



# MEDIA AND DIGITAL LITERACY

ENGAGING AND  
EMPOWERING  
YOUTH

*ANNUAL REPORT*

MEDIA  
AWARENESS  
NETWORK



RÉSEAU  
ÉDUCATION  
MÉDIAS





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# CHAIR'S MESSAGE



2009 was marked by challenge and change: for the world, for Canada and for MNet. As a not-for-profit educational organization, we were swept up in the economic tsunami that impacted not only organizations like ours but also the companies and institutions that have supported our work for the past fourteen years.

We survived the vagaries of the financial downturn, ending the year on a solid financial footing. MNet, like others, has had to re-think the way it does its work. We spent the year focusing on bringing in new forms of funding, expanding our licensing program, developing new partnerships and working to define our future focus as an organization.

It was a year of shifting fortunes in the Canadian media industries and the dust is still settling on the new media landscape that is emerging: institutions are changing, platforms are converging, digital media are exploding, and regulators and governments are scrambling to keep up. We worked hard in 2009 to stay ahead of the rapid changes and emerging trends so we could continue with our commitment to helping Canadian children and youth understand and navigate the evolving digital terrain.

Over the past year there has been considerable dialogue on what Canada needs to do to remain competitive in a digital world. Fuelling these discussions is the awareness that other nations are developing action plans to strengthen their digital economies, and the recognition that if Canada is to remain competitive, a similar action plan is needed here. MNet, along with other stakeholder groups, believes digital literacy must be a priority area in any national digital strategy. Recognizing the tremendous opportunity we have to put digital literacy in the forefront of policy development, MNet will spend the coming year advancing the idea of digital literacy as an essential life skill for the 21st century.

2009 will also be remembered as the year when MNet took stock of its history, looked at the rapid changes taking place in the media landscape – both at home and internationally – and took the first steps in the process of re-imagining the organization and its role in the digital age. In October, MNet’s Board of Directors struck a Strategic Planning Committee which is tasked with looking at the best possible organizational model and practices to ensure MNet’s sustainability and developing a strategic direction for the next three years. With the invigorating conversations that are happening around the Committee table, we anticipate it will be an exciting process.

I had the great privilege this year to be asked to move from my member’s seat at the MNet Board table to the Chair’s seat. Given the support offered at each MNet meeting by the dedicated group of Board and Committee members who generously volunteer their valuable time to contribute to the on-going good of the organization and provided each day by the incredibly bright and committed MNet staff, it was, for me at least, an easy transition. The transition the organization as a whole is currently undertaking will be much more challenging; however, the Board and I are confident that our amazing MNet “team” has the skills, knowledge and, above all, passion for what they do, to succeed going forward.

It has been a demanding year, but at the same time, it has been immensely rewarding. We look forward with great anticipation to the opportunities of the coming year as we move forward on a new strategic direction with a strong focus on the digital literacy skills young Canadians need for 21st century learning.

Jay Thomson  
Chair





# CO-EXECUTIVE DIRECTORS' MESSAGE



What a difference a year makes in our digital world. At the start of 2009, many of us hadn't started using Twitter yet, we didn't know what an iPad was, and no one was talking about cloud computing.

It takes an immense effort to keep on top of new technologies and to understand what the social impacts will be on end-users –

particularly if those users are children and youth. Media Awareness Network's mission – and it's a challenging one – is to track the issues relating to young people's media use and keep parents, educators and policymakers informed and aware of those issues.

2009 was a busy year as we worked to get our new program *Passport to the Internet* into Canadian classrooms. The urgent need for interactive digital literacy programs such as *Passport* is evidenced by its prompt and widespread take-up in the education sector: by year-end, two-thirds of Canada's elementary schools had access to the resource. Following this success, with funding from the Inukshuk Learning Plan Fund and TELUS, we started the development of a new digital literacy program for intermediate and secondary students, *MyWorld*, to be released in late 2010.

In response to the increasing calls for a Canadian digital economy plan, we initiated a white paper to situate the role of digital literacy within a government digital strategy. We advanced the idea of digital literacy as an essential life skill for all Canadians at relevant forums and hearings and we conducted outreach with parliamentarians and news media, with the overriding message of the importance of giving young people the skills they need to effectively participate in their quickly evolving media culture.

