

MCTV Space Needs in the Future

The MCTV Board drafted our vision statement as a preamble to our Access Plan which is currently being revised and updated. We wanted to acknowledge the changing role of PEG(Public, Education, Government) Access Television in Vermont and the rest of the country. In contrast to commercial television, PEG Access Television in general, and MCTV in particular, is both a forum and an incubator for community-based public information and dialogue.

MCTV has shared the third floor space with the Friends for over 20 years. We currently use about 500 square feet in the large room for talk shows and editing and about 200 square feet adjacent to it for admin, programming, and computer and network equipment. The remainder of the space has been used for book sorting and storage by both the library and MCTV.

In other parts of the building our staff and equipment resources partner with the library. Children's media lab, video camps, taping speakers and programs in the meeting room, and digital signage in the hall are examples.

We see our role as facilitators more than videographers. We don't see the need for the large sound stage usually associated with a television studio, but a reduction in our current space would limit the quality and type of talk show programs we can offer. Our vision for the near future would be to help empower people to create digital media themselves rather than rely on us to do it for them. Social media is almost demanding that of people. We would embed the means to produce content in the community. To that end ,we would want to include sound and video equipment in meeting, videoconferencing, and presentation spaces, advocate for quiet HVAC systems in community meeting spaces, and provide digital editing software and training for library patrons. We were planning to fit out a small second floor lab as a sound booth and editing suite for library use. This has been on hold with the construction but we would hope to resume work on that .

It's hard to project too far in the future given the rate of change. Twenty years ago I asked a few other PEG directors if we would still be relevant in the future if everyone had a camcorder and could put video online. The best answer was that we would still be valuable as aggregators of community content, as well as providers of professional training. Since then I have had others in the PEG community comment to me that they feel MCTV is doing pioneering work in collaborating with a public library.

Dick Thodal
Executive Director