CHAPTER XVI

I Want My Internet! Young Women on the Politics of Usage-Based Billing

Leslie Regan Shade

Stop right now, thank you very much, I need my internet to download stuff
Hey you, Mister ISP, we don't want to pay any usage-based fee
Do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do … we got to work together …
Ba-da-ba-da-ba-da-da-da-da … the internet's forever …

Stop right now, we have had enough, the internet belongs to all of us …
Hey you, trying to charge me more, checking my Facebook shouldn't make me poor …
Do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do-do … we got to work together….
Ba-da-ba-da-ba-da-da-da-da … the internet's forever …

(The Site Girls, 2011)

Based on the bouncy song, "Stop" by the popular mid-1990s girl-power band The Spice Girls, the Site Girls' music video rendition remixes the Motown-influenced song and catchy chorus to argue for the curtailing of usage-based billing by internet service providers. The four campily dressed Site Girls (two men, two women) vamp and sing in a university library amongst rows of books and computer terminals. One of the Site Girls is a stern Mr. CRTC, who warns the other Girls to

Slow it down, read the sign, we're going to make you pay for your time online.
Got to keep it down, baby. We're metering you time.
Your freedom of expression doesn't match your bottom line.

Posted on YouTube in 2011, the music video was created by university students in response to the Stop The Meter campaign, initiated by the Canadian digital rights group OpenMedia. The campaign's goals were to persuade the Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), the minister of industry, and large telecoms to put an end to the practice of usage-based billing (UBB), a system that allows internet service providers (ISPs) to calculate how much data their users upload or download to the internet, and to charge them according to their usage. Under UBB, higher monthly internet costs impact "heavy" internet users—for instance, those uploading or downloading large data and video media, and innovative content creators who depend on fast and fulsome internet connections. Critics against UBB cited as concerns the challenge of small ISPs to compete in an oligopolistic telecom market, the high costs of internet access in Canada compared to other countries, and a resultant negative impact on the average internet consumer whose monthly fees could exceed their ability to pay, thus leading to continued concerns of digital divides.

This chapter examines the Stop the Meter campaign and in particular focuses on how young women used YouTube as a site for speaking out against UBB and for urging their viewers to sign OpenMedia's online petition against UBB. The actions of these young women personify what Lance Bennett, in his analysis of digital rights activism, describes as "easily embraceable personal action frames."[1] Personal action frames, often crowdsourced, use social media to enable individuals to become "catalysts of collective action processes as they activate their own social networks."[2]

This example of youth digital activism is situated within a model of digital policy literacy, which emphasizes how the effective use of digital media involves learning and negotiating the policy processes, political economic parameters, and infrastructural affordances that shape information and communication technologies.[3] The first element of the model, policy processes, is particularly apt, as it considers structures that enable and constrain citizen and youth involvement in making policy decisions around digital communication.

Structures of policy participation include diverse modes of policy activism and intervention within, or outside, official policy-making processes. The Stop the Meter campaign illustrates the vibrancy of citizen-generated activism to effectuate the public interest in telecom policy, and, as well, the surprising viral nature of the campaign that catalyzed many young women to take to YouTube and speak out about the importance of the internet in their everyday lives.

Young People and Social Media: "Connected and Confident"

MediaSmarts' Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III research project (2014) surveyed just over five thousand Canadian students in grades 4 to 11 about their use of the internet and mobile technologies, asking a series of questions related to ethics, privacy, digital literacy, bullying, and commercialization. The report found that youth were "highly connected,"[4] using a variety of platforms, with 99 percent having access to the internet outside of school. Portable devices – tablets, laptops, smartphones – are common. Social media included Facebook, where, in grades 7 to 11, equally 83 percent of young women and young men had an account; yet young women surpassed young men in having personal accounts on other popular social media sites: Twitter (53 percent young women, 41 percent young men), Instagram (55 percent young women, 32 percent young men), Pinterest (22 percent young women, 4 percent young men), and Tumblr (41 percent young women, 16 percent young men).[5] "Confident and enthusiastic"[6] characterizes young Canadians' use of the internet for sociality, information, and education.

For young people, social media generates what danah boyd calls "networked publics": "an important public space where teens can gather and socialize broadly with peers in an informal way."[7] While specific social media platforms wane in popularity (for instance, Facebook – because more adults and parents have joined) and others, such as Pinterest and Tumblr, are used to curate specific content for different audiences,[8] boyd's observations that "teens' mediated interactions sometimes complement or supplement their face-to-face encounters"[9] ring true with the MediaSmarts' findings, as well as with the findings of the eGirls Project reported in this volume.[10]

Relevant to this chapter is whether and how young Canadian women use the internet for civic and political activism, and what their knowledge is about digital policy issues. In their findings,

MediaSmarts reports that only a small proportion of students participate in online public debate and activism.[11] Thirty-five percent of youth have joined or supported activist groups online (examples cited include Free the Children, Greenpeace, Students against Bullying), but not in a sustained fashion. There are no significant gender differences, although youth in higher grades are more likely to join online groups.[12] And while YouTube was the most popular website for 75 percent of youth, most young people watch content rather than create, post, and distribute their own content online; only 36 percent of young men and 30 percent of young women have posted video or audio files.[13]

Civic and Political Participation by Youth

Although there is an emerging literature on civic and political participation by youth, in general few studies have yet specifically addressed political uses that young women in particular make of new information and communication technologies. The general scholarship on young people and political engagement suggests that youth have in many instances eschewed traditional forms of citizen participation, such as voting (if they are of the majority age), political party membership, and reading mainstream news media. However, these forms of "dutiful" citizen participation are generationally situated, and instead young people engage in other "non-traditional" modes of engagement, such as volunteering, consumer activism, and engagement in networked media.[14]

