

Review: Discussion on The Sunday Edition about privacy in the digital age

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REVIEW

CBC Radio's The Sunday Edition presented a discussion December 19, 2010, on the challenges to privacy in the digital age. Guests included German, American and Canadian authorities on privacy, the Internet, and public policy.

The complainant, Eduard Hiebert, wrote that CBC failed to properly pursue a line of questioning that would have explored the differences between privacy and secrecy. He said host Michael Enright did not sufficiently challenge the guests on various matters of concern.

The executive producer of the program, Marjorie Nichol, wrote back that Hiebert had raised interesting points but that the conversation had simply ventured in a different direction. She said the issues remain important and that the program can be expected to pursue them.

Hiebert asked for a review.

CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices call for equitable treatment of viewpoints.

"We contribute to informed debate on issues that matter to Canadians by reflecting a diversity of opinion. Our content on all platforms presents a wide range of subject matter and views. On issues of controversy, we ensure that divergent views are reflected respectfully, taking into account their relevance to the debate and how widely held these views are. We also ensure that they are represented over a reasonable period of time," the policy states.

CONCLUSION

There was no violation of CBC Journalistic Standards and Practices.

The complaint reflects a listener's concerns about the path of the discussion, but in most such matters of audience frustration, there is nothing involving the Ombudsman's mandate to review.

The discussion involved differing views, was accurate, and was conducted in the context of other discussions on that program and across that platform. It is a day-to-day programming matter and the purview of CBC Radio Current Affairs.

While the one question the complainant wanted to be pursued wasn't discussed at length, that does not comprise the basis of a review of journalistic standards and practices. Panel discussions will take detours all the time, even when there are other intentions. The program's intention is to keep exploring these issues.

Kirk LaPointe
CBC Ombudsman