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Assembly
of Ontario



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**Standing Committee on
the Legislative Assembly**

**Comité permanent de
l'Assemblée législative**

1st Session
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Wednesday 14 November 2018

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Mercredi 14 novembre 2018

Chair: Jane McKenna
Clerk: Valerie Quioc Lim

Présidente : Jane McKenna
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ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE DE L'ONTARIO

STANDING COMMITTEE ON
THE LEGISLATIVE ASSEMBLYCOMITÉ PERMANENT DE
L'ASSEMBLÉE LÉGISLATIVE

Wednesday 14 November 2018

Mercredi 14 novembre 2018

The committee met at 1300 in committee room 1.

TELEVISION BROADCAST SYSTEM

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): Good afternoon. The Standing Committee on the Legislative Assembly will now come to order.

We have with us today Todd Decker, Clerk of the Legislative Assembly, and Michael Donofrio, director of the broadcast and recording service, to provide us with information on the assembly's television broadcast system.

The committee is going to suspend, and we will resume after the tour—

Interjection.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): We're going to have a bit of a presentation here before we do the tour.

Okay. Go ahead.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): Thank you, Madam Chair.

Good afternoon, committee. It's a privilege to be with you in your meeting this afternoon. This is the first time that I've had the opportunity, since being appointed Clerk just a little over two years ago, to meet with the committee. So it's a privilege to be here—

Applause.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): Thank you.

Mr. Sam Oosterhoff: A standing ovation.

Mr. Robert Bailey: No, no standing ovation.

Laughter.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): Preparing for this meeting did give me a little reason to contemplate a bit. When I joined the Legislative Assembly as a Committee Clerk 35 years ago, we didn't have a television broadcast system in place at the time. If a member wanted or if anybody wanted to listen to the debates or hear what was being said in the House, you literally had to physically go to the House in one of the galleries and listen and watch.

Certainly, a lot has changed in the intervening years. We have an Internet now that we didn't have, of course, and we stream some of our proceedings live on our website. Of course, high-definition television has come through, and that has changed a little bit of the presentation of Ont.Parl for viewers to see.

I have with me Mike Donofrio. Mike is the director of the broadcast and recording service. He's one of the very

first people I was able to hire when I did become Clerk. He has been on the job for just a little under two years.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Two years in January.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): Two years in January—hit the ground running, has lots of ideas for the legislative broadcasting system and has already implemented a few changes.

Mike has a presentation to run through with you. One of the things you wanted to know is: What is the current status and the current capabilities of the legislative broadcasting system? Mike has prepared the initial part of this presentation to lead you through how the system works right now and what it's capable of.

With the committee's indulgence, I'll ask Mike to present his presentation.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Thank you, Todd.

My plan was, as Todd said, to do the first part of the presentation on just what our current capabilities are, then I thought we could do the tour so you can see what those current capabilities are. Possibly that would also trigger any questions you might have. Then, when we came back, I was going to first start with some of the questions you already had on paper—go through those—and then, after that, just leave it wide open for any questions you might have, if that works for everybody. Okay.

Just some background information: the Ontario Parliament Network started broadcasting Ontario provincial proceedings in 1986. Our signal is distributed via satellite, cable and streamed on our website. The audio signals from the House, committee rooms and travelling committees are provided to Hansard reporting service and are used to produce the official Hansard publication.

Our current capabilities on House proceedings: The House is broadcast live on the Ontario Parliament Network and streamed live on our website every day, from start to finish. Simultaneous interpretation in both English and French is provided. If you go on our regular television channel and you turn to the SAP channel, you can hear the French translation. Real-time closed captioning for the hearing impaired is also provided.

Committee proceedings: The Amethyst Room is the only committee room equipped for broadcast. Committee rooms 1 and 2 are fully equipped for audio. As you can see, we have an audio operator, Adam, back there right now. They're also appointed with a single camera. You can see it back there. This is shown on the Legislative Assembly's internal TV network; anyone within the precinct can watch it on their TV to see what's happening.

Rooms 228 and 230 can also be equipped for audio if needed. Full set ups can be there so that there can be committees done in there, for audio.

