on the active co-operation of the respondents. (Television researchers are working on a totally passive system, using sonar or infrared detectors to determine the number of people in a room; one device can even distinguish by body heat between people and animals! Such a method is extraordinarily sophisticated and expensive for the needs of radio broadcasters). However, a people meter system is one method of determining the size of the radio audience, one which has yet to be tried by an international radio broadcaster. For RCI, though, little other relevant data could be generated in terms of its information needs.

4.4 Program Research

"No matter how powerful or complete the transmitter coverage or the distribution of [radio] receivers may be, a broadcasting system...is worthless unless the programs produced are meaningful to the audience...It can be harmful to the reputation of [the broadcaster] if the programs heard are so alien either because of their language, their mode of presentation, or even the use of music which means nothing to the ears of the people" (Cooding 1959: 53-54).
Audience measurement has been criticized as insufficient for an international broadcaster, where "...audience size alone is an inadequate evaluation of whether...more exacting programming objectives [are being met]" (Beville 1985: 131). Broadcasters have become aware of a need for qualitative information about their audiences. Joel Curchod, Director of Radio Switzerland International, wrote:

"...any qualitative results...would help us more than the expert indication concerning the number of listeners at a given amount of the day or on the 'make and model' of the radio receiver" (Curchod 1983).

And for the shortwave broadcaster, targeting very specific groups of individuals within a particular society,

"...qualitative ratings systems could have an enormous effect. Minorities and all special interest groups whose needs do not fit into 'mainstream' programming will benefit from a qualitative research system that reflects the goals and objectives [of the broadcaster]" (Hardy 1981: 131).

Most useful for international broadcasters is qualitative research which examines audience reaction. While quantitative methodologies ask people to respond to questions which have already been formulated,[17] qualitative research is more subject centered, allowing listeners to give the information that they want to the researcher (Hobson 1986: 218).

However, to recognize the limitation of qualitative research is important: it has a profound potential for misleading results. Information produced cannot be generalized to a population with any degree of certainty. This is
because qualitative methods usually involve a small number of respondents, rarely chosen through random sample methods (deGroot 1986: 15).

The dividing line between quantitative "audience measurement" and qualitative "program research" is fuzzy. For example, marketing studies often rank respondents according to their "psychographic" profiles, a transformation of personality and attitudinal factors into demographic-like variables. Some of the measurement techniques described in the previous section have qualitative elements; likewise, some of the qualitative methods detailed below may incorporate quantitative properties.

But whatever the classification, there is widespread agreement that some amount of qualitative research is necessary. Katz (1977), for example, suggests that programs should be designed in conjunction with experimental exposure to audiences. And Steedman (1975) (quoted in Bates 1984: 51), an evaluator of educational media, found that broadcast programs which failed to gain an audience suffered from a lack of pre-production research, or "pre-testing". Their producers had failed to identify the audience and its likely responses to certain topics and approaches.

This section examines the various methods international broadcasters in general and RCI in particular employ to find out more about their audiences. As above, each method is rated according to its cost, amount of RCI control, and complexity.
4.4.1 Focus Group Sessions

Focus group discussions are the classic form of qualitative research: a group of audience members gathered in person to discuss aspects of a broadcaster's programming or operations. They are led by an animator or interviewer using a prepared list of topics to be covered. Focus groups cannot be used to generate quantitative information, but can give a good "feel" for reactions to a topic, "often better than can be obtained with a structured questionnaire" (EEC IEAR Aug. 1984: 1).

Participants are selected from mailing lists or are recruited from past surveys. Focus groups may be gathered in the home country of the broadcaster (possibly with "expert" participants, or with laymen who may or may not be exposed to sample programming during the session), or in the field, in the target country. The groups are not representative but can be "loaded" (i.e., participants selected on the basis of particular demographics or other characteristics) to give as wide a representation as possible.

No more than twelve people usually participate in each session, making focus groups fairly inexpensive. Sometimes they result in innovative, thought-provoking ideas. But there are problems: often discussion participants contradict each other, and not all subjects take the opportunity (or are provided it) to express themselves as well or as strongly as others in the group (EEC IEAR Mar. 1984: 4).
An interesting variation on the focus group was conducted by the BBC in 1985: an international phone-in show. Listeners from around the world were invited to call in with their opinions on various programming questions. As with domestic call-in shows, respondents were atypical of the "average", but it was nevertheless an interesting and relatively cheap research experiment (EEC IBAR Autumn 1985: 2).

4.4.1.1 RCI's Focus Group Sessions

RCI has initiated one focus group session,[19] conducted by Barry Sherman of the University of Georgia in September of 1986. It was a structured group interview and discussion with 14 RCI listeners in Atlanta, who were located through correspondence records at RCI. Run by one interviewer and two assistants, the project cost $1600 US (about $2250 Canadian). The final report ("Focus Group Report on RCI") presents the demographic characteristics of the group, their radio and shortwave listening habits, and details their comments on RCI programming, personalities, and promotional activities. For example:

"RCI is better than Radio France, Radio Italy...it's well above those...and those in Eastern Europe..."

"...I hear them being professional, good, and bland...monotone..."

"RCI should get involved with more business promotions, like trade shows..."

Randall (1986) has said that, although the focus group method does not claim to represent the entire population,
very interesting points were raised, with a few surprising
insights. For his purposes - discovering new and better
ways of reaching Americans and Canadians in the US - this
project was well worth the investment.

For RCI, the real strengths of focus group sessions (as
summarized in Table 1) are in determining attitudes: those
of Canadians abroad, and the appropriateness and uses of
programming. They are moderately useful in determining if
audience members perceive Canadian viewpoints in RCI pro-
grams. However, like all qualitative research methods, they
cannot be generalized to the population as a whole, and thus
do not represent attitudes of the entire listenership.

4.4.2 Anecdotal Material

Stations receive unsolicited comments from observers in
their target countries: from the home nation's diplomats,
reports in the foreign media, observations from visiting
professors or those residing temporarily overseas, and com-
ments from travelers (Browne 1982: 328). This material is
in no set form and ranges from vague impressions to more
informed ideas on radio and media consumption habits. Diplo-
mats and reporters may be very good observers and may devel-
up a good understanding of a target country, but the data
they provide can only be used to illuminate other, more
structured research findings. As CEC's Constance McFarlane
has said:

"Numbers can be stale, so you can flesh them out
with talk, background material to make things come
alive for the reader of your report. Anecdotal material is useful to provide a better understanding of your audience in a personal way—probably better than no information at all" (McFarlane 1986).

Anecdotal material may be solicited from refugees or recent emigrants from a target country. Especially useful is information on media habits of friends and others who have remained in the homeland. But there may be a tendency for respondents to tell interviewers what they think is wanted; in effect, they may feel obliged to make a symbolic statement against their former country. And, of course, neither refugees nor emigrants may have perceptions and attitudes which reflect those of their "average" countrymen.

Nevertheless, broadcasters do seek out groups of emigres, especially those from closed societies. For example, in 1985 the USIA contacted RCI about gaining access to a group of Ukranians, who had recently resettled from Poland to Toronto. The Americans felt that the group of about 100 would be fairly representative, linguistically and culturally, of the Ukranian population. And they regarded the group as "extremely interesting as subjects of a quiet survey of their former media habits" (Demitz 1985). Interestingly, pencilled at the foot of a request was this comment: "External Affairs said RCI 'not interested'—wants no attention to them so as not to close down other doors"; indicative perhaps of future research plans of External Affairs.
4.4.2.1 RCI's Use of Anecdotal Material

Information is occasionally received by RCI from diplomats, academics, and RCI personnel who travel overseas and conduct their own unofficial "research". This information makes its way in some form to management and program staff, albeit in an unstructured and random way.

More important for RCI, though, is anecdotal data gathered by RFE and RL. Specially-designed interviews are conducted with travelers and emigrants from the Communist bloc. The demographic questions serve as input for the computer simulation model described in Section 4.3.4 above. The anecdotal comments are forwarded to the station for analysis and distribution. The cost is included in the annual $12,000 total paid to RFE and RL. Such material is sporadic and highly subjective but, as Randall (1986) has indicated, is if nothing else very interesting. But, for RCI's information needs, the method scores "low" in satisfying all except two: getting attitudes of Canadians abroad (from Canadians overseas, like diplomats, who provide comments), and the appropriateness and uses of programming by the audience. However, anecdotal material is almost useless in systematic data collection.
4.4.3 Expert Evaluation

Expert evaluation is conducted at various levels of formality as part of the management and production duties of every broadcaster. It is of course done from the professional's point-of-view: self-evaluation may in fact be more critical than that of the layperson. One may wonder, however, if the broadcaster is the most qualified to assess his own output (or that of his colleague). Obviously he will understand the technical and organizational aspects of his work, but is probably not without values and other motives. He is a stake-holder in the process, and will be influenced by his own professional and personal agenda to some extent (Anderson and Ball 1978: 121).

Bringing in "outside" experts — those who have lived in the target country or are intimate with the culture — is another method of evaluating a program, but has its own problems. Zimmerman (1986) has said that, since in practical terms such an activity must be conducted in Montreal, it would be necessary to recruit members of the various ethnic communities from the Montreal area. She said that these people have possibly become Canadianized, may have overly-strong opinions, and may serve to mislead rather than inform.
4.4.3.1 Expert Evaluation at RCI

RCI conducts regular "Program Evaluation". A day is chosen at random by RCI management, a "normal" news day. On that date, two copies of a language section's programming are recorded. RCI management gathers the next morning to listen to and discuss the programming, rating it according to the RCI Program Evaluation Sheet (see Appendix D). A simultaneous translator (a non-staff member) participates in the evaluation sessions, if necessary. The language section department head and staff members go through the same procedure at the same time in another room. The two groups then get together and exchange evaluation sheets. An informal discussion follows. Familliant (1987) has said that it is a healthy and constructive exercise; no records are kept of the sessions, the evaluation sheets are eventually destroyed, and job performances are not based on these discussions. He says other information, sometimes valuable to management, arises in the course of the process that would not normally be available. The sessions thus serve to foster internal communications. Such evaluations are conducted twice a year for each language service, at a minimal financial cost, but at some inconvenience in terms of management time.

Zimmerman (1986) has said that at one time, outside evaluators were brought in, but this served only to "infuriate the staff".

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These evaluations are most appropriate to determine if RCI policies are being followed and if Canadian viewpoints are being communicated in RCI programming. They are moderately useful in judging the appropriateness of programs, too, subject as they are to critical examination by a group of people.

4.4.4 Content Analysis

Browne (1982: 325) points out that content analysis is not audience research in the strictest sense of the term, but it does

"...give program makers and supervisors some indication of themes, phraseology, etc., that are being presented to listeners, which may in turn serve as a basis for inferring listener reactions. The assumption is that those involved with day-to-day production and supervision may lack perspective on their broadcasts, may be 'unable to see the forest for the trees'."

Content analysis may be done on a broadcaster's own output, or on that of others for comparative purposes. It may be done from an examination of scripts, but preferably involves a coder who listens to taped broadcasts to give a more authentic impression (that of the listener). This allows the analysis of ad-lib (non-scripted) comments and tone of voice. As with all content analyses, the final results will depend on the categories selected for coding, a quantitative constraint which is difficult to avoid.
4.4.4.1 RCI's Content Analysis Projects

Content analyses of a sort are conducted twice a year at RCI. This writer obtained a copy of one such report dated April 26, 1986: "Comparison Evaluation of Russian, Ukranian, Polish, Czechoslovakian, Hungarian, and German Broadcasts of RCI and other International Broadcasters". It was written by section heads, a summary of one day of programming on RCI, RFI, BBC, Deutsche Welle, and VOA, in the various languages.

