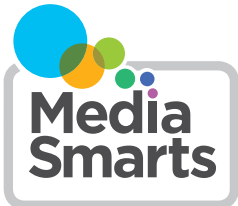
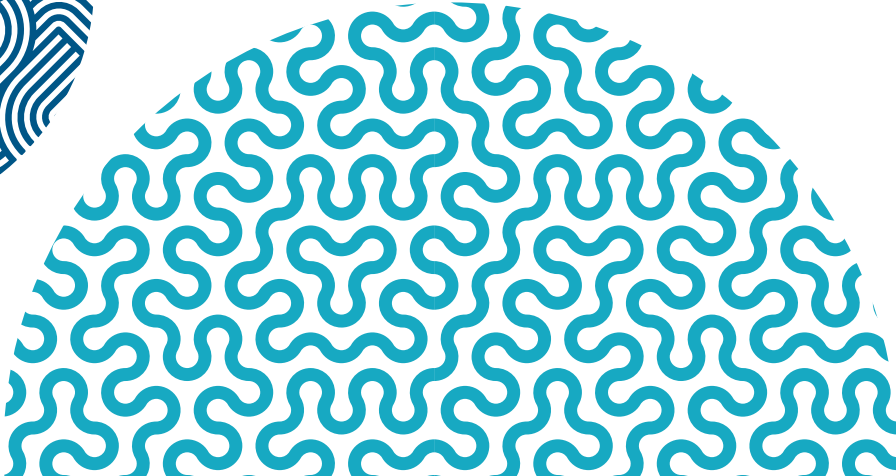
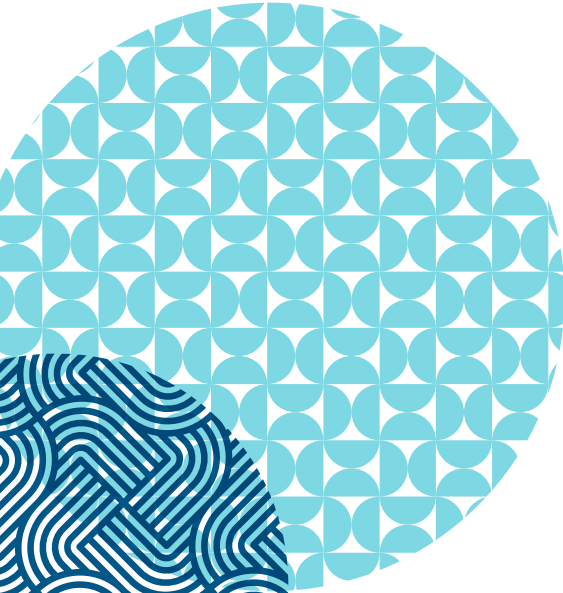


ANNUAL REPORT

2021



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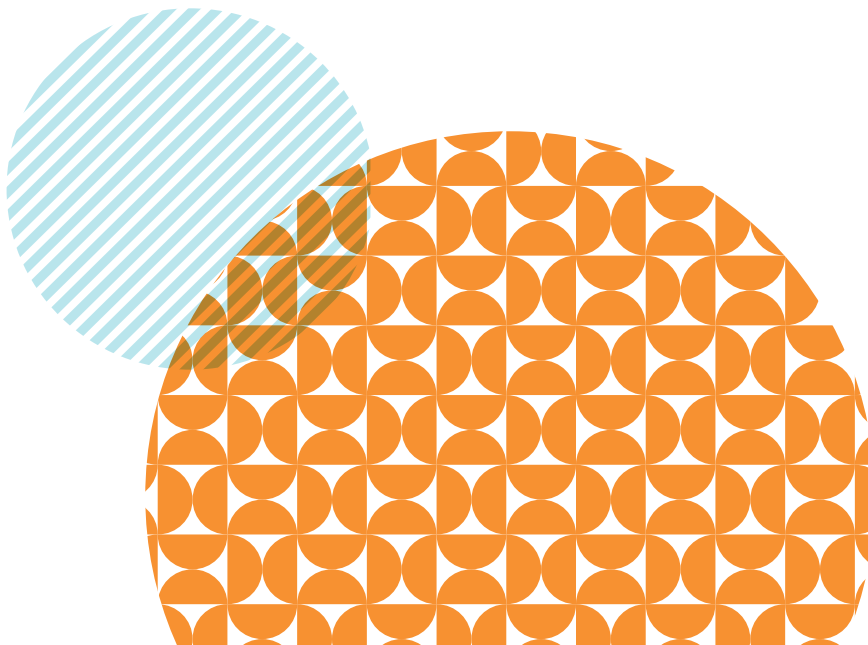
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“ **We are big fans of
MediaSmarts—**

we use many of your resources in our programs and find the content helpful and relevant to the digital literacy needs of teens. ”

-Youth Services Specialist, Toronto Public Library



A message from the Executive Director

Dear friends and supporters,

We continued to live through a pandemic in 2021, one which could have had even more drastic consequences if it were not for the digital tools available to us.

