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New Windows of Opportunity...

CHAIR'S MESSAGE

Social anthropologists and communications specialists in years to come will undoubtedly study our times with great interest, in large part to assess the role of media in our social, cultural, and political development. Their evaluation of how effectively we assisted young people in using and understanding media will speak volumes about our success as a society.

As a starting point, we need to understand the factors shaping the media and multi-media environment in which young people are growing up:

- Unlike any other era, the means to communicate information, ideas, and values on a wide scale is in the hands of individuals, including children.
- Everyone can now easily access content through populist media such as the Internet and wireless devices, and interactivity means we can be part of that content - we can be the hero, protagonist or director rather than the passive observer.
- Young people, in particular, are global media consumers who routinely transcend geographical, regulatory and legislative boundaries, creating and distributing content or re-purposing what others create.

It is essential to recognize that young people are the leaders in many aspects of this media environment. Indeed, children in this century are better equipped than any other generation to face the challenges of media and new technology. They are not simply sponges capable of absorbing only what we choose to give them. They are competent, sophisticated media consumers and we share a collective responsibility for helping them to develop their skills through solid, broad-based media education.

MNet Well-positioned for New Opportunities

As is already the case at home, MNet is earning a growing international reputation for effective, quality programs that address that need for media education.

MNet's programs are highly attractive for many reasons, including: a) their solid pedagogy; b) their balanced perspectives stemming from a mission based on education, not advocacy; c) their easy access on a world-class Web site; and d) their reflection of Canada's cultural, social and ethnic diversity.

MNet's commitment to leadership also gives it a strong competitive edge. The organization has a proven track record in trend analysis, including pioneering Internet literacy and early
identification of online gambling, hate and privacy as key issues for the public agenda. MNet has also staked out a leadership position through ground-breaking research on young people’s Internet use. And perhaps one of the organization’s greatest strengths is its partnership approach to working with user groups, industry and government for program funding and delivery. I have worked with many non-profit organizations over the years, and few have so successfully pulled off this balance of private, public and non-profit partnership.

The challenge – as always – is to develop stable and sustained funding to support the resources and business strategy required to take advantage of the opportunities opening up for MNet, in Canada and abroad.

The Global Need for Media Literacy

The importance of media literacy for youth is, indeed, rapidly gaining recognition around the world. This trend is being fueled by the fact that the borderless, unrestricted nature of the Internet and wireless media make them ideal for attracting a global community of users. And young people, in particular, have embraced the new multi-media mix with enthusiasm.

It is important that adults be there as translators to help young people interpret what they discover through their media experiences. Rather than settle for our youth becoming simply information seekers, we need to help them become knowledge seekers. This is where new technologies and media, including the Internet, can be really useful. But we need to think less in terms of information-rich societies and more in terms of knowledge-rich societies.

This means understanding that today’s new type of ‘nomadic communications’, which is not fixed in one location, market or culture, is reshaping how we approach education, parenting and the definition of community. The same questions about how best to help young people to be safe, wise and responsible media users are being asked around the world, as MNet is seeing from the interest its programs are receiving from countries such as Ireland, Iceland, Singapore, the United States and Brazil.

A Uniquely Canadian Voice

Personally, I am confident that MNet and its partners will, once again, meet the challenges of growth and opportunity. In doing so, we will ensure that MNet’s work, while international in scope and reach, remains rooted in and shaped by Canadian society and the cultural framework this provides.

In the end, its Canadian perspective, as well as the ability to deliver products in two of the world’s major languages, will continue to enrich MNet’s contribution to media education in a global community. It has been a great pleasure to serve as Chair of this dynamic NGO over the past year; and to work with such an outstanding Board and staff who are dedicated to supporting educators, parents and community leaders in making every young person’s relationship with media an empowering, positive experience.

Dr. André H. Caron
Chair
EXECUTIVE DIRECTOR'S REPORT

Imagine, for a moment, the media landscape of 1993... the year the idea of creating Media Awareness Network (MNet) was sparked by the CRTC’s initiative on television violence. Most remarkable about the picture of that era is what’s not there. No palm pilots, no mobile camera phones, no interactive TV, no DVD players. And, in 1993, most people were just beginning to hear about the Internet and the World Wide Web.