We are happy to see an increased interest in helping young people attain these skills among Canadian parents, educators and organizations: our list of collaborators in Media Literacy Week continues to diversify and grow, and licences for our digital literacy resources have increased to the point where they are now available to 80 per cent of elementary and secondary students in Canada.

The theme of this year's annual report, *Engaging and Empowering Youth*, is timely given that 2009 marked a sea-change in rethinking responses to online safety issues affecting young people. We know from the evidence that reactive approaches based on fear are not only ineffective, they can be counter-productive. At national and international conferences we added our voice to those of colleagues calling for proactive strategies that build resiliency in children and youth, strategies that are respectful and multi-faceted, child- and youth-centred, and that have critical thinking, reflection and e-citizenship as their cornerstones.

As a society we need to respect children's love of media and recognize the positive aspects of their media interactions. As leading media literacy scholar Henry Jenkins recently wrote, "we have spent too much time focused on what media are doing to young people and not enough time asking what young people are doing with media." Our challenge moving ahead is to prepare Canadian children and youth to successfully participate in the digital age so they can take advantage of the immense potential of digital media for innovation, creativity and citizenship.

### **Our thanks go out to...**

We depend tremendously on the members of our Board of Directors for their support, guidance and direction. This past year, more than ever, we have valued their exceptional commitment – their strong belief in the value of our work makes them outstanding champions for MNet.

We also wish to thank our long-standing Board member and current Chair Jay Thomson, who has worked tirelessly with the Board and staff on the development of a new strategic direction and funding opportunities for the organization.





Given the financial challenges of the economic climate, we are particularly thankful for the stalwart support we receive from our sponsors. Funding from CTVglobemedia, Canwest, TELUS, Bell, Canadian Internet Registration Authority (CIRA), and the National Film Board of Canada makes it possible for us to continue our work in helping to make Canada a world leader in media and digital literacy.

Our program partners also provide considerable support for our work by helping with the development, focus testing, promotion and evaluation of our resources. In particular, we would like to thank our educational colleagues and partners – from the Canadian Teachers’ Federation, to school board representatives, academics, classroom teachers, teacher-librarians and media educators – who are all equally committed to empowering youth with media and digital literacy skills.

And finally, we want to thank our “small but mighty” team, whose dedication, talent, expertise and professionalism are the backbone of the organization. The passion of MNet staff for their work is evident in everything they do. The considerable grace and heart they have demonstrated, no matter what the challenge, are greatly appreciated.

Cathy Wing

Co-Executive Director

Jane Tallim

Co-Executive Director





# MEDIA AND DIGITAL LITERACY

## **More than a privilege... it's a right**

According to the Convention on the Rights of the Child:

States Parties recognize the important function performed by the mass media and shall ensure that the child has access to information and material from a diversity of national and international sources, especially those aimed at the promotion of his or her social, spiritual and moral well-being and physical and mental health. (Article 17)

The child shall have the right to freedom of expression; this right shall include freedom to seek, receive and impart information and ideas of all kinds, regardless of frontiers, either orally, in writing or in print, in the form of art, or through any other media of the child's choice. (Article 13)









# MEDIA AWARENESS NETWORK

**... is dedicated to engaging and empowering children and youth**

By ensuring they possess the necessary critical thinking skills and tools to understand and actively engage with all forms of media.

## **How do we do this?**

We create resources and programs to help young people understand how media work; how media messages may affect their lifestyle choices and attitudes; the extent to which they, as consumers and citizens, are well-informed and understand their rights and responsibilities in a media world; and how they can harness and create media for self-expression and empowerment.



News Gathering in the Digital Age media panel launching the start of Media Literacy Week



# REACHING OUT

## ...through the Internet

[www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca) /  
[www.education-medias.ca](http://www.education-medias.ca)

Over 5.6 million people visited the MNet Web site this year – our thought-provoking *Talk Media* and *Parlons médias* blogs were popular destinations for 50,000 monthly readers. The Teacher's Guide for our on-line game *Privacy Playground* remains at the top of our list of most commonly downloaded PDFs, with nearly 73,000 copies downloaded.

