CBC Radio Listeners:
Their Attitudes and Behaviour and Why They Listen
to the Radio

Prepared for the Friends of Canadian Broadcasting

Canadian Media Research Inc.
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Summary (Anglophones)

• The annual TV/Radio Trends Survey was conducted in November-December 2007 among a national sample of 1,427 Canadians aged 18-plus

• The survey revealed something never before known: some 22% of Canadians are occasional CBC listeners (10 hours or less per month) and 19% are regular listeners (more than 10 hours per month). Previously, it was thought that only about 20% of Anglophones were CBC listeners. Regular CBC listeners, on average, spend over 55 hours per month with CBC radio.

• CBC regular listeners say that Newspapers (38.6%) and Radio (30.7%) are far more important than TV (22.7%) as a main source of news; those who don’t listen to CBC rely heavily on TV as their main source for news.

• Regular CBC listeners spend some 20.5 hours per week listening to the radio, including other stations. They are much heavier radio listeners than either occasional CBC listeners or non-CBC listeners.

• CBC listeners and non-CBC listeners are alike in that roughly two-thirds personally own a cell phone. However, regular CBC listeners are less likely than non-listeners to text message with their cell phone and they are also less likely to send photos with their cell or download music.

• The relatively cooler reception that new media such as mobile downloads and iPods receives among regular CBC listeners extends to podcasting and downloading via the internet. Clearly, old-fashioned radio remains the medium of choice for CBC listeners.

• Two-thirds of CBC regular listeners say that music is a primary reason for using the radio; classical music is of great interest to CBC regular listeners.

• Two-thirds of occasional and regular CBC listeners also say that local news is a primary reason for listening, equal in importance to music. Surprisingly, national and international news is just as important as local news to regular CBC listeners: 65.3% say it is a primary reason for listening. Surveys have traditionally shown the importance of local news but the equally important role of national/international news is a new finding.

• A majority (53%) of CBC regular listeners say that sports is not a primary or secondary reason for listening. Only 1 in 5 regular listeners say sports is a primary reason.

• Only 1 in 3 regular CBC listeners report that traffic updates are a primary reason for listening, giving traffic less importance than weather.

• A large majority of Canadians agree or strongly agree that the CBC Board should choose the CBC President; regular CBC listeners are slightly more in favour of the Board making the choice but even non-CBC listeners support the Board decision.

• Roughly 3 in 4 respondents agree or strongly agree that CBC should consult with the public before making
• **Introduction**

The TV/Radio Trends Survey is a national survey of Canadians’ attitudes toward television and radio. The primary purpose of the survey is to test consumer satisfaction with TV channels and radio stations. The TV/Radio Trends Survey also measures Canadians’ use of and interest in many new technologies such as the Internet, VOD, PVRs, blackberries, HDTV, iPods, etc. The 2007 TV/Radio Trends Survey is the sixth annual survey of its type and this year’s results can be trended with findings from earlier surveys. This report focuses on radio listening and specifically the listening patterns and attitudes of CBC radio listeners.

The TV/Radio Trends Survey was designed by CMRI and the fieldwork was conducted in November December 2007 by BBM Analytics, a subsidiary of BBM (Bureau of Broadcast Measurement), employing a 20-page mail questionnaire sent to former BBM survey respondents. Such a survey is commonly referred to as a return-to-sample (RTS) survey and is an effective way of collecting data on the qualitative reactions of TV viewers and radio listeners to programs and stations.

The 2007 TV/Radio Trends Survey involved a sample of some 1,427 Anglophone and Francophone respondents aged 18-plus. There were 484 Francophone respondents and 943 Anglophones respondents to the survey.

One person per household was chosen at random to complete the TV/Radio Trends Survey questionnaire. The response rate to the survey from the initial mail-out was approximately 40%, a relatively high response rate for a mail survey. However, it should be borne in mind that the sample frame consisted of former BBM survey respondents, who had earlier responded to a mail survey. To encourage response to the TV/Radio Trends Survey, the questionnaire was short and made as simple to complete as possible and a small monetary incentive was included with the questionnaire. All data were weighted by age and sex. The 2007 survey has a margin of error of +/-2.6%, 19 times out of 20.

