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A HISTORY OF
THE DEVELOPMENT OF PUBLIC ACCESS
TO CABLE TELEVISION
IN EAST LANSING, MICHIGAN
(1972 - 1979)

By
Randall Lee VanDalsen

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ABSTRACT

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The concept of "public access" to cable television has been in existence for less than ten years. Under federal, state and local directives, many cable companies in the United States have been required to provide free (or nearly so) time on a cable channel, equipment to produce programs, and a policy of nearly no censorship of what was produced. In many communities, this requirement has led to excellent examples of how a new communications technology could benefit the "public interest, convenience, and necessity," as hoped for in the famous phrase from the Communications Act of 1934. In the vast majority of cable systems, however, the public access channels have been dormant.

As the cable television industry now eagerly moves into the remaining U.S. markets yet to be wired, many cable operators have been quick to eulogize that the public access idea was one of those "blue-sky" fantasies that simply wouldn't work. As evidence for this belief, they point to a few places where their affiliated companies make a channel

available for the public to use, provided one camera and a videotape recorder, did little to promote the concept, and saw the service go unused.

There is another side to the story, however. Many communities have demonstrated that public access channels, when properly developed, can evolve into thriving sources of popular local programming. To the best of my knowledge, though, there has been no research conducted to study these existing access centers and reveal how their success was achieved.

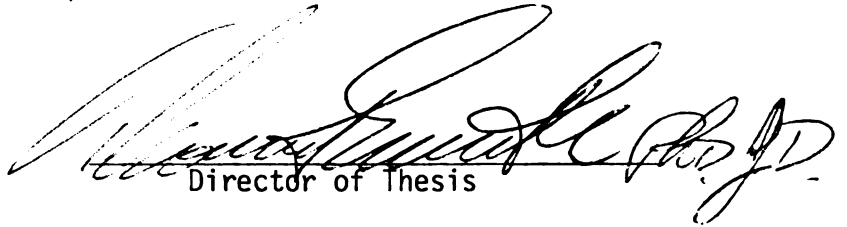
The purpose of this study, therefore, is to analyze the development and operation of one of America's most active cable access centers, in East Lansing, Michigan. Literally hundreds of volunteer producers stream through the access facility during a typical week's time. Dozens of local programs are produced on a weekly basis, many of them for years now.

My primary sources of information included local newspapers and magazine articles, records of all public access programs kept on file at the cable company, interviews with company officials, cable commissioners, access center coordinators and volunteers and, since I have been an access coordinator here for many years, personal recollections. Other important data came from the East Lansing Cable Communications Ordinance, the city's franchise agreement with the National Cable Company, the FCC Cable Television Rules and several FCC memorand concerning the East Lansing situation.

Major findings of this study include the definition of character traits necessary for an effective access coordinator, ways to attract volunteers to the center and teach them video production, systems

of organization which help make a very busy operation run smoothly, the importance of working with the cable company, keeping up with the latest technological developments in small-format video, and the development of program promotion and audience measurement techniques.

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Director of Thesis

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A very large "thank you" is also extended to the hundreds of public access volunteers who have made this "blue-sky" vision of community-produced television an enormous practical success in East Lansing.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

LIST OF TABLES	vii
LIST OF FIGURES	viii
CHAPTER	
I. INTRODUCTION: LAYING THE GROUNDWORK	1
The Development of the East Lansing Cable Ordinance and Franchise Agreement	3
The Rationale for Cable Access	6
II. TECHNOLOGY: "WHAT CAN I GET MY HANDS ON?"	10
The FCC "Voids" the East Lansing Equipment Requirements	13
Other Important Technological Developments	15
III. COORDINATING TECHNIQUES: "HOW DO I GET INVOLVED?"	18
The Making of an Effective Access Coordinator	19
Video Production Techniques: How the Access Volunteers are Trained	21
Organizing Trained Volunteers Into Production Groups	23
Dealing with Controversial Programs	24
Working with the Cable Company	26
Maintaining Accurate Records	29
IV. THE PROGRAMMING AND THE PROGRAMMERS: "YOU PUT <u>WHAT</u> ON THE CABLE?!?!	31

Bringing the People In	33
Removing Restrictive Obstacles to Community Participation	34
Program Production Increases Dramatically	35
Production Quality: Should Only the Slick Survive?	38
Reactions from Original Ordinance Authors	39
V. AUDIENCE DEVELOPMENT AND MEASUREMENT: "IS ANYONE WATCHING OUT THERE?"	41
Promoting the Access Channel Programming	41
The Importance of Series-Type Programming	43
Early Audience Measurement Techniques	44
The Introduction of Audience Surveys	45
VI. CONCLUSIONS	49
Impact On and Importance to the Community	49
Benefits to the Cable Industry	50
Recommendations to Decision-Makers	52
SELECTED BIBLIOGRAPHY	55
APPENDIX A: RED LETTER DATES	57
APPENDIX B: EAST LANSING PUBLIC ACCESS SERIES PROGRAMS	60
APPENDIX C: 1979 AUDIENCE SURVEY QUESTIONNAIRE	64
APPENDIX D: PUBLIC ACCESS RULES AND EQUIPMENT CHECK-OUT FORMS. .	69
APPENDIX E: TV PRODUCTION WORKSHOP RELATED FORMS	83

LIST OF TABLES

	Page
1. Public Access Channel Series Programs Viewership Levels (In Percent)	47

LIST OF FIGURES

	Page
1. Public Access Program Production	36

CHAPTER I

Introduction: Laying the Groundwork

Cable television is the only medium to which the general public has had an enforced right of access. The first governmental unit to establish this right was the New York City Board of Estimate. In 1970, the Board awarded franchises to two large cable systems that fell under its jurisdiction. The franchise agreements stipulated that two channels were to be reserved for lease by the companies to persons on a common carrier basis. The public would also have the right to lease production facilities from the cable companies.¹

The Federal Communications Commission established its mandatory cable access provisions in its 1972 Third Report and Order. Cable systems in the top 100 markets were required to supply free access channels for educational, municipal, and public use. Any group or individual who applied for access time was guaranteed up to five minutes free of charge on the public access channel. Only advertising, illegal lottery information and obscene matter was not allowed.²

(The FCC later modified these rules significantly. A 1976 Report and Order amended the previous access rules to only include systems with

¹"Two Cable TV Services Here Win 20-Year City Franchises," New York Times, 29 July 1970, p. 61.

²47 C.F.R. 76.251(a)(11)(i), (1972).

3500 subscribers or more. The new rules also required merely a minimum of one "composite" access channel to be used jointly by the public, government and schools.³⁾ Another very important provision of the 1972 rules pertained to the rights of local franchising authorities. More stringent access requirements would not be allowed unless the local franchisor obtained FCC approval at the time the system was certified. The Commission believed that other free channels and services - if allowed to be negotiable items during the franchising process - would "unduly burden systems" economically and thus thwart the Rules' basic goals.⁴ This last provision, as I will discuss later, would have very important ramifications in the case of East Lansing, Michigan.

The notion of "public access" to cable television has been at work in the community of East Lansing since early 1972. In a short, seven year span, it has evolved from simple, one-camera tapings of governmental meetings to such things as complex five-camera, multi-angle video replay, 15-person crew member recordings of local sports events. Initially, potential cable programmers had little more to use than "a portapac and a prayer." Now, about \$200,000 worth of video gear is at their disposal. A literal handful of early access users has ballooned to hundreds of regular video producers. Public access program audiences have grown from perhaps little more than the producer and a few friends in 1972 to well-documented, very significant percentages of the city's cable subscribers.

³47 C.F.R. 76.254(a)(4)(b), (1977).

⁴47 C.F.R. FCC 72-108 (1972), Par. 131-134.

With this thesis, I intend to thoroughly explore the history of these and other developments. I believe this information will be of great value to researchers and those now involved in the process of charting the future course of community access to cable television.

The Development of the East Lansing Cable
Ordinance and Franchise Agreement

In 1971, the East Lansing City Council and staff began working on a cable television ordinance.⁵ Advice came willingly from many facets of the community (educators, religious leaders, university professors, engineers, etc.) which had united to create the Community Cable Television Coalition. This group was primarily interested in the potential for local services a cable system could provide. In December of 1971, after hearing the Coalition's thorough critique of a proposed cable ordinance, East Lansing Mayor Wilbur Brookover invited the group to work closely with the City to come up with an improved document.

With "a sense of urgency," Coalition leader Rev. Truman Morrison asked Dr. Thomas Baldwin, a Michigan State University professor of telecommunication, to prepare a preliminary draft of an ordinance. Dr. Baldwin was very interested in the work of the Coalition, and had been collecting information for an ordinance since Fall of 1971. He quickly wrote a draft, including provisions on channel capacity, services to the city, public channels, and video production equipment to be provided to the public. This proposal was sent to the Coalition for revision and sent to the city attorney. The document was eventually

⁵Joey Reagan, "The Development of the East Lansing Cable Television Ordinance: 1968-1972." (Unpublished report, Michigan State University, March 1978), p. 5.

submitted as an ordinance by the Council in June 1972. At the September 5, 1972 meeting of the Council, the Coalition proposed a series of amendments to the ordinance. All were adopted and the ordinance was finally passed at that meeting.⁶

Eight months later, the City signed a franchise agreement with the National Cable Company, a subsidiary of LVO Cable, Inc. (now United Cable Television Corporation). The agreement went far beyond the FCC's requirements, particularly in the access and franchise fee provisions. Notable aspects of the agreement which exceeded the FCC's rules were:

- The requirement of more than one educational access channel. The franchise called for three channels on the main distribution system to be used by Michigan State University and the local public schools.⁷
- A channel reserved for the public library.⁸
- A "local origination" service to be provided by the company, including specification of the types of programs which had to be presented.⁹
- Employment of a coordinator by the cable company who would be in charge of the day-to-day operation

⁶Ibid., pp. 9-10.

⁷East Lansing, Michigan, Franchise Agreement (May 29, 1973), sec. 12(a), (b).

⁸Ibid., sec. 13(c)(7).

⁹Ibid., sec. 13(c)(1).

for production personnel added another \$50,000 annually.¹⁴

The Rationale for Cable Access

To many people in the cable television industry, these access channel requirements issued by the FCC and expanded upon by localities like East Lansing were looked upon with scorn at worst and benign neglect at best. They felt a lot of time and energy was being invested in devising complicated rules for a compulsory service which hardly anyone would use. To them, it was clearly just another case of unwarranted bureaucratic intervention which made the operation of their businesses even more difficult.

Having been deeply involved in the evolution of access to cable television in East Lansing since 1972, I've been in a unique position to witness the enormous growth of community participation in this service and the benefits which access channels provide to the public. The alternative, no access to cable channels, instead having to beg for fragments of time on area broadcasting stations, is seriously deficient. Unless you want to talk about your product or service that's up for sale or represent an opinion lucky enough to fit into a rare public affairs program, you're likely to be turned down when trying to obtain access to broadcasting. The individual citizen has no right of free access to over-the-air television, and this has led to many highly-publicized lawsuits through the years. It has also led to situations

¹⁴From discussion with Robert Cowley, National Cable Company system manager.

where efforts to speak on important issues, both national and local in scope, were effectively stymied.

Proponents of access to the media generally argue for the issue on two basic premises: the inherent value of additional information for society and a right of freedom of expression under the First Amendment to the Constitution. Proponents say that equality through access to the media would offset the economic advantage and experience-based factors that traditionally determine who has the capability for effective communication to large audiences. As Jerome Barron states:

"If freedom of expression cannot be secured because entry into the communication media is not free but is confined as a matter of discretion by a few private hands, the sense of justice of existing institutions, which freedom of expression is designed to ensure, vanishes from sections of our population as surely as if access to the media were restricted by the government."¹⁵

Proponents also say that access to the media would ensure "fairness" in public debate and expose the public to relevant information to enable them to make more intelligent decisions. Former FCC Commissioner Kenneth Cox contends that ". . . the real objective (of access) is to increase the information to society and help resolve its problems."¹⁶

As broadcasting has developed during the past 25 years, however, gaining access to local programs to speak out on a subject of importance to a community has become increasingly difficult. A prime reason for

¹⁵Jerome Barron, "Access to the Press -- A new First Amendment Right," 80 Harvard Law Review. 1649 (1967).

¹⁶William L. Rivers and Michael J. Nyhan, eds., Aspen Notebook on Government and Media (New York: Praeger Publications 1973), p. 131.

this problem is the fact that the local broadcaster is no longer a significant source of programming for his or her station. The vast majority of programming now comes from the networks and, more recently, the syndicated market. As a station's airtime is taken up by greater percentages of non-local fare, there are of course fewer programs for someone from the community to gain access to. Compounding this problem is the fact that we've now reached the point where, according to the major pollsters, a resounding majority of the American public now receives most of its information about current events from television, and relies upon it as the most trustworthy medium. Thus, we can have a situation where many people are likely to know more about the problems in Iran or Northern Ireland than the issues involved in a local dispute on, for example, the development of a new neighborhood shopping mall.

This dilemma of scarcity of telecast time doesn't exist on a cable system. If you have the technical capacity for upwards of 35 television channels, as most cable systems now have, why not set aside a few for local expression? The Federal Communications Commission was made aware of this capability of the expanding cable technology and, yielding to arguments from media reform advocates, established the federal cable access rules in 1972. A few cable operators did their best to comply with the law, seeing access channels as a way to show the communities they served that cable was indeed a unique, exciting, and responsive new medium. Many local government officials were also excited by the idea of community access channels, and they designed ordinances and franchise agreements that would encourage use of the channels.

East Lansing has been one of those fortunate communities where, to a great extent, the city officials and the cable company personnel have worked together to promote the development of citizens' access to cable. The remaining sections of this thesis will show how that cooperation helped the East Lansing public access channel become a widely-recognized success story.

CHAPTER II

Technology: "What Can I Get My Hands On?"

The video hardware which is available to the community for access program production is, of course, an extremely important component in the design of a potentially successful video center. East Lansing's videomakers have observed a stunning evolution in this area during the last seven years.

In early 1972, National Cable Company was in the third year of a ten-year contract with Michigan State University to provide cable television services for the residents of the University's Married Housing apartments. Responding to an intense lobbying effort from members of the Married Students Union and others, National provided one portapac (a black-and-white portable videotape recorder and camera) to be used to make local programs.¹ With this, a few unedited tapes (meetings of the MSU Board of Trustees, Married Students Union, East Lansing City Council and Cable Commission) were recorded. The tapes were turned over to a National Cable Company technician who drove them out to the system's headend, where they were cablecast by disengaging the "weatherscan" system (a camera which panned across an array of weather dials 24 hours a day) and plugging in a videotape

¹From discussion with Married Students Union President J. Edward Terdal in 1974.

player. The weatherscan was then reconnected at the conclusion of the program. This was a very inconvenient system, to say the least, requiring a company employee to sit out at the headend often until very late in the evening.