### Facebook and Twitter

In the spring of 2009, MNet launched English and French *Facebook* pages and *Twitter* accounts where MNet experts share advances in media literacy, recent research and articles of interest. The *Facebook* pages also give MNet the opportunity to share videos and pictures from various events.

### YouTube channel

MNet launched a *YouTube* channel where educators, parents and youth can access various media literacy videos including footage of the 2009 Media Literacy Week launch and winners of the 2007 *MyMedia* contest.

## ...through speaking engagements

MNet reached over 1,400 people through workshops, conference presentations and panel discussions. Topics covered a broad range of media literacy issues such as cyberbullying, online hate, advertising and digital media.

Highlights included:

- Cyberbullying workshops in Whitehorse at the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association's conference *Our Students, Our North, Our Success*
- Internet safety workshops for the First Nations Educational Council in Montreal, Quebec
- A panel discussion on advertising and media literacy at the U.S. Federal Trade Commission in Washington
- A *Using media in teaching history* presentation for the Association for Canadian Studies, in Moncton, New Brunswick
- A presentation on Internet and youth civic engagement at PREVNet's national conference *Life Without Bullying* in Toronto, Ontario
- Participation in an international panel discussion on digital literacy at the Family Online Safety Institute's (FOSI) annual conference *Building a Culture of Responsibility: From online safety to digital citizenship* in Washington



## ...through relationships with provincial, territorial and federal governments

MNet is committed to helping provincial and federal governments gain a better understanding of media and digital literacy and how it fits within their policies and approaches. From corresponding with provincial/territorial and federal Members of Parliament, to formal submissions and presentations, to senate and parliamentary committees, MNet has worked actively to inform policy in 2009.

Some of the important steps taken in building government relations this year included:

- A submission to the Canadian Parliamentary Coalition to Combat Antisemitism (CPCCA). In its submission and presentation to the committee, MNet urged the CPCCA to recognize media and digital literacy as a critical element of any multi-faceted strategy put into place to address antisemitism.
- A presentation at copyright consultations hosted by the Ministers of Industry and Canadian Heritage. Key messages focused on how the new copyright legislation relates to media education, specifically that current Fair Dealing rules must be preserved and should be extended.
- A presentation to the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications investigating wireless broadband access in Canada on the inclusion of digital literacy as an essential component in a national digital strategy.
- A request to MPs to recognize Media Literacy Week in the House of Commons by the reading of a statement prior to Question Period which resulted in two such announcements. The Honourable Hedy Fry, Member for Vancouver Centre, made a statement on November 2 and Michael Savage, Member for Dartmouth-Cole Harbour, made a second statement on November 4.







### ...through media outreach

Every year, journalists call on MNet to share its expertise on media-related stories. In 2009, staff participated in over 70 interviews, many of which were with prominent national news organizations, including three appearances on CTV's Canada AM and interviews with The Globe and Mail, La Presse, CBC Radio and Radio-Canada.

Media violence was a hot topic this year, with a number of interviews relating to TV and video game violence and violent music lyrics. Issues relating to digital media and youth were also in the forefront, with a number of interviews on cyberbullying, privacy, advertising and hate.

### ...through Media Literacy Week

Along with 38 collaborating organizations across the country, lead partners MNet and the Canadian Teachers' Federation hosted Canada's fourth annual Media Literacy Week November 2-6. This year's theme was Media Literacy in the Digital Age

More than 34 events took place across Canada:

- The English Montreal School Board in Quebec invited local media personalities to share their thoughts on working in the media industry in a panel discussion for secondary students and teachers from several local high schools.
- The Manitoba Association of Computing Educators and Manitoba Education hosted four virtual presentations by leading Canadian educators, followed by a live and virtual panel of K – 12 educators from across Manitoba discussing what media literacy looks like in their classrooms.



Students from Vancouver participating in the Pacific Cinémathèque workshop during Media Literacy Week.