Questionnaires were returned to BBM Analytics over a period of several weeks and BBM Analytics prepared a data file for analysis by SPSS, a well-known statistical software package. The questionnaire is available on request. The text of this report refers to the Anglophone sample only; Francophone results are available separately.

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Radio, TV and Internet Use
How Many Canadians Listen to CBC Radio?

CBC radio has a much larger audience than traditional surveys have shown. Apparently, CBC need not be concerned with efforts to reach more Canadians.

According to the fall 2007 TV/Radio Trends Survey, about 4 in 10 Anglophone Canadians listen to CBC radio on a monthly basis. This is a substantially higher number than BBM ratings data show; BBM surveys are restricted to one-week periods and perhaps do not account for the occasional CBC listener. The TV/Radio Trends Survey asks respondents to indicate how many hours they spend listening to CBC radio in a typical month. As shown at right, some 22% of Canadians are occasional CBC listeners (10 hours or less per month) and 19% are regular listeners (more than 10 hours per month). Regular CBC listeners, on average, spend over 55 hours per month with CBC radio.

Some 59% of Anglophone Canadians said they do not listen to CBC radio at all in a typical month.
How Many Stations Do People Listen to?

According to the fall 2007 TV/Radio Trends Survey, CBC radio listeners also spend some time with other radio stations. Only some 22% of regular CBC listeners say that they listen to only 1 station per week, while 25% say they listen to 3 stations and 16% say they listen to 4 or more in the typical week. However, some 67% of CBC regular listeners listening time is spent with CBC. Non-CBC listeners are the most loyal to a single station, with about one-third saying they listen to only one station; another one-third say that listen to only two stations.

Note that the survey did not distinguish between CBC Radio 1 and CBC Radio 2.
• Time Spent With Radio, TV and the Internet

According to the fall 2007 TV/Radio Trends Survey, regular CBC listeners spend some 20.5 hours *per week* listening to the radio. They are much heavier radio listeners than either occasional CBC listeners or non-CBC listeners, spending almost twice as much time with radio as the other two groups. Non-CBC listeners are much heavier TV users (21.4 hours per week) than light or regular CBC radio listeners. Weekly hours spent using the internet in fall 2007, according to the TV/Radio Trends Survey, was in a narrow range of 6-9 hours in all three groups.

Clearly, regular CBC radio listeners are relatively light internet users compared to the time they spend with radio.
Overall Satisfaction with Radio

Canadians are generally quite satisfied with radio. Less than 10% express any dissatisfaction and the number of people who say they are very dissatisfied is almost not measurable. Regular CBC radio listeners are the most satisfied with radio, especially those who indicate they are very satisfied, which is an indicator that CBC is providing a service that listeners appreciate and approve of.
Cell Phones, Text Messaging, etc.

The TV/Radio Trends Survey has explored interest in HDTV, PVRs and other new TV technology over the past 6 years. In the 2007 survey we asked respondents about cell phone ownership and use.

CBC regular and occasional listeners and non-listeners are alike in that roughly two-thirds personally own a cell phone. However, regular CBC listeners are less likely than non-listeners to text message with their cell phone and they are also less likely to send photos with their cell or download music or video. This may be partly related to the fact that CBC listeners are somewhat older than non-listeners (see appendix).
iPods/MP3 Players

In the 2007 survey respondents were asked if they owned an iPod or an MP3 player. Some 14% of non-CBC listeners said they owned an iPod and 20% said they owned an MP3 player. By comparison, regular CBC listeners were less likely to own either type of portable music player.