The stated goals of the study were

"...to make production teams aware of how other international broadcasters [and RCI] deal with a given news situation, how they resolve programming and production problems, how in general do they satisfy they needs of a specific foreign audience" (RCI 1986: 1).

It includes judgments on objectivity, program approaches and styles, and comments on technical quality, topicality to the listeners, and language styles. For example, some excerpts from the evaluation of Russian broadcasts follow:

"BBC...[presented] a good mix, informative and varied, with several voices."

"RFI had a six-minute talk on plastic surgery in France...somewhat long and of questionable value to a Russian listener..."

"DW was very interesting, a little bit more personal than BBC..."

"RCI was also friendly and attractive...although some technical problems [were] encountered..." (Source: RCI April 1986: 5-7).

The results of this report are unquantified and the reader is left with a collection of rather unstructured impressions. In fact, this is not a content analysis in the true

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sense of the term because the data is neither coded nor systematically analyzed. However, it was produced at very little cost and is perhaps a useful exercise in self-study and comparison. Moreover, as a number of staff members were responsible for listening to and analyzing the programming from other stations, it forced them to critically evaluate the "competition", and to compare their program approach and on-air styles to others. It is a method to determine if policies are being followed and if Canadian viewpoints are being expressed (information need 3), but cannot provide information about the audience itself.

4.4.5 Listener Panels

Listener panels are a way of obtaining structured information from audience members for comparative purposes. A listener panel is

"a group of listeners who, [upon invitation], individually provide information via structured postal questionnaires about themselves, their listening habits and reactions to programs on repeated occasions, over a period of time" (EEC XEAR 1976: 1).

Panels are composed of either experts or laymen. The experts are people familiar with a particular culture, habits and language, who are asked to listen to a set of tapes of programs recently broadcast to the country in question. Their judgments are an informed and "highly sophisticated form of guess-work" (Browne 1982: 323), but are of particular use in researching closed societies.
On the other hand, lay panels are composed of actual listeners (up to 2500 per panel), selected from mailing lists or from letters received at the station.\[20\] They are self-selected and, as the EEC feels, include the more regular, informed, and opinionated listeners (EEC XBAR 1976: 5). They are sent questionnaires which ask for reactions and opinions on various programs, scheduling, reception quality and perceptions of bias.

Panels are used to develop long-term assessments of behavior and opinion change, and are relatively easy to organize. They are also fairly inexpensive. But in no way can panel results be projected onto the total listenership of a station. Nor can they continue indefinitely without change: panelists become conditioned over time and must be retired and replaced by others. Panels usually meet with good responses; a recent BBC effort drew a 68% response rate (BBC IBAR 1982: 1).

Although the domestic CBC uses panels in television research, the radio side of the organization has not followed suit. RCI has no panels presently operating and has no intention of doing so in the near future (Randall 1986). Listener panels have been judged as moderately useful in providing data or program appropriateness and uses. Information on audience size cannot be generated using this method because panels are not representative of the larger population.
4.4.6 **Program Pre-Testing and Experimentation**

Program pre-testing is "research conducted to determine the potential audience research prior to the broadcast of a program" (CPB 1981: 1). Most of the experience (and the literature) on pre-testing and experimentation has been in the area of television, both commercial and educational, because of the high stakes of commercial TV and the high costs of changing educational programs once they have been produced.

Few international radio broadcasters have undertaken such research, for several reasons. First, it is expensive to conduct, if done in the field. Even at home the recruitment of foreign-language "guinea-pig" audiences poses a problem. Second, most of the methodology is sophisticated (such as devices like the Program Evaluation Analysis Computer System (CPB Sept. 1981: 3)[21] and is designed specifically for television-viewing. Reliable results may emerge from a group-viewing session where individuals register their scene-by-scene responses on an electronic device. But this method does not seem appropriate for radio. As mentioned above, radio listening is usually a solitary, secondary activity; group-listening and intense concentration may considerably alter individual reactions (Elliott 1978: 138; Wilson 1987).

Third, most pre-production or "formative" research has been located by educational designers as part of a system which includes needs studies, environmental assessments, and
the like (Gerner 1986). This more formal structure appears to be viewed as somewhat cumbersome or superfluous for shortwave stations; in other words, they do not perceive it as applicable in their operations.

A fourth constraint to pre-production research may be the professional pride of program producers and staff, who may feel they understand their audiences without the need for pre-tests. One observer writes:

"The distinguishing characteristic of BBC programmers was an anything-but-understated confidence that they knew their audiences. This was expressed in several ways, ranging from comments [from various BBC producers] like 'Our listeners don't have any competing loyalties' to outright national stereotypes: 'The Arabs are incredible hypochondriacs, so we give them lots of medical features!' (Gibson 1978, quoted in Browne 1982: 333)."

Mills (1986: 174) suggests that gaining producers' cooperation and overcoming their initial hostilities may be the researcher's most difficult barrier in program pre-testing.

But Kim Andrew Elliott has expressed another view:

"I am sure program producers would be receptive to data generated from such studies, because they are not usually emotionally attached to their programs. There might be some resistance because of the extra energy required when programs and schedules get changed" (Elliott 1986).

Despite these problems, the literature of television production is unequivocal on the importance of pre-production research. It will eliminate the stereotypes and erroneous attitudes held by production staff (Thureau 1986: 235), provide feedback at the concept and program pilot stage (Par-
sons and Lemire 1986), and act as a powerful developmental tool (Mills 1986: 172).

Elliott (1986), among others, believes that pre-testing for international radio would be a valuable exercise, even though radio is radically different from television. (For example, radio programs are much easier and cheaper to reproduce than television programs, so pre-production mistakes are not as serious. But misinformation about audience likes, comprehensibility, etc., will still result in programs somewhat "off the mark".) Christine Wilson, CBC English Network Radio Research Officer, has said that program pre-testing is "the future of radio" for domestic programming, but the challenge is to develop appropriate, non-TV testing methodologies. She has suggested one which might be useful for international broadcasters: the mailing of cassette recordings of programs to individuals. They would then listen to the programs at their leisure, and fill out an evaluation or comment form. This is a fairly involved method to implement, but such a strategy would avoid some of the problems of group-listening, would simulate to some degree a real listening environment, and would provide producers with at least a minimum of feedback (Wilson 1987).
### Table 1: The Ability of Audience Research Methods To Satisfy RCI's Information Needs

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<tr>
<th>Information Needs</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Mailing Lists</th>
<th>Analysis of Mail</th>
<th>Computer Simulation</th>
<th>People Meter</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Anecdotal Material</th>
<th>Expert Evaluation</th>
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**Quantitative**

**Qualitative**

**KEY:** H = High  M = Moderate  L = Low
4.4.6.1 RCI's Program Pre-Testing Strategy

Like most international broadcasters, RCI does no regular pre-testing, although one experiment in programming style was done in 1979 in conjunction with Kim Andrew Elliott, then a Ph.D. student at the University of Minnesota. This indicates that RCI may be open to the concept of experimentation and pre-testing but has initiated nothing on its own.

With respect to RCI's information needs, pre-testing can provide valuable information on the appropriateness and usefulness of programming, and, if the right questions are asked, it can help producers discover if the mandated policies are being incorporated into their broadcasts.

4.5 Discussion of Table 1

From the preceding discussion, each research method has been ranked according to its theoretical possibility of fulfilling the five information needs of RCI. Ideally, FCI will select a combination of research projects which will, together, answer all of its research questions.

4.5.1 To determine Audience Size

Three methods score highly in determining audience size: surveys, computer simulation, and people meters. The first is most appropriate in the "free world" (especially in the USA and Western Europe); the second is the only way to develop audience size projections for Communist countries. (Simulation is also sometimes used to enhance audience fig-
ures in other situations; Elliott (1987) reports that this is a regular component of VOA data processing. The people meter is as yet untried by radio broadcasters but, theoretically at least, appears to hold potential for data generation.

4.5.2 To determine the attitudes of Canadians Abroad and at Home

To determine the awareness and use of RCI by Canadians living and travelling overseas, two methods are superior: mailing list surveys and focus group sessions. The former may be targeted to a sample of Canadian respondents (such as done by Sherman 1982), posing specific questions about shortwave awareness and usage. Once such respondents are located, the latter method may be used in order to generate more in-depth comments. Targeted at various publics within Canada, each method may also be used to determine the awareness and attitudes of Canadians at home.

4.5.3 To determine if RCI policies and Canadian viewpoints are reflected

To satisfy the third information need, to determine if RCI reflects its mandate, two methods appear most useful to RCI: expert evaluations and content analysis. Each involves the breakdown and analysis of RCI programming for specific reasons. And, with respect to content analysis, it allows for a comparison to be drawn between RCI and its competitors.
4.5.4 To determine the Appropriateness and Uses of Programming

Three research methods score highly in satisfying this information need: focus groups, expert evaluation, and program pre-testing. Focus group sessions allow the researcher to explore concerns and attributes of actual audience members, or those designated as culturally representative of a target area. Expert evaluators may play the same role, being "expert" in a specific social milieu. And program pre-testing gives producers the opportunity to try out various program approaches on "guinea-pig" audiences to see if they are appropriate or useful to the audience members.

4.5.5 To Determine Who's Listening and Why? Who's Not and Why Not?

For this fifth information need of RCI, two methods are useful. For the free world, the random sample survey is the best way to discover motivations of listeners and lack of motivation in non-listeners. For countries behind the Iron Curtain, computer simulations (based as they are on data collected in non-random sample surveys) appear useful. This particular information need may best be met by extending initial research results, by using an extrapolation technique, for example, or by using cultural or other information when interpreting the data.
This chapter has outlined the various audience measurement and program research techniques available for use by international radio broadcasters.

Most audience research methods are clear-cut in their capability to meet particular information needs: either they can or cannot be used to generate particular data. In examining the various audience research methods in terms of the information needs of RCI, they have been assigned either "high" or "low" scores to describe their potential to satisfy each need. (A "medium" score has been assigned to account for special circumstances).

Table 1 summarizes the strengths and weaknesses of the audience research methods in meeting the information needs. If RCI wishes to adequately meet all five information needs, a combination of research projects is necessary. It is suggested that an ideal research strategy would include regular and frequent implementation of each of the methods which score highly in each category. As some methods are possible only in the free world (such as sample surveys) and others are more suited for researching audiences in the Socialist world (for example, computer simulation), it is suggested that each be implemented first in target areas of most importance, and secondly in the broadcast targets of lower RCI priority. At first glance, it may appear that this table is comparing "apples" with "oranges". But these rat-
ings are for comparison only; in no way should it be assumed that any one research method will score highly in all categories. The various methods complement each other and a comprehensive research strategy must include the best. For example, some, such as survey research and computer simulation, are most appropriate to determine audience size, while others cannot possibly hope to do this. Thus, in order to adequately cover all bases, RCI must implement a selection of audience research methods.

Another note of caution to the reader: the various rankings in the table are not equivalent in the sense that one "high" ranking does not equal another "high" rating. These judgments have arisen from the literature, out of interviews, and have been formally assigned by the writer during the course of comparing the various research methods. They should therefore be taken as indications of strength and weakness and, in this form, are not quantifiable.