The Amethyst Room committees are broadcast live when the House is not sitting. So if the House isn't sitting and we do have something happening in the Amethyst Room, that will go on the live broadcast. When the House is sitting, the Amethyst Room committees are streamed live on our website. They're then rebroadcast later that evening, and then on Fridays.

Simultaneous interpretation is automatically provided in the Amethyst Room. Committees are closed-captioned when they are on Fridays. When we air them on Fridays, we air them back-to-back-to-back. The closed-captioner dials in there, and that's when they are captioned to go live on television.

Video conferencing and teleconferencing are available. As a matter of fact, we also have the ability to do Skype in the Amethyst Room. Simultaneous interpretation is available in committee rooms 1 and 2 when required.

Travelling committees: We provide audio operation on all committees travelling across Ontario for public hearings. Teleconferencing is available, simultaneous interpretation is provided and a single camera on a wide shot is streamed on our website and internal TV channels when requested by the committee Chair.

Our media studio: The media studio is operated by the broadcast and recording service on behalf of the press gallery. It provides a location for press conferences which can be booked by MPPs, ministries and officers of the Legislature. The media studio is equipped with full studio lighting and three cameras. The media studio feed is sent directly to each caucus, to members of the press gallery and to the Legislative Assembly's internal television network.

Internal signal distribution: BRS provides an internal television network which distributes seven television channels throughout the assembly and adjoining government buildings. They are the House feed; the Amethyst Room feed; committee rooms 1 and 2, which are the single cameras and audio; the media studio; our encore and info channel, which I'll explain a little bit more as we go; and CPAC.

The broadcast and recording service provides each caucus and members of the press gallery with a video and audio feed of the House proceedings. BRS also provides copies of footage, or "dubs," on request, for no fee, via a Google Drive download. Anyone can request a dub. Let us know what it is, we'll cut it together, we'll put it on Google Drive and we'll send a download link for the person to download it.

Special legislative events: At the request of the Speaker's office, the broadcast and recording service will document special events and ceremonies that occur at Queen's Park; for example, the Order of Ontario. Every year we shoot the Order of Ontario, the firefighter and police bravery awards, and Lights Across Canada, which should happen fairly soon, as well as the Christmas choir series. BRS will also provide the press with a television pool feed

for special events that occur at Queen's Park; for example, royal visits, executive council swearing-in ceremonies, the Lieutenant Governor's arrivals by landau, and inspection of the royal guard.

The encore and information channel: The channel features programming from local broadcasters. It also provides the internal viewer with information on the daily business of the House and committees. We cut together a little daily news digest. We record six or seven of the local newscasts in the area, and anything that has to do with Ontario politics we will cut together, and we will run that every day, twice a day, so that any of the members can see what was in the news. We will also run Focus Ontario, as well as TVO's The Agenda.

Other audio services that we provide: At the request of the Speaker's office, the broadcast and recording service provides the audio set-up for most non-partisan Legislative Assembly events; for example, flag-raising ceremonies out front, beer tasting and wine tasting, as well as ceremonies that happen on the grand staircase.

Now, if you want, we can do the tour, and then when we come back I can go through some of the questions that you have.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): We'll suspend, and we'll resume after the tour.

The committee recessed from 1309 to 1402.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): We're just going to resume with your presentation.

Thank you so much for the tour. It was fabulous.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): I'll let Mike continue in just a second.

I'm just going to tell you about one interesting feature of the legal status of our broadcast system. Under Canadian law, to be able to broadcast, you need to have a licence with the CRTC, the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. Many, many years ago when Canadian Parliaments and Legislatures started introducing the televising of parliamentary proceedings, the CRTC passed what's called an exemption order. It means that we don't actually have to have a licence to broadcast; we have an exemption from a licence. But it means that we also have to observe certain conditions that are in that exemption. One is that we can't do any sort of commercial broadcasting. We can't sell advertisements, for instance, or do anything that's a revenue stream. The main condition is that what's broadcast is parliamentary proceedings, legislative proceedings, legislative process—that sort of thing. Even things like public service announcements are beyond the exemption. It really is to be used purely for broadcasting proceedings of the Legislative Assembly. So that's what lets us do it without a licence from the CRTC.