To alleviate this problem, National installed a cable drop and a modulator in the Married Housing Office meeting room in February 1973. Programming could be sent out on the cable from this site by activating the modulator and a remote control device which would switch off the weatherscan system. Then, whatever fed the modulator would be cable-cast directly from the drop site. The cable company also donated a black-and-white studio camera and the videotape recorder which had been used at the headend for cablecasting. This recorder also had an editing function, an important addition which gave potential programmers some much needed flexibility.

When the remote cablecasting drop was installed, the Married Housing Department hired me on a part-time basis to coordinate the use of the facilities. I had been one of the handful of residents interested in the possibilities of this new access service. In September of 1972, I had organized MSU's first student video organization, the "Video Workshop." The group had become a clearinghouse for information on cable access, instruction and assistance with TV production, and tracking down other hardware which might be available for community use.

A significant portion of my job as cable coordinator for Married Housing was spent looking for, begging, and borrowing production equipment we could use. Those who were there at the days of our early production setup remember an outrageous hodgepodge of intertwined gear which somehow managed to work. It was a system worthy of a Rube

Goldberg Award. Walkie-talkies were employed as an intercom system. Cables would be hanging from the ceiling, strewn across the floor, and snake through doorways. A home stereo receiver would suffice as an audio mixer. A "switcher" was created by jamming a VTR in record mode and moving its input selector back and forth between the two video inputs. Many miscellaneous items like video monitors, special cables, and headphones were borrowed from departments on campus likely to have such equipment (Telecommunication, Psychology, Family and Child Sciences, etc.). Quite a few items, however, were dragged in from home by the access users.

In August 1973, though, I had a major stroke of luck. While directing a crew through a taping of a speech on campus by union organizer Cesar Chavez, I met some folks from the Youth Development Corporation, a Lansing Model Cities agency. It turned out that they had quite a bit of video equipment, but had no one who really knew what to do with it. We soon struck up a deal: in return for letting the Video Workshop at Married Housing use their equipment, we would train their people how to use it. The hardware included a portable switcher with monitoring facilities, a videotape recorder, a portapac, an audio mixer with cables and microphones, and videotape. A real gold mine, indeed!

At about this time, National Cable was beginning the extension of its system throughout East Lansing. Soon they would hire their first full-time public access coordinator, David Korte, whose initial job it would be to line up the purchase of hardware to comply with the extensive franchise agreement provisions concerning the public access service. The agreement specified two portapacs, a portable lighting kit, an

editing system, and a 625 square foot studio with two black-and-white cameras, a switcher/special effects generator, monitoring facilities, audio panel, a film/slide chain, and a video recorder.²

In early 1974, while National's new office/studio building was under construction, Korte began allowing people to check out the portable equipment and use the editing system. The gear was kept in the basement, next to the boiler room, of the University Inn Motel. Without a doubt, users could hardly wait for the new building to be ready. That would take place in September.

The FCC "Voids" the East Lansing Equipment Requirements

The next significant development occurred in July 1975. The Federal Communications Commission, after studying the East Lansing cable ordinance and franchise agreement for over two years, issued an important Memorandum Opinion and Order which attempted to "void" various sections of these documents, including the aforementioned equipment requirements. Even though the equipment had been purchased and in use for nearly a year, the FCC labeled these provisions as "excessive" and said that "the cable system is in danger of bankrupting itself to fulfill the terms of the agreement."³

The City of East Lansing vehemently fought this ruling. They argued their case in a petition for reconsideration of the July

²East Lansing, Michigan, Franchise Agreement (May 29, 1973), sec. 17.

³FCC Memorandum Opinion and Order, National Cable Company (East Lansing, Michigan), Mimeo No. 52439, July 14, 1975.

Memorandum, explaining why they felt the voided provisions were important. The City also asserted that the greatest financial drain on National was not the access channel requirements. The company's local origination service was pointed to as the culprit.⁴ Indeed, an earlier report stated that National had lost more than \$100,000 during the local origination channel's first two years of existence.⁵ National had allocated a lot of money to the l/o channel, intending it to be a mini-TV station which would hopefully pay for itself through revenue generated from commercials. The l/o service had a 6-person staff and a full color studio which was much more extravagant than what was used by public access producers.

Since the July 1975 FCC Memorandum also voided the local origination channel requirements, National Cable used it as the justification when it closed down the l/o service in February of 1976. However, all production facilities of the l/o operation was turned over for public access use. The list of equipment included the following:

- A 1000 square feet studio with full lighting grid and cyclorama.
- 2 color studio cameras.
- A color film/slide chain.
- Full color switching and monitoring facilities.
- Audio facilities including:

Audio mixer and distributor

Microphones and cables

⁴FCC Memorandum Opinion and Order, National Cable Company (East Lansing, Michigan), Mimeo No. 72313, September 21, 1976, par. 3.

⁵Towne Courier (East Lansing, Michigan), 18 February 1976.

Audio cart recorder/player

Reel-to-reel recorder/player

Record turntable

- A color videocassette recorder.

This was a very significant move forward for public access and, as I will discuss later, helped lead to an enormous surge of activity.

I should also mention that on September 21, 1976, the FCC released another Memorandum Opinion and Order concerning East Lansing. This one retracted many previous "voids," including those concerning the equipment requirements for the public access and local origination channels.⁶ The City, however, decided not to enforce the franchise agreement to the letter and bring back the local origination channel, being very pleased that the company's total community programming focus was on the public access service.

Other Important Technological Developments

Late 1976 also saw the birth of a "remote unit." This was made by dismantling the old black-and-white studio control room and housing the components in modules which could be safely loaded into cars and taken to an event. Thus, we were now able to produce multi-camera presentations of sporting events, plays, concerts, fashion shows, poetry readings, political debates, etc. This was a tremendous improvement over the previous one-camera tapings of such things with a portapac.

6

FCC Memorandum Opinion and Order, National Cable Company (East Lansing, Michigan), Mimeo No. 72313, September 21, 1976

Other significant technological developments happened in early 1977. The first was the company's purchase of a time base corrector, a device which greatly improved the transmission quality of videotapes on the cable. We were the first cable system in Michigan to get the CVS-510 TBC, a brand new model built specifically for the closed-circuit market by a company which was known for its high-quality time base correctors at work in broadcasting outlets. Since then many other access channels throughout the Lansing area have followed our lead.

The next big event was the acquisition by the East Lansing Cable Communications Commission of a special "sub-band" modulator. This instrument would enable you to televise an event live from where it happens, as long as you are near a cable drop. The first example of this took place on April 20, 1977. The incident was a legislative conference at East Lansing's Hannah Middle School. There, a 35-person crew produced the show like a political convention, with five cameras and a dozen microphones scattered throughout the building. A portable switcher and audio mixer fed the sub-band modulator which was plugged into the school's cable drop, allowing us to cablecast the event live for seven straight hours without a break! The sub-band modulator has been used about a dozen times since then.

Another helpful move in the hardware area came soon thereafter. That was the construction of a master control room which would have the playback and switching equipment necessary to program the public access channel. Prior to this, the studio control room switcher also fed directly out to the channel. This meant that the studio could not be utilized during programming hours unless you were using it for a live cablecast. Here again, the goal and result was improved flexibility.

Nineteen seventy-eight saw us become the first cable system in Michigan to add the new generation of videocassette recorders, the Betamax. They combined good quality with low cost, light weight, and ease of operation. I feel it's very important for an access center to not be afraid of experimenting with the new technologies as they develop.

The most recent hardware additions were prompted by National's addition of Meridian Township, a community adjacent to East Lansing, to its service area. The township's access provisions require a separate studio and other gear. That studio is currently in the planning stage, but things like a new color switcher and cameras, a Betamax editing system, and new portapacs are now in use.

The amount and quality of the facilities provided to the public access volunteers have certainly been reasons for the East Lansing system's extremely high level of community involvement. Most of the other access centers in the country pale in comparison.

But a much more important factor in determining an access center's likelihood of success is the type of people working to make it all happen. In the next two chapters, their roles will be carefully examined.

CHAPTER III

Coordinating Techniques: "How Do I Get Involved?"

The most difficult aspect of running a successful video access center is attempting to involve a significant portion of the community. Without question, community access leaders across the country are attempting to affect a profound social change: that people from all walks of life can become producers as well as consumers of television programs.

This isn't a completely radical idea, however. Parallels exist in a number of other fields. Do-it-yourself auto and home repair centers have been present for many years. Audio tape recorders, which not too long ago were found only in record production labs and broadcasting studios, now are operated by millions of consumers. Similar examples include the use of home movie cameras and video recorders. Another currently burgeoning field is that of home computers. A common thread through all of these examples and the community access TV movement is the idea that new technologies should not remain only in the hands of the "experts." It has always been difficult to help the public see the worth of using these new tools, however. That is a major task of the access coordinator.

The Making of an Effective Access Coordinator

The critical personnel position for developing the use of the access service is that of the public access coordinator. This person must be someone who truly enjoys working with people from many facets of the community. He or she must be deeply committed to the goal of making the access concept work, regardless of how trying it is likely to be at times. Patience is a very important trait to have here. Users will often make many mistakes along the way towards mastering the video equipment, so they'll need plenty of encouragement. A good sense of humor is a vital tool to have to help keep everyone feeling at ease. Access users must enjoy their time at the studio facilities. Access coordinators should strive to attain a relaxed, informal atmosphere there.

The coordinators must also be good television producers themselves, and be willing to work on access programs when possible. New volunteers can learn a substantial amount by just watching a skilled producer/director during an actual production. If the coordinators are poor videomakers themselves, you're likely to wind up with the "blind-leading-the-blind" syndrome, of no benefit to anyone. However, it's also not wise for the coordinators to be in charge of all the access productions. The goal should be to become primarily good facilitators, giving people the necessary training and tools to develop their own creations. Otherwise, the amount and variety of programming will be far less than the potential, and the coordinators are likely to completely burn themselves out.

An important point: one who would consider being a public access coordinator should not expect a 9-5 work schedule. Access users' schedules are much more likely to allow time for TV production in the evenings or on weekends, so arrangements must be made in accordance with this fact. Very rare is the access volunteer who sees this television production as a full-time hobby.

What I've had to say so far and will describe here later has come from my personal experiences in the field since 1972, and discussions with many video center activists from around the country. Back in those very early days of access TV in East Lansing, techniques used to involve citizens of the community in access were a far cry from present methods. David Korte, who was National Cable's public access coordinator until I succeeded him in early 1975, and I, who got my initial licks in as the first director of the MSU Video Workshop, had to begin by speaking to countless community groups, artists, politicians, bureaucrats and many others to stimulate a few flickers of interest. This was a time of great frustration for us, with most people we talked to not convinced that this was a potential activity for them. A good portion of the programming during the early cablecasts from the Married Housing Office was spent recruiting new volunteers, attempting to explain what this "hare-brained idea" was all about.

A few basic management skills eventually became increasingly important for us to have as the number of users grew. A large, easy-to-understand "reservation board" was constructed on which people could sign up well ahead of time to use portapacs, editing stations, studio facilities, or the remote unit. A section of the board also showed the public access program schedule for the next month, letting

producers easily find out when the available time slots were. It's clear that if you as an access coordinator fail to develop a workable facilities reservation system, unnecessary conflicts are bound to develop, perhaps causing potential active users to spend their time elsewhere.

Video Production Techniques: How the Access Volunteers Are Trained

Teaching television production to the public has been one area we've experimented with extensively in East Lansing. At first we would take a small group (5-6 people) and show them the basics, a very "minimalistic" approach. Participants would see how the equipment operated mechanically, warned about the ways it could be damaged, given a few tips on technique, and that was about it. I think there initially was a desire to not be too "domineering" here, instead believing that people would automatically know what to do once they got the tape decks and cameras rolling. That, unfortunately, didn't happen very often. Both David and I had many frustrating experiences, seeing people make the same obvious production mistakes, again and again.

To deal with this problem, a workshop in the form of a daily newscast was organized in early 1976. Here, anyone could sign up for crew or talent positions and get their first hands-on contact with video equipment, refine skills, and get instruction on better techniques, all while doing a regularly cablecast program. This didn't work too poorly, with a few people (as hoped for) going from this to produce new series programs of their own. But the vast majority were content to only work on this newscast. Another problem was the fact that the show

was on at 5:30 p.m., too early for people who had a typical work schedule.

In late 1967, I initiated a series of free "classes" in video production which were offered at various times (usually evenings and weekends). A group of 15-20 participants had to sign up in advance and were taught as a group once a week for six weeks, two hours per session. Each week something new would be taught. For example, one week we might teach lighting techniques and set construction, another, camera composition, control room operation, etc. Hands-on studio training was stressed again, and portapacs were encouraged to be used to produce segments for insertion in studio shows. There was a very good reason for this. People who had been trying to produce an entire program with portapac footage usually had two results. The first would be a visually dull taping of an entire event from one camera angle. Very simple to produce but not often very interesting to watch. The other option was to use the portapac like a film camera, taping in documentary style from many angles, maybe even with more than one portapac, and then editing the footage into the final product. The problem here was that very few people had the time to spend required for this method's postproduction stage. It wasn't uncommon to see people struggle through 40 or more hours in the editing room to come up with a 30-minute program. Naturally, this wasn't a very realistic thing to expect of many access users.

Therefore, the studio workshops stressed the fact that television production is a group process, with each crew member very important in the creation of the final product. All participants in the workshops were given the chance to work at each crew position, giving them the

possibility of specializing in some spot if they preferred. But we always encouraged people to try everything. Television production isn't very democratic as a process. A program can have only one producer and one director. Once the tape recorder is rolling, all crew members have very specific tasks. The only way we could really democratize this process was to try to encourage as many people as possible to have a crack at producing a show about their interests.

This method has worked very well through the years. Hundreds of different people have produced special shows and series based on their own special talents and ideas at the East Lansing access center. Our philosophy has also encouraged a sense of "group consciousness." We've been fortunate to see a tremendous crossover of personnel between programs, with perhaps a host of one program being a camera operator for another. Or simply an audio operator on a series one week might be running a camera on the next show. I feel that the promotion of this approach by an access coordinator works wonders for users' morale and keeps them coming back. It's important to not let access volunteers feel they're getting in a rut.