Following, then, is a summary of the information needs of RCI and the audience research methods that will best satisfy them. An ideal audience research program would include implementation of each method on a regular basis for each target area, or (in the case of program development), for each new project undertaken by the service.

1. To determine audience size: sample surveys (for the free world); computer simulation of audiences (for closed societies); people meters (for experimental purposes).
To determine attitudes of Canadians abroad and at home: mailing list surveys (to be targeted at groups of Canadians both overseas and within Canada); focus group sessions (to be conducted with selected individuals from the groups located in the mailing list surveys).

To determine if RCI policies and Canadian views are being presented: expert evaluations (conducted in Montreal with both staff and non-staff "experts"); content analysis (to break down RCI's program content into categories).

To determine the appropriateness and uses of programming: focus group sessions (conducted with "cultural representatives" of a target area, either in the area itself or in Canada); expert evaluation (done by both "broadcast" experts and "cultural" experts, people familiar with the particular socio-cultural milieu); and program pre-testing (again, conducted with "guinea-pig" audiences).

To determine who's listening and why (and who's not listening, and why not?): sample surveys and computer simulation (and extending the data through post-project manipulation, such as extrapolation).
Chapter V

EVALUATING RCI'S CURRENT AUDIENCE RESEARCH STRATEGY

The information in Table 1 directly addresses the first primary question of the evaluation strategy, by describing the uses of the various audience research methods available for use by RCI. This chapter addresses the second primary question of the evaluation strategy: the current situation of audience research at RCI. Following Question 3 (which is presented in the review of the entire Evaluation Strategy, below), the organizational situation at RCI is described. Then, the various audience research methods actually in use at RCI are presented, including a discussion of their frequency of implementation, practical considerations and problems, and information needs which they satisfy. By comparing the ideal research strategy with the current strategy, and considering the various practical factors, the evaluation will be done, and recommendations for change and improvement will develop.
5.1 Evaluation Strategy

5.1.1 Primary Questions

1. Given the information needs of Radio Canada International, what methods of audience research could best meet them?

2. Is Radio Canada International currently using these research methods? If not, why not? How possible is it that they could be implemented?

5.1.2 Question Sequence

1. Information Needs: What are the goals of RCI? What information does RCI require to assess its effectiveness in attaining these goals? In other words, what are RCI's information needs?

2. Ideal Strategy: Given these needs, what audience research methods best supply the required information?

3. Current Situation: What is the current situation at RCI with respect to audience research? What is the organizational situation? What audience research methods are being used? How frequently or infrequently? What are the costs, practical considerations, and potential problems with these methods? Which information needs are being adequately addressed? Which are being inadequately addressed?

4. Recommendations: Considering the information needs of RCI, as well as organizational and practical concerns,
how can its audience research strategy be improved? What audience research projects should be dropped or added? What other alternatives are possible?

5.2 RCI's Audience Research Setting

Part of an input evaluation is to describe the setting in which a program operates. This includes identification of the various personalities involved in the program, their attitudes, the organizational structure, and other relevant factors. The following section provides this description, a necessary background to the analysis of audience research methods presented in the next chapter.

5.2.1 The Personalities and their Attitudes

RCI is headquartered in Montreal, with a small production staff in Vancouver, and technicians at their transmitter in Sackville, New Brunswick; and at the monitoring station in Stittsville, Ontario. Of the 200 staff members, most are involved with production or administration. The organization is divided into language sections, each responsible for the programming to a particular target area in the world. Each section is headed by a manager and contains producers, announcers, and news writers. RCI also uses material from CBC reporters and producers, and from freelance journalists. With respect to audience research, though, there is no person devoted to this on a full-time basis. (However, there are two full-time people who open and answer listener mail, but they are more clerical than research-oriented).
Within RCI, there seems to be a range of attitudes towards audience research, from open and experimental, to cautious and restrained. All personnel interviewed felt that research is a useful tool for improvement, a supportive view which, interestingly, does not appear to be shared by every international broadcaster (Gagne 1987).

RCI Director Etty Zimmerman is, ultimately, in charge of the entire organization, including its audience research projects. In practice, though, administrative duties take precedence over much hands-on involvement with research. However, she has expressed openness towards developing and experimenting with new research methods for international radio. She mentioned the need for having a staff "expert" in international audience research, a role which is currently vacant. As well, Zimmerman indicated a need for more in-depth data on listener needs, lifestyles, and audience profiles to augment the program design and presentation process.

Keith Randall has been (until April 1987) the Manager of Development and Communications. He has also expressed a positive attitude towards research innovation. He has demonstrated this by commissioning a mailing list survey and a focus group discussion session (RCI's first), both of which were conducted with RCI listeners and Canadians in the USA.

Allan Familliant is perhaps the key figure in RCI's audience research. As Director, Program Operations, he decides
in which surveys RCI will participate, and arranges research participation with other broadcasters, such as BBC, Radio Free Europe (RFE) and Radio Liberty (RL), two US-funded stations broadcasting to Eastern Europe and the USSR respectively. He is also the supervisor for RCI's extrapolation project (which uses present survey results to mathematically "extend" audience figures to statistically-probable sizes). However, he is not convinced that RCI should conduct more or different research; in a personal interview he stated that current RCI research is "sufficient", and that if extra funding became available, he is not sure that research would be a high priority for expansion (Familiant 1986).

Constance McFarlane is Head of CBC Research in Ottawa. In the past all survey participation and data interpretation was conducted through her office. She is no longer directly involved with RCI research projects. But she undoubtedly still retains influence and, with her expertise, it is assumed she acts as an advisor or resource person. She has indicated an open, if somewhat cautious, attitude towards new research activities. These include the possibility of locating survey respondents through "snowball sampling",\[^{22}\] and the potential of working with other members of the International Broadcasting Group of Four to develop and conduct sample surveys in target areas of mutual interest.

Louise Gagne is the CBC Research Staff member located in Montreal who is now responsible for RCI research. She has
expressed her interest in working with international research projects but finds it difficult for two reasons: a lack of international expertise within her department, and a substantial workload of domestic research projects for CEC/Radio-Canada, which take precedence over those for RCI.

At the production level of RCI—writers, producers, and announcers—it is safe to assume that a range of attitudes towards audience research will exist. Browne (1982: 333) has suggested that there is a generally low regard among international broadcast staff members for research:

"Producers, announcers and writers generally think of themselves as professionals who have a "feel" for what "their" audience wants, needs, likes, and can understand...In light of [their professional] experience, why should more time and more money be invested in still more research?"

Elliott (1986), on the other hand, believes the contrary, that programmers welcome research. However, Browne (1987) has written that, while this may be true for English production staff, there are many language services within an international service

"...when the producers are strongly attached to their programs: [for example], the Russian, Dari, Pashto, Arabic, and probably many other VOA services."

The point here is that these staff members may be politically or personally involved with their programming, may closely identify with their programs, and thus may disregard research in favor of their own motives or agendas.

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So, the true situation probably falls somewhere in between. Zimmerman (1986) has pointed out that feelings sometimes run high. One method of program evaluation formerly used by RCI, the bringing in of outside experts to assess programming, infuriated program staff:

"They said it was an underhanded way of doing things, and that caused us to re-think the effectiveness [of the research]."

5.2.2 Financial Factors

Over the past few years, the CBC as a whole has encountered severe financial difficulties. Cutbacks in government funding have been reflected in the budget of RCI, as in all CBC divisions. Out of its current annual budget of $13.1 million, RCI has allotted $25,000 to audience research. This includes the purchase costs of data from other organizations, and processing and interpretation costs charged by CBC Research. While its research budget may be small compared to those of the shortwave giants, BBC and VOA, it may be about average for a small-to-medium broadcaster such as RCI. It must be emphasized that in an era of staff and cost slashing throughout the CEC, RCI may in fact find it difficult to reserve even this amount for research purposes.

5.2.3 External Factors

Arrangements for the inclusion in the surveys of other broadcasters are negotiated by Allan Familiant, usually at very favorable costs. Most often RCI "piggy-backs" onto sur-
veys of the BBC, VFE or RL. More recently, it has obtained information from VOA (through the United States Information Agency [USIA]), and from SECODIPP, a private French organization which does research work for Radio France Internationale (RFI) and the French television network TF-1 (Gagne 1987).

Co-operation with other international broadcasters depends upon good organizational relationships. These have been maintained both through historical ties and through personal friendships. RCI management are well-liked and respected by their colleagues at other international stations. Long-term co-operation is dependent upon similar organizational goals and philosophies, on the maintenance of solid interpersonal relationships, and to some extent on the political situations of the home countries.

Piggy-backing onto the surveys of other broadcasters is most often confirmed by contract and payment of a fee. Sometimes, however, information is provided free of charge, in the hopes of either receiving information in exchange, or of developing a closer relationship in the future. For example, this year RFI (through SECODIPP) sent RCI some research data from Morocco. Gagne said that this opens the doors to future co-operation, but that informal relationships can also pose problems for a researcher. Data obtained at no charge or informally may be of lower quality, less methodologically pure, or different in any number of ways from previously-
collected information, making it very difficult to interpret.

Problems may exist, of course, even with information for which RCI pays. While the BBC regularly and completely reports its assumptions and survey methodology, other broadcasters may not. For example, in recent data obtained from RL, no details were included on survey design, specific questions asked, or on interview techniques. Without the research schema, it is impossible to properly interpret the results (Gagne 1987).

In both formal and informal relationships, there is also the perceived danger of becoming too close to another broadcast organization. RCI neither wants to be considered a nuisance to other international operations, nor thought of as dependent upon them for research material. A certain distance must be maintained (Gagne 1987).

5.2.4 Internal Factors

Internally, RCI’s audience research is characterized by three things: methodological purity vs. a certain “understanding”, a movement towards better communications, and sincere attempts to conduct limited program research despite fairly serious time constraints.

CBC is primarily oriented towards domestic research, particularly for television. Because of this, there is a great deal of emphasis on methodological purity vis-a-vis respondent selection, of critical importance in sample surveys.
But there is a perception that CBC Research does not fully understand or appreciate the special research situation of the international context (Zimmerman 1986). RCI's rather unique, international situation must be considered when designing and interpreting research projects (Gagne 1987).

Steps have been taken to improve communication between RCI and the Research department. Formerly all projects were handled in Ottawa; that responsibility has now been transferred to Gagne in Montreal, whose office is located directly across the hall from the RCI management suite.

Internal RCI communication must be considered, as well. As a bureaucratic organization, policies are set at upper levels and communicated down the chain of command. Acceptance or resistance to information, including audience measurement and evaluative data, depends on both the tone of the communication and staff opportunities for clarification and feedback. Divided as it is in a number of language sections and with a total of about 200 employees, RCI staff attend regular meetings and receive a monthly "Activities Report", compiled by the RCI Communications Director. The report is a rundown of the activities of the various sections, as well as notes on staff changes, promotions, policies, and other organizational activities. It also includes a summary of audience mail comments received during the month. The report is written in an informal manner, serving both as a staff newsletter and as a regular attempt to provide a sense of the audience to all employees.
RCI management conducts regular evaluations of programming, in spite of the rather time-consuming nature of the exercise. They have developed a structured review process which indicates a concern for management/staff communication and an interest in improvement using qualitative research.

5.3 Summary of the Research Process at RCI

From this investigation, the key figures and processes of research decisions within RCI have emerged. Allan Famillant is chiefly responsible for the research program, and it is he who decides on research questions and targets, based on RCI's financial resources and possibilities of inclusion in the projects of other broadcasters. It appears that he is primarily interested in audience size data, thus seeks out projects which will provide such information.

