Leveraging knowledge mobilization efforts in the media

Creating partnerships between researchers and journalists

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“We thought the ivory tower could use a radio antenna”
Introduction

• The basis of news media is becoming increasingly important

• Researchers and universities are publicly obligated to communicate research findings to society in an accessible and engaging way

• The media remains an important channel for research to enhance public discourse

• Empirical evidence on research-media interactions tells a story of two worlds

• A need for more effective mechanisms that facilitate collaboration between researchers, journalists, and community members

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Background – Why interact?

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Journalists</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Seeds the growth of policy and practice</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Legitimize research (Peters et al., 2008)</td>
<td>• Legitimize media coverage (Albaek, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Extend influence (Chapman et al., 2014)</td>
<td>• Divest the need for personal research (Nielsen &amp; Autzen, 2011)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Peer into the black box of policymaking (Waddell et al., 2005)</td>
<td>• Improve the accuracy communicating research implications (Amend &amp; Secko, 2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>• Demonstrate to taxpayers a return on their investment (Wien, 2014)</td>
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“We thought the ivory tower could use a radio antenna”
### Background – Perceptions

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Researchers</th>
<th>Journalists</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Burdened by a turbulent history</strong></td>
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<tr>
<td>• Accuracy of coverage (Chapman et al., 2014; Peters et al., 2008)</td>
<td>• The inaccessibility of many researchers (Waddell et al., 2005)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• The uninformed, egalitarian perspective afforded to some topics (Orr, 2010)</td>
<td>• Researchers lacking communication skills (Chapman et al., 2014)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Uncritical, sensationalist framing (Albaek, 2011; Amend &amp; Secko, 2012; Chapman et al., 2014)</td>
<td>• Ambiguous interaction agenda often held by researchers and institutions (Amend &amp; Secko, 2012)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
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What is CITED?

*CITED* produces KMb podcasts on important societal issues through co-production, including partnerships between researchers, journalists, communities and students. Three key objectives:

(1) to extend research and community expertise to enrich the public discourse and serve the public

(2) to expand the desire and capacity for KMb in media partners and research institutes

(3) to contribute to the KMb community of practice by building a unique, tested and replicable method of media/university co-creation

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What is CITED?

Research Questions:

(1) How do different values of media and academic partners affect co-creative processes of developing KMb products tailored for the public?

(2) What are the facilitators and barriers to partnerships between researchers and journalists? And what strategies or tools might support this work at universities?

“We thought the ivory tower could use a radio antenna”
“We thought the ivory tower could use a radio antenna”
Episode #3: Who Killed Canadian History?

From the Heritage Minutes/Drake mashup, to Harper’s grand historical narrative; we debate Canadian history and how it ought to be taught.

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The only podcast with a bibliography

Bibliographies

What are the best Canadian Heritage Minutes?

Read Justin McElroy’s blog, where he ranks all 78 of them according to their “heritage factor,” and their Canadian-ness.

Who killed Canadian history?

Read the debate between military and political historian J.L. Granatstein and social historian, in Granatstein’s book “Who Killed Canadian History?” and Timothy Stanley’s retort “Why I Killed Canadian History: Conditions for an Anti-Racist History in Canada.”


What does it mean to think like a historian?

Find out at the Historical Thinking Project, which outlines 6 key elements: establish historical significance, use primary source evidence, identify continuity and change, analyze cause and consequence, take historical perspectives, and understand the ethical dimension of historical interpretations.


What’s wrong with Stephen Harper’s vision of Canadian History?

Read Yves Frenette’s article on how Harper has “conscripted Canada’s past” for political reasons, all the while cutting essential supports for history and historians all across Canada.


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Topics Covered

- Who Killed Canadian History?
- The New Debt Politics?
- Superpredators Revisited?
- The Heroin Clinic
- The Other Climate Change Consensus

- The Conservative War Against Liberal Sex Education
- Exiled: The Mennonites and the Sex Offenders
- The Secret Science of Video Games
- Dissecting Bill C-51
- Harm Reduction Under Attack

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## Results – Uptake

### A Snapshot of Key Figures

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>2015</th>
<th>2017</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Episodes</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>23</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Online listens and downloads (excludes radio)</td>
<td>14,452</td>
<td>1,806,247</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average download per episode</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>58,266</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Average listening time (mins)</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>28</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Subscribers (iTunes + Soundcloud)</td>
<td>537</td>
<td>--</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Radio stations we broadcasted from</td>
<td>94</td>
<td>5</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Times played Nationally Across Canada</td>
<td>--</td>
<td>9</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Social science and humanities researchers featured</td>
<td>42</td>
<td>26</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Researchers from other disciplines</td>
<td>26</td>
<td>17</td>
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Results – Stakeholders

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# What are we learning?

## LISTENERSHIP

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Lessons</th>
<th>With Current SSHRC funding…</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>• We can grow CITED through effective branding, adept use of social media, and partnership with campus groups, but not without extra support</td>
<td>• Hire an additional student staff member to maintain CITED’s online presence, and to build on- and off-campus partnerships.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• CITED could be syndicated on almost any campus station in Canada</td>
<td>• Build organic listener growth by arranging regular syndication deals.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Media partnerships are helpful to boost numbers, but there is no guarantee that the attention will build a loyal audience</td>
<td>• Pitch specific projects to large media partners, and build long-term agreements with smaller distributors who might desire regular content.</td>
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</table>
What are we learning?

### Key Lessons

- Adequately addressing issues demands diversity of perspectives (CITED has diversity of academic and non-academic voices)
- Balance of expert/non-expert voices helps connect research with people’s lives, personal struggles, and broader policy decisions that shape them
- Professors involved praise depth although difficult to get academics to devote time needed for long form documentary.

### With Current SSHRC funding...

- Devote more time to working with specific researchers to highlight their individual projects, like in ‘Who Killed Canadian History?’
- Do more reporting to locate exemplary characters like Jeff in Superpredators Revisited, and continually develop capacity to weave expert and non-expert stories
- Build an outreach strategy to locate professors to collaborate with on episodes for classes in higher education
### What are we learning?

**MENTORSHIP**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Key Lessons</th>
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</tr>
</thead>
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<tr>
<td>• CITED valuable learning experience for undergraduate students</td>
<td>• We could further student skills through stipends or internship model (class credit) for working on CITED</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Professors value working with us, but they are not likely to seek us out</td>
<td>• We must spend time developing formal and informal mechanisms to attract professors with outreach projects to collaborate with us</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>• Unexpectedly, our experience with some professors has revealed that our team can provide valuable mentorship to faculty partners, and teach them how to frame influential narratives about the importance of their research</td>
<td>• We need to develop an outreach strategy to find interested faculty members who are in need of support in telling impact stories about their work</td>
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Looking Forward

• CITED represents an innovative model for KMb
• Integration of citizen voices, alongside researchers, highlights complexity of the many factors involved in public policy and societal discourse
• CITED has already won national awards, and we are learning a lot about how this model might be adapted for use by others

• Summer Data Collection:
  • Interviewing Researchers (N=10), Journalists (N=10), and Community members (N=10) that have participated in CITED
  • Interviewing group of KMb specialists (N=10) on broader issues on research, the media, public perception, and the relationships between these areas and public policy

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Selected References


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Thank you!

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