It is worth noting that even among non-listeners the ownership of iPods and MP3 players is restricted to a minority.
Podcasting

The relatively cooler reception that new media such as mobile downloads and iPods receives among regular CBC listeners extends to podcasting. When asked whether podcasting, i.e., downloading of radio programs, was valuable, only 3% of regular CBC listeners strongly agreed; non-listeners were much the same. Only occasional CBC listeners showed some interest in podcasting. Surprisingly, roughly one-half of listeners and non-listeners strongly disagreed that podcasting was valuable.
• **Downloading and Playing Music**

Similarly, less than 5% of regular CBC listeners strongly agreed that they are listening to the radio less and downloading more music from the internet or otherwise playing their own music. Another 11% or so agreed with this, whereas almost 60% strongly disagreed and about 26% disagreed. Occasional CBC listeners and non-listeners were quite similar in that only a minority agreed the internet was displacing their radio listening time.
Main Source of News

We asked respondents what medium was their main news source. Typically TV finishes far ahead of other media in other national surveys but we found that CBC listeners, especially regular CBC listeners, are quite different in this regard. CBC regular listeners say that Newspapers (38.6%) and Radio (30.7%) are far more important than TV (22.7%). Non-CBC listeners choose TV (56.6%) ahead of all other media. Note that the internet is chosen by a small minority in all groups.
Why People Listen to the Radio
Why Do People Listen?

We asked respondents a series of questions about why they listen to radio. At right are the results for a question about why people first turn on the radio each day. A large majority of CBC listeners, both occasional and regular listeners, agree that it is to get caught up with news, weather and other information. Over 40% of regular listeners strongly agree with this concept and another one-third agree. Only about 4% strongly disagree. CBC regular listeners are far more likely to strongly agree that this is why they turn on the radio than non-listeners.
Why Do People Listen: Music?

Music plays an important role for CBC listeners and nonlisteners alike. Two-thirds of CBC regular listeners say that music is a primary reason for using the radio. Fully three-quarters of non-CBC listeners report music as a primary reason for listening. Only a small minority in any group say that music is not a reason for listening.
• Why Do People Listen: Music?

Interestingly, while music is a primary reason for listening to the radio, it accounts for less than one-half of the listening time of CBC regular listeners. Even non-CBC listeners report that only about 60% of their radio listening is to music, with news, information, weather and other content accounting for a substantial amount of listening time.
Why Do People Listen: Music?

We presented respondents with a list of television program types and asked whether or not they were interested in each program type. Few people said they were interested in programs featuring classical music, ballet or opera. However, regular CBC radio listeners differed markedly from the non-CBC listener and occasional CBC listener. 4 in 5 regular CBC listeners expressed an interest in such programming, a strong indicator that CBC listeners have very different music tastes than others in the population. In the 2008 survey we plan on exploring this further.
Why Do People Listen: Local News?

Local news is another important reason for listening to the radio. About one-half (49.1%) of non-CBC listeners report local news as a primary reason for listening. Some two-thirds of occasional and regular CBC listeners say that local news is a primary reason for listening, basically equal in importance to music.
Why Do People Listen: National/International News?

National and International news is just as important as local news to regular CBC listeners: 65.3% say it is a primary reason to listen to the radio. This is somewhat surprising, given that local news usually outstrips the importance of national/international news in most surveys of this type. Non-CBC listeners and occasional listeners are much less likely to list national/international news as a primary reason for listening.
• Why Do People Listen: Weather?

Weather is an important reason to listen to the radio but less so than local news and national/international news among regular CBC listeners. Interestingly, there are scant differences between regular and occasional CBC listeners and non-CBC listeners; about one half of respondents in each group say weather is a primary reason.
Why Do People Listen: Sports?

Sports is even less important a reason to listen to the radio than weather. A majority (53%) of CBC regular listeners say that sports is not a primary or secondary reason for listening. Only 1 in 5 regular CBC listeners say sports is a primary reason.
• Why Do People Listen: Traffic?

Traffic information falls in between sports and weather in importance in two of the three groups. The occasional CBC listener reports traffic as more important than weather. However, only 1 in 3 regular CBC listeners report that traffic updates are a primary reason for listening, giving traffic less importance than weather.
Why Do People Listen: Time Checks?

Time checks are much less important than weather, traffic and sports. Only 1 in 10 regular CBC listeners say that time checks are a primary reason for listening. Perhaps CBC listeners are so attuned to the rhythm of CBC schedules, they do not require frequent time checks.
• Why Do People Listen: Commercials?