Louise Gagne is responsible for the processing of the data, using standard techniques and more innovative ones, such as extrapolation to enhance the estimates of audience size.

Several qualitative projects have been commissioned by Keith Randall, dealing with Canadians in the USA, an area which falls under his jurisdiction of developing new methods of program delivery. As well, regular program evaluations are conducted by RCI management and staff, for improvement and policy purposes.
It is not known how audience research information is ultimately communicated to staff (aside from the monthly newsletter), nor what staff perceptions or use of this information might be.

5.4 What Is Currently Being Done?

5.4.1 Information Needs Satisfied

There are eight different audience research methods currently in use at RCI, some implemented more frequently than others. These methods include sample surveys, mailing list surveys, analysis of listener mail, use of a computer simulation model of audiences, focus group sessions, the collection of anecdotal material, expert evaluation of programming, and content analysis of RCI programming.

In considering the worth of RCI's present research strategy, several factors must be examined. First, and possibly most importantly, what information needs are being met? If the ultimate goal of conducting research is to generate required information, planners must be sure that the methods they use are producing needed data. Table 1 has presented the information needs which can be met by all research methods available to international radio broadcasters (or, at least, by conventional methods); Table 2 isolates those methods used by RCI. Thus the reader is presented with a snapshot of how well RCI is satisfying its own information needs.
### TABLE 2: THE ABILITY OF RCI'S CURRENT AUDIENCE RESEARCH TO SATISFY ITS INFORMATION NEEDS

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods → Information Needs</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Mailing Lists</th>
<th>Analysis of Mail</th>
<th>Computer Simulation</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Anecdotal Material</th>
<th>Expert Evaluation</th>
<th>Content Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Audience Size</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Canadians abroad (and at home)</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCI policies &amp; Canadian viewpoints</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Appropriateness &amp; Uses of Programs</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Who's listening &amp; why? Who's not &amp; why?</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Quantitative

Qualitative

KEY: H = High  M = Moderate  L = Low (subjective judgments made by this writer)
Note, however, that even though it appears that most needs are being adequately satisfied, the frequency of implementation of each research method should be considered. Methods have been ranked according to frequency of their implementation on a high/moderate/low basis. "High" frequency means that a particular method is used at least three times a year or more in RCI's total research strategy. A method judged as being "moderately" implemented is employed by RCI twice a year. And those methods used infrequently (just once a year or less) have been ranked as "low" on the frequency scale. These ratings are provided in the bottom row of Table 2.

So, for example, even though the third information need ("Does RCI programming adequately reflect RCI policies and Canadian viewpoints?") is satisfied by conducting expert evaluation and content analysis, the reader will note that these methods are only infrequently implemented. Therefore, the potential exists for the meeting of this information need, but the reality is somewhat different.

The reader may examine this table carefully, comparing the possibilities for satisfaction of each information need with the frequency of implementation of each method. The specific RCI projects and comments on their implementation are presented in more detail in Chapter IV, in the separate explanations of each research method.

The following conclusions may be drawn from Table 2:
1. Audience size information appears to be well-provided in RCI's audience research strategy (although no claims are made regarding the quality of this information), because sample surveys are frequently-implemented and computer simulation is moderately so;

2. The fifth information need ("Who is listening and why? Who is not listening, and why not?") is similarly met by the same two frequently-implemented research methods; i.e., surveys and simulation;

3. Even though the three remaining information needs can be effectively met by the other research methods, since these methods are infrequently implemented, this data is rarely collected or generated.

5.4.2 Practical Considerations of RCI's Audience Research Strategy

Why does this situation exist? Why does RCI allow this potential treasure-trove of information possibilities to go to waste? The answer, of course, is that there are a number of other considerations aside from the information possibilities with which RCI planners must deal in drawing up the overall RCI research strategy.

These "practical" considerations which influence planners in the real-world situation of RCI have been broken down into four broad categories: cost; control; problem potential; and trustworthiness. Each method currently in use by RCI is rated in Table 3 in these four categories. The reader
is reminded that, as in the previous tables, the rankings are subjective and cannot be compared across categories. For example, a "high" amount of control obviously does not equal a "high" ranking in the problem potential category. Rankings can be compared within categories, however; for example, two "moderate" ratings in the cost category can be regarded as similar, as can two "low" ratings in the trustworthiness category: not equal, given the unquantifiable nature of the variables, but similar, and therefore comparable.

Each category is explained and discussed below.

5.4.3 Cost to RCI

The cost of each method has been ranked as either high, medium, or low. As Table 3 indicates, methods which cost more than $3000 per project are rated as high cost. Those for which RCI must pay up to $3000 are moderately expensive. And those research methods which are essentially free to RCI (except for staff cost, such as the salaries of the people who answer listener mail) have been classified as low cost. For RCI, with a small research budget, high costs may be seen as a drawback to using a method, and low costs as a strength, all other things being equal.

($3000 may not appear particularly expensive to readers accustomed to the costs of survey research in North America, but these cost classifications emerged during the interviews conducted with RCI personnel. However, even Familiar
## Table 3: Practical Considerations & Frequency of Implementation of RCI's Audience Research Methods

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods →</th>
<th>Surveys</th>
<th>Mailing Lists</th>
<th>Analysis of Mail</th>
<th>Computer Simulation</th>
<th>Focus Groups</th>
<th>Anecdotal Material</th>
<th>Expert Evaluation</th>
<th>Content Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost to RCI</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCI control over process</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>H</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem potential</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>FREQUENCY</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>L</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### Quantitative

**KEY:** H = High  M = Moderate  L = Low

- **Frequency:**
  - High = 3 times a year or more
  - Moderate = 2 times a year
  - Low = 1 time a year

- **Cost:**
  - High = > $3000 per project
  - Moderate = < $3000 per project
  - Low = No cost except staff time

- **Control/Problem Potential/Trustworthiness:** Judgments made by this writer based on data collected during interviews

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expressed the opinion that $3000 is not particularly expensive for inclusion on a sample survey).

The techniques for audience measurement appear to cost substantially more than those employed for program research. Both sample surveys and computer simulations are expensive. In comparison, the costs of all program research methods are lower, especially expert evaluation and content analysis (both involve small groups of people and relatively simple procedures).

5.4.4 RCI Control over the Research Process

The amount of control RCI has over each research method is important because the ultimate results depend to a large extent on how well supervised and implemented a particular research project is. As described in Chapter IV, each method gives the broadcaster a different amount of control over the process. The amount of control depends on who designs and conducts the research project (RCI vs. other agencies), where it is conducted (at home vs. in the field), the time span of the entire project, and so on. For example, focus group sessions are highly-controlled by the broadcaster (which is seen as a benefit of the method), while the analysis of listener mail gives the broadcaster almost no control over respondent selection or data generation (which is seen as a constraint of the method).[23]

This matter of control is especially important for international broadcasters, who must co-ordinate research
projects at great distances or, indeed, must depend on other research agencies for the final data. While, theoretically, a broadcasting organization perhaps should not conduct its own research directly (and risk biasing the results), international research is unique and requires careful supervision.

Examining Table 3, it appears that none of the audience measurement methods give RCI high control, although sample surveys (if designed or supervised by RCI) and mailing list surveys allow the broadcaster moderate control over the process. Since computer simulation is done totally by either RFE or RL, RCI has very little influence on the process. This lack of control over quantitative research is not due to the methods themselves, but due to RCI's lack of funds. However, the end result is the same: less control for the broadcaster.

Three of the more qualitative methods are highly-controlled by RCI, primarily because all are conducted at RCI headquarters or under direct supervision of RCI management.

5.4.5 Problem Potential of the Various Methods

The problem potential of each research process has been assessed. Methods found to be excessively complicated (in terms of organization, implementation, and data processing) have been labelled as "high" because they require more attention and input from staff and ultimately involve a
higher risk in terms of possible problems. In other words, the more complicated a process, the easier it will be for mistakes to be made or problems to develop. This is seen as a drawback. Conversely, simpler methods are ranked as "low"; all other things being equal, simpler methods less risky, with less chance for error or complications.

The quantitative methods have been judged as highly or moderately complicated in terms of design and implementation, while the program research methods score considerably lower. Again, this is due to the simplicity of the latter as compared to the measurement techniques.

5.4.6 Trustworthiness of Each Method

"Trustworthiness" has been designated as the fourth practical variable of the research methods. This arises from methodological elements of each method; in other words, how likely is it that the information generated can be trusted in terms of proper responent selection and data collection, valid data manipulation, and overall usefulness. The information for this variable (as with the others) was collected during discussions with interviewees.

Properly executed, sample surveys are highly trustworthy. Ranked as moderately trustworthy are computer simulation (which has been subject to substantial testing over the years) and three qualitative methods - focus groups, expert evaluation, and content analysis. However, it must be remembered that qualitative information may be trustworthy...
but not generalizeable to an entire population; the two concepts are separate.

5.5 Interpretation of Table 3

Table 3 summarizes the various factors (aside from information possibilities) which guide RCI in selecting and implementing its audience research projects. It is safe to assume that a crucial consideration (and understandably so) is cost.

But this table underscores the fact that there are other considerations as well, and that no one research method is perfect. Each has its own practical strengths and weaknesses. For instance, although sample surveys appear to score quite poorly (high cost, moderate RCI control, and high problem potential), they are the most trustworthy of all research methods. In comparison, expert evaluation scores better in terms of cost, control, and problem potential, but is ranked as only moderately trustworthy. Overshadowing this, of course, are the very different information needs addressed by each of these methods.

Because these rankings are not quantified, it is impossible to come up with a neat formula to determine the overall "most practical" research method. An evaluation such as this must be more judgmental, weighing the various practical factors against the costs and information needs, as well as how the methods fit into the overall organizational situation at RCI.
5.6 The "Other" Methods: Practical Considerations

In Table 1, eleven research methods were rated according to their ability to satisfy the information needs of RCI. Eight of these methods, those actually used by RCI, were rated according to the practical considerations outlined in Table 3. Table 4 (below) presents the three remaining methods (those not used by RCI) in terms of their practical considerations.

Table 4 reports that the people meter system appears to have everything going against it (except for a "moderate" trustworthiness rating). Listener panels seem somewhat practical (scoring moderately well in all categories), while program pre-testing holds even more practical promise for implementation.
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Methods</th>
<th>Practical Cons'ns</th>
<th>People Meter</th>
<th>Listener Panels</th>
<th>Program Pre-testing</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cost to RCI</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCI control over process</td>
<td>L</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>H</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Problem Potential</td>
<td>H</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>L</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Trustworthiness</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td>M</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

KEY: H = High  M = Moderate  L = Low

Cost: High = > $3000 per project
Moderate = < $3000 per project
Low = No cost except staff time

Control/Problem Potential/Trustworthiness = Judgments made by this writer based on data collected during interviews

**TABLE 4: PRACTICAL CONSIDERATIONS OF AUDIENCE RESEARCH METHODS NOT IN CURRENT USE BY R.C.I.**
Chapter VI

SUGGESTIONS FOR RCI'S FUTURE AUDIENCE RESEARCH

A careful examination of Tables 1 through 4 provides the information necessary to evaluate RCI's audience research. This chapter will draw comparisons between the ideal research strategy proposed in Chapter IV and the real-life situation described in Chapter V. From this the fourth question of the Evaluation Strategy will be answered:

Recommendations: Considering the information needs of RCI, as well as organizational and practical concerns, how can its audience research strategy be improved? What audience research projects should be dropped or added? What other alternatives are possible?