As Kahn and his collaborators wrote, for youth there is "more emphasis on lifestyle politics, influencing business practices through boycotts and buycotts, and expressive acts tied to popular culture."[15] Participatory forms of politics-driven participation include blogging and sharing or discussing perspectives on social media, which can "foster offline engagement by increasing individuals' political interest and thus their motivation to be involved, by developing civically relevant digital skills, and by placing participants in contexts where recruitment is more likely."[16]

Noted alongside the popular use of social media by young people is its increasing use for civic and political engagement. "[Networking young citizens]," writes Brian Loader, "are more project orientated; they reflexively engage in lifestyle politics; they are not dutiful but self-actualizing; their historical reference points

are less likely to be those of modern welfare capitalism but rather global information networked capitalism and their social relations are increasingly enacted through a social media networked environment."[17]

Similar to Bennett, Emily Weinstein[18] found that youth's expression of their politics and civic engagement is characterized by the personalization of their message and their politics. Tactics youth deploy for civic engagement are diverse, but as Elisabeth Soep cautions, these can challenge social inclusion as these literacies are evolving.Practices tend to be learned through peer engagement, by "geeking around," and in non-formal educational settings.[19] Soep proposes that young people need a combination of social and technical skills: social, to learn how to effectively manage the interpersonal dynamics of their social networks and learn how to engage in public awareness; and technical, learning digital and creative skills by designing tools and platforms, understanding the nuances of remix and appropriation.

Much research on youth and civic and political participation online tends not to differentiate by gender, a point noted earlier by Anita Harris,[20] who also demonstrates that feminist theory is attending to cultural and digital sites wherein young women enact various forms of cultural "resistance." (One recent example is Megan Boler's work on young adult women's labour in the Occupy Movement.)[21] This is echoed by Caroline Caron,[22] who proposes that scholars in both girlhood studies and political theory need to pay more attention to girls' cultural production and media-making activities and how their practices and discourse can be integrated into, and contribute towards, theorizations of citizenship. Martha McCaughey also argues that we need more research and information on whether young women's active use of social media is creating new forms of political consciousness "that will ultimately lead to new definitions of activism and of feminism, and new theories of social change."[23]

Digital Policy Activism

Many young Canadians are increasingly savvy about their rights as digital users and eager to contest digital policy. Copyright reform has been of particular interest to both young men and women, as they voiced their concerns through social media (the early popularity of

Facebook was used to great effect for the first phase of copyright reform activism in 2007).[24] OpenMedia and other groups championed net neutrality activism, with youth participating in a rally on Parliament Hill. One successful intervention was instigated by University of Ottawa law students, with the support of the Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic, in a complaint filed to the Office of the Privacy Commissioner, alleging various violations of Canadian privacy laws by Facebook under the *Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act*.[25] Facebook was asked to make remedies, and Canada became the first country in the world to issue legally binding recommendations to the popular site whose global membership at that time topped 300 million.[26]

UBB

Usage-based billing also elicited activism by young people, who avidly took to YouTube to voice their concerns. Before a discussion of the texture of their responses, a brief description of UBB and the regulatory debates is provided.

UBB refers to a mechanism wherein ISPs charge their subscribers based on how much bandwidth they are using within a monthly billing period. Some ISPs contend that this practice is necessary to manage their network congestion, which has increased because of the prevalence of online multimedia content, internet streaming services such as Netflix, and the frequency of downloading. In Canada, the large telecom firms such as Bell Canada and Rogers control both wholesale access to the internet and subscriber's homes through the "last mile". They are in turn obligated to provide internet access to smaller independent ISPs at wholesale rates; the smaller ISPs thus rent network access from the larger telecoms and package their own retail internet services to their subscribers, often as unlimited monthly bandwidth packages.

The debates around UBB surfaced in the spring of 2010 when the CRTC approved Bell Canada's application to bill wholesale and retail internet customers based on their bandwidth usage.[27] In the fall the CRTC issued a call for comments on UBB.[28] In November OpenMedia launched a petition, StopTheMeter, to persuade Tony Clement (then Minister of Industry), the CRTC, and other stakeholders to put an end to UBB. Within 24 hours, over one thousand people signed the petition.

In January 2011 the CRTC rendered its decision on UBB. It ruled that large ISPs may determine the rates they charge to small ISPs for user bandwidth, but in turn small ISPs must get a 15 percent discount when they buy wholesale.[29] Steve Anderson, executive director of OpenMedia, responded to the decision by saying that, "It is deeply disappointing that the Commission has decided to give a few companies a free hand to engage in economic discrimination and crush innovation. Now is the moment for forward-looking visionary policy-making—not half measures and convoluted compromises with the companies trying to kill the open internet. This decision is a step in the right direction, but it is clear to me that Canadians are going to have to continue to speak out on this issue".[30]

By mid-January 2012 the Stop the Meter petition was signed by 25,000 people, and by the end of February over 160,000 people, energized by widespread media coverage of the issue and the campaign, signed the petition. Wading into the debate, Minister of Industry Clement himself tweeted his displeasure at the CRTC ruling. Prime Minister Stephen Harper also tweeted his concerns and ordered a review of the decision.[31] Opposition parties (the Liberals and NDP) also spoke out against the decision.

The CRTC quickly announced a review of the decision, solicited online comments, held a public hearing in July at CRTC headquarters in Gatineau, Quebec, and rendered its compromise decision in November. During these six months even more consumers, public interest groups, and businesses were galvanized by the UBB debates, and by the end of April 400,000 had signed the OpenMedia petition, and by early summer half a million people had signed.

