

Sent electronically to:

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council

P.O. Box 3265, Station D

Ottawa, Ontario

K1P 6H8

July 19, 2012

Dear Sir/Madam,

Re: Complaint against Bell Media CTV WiFi Report: Serious Conflicts of Interest and Inaccuracies, Journalistic Incompetence and Breach of CBSC CAB Code of Ethics

We are writing to report that BC CTV – owned by Bell Canada – has demonstrated journalistic incompetence and breached Clause 5, section (1)(2)(3) and Clause 6 of the CAB Code of Ethics in the following “news investigation” stories that they aired on June 26 and June 27, 2012 (2 parts) at 6:00pm.

Reporters: Jon Woodward and Mi-Jung Lee

<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/WiFi-danger-in-schools-overblown-ctv-investigation-1.854418#axzz1yvjhDuQa>
<http://bc.ctvnews.ca/b-c-school-districts-divided-on-future-of-WiFi-1.856605>

CBSC CAB Code of Ethics: <http://www.cbsc.ca/english/codes/cabethics.php#Clause5>

Clause 5 - News

(1) It shall be the responsibility of broadcasters to ensure that **news shall be represented with accuracy and without bias**. Broadcasters shall satisfy themselves that the arrangements made for obtaining news ensure this result. They shall also ensure that **news broadcasts are not editorial**.

(2) News shall not be selected for the purpose of **furthering or hindering either side of any controversial public issue, nor shall it be formulated on the basis of the beliefs, opinions or desires of management**, the editor or others engaged in its preparation or delivery. The fundamental purpose of news dissemination in a democracy is to enable people to know what is happening, and to understand events so that they may form their own conclusions.

(3) Nothing in the foregoing shall be understood as preventing broadcasters from analyzing and elucidating news so long as such **analysis or comment is clearly labeled as such and kept distinct from regular news presentations**. Broadcasters are also entitled to provide **editorial opinion, which shall be clearly labeled as such and kept entirely distinct** from regular broadcasts of news or analysis.

Clause 6 - Full, Fair and Proper Presentation

It is recognized that the **full, fair and proper presentation of news, opinion, comment and editorial is the prime and fundamental responsibility of each broadcaster**. This principle shall apply to all radio and television programming, whether it relates to news, public affairs, magazine, talk, call-in, interview or other broadcasting formats in which news, opinion, comment or editorial may be expressed by broadcaster employees, their invited guests or callers.

On June 26, 2012, WiFi Broadband Alliance, “*the industry association focused on driving the next generation WiFi experience*”, welcomed 12 new members. One of them was Bell Mobility¹. That same evening, Bell’s

subsidiary CTV aired a news story labelled *WiFi Danger in Schools Overblown*². What a timely co-incidence! This two-part feature targeted BCCPAC, BC Confederation of Parent Advisory Councils' recently adopted resolutions which called for precaution and parental choice regarding WiFi in schools³.

The Canadian Broadcast Standards Council's Code of Ethics²⁸ stated that “news shall be represented **with accuracy and without bias**”, with “**Full, Fair and Proper Presentation.**”

The CTV WiFi story, presented to viewers as an *investigation*, is full of inherent flaws, biased information, journalistic incompetence and conflicts of interest. It is a blatant violation of the CBSC Code of Ethics.

Reporter Jon Woodward of CTV (100% owned by Bell) consulted sources at UBC for recommendation on the choice of engineer to conduct the testing of WiFi radiation levels in schools. He also invited UBC's Professor Dave Michelson to comment on the safety of WiFi.

Some facts about Prof. Michelson and UBC:

- UBC has received millions of dollars in donations from wireless service providers such as Telus and Bell⁴. Prof. Michelson's research lab at the Faculty of Electrical and Computer Engineering is funded by Bell as part of a \$1.25 millions donation.⁵
- Michelson is the Chair of Academic Advisory Panel and a Board member at Wavefront Wireless Commercialization Centre⁶, a venture capital operation which enjoys multi-million dollars of funding from “industry partners” such as Rogers, Ericsson, Sierra Wireless, Nokia and more⁷. Wavefront is dedicated to “*accelerating wireless innovation and commercialization for Canada*”.