This chapter first outlines information needs being poorly met at present, then examines in more detail the audience measurement and program research strategies, ideal compared to real. A summary of the organizational situation at RCI is presented. Then, recommendations for change and improvement are made.
6.1 Information Needs: a Potential for Improvement

Table 2 has shown that RCI is not addressing all defined information needs with equal vigor. As summarized earlier:

1. Audience size information appears to be well-provided in RCI's audience research strategy (although no claims are made as to the quality of this information), because sample surveys are frequently-implemented and computer simulation is moderately so;

2. The fifth information need ("Who is listening and why? Who is not listening, and why not?") is similarly met by the same two frequently-implemented research methods;

3. Even though the three remaining information needs can be highly met by the other research methods, since these methods are infrequently implemented, this data is rarely collected or generated.

This means, then, that generally information on audience size is sufficient, while there is a real lack of more qualitative data, especially that which will satisfy the second, third, and fourth information needs of RCI.

Examining Table 3, it appears that the quantitative audience measurement techniques used by RCI are fraught with drawbacks: they are expensive, give moderate to low control to the broadcaster, have moderate problem potential and (except for surveys) are low in trustworthiness. But, they are also the methods most frequently used, simply because of
the importance placed on determining audience size. There are no alternatives available to RCI; if it needs audience numbers, surveys and simulations are the only way. And, it appears RCI is attempting to maximize the impact of this information by minimizing its costs (with the resulting possibility of low-quality information). By piggy-backing onto other surveys and occasionally commissioning its own, RCI is striving to survey its target areas in a systematic manner, given its low budget. Through its extrapolation project, RCI is making an effort to extend audience size data to its logical limits. While survey and simulation research is relatively costly, it was stressed to this writer that RCI is in fact getting a "good deal" from the EEC and other agencies, and that for the money spent, such quantitative data is invaluable. As well, RCI itself has produced a sound piece of research (Those Who Write and Those Who Listen) which cuts off all other avenues for audience research; that is, by stressing the advantages and validity of survey research, it effectively condemns all other research methods in their claims to generate audience size estimates. By extension, it also gives highest priority to survey research and relegates other methods (qualitative as well as quantitative) to second place.

However, other methods do have their uses, and the program research methods, for example, appear to have a number of advantages. They have the potential to generate impor-
tant information, data which cannot be collected in any other way. And they are favorably ranked in practical terms, beneficial to RCI in terms of cost and control; a bit less with respect to problem potential and trustworthiness. The major problem, however, is that RCI conducts very little program research. Content analyses and expert evaluations are done just twice a year, and there has been only one formal focus group session conducted to date. Program experimentation and pre-testing is non-existent. As it is, RCI programmers know that there is a body of listeners out there, but they do not know much more about what their audiences find useful or appropriate. And they have no formal way to test new program ideas, presentation styles, or pilot productions.

5.1.1 Examining the Research Strategy

Examining the situation more closely, it appears that with some modification, RCI's research strategy can be improved. For a very small investment, RCI can better address its information needs and institute some new research projects. This discussion focuses on specific recommendations in terms of RCI's information needs.

5.1.1.1 Determining Audience Size

It is apparent that mere numbers are insufficient to adequately represent the audience to an international broadcaster. However, "head counts" do have their use, and RCI
should continue to engage in such studies, especially since it can obtain this information at a reasonable cost.

Survey research and computer simulations are absolutely necessary for RCI to determine audience sizes in both the free and Socialist worlds. But it appears that in order to maintain good relationships with other broadcasters, those who regularly supply RCI with free or low-cost research results, RCI must conduct its own surveys. It can then share the information with other organizations and thus play a more balanced role as research partner. In other words, RCI must "give" in order to "receive". (RCI would also have total control over the project and could ask exactly the questions it wants too, without the policy guidance, or restrictions of another broadcaster or research agency).

While conducting a full-blown survey on its own is perhaps only possible every few years, RCI could take the initiative and organize a cost-shared project, inviting other stations to "piggyback" onto it. This would not only give RCI control, it would also enhance its image with other organizations. In the past an attempt was made to organize a survey of the USA with the International Broadcasting Group of Four; in the end the survey included only Radio Netherlands, the BBC and RCI. In spite of the organizational problems of arranging such a shared project, RCI should consider taking the role of initiator in the future. Certainly the interest exists within the CBC Research department, and RCI.
is respected as credible and forward-thinking among international broadcasters (Elliott 1987).

However, there is a need within CBC Research for heightened awareness about the intricacies of international broadcast research. Both Zimmerman and Gagne have expressed the desire to see an international research "expert" on staff. Considering the shrinking budget of the CEC, it is doubtful that a special position can be created. But awareness and understanding can and must be encouraged from within. Methodological purity need not be sacrificed, but certainly other research alternatives (like snowball sampling and extrapolation) should continue.

As well, there is a need for background "area research": information on cultural, linguistic and social patterns, religious restrictions, economic profiles, and other lifestyles data. This could be collected in the field or compiled by Canadian diplomatic workers on behalf of RCI, could be gathered from other international broadcasters, or, as Gagne is currently doing, can be found in published documents. Interpretation and understanding of research data can only occur when researchers and users possess this sort of information. To make cultural assumptions based on guesswork or stereotypes is a dangerous and misleading activity.
6.1.1.2 Determining Attitudes of Canadians abroad and at home

RCI must gain access to very specific groups of people to satisfy this information need; in this case, Canadians at home and overseas. One practical method of reaching Canadians overseas is through the mailing list survey. Canadians in the USA were located through subscription lists to two Canadian newsmagazines by Sherman (1983); similar methods can be used to locate Canadians in other countries (for example, mailing lists of the RCI program schedule, membership lists of Canadian social clubs overseas, embassy files of Canadians stationed in a particular country, etc.). Mailing list surveys can provide information from listeners especially important to the station, and from sub-groups of particular interest. Compared to other research methods, mail surveys are cheap and effective (Elliott 1987).

Focus group sessions can also be conducted with Canadians overseas, perhaps with those individuals who are located through a mailing list survey which has been previously done.

There are several other ideas RCI might consider to contact Canadians travelling or living overseas. One is to distribute short questionnaires on international airline flights bound for Canada (for example, on all Air Canada flights departing Europe for Canadian destinations). Presumably there would be a "captive" group of Canadian travel—
lers aboard (as well as other people who have some interest in Canada, since they are enroute to this country), who might welcome the opportunity to fill out a questionnaire on such a long and boring flight. If this would not be workable, RCI could hire interviewers to conduct airport interviews; stationed perhaps just outside the customs and immigration section in the terminal, they could select a random sample of Canadians arriving home. This would be a relatively inexpensive way to access this specific target group.

Another suggestion which would give RCI access to Canadians army bases overseas. Since RCI has an established connection with the Canadian Forces Network in West Germany (a radio and TV service for Armed Forces personnel), this could probably be easily arranged. RCI might consider doing a "snowball sample" with these people: asking shortwave listeners to identify other users, who would then be approached by the interviewer. Army personnel could be simply surveyed, or could be subjects of more focused interviews.

Surveys and focus group sessions can also be used to determine the attitudes of Canadians at home. RCI might also consider piggy-backing on to domestic CBC radio surveys with awareness and attitudinal questions, or onto omnibus surveys if economically feasible.
6.1.1.3 Determining if RCI policies and Canadians viewpoints are reflected

This need is best met by systematically breaking down and analyzing RCI programs into content categories. This may be done in two ways: through expert evaluations (as they do now, with management and staff evaluating programs according to the scheme presented in Appendix D), and by content analysis.

However, the content analysis projects currently undertaken by RCI are, in fact, not true content analyses at all. It is suggested that to generate any meaningful information, a more methodologically pure project be developed. As it is, the content analysis report is an unstructured and vague collection of impressions; while (as mentioned earlier) this may have been somewhat useful for the staff to do, a "real" content analysis might provide RCI with more accurate insight into what is actually being presented over its airwaves.

6.1.1.4 Determining the appropriateness and uses of programming

It is suggested that RCI consider expanding its program research strategy. Even though there are drawbacks, RCI should attempt to recruit "experts" (or "stand-ins", people of foreign origin or familiar with the target countries) in Montreal and institute program pre-testing, focus group sessions, and evaluation using these "stand-in" cultural repre-
resentatives. The information generated could greatly out-
weigh the small initial costs. An increased understanding of
listener needs and likes will probably lead to better pro-
gram presentation and content, even if the latter is to a
large extent dictated by RCI policy. These methods are worth
trying, and the results should be carefully evaluated.

The appropriateness and uses of programming may also to
an extent be done in-house by RCI management, assuming they
are knowledgeable about and sensitive to the target area in
question. However, it is suggested that "stand-ins" be
invited to participate as well, in spite of staff resistance
with which this has met in the past. Evaluation by others is
a factor in all work situations and RCI production staff
should be persuaded that this is a valid and ultimately
helpful exercise, one which need not be threatening.

In addition, it is proposed that regular focus group ses-
sions be conducted in the field. The hiring of local
researchers is preferred, but perhaps RCI could also consid-
ern sending a staff member overseas to conduct a focus ses-
sion himself or herself. Not only would this give RCI total
control, the staff member would also benefit, and could
bring back valuable insight in a milieu with which he or she
has perhaps become out-of-touch.

Listener panels are not in use by RCI, but could be con-
sidered as a future research strategy. Their moderate cost
makes them somewhat attractive in terms of information pos-
sibilities. It is recommended that RCI consider instituting a small-scale listener panel and monitoring the worth of information generated. If such panels were occasionally sent cassette recordings of broadcasts or pilot programs, they could possibly play a valuable information role.

6.1.1.5 Determining who's listening and why? Who's not and why not?

It is suggested that survey research (and computer simulation) coupled with extensive area research will provide insight into these questions. Information may be supplemented by listener mail comments, therefore, it is recommended that RCI continue the analysis of listener mail in the same way that it is currently being done. Use of the mail is limited to tabulating and circulating the comments received, but it has been indicated that from time to time ideas or suggestions have emerged which are considered or integrated into RCI operations. No great concentration should be focused on listener mail, although RCI might consider generating particular information by running a contest or quiz over the air. In fact, Findall (1986) indicated an interest in trying this— as an experiment — but to date nothing has occurred.

Anecdotal material arrives at the station spontaneously from those stationed or visiting overseas, and as part of the computer simulation interviewing process of RFE/RL. Since the fees paid to the two European stations include the
compilation and sending of this material, there is no need for RCI to alter the current situation. But anecdotal material is of very limited use because of its subjectivity.

6.1.1.6 Other Recommendations

There are a number of other suggestions which do not easily fit into the discussion above. One is financial. Although it would be desirable that RCI increase its research budget, this writer feels that an increase is unlikely considering the financial situation at the CBC. (And, in fact, RCI currently spends considerably more on research than other international radio organizations of comparable size). Therefore, any changes to its research strategy must be relatively inexpensive, and the suggestions above were made with this in mind. As well, the more sophisticated research methods (people meters and PEAC units, for example) are not recommended for RCI. They are too expensive and provide sophisticated information neither needed nor particularly useful for its purposes.