Organizing Trained Volunteers Into Production Groups

Once the people have gone through the basic training course, what do they do next? Well, in East Lansing we have encouraged would-be producers to find something interesting about the local community and explore it. This could be anything from a mini-documentary about the local gay rights movement to tapings of public hearings on highly-controversial rezoning proposals, or simply talk shows with area sports

personalities. One thing I have done which has helped all these people with widely-varying interests get together was organize well attended (150+ people) community forums on public access. At these, potential volunteers could hear from many producers in areas like news and public affairs, sports, comedy, religious, minority affairs, music, and other types of programming. These meetings have been very successful as a method of directing new volunteers to more experienced producers who needed a fresh influx of crew members.

On the public access channel, there is room for local people, events, and issues to appear, and all in prime time. This is the thing that sets public access TV programming apart from the vast majority of over-the-air television. When's the last time your local broadcaster pre-empted "Charlie's Angels" to air an in-house produced documentary? Or even made one to air at any time? We have found that in East Lansing a large group of people really want to see more television programming about their community. I'll discuss this further in the upcoming chapter on audience studies.

Dealing with Controversial Programs

An area in which community access TV gets a lot of criticism is that it gives a forum to "crazy, unstable" people, or ones who will say things some people especially don't want their children to hear. I have a very strong suspicion that this is why you see so little happening on channels set aside for public access on cable systems across the nation. The reaction by system operators to the early access programs, like the soft-core "Midnight Blue" in New York City, was one of horror. They worried that a service being used like this would

lose them far more customers than it might gain. Restrictive access policies were established, there was usually no promotion of the service, and the facilities that were provided were often miniscule. These systems for access were designed to fail.

One thing overlooked, though, was the simple fact that we're all not living in New York City! Not very many communities are going to have people interested in getting on the cable access channel with a show like "Midnight Blue." It certainly hasn't been the case in East Lansing. There have only been a couple of cases during the past seven years where any action had to be taken to deal with such problems. No viewer has ever objected to commentary by groups like the Socialist Labor Party, the Right-to-Life movement, or the Communist Party, all who have appeared on the public access channel. What people have complained about has been what they referred to as "obscenity," "profanity," etc. When this first happened, I advised the producing group of the complaints and said they might take it easy next time, since they were in an early evening time slot. When their next program generated even more complaints, I said that we'd have to move them to a later time. They decided to stop producing, rather than change time slots. They weren't angry about this move, though. The producer even apologized at length for the trouble caused by his show. When a similar problem occurred in another program, the producer agreed to go to the later time slot. This policy was encouraged to be the one to use by the East Lansing Cable Communications Commission and the cable company has agreed with it. I think this strategy is preferable to outright censorship (e.g., kicking a program or producer off the access channel permanently). The process also is a good example of how we let

"community standards" (through viewer response and East Lansing Cable Commission mediation) dictate our reaction, as was recommended by the United States Supreme Court's most recent ruling on obscenity.

Working with the Cable Company

The last major area I'll discuss in this chapter deals with working to get the cooperation of the cable company. If you can't get them on your side, the public access service is likely to suffer dearly. In many communities where the cable system's support is minimal (only providing the channel space and very little equipment), the access center is operated outside of the company by interested people who are constantly struggling to keep the place financially above water. More energy has to be spent finding sources of funding than generating new and better local programming. Many places like this have simply had to fold up operation. A recent example of this occurring was the "Project Video" center in Jackson, Michigan.

In East Lansing, though, the community was lucky to have enough interested citizens who saw the potential of access and saw to it that guidelines were written into the cable franchise agreement which would help make it possible. But all the best video hardware in the world won't make an access center work. The people employed to lead the way are the one's most responsible for the success or failure of community access. And along with being able to deal with community groups and government people, they had better know how to work well with the cable system management.

The vast majority of managers in the cable industry have known little about community access and how to make it viable. It's been

seen as a burden, a trade-off, or a raw deal. Many have openly fought the concept, and some have done this all the way to the Supreme Court.

Those of us who have seen what access television can do have a responsibility to educate the industry. They have been rightly more concerned with getting systems constructed, selling the service, adding new innovations, and setting up smooth day-to-day operations. To many cable operators, this idea of "access" came up from nowhere to be required of many in an industry which had been in existence for 20 years without it and had done just fine. Of course the initial reaction would be one of confusion. But now we see some companies competing for new franchises that shine the spotlight on their proposals for community access, and back them up by pointing to their past successes.

One of the first things I would recommend to people trying to get access off on the right foot with a new cable system is this: try to get to know the cable company management staff as real people, not merely cogs in a gigantic bureaucratic machine. And let them get to know you, too. This first step goes a long way in helping break down the natural fear of the unknown. If you can sometimes share a laugh with the manager it's much more likely that future clashes over video equipment purchases, for example, won't be quite so severe.

Don't be afraid to sit down and let the manager know what you as coordinator have in mind to do to stimulate the use of the facilities. I've done this often through the years in East Lansing. I like to spring as few surprises on the company as possible. Their early outspoken skepticism I heard during the initial months has now all but vanished because we've been able to accomplish much of what we said we wanted to.

An early concern of the company was that the public access channel was being dominated by what they characterized as "weirdoes." "Where were all the more established community groups?" they asked. This concern was justified, but I wasn't very surprised that many early users came from the "non-Establishment." These people had no voice at all in any of the established media. Here was their outlet. But we had to try to include as many portions of the community as possible.

There were a number of things we could do to attract the more well-known organizations. We could televise live debates of candidates for City Council, enlisting the help and participation of the League of Women Voters. A public affairs series might get a leader in the area United Way campaign. You could explain more about community access to him after the show and, as it happened here, he might get a series going about the various services his organization provides, and all in far greater detail than possible on over-the-air TV. Or convince the local college to let you videotape the hockey games, or other sports not given much coverage by the community's media outlets. This will really attract attention to the access channel and get you many positive phone calls. And, as it also happened here, you might wind up with your volunteer play-by-play commentators invited to say a few words and hand out some awards at a season-end sports banquet! Don't forget to let the company management know about these developments, either.

Maintaining Accurate Records

This brings up the point about making reports and keeping objective records of the access center's activity. These have been invaluable tools for me to keep the powers-that-be informed, both the cable company and the cable commission. Since people from neither group have come by very often for lengthy first-hand looks at the public access activities, I've supplied regular reports which summarize what has been taking place. These could include brief statements about a good telecast of a hockey game, the goals mentioned by a producer of a new series, a farewell to a long-time access user who may have just landed a job in another part of the state, how the latest group of workshop participants is doing, how new equipment is working out or what old gear is in for repair, and many other items. The purpose here is to keep the VIP's aware that things are still moving along. The activity is much more than a passing fad (many series have been produced regularly for over three years now!).

Including objective periodic data of such things like levels of studio and remote unit use, program production, and portapac checkouts, is also very important here. You have to do more than simply say you have a wonderful feeling at the access center that things are going and growing. You're a lot more believable if you can also point to month-by-month data which shows clearly that the use of facilities and the variety of programming has continued to improve. This makes it much easier to request and get necessary expansion and improvement of the access center equipment at each year's budget request time. Such records are also an excellent tool to let a coordinator know if a renewed active recruitment drive might be necessary to turn around

a downward trend in the amount of facilities usage. Otherwise, relying primarily on word of mouth may become a sufficient method if the records show that you're in a booming period, when it takes most of your energy to simply keep the hardware operating and your sanity intact.

CHAPTER IV

The Programming and the Programmers: "You Put WHAT on the Cable?!?!"

ITEM: In 1977, Nancy Dyki worked at a local health center as a medical technologist. After reading a newspaper article about the East Lansing public access center, she signed up for a production workshop, learned the ropes, and soon was volunteering for a number of productions ("Tee Vee Trivia," "MSU Hockey," "MSU Summer Circle Theatre," etc.). Having quickly become fascinated with video, she enrolled in engineering and electronics courses at Lansing Community College. By the summer of 1979, Nancy had earned a 1st Class FCC Broadcast Engineer's license and was hired by the East Lansing Public Schools to be their cable access channel coordinator!

ITEM: Now in his early 20's, Tim Arnold is known by a number of local people as the owner of a few pinball arcades in the area. In 1975 he and a few friends found their way into the access center, formed a group they called "Atomic Studios Productions," and created their own often-hilarious comedies like "The Deek Dork and Gloria Comedy Hour" (an adult puppet show) and "Benson Gaffner, Primate Eye." A series of talk show parodies one evening became something

called "Tee Vee Trivia" in February 1977. It could be described as a cross between Art Fleming's "Jeopardy" and Groucho's "You Bet Your Life," with audience members phoning in to be "contestants." Tim became "Sloucho Barx," hosting this show behind a fright mask and wig. "Tee Vee Trivia" has been on the cable every week since then, with specials like the annual "Frogbite Telethon" and many weird visitors, including a Charles Manson lookalike. The series is now the most popular weekly show on the public access channel, with a viewership of seven percent of all cable subscribers tuning in. Tapes of "Tee Vee Trivia" are also biked to Ann Arbor for telecast on that city's access channel (and yes, Sloucho has received calls from there too!).

ITEM: Ernie Culp is an energetic 70-year-old retired auto worker. He's also known as "Uncle Ernie," whose "TNT True Adventure Trails" series has been seen on the public access channel since late 1977. A hobby of Ernie's for the past 25 years has been making home movies, which he now brings to the National Cable Company access studio and dubs in a narration and background music. There is a religious theme in the series, but it's very low key and lots of fun.

ITEM: Eric Peasley has become one of the access center's most available sports announcers, willing to volunteer his services to call the shots for hockey games, soccer matches,

or at ringside. Very, very low key during his first attempt at play-by-play, Eric was gently coached to put a little more life into his delivery. Ever since then, he's been impossible to hold back. There is one thing that many people don't know about Eric, though. He also happens to be a mechanic at a local Volkswagen dealership.

Bringing the People In

Without a doubt, the most important thing to strive for in developing a successful access center is a large and varied assortment of volunteer producers. The more representative your programming mix is of the community served, the more successful and aware of you're likely to be. The mighty tough task of the access coordinator is to seek out those people who would be willing to take on a very new type of hobby: making their own television show.

Community involvement in East Lansing's new public access center was not very heavy during its first couple of years of existence. Many people were in one way or another coaxed into coming over, but relatively few (maybe a couple dozen) stayed on to produce programs on a regular basis. This was more than likely due to a couple of reasons. First, there simply weren't many people around whom a budding producer could call upon to work on a program. It takes more than one or two people to develop such a project over time. A common occurrence would be for an enthusiastic producer to burn out after a couple of attempts or be very frustrated, seeing such

amateurish programs coming out and having no one to share that sense of frustration with. There's no easy way out here. You've just got to be patient as the word gets around the community about the potential of the access center and more people appear there. Later there will be plenty of available crew members who, with proper encouragement, would jump at the chance to help out.

Removing Restrictive Obstacles to Community Participation

Another major early stumbling block was some of the cable company's initial operating policies concerning public access, both formal and informal. The rules included a provision that the studio provided for access users could be used free of charge for only thirty minutes (including set-up time). This, of course, discouraged many people from using the studio, relying instead on portapac productions (with the limitations which I've discussed in the previous chapter). Another problem was due to the existence of the local origination channel which National Cable operated until early 1976. Since this service had a potential for making extra revenue, much more attention was given it, and some of the early access users felt very unwanted at the cable company building, which housed facilities for both l/o and public access. There seemed to be a "You're in the way" attitude directed at many early access users. This changed dramatically in February, 1976.

On Friday the 13th, National Cable dropped the axe on the local origination channel, citing huge losses and not much revenue potential on the horizon. However, as I mentioned in Chapter II, all existing facilities were turned over for the exclusive use of public access

volunteers, and two full-time employees would be retained to coordinate the center. I was one of the coordinators.

One of the first things I worked on was to convince the cable company management to allow free studio time to be expanded to ninety minutes. This, along with the far superior color equipment available, stimulated much more interest. A determined effort was also made to better publicize the access center, through newspaper feature articles, more personal appearances to community groups and Michigan State University classes, and posters tacked up around town. This definitely succeeded in bring many new faces to the studio. Once there, they would be made to feel more than welcome under our roof. This would later develop into what many access users have termed to be a sense of "family." I really can't stress the importance of developing this feeling of community at the access center enough. One thing we did to heighten the sense that this was their access channel was to hold a "contest" among users to come up with call letters ("WELM-TV") for it. Within a year's time after the big changeover, we would have a list of over 200 active volunteers, and this number has remained stable since then, with new people always turning up to replace those who leave this highly-transient city.

Program Production Increases Dramatically

With this changed emphasis, public access program production skyrocketed (see the graph on page 36). The twenty-programs-per-month average immediately tripled, and would eventually climb to over 100. In the two years prior to this changeover, only thirteen series-