Karl Reardon of Planetworks who was recommended to conduct the testing also has serious conflict of interests. Mr. Reardon is/was:

- A former Director and General Manager of Motorola⁸
- A paid consultant (2 companies: Planetworks⁹ and Radiowize¹⁰) who serves the telecommunication industry on cell tower rooftop leasing and other wireless projects
- Author of a celltower leasing guidebook¹¹ for the Municipal Engineers
- Holder of seven US and EU patents on wireless and data technology¹²
- Chief Technology Officer of a company called Wireless Image whose sole business is the sale of mobile advertising solutions for cellphones¹³.

Both of these *experts* have vested interests to **promote** wireless technology. However, Jon Woodward as a journalist did not question that. He did not disclose the conflicts of interest and did not seek or present any counter expert opinion. Even worse, he and partner, Mi-Jung Lee, expedited those industry-driven, biased testing data to the school board trustees and pushed for a quick response on camera. That is not journalism. That is infomercial.

During the testing, the industry-affiliated engineer walked around waving his RF meter down the hallways, at the back of the classrooms, even up on the ceiling where the lights (but not the students) were located, yet obviously **not** going for the sources which emitted the highest level of microwave radiation, sources which presented the most danger, i.e. **the laptops and iPads in direct contact with the children!** Each WiFi-enabled iPad/laptop/smartphone has a client card which is an antenna that transmits pulsed microwave continuously. These frequencies are blasted at the children's hands, chest, or reproductive organs (placed on their laps). Please take a look at the nearfield and contact-level measurements of iPads and laptops taken by various parties in Canada, USA and Israel. They are thousands of times higher than what was stated in the CTV program: <http://www.safeinschool.org/2012/01/ipad-iphone-WiFi-radiation-and.html>

The design of the CTV testing was flawed and unrealistic. That testing created an *illusion* that WiFi radiation is negligible. A proper and relevant testing should have compared near-field/contact-level measurements of (1) the wireless devices in the WiFi-equipped schools, with (2) the hardwired devices at the non-WiFi schools, or simply compare the same devices in the same schools before and after WiFi is turned on. This is simple to

execute and will clearly show the difference in radiation levels that children are exposed to. This, strangely, was not included in CTV's agenda.

As seen in the videos, WiFi radiation spikes every few seconds at levels even higher than cellphones, and children are exposed to it for long hours daily in schools, yet Mr. Reardon and CTV reported only **average** measurements and excluded all the peak radiation data. It is similar to someone concealing the fact that he drove a car at 120 km/hr, by mentioning only the "average speed" of 20 km/hr, after averaging with the time that the car had stopped at red lights. This is an easy way to make the measurements look ridiculously low. Furthermore, Mr. Reardon only reported these average measurements as a percentage of Health Canada's guideline, while most viewers have no idea that this guideline is regarded by many international scientists as outdated and obsolete, that it is hundred to millions of times less stringent than many other countries' standards.²²

This is not the first time Jon Woodward's journalistic integrity has been brought into question. CTV is being sued over a misleading and defamatory story¹⁴ that was directed and produced by Woodward in December, 2011. This is also not the first time that Bell has lost its credibility. In June 2011, Bell Canada was ruled by the Federal Competition Bureau for using "Misleading Advertising" and was fined for \$10 million¹⁵.

When producing this story, Mr. Woodward initially requested to speak to parents who have concerns about WiFi in schools. Two contacts were provided for him through members of the BCCPAC WiFi Safety Subcommittee. One of them is an IT consultant, also an electrohypersensitive (EHS) patient¹⁶ and parent of an EHS child. To a reporter, this should be an ideal candidate to speak to. However, Jon never responded to this parent, but opted to make arrangement for interview with the other parent. Eventually, even the interview of the second parent was canceled by Jon at the last minute. As it turned out, he filled that airtime with interviews of a pro-WiFi, digital-immersion pilot-program school Principal as well as Grade 9 students.

In Part 2 of the segment when a child energetically described an art drawing program on her iPad, Bell Media CTV reporter Mi-Jung Lee said, "*these kind of opportunities could be lost if a motion from the BCCPAC gets put in place.*" This a false and misleading statement because the child's device and art program do not require an internet connection in order to function. In fact, what would be lost is the dangerous radiation exposure.

CTV misrepresented the wordings and intent of the BCCPAC resolutions¹⁷ and did not mention any of the rationales behind those resolutions to its viewers, e.g. RF-EMF including WiFi radiation having been classified by the World Health Organization as a 2B Possible Carcinogen to Humans; Health Canada, European parliaments and physicians' associations in different countries having called for reduction in exposure for children¹⁸; WiFi exposure in school is unavoidable so there is a need to accommodate EHS²³ students, a need to apply the Precautionary Principle as upheld by UNESCO¹⁹, and the importance of supporting informed parental choice etc.