Mr. Robert Bailey: So, Todd, we're protected through the Legislature's privilege, mentioning people's names in debate—

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): I'll just recognize MPP Bailey.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Thank you for turning that sound on. Just call me Bobby.

Anyway, I was just explaining that we're covered through parliamentary privilege in there, as well.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): The privilege of freedom of speech entitles members to be immune from any sort of prosecution or whatever for things that you say in a proceeding in Parliament. For instance, in this committee meeting and proceedings in the Legislative Assembly, members have unlimited freedom of speech, pretty much, and it's protected under parliamentary privilege.

Mr. Robert Bailey: We have to be careful with that, too, don't we?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): With that ability comes—

Mr. Robert Bailey: Responsibility.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): Exactly, yes.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): We'll continue on with your presentation.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: The next couple of slides are just answering some of the questions that everybody outlined here.

The first one was, are there any significant issues that tend to arise? There are currently no significant issues that tend to arise regarding our service. In order to avoid any significant issues in the future, we should keep the following in mind.

We have aging infrastructure. As I explained to everyone upstairs, some of our infrastructure is getting older. We're constantly trying to keep an eye out and trying to determine what needs to be replaced and when. Obviously, if we were trying to replace everything in one shot, the cost would be enormous. So within our budget, every year, we try to see what we think is going to need to be replaced or updated, and we try to do that. We always have to keep that in mind in order not to let things get too far out of hand where we come in one day and, oops, everything is gone.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Does that go to the Board of Internal Economy or the Speaker or—

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): Just acknowledging MPP Bailey.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Sorry, sorry.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): So as Mike was saying, they try to do as much as they can through their existing budget. If it ever arose that a large investment was required to replace a large amount of equipment and it wasn't within the budget, a submission would be made to the Board of Internal Economy for approval.

Mr. Robert Bailey: Okay. Thank you, Chair.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): Yes, I recognize MPP Coteau.

Mr. Michael Coteau: That's how you do it, Bob.

What is the budget for your infrastructure cost renewal per year?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: There's not actually something that's specifically for replacing equipment—

Mr. Michael Coteau: It's just operational.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Yes, we have an operational budget, and then, between myself, the operations manager, Teresa, and our technical manager, John, we try and— basically, if there's anything we're concerned about, we try and replace it or update to the next level. For example, we just recently changed the graphical look, and we're using some of it here and now. The equipment we were using to play out the graphics, when the House isn't sitting, on the main television station was very old SD equipment that we were upconverting to HD. We knew we were going to have to replace that. As we were going to change the graphics, we used that opportunity to then buy that piece of equipment and update it while we were updating the graphics.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Right. Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): Any further questions before we move on? Okay, continue.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: The other big thing is the chamber lighting. As I showed most of you, we bounce the lighting up off of the ceiling. As Todd and I were explaining, the goal or the hope is that eventually we can reveal all the murals on the ceiling. That will affect the lighting, because right now we're using the white in the ceiling to help bounce that light. Even the murals that have been revealed now—because that all used to be white—that has affected our lighting. The good part about it is, as that happened, newer equipment came on and the newer cameras are more light-sensitive, so we were still able to go because the new light-sensitive cameras—the hit that we took in the amount of light, those light-sensitive cameras made up for that.

If we reveal the entire ceiling, that won't work. We will have to investigate another way of doing the lighting, and it will most likely have to be lighting that you will see, that comes a little bit more directly. Part of the decision-making will have to go hand in hand with the restoration: How much of the restoration do we want to do, and how will that then affect the lighting? The cost of that lighting will probably be pretty significant. That's just something to be keeping in mind when we go through that whole process of revealing the ceiling.

Accessibility: Currently, right now—

Interjection.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Sorry? There's a question?

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): MPP Harris, we have a question?