Equally remarkable has been the shift in leadership over the past decade from adults to young people as first adopters and influencers of media technology and content.

A decade ago, our instincts told us that media use – already high in young peoples’ lives – was going to explode, and that we were entering a new era of communication and interactivity. The degree to which this has proven true has exceeded our expectations. The resulting urgent need for media education continues to inspire MNet’s prime objective – to give educators, parents and community leaders information and tools to guide young people in their use and understanding of media.

Delivering world-class programs

MNet has always recognized that our primary strength is in providing media education and awareness programs that are rooted in the Canadian context while being competitive internationally.

Web Awareness Canada (WAC), which we introduced in 1999, continues to be the only program of its kind. When a library system in New York State needed an Internet literacy professional development program, it chose MNet’s Web Awareness library workshops. The result is an American version of our workshops to be launched in the U.S. market in June 2003.

In the European market, we now have an agreement with the Safety Awareness for Tweens consortium (SAFT) of Europe. This initiative supports the pilot testing of MNet’s Jo Cool or Jo Fool interactive online teaching module in Iceland and Ireland, and may lead to an international licensing agreement. And our partnership approach to media education is currently being considered as a model in Singapore.

The launch of MNet’s new Web site in March 2003 (beta phase) further enhances our opportunities to serve not only Canadians but the global community. Our site now houses the largest collection of English and French media education resources in the world. All existing
content has been updated, and important new sections have been added. The site uses newly-developed technology and software that make it extremely easy for us to manage and refresh our online resources, while giving users powerful tools to access our programs.

We face the challenge of maintaining the quality, relevance and competitiveness of our programs. With that in mind, we’ve just completed a detailed user evaluation of our professional development workshops. This is part of an ongoing process that will see our key products tailored to specific audience needs and revamped to incorporate the latest research and information on youth-related Internet issues.

Ultimately, though, our success depends on having the right people on our team. We have been fortunate over the years to attract a dedicated group of professionals with extensive knowledge and expertise. They bring to their work the intellectual discipline that underpins MNet’s growing reputation as the premier online media education resource.

**Developing strong partnerships**

One of the most rewarding aspects of MNet’s philosophy and approach are the strong partnerships we continue to develop with organizations that share our commitment to young people. It’s been a key to our success from day one.

Our Internet literacy program, for instance, drew much of its initial inspiration from conversations with our partners in the public library sector, and it continues to benefit from the advice of our national Web Awareness Canada Library Advisory Committee.

The development of partnerships continued to be a major organizational priority throughout this past year. And the results were gratifying as we watched MNet’s programs reach into communities across the country.

You’ll learn more about the specific initiatives in the Program Report Card (page 8), but let me recognize here the fabulous contributions that were made this past year by our program partners. They include Girl Guides of Canada, the Canadian Library Association, the Canadian Paediatric Society and – in a new role as project partners – two of our corporate sponsors, Bell Canada and Rogers Cable Inc.

MNet’s corporate planning and market development activities are benefiting greatly from an Interchange Canada Agreement offered by the Public Service Commission of Canada. The Department of Canadian Heritage, under this initiative, has sponsored the assignment of Margaret Skok, the Department’s Director of Trade and Investment Development.

I’d also like to recognize the enormous contribution of all of our public and private sector funders – the companies and government departments that generously support our work. We are privileged to have within this group leading organizations that understand the value of media education for the health and well-being of young people and society. They also recognize the need for MNet’s autonomy over content, and support the strong guidelines, set by MNet’s Board of Directors, which uphold this principle.

**Building a Canadian centre of excellence**

What has always been clear to Anne Taylor and me, as founding Co-Directors, is the enormous potential for Media Awareness Network to become a Canadian centre of expertise and excellence in media education. It has inspired us
throughout the first decade of growing pains, setbacks and triumphs.

Our goal has been to establish the pillars to support this long-term objective:

- a clear, focused mission
- dedicated, expert staff
- good governance
- strategic partnerships.

MNet has worked hard to put these pillars in place, and we recognize that this essential organization building is always a work in progress. During the coming year, we'll engage in a review of MNet's mission and strategic objectives, and implement the findings of the current review by our Governance Task Force.