Some international broadcasters attempt to question people at international expositions, trade fairs, international sporting events like the Olympics, and so on, and in fact RCI did some research at last year’s Expo ’86 in Vancouver (Zimmerman 1986). This is to be encouraged and could presumably be done at little expense.

In the development of program research, it is felt that RCI could benefit from guidance. It seems that presently
there is little contact between RCI and the CBC English Radio Research division (mentioned earlier in the text); it would be worthwhile to forge a working relationship with this Toronto-based department to exchange ideas and develop innovative methodologies. The department is very interested in qualitative radio research (Wilson 1987), and an exchange of ideas between it and RCI could prove very beneficial.

Another tactic RCI might pursue would be to encourage academic research projects on the organization itself and its audiences. Graduate students are an unexploited resource as far as RCI is concerned; RCI could work closely with them on research projects for mutual benefit. To date three graduate studies have been done with RCI: an historical overview (Hall 1973); an investigation of RCI's foreign policy role (Hibbits 1981); and this project. It is suggested that RCI establish links with university communication programs with an international or audience research component for mutual benefit.

6.2 Conclusion

Audience research has been identified as a means for a broadcaster to obtain audience opinion, to evaluate program effectiveness, and to collect information for program development. Browne (1982: 334) states that all research should theoretically "...tell program staff what sorts of audiences they reach, with what sorts of programs, and... whether and
why programs are successful or not". The ideal audience strategy would encompass both audience measurement and program research, and would concentrate on audience size, composition, and reaction.

But realistically, the ideal never exists. A current program can always be improved. This input evaluation has determined when and how improvements can be made in the research strategy of RCI.

By combining the works of several communication researchers, a comprehensive model of international broadcasting for Radio Canada International has been presented. The model (Figure 8) depicts the broadcasting organization, the production and transmission of messages, and the target audiences, including a hypothetical listening individual. He or she is shown as a member of a particular society, of social groupings, and as under the influence of a number of factors, all of which shape the conditions under which he or she tunes in to RCI.

The diagram also shows the communication back to the broadcaster from this listener. This feedback channel is but one small part in the whole process, and in the diagram (as in real life) it may appear rather insignificant. Indeed, it is easy to miss altogether in a quick glance at the model. But for the international broadcaster, this thin line represents the only information it receives back from its audience. The audience exists for the shortwave station only
though audience research, and is important as an information source for corporate planning, broadcast planning, and message production. Information is supplied to people involved in these activities through other means, as well, but audience research provides the only input mechanism available to the listener, the final target of an international radio station's activities. It must be seen as essential to the decision-making activities within the broadcast organization.

As an important component of the broadcast process, audience research was identified as an appropriate activity for evaluation. And since research is normally conducted to generate answers to particular questions, it was necessary to determine what questions RCI has in terms of their audiences. This was done by examining RCI's mandate and asking RCI officials what, to them, were important questions about their listeners. From this, specific information needs were identified for RCI. Several arose as common to all international broadcasters ("how many people are listening to us?") and several others were more specific to RCI ("are we successfully communicating Canadian viewpoints and our own policies?"). These information needs were defined as the basic questions RCI would have to answer in order to understand its audience and to evaluate how effective it is in serving them and achieving its organizational mandate.
Then, the various research methods were examined to see if each could answer the several information needs. Table 1 summarized those best suited for the various needs:

1. To determine audience size: sample surveys (for the free world); computer simulation of audiences' (for closed societies); people meters (for experimental purposes).

2. To determine attitudes of Canadians abroad and at home: mailing list surveys (to be targeted at groups of Canadians both overseas and within Canada); focus group sessions (to be conducted with selected individuals from the groups located in the mailing list surveys).

3. To determine if RCI policies and Canadian views are being presented: expert evaluations (conducted in Montreal with both staff and non-staff "experts"); content analysis (to break down RCI's program content into categories).

4. To determine the appropriateness and uses of programming: focus group sessions (conducted with "cultural representatives" of a target area, either in the area itself or in Canada); expert evaluation (done by both "broadcast" experts and "cultural" experts, people familiar with the particular socio-cultural milieu); and program pre-testing (again, conducted with "guinea-pig" audiences).
To determine who's listening and why (and who's not listening, and why not?): sample surveys and computer simulation (and extending the data through post-project manipulation, such as extrapolation).

The personalities and organizational situation at RCI were briefly explored, with these comments emerging:

1. Betty Zimmerman mentioned the need for an "expert" on international research on staff;

2. Connie McFarlane is interested in snowball sampling and in attempting to work with the International Broadcasting Group of Four for future research projects;

3. Louise Gagne finds a lack of international expertise within her department, and at any rate must devote most of her time to domestic research;

4. RCI has maintained good working relationships with other broadcasters and must continue to do so in order to ensure future co-operation;

5. It is unlikely that the research budget of $25,000 will be increased in the foreseeable future;

6. Some data RCI receives from other broadcasters contains no information on methodology;

7. Internal RCI communications seem good; there is a monthly staff newsletter which includes the latest listener mail comments.
The research methods were then examined for several practical strengths and weaknesses: cost to the broadcaster, amount of control the broadcaster has over each, the problem potential inherent in the various techniques, and the overall trustworthiness of the data generated. This information was summarized in Table 3, which also presented the frequency of implementation of each method. Several conclusions arose from this analysis:

1. RCI concentrates its attention on quantitative audience measurement, conducting fairly frequent sample surveys and computer simulations for audiences behind the Iron Curtain;

2. These quantitative methods are the most expensive, both in terms of actual cost and in interpretation time for research staff in Canada;

3. RCI conducts very little in the way of qualitative program research, except for semiannual content analyses and expert evaluations;

4. These methods are relatively inexpensive and hold great potential to meet information needs that are currently not being met.

By synthesizing both tables, and considering other, alternative research methods, this writer moved toward some recommendations for improvement for RCI's audience research strategy. It was concluded that:
1. **surveys and computer simulations** should be continued. RCI should try to conduct its own and get others involved in order to have control over survey questions and to equalize relationships between itself and others;

2. RCI should consider adding an international research expert on staff or developing Gagne as such;

3. **in-depth area research** is needed;

4. **mailing list surveys** show potential to generate data for particular groups (such as Canadians abroad and at home) at low cost;

5. Canadians could be targeted through questionnaires on airplanes, interviews at airports, or research projects on overseas army bases;

6. **RCI should consider piggybacking onto domestic CBC radio surveys in Canada to determine awareness of Canadians at home**;

7. **management evaluation of programming** should continue, but they should consider bringing in "cultural stand-ins" (those representative of a culture) from outside to participate in the evaluation, regardless of staff resistance;

8. **content analyses of programming should be developed into purer, more meaningful projects**; some attempt should be made to systematically code and tabulate the data;
9. by implementing a mixture of program research methods, RCI could fill in current "information holes" for very little added cost. For example, program evaluations and focus group sessions with "stand ins" (or conducted in the field) would be beneficial;

10. RCI should consider instituting a listener panel, an inexpensive and potentially valuable source of qualitative information;

11. RCI should continue with its listener mail analysis and might consider running a radio contest to see what sorts of information might be generated this way;

12. anecdotal material serves few purposes but since RCI receives it without solicitation, there is no need to alter the current situation;

13. other, more sophisticated research methods are not recommended. But a number of inexpensive and workable ideas were presented: conducting interviews at international trade shows; forging a relationship with the qualitatively-oriented CBC English Radio Research division in Toronto; and encouraging graduate students to study RCI and its audiences as another way to obtain data.
6.3 Limitations of the Research

This writer acknowledges several limitations of this study. One is that relatively little literature was available of this topic, and there was a heavy reliance on the 1982 work of Donald Brown of the University of Minnesota (who also acted as an unofficial consultant for the project). This is one reason why so much emphasis was given to material collected through correspondence and personal interviews; while not necessarily a limitation, it is a factor to be remembered.

Second, as RCI is headquartered in Montreal, it was sometimes difficult for this writer to fully investigate every aspect of the organization. It was not possible, for example, to meet with production staff.

Third, it is felt that the organization study of RCI is somewhat lacking. Ideally a more in-depth study could be done, which would entail an assignment of several months within the organization.

With respect to the ranking and analysis of the research methods - the information presented in the tables - a better rating method is desired. As they are, the rankings are somewhat imprecise and subjective. Should the study be redone, more direct input from experts would be sought (for example, they would be asked to rate the methods on the various scales, and then an average would be calculated), and another, perhaps quantitative scale, would be employed. This
would be difficult to develop but would probably result in more useful final data.

6.4 Implications of the Study

This thesis is a first look into an area which RCI has never studied, and indeed, into an area which has been infrequently addressed. It is hoped that this will lead to a critical examination by RCI management of their decision-making process with respect to audience research, and that some of the new and untried suggestions will at least be considered.

As well, future researchers could examine RCI's audience research from a "users" point of view. This project has adopted a "collection" point of view; that is, the implementation of the best methods to collect relevant information. But what about how the resulting data is disseminated and used by program planners and staff? It would be interesting to discover if the information is being used in any meaningful way.

It would also be interesting to compare RCI's own self-evaluation being prepared now, to see what findings are different from those in this study, and to examine the underlying reasons for these differences.

Comparisons between the research strategies of different international broadcasters would be a valid subject of study, as would be an examination of how the different broadcasters use their data.
6.5 Summary

The current audience research situation at RCI is undoubtedly a result of past practices and current attitudinal, financial, and structural factors within and external to the station. It is concluded that, while RCI has succeeded in operating a fairly comprehensive audience research program with limited resources, there are several areas in which it could improve. Although some of the recommendations in this project have been based on theoretic ideals, this writer has attempted to remember the realities facing RCI. This report will be delivered, in true evaluation fashion, to the appropriate decision makers at the station, with the hopes of careful consideration and possible implementation of the recommendations.
APPENDIX A

BBC STANDARD QUESTIONNAIRE

I'd like to ask you some questions about radio and television.

1. Which of the following things do you have in your home? (READ LIST)

Radio
Radio-cassette
Hi-Fi system
Television
Video recorder

2. How often, if ever, do you watch television programmes? Is it? (READ OUT)

Everyday or most days
At least once a week
Less often
Never - Go to Q.5

3. Did you watch television yesterday?

Yes - Go to Q.4
No - Go to Q.5

4. At what times did you watch television yesterday?

(Probes: Any other times? Code in grid following Q.7

5. How often, if ever, do you listen to the radio? Is it? (READ OUT)

Everyday or most days
At least once a week
Less often
Never - Go to Q.18

6. Did you listen to the radio yesterday?

Yes - Go to Q.7
No - Go to Q.8

7. At what times did you listen to the radio yesterday?

(Probes: Any other times? Code in following grid)

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<th>TV</th>
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</table>

* The questions on viewing and listening yesterday are preferable if interviewing is continuous throughout the week. In other areas, however, - for example, when interviewing only takes place at weekends - these questions should be replaced by "At what times do you generally watch television/listen to the radio?"
ASK ALL RADIO LISTENERS

6. As you may know, it is possible to hear radio stations which broadcast in ........ (LANGUAGE) from countries outside .............. Do you know of any such stations?

   Yes - GO TO Q-9
   No - GO TO Q-10

9. Which do you know of?

   CODE IN GRID BELOW

10. Do you know of ......... broadcasting to this area? (Make those not already mentioned)

   CODE IN GRID

   If aware of any foreign stations, ask Q-11. If not, go to Q-18

11. a) Now I'm going to read the names of these foreign stations again. For each of them, can you tell me if you have listened to it at least once in the last 12 months? Ask for each station known.