BCCPAC's resolution #17 called for one school at each level in each district to be wireless-free. Resolution #18 called for school boards to "cease to install WiFi [microwave transmitters] and other wireless networks **in schools where other networking technology is feasible.**" Mi-Jung Lee altered the resolution wording, left out the conditional portion of "**in schools where other networking technology is feasible**" and said "*these kind of opportunities could be lost if a motion by the BC Confederation of Parents Advisory Councils gets put in place.*" There is nothing in the resolutions that bans computers, bans internet-connection or suggests a student cannot use a computer art program on her iPad. This is a scare mongering tactic typical of corporate PR departments attempting to influence the public, not an example of unbiased investigative reporting.

The program failed to mention that WiFi is only a networking option, that internet access can be achieved with wired computer devices which are superior in many ways. CTV insinuated that educational benefits would be lost without WiFi connection. This is factually wrong. BC ERAC (Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium), an organization representing IT Departments of BC school districts, stated the followings in their white paper on wireless networking: "wireless technologies are not able to provide the type of data speed experienced with wired connections, typically running at 100Mbps or faster. Thus wireless is still not an obvious replacement for a wired environment... Many of the risks associated with wireless... Reliability, slow speed of connections, interference from other devices, cost, security, manageability, compatibility, scalability and consistency of technology implementation."²⁰

In response to numerous complaints about his inaccurate report on WiFi, Jon Woodward wrote in a form letter that CTV "*made no conclusions about whether the WiFi emissions themselves were safe.*" How can he say that when his infomercial, disguised as investigation, was packed with one-sided opinions from industry proponents that advertise the *safety* of WiFi? Below are some astonishing quotes from the report. "*The results*" that they referred to was the flawed measurements from their flawed testing:

"we found that children in schools with WiFi installed have about the same exposure to electromagnetic emissions produced by the devices as schools without WiFi."

"the levels inside schools were about 10 times lower than a student would feel outside in the playground or walking to school."

"WiFi is not really an issue," said Karl Reardon."

"There's no significant difference between WiFi on or off. It's lower than the environment we're exposed to every day when we're outdoors."

"surprisingly, schools without WiFi ended up in a higher range..."

"Within a few centimetres of the fluorescent light, the readings were much higher; Reardon said."

"Schools in B.C. have been under pressure from parent groups to stop installing wireless networks in schools on health grounds, despite teachers' objections that wireless internet is a tremendous learning tool."

"And all of our measurements were tens of thousands of times below the Health Canada standard, leaving the parents wishing they've done their homework"

"WiFi is not this ominous, dangerous thing... It's a great tool for us to use.' That's what these kids want the grown-ups to stop worrying about."

"CTV investigation revealing that radiation levels in classrooms equipped with WiFi aren't any higher than in those without."

"these kind of opportunities could be lost if a motion from the BCCPAC gets put in place."

"emissions from wireless devices carry millions of times less energy than cancer-causing rays like UV from the sun."

"As far as any physical effects, they're too weak to have almost any physical effect..."

"The signals coming off the WiFi units are so low that they almost don't register on most equipment,' Reardon said. 'It's so far below any of the standards; it's literally thousand of times below the Health Canada limits. It's comparable and lower than the environment we're exposed to every day when we're outdoors,' he said."

Jon Woodward concluded his news segment with the following remarks:

*"The experts say that the **only** effect that WiFi signal could have on your body is that they transmit heat, kind of like a microwave. But WiFi levels in schools are so low that it would take thousands more times of exposures than what you are seeing now of those signals to notice any change in temperature. So the experts say, '**Don't worry about it!**'"*

Jon's reliance on his industry experts is similar to interviewing tobacco company affiliates about whether cigarette-smoking is safe³². Anyone who has made an effort researching the EMF issue knows that there is no consensus in the scientific community about whether heat transmission is the only effect (thermal effect), because thousands of studies have shown non-thermal biological effects resulting from low-level microwave radiation. Even Swisscom, a major manufacturer of WiFi equipment, admitted to such biological effects in their patent document³². Scientists are also extremely concerned about cumulative exposure, especially for children. Countries such as Switzerland, Russia, China, Italy and more have set their national EMF exposure limits based on precaution against non-thermal effects.²¹ In the document "SafeSchools 2012"²⁶, medical associations, medical doctors and leading international scientists testify that such non-thermal biological effects are well-documented and the thermal-only position is inadequate for the protection of human health. In fact, Women's