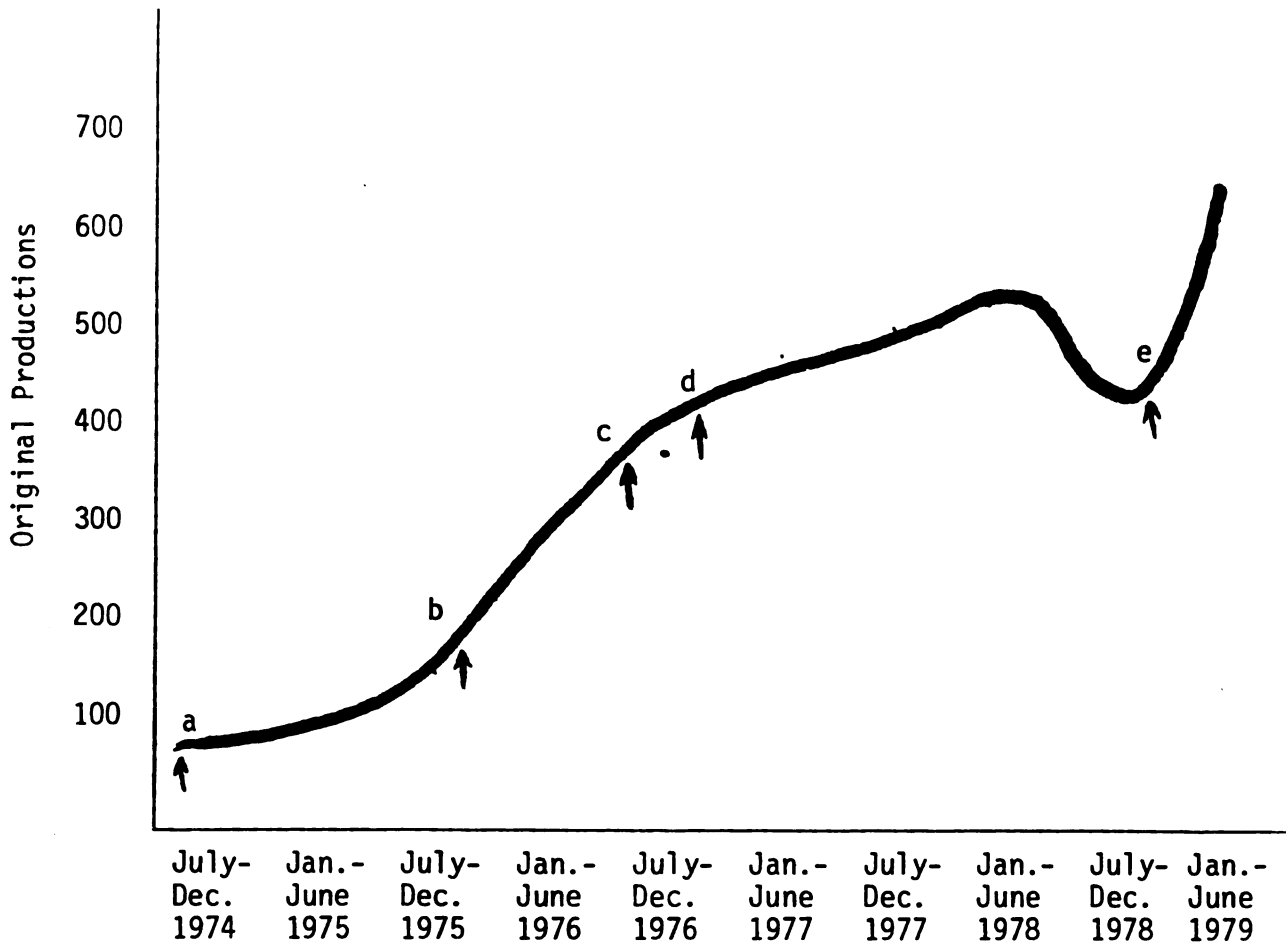


Figure 1. Public Access Program Production

- (a) Sept. 1974 -- National Cable opens its present office/studio building. Separate studios established for public access and local origination.
- (b) Feb. 1976 -- National Cable discontinues local origination channel; all video gear turned over to public access use.
- (c) Nov. 1976 -- Organized TV production classes begin.
- (d) Feb. 1977 -- More than 200 people attend an organizational forum designed to stimulate more access programming.
- (e) Jan. 1979 -- Public access channel gains additional potential audience of 30,000 homes through system interconnection with Lansing.

type programs had begun production. During the two years afterward, 34 new series began (see the Appendix for a list of all series programs produced at the public access center through June, 1979).

A good variety of programming types has also been established. Here's how the 74 series programs produced to date break down in the following 11 categories:

News/Public Affairs	23
Religious	10
Performing Arts	9
Sports	6
Video Art/Experimental	6
Comedy	4
Minority Affairs	4
Variety	4
Educational	4
Women's	2
Children's	2

Special programs too numerous to specify have also been made. Notable ones include the seven-hour live marathon cablecast of a legislative forum that I described in Chapter II, a number of tapings of outdoor dramatic presentations of the MSU Summer Circle Theatre Department, rock and jazz bands in concert at local nightclubs, and dozens of political speeches and forums, often featuring nationally known dignitaries visiting the East Lansing area.

Production Quality: Should Only
the Slick Survive?

Another area which has seen a lot of variety is the level of production sophistication and quality from program to program on the access channel schedule. An acceptable rule of thumb is this: the longer a program series has been in production, the better the production quality. This also is true for most individual volunteers. Obviously, practice makes perfect. Therefore, it's a very good idea to encourage the development of long-term series programs, while trying as much as possible to keep the producers coming back for more. If a show has strong production characteristics, it's probably more likely to retain viewers than if not. Our survey results tend to support this conclusion. "MSU Hockey," the most sophisticated series attempted by local access volunteers (5 cameras, 2 video replay angles, a 14-person crew), is the most-watched program among the regulars, with an average weekly audience of 10% of all cable subscribers. The more well-produced shows are also more likely to win your access center some awards, which help in the publicity department. Two awards have been given to East Lansing's access center by the National Cable Television Association. One was for a documentary about the local handicappers' rights movement, the other for the taping of the 1976 annual football skirmish to benefit ALSAC, "The Bull Bowl," featuring the Pigs vs. the Freaks.

In no way should this discussion imply that less slick productions should be kept off the channel. All access programs are likely to be amateurish initially, but it's an exciting thing for a producer to see his or her work on the cable for the first time. What may look awfully dull to the more experienced could be a big thrill to that producer.

And he or she is likely to soon be asking for suggestions from the more able coordinators and veteran volunteers on how to improve the show's looks.

Reactions from Original Ordinance Authors

One thing I was interested in finding out was how the evolution of access programming compares to what the early framers of the East Lansing cable ordinance thought would develop. To find out, I asked two of the most involved people in those early days, Dr. Truman Morrison and Robert Muhlbach, for their evaluations. Dr. Morrison said that he didn't expect the volume of programming that came about, and was especially happy about the variety. He certainly was pleased about this, but did express a wish that more people in the middle age group and older could be convinced to become involved. Muhlbach, who was also a member of the East Lansing Cable Communications Commission from its inception until mid-1979, said he was surprised to see so many long-term series-type shows occur. He expected many more single-issue mini-documentaries to be made. The concern among some access users, as they expressed to the Commission regularly, that the production hardware be more sophisticated was also not anticipated. In general, though, both men were pleased at how public access had grown in their community.

ITEM: "Past and Present Tense" was a very thoughtful public affairs discussion series produced at East Lansing access during the first six months of 1978. Co-hosts Truman Morrison and Erik Lunde guided their audiences through a number of topics with local authorities on the

subjects. The interesting thing about this series is that later that year, Truman and Erik were approached by the program director at WKAR-TV, the local public television station, and asked to do their show there. The series, re-titled "Conversation," has been broadcast by WKAR-TV ever since.

ITEM: "Black Notes" is a weekly series which showcases many Black artists in the Lansing area. Segments in the shows also deal with public affairs issues (interviews with top government officials like Michigan Secretary of State Richard Austin, mini-documentaries on misuse of funds intended to help minorities, etc.). The crew has even developed a "soap opera." "Black Notes" is the longest-running series on East Lansing's public access channel, having been around now for over five-and-a-half years. The group which produces it, the Black Notes Media Collective, was also the first group in town formed specifically to produce an access program.

CHAPTER V

Audience Development and Measurement: "Is Anyone Watching Out There?"

Developing and measuring significant viewership levels of access programs is an important and too often overlooked aspect of a community video center's operation. Many who are involved in cable access are now seeing the need for hard data to prove the worth and community acceptance of access programming. There's a widely-held notion in the cable industry that "nobody watches access shows," and this makes it very difficult to gain the support of many communities' cable operators, particularly since there are so many new satellite services now available to fill up blank or under-used cable channels.

Promoting the Access Channel Programming

In the most recently-conducted viewership survey of East Lansing cable subscribers by the Michigan State University Department of Telecommunication, it was discovered that 75% of this group is now aware of the public access channel, and 71% of those aware watch its programming. This achievement didn't just happen miraculously, though. Many different kinds of promotional techniques have been used through the years, and almost all have been at no cost. Personal appearances at community group meetings, of course, happened first. These were followed up by coaxing local newspapers to assign reporters to write feature.

articles about this new concept for television. This is an area in which we have been extremely fortunate to have had dozens of major articles written about East Lansing access. Advertisements have also been placed in TV listings sections of the local newspapers.

There's always been an easy way for us to post the channel's program schedule. During non-programming hours, a 10-page character generator is shown on the channel which lists times, titles, and descriptions of all programs coming up for the next few days. But another important method of getting this information out is through the TV listings published in the local newspapers. This was a most difficult accomplishment for us to achieve. For over a year I tried to convince the two major area newspapers, The State Journal and The State News, to run our listings, but had no luck. When the Journal people at one point told me that they doubted our "fledgling" TV station could regularly send in program schedules by their deadline, I asked if they would let us send such logs to them, not to be published, but merely to prove that we could do it. This continued for eight months! Finally, the Journal agreed to add the WELM-TV listings in August, 1976. They would also be willing to give us some copy space to describe a little more about upcoming programs in their "On Local Screens" column in the weekend TV pull-out section.

These moves by the Journal definitely broke the ice. The State News added us to their TV listings section about a month later. A third area paper, The Lansing Star, decided to create a special TV section devoted only to our channel's schedule. All of these newspapers have continued to carry the schedules once they got started, and we are very grateful for this.

There are many other ways of promoting the channel line-up. How about sandwich-board signs at the entrances to major apartment centers? Or small posters tacked up on high-traffic area bulletin boards, telephone polls, etc? Try making up a banner for your access channel and display it at a remote taping where many will be in attendance (sports events, debates, concerts, etc.). You might find people willing to put in a few words for you in their community group newsletter. Word of mouth promotion should always be encouraged. We even had some T-shirts made up with a "WELM-TV" emblem and sold them at cost to scores of access volunteers.

Some of the access users really let their imaginations (and chutzpah) soar. In Fall 1978, two volunteers, Julie Johnson and Sue Timma, who lugged a portapac to the MSU football stadium to tape highlights of all home football games for "WELM News," had a friend who was one of the people who decided what words and designs would be flashed up before and during the games by the card section. Would you believe that Julie and Sue convinced her to have the card block spell out "WELM-TV" before a crowd of over 75,000 people? It's true -- and they have it on tape for proof! Julie told me that one of the cameramen standing near her in the pressbox on that occasion remarked, "Somebody's publicity department sure must be working overtime."

The Importance of Series-Type Programming

The existence of many series-type programs made by access users has also been a boon to audience development. Many subscribers now know that at 7:00 every Thursday night, the antics of Sloucho Barx's "Tee Vee Trivia" will be on cable channel 11. "WELM News" appears

every week night at 5:30. The home games of the Michigan State University hockey team show up on the same weekend they are played. Uncle Ernie's "TNT True Adventure Trails" follows the news Monday through Thursday. Since these series are cablecast regularly, people are more likely to be able to identify them. This regularity, in turn, can increase awareness of the public access channel. The "station I.D.'s" which appear between programs always point out that the viewer is watching the public access channel, further reinforcing awareness.

Early Audience Measurement Techniques

Ever since the early days of access cablecasting in East Lansing, a common question has been "Is anyone watching out there?" Individual producers wanted to know if more people than only those in the control room were viewing their work. Many people saw the access channel as a potentially excellent vehicle for community expression and information exchange, so they, too, were concerned with this question. Cable company officials were interested in whether their expensive facilities were being used as an electronic "playground," with little subscriber interest, or as a service which generated more significant viewer support.

During the first couple of years, the methods of audience detection were highly informal. Someone who appeared on a regular show would tell others of how he was recognized in a grocery store line by a total stranger who saw his performance on the tube. A phone with a very long extension cord could be dragged into the studio set during live programs, with the host encouraging people to join in the questioning of a well-known guest. Viewers could be asked to call the access center after

(or during) a taped cablecast to "let us know you're watching." We often got dozens of calls during local sports programs, which prompted the coverage of a myriad of events including hockey, women's basketball, football, tennis, and even lacrosse! This might offend some purists who feel that access programming should be geared almost entirely to controversial public affairs and cultural offerings, but it cannot be denied that local sports coverage will do wonders for your efforts to develop community awareness of the access channel. Furthermore, after watching the local college's soccer match, a viewer just might stay tuned to see that documentary coming up next on area housing problems or a play taped a few days ago.

The Introduction of Audience Surveys

A more scientific approach to measurement of the public access channel audience began in 1977. The Michigan State University Department of Telecommunication obtained a grant from the East Lansing Cable Communications Commission to conduct a study of the local cable subscribers and access users. An important part of the telephone and personal interview surveys concerned viewership of public access programs. Many series and a few specials were included in the questionnaires. Respondents were asked if they had ever watched a particular program, and if so, how often (if it was a series). Other important questions were also asked, concerning things like ratings of the access channel's picture quality and programming variety, what methods were used to decide when to watch the channel, awareness of the center's free TV production workshops, etc. Demographic information was gathered, too, allowing cross tabulation for more detailed analysis of the audience. Clearly,

this was a vast improvement over being recognized in a grocery line.

Audience studies have also been conducted during the two years since the initial one. These have been administered by the Department of Telecommunication's "Audience Studies" class every January. Students in the course conduct phone interviews with about 300 subscribers, using a questionnaire developed by the instructors and the access center coordinators. Results can either be hand tabulated or coded for compilation by a University computer.

The outcomes of these studies has been most encouraging to us. They have revealed that people will watch access productions, and often at very surprising levels. For example, the average weekly viewership of the "MSU Hockey" series in the 1979 study was nearly 10% of the cable subscribers. "Tee Vee Trivia" has seen its reported audience grow to nearly 7% during an average week. Mike Doyle's "Tempo" series, in which he shares his collection of old movie trailers, posters, and other memorabilia with the audience, has ballooned from a meager average weekly figure of 0.5% in 1977 to about 4% of all cable subscribers in 1979. The following table contains the results of the overall viewership levels for the public access series programs included in the 1979 study. (NOTE: the "in an average week" figure was computed by taking the number of respondents who said they watched a program weekly and adding the monthly viewership figure divided by 4.35, the number of weeks in an average month.)

TABLE 1
PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL SERIES PROGRAMS
VIEWERSHIP LEVELS (IN PERCENT)

Series Title	Cable Subscribers Viewing . . .		
	In An Average Week	At Least Monthly	Ever
MSU Hockey	9.8	15.7	23.6
Tee Vee Trivia	6.9	13.8	22.0
WELM News	7.2	13.1	19.0
Impressions	4.3	11.5	19.0
Tempo	3.6	8.2	14.0
Ed Weiss-Cracks	3.3	6.9	14.8
TNT Trails	3.0	5.2	8.9
Black Notes	3.0	3.9	7.9
Woman Wise	1.3	3.6	7.9
Electric Way	1.6	3.6	6.9
Shintowa	1.3	4.6	4.9
We All Live Here	0.7	2.6	6.2

The 1979 study also included questions about two non-series programs. The first referred to WELM's telecasts of the public hearings about the very controversial proposed Dayton-Hudson shopping mall complex for East Lansing. Nineteen percent of the respondents said that they did view these programs on the public access channel. Access volunteers also produced a number of political candidates debates during the 1978 election year. The audience study revealed that 21% of those polled said they watched these debates.

The results of this survey clearly show that if given enough time to develop, local access programming will attract a very respectable following. The figures on viewership levels for the Dayton-Hudson mall hearings and the political candidates debates are particularly encouraging, since they convincingly dispel the commonly held notion (believed by many in broadcasting circles) that no one cares about local community affairs programming.

