



Social Movement Media – CUTV

Gretchen King

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OUT OF THE MOUTHS OF “CASSEROLES” *textes qui bougent au rythme du carré rouge*

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Social Movement Media – CUTV

Gretchen King, McGill University, Communication Studies; CUTV

Beyond Twitter and Facebook, the mix of mediums wielded by strikers, protestors, and their allies on the streets of Montreal over the last four months includes CUTV. The Concordia-based community television station offers live, high definition television streaming from demonstrations and direct actions, on a daily basis and often several times a day. CUTV has been part of the street mobilizations in Montreal since mid-March and has broadcast from other demonstrations in Victoriaville, Sherbrooke, and most recently, from a picket line in front of the Nicolet police academy.

Since the nightly marches began in late April, CUTV has been broadcasting live nearly every evening, often at the front lines of the marches which snake through the streets for hours each night. Nearly half-a-million unique IP addresses have visited CUTV's websites and during the live feeds, the station provides thousands of viewers live footage from within demonstrations and protests. CUTV is the first community television station in Canada using the LiveU video broadcasting system. The fifty-pound kit, consisting of several mini-servers, is essentially a backpack that connects from nearly anywhere to the 3G cellular phone network. This portability means CUTV can offer unfiltered coverage from demonstrations, while requiring only a handful of staff and volunteers on the ground. The programming also reflects the simplicity of the technology: live content often features interviews and analysis shot within demonstrations and during direct actions. Embedded CUTV journalists document the diversity of reasons that demonstrators have to take to the streets nearly everyday since February.

CUTV is an effective tool for amplifying the message of demonstrators. CUTV journalists offer points of view on the mobilization – rich in information and analysis – from a diversity of perspectives in both French and English. The high quality video stream also aids in holding the police accountable for their actions against the demonstrations. Often CUTV's footage has contradicted the facts as reported by police and mainstream media reports. Recently CUTV's team caught police in the act of covering their identification numbers with tape.

The police have certainly taken notice of CUTV's live broadcast crews. To date, they have destroyed thousands of dollars of CUTV equipment including a P2 camera, two camera rigs, two micro transmitters and receivers, one camera lens, and two CUTV flags. Not only has the equipment taken a beating, but CUTV volunteers and staff have endured multiple attacks by police wielding pepper spray, CS (tear) gas, and

batons. The police have repeatedly separated CUTV from demonstrations and blocked the camera person from filming the scene. Two CUTV staff members have been arrested while live broadcasting, and other staff and volunteers have suffered multiple beatings on the job – resulting in internal bruising, several fractured ribs, and a mild concussion. CUTV has also twice been asked to “Turn-off the camera!” in order to avoid police persecution. While much of the abuse of CUTV is on camera and broadcast live, most of the brutality inflicted on students is much more severe and can go undocumented.

The cost of implementing the LiveU system is well beyond the means of most popular uprisings. To ensure this social movement media model is replicated, open source activists must develop similar, more affordable systems. Technology in the hands of social movements is crucial for cultivating resistance. Right now, student strikers and their allies have CUTV as a tool to amplify their movement. This is not the only medium, but certainly an effective one. Tune in nightly at www.cutvmontreal.ca and see you in the streets.