Not surprisingly, virtually no one says that commercials are a primary reason for listening to the radio. However, some 12.8% of non-CBC listeners say it is a secondary reason. Not shown in the chart is that a much larger percentage of people tune to the radio for local store information. CBC regular radio listeners are adamant about commercials: 0%, i.e., not a single respondent, said that commercials were a primary reason for listening to radio.
Special Characteristics of CBC Radio Listeners
• CBC Listeners and CBC TV

We asked respondents a series of questions about things not directly related to radio. At right are the results for a question about which is their favourite TV station. Only a small percentage (<5%) of non-CBC radio listeners say CBC TV or CBC Newsworld is their favourite station. CBC listeners, both occasional and regular listeners, especially the latter, report that CBC TV or Newsworld is their favourite TV station. Some 25% of regular CBC listeners say CBC TV is their favourite station, compared to only about 7% choosing CTV or Global. There appears to be a symbiotic relationship between the two CBC services.
- **Attending Church**

Perhaps because of CBC radio’s slight skew to older age groups (see appendix) its regular listeners are more inclined to attend church or a place of worship on a regular basis than non-CBC listeners. Almost 1 in 3 regular CBC listeners worship on a weekly basis.

![Attendance at Church Place of Worship Chart](chart.png)
Voting

Respondents to surveys are likely to fudge answers to questions about past voting patterns; CMRI recalls a survey following the 1995 Quebec referendum which asked Quebecois whether they had voted Yes or No for sovereignty and only one quarter of respondents acknowledged they had voted Yes (half the actual vote). Nonetheless, despite the fact that respondents in the TV/Radio Trends Survey appear to have exaggerated that they voted in the last federal election, it is worth noting that over 97% of regular CBC listeners claimed they did vote. We did not ask for which party.

![Voted in Last Federal Election, CBC Radio Listeners vs. Non Listeners, Anglophones 18-plus, Fall 2007](chart)
Policy Questions
The Role of CBC’s Board of Directors

We asked respondents whether the government or the CBC Board of Directors should choose the CBC president. The majority of Canadians agree or strongly agree that the Board should have this responsibility; regular CBC listeners are slightly more in favour of the Board making the choice but even non-CBC listeners support the Board decision.
Public Consultation

Roughly 3 in 4 respondents also agree or strongly agree that CBC should consult with the public before making major programming changes. There are no major differences among CBC listeners or non-listeners.
Importance of CBC TV

The symbiotic relationship between CBC TV and radio is very strong, as we saw earlier. This was very evident when we asked respondents whether they thought CBC TV was important to Canada’s culture. Less than 10% of regular CBC listeners said CBC TV was not important. Almost three times as many regular listeners (58.1%) said it was very important compared to those who do not listen to CBC radio (22.3%).

Source: CMRI (TV/Radio Trends Survey)
• Importance of CBC Radio

It is rare in survey research to have a large majority of respondents choose the extreme category in a survey question. That was the case when we asked whether CBC radio was important to Canada’s culture. Fully 73.0% of CBC regular listeners said that CBC radio was very important to Canadian culture. Only 14.1% of non-listeners said it was very important. This large gap needs further exploration and study.
Appendix-Demographics
Gender of CBC Radio Listeners vs. Non Listeners, Anglophones 18-plus, Fall 2007

- Non-Listener: 50.2% Female, 49.8% Male
- Occasional CBC Listener: 54.9% Female, 45.1% Male
- Regular CBC Listener: 51.2% Female, 48.8% Male

Source: CMRI (TV/Radio Trends Survey)
Age of CBC Listeners and Non-Listeners, Anglophones 18-plus, Fall 2007

- Non-Listener: 22.4% (55-plus), 45.1% (35-54), 32.5% (18-34)
- Occasional Listener: 29.7% (55-plus), 44.4% (35-54), 25.9% (18-34)
- Regular Listener: 47.4% (55-plus), 36.3% (35-54), 16.3% (18-34)

Source: CMRI (TV/Radio Trends Survey)