At MediaSmarts, this shift towards a digital-forward society reinforced the value of our strategic priorities: delivering up-to-date and relevant digital media literacy resources to all Canadians and continuing our important research into the digital lives of children and youth.

In 2021, we helped educators with the resources they needed as they moved between online and in-person learning. We helped citizens navigate misinformation related to the pandemic. We reached millions of people through the events and activities of our annual Media Literacy Week. We continued to create and deliver innovative programs, courses and resources, and we conducted ground-breaking research into how young people in Canada understand algorithms and data privacy.

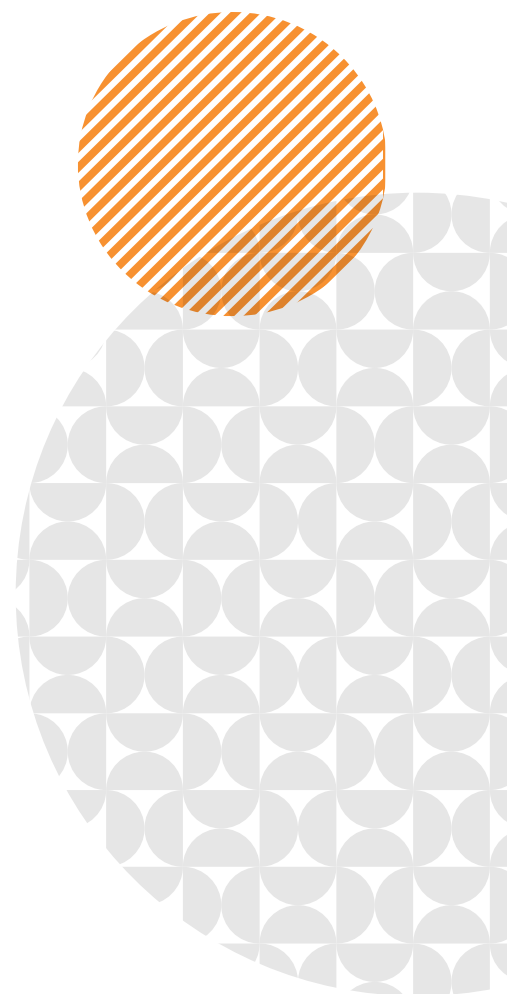
I'm immensely proud of the work our team is doing to further digital media literacy in Canada. Understanding how digital media influence our lives, how information is communicated, and how to be good digital citizens are crucial skills that will help us create a better world.

Sincerely,



Kathryn Ann Hill

Executive Director, MediaSmarts



Our impact

From attending our workshops to accessing our free online resources, people turned to MediaSmarts to improve their digital media literacy skills.



60 resources

created or updated including lesson plans, guides and articles



Thousands of people

reached through workshops and presentations



3.3 million views

of our website resources

Reaching our audience

We're proud to report increased engagement across our various communications channels, including a substantial increase in website visits. Our website **MediaSmarts.ca**—our primary product—is home to thousands of free resources used by over 1.5 million people each year. The MediaSmarts team are the go-to experts for media outlets across the country, and our annual Media Literacy Week reaches millions of people to raise awareness and encourage digital media literacy education.

Website visits

1.5 million website visits in 2019

1.6 million website visits in 2020

1.8 million website visits in 2021

In 2021, our website visits increased by

18%



Social media

26,000

followers across
Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
(↑ from **23,000** in 2020)

11.3 million

impressions across
Twitter, Facebook and Instagram
(↑ from **5.8 million** in 2020)

Overall, we grew our social audience by

13%



40%

increased referrals to
MediaSmarts.ca from
social media



Media interviews

Our experts conducted an impressive

127 media interviews

with outlets including The Globe and Mail, CBC, CTV, Radio-Canada, The Hill Times, Global News, Today's Parent and Wonks and War Rooms podcast (listen [here](#))!