We also face the urgent need in the year ahead to increase, and stabilize, our funding from the public and private sectors. As well, we must secure development funding that will allow us to increase our revenues from product licensing and sales in Canada, and abroad. Meeting these funding objectives is essential so that MNet can continue to operate for the public good and undertake world-class research on how young people and media are interacting.

As we build our organization, we will keep our fingers on the pulse of young people's media experiences. That's the key to fulfilling our commitment – to serve young people well, and help them become media literate. And we will continue to support teachers, parents, librarians and community leaders, so they can help children and young people to manage the risks and challenges media present, while seizing the wonderful opportunities they offer.

Jan D'Arcy
Executive Director
Your Web site does an amazing job of addressing race, violence, and gender.
Jesseca White
High School Teacher

The material on your Web site is fantastic! I can’t think of a better package - and this makes preparing for our night so easy for us, the leaders. Thank you!!
Ingrid King
Girl Guide Leader
Canada

You have done a terrific job of making parents aware of the facts, but more importantly you have provided parents with the information and tools necessary to foster a great Internet experience for their children.
Margot Poss
Parent
Canada

In my view MNet is an indispensable instrument for Canadian society in the field of media!
Cor Crans
NFI - Media Expertise Centre
Netherlands

Launching MNet's new Web site - now the most extensive bilingual media education site in the world - was a major accomplishment in 2002-2003. This Report Card highlights some of the significant content developed for our site, as well as other initiatives we’ve undertaken during the past year.

New MNet site earns applause

Reaction to the March 2003 launch of the beta version of MNet's Web site was instant and enthusiastic, with visitors praising the look, architecture, and content.

The number of weekly users quickly doubled to 300,000.

The site’s features make it much faster and easier to access materials:

• A powerful search engine gives effective access to MNet's 4,000 resource documents.

• The Lesson Library provides a dynamic gateway into MNet's 300-plus media education lessons allowing teachers to find specific lessons that fulfill the demands of their provincial curricula.

• The Content Cart enables visitors to ‘tag’ documents for later use or printing.

• The Help section - using Flash animation - provides quick tips for taking full advantage of all the site offers.

New publishing software allows MNet to add or revise content instantly, making it easier to keep the site current and to manage the enormous volume of information it houses.

Online Resource Development

Our new Web site consists of 30 main sections, in English and French, providing extensive materials that support our rich collection of teaching units and student learning resources, resources for parents and balanced discussions of critical
media issues related to young people. The following are highlights of the new and enhanced content developed in the past year.

**What Is Media Education and Why Teach It?**

This section offers different perspectives on media education from key educators in Canada, the U.S. and the United Kingdom. Together they provide strong insights into the nature and aims of media education.

**Canadian Media Education Resources:**

A reference section highlighting the best and the latest in media education books, kits, Web sites and videos. This is also home to Barry’s Bulletin, the popular monthly MNet newsletter written by Barry Duncan, a Canadian pioneer in media education.

**Kids on the Net: Critical Thinking Skills for Web Literacy:**

This concise and practical framework document for educators and parents details

- the social and psychological traits associated with six different age groups of young people;
- how these traits can affect interpretations of media and Internet content;
- media-related issues that tend to emerge for each age group, and;
- an inventory of the specific information and critical thinking skills that kids should have to manage the challenges and opportunities of their media environment.

**For Parents:**

MNet has taken a new approach in this section, producing parent-friendly information and advice on television, movies, music, video games, the Internet and marketing and consumerism. Each section offers tips on managing media in the home, and guidelines for discussing media with kids. Throughout the section, parents are encouraged to become active consumers and to help their kids benefit from the best the media have to offer.
Your youth media kit should be part of every high school course dealing with media and marketing.
Scott Hannant
CJOH/CTV Television News
Ottawa, Canada

Media Toolkit for Youth:
This unique resource addresses, in a way teens can understand, what drives the news media, why stereotyping is sometimes used, and how it can affect young people and visible minorities in particular. Teens learn how they can use the media effectively to further the objectives of their school or group, and to project, through the media, a positive public image of youth.

Jo Cool or Jo Fool?
In this popular student module, 10-13-year-old students follow brother and sister Joseph and Josie into mock Web sites and online activities. Players of the game have to decide whether Joseph and Josie are making wise, safe and ethical decisions in their online travels. The lessons of the Cybertour are reinforced in a 20-question student quiz.