VI. CONCLUSIONS

Impact On and Importance to the Community

The public access center in the East Lansing cable system has provided an enormous variety of local programming which would otherwise have never been produced. Dedicated efforts of the community's government officials, citizens groups, and cable company personnel have led to the development of an access center which is now probably the busiest place of its kind in the country. It is now a source of great community pride, with requests for information about its operation coming in from around the country. East Lansing has also been selected as the site of the 1980 convention of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers.

With this thesis, I have tried to show how this result came about through extensive planning before the cable system was built, effective use of existing TV production technologies, the evolution of coordinating techniques by the access center personnel which brought in hundreds of area residents and kept them coming back for more, and many types of promotional efforts to develop impressive viewership levels for public access channel programs.

A properly organized access center can become an oasis of positive community interaction in a world which many writers have labeled as becoming increasingly depersonalized. The access channel is an outlet

for personal expression about whatever concerns an individual, be it the lack of religion in society, the need for more changes in the world as called for by the feminist movement, an argument to not take things so seriously, or the achievements of handicapped people. The ease in which television can be used for these and many other purposes is richly ironic, since the medium is so often decried as a one-way communications device with precious few opportunities for input from the public.

Located in a large university town, the East Lansing public access center has also been a place where students interested in entering the communications fields have had opportunities for hands-on experience. About half of the users of the facilities are students, and they get a chance to see how important and rewarding local programming can be. Not surprisingly, many of the telecommunication students who have received their initial experience at WELM and later went on to work in broadcasting are now ardent advocates of expanding community programming at their stations.

Benefits to the Cable Industry

Although the public access service is not regarded as a revenue producer, one can point to evidence that it indirectly is. East Lansing's National Cable Company has pointed to its commitment to operating a successful public access service as a factor when making its case to justify a proposed cable rate increase to City Council. Public access channel offerings are also part of the alternative programming package which may attract new subscribers. One cannot overlook the importance of a cable operator's track record concerning a desire

to develop new local programming, particularly in these current days of the industry's frenzied expansion into the remaining markets yet to receive cable television service. Dozens of competing firms are trying to convince the franchising authorities in these communities that their particular company is the one to go with. While all can offer similar packages of broadcast channels, satellite services, burglar and fire detection systems, etc., some can score very strong points by pointing to a solid past record of community programming, as opposed to the majority which simply promise to provide for it in the future.

Although the recent U.S. Supreme Court decision in the Midwest Video II case removed the FCC's requirements to provide access channels, it would be unwise for the industry to pull out of this area altogether. As Federal Communications Commission chairman Charles Ferris, speaking before the annual convention of the National Cable Television Association (NCTA) in May 1979, pointed out:

"I hope that you are not viewing the end of your federal requirement of local programming access as the occasion to abandon the opportunity to market cable as an important low-cost vehicle for increased local programming. "Localism" should not be a catch word that separates broadcasting and cable. You have found that there are unsatisfied national specialized audiences. But you may also discover that your local community is also an unsatisfied specialized audience."

As the cable industry continues its rapid growth in political clout, it must also be cognizant of the pitfalls that may lie ahead. An important lesson can be learned from the experience of those in broadcasting. For years that industry was free to do as it pleased, and as its profits soared, it became less and less concerned with meeting individual community needs with local programming. They soon

found themselves in big trouble, though, and had to spend many thousands of dollars in not-always-successful attempts to rebuke license renewal challenges from consumer action groups. These legal actions came about for a myriad of reasons, not the least of which was a station's lack of commitment to meeting community needs through local programming.

The cable industry would be ill-advised to follow in its predecessor's footsteps. A successful operation of a public access center can be pointed to with pride as proof of a cable system's dedication to the needs of the community it serves.

Recommendations to Decision-Makers

As mentioned previously, the U.S. Supreme Court's Midwest Video II decision effectively wiped out the access rules of the Federal Communications Commission. I firmly believe, however, that there still can be an important role to be played by the FCC in the development of cable access. Unlike a number of my colleagues in this field, I do not believe new federal requirements need to be specifically delineated in another national communications law. As it happened with the old regulations concerning access, these requirements can become too inflexible, with set minimum guidelines treated by the bureaucracy as maximum standards (this problem arose in East Lansing, as described in Chapter II).

I would argue that the FCC could work far better as an information source about access operations from around the country. Through its network of field offices, profiles could be drawn up by the Commission staff which describe a number of working access centers, compiled into

booklets which also contain other information about existing cable services, and sent to communities in the process of developing new franchise agreements with cable companies. Staff members could also be made to appear at public hearings on cable television, helping to further explain the access concept with slide presentations, videotapes, etc. The FCC already has the power to undertake such a project. One of the functions of the Commission, as described in Section 303 (g) of the Communications Act of 1934, is to "study new uses..., provide for experimental uses..., and generally encourage the larger and more effective use of [telecommunication] in the public interest." The final decisions must be left up to the local community. If franchises are agreed to with cable operators which include detailed access requirements provisions, then so be it. If, on the other hand, a franchising authority is not convinced of the worth of such an arrangement and includes no such provision, another body should not step in and force them to.

To successfully carry out this proposed venture, much more research about the country's experiences with public access to cable television must be conducted. Detailed analyses similar to this study of East Lansing could be done in places like New York City; Reading, Pennsylvania; Minneapolis, Minnesota; Hayward, California; and Columbus, Indiana. These are just a few of the other places I have heard about or visited which also demonstrate that access channels can become important sources of community programming. As FCC Chairman Ferris said in his NCTA speech.

"Your industry's experience with the local access channels has shown that there are in many communities local video producers willing to provide exciting and innovative program ideas, and that there is local interest in cable programs on community issues and events. Midwest Video only

removes legal obligations, not the continued potential for local educational programming and local coverage of city government, local sports and even a local parade or demonstration. It does not remove the potential for local merchants to become underwriters of local program services. While you look to the sky for new programming ideas, I hope you are not ignoring them in your own backyard."

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX A

Red-Letter Dates

- May 1968 - National Cable Company signs a contract with Michigan State University to provide cable television services to the Married Housing Apartments.
- May 1972 - National Cable Company provides one portapac to Married Housing residents for public access program production.
- September 1972 - East Lansing City Council adopts a cable television ordinance.
- September 1972 - The Michigan State University "Video Workshop" is established as a recognized student organization.
- February 1973 - National Cable Company installs a modulator and other hardware at the Married Housing Office, thus enabling programs to be cablecast from there.
- April 1973 - The Video Workshop begins weekly programming from the Married Housing Office (this continues until February 1975).
- May 1973 - East Lansing City Council grants cable television franchise to National Cable Company.
- July 1973 - First access weekly series begins. "Women's Center Presents ..." (later "By, For, and About Women") is produced at Married Housing Office facilities. Would later be produced at National Cable Company facilities until February 1976.
- May 1974 - Public access and local origination programming begins from National Cable Company's temporary origination point/studio in the University Inn basement.

- September 1974 - National Cable Company opens present office/
studio building with separate studios for
public access and local origination.
- March 1975 - The National Cable Television Association gives
award to National Cable Company for local
origination documentary special, "The Handicappers,
An Equal Rights Movement."
- July 1975 - Federal Communications Commission issues a Memorandum
Opinion and Order, "voiding" many local programming
provisions of the East Lansing cable television
ordinance and franchise agreement.
- February 1976 - National Cable Company discontinues local origination
channel. All equipment is turned over to public
access use solely. Two full-time staff people are
retained as public access coordinators.
- March 1976 - "Cable 11 News" begins as a combination newscast
and television production workshop.
- August 1976 - Public access volunteers choose call letters "WELM"
for channel 11.
- August 1976 - Program listings for public access channel begin
appearing in three local newspapers.
- September 1976 - FCC rescinds many of its previous "voids" of
programming-related portions of the East Lansing
cable television ordinance and franchise agreement.
- November 1976 - Former black-and-white studio gear is converted into
a portable multi-camera production system.
- November 1976 - Organized television production "classes" begin.
- February 1977 - National Cable Company buys time base corrector
for channel 11.
- February 1977 - More than 200 people attend an organizational meeting
to stimulate more access programming.
- February 1977 - Former FCC Commissioner Nicholas Johnson visits public
access center and tapes interview program.
- March 1977 - National Cable Television Association gives award to
National Cable Company for public access sports
special, "The Bull Bowl 1977: The Pigs vs. the
Freaks."

- April 1977 - First live telecast using the cable system's two-way return capacity is held. Program is a 7-hour marathon legislative conference from the Hannah Middle School.
- May 1977 - East Lansing public access center is profiled in the first newsletter of the National Federation of Local Cable Programmers (NFLCP).
- June 1977 - First live telecast from a subscriber's home on the public access channel is held.
- July 1977 - Meridian Township Cable Advisory Board recommends that the township award its cable franchise to National Cable Company, citing the East Lansing public access service as a factor in their decision.
- August 1978 - Access program "Past and Present Tense" is picked up for production by local public television station WKAR-TV.
- January 1979 - Lansing/East Lansing cable interconnection allows transmission of channel 11 to Lansing (adding a new potential audience of 30,000 homes).
- April 1979 - East Lansing hosts Central States regional conference of the NFLCP.
- June 1979 - First six-months total for program production in 1979 greatly outdistances all previous years' comparable figures. 1200 productions for 1979 are anticipated (a 26% increase over highest earlier annual total).
- September 1979 - East Lansing chosen as site of the 1980 national convention of the NFLCP.

APPENDIX B

East Lansing Public Access Series Programs¹

TITLE	DURATION
1. "Women's Center Presents ..." / "By, For, and About Women"	7/73 - 2/76
2. "Black Notes"	1/74 - Present
3. "Observations"	2/74 - 5/74
4. "Children's Video Workshop"	2/74 - 5/74
5. "Intermediary" / "The Electric Way"	3/74 - Present
6. "Moo You Two"	10/74 - 4/75
7. "MSU Hockey"	10/74 - Present
8. "Parent Reports"	1/75 - 5/76
9. "Gator's Gab"	7/75 - 3/77
10. "Fade to Black"	7/75 - 9/75
11. "MSU Sports Spectacular" / "Capitol City Sports" / "Talkin' Sports"	11/75 - 6/78
12. "Wizards' Workshop"	11/75 - 3/76
13. "Bread and Circuses"	1/76 - 6/76
14. "Cable 11 News" / "Cabletronic 11 News" / "WELM News"	3/76 - Present

¹Series programs are defined as having had five or more shows produced under the same name, regularly scheduled.

15.	"VTN Presents"/"Videowaves"	3/76 - Present
16.	"The Richard Connaughton Show"	4/76 - 6/76
17.	"Emphasis"	5/76 - 8/76
18.	"Spectra"	5/76 - 7/76
19.	"Iranian Students Association Presents"	6/76 - 10/76
20.	"Woman Wise"	7/76 - Present
21.	"Talking Back"	7/76 - 4/77
22.	"Ride On"	9/76 - 11/76
23.	"Labor Viewpoints"/"The Real News"	11/76 - 6/77
24.	"Pattern of the Universe"	11/76 - 3/77
25.	"Tee Vee Trivia"	2/77 - Present
26.	"Tempo"	2/77 - Present
27.	"MSU Panorama"	2/77 - Present
28.	Interlude"/"Nightspot"	3/77 - 6/77
29.	"Pass It On"	4/77 - 9/77
30.	"Impressions"	4/77 - Present
31.	"Ed-Itorial Weiss-Cracks"	4/77 - Present
32.	"TFP-3"	5/77 - 9/77
33.	"After Hours with Tom Hocking"	6/77 - 12/77
34.	"The Bible's View"	7/77 - 6/78
35.	"Shintowa"/"Variety"/"Artpourri"	8/77 - Present
36.	"Christ's Teachings in Our Violent World"	10/77 - 5/78
37.	"Tuesday Night"	10/77 - Present
38.	"Voc Rehab Presents..."/ "Handicappers Unlimited"	10/77 - 7/78
39.	"Sound-Off"	10/77 - 5/78

40.	"Won Chuen"	11/77 - 8/78
41.	"Baha'i: New World TV Series"	11/77 - 1/78
42.	"Past and Present Tense"	11/77 - 6/78
43.	"Canadian Travel Film"	11/77 - 2/78
44.	"Sights and Sounds"	11/77 - 1/78
45.	"Fifteen With Spira"	1/78 - 5/78
46.	"TNT True Adventure Trails"	12/77 - Present
47.	"Wednesday Night Fever"/"Synergy"	2/78 - 6/78
48.	"The Closing Circle"	4/78 - 6/78
49.	"Ultimate Intelligence"	4/78 - 12/78
50.	"Unification Church"	4/78 - 7/78
51.	"Cable 11 Film Classics"	5/78 - 9/78
52.	"The Best of Sloucho"	7/78 - 10/78
53.	"We All Live Here"	8/78 - Present
54.	"Pazzo"	10/78 - 6/79
55.	"Arts Lansing"	11/78 - 2/79
56.	"On T.A.P."	11/78 - 6/79
57.	"New American Theatre"	1/79 - 2/79
58.	"Mormon World Conference"	1/79 - Present
59.	"MSU Women's Basketball"	1/79 - Present
60.	"Black Notes Studio A"	1/79 - Present
61.	"Speaking of Sports"/"From the Pressbox"	1/79 - 6/79
62.	"Pan African News"	1/79 - 7/79
63.	"The United Way Today"	2/79 - 7/79
64.	"Talking Heads"	3/79 - Present
65.	"Community Calendar"	3/79 - Present
66.	"Show My People"	4/79 - Present

- | | | |
|-----|------------------------------|----------------|
| 67. | "MSU Lacrosse" | 4/79 - 5/79 |
| 68. | "Cable Talk" | 4/79 - 5/79 |
| 69. | "MSU Women's Tennis" | 4/79 - 5/79 |
| 70. | "Lansing Today" | 4/79 - 9/79 |
| 71. | "Christ Temple Bible Study" | 5/79 - 9/79 |
| 72. | "Urban Scene" | 5/79 - 9/79 |
| 73. | "Health Input" | 5/79 - 9/79 |
| 74. | "Bob Carr Washington Report" | 5/79 - Present |

APPENDIX C

1979 Audience Survey Questionnaire

TELEPHONE NUMBER _____

ID NUMBER: _____ 1-3

CALLBACKS: 1 2 3 4 5 6

STATUS OF INTERVIEW:

COMPLETED (1)
REFUSED (2)
DISCONNECTED (3)

ZENATY/VAN DALSEN: 353-3288

INTRODUCTION: Hello, I'm _____ calling from the Telecommunication Department at Michigan State University. We're doing a study of television use in East Lansing and I have a few questions I'd like to ask you. This will only take a few minutes.