- In South Shore, Nova Scotia, the Lighthouse Media Group, South Shore Regional School Board, DesBrisay Museum, Empire Theatres and the Royal Canadian Legion teamed up to present a film screening for students of *Time To Remember - Time To Envision*.
- In the Lower Mainland of Vancouver, Pacific Cinémathèque hosted a workshop for high school students taking a Social Justice course on creating public service announcements.



To launch the week, MNet, the Canadian Teachers' Federation and Encounters with Canada, a program of the Historica-Dominion Institute, hosted a media panel on the impact of digital media on journalism and news gathering. The panel took place before 130 enthusiastic and engaged students from across the country. The event was supported by the Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada.

Panellists included Andrew Cohen, award-winning journalist, best-selling author and President of the Historica-Dominion Institute; Scott Rubin, head of policy communications at *YouTube*; Roger Dubois, video-journalist with CBC.ca; and Althia Raj, National Bureau reporter for Sun Media. The event was moderated by Daniel Bouchard, news anchor for Radio-Canada and Professor of Communication at University of Ottawa.

For the first time, two of the panel discussions, including the launch event, were broadcast live on the Web through streaming video. MNet also welcomed our first provincial government collaborator, the Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth.

## Media Literacy Week 2009 Sponsors

<b>Gold</b>	YouTube
<b>Silver</b>	Bell and Entertainment Software Association of Canada
<b>Bronze</b>	OpenText and the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
<b>Funder</b>	Government of Canada

### ...through our licensed resources

MNet currently has six media and digital literacy programs available to Canadian educators and librarians through licence agreements in every province and territory. In 2009, our licensed resources were used in 11,000 Canadian schools— representing 80 per cent of student enrolment – 19 of the 20 largest school districts in the country, as well as two provincial/territorial library systems and two large urban library systems, covering a combined population of 5 million.

Thanks to MNet's well-established relationships in the Canadian education sector, we had exceptional success in getting our new digital literacy resource – *Passport to the Internet* – into Canadian elementary and intermediate classrooms. By the end of the 2009, the resource was available to two-thirds of Canadian elementary and intermediate schools through ministry and school board-wide licences.





“Thank you so very much for continuing to develop relevant, engaging resources for Canadian students. We appreciate the great work MNet has done over the years to support Canadian educators and students in learning these important skills.”

**Coordinator  
Technology Assisted Learning  
Curriculum Branch  
Yukon Department of Education**

# TACKLING THE ISSUES

## ...on our Web site

Educators, parents, journalists, students and youth visit [www.media-awareness.ca](http://www.media-awareness.ca) / [www.education-medias.ca](http://www.education-medias.ca) to obtain information and resources on media issues that concern them.

The most popular resources on our site provide a snapshot of the topics that are top of mind to our users:

- Almost a million users accessed our educational games. These popular resources help teach youth about online privacy, online advertising, safe and responsible Internet use and authenticating online information.
- Beauty and body image in the media – a topic of interest to over 300,000 users
- Media violence – accessed by over 200,000 users
- Media stereotypes – of interest to over 200,000 users

## ...through articles

This year, MNet produced 18 bilingual articles for over 200 educational publications. Topics included cybercitizenship, media and digital literacy, information authentication, integrating technology into the classroom, online privacy and marketing, and media stereotypes.

## ...as part of task forces and advisory groups

In 2009, MNet staff participated in the following national task forces and advisory groups:

- National Drug Prevention Advisory Committee (Health Canada)
- National Advisory Group on Youth Substance Abuse Prevention (Canadian Centre on Substance Abuse)
- Association to Reduce Alcohol Promotion in Ontario Advisory Committee (ARAPO)
- Canadian Coalition on Cyber Risk Reduction (University of Toronto)





# COLLABORATING

Resources produced by MNet are often the result of collaborations with research, funding and development partners. In 2009, we worked with several organizations to develop media literacy tools for parents, educators and youth. Here is a sampling:

## **Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada (OPC)**

With funding from the Privacy Commissioner's office, MNet released an updated version of its popular professional development resource *Kids for Sale* to reflect the new privacy challenges faced by youth in virtual online worlds and social networking sites. The OPC also supported the Media Literacy Week launch event in Ottawa while MNet used the week to draw attention to the Privacy Commissioner's student video competition *My Privacy & Me*.