Mr. Mike Harris: Mike, I was just curious: Where did you come from before joining us here at the Legislature?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: I love to talk about my background. I can go deep into it, but—

Mr. Mike Harris: Quickly.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Quickly, I've been in broadcast television for over 30 years. I was with the Weather Network; I was the senior manager of operations for seven years before coming here. I've worked for CBC, CTV, CKVR television. I've worked for cable stations. I also worked for three years in Boston at an all-news network as well. So I've been in the business for a while.

Mr. Michael Coteau: Did you say the Weather Network?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: The Weather Network, yes.

Mr. Michael Coteau: That's private life, but I'm sure you never know what's—

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): I just want to recognize MPP Coteau.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I should listen to my own advice, eh, Bob?

Mr. Robert Bailey: That's not how you do it, Michael.

Mr. Michael Coteau: I'm done; I'm done.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): Next I'd like to recognize MPP Berns-McGown.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: What's the timeline for revealing the ceiling?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Sorry?

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: What's the timeline for revealing the ceiling?

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): We don't have one now. There isn't an approved, pre-set plan. All we're doing is that when there's another reason to install scaffolding inside the chamber for any other sort of project, we take advantage of that and try to position the scaffolding so that we can expose more of the ceiling. So it's just on an ad hoc basis now.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Okay.

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Mr. Michael Donofrio: I do know, too, when I first started here they were in the midst of a whole look into the lighting and coming up with different scenarios and some costing and stuff. When we were talking about that lighting, it started primarily with wanting to see what it would be like to convert to LED lights rather than the old lights that we have. The current lights that we have will actually—we probably won't be able to get parts in another four or five years for them, so we are going to have to look into updating.

As part of that, we were working with precinct properties, who was talking to us about the ceiling and that most likely they were going to present both things as a team, to basically say, "If we do this to the ceiling, this is going to affect this, and that will affect the cost of this," and to come up with a timeline of, "Is there an interim solution for the lights where you do the lights and still bounce for five to 10 years—if it's going to take longer and then change them—or are we going to do that sooner and do it all at once?" kind of a thing.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Are the LED lights cheaper?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: The LED lights are cheaper to operate. They don't use anywhere near the amount of energy. The ballast—those big grey boxes that you saw in the attic—would be much smaller. Technically they're supposed to last longer so we shouldn't have to change the bulbs as frequently as we would have to change them now.

The cost savings wouldn't necessarily be in the purchasing of the fixtures but in the running of the fixtures. They would not use anywhere near the energy that we're using currently right now—and the heat. The heat right

now of the lights we currently have—they give off a lot of heat. That's all going up in that ceiling that we want to restore, as well. Not only that; if those lights do go off, there is an actual warm-up time. So if we blow a fuse and the lights go down, we'll have to recess the House for a period while the lights warm back up. They just don't come back on like that; they have to warm back up. So we turn them on early in the morning before any of you get in the chamber to make sure they're up and going. They're not instant.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: They're fussy.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Yes, it's an older technology.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Thank you.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: One of the other issues that may occur has to deal with accessibility. Currently, right now, it's not mandated to have closed captioning on the website. Right now when the Amethyst Room goes live and it goes live on the website, it isn't captioned yet because we're captioning the House. It then gets captioned later for TV and then any replays, but it will be soon, I think—in 2020?—

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): Yes, 2020.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: —where we will need captioning on anything that we put on the website. That will affect costing and anything else that we may want to do in the future. If we want to do, say, more committee rooms televised or something like that, that is something that we'll have to keep in mind in terms of cost.

The ability to stream to other platforms, and I know this is one of the questions: The Legislative Assembly already has plans to do a test-case streaming on YouTube, so our website has already been looking into it. The only thing we're waiting on right now is that we've ordered some extra streaming equipment. As soon as that streaming equipment comes in, we're going to do a test-case scenario with YouTube live just to make sure that all the things that we need—closed captioning; the two audio streams, English and French; the service we get back, and all that stuff—works well. We've already been in plans to look into that, and we will do a test-case scenario, probably pretty soon—within a few months.