The CRTC's November decision proscribed a wholesale billing model based on capacity; it ruled that large ISPs may charge independent ISPs a flat monthly rate, or a rate based on capacity and the number of users. Under this decision, independent ISPs were thus tasked with managing their network capacity by determining in advance the amount they need to serve their retail customers.[32] Pleased with the decision, OpenMedia wrote that it was a "step forward for the open and affordable internet," with Anderson applauding the consumer activism: "It is truly rare for people to outmaneuver Big Telecom's army of lobbyists, but together Canadians did it".[33]

Youth and UBB

What galvanized young Canadians to react against the somewhat arcane and seemingly not exciting topic of UBB? OpenMedia catalyzed debate with its campaign and online petition Stop The Meter. As a national, non-profit, and nonpartisan media reform organization, OpenMedia's membership consists of a network of civil society; consumer, labor and media advocacy organizations; grassroots activists; and academics. Initiated by Steve Anderson when he was an MA student at Simon Fraser University (SFU) in Vancouver, and initially called the Campaign for Democratic Media, OpenMedia's goals are to increase public awareness and informed participation in Canadian media, cultural, information, and telecommunication policy formation. Campaigns prior to UBB included Stop Big Media, to influence the 2007 CRTC Diversity of Voices hearing on media concentration, the Save Our Net campaign on net neutrality, and the 2010 petitioning of the CRTC for licensing of the English-language service of the Al Jazeera international television news network.[34]

Run by a slim staff of young people (paid staff, at the time of UBB policy debates all young women; unpaid interns; volunteers; and a board of directors), and dependent on modest financial support from member organizations and donations, OpenMedia's creative use of social media, blunt messaging, and home-base in Vancouver (resident to a healthy media-activist community characterized by a successful series of annual Media Democracy Days) was recognized by local and national media, citizens, consumers, corporations, industry, and government regulators. Indeed, following a very robust and successful campaign against Bill C-30, the federal government's proposed "lawful access" surveillance legislation,[35] OpenMedia's "youthful team of leaders" was awarded the 2013 British Columbia Civil Liberties Association (BCCLA) Youth Activism Award.[36]

With the Stop the Meter campaign, OpenMedia was successful in crowdsourcing through its website and in its use of Twitter, listserv messages, humorous short videos, and a national "day of action" in February with rallies against UBB across the country, to maintain the persistence of the issue in mass media – public and private broadcasters, local and national print media.

Humour played a key role in the public discourse about UBB. Two videos in particular virally spread on YouTube, through listservs, Facebook, and on websites. These were situated amongst a growing use of social media for satirical and critical commentary,

prominent in the 2011 federal election,[37] which transpired as the CRTC decision was under reconsideration in the spring. One video featured the popular CBC comedian Rick Mercer, from his weekly television show, in a spoof of the *Heritage Minutes* (historical dramatizations of key events in Canadian history inserted in between shows broadcast on CBC and CTV).[38] Titled "Our Gouge-Based Heritage," the video features Mercer in four distinct moments in time:

> 1892: as a telegraph operator chastised by his boss, "Don't use Morse Code so extravagantly – who do you think we are? America?!"
> 1956: as a telephone salesman, chastised by his boss, "These long distance calls are killing us!"
> 1973: as a tele-facsimile operator chastised by his boss, "Our phone bills are going through the roof!", and,
> 2011: as an office worker typing on his internet–enabled computer, chastised by his boss, "Didn't you get the memo about the unlimited bandwidth? Clue in …rates are going up!"
> The tagline: "Paying way more for communications – a part of our gouge-based heritage."[39]

The oft-remixed Hitler "Downfall" video was also used for comedic effect. In this instance, Hitler and his troops have over-extended their monthly cap on Rogers and have been cut off; seething, Hitler screams "Monthly Usage Caps! What good is Netflix if I can't even watch it?!? What am I to do? I refuse to sit at Second Cup and leech their WiFi like some grad student."[40]

In the winter of 2011 when the campaign was ramping up (after the initial CRTC decision and before and during the time when the government ordered the CRTC to reconsider its decision), young people posted short videos on YouTube. Using their webcams to record themselves, in what looks to be their bedrooms, living rooms, or their parent's rec rooms or basements, they described what impact UBB would have on their uses, such as for online gaming, video production, communicating with friends and family, and school research. Through their short messages, youth displayed "easily embraceable personal action frames"[41] about the potential impact of UBB on their personal use of the internet, and the importance of the internet for their generation. There were at least a dozen videos posted by young people, but at the time of this writing, most of these videos have

been taken down or made private by their owners. This ephemerality speaks to the ability of young people to fluidly use social media for various phases of their identity formation and political identities, and to be able to "forget" their online traces (when they have not been replicated elsewhere by others) when they become passé or, perhaps, embarrassing.

For many youth, vlogging (video blogging) on YouTube is an accessible space to display and debate issues of social and civic importance; this aligns with their affiliation in using social media to connect with their "networked publics." Purchased by Google for US$1.65 billion in 2006,[42] YouTube has since transitioned from a platform populated by amateur videos to one where Google seeks a variety of monetization schemes, the development of premium content, and specialized and sponsored content channels.[43]

In her ethnographic study of how young people use YouTube, Patricia Lange presents a reticulated model of civic participation that emphasizes "social connections, shared interests, and interactions around particular social and place-based attachments," which are focused around "technical affiliations, technologized identities, and affective ties that diffusely propagate shared values."[44] This is a useful framework to consider UBB youth activism.

Lange describes a US teenager named Frank, who took to YouTube to voice his support for network neutrality. Addressing the camera directly, he displays his technical affiliation as a networked and "geeky" teen, joins a wider public discourse debating the issue (which at that time was being deliberated at the Federal Communications Commission), and aligns himself with a concerted movement for net neutrality, spearheaded by the public interest group Free Press and its widespread Save the Internet campaign.