Industry Profiles, Media Codes, Guidelines and Legislation:
MNet's extensive collection of documents on key Canadian media industry organizations, their codes and guidelines, has been augmented by reader-friendly summaries on Canadian media-related legislation dealing with privacy, copyright, online hate, media violence, sexual content and the portrayal of diversity and gender.

Stereotyping of Aboriginal People:
A look at how stereotypical images and symbols of North American Indians and Canadian First Peoples have been used in movies, sports and news media over many decades. The section also provides a brief history and current snapshot of the successful efforts of Canadian Aboriginal people to create their own media networks, programming and entertainment icons.

Media Violence:
Eight essays on media violence analyze the role of violence in entertainment, from video games and music to Web sites, television and movies. They also provide an overview of the research findings and key arguments that have framed the public debate on the issue, and explore the role media education can play in diffusing the power of media violence for young people. A chronology of industry and government responses to the issue is included.
Online Hate:
A revamped section on online hate explores the definition of hate, its motives and language and the tension between hateful speech and freedom of expression. The section also suggests ways to educate young people about how hate mongers may target them online, and provides an overview of pertinent legislation and voluntary industry codes that deal with hate.

New Internet Literacy Workshops
MNet expanded its workshop portfolio in 2002-2003. Parenting the Net Generation – our first workshop designed specifically for parents – is based on MNet's Young Canadians In A Wired World (YCWW) research. This 30-minute overview of young people's online environment and tips for parents was launched into communities across Canada by public libraries during Web Awareness Day in February 2003.

This past year, MNet's three professional development workshops were adapted for the American library market. Completed under a special agreement by the Ramapo Catskill Library System in New York State, these first international versions of our workshops will be introduced at the joint American Library Association and Canadian Library Association conference in Toronto in June 2003.

National Dialogue on Literacies for the 21st Century
As the media landscape converges, MNet is bringing together Canadian media education leaders to reflect on how the "new" media can be integrated into the traditional media education approach in Canada. This Dialogue will explore how media education can address issues such as citizenship, globalization, human rights and the critical importance of evaluating information. We see the outcome providing us with a new road map for teaching the multiple literacies that Canadian youth need in today's world. The first stage of the Dialogue will produce a White Paper to serve as a common starting point from which we will invite input from governments, professional associations, education and library institutions, and community organizations.

I know that Canada is way ahead of the U.S. in this area and I appreciate being able to see the great work being done for all people in Canada – especially children. What a relief for parents!
Rebecca Sorlien
Parent
United States of America

Your Web site was not only easy to use, but it had a wealth of information on a variety of media related topics.
Natalie Fleming-Adams
Primary School Teacher
Australia

Thanks for a great Web site and great ideas and especially the helpful rubrics which are so important in assessing student work and outlining expectations for them.
Max H. Brown
High School Teacher
United States of America

Girl Guides celebrate Web Awareness Day at the Lunenburg Branch of the South Shore Regional Library in Nova Scotia.
MNet is an authoritative Canadian voice for media literacy and its growing international recognition is well-deserved.
Len St-Aubin
Canadian Embassy
Berlin, Germany

Your site has always been incredibly informative, but your new design elements and navigation are amazing and have taken MNet to a whole new level!
Cathy Loblaw
Concerned Children’s Advertisers
Toronto, Canada

Congratulations – the new website looks great... it’s really snazzy and it is friendly and super-functional too.
Andrea Tomkins
Web designer
Ottawa, Canada

As a journalist for more than 30 years and a current radio and television news director, I have found your site accurate and informative.
Adrian Bateman
Journalist
Canada

Special Outreach Initiatives

Raising awareness about media education continues to be an important focus of MNet’s activities. Two major community-based initiatives were launched this past year to reach out to parents and young people. The highly successful You Go Girl in Technology! National Challenge to girls in all levels of Canadian guiding was issued in October 2002 by Girl Guides of Canada and MNet, as the first step in developing a full Internet literacy badge program.

