

ANNUAL REPORT 2023





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A message from the Executive Director



Dear friends and supporters,

Once again, the digital landscape preoccupied much of the general population's attention in 2023. Seems everyone is talking about and is concerned with the areas our work addresses: from AI (artificial intelligence) to AR (augmented reality), concerns about online harms versus the benefits new technologies bring, and the impact of misinformation on our society.

For example, Statistics Canada released a poll finding that 43% of Canadians are finding it harder in 2023 than even just three years ago to tell the difference between what is true and false online.

In 2023, we completed Phase IV of our landmark *Young Canadians in a Wireless World* study, which has been examining young people's relationships with technology since 2000. Nine reports (an extraordinary accomplishment) were published as part of the study, touching on every aspect of the digital lives of youth. This research continues to inform our resources and the study is referenced regularly in the media and by our peers.

Our education team kept very busy creating guides, lesson plans and videos on topics like online privacy, digital citizenship, digital well-being and misinformation. We also held our second annual Digital Citizen Day, encouraging everyone to make our online spaces more positive, and our 18th annual Media Literacy Week broke participation records yet again with over 150 organizations hosting events and sharing resources.

We reviewed and updated our Strategic Plan, a process that included updating our vision and mission, and articulating the four values that will

guide our work into the future: Learning; Integrity; Collaboration and Inclusion. We confirmed MediaSmarts' commitment to digital media literacy as a lifelong learning process for everyone of all ages. We will continue to strive to be a leader in the field, demonstrated through our unique research-to-resource model, that ensures all that we do is grounded in evidence.

We continue to be mindful of the digital divides that exist in Canada: urban/rural, social, economic and cultural, all intersecting with race, class, gender, age and ability. We work to support and include diverse experiences and perspectives in everything we do and strive to better serve equity-deserving communities in our country.

I'm immensely proud of the work our small but mighty team is doing to further digital media literacy in Canada, and I can't wait to see what we accomplish in 2024!

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.

84 resources

created or updated including lesson plans, guides and articles

922,000

unique visitors to our website

Thousands

of people reached through over **50** workshops and presentations

“[MediaSmarts resources are] so important, timely, relevant and Canadian - thanks for this work and your ongoing advocacy.”

—Janet Bell, EdTech leadership consultant, via Twitter @janetbell

Reaching our audience

Raising awareness about the importance of digital media literacy is a key part of our mandate. Through our social media content, our media outreach and our annual Media Literacy Week and Digital Citizen Day events, our team is reaching millions of people to advance digital media literacy education.

Website

2.5 million page views in 2023
(up 3.5% from 2022) ↑

Top 5 website content:

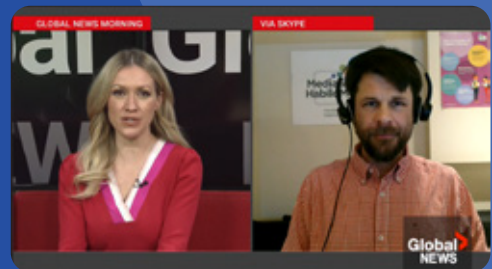
- Break the Fake misinformation resources
- What is Digital Citizenship?
- Diversity in Media articles
- Digital Citizen Day
- Media Literacy Week

Social media & video

38,700 followers across all our social channels (up from 31,000 in 2022) ↑

Overall, we grew our social audience by **25%** across Facebook, Instagram, TikTok and X

7 million impressions across all our social channels



Media interviews

Our experts conducted an astounding **247** media interviews (up from 153 in 2022) with outlets like The Globe and Mail, W5, Canadian Press, CTV, Global News, CBC Syndication, Global News and CBC All in a Day.

Video views

3 million on TikTok

280,000 on YouTube

56,000 on Instagram and Facebook

E-newsletter

Over **8,200** subscribers including **1,600** key education contacts across provincial/territorial ministries and municipal school boards

Media Literacy Week & Digital Citizen Day 2023

[Our 18th annual Media Literacy Week](#) was our best and biggest yet! A record-breaking 150 collaborating organizations ran activities including 30+ events, and we created some brand-new resources for educators to use including a plug and play [video lesson on online hate](#) as well as two new printable activity sheets.

Our second annual [Digital Citizen Day](#) was also a great success and brought with it some fantastic media attention, including interviews across Canada via CBC Syndication, iHeartRadio and Radio-Canada. We hosted two events with creators across the country to help drive awareness for the day.

Our reach for Media Literacy Week and Digital Citizen Day:

Creators with a combined reach of **6.8 million** followers posted about **#DigitalCitizenDay**

12 million hashtag impressions

47 million estimated audience for the press release

9 e-bulletins to over **9,000** education, industry and other contacts

Over **91,000** website page views

2.1 million video views on TikTok

Media Literacy Week is sponsored by Amazon Canada, Bell, Meta, TELUS Wise, TikTok Canada, and YouTube, with support from the Alberta Teachers' Association, l'Association des enseignantes et des enseignants franco-ontariens, the Elementary Teachers' Federation of Ontario, the New Brunswick Teachers' Association, the Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association, the Nova Scotia Teachers Union, the Ontario English Catholic Teachers' Association and the Ontario Secondary School Teachers' Federation.