People's viewing habits are changing. Many people are cancelling cable in favour of streaming boxes like Apple TV, Google Chromecast and Roku. We may want to consider providing an Android TV and Apple TV app. Some of the advantages to this are: If we are not currently available in your area, you can have access to our content. We can be viewed anywhere in the world. So if for some reason you don't have cable in your area or the cable company is not taking us or you just don't have access, you would have access. Pretty much throughout the province now, Internet is a good speed. There are very few, if any, areas now that don't have good-speed Internet within the province.

People who do not have cable or satellite would have access to our content: Again, lots of younger people just aren't getting cable anymore. They're watching Netflix and they maybe, like I said, get an Apple TV box or some

kind of Android TV box and they're getting their content that way. This way, they would have access to our content. They'd be able to download an app, watch our House feed and watch our Amethyst Room feed.

We can make all internal channels available to your constituency offices or ministry offices: Currently, in your constituency, if you have cable you can watch the House, but you can't watch any of our internal channels. We would be able to put all of our internal channels within an app. If we didn't want the public to have access to all of those—if we only wanted them to have access to what they have access to now; say, the House and the Amethyst Room—out of the box, you download it, and that's what you get. You put in a password that we could give to ministers and to their staff, and all of a sudden now, you can watch the media studio, you can watch committee room 1, committee room 2, you can watch the information encore channel in your constituency offices and in your ministry offices. If there are ministry offices that are not within this precinct and they're somewhere away, you can watch that on your TV set. Really, you can get a Roku box for, I think, \$90 or something like that.

The differences with other Legislatures: I know that was another question. There are really no major differences in the way each province broadcasts legislative proceedings. For example, we all do the same things where we're only showing a member who has been recognized by the Speaker; there are no differences in that. We basically cover the proceedings the same way. The main differences are in how much is covered, what is covered, and the equipment used to cover the proceedings. For an example, we have the ability to broadcast one committee room. Quebec has four televised committee rooms and they are adding two more. Alberta is about to add a third televised committee room. And when I say "a third televised committee room," it's a little bit misleading because they actually use their House as one committee room as well. They use their House to broadcast committee rooms, they also have a committee room that they broadcast in, and now they're going to be adding a third one. There are some that don't stream or broadcast any committee rooms.

We broadcast in both official languages. The only other province I believe to do this is New Brunswick. Even Quebec only broadcasts in French. That creates some unique challenges because the way television is structured is that you can have one SAP channel, which you can put the French on. So you go to SAP and you do French, but if you wanted to add anything else, television doesn't allow you to do that too well right now.

Most jurisdictions are not streaming travel committees. However, Alberta does stream them using four cameras.

BC streams only the audio, and on TV they put up pictures of the members who are talking when they're talking, so you're really hearing the audio and then you're seeing a picture. We are one of the leaders in that, but we are showing basically one wide-shot camera.

The Northwest Territories and Nunavut share a television channel, so their Houses can't sit at the same time.

They have to coordinate with each other when they're going to sit in order to broadcast to the public.

Alberta actually just started their own channel after years of paying CTV to broadcast question period. CTV was broadcasting it and they were paying them to do this. Just recently they have now started their own channel and are broadcasting.

We are the only jurisdiction, as I mentioned, in the House that tries to preserve the history of our chamber by masking the fact that it's also a television studio. Like I explained, we hide our lighting so you can't see it, and we hide our cameras within the alcoves.

In contrast, here is Quebec's chamber. I'm going to get up for a second. You can see their cameras, plain as day, hanging down from the walls. Their lighting is up in there. They actually do a better job than most of the chambers in hiding their lighting. It's not too bad, but it is plain to see.

The House of Commons: This one is a little harder to see because they're smaller cameras, but there's a camera there and a camera there, and they're all around the perimeter. It's easy to see. When you are on a camera, sometimes you can see cameras moving in the background. Their lighting is in your eyes. It's right in your face. It's sitting right there, coming right down on you.

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Some of this year's accomplishments: We've upgraded our signal distribution from an old analog to a digital, making our HD signal now available to all cable companies. Until just a few months ago, our HD signal was only available to Bell Fibe. Bell Fibe had installed some equipment here and was taking our HD signal.