E-newsletter

9,900 subscribers

(↑ from **7,000** in 2020)

1,500 key education contacts

(↑ from **1,400** in 2020)

Media Literacy Week 2021

Media Literacy Week (MLW) is an annual event promoting digital and media literacy across Canada, taking place each October. Schools, libraries, museums and community groups organize events and activities throughout the week. Our 16th annual [Media Literacy Week](#) was an enormous success. Throughout the week, educators used our [Teachers' Hub](#) with curated lesson plans, tip sheets, posters and videos and MediaSmarts hosted several successful events, including [The Walrus Talks: Our Digital Lives](#).

Thousands of participants across Canada

117 collaborating organizations

40+ events

56 million estimated audience for press release

74 million hashtag impressions for #MediaLitWk on Twitter

2 million Facebook & Instagram impressions

16,000 website page views



Partners



We made a greater impact by partnering with some fantastic organizations to create new resources, collaborate on research or simply help promote digital media literacy across Canada.

Ad Standards	Carleton University	Foundry
Agence Science-Press	CBC Kids	FRESH Committee
Alberta Society for the Promotion of Sexual Health	Centennial College	GAPMIL
Alberta Teachers Association	Centre d'étude sur les Médias	Global Centre for Pluralism
Alphanumérique	Centre for Global Education	Global Internet Forum to Counter Terrorism
Association for Media Literacy	Centre for Israel and Jewish Affairs	Hands On Media Education
Athabasca University	Centre québécois d'éducation aux médias et à l'information	Historica Canada
Atlantic Equity and Research Alliance	CHEO	Information and Communications Technology Council
Boys and Girls Club of Canada	CIRA	Imagine Canada
Canadian Association of Journalists	City of Toronto	Immunize Canada
Canadian Association of Science Centres	CLEMI	Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario
Canadian Commission for UNESCO	Concordia University	Institute Canadian Citizenship
Canadian Heritage	Connected North	International Network Against Cyber Hate
Canadian Journalism Foundation	Crime Prevention Ottawa	International School Health Network
Canadian Marketing Association	Digital Advertising Alliance of Canada	Internet Society
Canadian Paediatric Society	Digital Ecosystem Research Challenge	Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada
Canadian Standards Association	École branchée	Kids Code Jeunesse
Canadian Teachers' Federation	eQuality	Kinzoo
Canadian Teacher Magazine	ÉquiLibre	
	Facebook	

Montreal Institute for Genocide
and Human Rights Studies

The National Association for Media
Literacy Education

National Eating Disorder
Information Centre

National Film Board

National News Media Council

News Media Canada

Office of the Privacy Commissioner
of Canada

Ontario Institute for Studies in
Education

Ontario Library Association

Ontario Ministry of Education

Ontario Provincial Police

Ottawa Public Library

Ontario Teachers' Federation

Public Health Agency of Canada

PressReader

PREVNet

Printemps Numérique

Public Safety Canada

Science Up First

SecDev Foundation

Shaw

Sheridan College

Simon Fraser University

TELUS

The Sex Information & Education
Council of Canada

The Walrus

TikTok

TrendMicro

UNESCO

Université du Québec à Montréal

University of Ottawa Library

University of Toronto

University of Waterloo

Wattpad

Western University

Youth Ottawa

YouthNet

YWCA



“ Access to reliable information is key

to a healthy society and democracy. Unfortunately, we have seen disinformation increase during the COVID-19 pandemic. To address this, we all need to develop media and information literacy competencies. The Canadian Commission for UNESCO is therefore very proud to support MediaSmarts' activities in this field. ”

—Roda Muse, Secretary General, Canadian Commission for
UNESCO

Research

Our team continued MediaSmarts' ground-breaking research into the digital lives of young Canadians. Our research informs every aspect of our work, including the development of our resources and our recommendations to civil society.

Algorithmic Awareness: Conversations with Young Canadians about Artificial Intelligence and Privacy

MediaSmarts conducted focus groups with youth ages 13 to 17 to gain insight into how young Canadians understand the relationships between artificial intelligence (AI), algorithms, privacy and data protection. This project also allowed MediaSmarts to design a youth-friendly educational game to help build more understanding of data collection and sharing practices, which is being released in 2022.

