



June 03, 2021

Mr. Claude Doucet
Secretary General
Canadian Radio-television and
Telecommunications Commission
Ottawa, Ontario K1A 0N2

Dear Mr. Doucet:

Re. Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2019-392. Described video of prime time programming broadcast by the services of Bell Media Inc., Corus Entertainment Inc. and Rogers Sports & Media Inc. – Progress Report

Bell Media Inc. (Bell), Corus Entertainment Inc. (Corus) and Rogers Sports & Media Inc. (Rogers) (collectively, the Broadcasters) are pleased to submit our mid-year report on the progress made by the licensees to address the issues involved in fulfilling the condition of licence that requires certain prime time programming to be broadcast with described video.

In BRP 2019-392, the Commission recognized the practical realities of the program delivery process and the difficulties faced by the Broadcasters in describing late-arriving programming. Some American prime time programs received by the Broadcasters without DV already in place are delivered only shortly before they are scheduled for broadcast. In those cases, the Broadcasters may not have sufficient time within which to produce a DV version of the program in time for its original air date. As a result, the Commission specifically approved an exception whereby US programs delivered within 24 hours of their broadcast date and time are not required to be described for that broadcast.

While the Broadcasters cannot yet report that all of the required programming in prime time is available in described video, we remain focused on maximizing the amount of described programming made available in the Canadian broadcasting system and have continued to make great strides.

The Broadcasters are pleased to report that many of the issues that caused us to seek relief from the Condition of Licence (COL) in 2019 have since been resolved. As reported

in December of 2020, following significant operational and technological investments and improvements, we are now able to report a very limited number of cases in which DV is not present in accordance with the COL. The Broadcasters are now able to report that collectively, only a few reoccurring live or near-live programs and/or sporadic and infrequent technical issues have caused programs to go to air without DV on their initial broadcast. This is good news.

Described Video Working Group Meeting

As detailed in our last report, the Broadcasters initiated the formation of a Working Group to review and discuss issues of concern on a going forward basis. Its mandate is to:

Address the issues requiring the temporary 24-hour exemption to providing described video for prime time programming, and to consider and explore solutions informed by described video best practices, innovations and new technologies.

To be clear, the encouragement provided by the Commission in BRP 2019-392 regarding the Licensees' commitment to work in consultation with persons who are blind or partially sighted is to: *"address the issue that requires the 24 hours exception granted by the Commission in this decision."*¹

The Broadcasters will be scheduling both a Working Group meeting and a Community Consultation in the coming months, and will report back to the Commission with details of these meetings in our year end, December filing.

Community Consultation

Following our last Working Group meeting, the members agreed to establish contact points for the community members to communicate with the Broadcasters directly about any concerns or issues they may have with described video on our stations and services. It was agreed that the most effective method would be for Broadcasters to provide contact information that would then be distributed to community organizations. Since then, the Broadcasters have established dedicated corporate email addresses for exactly that purpose.

- Bell Media: DV@bellmedia.ca
- Corus Entertainment: DVatCorus@corusent.com
- Rogers Media: describedvideo@rci.rogers.com

Collectively, the Broadcasters have received only a handful of correspondence through these email addresses as well as through direct personal contact. This is clearly a positive indication that the DV experience as linked to the amended COL has been very good. In cases where specific issues have been identified as related to the traditional linear broadcast of our stations, the Broadcasters have been able to provide solutions.

¹ Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2019-392

In keeping with our initial plan of meeting twice annually with the Community, a third community tele-town hall will be scheduled following the next Working Group meeting.

Conclusion

The Broadcasters have continued to make significant steps to decrease the amount of time required to add described video to programming. Incidents of programming requiring DV in prime time, which do not include DV, is low, and the Commission approved amendment in BRP 2019-392 has provided a helpful measure of flexibility in those rare instances. Communication with the Community has improved and this remains a cornerstone to providing a better viewing experience of our traditional linear services through the resolution of any unknown issues. Discussion with the Community has evolved into explorations of quality concerns and broader statements about technological barriers to access. This is an important distinction to make given the expectations and requirements of BRP 2019-392.

Subsequent Working Group sessions will focus on issues raised in the Community Consultations and how best to address them. The Broadcasters look forward to gaining insights from its members in our next meetings.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Alain Strati', with a stylized, cursive script.

Alain Strati

Assistant General Counsel, Regulatory Affairs
Bell Media Inc.

A handwritten signature in blue ink, appearing to read 'Karen Gifford', with a stylized, cursive script.

Karen Gifford

Sr. Director, Regulatory Compliance and Licencing
Corus Entertainment Inc.



Calla Dewdney

Sr. Manager, Regulatory Media

Rogers Sports & Media

*** End of Document ***