Our signal goes to Shaw right now. Shaw sends it up on the satellite, and that's how the broadcasters get it. They're only taking our SD signal. We've been talking to them about taking our HD signal. They don't have the bandwidth right now, and they were saying that was going to be a couple of years away, so we were looking for alternate ways of doing this.

What we have done is, we have established a fibre connection from here to the biggest data centre in Canada, where we're now sending our digital HD signal. It's actually a very, very affordable way of doing it—incredibly affordable, actually. Shaw and Rogers are now both taking the signal from this location.

We were sending our analog signal to Bell TOC and paying to do that. Then from Bell TOC, it was being sent to Shaw—that was another cost—and then Shaw is charging us to send it up on satellite. By us now sending the signal to 151 Front Street, we can get rid of that whole TOC thing, save some money, and we're now sending a much better-quality signal out.

Rogers has now agreed to carry our HD signal on their new Ignite TV platform starting in December. They're the biggest cable company in Ontario, and they will be taking us in HD. That will then make Bell Fibe and Rogers Ignite have HD, and we're currently negotiating with other cable companies to make the switch-over to this signal and take us in HD, as well.

We launched the new graphic look and upgraded the equipment, as I mentioned, to play full-frame graphics to HD.

We're currently building and installing a media asset management system. Currently, right now—and I think I may explain this a little bit later, but I'll get into it—all of our archives are sitting with the Archives of Ontario. All of our old tapes, dating back to 1986, are sitting with the Archives of Ontario off-site somewhere. We don't have access to those. Any member of the public or anybody who wants to get access has to go to them, has to request it, and they have to dig out a tape. Those tapes are aging. If they don't get digitized soon, we will lose all the content that is on them and lose significant historical records.

Last year, we went to the Board of Internal Economy and put together a proposal for this media asset management system which will allow us to bring all of that content back in-house, digitize it, and we'll be able to search it. Not only that; everything that we're currently doing will automatically go into this. It will all be searchable with metadata.

The plan is to eventually also have members in their offices have direct access to that. As it's coming in and as the House is going, as soon as it has been said, a member or someone from their own office could actually make a dub themselves and send it to themselves, making it much more accessible much quicker. We're really looking forward to this system. We're in the midst of actually getting it installed now.

One of the things that we would also like: The Hansard document should be attached to it, so that if you're reading through the Hansard document and you go, "Oh, I like this," you should be able to just click on it and it should take you to that part of the video as well. We're excited about this system.

We just recently produced a documentary on the 100-year anniversary of women's right to vote in Ontario. This documentary will debut when the House recesses in December.

Some of next year's projects: The training and the roll-out of the new media asset management system: We're hoping that it will all be done and ready to go at some time in March or April of next year.

Start ingesting the almost 15,000 tapes that are currently stored at the Archives of Ontario: By the way, the Archives of Ontario, a year or two ago, started charging us for this as well, which also helped precipitate us to do this, because up until then, as a House—correct me if I'm wrong—we had mandated that we send our stuff to the Archives of Ontario. They have now had to move it to another building which I think they pay rent on. They've now passed that cost on to us. It's a significant amount of money that we could save by doing this.

Implementation of cellular bonding technology that will provide us with consistent and reliable streaming for our travelling committees and transmission backup of our television signal: Currently, right now, our television signal doesn't really have a backup; it never did. So if

anything happens to that line, if it gets severed in any way, we go off the air everywhere in the province.

As Todd had mentioned before, for our COOP plan, if anything were to happen to the chamber or if anything were to happen to the building and we had to move off-site, our current plan is to get the audio going first, and then we would probably have to rent a very expensive satellite truck with satellite time to broadcast the House. It would cost a fair bit of money.

The plan here is to implement cellular bonding technology, which I've worked with before at previous places, and utilize it in two ways: We bring it to the travelling committees, and it gives a much more reliable streaming signal out. Currently, right now, we're relying on whatever Internet we get at whatever hotel we're at. If they've got a really good Internet service, we're usually pretty good. If they've got a questionable service, the quality might not be as good. The last time they had a power outage—the power quickly went out—it knocked out their Internet. Their lights and everything came back quickly, but their Internet didn't, and we weren't able to broadcast.

