

BACKGROUNDER: CRTC's Reversal on Confidentiality of Streaming Service Financial Data

Over the past three years, the CRTC has consistently recognized the competitive harm that would result from publicly disclosing the confidential financial information of streaming services operating in Canada. The Commission's recent decision to require public disclosure of this information represents a stark departure from its established approach.

Five Previous CRTC Decisions Recognizing Confidentiality Concerns

1. **[August 2024 – Protecting Financial Data from Fund Recipients](#)**: In Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-121-1 at paragraphs 75-76, the CRTC acknowledged concerns about disclosing streaming services' gross Canadian broadcasting revenues to funds that receive contribution payments from these services. The Commission stated that "given the importance of confidentiality," it would require streaming services to reach agreements with recipient funds to protect their financial information before making payments. This led to an industry-wide agreement ensuring each service's specific financial information remains confidential.
2. **[March 2024 – Confidentiality of Broadcasting Fee Returns](#)**: In Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2024-65 at paragraph 203, the CRTC acknowledged that streaming services "expect the Commission to preserve the confidentiality of information submitted as part of their fee returns, to protect their financial situation." The Commission recognized it is "reasonable that parties seek this assurance, given that this information is fundamental to the preservation of their respective competitive positions."
3. **[September 2023 – Commitment to Confidentiality Process](#)**: In Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2023-331 at paragraph 69, the CRTC assured stakeholders that it follows established confidentiality processes and "will only require disclosure after receiving comments from the undertaking if it determines that the public interest in disclosure is not outweighed by any harm likely to be caused by disclosure."
4. **[February 2023 – Protecting Survey Data Through Aggregation](#)**: In Broadcasting Decision CRTC 2023-34 at paragraphs 23-24, the CRTC decided to publish data from its Annual Digital Media Survey only in aggregated form by industry segment, specifically to "preclude the disclosure of confidential survey microdata" and "mitigate the risk of harm to survey respondents" while still serving the public interest.
5. **[February 2022 – Recognizing Commercial Sensitivity](#)**: In Broadcasting Regulatory Policy CRTC 2022-47 at paragraph 143, the CRTC determined that individual streaming service financial data collected through surveys would not be disclosed, stating that such "DMBU-level data... is commercially sensitive, is consistently treated in a confidential manner by the parties, and could reasonably be expected to prejudice the competitive positions of the respondents if disclosed."