Similar to the example of Frank, UBB activism by youth was comprised of a model of reticulation. Youth were exposed to the issue through a shared interest and passion for the internet; the issue of UBB thus "operates from a socio-emotional starting point."[45] Knowledge and interest in UBB was spurred on by public discourse through OpenMedia, the SFU OpenMedia Club, OpenMedia interns, and print and broadcast coverage in technology, business, and national news sections. This type of "flash activism"[46] involved forwarding, linking, and liking slogans, events, campaigns, petitions, news articles, and videos.

In their accounts of their internet use, their knowledge of UBB, and the potential impact of UBB on their continued internet use, young women's vlogs addressed several concerns: the personal economic impact of not being able to use the internet to its full potential; the social ramifications of not being online; and the consequences for Canadian identity and citizenship in having haphazard, non-robust, and expensive internet connections. Three videos produced by young women (based on the context of the videos, they are estimated to be undergraduates in postsecondary institutions) are next examined to highlight these concerns. The videos were posted to YouTube in early 2011 and, at the time of the writing of this chapter in mid 2014, were all still publicaly available on YouTube. The names of the young women are anonymized in the descriptions, below, but the quotes remain theirs.

Economic Concerns

OpenMedia's Stop the Meter campaign messaging repeatedly emphasized the high cost of internet service under a UBB scenario: "Canadians will have no choice but to pay much more for less Internet." The petition asked the CRTC, industry minister, and prime minister to "stand up for consumer choice and competition in the Internet Service market. I want affordable access to the Internet." The culprits? "Big phone and cable companies," whose motivations are to "gouge Canadians, control the Internet market, and ensure that we continue to subscribe to their television services."[47]

Grace, a young Asian-Canadian woman, narrated a fairy-tale-like script over colorfully hand-drawn stick images. In the fairy tale, set in the far away land of Canada, the internet kings Rogers and Bell were known in their kingdom for charging high rates, and "because they were kings of the internet, they basically had everyone by the balls." Enter the brave knight, an independent ISP named TekSavvy, offering low internet prices and no bandwidth limits. While the kings colluded and tried to influence the small ISP to join their ways to impose a meter, to no avail, the commoners became weary of the "monopoly power of the two kings," proclaiming, "we have the right to give them the finger and have the internet with no meter at reasonable rates." Grace's narrative then cuts to herself as she directly addresses the camera: "Seriously guys, this may sound corny, but unity is the answer." She entreats her viewers to attend a

local Stop the Meter rally, sign the petition at StopTheMeter.ca, and visit her "failed" website for more detail.

In a video made as a class project, several young women describe UBB as what occurs when consumers exceed their monthly internet subscription limit, causing overages to get expensive. "It's really not fair," they say, and cite the negative impact for households, businesses, and university students.

Caitlin read a three-and-a-half-minute letter addressed to then–Minister of Industry Tony Clement about UBB—"an issue that is dear to my heart and will effect each and every Canadian in just a few short weeks … it is far more dramatic and wide sweeping than I had originally imagined." Seated on a couch, with a handmade pastel patchwork quilt tossed over its back, she talks about the variations in bandwidth speed and pricing across Canadian provinces and, looking directly at the camera, sincerely says, "I hope you will realize what barriers this will place on people."

Social Concerns

UBB was also expressed as an impediment to sociality, communication, and entertainment pursuits. Interviewing themselves, the students in the class video project described their use of the internet: for research ("I've never been to the library"); to maintain family ties abroad ("I'd be so homesick if I didn't have Skype or MSN Messenger"); for entertainment and "to pass the time," through Facebook, YouTube, or downloading movies and music ("it saves me a lot of money"). If the internet became unaffordable, the young women said they would listen to the radio more; go to the library "at least once in my life," or a place with "free WiFi like Starbucks"; in lieu of Skype, they would write letters more. They would also watch more TV, do more homework, rent movies, go to movie theatres, and buy albums.

For Caitlin, the internet was envisioned as "open, accessible and a hub of cultural learning and collaboration," enshrined in some government constitutions as an "inalienable human right." Positioning herself as a digital native, she spoke of the intrinsic elements of the internet that constitute it as "a home—an abstract place where every individual has equal rights and power to express themselves—to find information and truth and to learn and better themselves regardless of gender, ethnicity, and most importantly, socio-economic status."

Canadian Identity

Stop the Meter campaign messaging stressed that a UBB system would "crush innovative services, Canada's digital competitiveness, social progress, and your wallet." It positioned the battle as pitting the large incumbent telecommunication firms (Bell, Rogers) against the small independent ISPs across the provinces. Oligopolistic power was positioned as evil and detrimental to Canadian communication rights and cultural sovereignty. Caitlin pronounced the internet as a space imbued with Canadian values; if diminished, she would be "personally crushed" and "enormously disappointed in my country."

Referring to the recurrent issue regarding the brain drain of Canadian talent and accompanying lure of more attractive jobs in other countries, especially the United States, Caitlin directly related a UBB system as a reason that she might be forced to move to more "innovative" countries so that she could pursue her future career which would be undoubtedly dependent on the internet. "I don't want to choose between being employed and being Canadian," she proclaimed.

Despite the amateur quality of their video production, Lange's reticulated model of civic participation is evident in these young women's commentaries and observations about the impact of UBB on themselves and their peers. As they emphasize, their everyday communication is reliant on an accessible and affordable internet, and redolent in their commentaries is the personal—and collective—right to be connected. Their uses are imbued with "technical affiliations" (the internet is ubiquitous and an intrinsic facet for young Canadians); "technologized identities" (the internet is a positive and necessary tool for self-actualization); and, through a public concern with the issue of UBB, the young women create "affective ties that diffusely propagate shared values."[48]

UBB as Digital Policy Literacy

The attention to usage-based billing by young women serves as a useful example of digital policy literacy. Digital policy literacy involves an understanding of policy processes, the political economy of media systems, and knowledge of digital infrastructures. A model of digital policy literacy was developed to serve as an intervention expanding the core elements of media and digital literacy, and to explicitly situate digital policy as a key literacy attribute.[49] By foregrounding

digital policy, the model expands upon the tenets of media and digital literacy with their focus on critical reflections on media content that analyzes aesthetics, production, and ideology[50] and how people "engage proactively in a media world where production, participation, social group formation, and high levels of nonprofessional expertise are prevalent."[51]

The following table outlines the characteristics and areas of enquiry for the three elements of digital policy literacy—policy processes, political economy, and infrastructures—related to the young women's literacy around usage-based billing.