[The study](#), funded by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada, found that:

- While youth understand and appreciate the benefits of recommendation algorithms, they are troubled by algorithmic data collection and data sharing practices
- Youth want more protection online, especially when it comes to platforms sharing or selling their data profiles
- Youth want more information about, and control over, how their personal data is collected, stored and brokered, and they called for more transparency from online businesses
- More algorithmic literacy tools and resources would give youth the knowledge they need to protect themselves and their information in digital spaces



In 2021, MediaSmarts' research staff worked with a number of academic partners on tri-agency funded research projects, private and public sector interest groups, as well as federal departments including:

Canadian Practitioners Network for the Prevention of Radicalization and Extremist Violence (CPN-PREV)

Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC)

Canadian Sociological Association, Internet, Technology, and Digital Sociology

Carleton University, Department of Sociology

Deloitte, Future of Canada Centre

Digital Public Square

Get Cyber Safe

Global Undergraduate Awards

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada

Public Safety Canada, The Canada Centre for Community Engagement and Prevention of Violence

Sedentary Behaviour Research Network (SBRN)

Serene Risc, Smart Cybersecurity Network

Sheridan College, Creativity and Creative Thinking Program

The Walrus Talks at Home, The Future of Speech Online

University of Calgary, Communications Department

University of Calgary, Department of Psychology

Université de Montréal, The Human Centric Cyber Security Project (HC2)

University of Ottawa, Faculty of Education

University of Toronto, Factor-Inwentash Faculty of Social Work

University of Waterloo, Stratford School of Interaction Design and Business

YWCA Canada, Block Hate



New resources and programs

We continued to create new resources to address timely issues including online hate and misinformation. With programs like *DigitalSmarts*, we are expanding our audience to include Canadians of all ages from all walks of life, including seniors and under-represented groups.

Lesson plans

TELUS Wise resources: Responding to casual prejudice

[Calling Out versus Calling In: Helping youth respond to casual prejudice online](#)

Lesson plan for Grades 6-8

[Just a joke? Helping youth respond to casual prejudice](#)

Lesson plan for Grades 6-8

Games

[Privacy Pirates](#)

re-released in HTML5 (Flash is no longer supported as of January 2021)

Articles

[The big digital paradoxes of the pandemic](#)

guest blog post by Dr. Chris Dornan

[From Schitt's Creek to Squid Game: How the media we consume during the pandemic connects us](#)

guest blog post Amil Niazi

Tip Sheets

[Managing tech at home during the holidays](#)

for parents and trusted adults

[Break the Fake: Make Your Own Custom Search Engine](#)

[Communicating Safely Online](#)

for parents and trusted adults

[Communicating Safely Online](#)

for youth

[Resources for families and educators staying home during COVID-19](#)

for parents and educators

[Talking to kids about casual prejudice online](#)

for parents and trusted adults (with TELUS Wise)

“ **I was really impressed by
MediaSmarts resources**

and I would definitely recommend
using their lesson plans, especially
because they connect so well to
curriculum!

- Shelby Mackey, Saskatchewan blogger and teacher

”

Programs

DigitalSmarts: Digital skills workshops for under-represented populations

MediaSmarts was proud to partner with YWCA Canada to develop and deliver a series of nine hands-on digital literacy skills workshops to support and empower under-represented Canadians.

Funded by Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada's Digital Literacy Exchange Program, the [*DigitalSmarts*](#) workshops are

accompanied by videos and practice sheets and cover topics such as protecting privacy and security online,

job searching, shopping and banking online, using social media, searching the internet effectively and managing screen time for kids.

The local YWCAs and MediaSmarts pivoted to deliver the workshops online during the pandemic, and we received incredibly positive feedback for the content and delivery of the sessions. The four-year project will be completed in 2022 and the materials will continue to be available to Canadians and used by MediaSmarts and YWCA facilitators.

- **1,632** participants reached in 2021
- **97%** of participants had increased confidence in their internet use and **94%** improved their understanding of the digital environment

Helping Canadians cope with misinformation

As both the pandemic and misinformation continued to spread, MediaSmarts once again encouraged Canadians to check sources of information before sharing it:

- We created a new set of [*Check First. Share After.*](#) social media posts to combat vaccine misinformation and hesitancy: "Corona-Anxiety," "Vax Facts," "Share with Care," "Panini of Misinformation" and "Say Something"
- In time for the federal election, and to help Canadians avoid misinformation, we used donated Facebook ad credits to promote four [*Break the Fake*](#) videos



“
**We are so thankful
for programs like
DigitalSmarts...**

that at this moment are so helpful for
so many of us to stay connected with
family and friends during this pandemic.
It has helped our mental health,
learning new things every week has
been something we look forward to.”