## **Public Health Agency of Canada and Canadian Teachers' Federation (CTF)**

MNet teamed up with the Public Health Agency of Canada and the Canadian Teachers' Federation to produce a classroom resource – *I Heard It 'Round the Internet: Sexual Health Education and Authenticating Online Information* – to help students learn critical thinking skills for evaluating online sexual health information.

## **Equal Voice**

MNet partnered with Equal Voice – a national organization that promotes the election of more women to all levels of government in Canada – to create classroom resources for its Experiences youth program. Funded by Status of Women Canada, the *Media Representation of Women in Politics* learning modules explore how gender stereotyping and media portrayals of female politicians can influence young women's decisions to become politically involved.



Students from Glashan Intermediate School in Ottawa at the launch of *Media Representation of Women in Politics* learning modules

## Entertainment Software Association of Canada (ESAC)

The Entertainment Software Association of Canada has been a sponsor of Media Literacy Week for the past two years. To recognize ESAC's involvement in 2009, MNet worked with them to develop a video games tip sheet for parents, which was launched during the week. The resource offered tips on choosing age appropriate video games for children, managing gaming in the home, and using the Entertainment Software Rating Board rating system.

## Concerned Children's Advertisers (CCA)

MNet partnered with the CCA to produce a research brief examining the impact of food advertising on children and how media literacy can help mitigate unhealthy lifestyle choices. The research helped to inform the development of phase 3 of the CCA's *Long Live Kids* public awareness campaign – a national, child-focused initiative that encourages children to eat smart, move more and become media-wise.



MNet Media Education Specialists Emmanuelle Erny-Newton and Matthew Johnson in Whitehorse at the Northwest Territories Teachers' Association's conference



## Other organizations

Thank you to all the organizations and people who worked with us in 2009 to champion media literacy in their communities.

- Alberta School Councils' Association
- Alliance for Children and Television
- Association for Media Literacy
- Bell
- British Columbia Association for Media Education
- British Columbia Media Educators (B.C. Student Film Festival)
- Canadian Association for Media Education Organizations
- Canadian Home and School Federation
- Canadian Network for Innovation in Education
- Canadian Teachers' Federation
- Child and Youth Friendly Ottawa
- CITIZENShift
- Concerned Children's Advertisers
- The Director's Cut
- Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium
- English Montreal School Board
- Equal Voice
- Faculty of Education, McGill University
- Girls Action Foundation
- Inukshuk Wireless Learning Plan Fund
- Lighthouse Media Group
- London Public Library
- Manitoba Association of Computing Educators
- Manitoba Department of Education, Citizenship and Youth
- Media Education Working Group, Centre for Media and Culture in Education, University of Toronto
- mindyourmind
- National Eating Disorder Information Centre
- National Film Board of Canada
- National Film Board of Canada (Toronto Mediatheque)
- Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada
- Ontario Library Association
- Ottawa Carleton District School Board
- Pacific Cinémathèque
- Prime Minister's Awards for Teaching Excellence
- PREVNet
- Projections
- Public Health Agency of Canada
- REEL CANADA
- Rural Response for Healthy Children
- Safe Online Outreach Society
- The Segal Centre for Performing Arts at the Saidye
- Simon Fraser University
- Sprockets
- Toronto Youth Documentary Project
- TVO
- University of Guelph - Media Education Project
- YOUCAN



## Student Interns and Volunteers

Thank you to our student interns and volunteers whose contributions to our work were greatly appreciated in 2009:

- Aaron Bawn, field placement from the University of Ottawa
- Anton van Hamel, volunteer, studying at the University of Ottawa
- Karine Bertrand, summer student through the Canada Summer Jobs program
- Maya Shoucair, volunteer

A special thank you goes out to Daniel Tremblay who designed this year's annual report and to photographer Alexandre Vlad who took many of the pictures used.