Through a partnership between the Canadian Library Association (CLA), MNet and Bell Canada, public libraries across Canada launched the country’s first Web Awareness Day in February 2003, using the theme Parenting the Net Generation: It’s not just by the book anymore*. Posters, bookmarks and pamphlets, as well as Web Awareness resources for parents, were made available online in English and French to participating libraries.

For educators in Quebec, MNet began producing weekly ‘Teachable Moments’ for the Web site of l’Actualité en classe. The ‘Teachable Moments’ are based on current issues in the news and designed for teachers to use in class with students in grades 5 to 9. L’Actualité en classe is a project developed through a partnership of MNet, l’infobourg and l’école branchée.

And with funding from Health Canada, MNet began work on MediaPulse: Measuring the Media in Kids’ Lives – a new national media awareness initiative to reach out to health care practitioners that is being developed in partnership with the Canadian Paediatric Society (CPS). The project will formally launch at the CPS national conference in Calgary on June 19, 2003.

© Strategic Directions Council, 2000-2003 Ontario Public Library Week

Web Awareness Day
February 20, 2003
...at your public library
Thank you for your highly informative insight into the world of advertising for children.
Lia-Mariesa Murphy
University Student
Wales

I also strongly recommend that (parents) visit the Web Awareness site, bookmark it and go back often.
John Delorme
Educational Technology Instructor
Ottawa, Canada

What a great contribution you are making to the whole field of media education/media literacy!
Marieli Rowe
Telemedium
United States of America

Your site is absolutely invaluable for my studies and in developing future teaching units for classes You guys Rock!
Sharon Clogan
Student Teacher
New York, USA

I am developing a unit for the Government of Manitoba on the media. The information and lesson plans on teaching the media in your online instructional guide are superb.
Brian Hull
Online Course Consultant
Canada

On the horizon...

MNet’s production and outreach agenda for the coming year will be equally full. Here are just a few initiatives:

Young Canadians In A Wired World
Focus groups will start the next round of MNet’s research into young Canadians and the Internet.

Web Awareness Workshop Series
MNet will revamp its professional development workshops to incorporate MNet’s new research results and to respond to developments in the marketplace.

Médias en action
MNet is working with the Commission scolaire des Affluents, a Montreal-area school board, to create a new media education section of the Commission’s Web site for elementary teachers. This portal will provide self-directed learning modules and pertinent links to resources on MNet’s Web site, so that teachers can offer media education in their classrooms, in line with the province’s curricular requirements.

You Go Girl in Technology!
A full badge program will be launched across Canada in partnership with Girl Guides of Canada.

Web Site Development
New materials will include:

- Sections on Privacy and Online Youth Culture.
- Cyberbibliothécaires – a portal for librarians providing access to the latest Internet literacy information and resources. This project is being developed with a coalition of French-language library systems in Manitoba, Ontario, Quebec and New Brunswick.
ABOUT MNET

MNet’s Mission

The mission of Media Awareness Network (MNet) is to support and encourage media education, and its widest possible integration into schools, homes and communities. Our aim is to help people, particularly children and youth, to develop an informed and critical understanding of the nature of the media, the techniques used in creating media products, and media’s role and influence within society.

In executing this mission, we are guided by our fundamental goals to:

• Develop and deliver high-quality media education resources that are innovative, balanced and widely accessible in English and French.

• Provide leadership in advancing media literacy and contributing to the development of public policy on issues related to youth and media.

• Build broad public support for media education.

• Ensure good management of our human and financial resources.

The MNet Philosophy

MNet’s work is based on these core principles:

• Media education should build on the enthusiasm and energy young people bring to the media they love.

• Effective educational programs are learner-centred and foster life-long critical thinking skills.

• Innovative partnerships are key to ensuring relevant content and effective program delivery.

• Responsibility for sustaining MNet’s dynamic media education programs is shared amongst the public, private and not-for-profit sectors.

A Short History

MNet is a Canadian non-profit organization that has pioneered research, training, and production of resources for media and Internet literacy since the early 1990s. MNet grew out of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission’s (CRTC) TV violence initiative, and was initially housed within the National Film Board of Canada.