This little box allows us to use their Internet connection as well as different cell companies—a combination of Rogers, Telus and Bell all working together—to send that signal out, making it much more reliable.

By the same token, we can put a receiver down at the data centre, where we're sending our signal, and if anything were to happen to our main signal, we can use this technology to reroute and send directly to the data centre and not put us off-air.

Because these things are roaming boxes, we can keep them off-site—maybe across the street at the Whitney Block. If anything were ever to happen here and we needed to do a COOP set-up, we could be up and sending live pretty much instantly. We wouldn't have to incur any kind of satellite costs and we wouldn't have to try and find a satellite distributor to come with a truck or anything like that.

Possible future enhancements: a sixth camera in the chamber above the Speaker. Currently, right now, there's no camera above the Speaker, so for special events—when there's a throne speech or something like that, and we want to get the walking-in or the people who are sitting on the floor, we currently have to bring in a camera, set it up and do all of that stuff for those special events. Now, with choirs coming in that are up in the Speaker's gallery, it would be good to have a sixth camera in there, if possible.

As I mentioned before, an Apple TV and Android TV app: I think that would broaden our reach in a lot of ways.

Additional committee rooms equipped for TV: the possibility of equipping this room and the next room to also be able to put them on our website whenever anything is happening.

An additional camera or two for the travelling committees: As I mentioned before, right now, we're on one wide shot the entire time. We're sending that out to the website. It's fine; it does a good job. But adding one or two more cameras would really make that travelling committee look great.

Televise travelling committee meetings: Actually, we could televise travelling committee meetings right now at no extra cost, even just using the one camera and explaining to people that it's a webcast. What I had in mind was that you would put it in some kind of a graphic that would look like this, where you basically say, "This is live from Kingston. Here's the date. It's a Web stream." So if you're tuning in, you understand that it's only one camera, and if the quality isn't as great as you're used to on TV, you know that it's a Web stream. We could put information around there, explaining what the committee is and that kind of stuff. As I mentioned, that could be done at no real additional cost.

That's my presentation.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): MPP Berns-McGown.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Thank you. How much would the app cost?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: I actually haven't looked into the cost of the app yet because we weren't necessarily ready for that. Part of what I was looking at doing is trying to decrease some of our current transmission costs in the hope of making up the cost that way. To be honest with you, other than knowing exactly how we might want it to work, I haven't really looked into what the cost would be.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Fair enough.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: To me, I don't think it would be an outrageous cost. Once it's built, you might want to have whoever built it update it yearly—one update a year—just to make sure it's up to date. We currently have a deal with ISI Global, who is the one that provides our

streaming and our bandwidth, for unlimited bandwidth, so the extra bandwidth wouldn't cost us any money at all.

Ms. Rima Berns-McGown: Thank you.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): MPP Hassan.

Mr. Faisal Hassan: Thank you. Just about the captures: I noticed some of my colleagues, when they were speaking, there were people in front of them and you could only see their eyes. Is there a way we could improve that?

Mr. Michael Donofrio: That's actually much more unique to this Parliament now because there's an extra row of seats. That extra row of seats in the back has now made the people at the back much closer to those cameras, so that is affecting those shots a little bit. When there wasn't that row at the back, we rarely had that issue. We are looking at some ways of trying to improve it, but it's one of those things where—especially if somebody else is standing up or walks in—it does affect the shot, yes.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): Any further questions?

Well, I'd like to thank you both so much, Clerk and Michael Donofrio, for coming into the meeting today. It was much appreciated and very educational.

The Clerk of the Assembly (Mr. Todd Decker): Thank you.

Mr. Michael Donofrio: Thank you, and if you ever have any questions or want anything or even if you want to see the control rooms in action sometime, just give me a call and we'll show you.

The Chair (Ms. Jane McKenna): Thank you.

If there's no further business, we'll adjourn.

The committee adjourned at 1432.

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