Table 1: Digital Policy Literacy Model and UBB

Digital Policy Literacy Elements	Characteristics and Areas of Enquiry for Each Element	Digital Policy Literacy Related to UBB
Policy processes	How is policy constituted?	Gaining an understanding of CRTC regulatory functions, processes, and policies.
	What are structures of participation in policy making?	Gaining an understanding of the role of Industry Canada in telecom policy and its interventions in regulatory matters.
	What are effective modes of activism and intervention to shape policy?	Exercising civic participation through petitions, rallies, and media discourse; social media engagement; "flash activism;" and video creation.
Political economy	What are the socio-political relations surrounding the ownership, production, distribution, and consumption of media?	Gaining an understanding of telecom ownership in Canada and the dominance of Bell and Rogers, and the economic challenges of independent internet service providers.
	How do they reinforce, challenge or influence social relations of class, gender, and race?	Gaining knowledge of wholesale and retail cost structures for internet access and how this can impact affordability and access for many Canadians, especially those with low income and students.

Table 1: (Continued)

Digital Policy Literacy Elements	Characteristics and Areas of Enquiry for Each Element	Digital Policy Literacy Related to UBB
Infrastructures	How do technological affordances and design activate or inhibit online interactions?	Gaining knowledge of the practice of monthly internet subscriptions and the cost of data.
	What is their impact on ownership of content, privacy protection, access, and communication?	Gaining knowledge of how overages and high costs can inhibit internet communication for many Canadians, especially those with low income and students.

There is much to applaud in the spirited responses of young women who spoke out against UBB. In questioning the power of big telecom and the actions of regulators, and in expressing concern about access to and affordability of internet services, these young women displayed an awareness of the "public interest" necessity of the internet. But did the framing of the issue from OpenMedia and these young women focus more on their rights as *consumers* of communication services and obscure a more important, yet related, focus on their role as *citizens* using communication services? How are notions of "digital citizenship" and "digital consumership" intertwined? Strategically, media reform organizations and digital policy advocacy organizations such as OpenMedia are savvy to align their messaging towards the consumer impact of policies in order to attract wider public appeal for their campaigns. This consumer orientation is an example of "easily embraceable personal action frames."[52] In the case of UBB, the framing also fed into the dominant governmental policy discourse of marketization, as emphasized in the 2010 consultation paper on the digital economy.[53]

Contemporary telecommunication regulation and services are governed by a regime of market-generated rules for consumers that can often obscure a tradition of ensuring universality for citizens. Policy discourse tosses the terms citizen and consumer interchangeably, and as Sonia Livingstone and Peter Lunt write (in the context of UK policy): "Is 'consumer' taking over from 'citizen' in the communications sector, as suggested by the ubiquitous discourse of choice and

empowerment? Does the 'citizen' have a voice in regulatory debates, or is this subordinated to the market?"[54]

As the first frame in the digital policy literacy model suggests, policy processes involve a nuanced understanding of the structures of participation in various forms of policymaking. In the case of the CRTC, it is not an easily comprehended organization, and indeed, for many Canadians and industry, it is a reviled organization precisely because of its regulatory function in the broadcasting and telecommunications sphere. Participating in the policy functions of the CRTC as an intervenor or interested citizen can require a modicum of knowledge of "the rules of engagement" in responding to calls for public participation. Academic advocacy in regulatory realms can be challenging because of academic reward systems favoring peer-reviewed outputs, and negotiation with non-profit and community-based advocacy organizations.[55] Recognizing the need for more fulsome public input, the CRTC has recently published a citizen's guide to participating at the CRTC.[56] Nonetheless it can be difficult for citizens to garner the expertise and the resources to compete on an equal footing with industry interests, who have at their disposal vast resources (legal advice, funds, and dedicated staff) to devote to the detailed public hearings. Tensions can arise then, about how citizens respond to telecommunications policy issues: as digital citizens or as digital consumers. This tension, I might suggest, is indeed a constructive dialogical space for young Canadians to further their knowledge of the complexity of digital policies, and how they might effectively intervene and perhaps shape policy outcomes.

This example of young women engaged in discussing a salient (yet obscure) digital policy issue in thoughtful and creative ways is indeed inspiring. Their knowledge of a technical and policy issue runs counter to how many young women are using YouTube. For instance, Sarah Banet-Weiser has described and critiqued the post-feminist self-brand, wherein gender empowerment is equated with heightened consumer sovereignty.[57] She analyzes how young girls brand themselves using YouTube as a platform; their amateur videos display their engagement with popular culture, dancing, and lip-synching to popular music, and performing femininity in fanciful play-acting. As discussed in further detail by Kanai,[58] important to this self-branding is the feedback loop – the number of views and comments received validate the video and the importance of the self-brand. In a case study looking at "Am I Pretty?" YouTube videos

where young women present confessional portraits of their physicality, Banet-Weiser argues that these videos epitomize gendered neoliberal brand culture, showcasing vulnerable young women and packaging them within the commercialized self-esteem market.[59]