In 1996, MNet was incorporated as an independent entity under the leadership of Co-Directors Jan D’Arcy and Anne Taylor and a volunteer board that included senior representatives from leading Canadian media companies and the public sector. Since then, MNet has built upon its solid foundation to play a seminal role in advancing media education in Canada. With a staff of 17 working in Ottawa and Montreal, the organization today hosts the world’s largest English- and French-language online media education resource at <www.media-awareness.ca>.
BOARD OF DIRECTORS

MNet's Board of Directors includes representatives of its user groups, sponsors, and government. This model serves to keep MNet informed on the needs of those who use our resources, the media and IT environment and the public agenda. The participation of Board members who are leaders in their sectors brings to MNet a wide range of expertise and perspectives. As we begin a new year, filled with opportunities and challenges, we extend heartfelt thanks to retiring Directors who include our founding Chair Sandra Macdonald, Punch Jackson, Gary Maavara, Doug Willard, and David Fransen.

2003-2004 Board

Executive Committee

André H. Caron
Founding Director
Centre for Youth and Media Studies
University of Montreal
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Terry Price  
President-Designate  
Canadian Teachers' Federation

Bill Roberts  
President and CEO  
Vision TV

Jill Schoolenberg  
Director  
Business Group Leader, Client  
Microsoft Network Canada

Mark Sikstrom  
Executive Producer  
CTV Newsnet and CTV.CA  
CTV Inc.

ex officio

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Human Resources Development Canada

Ross MacLeod  
Director General Programs  
Information Highway Applications Branch  
Industry Canada

Jean Guérette  
Executive Director  
Portfolio Affairs  
Canadian Heritage

Claude Rocan  
Director General  
Centre for Healthy Human Development  
Population and Public Health Branch  
Health Canada
MNet's leadership in media literacy and the provision of quality media education resources for educators, librarians, community organizations, parents and young people is made possible by the generous and sustained support of our sponsors and funding partners. With the outstanding work of our Fund Development Committee, MNet's sponsor list continued to expand over the past year. In January 2003, Microsoft Canada joined us as a new Gold sponsor, AOL Canada increased its support to the Gold level and the Canadian Recording Industry Association (CRIA) became a Bronze sponsor.

**Founding Sponsors**

Bell Canada  
Shaw Communications Inc.

**Benefactors**

BCE Inc.  
CanWest Global  
CTV Inc.  
CHUM Television

**Gold Sponsors**

Bell Canada  
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AOL Canada Inc.  
Microsoft Canada

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CTV Inc.  
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TELUS

**Bronze Sponsors**

A&E Television Networks  
Craig Media Inc.  
Canadian Recording Industry Association

**Partners in Research and Development**

Canadian Heritage  
Health Canada  
Human Resources Development Canada  
Industry Canada  
Girl Guides of Canada  
CA*net Institute
THE M N E T TEAM

MNet's ability to deliver high-quality programs and resources is the result of the expert knowledge, experience and commitment to excellence of our staff members in Ottawa and Montreal.

During 2002, we said good-bye and best wishes to a number of team members: Mélanie Bhérer, Anne-Marie Kinahan, Alison MacLean, and Johanne Laurent. We also welcomed on board Cathy Blauer, Valerie Steeves, Gilles Parisien, Katia Martineau, Catherine Thurm, and Catherine Viens. MNet's work continues to be enriched by the experience and commitment of five founding staff members – Jane Tallim, Cathy Wing, Katherine Tait, Anne Taylor and Jan D'Arcy.

Executive Director

Jan D'Arcy

Administration, Communications, Fund Development and Marketing

Back, Left to right: Katherine Tait, Manager of Operations • Lynn Huxtable, Special Projects - Administration • Gilles Parisien, Financial Manager • Sandra Udle, Administrative Assistant • Susanne Ure, Project Manager, Site Re-design • Bill Allen, Director, Corporate Communications • Front: Cathy Blauer, Director, Fund Development • Anne Taylor, Director, Marketing

English Program Team

Left to right: Cathy Wing, Internet & Media Education Specialist • Jane Tallim, Director, Education Program • Valerie Steeves, Media Issues Specialist • Catherine Thurm, Program Officer

French Program Team

Left to right: Andrée Thibeault, Internet & Media Education Specialist • Catherine Viens, Program Officer • Louiselle Roy, Director, French Program • Absent is Katia Martineau, Program Officer – Media Issues
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