College Hospital in Toronto is currently treating patients suffering from the effects of radiation at non-thermal levels from wireless internet routers and other wireless devices.²⁹

All the above were omitted in Jon Woodward's report as he ignored journalistic balance by including only a pro-WiFi opinion. No expert in the biological effects of radiation was interviewed. None of the proponents of the BCCPAC resolution was interviewed. Instead, children were presented as authorities to make scientific points such as "*When you have technology in your hands, you always learn better.*" This is the opinion of a child but it is not factual. Rather, the opposite is true according to studies in Sweden and the U.S. as reported in the New York Times³⁰ and in the book "The Dumbest Generation"³¹, which show that the more technology a child has in the classroom, the slower that child advances. However, such serious examination of the impact of excessive technology in the school setting was overlooked and, instead, a child was presented as the expert claiming the opposite of a decade of research.

In Woodward's report he stated: "*Students at John Oliver [school] are big fans of the program.*" BCCPAC did not discuss whether WiFi is popular with kids, but whether scientists warn it causes biological changes in the human body, and whether parents should have a choice in responding to such warnings. Some students are also fans of cigarettes which were once allowed in schools, and the tobacco industry practiced the same tactics as Bell Media is utilizing in this report in order to delay greater control of the harmful substance.

Instead of engaging engineers who make their money from the wireless industry or citing Grade 9 students, CTV should have interviewed scientists who have studied the low-level biological effects of non-ionizing microwave radiation on human cells, such as Dr. Martin Blank, Dr. Leif Salford, Dr. Henry Lai, Dr. Andrew Goldworthy, Dr. Magda Havas, and Dr. Olle Johansson among others.

Bell Canada is the country's largest WiFi network provider²⁴. Having been contracted for all MacDonal'd's and Starbucks outlets across Canada, Bell recently announced the addition of 2,000 Tim Hortons to its WiFi portfolio²⁵. Industry funding's influence on EMF science is a well-known problem²⁷, but using a corporation's news media for propaganda is simply unacceptable. CTV's *investigative report* offered free prime time advertising opportunity for Bell and its wireless industry counterparts, to a captive audience who were expecting impartial news and journalism. This report was factually devoid, deceptive, biased and irresponsible. BCCPAC has studied WiFi for three years but Jon Woodward said on air that his phony testing left "*parents wishing they've done their homework*". That is unprofessional and disrespectful to all the parents and scientists who have done enormous work on research.

We strongly protest against Bell Media CTV's breach of the Canadian Broadcast Standards Council's Code of Ethics for accuracy and equity in news reporting. We demand that CTV provides an immediate correction on the air and on record.

If you have any question regarding this complaint, please do not hesitate to contact the undersigned at safeinschool@gmail.com.

Yours sincerely,

Michelle Khong - SafeinSchool.Org Parents Group. BCCPAC WiFi Safety Subcommittee Member.

Tammy Jeske - Nurse. BCCPAC WiFi Safety Subcommittee Member.

Peter Milne - I.T. Consultant. BCCPAC WiFi Safety Subcommittee Member.

Liz Walker - Environmental Specialist. BCCPAC WiFi Safety Subcommittee Member.

Carl Katz - I.T. Consultant. Parent, White Rock, BC.

- 1 http://www.wballiance.com/images/news/pdf/WBA_New_Members_Release-Seoul_CLEANED.pdf
- 2 <http://bc.ctvnews.ca/WiFi-danger-in-schools-overblown-ctv-investigation-1.854418#axzz1yvjhDuQa>
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- 3 <http://www.safeinschool.org/2012/05/bccpac-voted-yes-to-WiFi-resolutions.html>
<http://bccpac.bc.ca/>
- 28 <http://www.cbcs.ca/english/codes/cabethics.php#Clause5>
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- 16 <http://www.safeinschool.org/2012/06/ehs-electrohypersensitivity-es.html>
- 17 See Pg.2 <http://goo.gl/evtWA>, <http://www.bccpac.bc.ca/>
- 18 <http://wifiinschools.org.uk/resources/safeschools2012.pdf>
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