In a converged media culture that encourages the commodification of sexuality, recent research exploring how young women are taking to social media for civic and political participation is encouraging. Jessalynn Keller highlights how blogging as a practice has been embraced by many young feminists who have created vibrant communities to discuss contemporary social and political issues; Keller points out that young feminists "are establishing public selves that challenge gender norms and ageist assumptions that youth are uninterested in social change."[60] Likewise Julia Schuster argues that online activism is very important for young feminists to participate in political activities but that because there are generational divides in the use of social media, older people may perceive younger women to be less politically active.[61] And, in a distressingly increased climate of misogyny, Carrie Rentschler describes heightened social media activism by young women against rape culture using mobile media apps such as Hollaback!, which documents and maps street-level harassment; a tactic that Rentschler characterizes as "response-ability": "the capacity to collectively respond to sexual violence and its cultures of racial, gendered and sexuality harassment."[62]

In their use of social media to express their thoughts on political and social issues, chronicle their lives, showcase their creative work, and increasingly to market and brand themselves for future careers in various sectors, a type of labour that Tamara Shepherd describes as "apprenticeship labour,"[63] young people need to know about the policies and politics of the social media platforms they use. In MediaSmart's findings, youth awareness of digital policy issues, in that instance privacy, was variable. The researchers found that there were negligible differences between what young men and young women reported about their knowledge of online privacy policies: 39 percent of young men and 38 percent of young women stated that social media companies are not interested in what they do online, and 67 percent of young men and 68 percent of young women assumed that a privacy policy meant that a company would not share their personal information with others.[64] However, youth were aware of how to use privacy settings to manage their interpersonal relationships, suggesting that for many young people,

"privacy is linked to self-presentation and the management of social relationships."[65] (Notably, Sarah Heath reports similar findings from the eGirls Project with respect to privacy and online security in this volume.[66)] MediaSmarts recommends that digital literacy education consider the commercial impact of corporately owned social media and the limitations of privacy policies, as well as provide a more nuanced understanding of how young people consider and manage their online privacy.

These concerns echo the framework for digital policy literacy, described earlier in this chapter, and point to a continued need to work with young women to understand how they use social media for education, entertainment, socialization, and civic participation, and to further unpack their knowledge of digital policy issues, such as privacy, surveillance, intellectual property, the terms of service that govern the use of social media, and the regulatory conditions around telecommunication services. As this small case study of activism against UBB reveals, young women are passionate about their use of the internet for their everyday lives and recognize its necessity for their current studies and for their future employment. Importantly, they acknowledge the importance of the internet and robust public interest policies for Canadian identity and citizenship, seeing access to the internet as a basic right.

Postscript

Much has been written in internet studies about the ethical uses of public internet content in research, and indeed the delineation between what should be considered public and private content.[67] The Association of Internet Researchers has compiled a guide to internet ethics, outlining questions to consider regarding ethical practice.[68] In this chapter, with respect to data collection of the production, presentation, and performance of internet content, an expectation of privacy by the creators is not assumed, as the vlogs were posted on a public site with an expectation that they would be viewed and commented on by third parties; in fact, by entreating viewers to sign the OpenMedia petition, the young women all expected to have an audience for their vlogs. According to YouTube's Terms of Service for the period of time when the vlogs were created (the terms of service are from 2007), parent company Google holds a wide-ranging license over this content, including rights to make it available to third parties.[69]

Acknowledgements

Thanks to the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) for the funding of the research project Young Canadians, Participatory Digital Culture, and Policy Literacy.

Notes

1 W. Lance Bennett, "The Personalization of Politics: Political Identity, Social Media, and Changing Patterns of Participation," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 644 (2012): 29, <http://sciencepolicy.colorado.edu/students/envs_5720/bennett_2012.pdf>.
2 *Ibid*., at 22.
3 Leslie Regan Shade, "Towards a Model of Digital Policy Literacy," paper presented at the iConference, Toronto, Ontario, 7–10 February, 2012, <http://dl.acm.org/citation.cfm?id=2132176>; Leslie Regan Shade & Tamara Shepherd, "Youth and Mobile Privacy: Applying a Model of Digital Policy Literacy," *First Monday* 18 (2013) <http://firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/4807/3798>.
4 Valerie Steeves, *Young Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Life Online* (Ottawa: MediaSmarts, 2014), 2, <http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/pdfs/publication-report/full/YCWWIII_Life_Online_FullReport.pdf>.
5 *Ibid*., at 21–24.
6 *Ibid*., at 3.
7 danah boyd, *It's Complicated: The Social Live of Networked Teens* (New Haven: Yale University Press, 2014), 5.
8 Mary Madden, "Teens Haven't Abandoned Facebook—Yet," *Pew Research Internet Project*, 15 August, 2013, <http://www.pewinternet.org/2013/08/15/teens-havent-abandoned-facebook-yet/>.
9 *Supra* note 7 at 5.
10 See also Bailey, Chapter I; Burkell & Saginur, Chapter V; Steeves, Chapter VI; Regan & Sweet, Chapter VII; Heath, Chapter XIV.
11 Valerie Steeves, *Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Experts or Amateurs? Gauging Young Canadians' Digital Literacy Skills* (Ottawa: MediaSmarts, 2014), 6, <http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/mediasmarts/files/pdfs/publication-report/full/YCWWIII_Experts_or_Amateurs.pdf>.
12 *Ibid*., at 33.
13 *Ibid*., at 31.
14 W. Lance Bennett, "Changing Citizenship in the Digital Age," in *Civic Life Online: Learning How Digital Media Can Engage Youth*, ed. W. L. Bennett (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2008), 1–24; Michael Xenos, Ariadne Vromen & Brian D. Loader, "The Great Equalizer? Patterns of Social

Media Use and Youth Political Engagement in Three Advanced Democracies," *Information, Communication & Society* 17 (2014), doi:10.1080/1369118X.2013.871318.