MNet Co-Executive Director Jane Tallim participating in the international panel discussion at FOSI's annual conference



# OUR TEAM

The resources developed by MNet would not be possible without the hard work and dedication of our staff members. In 2009, MNet's team included:

Cathy Wing, Co-Executive Director

Jane Tallim, Co-Executive Director

Skye Cameron, Office Administrator

Rodney Doddridge, Web Manager

Judith Donin, Web Manager

Emmanuelle Erny-Newton, Media Education Specialist

Lynn Huxtable, Director, Corporate Affairs

Julie Jenkins, Accountant

Matthew Johnson, Media Education Specialist

Julia Ladouceur, Project Manager

Ann Marie Paquet, Communications Officer



# BOARD OF DIRECTORS AND COMMITTEES

MNet's success is due in large part to the dedicated service of its Board of Directors and Board Committees. Representing industry and government partners and our user groups (library, education and parent organizations), these individuals generously share their expertise, knowledge and time.

In 2009, MNet extended its appreciation to the following retiring Directors and Observers:

Jane Macnaughton

Emily Noble

Maria Di Perna

William Fizet

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**Consultant**

Jay Communications Consulting Inc.

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Toronto Hospital for Sick Children

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Canadian Teachers' Federation

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Educator

Maria Di Perna

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Ontario Library Association

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ZenithOptimedia

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MuchMusic

Denny Alexander

Media and Communications  
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**Assistant General Counsel**  
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**Dr. Michael Hoechsmann**  
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# SPONSORS

## Benefactors

CTVglobemedia



## Silver Sponsors



## Associate Sponsor



## Founding Sponsor





# AUDITOR'S REPORT

## To the Members,

### Media Awareness Network:

We have audited the statement of financial position of Media Awareness Network as at December 31, 2009 and the statements of changes in net assets, revenue and expenses and cash flows for the year then ended. These financial statements are the responsibility of the organization's management. Our responsibility is to express an opinion on these financial statements based on our audit.

We conducted our audit in accordance with Canadian generally accepted auditing standards. Those standards require that we plan and perform an audit to obtain reasonable assurance whether the financial statements are free of material misstatement. An audit includes examining, on a test basis, evidence supporting the amounts and disclosures in the financial statements. An audit also includes assessing the accounting principles used and significant estimates made by management, as well as evaluating the overall financial statement presentation.

In our opinion, these financial statements present fairly, in all material respects, the financial position of the organization as at December 31, 2009 and the results of its operations and its cash flows for the year then ended in accordance with Canadian generally accepted accounting principles.

Ottawa, Ontario, Canada

*May 17, 2010*

**WATSON FOLKINS COREY LLP**

Chartered Accountants

Licensed Public Accountants



# FINANCIAL SUMMARY

**31 Decembre, 2009**

December 31, 2009

	<b>12 Months Ending December 31, 2009</b>	<b>12 Months Ending December 31, 2008</b>
<b>ASSETS</b>		
Current Assets	566,627	302,676
Capital Assets	18,913	24,798
Deposit Certificates	184,488	202,714
	<b>770,028</b>	<b>530,188</b>
<b>LIABILITIES</b>		
Current Liabilities	21,158	17,986
Deferred Revenue	397,275	170,757
	<b>418,433</b>	<b>188,743</b>
<b>NET ASSETS</b>		
Unrestricted	271,143	261,766
Restricted	80,452	79,679
	<b>351,595</b>	<b>341,445</b>
	<b>770,028</b>	<b>530,188</b>
<b>REVENUE</b>		
Benefactors	221,424	245,470
Contribution Agreements	111,023	171,870
Sponsorships	63,250	67,000
Sales and Licenses	262,975	199,253
Donations and In-Kind Contributions	76,749	125,272
Other	12,408	21,662
	<b>747,829</b>	<b>830,527</b>
<b>EXPENDITURES</b>		
Programs	78,611	223,974
Administration	85,614	111,425
Salaries & Benefits	574,227	542,987
	<b>738,452</b>	<b>878,386</b>
<b>NET REVENUE (EXPENDITURE)</b>	<b>9,377</b>	<b>-47,859</b>