1. First, do you subscribe to the East Lansing Cable Television System?

(1) YES (2) NO (TERMINATE INTERVIEW: Thank you very much.)

2. How long have you subscribed?

(_____) (RECORD ACTUAL ANSWER)

4-5

3. Are you aware of programming on Cable Channel 11, the Public Access Channel?

6

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 12) (3) DK. (GO TO Q. 3)

4. Do you ever watch programs on the Public Access Channel?

7

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 12)

5. Do you recall the call letters of the Public Access Channel?

8

(1) WELM (2) OTHER RESPONSE

6. How do you decide what to watch on the Public Access Channel?

9

(1) WORD OF MOUTH (4) FLIPPING CHANNEL SELECTOR

(2) NEWSPAPER (-) OTHER: _____

(3) PROGRAM GUIDE ON CHANNEL 11

7. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being excellent, how would you rate the picture quality of the Public Access Channel? (CIRCLE NUMBER)

10-11

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

8. I am now going to read you a short list of regular programs shown on the Public Access Channel. I'd like you to tell me if you have ever watched the program...and, if so, do you watch it weekly or monthly? (PROBE IF NECESSARY: would you say you watch it weekly or monthly?)

	HAVE WATCHED	WATCHED MONTHLY	WEEKLY	
MSU Hockey	1	2	3	12
WELM News	1	2	3	13
Woman Wise	1	2	3	14
Black Notes	1	2	3	15
The Electric Way	1	2	3	16
We All Live Here	1	2	3	17
TV Trivia	1	2	3	18
Impressions	1	2	3	19
TNT True Adventure Trails	1	2	3	20
Ed-Itorial Weiss-Cracks	1	2	3	21
Shintova: Hearts in Harmony	1	2	3	22
Tempo	1	2	3	23

9. Did you watch the Dayton-Hudson Mall debates on the Public Access Channel last year? 24

(1) YES (2) NO

10. Did you watch any of the political candidates' debates on the Public Access Channel last year? 25

(1) YES (2) NO

11. On a scale of one to ten, with ten being excellent, how would you rate the variety of programming on the Public Access Channel? (CIRCLE NUMBER) 26-27

POOR 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 EXCELLENT

12. Are you aware that any East Lansing resident can learn to produce programs for Public Access free of charge? 28

(1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 14)

13. Have you ever produced or helped produce anything to be shown on the Public Access Channel? 29

(1) YES (2) NO (3) DK

Page 3

COLS.

14. Are you aware of programming on Cable Channel 22, the East Lansing City Government Channel? 30
 (1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 18) (3) DK (GO TO Q. 17)
15. Do you ever watch programming on the City Government Channel? 31
 (1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 18)
16. Do you read the printed messages on the City Government Channel? 32
 (-) YES (1) NO (GO TO Q. 17)
- 16a. IF YES: How often?
 (2) DAILY (6) ONLY FOR EMERGENCY INFO
 (3) ONCE-TWICE WEEKLY (5) DK
 (4) OCCASIONALLY
17. Have you watched any of the following programs on the City Government Channel...
 17a. City Council Meetings? 33
 (1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 17c)
- 17b. How often do you watch the City Council meetings? 34
 (1) BI-WEEKLY (4) OCCASIONALLY
 (2) MONTHLY (5) DON'T KNOW
 (3) EVERY OTHER MONTH
- 17c. City Hall Insights? 35
 (1) YES (2) NO
- 17d. A Closer Look: The Cedars Shopping Center? 36
 (1) YES (2) NO
18. Would you find video-taped summaries of the City Council meetings worthwhile? 37
 (1) YES (2) NO
19. Are you aware of programming on Cable Channel 23, the Public Library Channel? 38
 (IF RESPONDENT MENTIONS "WKAR," "MSU" OR "PUBLIC TV," ETC., REPEAT CABLE CHANNEL 23)
 (1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 25) (3) DK (GO TO Q. 22)
20. Do you ever watch programming on the Public Library Channel? 39
 (1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 25)
21. Do you read the printed messages on the Public Library Channel? 40
 (-) YES (1) NO (GO TO Q. 22)
- 21a. IF YES: How often?
 (2) DAILY (4) OCCASIONALLY
 (3) ONCE-TWICE WEEKLY (5) DON'T KNOW

22. Have you watched any of the following programs on the Public Library Channel... 41
- 22a. Visiting Librarian Program? 41
- (1) YES (2) NO
- 22b. Genealogy? 42
- (1) YES (2) NO
- 22c. Book Talks? 43
- (1) YES (2) NO
23. What would be the best time for children's programming to appear on the Public Library Channel? 44
- (1) 9AM - NOON (4) 6PM - 9PM
- (2) NOON - 3PM (5) DON'T KNOW
- (3) 3PM - 6PM (-) OTHER: _____
24. What would be the best time for adult programming to appear on the Public Library Channel? 45
- (1) 9AM - NOON (4) 6PM - 9PM
- (2) NOON - 3PM (5) DON'T KNOW
- (3) 3PM - 6PM (-) OTHER: _____
25. Are you aware of programming on Cable Channel 24, the Public Schools Channel? 46
- (1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 29) (3) DK (GO TO Q. 29)
26. Do you ever watch programming on the Public Schools Channel? 47
- (1) YES (2) NO (GO TO Q. 29)
27. Do you read the printed messages on the Public Schools Channel? 43
- (-) YES (1) NO (GO TO Q. 28)
- 27a. IF YES: How often?
- (2) DAILY (4) OCCASIONALLY
- (3) ONCE-TWICE WEEKLY (5) DON'T KNOW
28. What programs have you watched on the Public Schools Channel? (CIRCLE ALL MENTIONED, DO NOT PROMPT) 49
- (1) VIEWPOINT WITH SUPERINTENDENT ROBERT DOCKING
- (2) EAST LANSING BOARD OF EDUCATION MEETINGS
- (3) SCHOOL SPORTS EVENTS
- (4) SCHOOL CULTURAL EVENTS
- (5) TEACHER TRAINING PROGRAMS
- OTHER: (SPECIFY ALL MENTIONED): _____
- _____
- _____
- _____
- _____

Now just a few more questions...

29. Do you have a working color television?

50

(1) YES (2) NO

30. About how many hours of television did you watch yesterday? (CIRCLE NUMBER)

51

0 1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+

31. How long have you lived in East Lansing?

52-53

() (ROUND TO NEAREST YEAR)

32. How many people live in your household? (CIRCLE NUMBER)

54

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9+

33. Are there children under 18 in the household?

55

(1) YES (0) NO (GO TO Q. 35)

34. Would you tell me their ages? (RECORD ACTUAL AGES. ROUND TO NEAREST YEAR)

56-58

1 2 3 4 5 6 7 8 9 10 11 12 13 14 15 16 17

35. How much education have you completed?

59

(1) THRU 8TH (5) COLLEGE DEGREE

(2) 9TH - 12TH (6) GRADUATE WORK

(3) H.S. DEGREE (7) GRADUATE DEGREE

(4) SOME COLLEGE (8) REFUSED

36. Would you please tell me your age?

60-61

() (ROUND TO NEAREST YEAR)

37. Would you tell me if your household income is more or less than \$10,000?

62

(1) LESS THAN \$10,000 (GO TO Q. 38)

(-) MORE THAN \$10,000

37a. Is it more than \$25,000?

(2) NO (GO TO Q. 38)

(-) YES

37b. And finally, is it more than \$40,000?

(3) NO (GO TO Q. 38)

(4) YES (GO TO Q. 38)

(5) STUDENT

(6) REFUSED

38. Thank you very much for your help.

39. RECORD SEX:

(1) MALE (2) FEMALE

63

APPENDIX D

Public Access Rules

and

Equipment Check-Out Forms

NATIONAL CABLE COMPANY PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL RULES

I. PREAMBLE

1.1 The purpose of these Public Access Rules is to clearly define the rights and responsibilities of the National Cable Company (NATIONAL CABLE) and the applicant in the use of Public Access facilities provided by National Cable. The primary purpose of these facilities is to encourage East Lansing residents to take the opportunity provided by Public Access in the production of localized television programming.

1.2 To encourage local participation, National Cable offers channel time, an editing station, the loan of "Porta-Pak" type equipment, and videotape free of charge for public access applicants. Also, use of studio production facilities will be available to public access applicants for a fee described in Appendix C of the rules.

1.3 The following rules are guidelines for access channel operation, based upon Federal Communications Commission's regulations and local commitments, and are meant to insure maximum utilization by all persons desiring access to the facilities.

II. APPLICATIONS

2.1 A user will be defined as any East Lansing resident applying for use of the Public Access production facilities.

2.2 Any individual or group may use the access channel according to FCC Rules and Regulations (see Appendix D). Access to this channel will be first-come, first-serve, and non-discriminatory.

2.3 If the applicant is under 18 years of age, he must have an adult co-sign his application form and agreement. The co-signer is then responsible, along with the applicant, for all cost which may be incurred as a result of the use of these facilities as outlined in Appendix C, or for any financial responsibility connected with the use of the Company's facilities other than normal wear and tear.

2.4 Any user charged with one period of studio use during one week shall not be prevented from assisting in other studio productions during the same week.

III. USER RESPONSIBILITY

3.1 The applicant assumes full responsibility for use of National Cable production facilities, other than normal wear and tear.

3.2 Persons utilizing the Public Access production facilities will, at all times, be under the supervision and authority of National Cable's Public Access Coordinator. All handling of the facilities or granting of authority to do so will be done by the Public Access Coordinator in charge at the time of the production. Users of the channel may not present any material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services. This includes any advertising by, or on the behalf of, candidates for public office. Finally, the FCC stipulates that users of the channel may not present obscene or indecent matter. (See Appendix D, FCC Regulation Governing the Use of Public Access Channels.)

3.3 The applicant must be sure that, if the use of music and non-music copyrighted material is involved, the appropriate copyright clearances have been obtained. Before presenting a program, he or she must have signed the "Agreement for Use of Facilities for Public Access Purposes" (Appendix B).

3.4 The user of portable access equipment must take all initiative to identify himself to persons being videotaped, particularly when that person may not know of the taping or may not desire to be taped. In making his identity known, the user must not identify himself as an employee or representative of National Cable, and should make every effort to clearly disclose the pertinent aspects of the taping.

3.5 Regarding the use of studio facilities the following stipulations will be observed:

- a. Users are requested to arrive at least 15 minutes before their scheduled times of appearance.
- b. Users and other participants are asked to keep the control room clear of non-essential personnel during the production.
- c. Technical help and users shall not smoke, snack, or bring drinks into the control room.

3.6 National Cable reserves the right to temporarily refuse the use of the Access Channel and facilities to any person under the influence of alcohol, drugs, or otherwise not under full control of his senses.

IV. NATIONAL CABLE COMPANY RESPONSIBILITY

4.1 Basically, there are two ways to provide programming in order to utilize public access time. A program may be produced by using National Cable's portable facilities, or studios; or, a prerecorded tape (or film) may be supplied to National Cable. In either case, the tape (or film) is then scheduled for showing on the designated public access channel as outlined in the "Public Access Schedule Procedure."

4.2 National Cable will provide a qualified person to offer technical and programming assistance to channel users in order to assure optimum technical quality.

4.3 Applications to use the Public Access Channel for the showing of a prerecorded program is outlined in the section designated "Public Access Schedule Procedure"; however, the Company assumes no responsibility for damages to tape, film, or equipment furnished by the user. Furthermore, the Company will not edit, or alter in any way, the content of Public Access material without permission of the user. The necessity of duplication or any other type of alteration will be discussed with the Public Access Coordinator when application is made.

4.4 National Cable will keep for public inspection all applications for use of the Public Access Channel and a complete record of the names and addresses of all persons or groups who request access time. The Company will retain all records for a period of two years.

4.5. National Cable will provide basic television equipment and facilities necessary for production. This equipment will undergo periodic maintenance to help insure good quality of operation and will produce a picture comparable in technical quality with other local programming.

V. FACILITIES MADE AVAILABLE BY NATIONAL CABLE

5.1 All facilities will be offered on a first-come, first-serve basis. Public Access facilities are to be used only in the production of Public Access programming.

5.2 For remote productions, "Porta-Pak" type equipment and the necessary supplemental production gear will be supplied free of charge to any applicant qualifying under the terms of these Public Access Rules on 24 hours' notice for a period not to exceed 24 hours. Facilities will also be made available for electronic editing of the taped footage produced with the Porta-Pak.

5.3 In cases where studio production facilities are required, application should be made at least one week in advance, for the convenience of the user. This time limitation may be excepted in cases of public interest.

5.4 Studio Equipment will include:

- a. Two color television cameras
- b. Two 3/4" cassette-type color videotape recorders
- c. Two 1/2" black-and-white videotape recorders
- d. One color film/slide chain to include:
 - One 16 mm sound film projector
 - One Super-8 sound film projector
 - One 35mm slide projector/sequencer
- e. Switching and monitoring facilities
- f. One color studio with lighting facilities
- g. Four microphones with cables
- h. Intercom system
- i. Audio facilities to include:
 - One master sound mixer
 - One reel-to-reel audio tape recorder-player
 - One record turntable
 - One audio cartridge recorder-player
 - One audio cassette player

5.5 National Cable's Public Access Production Studio may be reserved one week in advance, by applicants, for one continuous 90-minute period of time on any given work day free of charge. One half-hour of this period may be used in one of the following ways:

- a. To rehearse and practice material before the cameras
- b. To videotape bonafide Public Access presentations

The remainder of the time period may be used in the following ways:

- a. To prepare and set up lighting and staging presentations
- b. To discuss production problems with the Public Access Coordinator prior to taping
- c. To view the finished program after the taping is completed

These time limitations may be excepted in cases of public interest.

VI. FEES FOR USE OF PRODUCTION FACILITIES

6.1 Charges for the use of production facilities are set out in a rate schedule at the end of this section, Appendix C. Where production costs are foreseen, the estimated production fees are due by cash, check or money order with completed applications for use. The Company will bill users for any additional production costs within 30 days after the program is produced or refund any excess of the deposit. Dubbing (i.e. tape to tape, film to tape transfers, etc.) will be billed as a production charge.

6.2 The Company reserves the right to withhold cablecasting of programs which do not meet adequate technical standards, such as audio or video loss and/or distortion, until such problems are rectified. In the event that the applicant produces a program not in conformance with any of the technical or legal specifications as stated in these Public Access Rules, applicant understands that no prepaid fees for use of National Cable studio and production facilities will be refunded. This will be done when the problem is judged not to be the fault of National Cable personnel or its equipment.

VII. PUBLIC ACCESS SCHEDULE PROCEDURE

7.1 First, all users must sign the Public Access Channel Agreement, included as Appendix A of these rules. Additionally, all potential users of this Public Access Channel must fill out an application form at the end of this section, Appendix B.

