

Canuck YouTube superfluous, eh?

THE PHRASE ABOUT GUY FAWKES DAY MIGHT be “remember, remember the fifth of November,” but if there’s any justice, the sixth of November will go down in history as being quite forgettable. That’s because on Tuesday, YouTube launched one of its most ill-conceived and unmemorable services yet: YouTube Canada.

Now, I’ve got no problem with the promotion of our home and native land in the vast media landscape. The CBC has been pumping out some quality, home-brewed programming for the past few years, and if you discount Nickelback, Celine Dion, and Avril Lavigne, we’ve got a fair share of talented entertainers that call the Great White North home. We may not own Hollywood, but we’re where they outsource to, after all.

There’s a problem with the latest installment of Canadian content on the web, however. YouTube’s attempt at crafting a Canuck counterpart is half-hearted at best, offering little new compared to the main page. In fact, we even get shafted on the domain name. Rather than grace us with the dignity of our very own YouTube.ca, the URL redirects to a disappointing subdomain: ca.youtube.com.

Even the site itself offers little in the way of a Canadian look. There’s a tiny little flag up in the top right corner of the page and a promotional video with some schmuck talking about the Canadian affiliate—which is actually a little offensive, considering the little effort that was obviously put into it—but that’s it. According to the YouTube team, this new service was created “to bring YouTube to you, in your language, while making local talent more visible and getting closer to our users around the world.”

In our language? It’s been a while since my last trip south of the border, but I wasn’t aware that Canadianese had evolved so differently from American English to create a demand for our very own version of a video sharing site.

The more relevant criticism to be made about the service is the questionable “need” for regionalized content online. While there’s been such a major push lately for the Internet to represent a global community, the user-generated content system doesn’t pack as much of a punch if it’s segregated into Canadian-only content. It’s great that there’s a spotlight available for users who are likely to be overshadowed by their American counterparts, but on the Internet today, there’s much less of a focus on where a person is from and more on what they have to offer. Sadly, YouTube Canada doesn’t even get that far, instead finding itself stranded in a no-man’s-land between a global village and a forum for national pride.

Considering there’s absolutely no functional difference between YouTube Canada and the one that’s given a soapbox to such thespians as Leeroy Jenkins and the dramatic chipmunk, there’s really no point in tagging it as a separate service. It’s great that Canadian artists will receive slightly more exposure than they would have already, but who outside of Canada is actually going to visit YouTube Canada anyway?

When the potential for worldwide exposure exists through a medium like the Internet, it’s simply a wasted resource to hack together something like this. On the bright side, at least now there’s front-page access to a higher number of Corner Gas clips than a Saskatchewanite can even count.

MIKE KENDRICK
Design & Production Editor

Smoking them out

NIGERIA IS SUING THREE MAJOR TOBACCO COMPANIES for allegedly promoting underage smoking. The tobacco companies, of course, deny the claims, saying that they do not—and never have—target marketing towards children. But in a country with a life expectancy of only 47.44 years, getting children hooked makes sense because if you waited till they were 20, you’d only be able to milk out a good 20 years of addiction. And that’s just not good business.

CONAL PIERSE
Opinion Editor

WITH THE CANCELLATION OF FREE FOOD, COUNCIL WAS FORCED TO RESORT TO CANNIBALISM



LAUREN ALSTON

LETTERS FROM THE ARCHIVES

SPECIAL WARTIME EDITION

A soldier’s thoughts

Whittington Barracks
Lichfield
9 December, 1917

I’m writing with my note-paper upon your issue of the *Gateway*, the first, I believe, of the season. I congratulate and thank you and your staff for so fitting an issue and so forcible a reminder of university life.

But first, I must explain the above address. Back in the summer, I set moving those influences which have taken me from the Canadians to the Imperials. The above is an officer cadet battalion, and the course lasts till next March, when I hope to get away to one or other of the fighting fronts.

So many of your subscribers give you information first hand of their doings in the actual conflict that I feel I know no reason for opening up the subject which is so terribly present with us, and with which I’ve had no actual acquaintance. Yet on the other hand, I hardly know how to desist.

In barrack life, you run with the multitude; from week to week, you drill and hear lectures, you polish and clean up, and everyone around you is doing the same; you become a link in a great chain, the ends of which are beyond your vision, but you feel

the strain in your muscles. Then you read a speech from Lloyd George or President Wilson, and you feel your individuality return, and you stand apart once again with the fire of the great purpose burning in your brain.

Have you not felt this big business over here to be your own concern? It’s something like the effect of the rum ration, which one hero told me made him feel as though he could fight the German army himself. Strange sensations and strange mental experiences are produced in war. You find yourself reaching back for the elements of civilian life while at the same time your eyes are set on the Cambrai front and your wish to grasp some glory there. So, Janus-like, you stand. You know how, in your boyhood days, you read the heroic deeds of past ages and conjured up in your mind’s eye a mental picture of the hero; now in the time when heroes actually exist, you fail to fit the hero before you into your reading.

I sit beside a fellow in the mess who wears a DCM, the French Croix de Guerre, and some Russian decoration, but—I feel ashamed to express it—he seems just an ordinary soldier.

Trusting that you all will have a prosperous session this year, and if I’m not too late, that you’ll have a happy Christmas,

I’m yours sincerely,

CDT H R LEVER
10 January, 1918

The fightin’ boys from the U of A

We’re very comfortably fixed up here. All the fellows are in good shape, too. I wish there were more of the U of A fellows with us, for I think they are the “goods.”

Out of our ten or eleven men, five are NCOs. I’m not boasting, for I know you’ll be as proud as anyone; nor do I think a fellow must be an NCO to be of any worth—yet it’s an indication. So I hope the fellows are getting in line with some unit, preferably the University Company.

I hear from G R Stevens and Ernie Parsons about every two weeks. Their letters are always cheerful. Ernie, I believe, is the same old reliable as he was last fall. We’ll be glad when we join them.

I’m taking machine-gun work. Whether I’ll be detailed to that work permanently, I don’t know. It certainly is fine.

We were at the ranges today. Perhaps you can imagine the noise when seven or eight guns are firing at the rate of 600 rounds per minute. When you get behind one of those, you feel almost capable of doing something.

All the boys send their regards.

SGT H T BEECROFT
16 November, 1915

Editor’s note (from the 1915 edition): Sgt Beecroft was later killed in France.

Smoke ‘em if you got ‘em

The cigarettes you so kindly sent on behalf of the alumni arrived today in fine condition. Many thanks—it’s hard to realize just how much a “fag” can and does mean to all of us over here.

To all of the alumni—both those I know and those I hope some day to meet—my sincere thanks. I often see many familiar faces over here, now in khaki, and it seems a little hard to realize that these are the same chaps with whom we loafed in the “Tuck,” played with on the “Grid,” but there are many of them. The University of Alberta has no cause to hang her head on that score, nor on any other.

My greetings to all of you for the New Year. May next Xmas see us home again, or if not, may it see us a little closer to the enemy’s goal line.

CPTN BRUCE MACDONALD
12 February, 1942

From the Archives is a semi-regular feature where the Gateway runs historical letters that we feel are of particular importance.