- *DigitalSmarts* workshop participant

Licensed resources

MediaSmarts' licensed classroom tutorials are available through a licensing arrangement to provincial/territorial departments, school boards, schools, post-secondary institutions and public library systems. In 2021 we released *Cyber Choices* as a comprehensive new licensed resource for Grades 3 to 5.

- As of 2021, many education licensees have been using our content for more than 20 years
- Through the licensing program, over 1,500 contacts (representing all 13 provincial and territorial governments, faculties of education, school districts and schools) are kept up to date on MediaSmarts' latest research and resources
- The personal contacts gained through licensing activities increases awareness of our mission, our uniquely Canadian research and content, and the wealth of free resources that are available on our website

New Licensed Resource: *Cyber Choices*

In 2021, MediaSmarts was pleased to release a new licensed digital citizenship tutorial for students in Grades 3 to 5: [Cyber Choices](#) is an interactive tutorial designed to help students develop the skills and habits they need to make safe and responsible choices online.

Delivered in an engaging online comic-book format (with accompanying audio to support developing readers), this new tutorial allows students to explore four different stories which cover key issues such as making good choices about their own and others' personal information, dealing with cyberbullying (as both a target and a witness) and managing online conflict.

“MediaSmarts is a proven leader when it comes to modeling effective use of digital technologies in education and driving best practice in innovative teaching and learning.”

—Subject Coordinator K-12
Technology and Skilled Trades, New
Brunswick School District

“ **(Digital media literacy is) a lifelong journey**

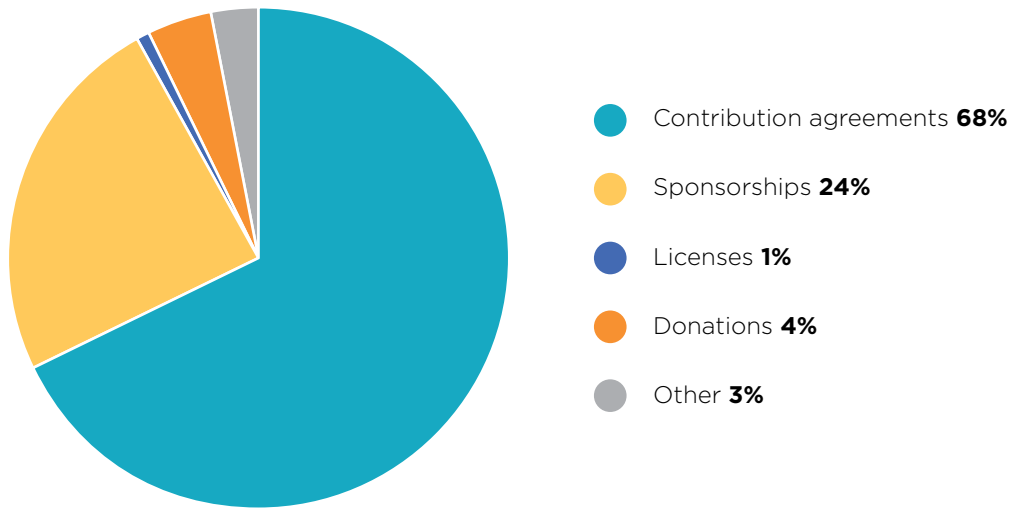
not just for young people but adults as well —(they) could benefit a lot from MediaSmarts’ education.

– Tako van Popta, Member of Parliament, during the Standing Committee on Public Safety and National Security examining Ideologically Motivated Violent Extremism.