15 Joseph Kahne, Nam-Jin Lee & Jessica T. Feezell, "The Civic and Political Significance of Online Participatory Cultures among Youth Transitioning to Adulthood," *Journal of Information Technology & Politics* 10 (2013): 13, doi:10.1080/19331681.2012.701109.

16 *Ibid*., at 4.

17 Brian D. Loader, Ariadne Vromen & Michael A. Xenos, "Introduction: The Networked Young Citizen: Social Media, Political Participation and Civic Engagement," *Information, Communication & Society* 17 (2014): 145, doi:10.1080/1369118X.2013.871571.

18 Emily C. Weinstein, "The Personal is Political on Social Media: Online Civic Expression Patterns and Pathways among Civically Engaged Youth," *International Journal of Communication* 8 (2014), <http://ijoc.org/index.php/ijoc/article/view/2381>.

19 Elisabeth Soep, *Participatory Politics: Next-Generation Tactics to Remake Public Spheres* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2014), <http://mitpress.mit.edu/books/participatory-politics>.

20 Anita Harris, "Introduction: Youth Cultures and Feminist Politics," in *Next Wave Cultures: Feminism, Subcultures, Activism*, ed. Anita Harris (New York: Routledge, 2008).

21 Megan Boler, Averie MacDonald, Christina Nitsou & Anne Harris, "Connective Labor and Social Media: Women's Roles in the 'Leaderless' Occupy Movement," *Convergence: The International Journal of Research into New Media Technologies* 20 (2014), doi:10.1177/1354856514541353.

22 Caroline Caron, "Getting Girls and Teens into the Vocabularies of Citizenship," *Girlhood Studies* 4 (2011), <http://dx.doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2011.040206>.

23 Martha McCaughey, "Technology Is My BFF: What Are New Communication Technologies Doing to/for Girls?," *Media Report to Women* 41 (2013): 10–11, <http://mediareporttowomen.com/issues/411.htm>.

24 Blayne Haggart, "Fair Copyright for Canada: Lessons for Online Social Movements from the First Canadian Facebook Uprising," *Canadian Journal of Political Science/Revue canadienne de science politique* 46 (2013), doi:10.1017/S0008423913000838.

25 Lisa Feinberg, "Facebook: Beyond Friends," *Our Schools/Our Selves* 17 (2008), <http://www.policyalternatives.ca/sites/default/files/uploads/publications/Our_Schools_Ourselve/9_Feinburg_facebook_beyond_friends.pdf>.

26 "Backgrounder: Facebook Investigation Follow-up Complete," Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, last modified 22 September 2010, <http://www.priv.gc.ca/media/nr-c/2010/bg_100922_e.cfm>; Elizabeth

Denhem, "*Privacy and the World Wide Web: How the OPC Investigation of Facebook Made Worldwide Waves, Remarks at the IAPP KnowledgeNet Session*" (Ottawa: Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, 2009), <http://priv.gc.ca/speech/2009/spd_20091007_ed_e.cfm>.

27 "Telecom Decision CRTC 2010-255. Bell Aliant Regional Communications, Limited Partnership and Bell Canada – Applications to Introduce Usage-Based Billing and Other Changes to Gateway Access Services," Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC), last modified 1 April 2011, <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2010/2010-255.htm#archived>.

28 "Usage-Based Billing for Gateway Access Services and Third-Party Internet Access Services: 8661-C12-201015975," Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC), last modified 3 February 2011, <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/PartVII/eng/2010/8661/c12_201015975.htm>.

29 "Telecom Decision CRTC 2011-44. Usage-Based Billing for Gateway Access Services and Third-Party Internet Access Services," Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC), last modified 25 January 2011, <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/archive/2011/2011-44.htm>.

30 Steven Anderson, "Spark 136 – January 30 & February 2: Usage-Based Billing, Part 1," interview by Nora Young, *Spark*, CBC, 28 January 2011, <http://www.cbc.ca/spark/2011/01/spark-136-january-30-february-2-2011/>.

31 CBC News, Science & Technology, "CRTC's Internet Billing Decision Faces Review," CBC News, last modified 1 February 2011, <http://www.cbc.ca/news/technology/crtc-s-internet-billing-decision-faces-review-1.1080216>.

32 "CRTC Supports Choice of Internet Services," Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunication Commission (CRTC), last modified 15 November 2011, <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/com100/2011/r111115.htm>.

33 "Regulators Pull Back from Usage-Based Billing after Half-a-Million Canadians Speak Out," OpenMedia, last modified 15 November 2011, <https://openmedia.ca/news/regulators-pull-back-usage-based-billing-after-half-million-canadians-speak-out>.

34 "About Us," OpenMedia, <https://openmedia.ca/about-us>.

35 Jonathan A. Obar & Leslie Regan Shade, "Activating the Fifth Estate: Bill C-30 and the Digitally-Mediated Public Watchdog," in *Strategies for Media Reform: Communication Research in Action*, eds. D. Freedman, R. W. McChesney & J. A. Obar (New York Fordham University Press, forthcoming), <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2470671>.

36 "Liberty Awards 2013 Recipients," British Columbia Civil Liberties Association, <http://bccla.org/2013-liberty-awards-gala/liberty-awards-gala/2013-awards/>.