7.2 Access programming will normally be videotaped; except in order to achieve the timeliness of a program, National Cable may permit live presentations.

7.3 If any program contains obscene or indecent material, National Cable reserves the right to withhold cablecasting the videotape until receiving a legal opinion of its likely liability. National Cable will not show tapes prepared outside of its studio facilities without full disclosure of the contents and pre-screening. Tapes must be submitted to National Cable at least one day prior to the scheduled showing. The Company realizes that a long delay in airing any tape may not be in the public interest, therefore National Cable agrees to work in an expedient manner to avoid such delays.

7.4 When the timeliness of a tape is essential, National Cable may waive the preceding requirements. Application for waiver of these or any other requirements should be made at least one week in advance when possible.

7.5 There are no theoretical limitations imposed on the running time of any Public Access program. There are, however, several practical and logistical factors which may dictate the limitations on program length. These limitations may include:

- a. Public Access production facility availability
- b. Channel time availability

7.6 National Cable will deviate from the established telecast schedule only upon its approval of written request, by a group or an individual having an unusual application, after consultation with the group or individual affected by the deviation. It is not the intent of the Company to herein inhibit or restrict the use of the Access Channel, but to insure in as fair a manner as possible, that all persons and groups wishing to use the Public Access facilities have an equal and fair opportunity to take advantage of communications potentials in Public Access. The utilization in a monopolistic manner by one or a few select groups or individuals is not deemed to be in the public interest. Channel use limitations will be applied only in cases where the public interest is not being maintained.

7.7 National Cable assumes responsibility for rescheduling programming which is delayed or interrupted for a duration of 10% of its total time, if such delays or interruptions are beyond control of the user.

VIII. REGULATION OF OPERATION

8.1 National Cable reserves the right to waive any self-imposed regulation when such waiver is judged by the Company to be in the public interest.

8.2 Any violation of these rules may, at the Company's discretion, cause National Cable to withhold the use of its facilities from the violator.

8.3 All applicants for use of National Cable facilities should be aware that they may be held accountable for their actions by the same laws that govern any public activity.

IX. MISCELLANEOUS

9.1 As experience shows a need, these rules shall be subject to periodic revision.

9.2 The Company will have available, information regarding

services offered to public access users by the East Lansing Cable Communications Commission. This information will be prepared and supplied by the Commission.

Public Access

APPLICATION FOR PRESENTATION USE
OF THE
PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNEL

NAME: _____ PHONE: _____

ADDRESS: _____

ORGANIZATION: _____

PRESIDENT OR SPONSOR: _____ PHONE: _____

PROGRAM TITLE: _____ LENGTH: _____

CONTENT: _____

REQUESTED DATE OF PLAYBACK:

DATE _____ TIME _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

DATE _____ TIME _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

DATE _____ TIME _____ DATE _____ TIME _____

MAY WE SCHEDULE YOUR PROGRAM AT ADDITIONAL TIMES? YES _____ NO _____

FORMAT

TAPE: $\frac{1}{2}$ " _____ $\frac{3}{4}$ " Cassette _____ 1" _____

FILM: 8mm _____ Super 8mm _____ 16mm _____

OTHER (Specify): _____

DESCRIPTION

Color _____ Sound _____ Film: Optical _____ Cassette: Track 1 _____

B & W _____ Silent _____ Magnetic _____ Track 2 _____

Both _____

MAKE AND MODEL OF RECORDING MACHINE: _____

ANY SPECIAL PROBLEM OR FORMAT OTHER THAN LISTED? _____

NAMES OF OTHER PERSONS INVOLVED IN PRODUCTION _____

(Signature)

(National Cable Representative)

(Date)

National Cable Company



National Cable Company

AGREEMENT FOR USE OF FACILITIES FOR PUBLIC ACCESS PURPOSES

"Applicant" herewith applies to National Cable Company (National Cable) for use of the designated public access channel on the following terms and conditions:

1. No charge shall be made for the use of National Cable's public access channel. In the event that a public access presentation involves the Company's designated public access production facility, and in the event that such production exceeds the time limits herein mentioned, a charge to cover production costs shall be levied and paid in advance in accordance with the schedule outlined in Appendix C of National Cable's Public Access Manual.
2. Applicant is aware of and recognizes the restrictions imposed on such use by Section 76.251 of the Rules and regulations of the Federal Communication Commission and agrees to abide by them. In particular,
 - a. Applicant will not cablecast any advertising material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services, including advertising by and on behalf of candidates for public office.
 - b. Applicant will not cablecast a lottery or any advertisement of or information concerning a lottery.
 - c. Applicant will not cablecast any obscene or indecent material.

3. Applicant agrees to make all appropriate arrangements with, and to obtain all clearances from broadcast stations, networks, sponsors, music licensing organizations, performers' representatives, and, without limitation from the foregoing, any and all other persons (natural and otherwise) as may be necessary to transmit its program material over the Company's cable television system.
4. In recognition of the fact that the Company has no control over the content of the Applicant's public access cablecast, Applicant agrees to indemnify and hold the Company harmless from any and all liability or other injury (including reasonable costs of the defending claims or litigations) arising from or in connection with claims for failure to comply with any applicable laws, rules, regulations, or other requirements of local, state or federal authorities; for claims of libel, slander, invasion of privacy, or infringement of common law or statutory copyright; for unauthorized use of trademark, trade name, or service mark; for breach of contractual or other obligations owing to third parties by company; and for any other injury or damage in law or equity which claims result from the Applicant's use of the National Cable designated public access channel.
5. Applicant recognizes that the Federal Communications Commission requires Company to maintain available for public inspection a record of all persons applying for use of designated public access channel, and agrees that this application may be used for such record.
6. Applicant states that he has read Company's "Public Access Manual" governing use of cable public access channel and agrees to abide by the terms and conditions contained therein.

(Applicant)

(Date)

(Address)

(Tape Control Number)

(Phone)

(Signature)

(National Cable Representative)

(Note: If executed by a minor, under 18 years of age, the contract must be signed by a responsible adult.)

PUBLIC ACCESS
PRODUCTION CHARGE SUMMARY

The first one-half hour of studio time and the use of a Porta-Pak and tape for a continuous 24-hour period will be offered by National Cable Company free of charge within the guidelines of these Public Access Rules.

STUDIO CHARGES

<u>DURATION OF USE</u>	<u>PER/MINUTE CHARGES FOR USE OF PRODUCTION FACILITIES</u>
First 90 minutes	None
After 90 minutes	\$.50

Studio charges do not include personnel, other than the Public Access Coordinator acting in a supervisory capacity. Any delay or interruption in production will be deducted from the total time when the delay is not within the control of the user.

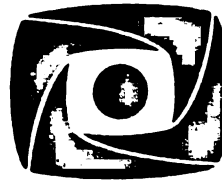
FCC REGULATIONS GOVERNING USE OF PUBLIC ACCESS CHANNELS

- 76.251(a)(4) Public access channel. Each such system shall maintain at least one specially designated, non-commercial public access channel available on a first-come, nondiscriminatory basis. The system shall maintain and have available for public use at least the minimal equipment and facilities necessary for the production of programming for such a channel.
- 76.251(a)(9) Program content control. Each such system shall exercise no control over program content on any of the channels described in paragraphs (a) (4) through (a)(7) of this section; however, this limitation shall not prevent it from taking appropriate steps to insure compliance with the operating rules described in paragraph (a) (11).
- 76.251(a)(10) Assessment of costs. (i) From the commencement of cable television service in the community of such system until five (5) years after completion of the system's basic trunk line, the channels described in paragraphs (a)(5) and (a)(6) of this section shall be made available without charge. (ii) One of the public access channels described in paragraph (a)(4) of this section shall always be made available without charge, except that production costs may be assessed for live studio presentations exceeding five minutes. Such production costs and any fees for use of other public access channels shall be considered with the goal of affording the public a low-cost means of television access.
- 76.251(a)(11) Operating rules. (i) For the public access channel(s), such systems shall establish rules requiring first-come nondiscriminatory access; prohibiting the presentation of; any advertising material designed to promote the sale of commercial products or services (including advertising by or on behalf of candidates for public office); lottery information; and obscene or indecent matter (modeled after the prohibitions of 76.213 and 76.215, respectively); and permitting public inspection of a complete record of the names and addresses of all persons or groups requesting access time. Such a record shall be retained for a period of two years.
- 76.251(a)(11) The operating rules governing public access, educational, and leased channels shall be filed with the Commission within 90 days after a system first activates any such channels, and shall be available for public inspection at the system's offices. Except on specific authorization, or with respect to the operation of the local government access channel, no local entity shall prescribe any

specifications concerning the number of such channels for systems in operation prior to March 31, 1972, shall continue in effect.

- 76.213(a) Lotteries. No cable television system when engaged in origination cablecasting shall transmit or permit to be transmitted on the origination cablecasting channel or channels any advertisement of or information concerning any lottery, gift enterprise, or similar scheme, offering prizes dependent in whole or in part upon lot or chance, or any list of the prizes drawn or awarded by means of any such lottery, gift enterprise or scheme, whether said list contains any part or all of such prizes.
- 76.213(b) The determination whether a particular program comes within the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section depends on the facts of each case. However, the Commission will in any event consider that a program comes within the provisions of paragraph (a) of this section if in connection with such programs a prize consisting of money or thing of value is awarded to any person whose selection is dependent in whole or in part upon lot or chance, if as a condition of winning or competing for such prize, such winner or winners are required to furnish any money or thing of value or are required to have in their possession any product sold, manufactured, furnished or distributed by a sponsor of a program cablecast on the system in question.
- 76.215 Obscenity. No cable television system when engaged in origination cablecasting shall transmit or permit to be transmitted on the origination cablecasting channel or channels material that is obscene or indecent.

National Cable Company



a united
cable television
corporation
system

REQUEST FOR PORTABLE VIDEO EQUIPMENT

Name _____ Today's Date _____

Address _____ Phone _____

Driver's License Number _____

For How Long? From _____ To _____
(Date) (Time) (Date) (Time)

EQUIPMENT REQUESTED

Porta-Pac Kit # _____

- _____ Video Tape Recorder
- _____ Carrying Case
- _____ Internal Battery Pack
- _____ Take-up Reel
- _____ Rf Unit & Cable
- _____ Tripod
- _____ AC Power Adapter
- _____ 3-to-2 prong AC Adapter
- _____ Head Cleaning Supplies
- _____ Ear Speaker
- _____ AC Extension Cord
- _____ EV-635A Microphone w/cable
- _____ Video Camera w/zoom lens

Portable Lighting Kit # _____

- _____ Lighting Instruments
- _____ Stands
- _____ Power Cords
- _____ Spare Lamps
- _____ Barn Doors

Videotape

- _____ 1/2-Hour # _____
- _____ 1-Hour # _____

Other _____

Comments:

I agree to assume complete financial responsibility for use of National Cable Company's equipment, normal wear and tear excepted.

Signature _____

Checked out by _____ Date _____

Checked in by _____ Date _____

P O Box 918 • East Lansing, Michigan 48823 • 517/351-8080

Member of National Cable Television Association



APPENDIX E

TV Production Workshop-Related Forms

TV PRODUCTION WORKSHOPS

FREE!

**★ You'll
learn these
skills:**

- CAMERA OPERATION
- TV STUDIO LIGHTING
- PUTTING A PRODUCTION TOGETHER

**No
previous
TV experience
necessary!**

- OPERATING AN AUDIO MIXER
- USE OF FILM PROJECTORS
- MUCH, MUCH, MORE

WORKSHOPS ARE OPEN TO ANYONE (16 YEARS AND OVER) WHO
WOULD LIKE TO HELP PRODUCE PROGRAMS ON EAST LANSING'S
CABLE TV PUBLIC ACCESS STATION, CHANNEL 11, WELM-TV.
WORKSHOPS MEET TWO HOURS PER WEEK FOR SIX WEEKS.

FOR MORE INFORMATION, CONTACT:

*Jerry Younglove or
Randy VanDalsen
Public Access Coordinators
WELM-TV
National Cable Company
1070 Trowbridge Road
East Lansing*

TELEPHONE 351-0214

TV PRODUCTION WORKSHOP OUTLINE

1ST WEEK: (All lecture and demonstration - no hands-on yet)

- I. Welcome the participants, introduce coordinators. Informal talk with participants about philosophy and history of public access television. Find out why workshop participants are there.
- II. Tour of studio, control room, film/slide room and Channel 11 master control room.
- III. Divide group into two sections of about ten people each, one section will be shown studio facilities, the other gets instruction in control room operation.

GROUP A: STUDIO

- A. Stress importance of keeping studio in order (clean up after yourself, strike your set, etc.)
- B. Studio Equipment.
 1. Point out lighting grid with key and fill lights; explain difference. Lighting control panel.
 2. Studio hods -- their purpose (holding graphics).
 3. Studio monitor.
 4. Identify cyclorama and show other background possibilities.
 5. Audio equipment.
 - a. Show each kind of microphone we use.
 - b. Mic cables & how to wind them.
 - c. How to plug/unplug mic cables from connector box.
 - d. Point out mic stands and boom.
 6. Cameras.
 - a. Point out all parts and functions.
 - b. Demonstrate camera movements (e.g., tilt, dolly, pan, etc.)
 - c. How to use intercom.

7. Set materials and props -- show where they're kept.
- C. Studio Crew Positions.
 1. Camera operators.
 2. Floor director.
 - a. What he's there for.
 - b. Demonstrate the verbal and non-verbal cues to talent.
- D. Simple set construction. (Two chairs on riser covered by carpet, bare background).
- E. Complex set construction (Living room set with carpeting, chairs, table, plants, fireplace-bookshelf in background).
- F. Lighting demonstration.
 1. How key and fill lights can be adjusted, moved, aimed.
 2. Demonstrate triangular lighting (key, fill, back).
- G. Camera composition.
 1. Explain importance of 3 x 4 aspect ratio for TV.
 2. Positioning cameras to create illusion of depth.
 3. Demonstrate 1-, 2-, 3-shots, over/shoulder shots, etc.
 4. Demonstrate head and nose room in framing.
 5. Show examples of poorly-framed shots and what a director would say to correct them.

GROUP B: CONTROL ROOM

- A. Control Room Equipment.
 1. Audio facilities.
 - a. Audio control board.
 - (1) Demonstrate toggle switches and potentiometers.
 - (2) Explain function of the V-U meter.
 - b. Demonstrate other audio components.
 - (1) Turntable
 - (2) Reel-to-reel tape player

- (3) Cart machine
- (4) Audio cassette
- (5) VTR's

2. Video facilities.

- a. Demonstrate how the switcher/SEG is used (what a T.D. would do on the director's cue).
- b. Demonstrate cutting and special effects (fade, key and wipe).
- c. Point out function of all control room monitors.