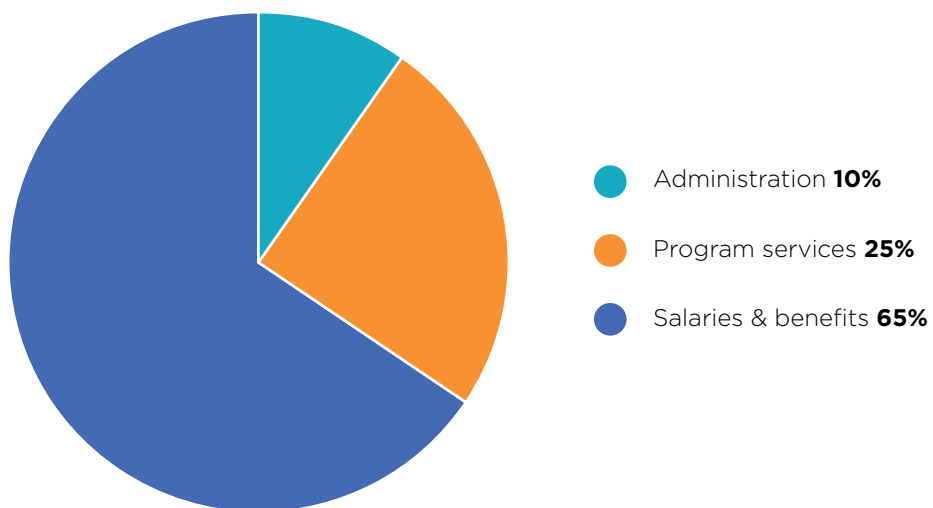
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Financials

Revenues



Expenditures



Message from our Board Chair

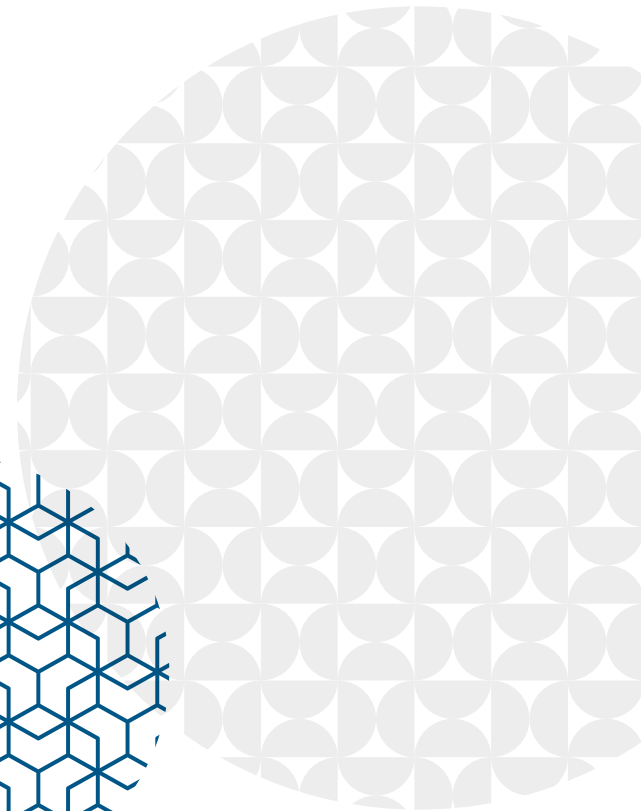
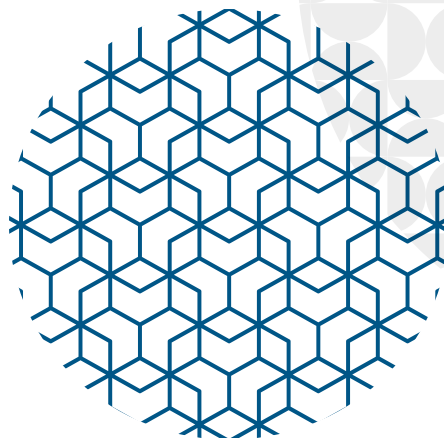
We're living in a time where teaching digital media literacy skills to all citizens couldn't be more important, and MediaSmarts is rising to the task.

From their crucially important work developing new digital skills workshops for marginalized people of all ages to their unparalleled research into the digital lives of young Canadians, MediaSmarts continues to be the go-to resource for digital media literacy in this country.

I'd like to extend a huge thank you to our fantastic staff, a small but mighty team who deliver a tremendous number of programs and resources each year. I'd like to thank our dedicated Board of Directors for all their continued efforts and support, as well as our sponsors and supporters who believe in our mission and who make this work possible.

As we look to the future, we know critical thinking and digital literacy skills will only increase in importance, and MediaSmarts will be there to help guide us through.

- David Fowler, Chair, Board of Directors



Thank you!

We couldn't achieve our mission without our wonderful and dedicated staff, Board of Directors and sponsors.



2021 Sponsors