37 Ian Reilly, "'Amusing Ourselves to Death?' Social Media, Political Satire, and the 2011 Election," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 36 (2011), <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/2508/2259>.
38 Katarzyna Rukszto, "History as Edutainment: *Heritage Minutes* and the Uses of Educational Television," in *Programming Reality: Perspectives on English Canadian Television*, eds. Zöe Druick & Aspa Kotsopoulos (Waterloo, ON: Wilfrid Laurier Press, 2008).
39 Rick Mercer: "Our Gouge-Based Heritage," YouTube posted by TheOpenmedia, 17 February 2011, <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=q0ZGkqQvAVw>.
40 "Hitler Gets Netflix and Hits the Internet Cap," YouTube posted by FightingInternet, 8 February 2011, <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=y-Mg6pq33Zc>. See also Christopher J. Gilbert, "Playing with Hitler: *Downfall* and Its Ludic Uptake," *Critical Studies in Media Communication* 30 (2013), doi:10.1080/15295036.2012.755052.
41 *Supra* note 1 at 29.
42 Andrew Ross Sorkin & Jeremy W. Peters, "Google to Acquire YouTube for $1.65 Billion," *New York Times*, 9 October 2006, <http://www.nytimes.com/2006/10/09/business/09cnd-deal.html>.
43 John Seabrook, "Streaming Dreams: YouTube Turns Pro," *New Yorker*, 16 January 2012, <http://www.newyorker.com/reporting/2012/01/16/120116fa_fact_seabrook?currentPage=all>.
44 Patricia G. Lange, *Kids on YouTube: Technical Identities and Digital Literacies* (Walnut Creek, CA: Left Coast, 2014), 98.
45 *Ibid*., at 121.
46 Jennifer Earl & Katrina Kimport, *Digitally Enabled Social Change: Activism in the Internet Age* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2011).
47 "Stop Telecom Price Gouging," OpenMedia, <https://openmedia.ca/meter>.
48 Lange, *supra* note 44 at 98.
49 Shade, *supra* note 3; Shade & Shepherd, *supra* note 3.
50 Patricia Aufderheide, *National Leadership Conference on Media Literacy, Conference Report* (Washington, DC; Aspen Institute, 1983); Renee Hobbs & Amy Jensen, "The Past, Present, and Future of Media Literacy Education," *Journal of Media Literacy Education* 1 (2009), <http://digitalcommons.uri.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=jmle>.
51 James Paul Gee, *New Digital Media and Learning as an Emerging Area and "Worked Examples" as One Way Forward* (Cambridge, MA: MIT Press, 2010), 36, <https://mitpress.mit.edu/sites/default/files/titles/free_download/9780262513692_New_Digital_Media.pdf>.
52 Bennett, *supra* note 1 at 29.

53 "Shaping Canada's Strategy for the Digital Economy," Industry Canada, last modified March 24, 2011, <http://www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/ich-epi.nsf/eng/02090.html>.

54 Sonia Livingstone & Peter Lunt, "Representing Citizens and Consumers in Media and Communications Regulation," *Annals of the American Academy of Political and Social Science* 611 (2007): 53, <http://core.kmi.open.ac.uk/download/pdf/92940.pdf>.

55 Tamara Shepherd, Gregory Taylor & Catherine Middleton, "A Tale of Two Regulators: Telecom Policy Participation in Canada," *Journal of Information Policy* 4 (2014) <http://jip.vmhost.psu.edu/ojs/index.php/jip/article/view/163/106>.

56 Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, It's Your CRTC: "Here's How to Have Your Say! A Five-Minute Guide to Understanding and Participating in Our Activities," (Gatineau, QC: CRTC, 2014), <http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/info_sht/g10.htm>.

57 Sarah Banet-Weiser, "Branding the Post-Feminist Self: Girls' Video Production and YouTube," in *Mediated Girlhoods: New Explorations of Girls' Media Culture*, ed. Mary Celeste Kearney (New York: Peter Lang, 2011), 281.

58 Kanai, Chapter III.

59 Sarah Banet-Weiser, "'Am I Pretty or Ugly?' Girls and the Market for Self-Esteem," *Girlhood Studies* 1 (2014), <http://dx.doi.org/10.3167/ghs.2014.070107>.

60 Jessalynn Marie Keller, "Virtual Feminisms: Girls' Blogging Communities, Feminist Activism, and Participatory Politics," *Information, Communication & Society* 15 (2012): 429, 444, doi:10.1080/1369118X.2011.642890.

61 Julia Schuster, "Invisible Feminists? Social Media and Young Women's Political Participation," *Political Science* 65 (2013), <http://pnz.sagepub.com/content/65/1/8.full.pdf>.

62 Carrie A. Rentschler, "Rape Culture and the Feminist Politics of Social Media," *Girlhood Studies* 7 (2014): 68.

63 Tamara Shepherd, "Young Canadians' Apprenticeship Labour in User-Generated Content," *Canadian Journal of Communication* 1 (2013): 47, <http://www.cjc-online.ca/index.php/journal/article/view/2598/2361>.

64 Valerie Steeves, *Canadians in a Wired World, Phase III: Online Privacy, Online Publicity* (Ottawa: MediaSmarts, 2014), 37. <http://mediasmarts.ca/sites/default/files/pdfs/publication-report/full/YCWWIII_Online_Privacy_Online_Publicity_FullReport.pdf>.

65 *Ibid*., at 26.

66 Heath, Chapter XIV.

67 For a summary of considerations for internet qualitative research see Claire Hewson, "Qualitative Approaches to Internet-Mediated Research: Opportunities, Issues, Possibilities," in *The Oxford Handbook of Qualitative*

Research, ed. Patricia Leavy (Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2014): 423–454.

68 Annette Markham & Elizabeth Buchanan, *Ethical Decision-Making and Internet Research: Recommendations from the AoIR Ethics Working Committee* (Version 2.0), Association of Internet Researchers, 2012, <http://aoir.org/reports/ethics2.pdf>.

69 See "Google Terms of Service," 17 April 2007, at para 11.1 and 11.2, <https://www.google.com/intl/en/policies/terms/archive/20070416/>; for the latest terms of service see, "Google Terms of Service" dated 14 April 2014, <https://www.google.com/intl/en/policies/terms/>.