   For each station heard, ask Q-11b

   b) In what language? (Probe for all languages listed: What about ..........?)

   For each station and language heard, ask Q-11c

   c) About how often do you listen to .......... (STATION) in .......... (LANGUAGE)? Would you say it was most days, at least once a week, or less often than once a week? (Code in grid below)

   (EXAMPLE)

   STATION KNOWN

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<table>
<thead>
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</tbody>
</table>

   Ilb/b    Ilc

   Yes    No  

   M ost    L ess  

   D ays    W eekly

   F requently

9a) Voice of America  Spanish  English
9b) R. Nederland     Spanish
9c) BBC London        Spanish  English
9d) Deutsche Welle    Spanish  German
9e) Radio France Int. Spanish  French
9f) Radio Moscow      Spanish

12. You said that you listen to the BBC broadcasting in .......... (LANGUAGE) from London.

   a) Do you know roughly at what times of the day the BBC can be heard broadcasting in .......... (LANGUAGE)?

   IF ALL TRANSMISSIONS ARE MENTIONED (EVEN IF THEIR EXACT TIMES ARE NOT KNOWN), GO TO Q-12c

   b) Do you know that you can hear broadcasts from the BBC in .......... (LANGUAGE) at .......... (TIME)?

   FOR EACH TRANSMISSION KNOWN, ASK Q-12c

   c) Have you listened to the BBC's transmission at .......... (TIME) in the last 12 months?

   If yes, ask Q-12d

   d) About how often do you listen to this transmission? Fit answer to code list

   TRANSMISSION  TRANSMISSION  TRANSMISSION

   1. 2. 3

   a) Aware of transmission: unprompted

   b) Aware of transmission: prompted

   c) Transmission heard in last 12 months:

   YES

   NO

   d) Frequency of listening: 

   HOW MANY DAYS WERE THERE TO TRANSMISSION AT LEAST ONCE A WEEK OR LESS OFTEN?

   13. Ask all BBC listeners in .......... (LANGUAGE)

   When did you first start listening to the BBC in ..........?

   Code list as appropriate

   14. And when did you last listen to the BBC in ..........?

   In the last day or two

   Within the last week

   Within the last month

   More than a month ago

   Go to Q-18
5. Ask all who do not listen to the BBC in... (Language)

Have you ever listened regularly to the BBC in...?

Yes - go to Q.16
No - go to Q.18

16. Can you remember when you last listened to the BBC in...? Fit answer to Code List

Code List as appropriate

17. a) Do you have any particular reason for giving up listening to the BBC?

Yes - go to Q.17b
No - go to Q.17c

b) What reason is that? (Write in)

..............................................................

Go to Q.18

c) I am going to read out some reasons people have mentioned for giving up listening to the BBC and I'd like to know if any of them apply to you.

Read Out List

I no longer have a shortwave receiver
I watch television more now
I can't find it any more
It's impossible for me to listen at the times it is on
I only listened to hear about one particular event (specify event) ........................................
I did not like what they were saying

Ask all with radio

18. I would like to find out what wavebands you have on your radio. May I please look at your set(s) to see what wavebands it (they) can receive?

Set equipped with

FM/HHF   1
AM        2
MW/AM     3
SW        4

... Code wavebands in list below

11 metres/25 megahertz 1
13 21
16 17
19 15
25 11
31 9
41 7
49 6
60 5
75 4
90 3

None of the above wavebands identified V

19. I would like to know whether you have at least one radio set that can pick up shortwave broadcasting. Most of what you hear nowadays from stations in this area is on mediumwave or FM (if appropriate; or longwave) but almost all broadcasting from abroad, especially from stations a long way away, can only be heard on shortwave. Can you tell me whether (any of) your radio set(s) can receive shortwave broadcasts?

Yes
No
Appendix B

SURVEY CHECKLIST

1. Assuming the information in the study is valid, is the information relevant and useful?
   a. Are the purposes of the study clearly stated?
   b. Is the universe clearly defined?
   c. Are sampling tolerances and confidence levels reported?
   d. Is there a simple interpretation of the tolerances?
   e. Are major findings of the study summarized?

2. Is the study a valid measure of what it is supposed to measure?
   a. Is the means of collecting data clearly identified in the report?
   b. Are the limitations, logical and technical assumptions and theories of the study revealed?
   c. Is the sample design explained in the report?
   d. Can the methodology and design logically produce meaningful, relevant data, assuming that the execution of the study is accurate and reliable?
   e. Is the sponsor of the study clearly identified?

- 158 -
f. Is the organization conducting the research identified?

g. Does the study include adequate methods for validating interviews?

3. Is the measurement free of bias?

a. Is the sample good?

i. If a quota sample was used, are there good reasons why it was used?

ii. If a probability sample was used, is it in fact a probability sample?, i.e., does each unit in the universe have an equal or known chance to be sample?

iii. Are the respondents truly representative of the sample?

b. Is the questionnaire good?

i. Is it short enough to produce complete responses?

ii. Will the questions keep the respondent interested?

iii. Is the order of the questions such that it does not bias the answers? Is it logical?

iv. Has the questionnaire, if translated from English, been pre-tested or back-translated?

v. Do the questions avoid suggesting, by context or sequency, certain answers ("what
stations do you usually listen to?"
implies that some stations are tuned in).
vi. Are the respondents required to answer
only for themselves?
vii. Is the identity of the sponsor hidden from
both the respondent and, whenever possible, the interviewer?
viii. Is the purpose of the study withheld from
the respondent?
c. Is the fieldwork of professional quality?
1. Are exact dates when the fieldwork was
conducted listed?
li. Was it conducted at a time when the behavior
to be reported was likely to be typical?
lili. If the study measured several different
stations, was the fieldwork for each con-
ducted at the same time?
iv. Are the interviewers part of a permanent,
professional staff?
v. Were they carefully trained and super-
vised?
vi. Were they restricted in the exercise of
judgment, both in respect to selection of
respondents and in questioning?
vii. Was the fieldwork spread over a sufficient number of interviewers so as to minimize differential interviewer effects or bias?

viii. If the study was a mail survey, was the letter of transmittal included in the report?

d. Is the report honest and understandable?

i. Are conclusions and recommendations made, supported by data?

ii. Are sample bases for all breakdowns given?

iii. Are techniques used in weighting explained?

iv. Are 'no answer' and 'don't know' replies reported?

v. Do source and date accompany all reference statistics?

vi. If the study has been conducted in consultation with an independent group, is the group's character and its exact responsibility in respect to the study made clear?

(Source: modified from IPA 1970: 14-17)
## Appendix C

### BBC MAIL SURVEY SAMPLE

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Saturday</th>
<th></th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>26.</td>
<td>0000 World News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 News about Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 Radio Newscast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>30 About Britain</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45 John Peel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>8115 Outlook</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45 &quot;The King of Instruments&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>27.</td>
<td>0700 World News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 &quot;The World Today&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 &quot;Anything Goes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45 Newscast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45 &quot;The King of Instruments&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>28.</td>
<td>0700 World News</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>14 &quot;The World Today&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>15 &quot;Anything Goes&quot;</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45 Newscast</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>45 &quot;The King of Instruments&quot;</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

### BBC WORLD SERVICE LISTENING DIARY

**23rd—29th February**

Which World Service programmes do you listen to? To get an idea of your interests we would like you to complete a diary of your World Service listening between 23rd and 29th February, the final seven days of the month. Put a cross next to each programme you listen to in that week, detach pages 7-10 and send them to us, marked "London Calling Questionnaire", at one of the addresses on page 6 or direct to P.O. Box 76, Bush House, Strand, London WC2B 4PH.

There are also prizes to be won! All those who return the questionnaire will be included in a prize draw for BBC books— the names of the winners will be announced in due course.

First of all we would like you to tell us something about yourself. Please write your name, address and occupation and put a cross in the boxes as appropriate.

**Name:**

**Address:**

**Occupation:**

18. Sex:  
   - Male  
   - Female

19. Age:  
   - 19 & under  
   - 20-24  
   - 25-35  
   - 35-45  
   - 45-55  
   - 55-65  
   - 65 & over

20. Are you a British expatriate?  
   - Yes  
   - No

21. Which language(s) do you generally speak at home?  
   - English  
   - Other  
   - English and other

22. How many years of formal full-time education have you had?  
   - 5 & less  
   - 6-10  
   - 11-15  
   - More than 15

23. For how many years have you been listening to World Service?  
   - Less than 1  
   - 1-5  
   - 6-10  
   - More than 10

24. Are you a member of the World Service Listener Panel?  
   - Yes  
   - No

25. How many people see this copy of London Calling*?  
   - Myself only  
   - 2-5  
   - 6-10  
   - More than 10

The diary is very easy to keep. Each time you listen to a World Service programme between 23rd and 29th February, put a cross in the RED box. Do the same for the programme title and time, ignoring the BLACK numbers—these are for computer purposes only. By 29th February there will be a complete record of your World Service Listening throughout the week. Good listening!

---

**ALTERNATIVES**

- SOUTH ASIA
  - SOUTH ASIA NEWSPAPER SURVEY (26th February 1957)
  - SOUTH ASIA RADIO NEWSCAST (26th February 1957)

- AFRICA
  - AFRICA NEWSPAPER SURVEY (26th February 1957)
  - AFRICA RADIO NEWSCAST (26th February 1957)

- EUROPE
  - EUROPE NEWSPAPER SURVEY (26th February 1957)
  - EUROPE RADIO NEWSCAST (26th February 1957)

- AMERICA
  - AMERICA NEWSPAPER SURVEY (26th February 1957)
  - AMERICA RADIO NEWSCAST (26th February 1957)
Appendix B

RCI EVALUATION SHEET

RCI PROGRAM EVALUATION (Short Wave) / ÉVALUATION DES PROGRAMMES - RCI (ondes courtes)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>TARGET AREA / RÉGION-CIBLE</th>
<th>PROGRAM HOUR / HEURE DES PROGRAMMES</th>
<th>DATE</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>CRITERIA (<em>) See Program Policy / CRITÈRES (</em>) Voir politique des programmes</th>
<th>EVALUATION</th>
<th>REMARKS / REMARQUES</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td>Mark Code</td>
<td>Comment / RCI Code</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. TO &quot;ATTRACT AN INTERNATIONAL AUDIENCE&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>A. FOR &quot;ATTRUIR UN AUDITOIRE INTERNATIONAL&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. FOR &quot;FURTHER DEVELOPING INTERNATIONAL AWARENESS OF CANADA AND CANADIAN IDENTITY BY REFLECTING THE REALITIES AND QUALITY OF CANADIAN LIFE AND CULTURE.</td>
<td></td>
<td>9</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>B. POUR &quot;FAIRE CONNAÎTRE AVANTAGEUSE LE CANADA ET LA RÉALITÉ CANADAISE ET L'ÉTRANGER... PAR DES ÉMISSIONS QUI REPRODUISENT LES RÉALITÉS ET LA CULTURE DU CANADA.&quot;</td>
<td></td>
<td>7</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. TO &quot;REFLECT... CANADA'S NATIONAL INTERESTS AND POLICIES AND THE SPECTRUM OF CANADIAN VIEWS ON NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL AFFAIRS&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>C. POUR QUE LES ÉMISSIONS &quot;REFLECTENT LES INTÉRÊTS ET LA POLITIQUE CANADIENS SUR LES AFFAIRES NATIONALES ET INTERNATIONALES&quot;.</td>
<td></td>
<td>12</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TOTAL 100</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

| A. NEWS / NOUVELLES | 1. CANADIAN POLICIES / CANADA / INTERNATIONAL | 10         |                    |
|                     | 2. TOPICS / INSERTIONS                     | 10         |                    |
|                     | 3. CATEGORY "A" OR "B" / CATÉGORIE "A" OU "B" | 10         |                    |
| A. SPORTS | 4. INTERNATIONAL IN CANADA / INTERNATIONALES AU CANADA | 2          |                    |
|                     | 5. UNIVERSAL / INTERNET UNIVERSEL          | 2          |                    |
| B NEWS & INFORMATION SERVICE / NOUVELLES ET INFORMATIONS | 1. INTERPRETATION AND EXPLANATION / EXPlication ET ANALYSE | 7          |                    |
|                     | 2. GENERAL CANADIAN SUBJECTS / SUJET CANADIEN D'INT. GÉNÉRAL | 7          |                    |
|                     | 3. TOPICALITY / SUJET CANADIEN D'INTÉRÊT GÉNÉRAL | 18         |                    |
| C SPECTRUM / REVUE DES ÉVÉNEMENTS DE L'ACTUALITÉ | 10. INTERNATIONAL / SUJETS D'INTÉRÊT UNIVERSEL | 18         |                    |
|                     | 11. TOPICALITY / SUJET PROPRE AUX RÉGIONS-CIBLES | 10         |                    |
|                     | 12. INTERNATIONAL / SUJETS D'INTÉRÊT UNIVERSEL | 18         |                    |
| TOTAL 100 |                                                  |              |                    |