B. Character generator demonstration.

C. Demo of film/slide chain.

- 1. Show how slides are loaded in carousel.
- 2. Show how to thread the film projector.
- 3. Show how to use film/slide remote controls in control room.

QUESTIONS ARE ENCOURAGED THROUGHOUT. ALSO INJECT PLENTY OF PROPAGANDA FOR PUBLIC ACCESS VS. COMMERCIAL TV.

Wrap-up -- distribute the 10-page handout.

2ND WEEK: (All lecture and demonstration)

GROUP A and GROUP B switch places (those who were shown studio equipment operation in 1st week go into control room, and vice versa).

3RD & 4TH WEEK: (All hands-on by participants)

I. Studio Productions.

- A. Entire session spent doing 5-minute productions, rotating participants as crew members and observers. Instructor does the directing. (Program begins on title slide with music, dissolve to studio for interview, at end dissolve back to title slide and music and fade to black.)

5TH WEEK: (Demonstrations and hands-on experience)

I. Operation of Portapacs.

- A. Instruction in use of video portapacs with emphasis on mechanics of operation. Ways in which gear can be harmed are pointed out, as well as proper packing methods.
- B. Two-angle recording of an improvised interview is conducted.

II. Videotape Editing Methods.

- A. Editing technique using the automatic editing system is demonstrated, using footage obtained from previous improvised interview.

6TH WEEK: (All hands-on by participants)

I. Studio Productions.

- A. Continue rotations as occurred during 3rd and 4th weeks, devising things to make productions more difficult (e.g., 16 mm film and videotape inserts, use of graphics in studio, close-ups of objects shown by talent, etc.).
- B. Instructor directs unless a participant would like to give it a try.
- C. Instructor feedback.

7TH WEEK: (All hands-on by participants)

I. Final Studio Production.

- A. Participants produce a variety show (in segments allowing group to fill various roles) worked out ahead of time with coordinators which will be cablecast on public access channel.
- B. VTR replay of production.
- C. Instructor feedback.
- D. Pass out "diplomas" certifying completion of workshop course.

GLOSSARY

ACADEMY LEADER - A piece of film marked with numbers ranging from 8 to 3, each one second apart. It's attached to the head of a film for the purposes of cuing up and aligning the film.

AD LIB - Speech or action that has not been scripted or specially rehearsed.

APERTURE - Diaphragm opening of a lens; usually measured in f-stops.

ASPECT RATIO - The proportions of a television screen, and therefore of all television pictures: three units high and four units wide.

AUDIO - The sound portion of television and its production. Technically, the electronic reproduction of audible sound.

BACKGROUND LIGHT - (Also called "set light") Illumination of the set and set pieces such as backdrops.

BACK LIGHT - Illumination from behind the subject and opposite the camera.

BARN DOORS - Metal flaps in front of the lighting instruments that control the spread of the light beam.

BROAD - A floodlight which emits a very diffused (broad) beam of light.

BURN-IN - Image retention by the camera pick-up tube. If the camera is focused too long on an object with strong contrast, the picture tube may retain a negative image of the contrasting scene, although another object is being photographed.

BUSS - A row of buttons on the video switcher. Also called a bank.

CAMERA - The general name for the camera head, which consists of the lens, the main camera with the pick-up tube and the internal optical system, electronic accessories, and the viewfinder.

CARTRIDGE - (Also called "CART" for short) An audio recording/playback device containing an endless tape loop that rewinds as it is played back, and cues itself automatically.

CASSETTE - A video- or audiotape recording/playback device.

CHARACTER GENERATOR - A special effects generator/keyboard device that electronically produces a series of letters or numbers directly on the television screen, or keyed into a background picture.

CLOSEUP - Object or any part of it seen at close range and framed tightly.

CONTROL ROOM - A room adjacent to the studio in which the director, the technical director (T.D.), and the audio operator perform their various production functions.

COPY - All material to be read on the air.

COVER SHOT - Wide-angle shot giving basic orientation of place and action; covers a great area.

CUE - Signal to stop, pace or stop any type of production activity or talent action.

CUE CARD - A hand-lettered card that contains copy, usually held next to the camera lens by the floor personnel.

CUT - 1. The instantaneous change from one shot (image) to another.
2. Director's signal to interrupt action (used during rehearsal).

DISSOLVE - 1. Camera support that enables the camera to move in all directions when wheeled about by the camera operator.
2. To move the camera toward (dolly in) or away from ("dolly out or back") the object.

DUB - The duplication of an electronic recording.

EDITING - The selection and assembly of shots forming a finished program.

EFFECTS BUSS - Rows of buttons that can generate a number of electronic effects, such as keys, wipes and dissolves.

ESTABLISHING SHOT - Orientation shot, usually a long shot.

FADE - 1. Video: the gradual appearance of a picture from black (fade-in) or disappearance to black (fade out).
2. Audio: the gradual decrease of sound volume.

FADER BARS - Two levers on the video switcher that can produce dissolves, fades, and wipes of different speeds, and superimpositions.

FILL LIGHT - Additional light, usually opposite the key light, to illuminate shadow areas. Accomplished by floodlights.

FILM CHAIN - Device consisting of one or two film projectors, a slide production, a multiplexer, and a television camera.

FOCUS - A picture is in focus when it appears sharp and clear on the screen.

F-STOP - The calibration on the lens indicating the aperture opening (and therefore the amount of light transmitted through the lens). The larger the f-stop number, the lower the amount of light transmitted.

GHOST - Undesirable double image on the screen.

GRAPHICS - All two-dimensional visuals prepared for the television screen, such as title cards, charts, and graphs.

HEADROOM - The space between the top of the talent's head and the upper screen edge.

HUE - The color itself, such as red, green, or blue.

INTERCOM - Abbreviation for intercommunications system. The system uses telephone headsets to facilitate voice communication among all production personnel in a show.

JUMP CUT - Cutting between shots that are identical in subject yet slightly different in screen location. Through the cut, the subject seems to jump from one screen location to another for no apparent reason.

KEY - 1. An electronic effect. Keying means the cutting in of an image (usually lettering) into a background image.
2. Key light: the principal source of illumination.

LAVALIERE - An extremely small microphone that can be clipped onto a jacket, tie, blouse, or other piece of clothing.

LEVEL - 1. Audio: sound volume.
2. Video: signal strength measured in volts.

LIVE - Direct transmission of show at the time of origin.

LONG SHOT - Object seen from far away or very loosely.

MICROPHONE - Also called a mike. A small portable assembly for the pick-up and conversion of sound into electrical energy.

MONITOR - A high quality television receiver used in the television studio and control rooms.

MULTIPLEXER - A system of mirrors or prisms that directs images from several projection sources (film, slides) into one stationary television camera.

NOSE ROOM - The space left in front of a person looking toward the edge of the screen.

OVER-THE-SHOULDER SHOT - Camera looks over the shoulder of a person in the foreground at a person in the background of a shot.

PAN - Horizontal turning of the camera.

PORTAPAC - Portable camera and videotape unit which can be carried and operated by one person.

POSTPRODUCTION - Any production activity that occurs after (post) the production. Usually refers either to editing of film or videotape or mixing sound for later addition to the picture portion.

POT - Abbreviation for potentiometer, a sound-volume control.

PRODUCER - The creator and organizer of a television show.

PROPS - Properties: furniture and other objects used for set decorations and by actors or performers.

REMOTE - A television production done outside the studio.

ROLL - A director's command to roll tape or film.

SET - Arrangement of scenery or properities to indicate the locale and/or mood of a show.

SHOT SHEET - Lists every shot a particular camera has to get. Is attached to the camera as an aid to the camera operator for remembering a shot sequence.

STAND-BY - A warning cue for any kind of action in a television production.

STRIKE - To remove certain objects; to remove scenery and equipment from the studio floor after the show.

SUPER - Short for superimposition, the simultaneous showing of two full pictures on the same screen.

SWITCHER - A panel with rows of buttons that permits the selection of a specific video input and the change from one video source to another through a variety of transition devices.

TAKE - Director's signal for a cut from one video source to another.

TALENT - Collective name for all performers and actors who appear on the show.

TALLY LIGHT - Red light on the camera and/or inside the camera viewfinder, indicating when the camera is on the air.

- TAPE - Plastic ribbon which is specially treated and is used to record magnetic impulses from video or audio sources.
- T.D. - The technical director. Usually does the switching during a show.
- TILT - To point the camera up and down.
- TITLE - Any graphic material shown on camera; more specifically, studio title card or slide.
- TRIPOD - A three-legged camera mount, usually connected with a dolly for easy maneuverability.
- TRUCK - To move the camera laterally ("truck left" or "truck right").
- TWO-SHOT - Framing of two people.
- VIDEO - Picture portion of a telecast.
- VIDEOTAPE RECORDER - Also called VTR. An electronic recording device that records and stores on videotape video and audio signals for later playback or postproduction editing.
- VIEWFINDER - A small television set mounted in the back of a camera that displays the picture as generated by the camera.
- VOLUME - The relative intensity of the sound, its relative loudness.
- VU METER - A volume-unit meter; measures volume units, the relative loudness of amplified sound.
- WIPE - Electronic effect where one picture seems to push the other off the screen. The split-screen effect is an example of a wipe.
- ZOOM LENS - A variable focal-length lens that you can adjust to go from a wide shot to a closeup ("zoom in"), or the reverse ("zoom out"), in one continuous move.

PRODUCTION CREW POSITIONS

Television production is team work. The major task of television production is working with people, the ones in front of the camera (talent) and those behind (production staff). The following is a list of basic crew positions.

Producer: In charge of individual production. Responsible for coordinating technical and nontechnical production elements. Often serves as writer and sometimes as director.

Director: In charge of directing talent and technical facilities. Is responsible for transforming a script into video and audio images.

Talent: Performers and actors who appear on television.

Writer: Writes television scripts.

T.D.: Technical director; usually acts as crew chief and does the video switching.

Camera Operator: Operates the camera and often takes care of the lighting.

Floor Director: In charge of all studio activities. Directs talent in studio and relays all director's cues to all studio personnel.

Graphic Artist: Prepares studio cards, slides and other materials needed for visual presentation.

C.G. and Film: Prepares and operates character generator and film chain.

Audio Engineer: In charge of all audio operation. Works the audio control board during the production.

THE CAMERA

The camera is the single most important part of television production equipment. It is important that you understand the basic function and operation of the Television camera. All other TV production equipment and production techniques are directly determined by what the camera can do and the capability and versatility of the camera operator.

PARTS OF THE CAMERA

The standard television camera consists of three main parts:

- (1) The lens, which selects a certain field of view and produces a small optical image on the viewfinder.
- (2) The camera itself with its pickup tubes and internal optical system, which converts the lens image into electrical signals.
- (3) The viewfinder, which converts the cameras electronic signals back into a visible image.

All TV cameras, whether big studio models or small portable models work on the same basic principle: the conversion of an optical image into electrical signals that are reconverted by your TV set into visible screen images.

WORKING THE STUDIO CAMERA

When operating a camera, you should go through some basic steps before, during and after each production.

BEFORE

- (1) Put on your headset and check intercom.
 - (2) Unlock the pan and tilt mechanism on your camera tri-pod.
 - (3) If camera is on, uncap the camera lens.
 - (4) Adjust your viewfinder.
 - (5) Check and rack through your focus.
 - (6) If you leave your camera, lock the pan and tilt.
- NEVER LEAVE A CAMERA UNLOCKED.

DURING THE PRODUCTION

- (1) Put on headset and establish contact with director and unlock camera and set tilt and pan drag.
- (2) Preset zoom at each new camera position, zoom all the way in and focus.
- (3) Know the approximate reach of your camera cable before you start a dolly or truck.
- (4) At all times be aware of all other activities in the studio. Where is the other camera, floor director, and floor monitor?
- (5) Listen carefully to what the director tells all crew members, this way you will be able to coordinate your shots with the shots of the other camera.

AFTER THE PRODUCTION

- (1) After the "all clear" signal, lock your camera and cap the lens.
- (2) Push the camera to its storage position and coil the camera cable as neatly as possible.
- (3) Help other crew members strike set.

Camera Handling

The movement and positioning of a video camera is an art in itself. It is essential to a good video production that all camera movement be done as smoothly and artistically as possible. To accomplish this, a video cameraman must first be completely familiar with the four basic camera movements, consisting of panning, tilting, trucking, and dollying.

Panning can be defined as movement of the camera in a horizontal plane. In other words, the camera swings left or right while the base or tripod of the camera remains stationary. A pan is used to illustrate to the viewer the relative size of an area, to follow action from one location to another, and also to indicate the amount of distance between two subjects in a scene.

Tilting is a camera movement which is executed in a vertical plane. When tilting, the camera tripod again remains stationary while the camera is moved vertically either upward or downward. A tilt is used to obtain a lower or higher angle within a scene, to show the relative height of an object such as a tall building, or to focus attention on a very low level such as a shot looking down into a canyon.

A third type of camera movement known as trucking, requires that the cameraman physically move the camera to the left or right. This, of course, can only be accomplished if the camera is mounted on a movable pedestal. A truck shot is much more difficult to execute smoothly than a panshot because of the difficulties in moving on an uneven studio floor or under adverse conditions. Also the cameraman must be aware of the problems of running over camera and power cables which tend to get in the way of a truck shot. A trucking movement is usually used to indicate the motion

of a subject in a scene. In this case, the camera moves along with the subject from left to right.

Physically moving the camera and tripod closer to (forward), or further away (backward), from a subject is known as dollying. The dolly-in is extremely effective in giving the viewer the impression that he or she is entering the scene as the camera moves in for a closer shot. This is very appropriate at the beginning of a production following a wide establishing shot of the scene. Of course, the opposite is also true concerning a dolly-back which can be used to signify the end of a production. These techniques are all very effective but can easily be overdone. They should never be used without a definite purpose.

Taken from the Mobile Newsroom Newsletter October 1974

Shots - Framing + Symbols



1. Extreme
close up
(X CU)



2. Knee
Shot



3. Bust Shot



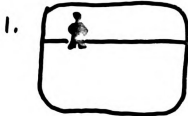
4. Two Shot
(2-Shot)



5. Three Shot
(3-Shot)



6. Over-the-Shoulder
Shot
(O-Shoulder)



1. Extreme Long Shot,
[Cover]
(XLS)



2. Long Shot, [Full Shot]
(LS)



3. Mid Shot, [Medium Shot]
(MS)



4. Medium Close Up
(MCU)



5. Close Up
(CU)



6. Tight Close Up
(TCU)