Target Area Manager / Chef de la Région-Cible | Date | Producer / Réalisateur | Date

RCI 112 Bil (11/81) WHITE / BLANC - target area manager/président de la régions-cible
FINK / ROSE - program director/directeur des programmes
GOLD / OR - RCI commissaire / comité RCI

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[2] For example, "FCI believes shortwave audiences, in general, are above average in terms of education, economic position and international awareness". Radio France Internationale is designed to "...appeal to opinion leaders, not the mass". The Voice of America "teams to the 'politically curious'". The German international station, Deutsche Welle, designs its Eastern bloc programming "for intellectuals". And Radio Belgrade "...believes shortwave audiences are mainly above-average intellectually, policy-makers, etc." (RCI May 1973: 160).

[3] However, there has been some theoretical and empirical evidence against the validity of the two-step flow hypothesis. For example, Elliott (1979) suggests that the audience interested strictly in news and information (the main fare of most stations) may be too small to have any appreciable impact on a target nation's public opinion. And, he points out that

"...most of the content presented in day-to-day international broadcasting may not be salient enough for the multi-step process. Opinion "followers" are not likely to seek out information on copper wire production in Romania [for example], and opinion leaders are not likely to make [such a boring subject] the topic of their conversation" (Elliott 1979:..."
For additional critical discussions, see Stuart Oskamp, *Attitude and Opinion* (Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice-Hall, 1978), pp. 155-156. He discusses various studies: one indicates that opinion-leaders are also opinion-receivers, and may operate in a system with a limited number of contacts, other "opinion-people", and rarely share information with the majority of citizens who are outside of the "opinion" system. Another study finds that many opinion-leaders do not actively try to persuade others to their point-of-view, suggesting that the two-step flow theory is overly simple.

[4] McQuail also presents three other views of the audience: he defines it as a *mass*, a large and widely-dispersed collection of individuals, unknown to each other; as a *market*, the particularly economic view which prevails in North America, "an aggregate of potential consumers with a known social-economic profile at which a medium or message is directed"; and, McQuail's simplest view, the audience as an *aggregate of persons*, a "collection of persons forming the readers, listeners, or viewers for the different media or their component items of content" (McQuail 1983: 154, 149). This project, however, defines the audience as a collection of *publics*.

[5] Maslow (1970) defined human needs as a hierarchy ranging from basic needs (physiological and safety needs) to higher needs (needs for belonging and love, esteem, and
self-actualization). Maslow said his hierarchy is universal to the human species and are biologically-given, although their effects on human behavior can be modified by the environment. Individuals, then, react to their felt needs by selecting from an array of behaviors presented to them.

[6] This was somewhat successful in wartime Germany, in Ghana, and is currently being attempted in the Republic of South Africa. Much of the black population has radios pre-set to one waveband: that of the government-approved station.

[7] The "shortwave giants" are the USSR, the USA, and the People's Republic of China. Each broadcast over 1400 program hours weekly. The international services of West Germany and Britain broadcast between 700 and 800 hours a week.

[8] Elliott (1987) writes that, even in the face of research which suggests a negligible body of listeners, many stations remain on the air with the assumption that they must be reaching someone.

[9] In 1978 The American Radio Relay League, an interest group representing amateur radio hobbyists, conducted their own audience research in order to prove that the research done by broadcasters is invalid and exaggerates audience sizes; in other words, they attempted to prove that international radio audiences are much smaller than is claimed by the broadcasters themselves. Their agenda

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was rather obvious (to free up needed radio frequencies for their own purposes) and demonstrates clearly a hidden for undertaking research studies.

[10] But it should be emphasized that the terms "quantitative" and "qualitative" do not refer to radically different approaches.

"Quantitative analysis includes qualitative aspects, for it both originates and culminates in qualitative considerations. On the other hand, qualitative analysis proper often requires quantification in the interest of exhaustive treatment. Far from being strict alternatives, the two approaches virtually overlap, and have in fact [frequently] complemented and interpenetrated each other" (Kracauer 1952: 627).

[11] For example, Kim Andrew Elliott, chief of VOA Audience Research, estimates that a full-blown survey in South Africa would cost US$ 70,000 — some four times the total annual research budget of ECI!

[12] One method of dealing with this is explained in a VOA survey of urban Senegal:

"Interviewers followed a specified zig-zag route from a randomly selected starting point... For households grouped within compounds, the method followed was to select every fifth compound from the starting point, and within the compound, the next to the last house counting clockwise..." (USIA 1976: 18).

This method - the "Random Route" - is used frequently in other parts of the world as well.

[13] For example, a BBC fieldworker made the following observations during a survey he supervised in urban Bangladesh:

[We visited] a cluster of houses. [They]
appear to have electricity. Women around rush into houses when we approach - Tilak (the local supervisor) and I are asked to stand a short distance away so that they can get on with their work. I spend the next two interviews standing outside the compound with Tilak, relaying information. The selected respondent is female, 60 yrs., very conservative, not willing to come into front room; female interviewer carries out interview in back room" (EBC 1983: 47).


[15] In apparent contradiction to this, some broadcasters continue to use letters as a means of estimating audience size. Radio Australia, for example, reports that during the period July 1, 1974 to June 30, 1975, it received a total of 315,054 letters, providing "...a continuous indication of...programme impact... A very conservative estimate would be three listeners for every correspondent, which indicates a regular audience of at least 500,000..." While the rationale supporting this equation is not stated, the assumption is that each letter comes from a "regular" listener, which is not valid (Stuntz 1978: 26).

[16] However, Keith Randall has said that in 1986, only about 38,000 letters were received, reflecting changes in the RCI listener's guide which answer a lot of frequently-asked questions.
[17] That in itself is a problem. Formulation of questions means formulation of predicted answers, which for the purposes of tabulation should be as simple as possible. In quantitative surveys,

"...the greater the number of response choices for any question, the more difficult the analysis. Hence, questions with yes/no answers are preferred. But the fewer choices, the less meaningful are the answers...We vest a great deal of value in numbers that cannot inform us about...variety...[and about] the concerns and qualifications that shape our answers" (Suzuki 1987).

[18] Some of these methods are "traditionally" qualitative, for example, they use group discussion or individual non-directive interview techniques to generate information (Goodyear 1976: 131). Others are research methods designed to collect background information for program production and are non-quantitative in nature.

[19] Zimmerman (1986) has said that Ian McFarland, an RCI announcer, conducted another series of informal focus group sessions on a recent trip to Sweden and Switzerland. No information was available to this writer, but Zimmerman said these were useful to McFarland personally, but are not a high priority for RCI research.

[20] In one interesting series of panels, the USIA established two groups of listener panels: one of regular VOA listeners, the other a group of "non-listeners": people who claimed to listen to other international broadcasters but not VOA (Brown 1982: 324).

[21] The PEAC is a system to record audience response to a
particular media product, most often a television commercial or an educational program.

"It employs a set of push-button hand-units to record the responses of individual audience members on measures such as interest value and credibility" (Baggaley 1986:152)

Another system has been developed by a Seattle, WA, company, called the Vox Box. Designed for at-home evaluation of test and actual programs by TV viewers, it consists of two rows of buttons: one for channel selection, the other to record qualitative response using the following button options: excellent, informative, credible, funny, boring, unbelievable, dumb, "zap", and a special button to apply a response to the program personality (Eville 1985: 144-45).

[22] The "snowball sample" is a technique useful for locating a group of respondents with very specific (or different) characteristics from the larger population. In effect, a researcher "creates" his or her own sample using an initial group of people as informants. The theory behind snowballing is that members of specific populations (such as shortwave listeners) may know about others with similar interests (through hobby groups or informal friendships). By asking the shortwave users located by normal, random-sample survey methods if they know anybody else who listens, the researcher can then contact these people and survey them. They, of course, can also be asked for the names of any of their friends who might be listeners, and so
on. This method allows a larger sample to be built relatively easily, and lessens the time and money spent of uselessly contacting and rejecting the huge number of non-shortwave listeners which make up the bulk of the population. The snowball sample is not exactly random, but by weighting the "subsample back to the initial random sample, [it would] make the entire sample projectable to the target population" (Chilton Research Services 1984: 5).

[23] However, survey research has been assigned a "medium" control rating. When FCI piggybacks onto surveys conducted by other broadcasters it has little or no control over questions asked, sequencing, etc. But with surveys commissioned by RCI itself, it has almost total control over most aspects.
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Acronyms:

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BBC XBAR: BBC External Broadcasting Audience Research
CBC-RD: Canadian Broadcasting Corp. Research Department
USIA-OR: United States Information Agency Office of Research
VOA: Voice of America


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McFarlane, Constance (Director, CBC Research Dept.). Conversation, Dec. 18, 1986, Ottawa.

Parsons, Patricia (Project Evaluation Officer, TVOntario). Conversation, December 10, 1986, Toronto.


PERSONAL CORRESPONDENCE

Browne, Donald (Professor, University of Minnesota). April 11, 1986, and April 15, 1987.


AUTOBIOGRAPHICAL NOTE

John Hamilton has lived and worked in a number of places, including Hudson, PQ, Paris, and Bridgetown, Barbados, but Fredericton, New Brunswick, is "home". In 1980 he received a B.A. in English from the University of New Brunswick in Fredericton. The next year, his professional career in broadcasting began with his appointment as Station Manager of CHSR-FM, the college radio station at UNB.

In 1982, John moved to commercial radio. He was a copywriter and eventually Creative Director for CIHI-AM/CKHJ-FM in Fredericton. In 1984 he was promoted to Promotions and Public Relations Director for the same stations.

In the fall on 1985, he began his M.A. at the University of Windsor. Currently, John is a freelance journalist based in Windsor, working primarily for CBE Radio, the Windsor station of the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation. He plans a career in journalism, public relations, or community or corporate communications.