“The best defense against disinformation and harmful online content is an informed and resilient population... Media Literacy Week is an opportunity for everyone to develop their critical thinking and learn how to promote a welcoming space online.”

-Pascale St-Onge, Minister of Canadian Heritage



Research & evaluation

Below you'll find summaries of the research projects MediaSmarts undertook in 2023. Our research informs every aspect of our work, including the development of our resources and our recommendations to civil society and policy developers.

Young Canadians in a Wireless World Phase IV

This year marked the completion of Phase IV of [Young Canadians in a Wireless World](#), Canada's longest running and most comprehensive research study on young people's attitudes and behaviours regarding the internet, surveying over 20,000 parents, teachers and students since 2000.

A national survey of 1,058 youth ages 9 to 17 was conducted in 2021 for this fourth phase of the study, which was funded in part by financial support from CIRA. In 2022 and 2023, we released the following reports based on our survey findings: [Researching Young Canadians in a Wireless World](#), [Life Online](#), [Encountering Harmful and Discomforting Content](#), [Online Meanness and Cruelty](#), [Online Privacy and Consent](#), [Relationships and Technology: Sexting, Digital Media Literacy and Digital Citizenship](#) and [Trends and Recommendations](#) (an overview of all the reports including highlights and policy recommendations).

The findings were mobilized through infographics, social media content, outreach to community partners and media outreach resulting in over **120 media interviews**. This internationally renowned study is foundational to all the work that MediaSmarts does and will continue to inform policy and set benchmarks for research on children's digital lives.



“When it came to Canadian research, when I began looking into this area no matter which prominent scholar I read, MediaSmarts’ YCWW reports were consistently cited. In my view MediaSmarts’ research in this area provides an essential benchmark of knowledge that helps inform both academic scholarship and public knowledge alike.”

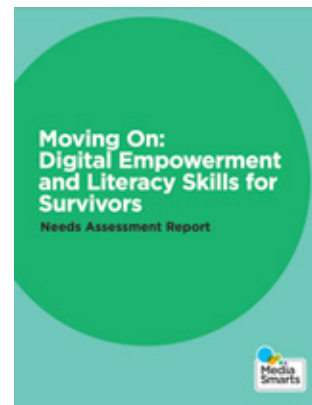
—Dr. Michael Adorjan, Associate Professor, Department of Sociology, University of Calgary

Moving On: Digital Empowerment and Literacy Skills for Survivors (MODELSS)

MODELSS is an intervention research project funded by the Public Health Agency of Canada designed to adapt, deliver and evaluate digital media literacy resources for practitioners in the violence against women (VAW) sector and survivors of family violence – specifically those who have experienced or are experiencing technology-facilitated violence and abuse (TFVA).

In 2023, we published a needs assessment [report](#) detailing the digital media literacy needs and concerns of survivors and VAW practitioners with a focus on addressing and preventing TFVA. Based on this research, we also designed three new printed guides which were distributed to practitioners in the field.

In 2024, MediaSmarts will release six workshops based on these findings to help educate and empower survivors so they can safely and confidently participate in online communities.



Reporting Platforms: Young Canadians Evaluate Efforts to Counter Disinformation

MediaSmarts facilitated [online focus groups](#) with youth ages 16 to 29 to look at processes for reporting misinformation on popular apps, with a focus on how young Canadians feel about current efforts to counter misinformation online and solutions they might have to share.

This [report](#), funded by the Department of Canadian Heritage, found that youth didn't trust platforms to counter misinformation online, and they felt platforms should make design changes that prioritize accuracy, transparency, trust, responsibility, and safety.

“In my opinion, it is important for platforms to counter misinformation and disinformation because of how misleading this information has been to people that are not sufficiently informed.”

—(16 to 18-year-old)

“I do not believe that platforms are doing enough, and I think that most social media users are aware of how much misinformation can be spread on the internet, but not how to decipher exactly what is misinformation because of the inadequate screening processes.”

—(19 to 22-year-old)



“Thank you, MediaSmarts, for developing these beautifully designed, comprehensive materials about media literacy. As a parent, I truly find them very helpful and valuable.

—Mila Siliayeva, Parent and leader of the Media Literacy for Parents Project at Clearpoint Elementary School in Montreal



New resources & programs

We continued to create and promote new resources for homes and classrooms to address timely issues including digital citizenship, online hate, privacy, digital wellbeing, algorithmic literacy and misinformation.

Lesson plans with the Information and Privacy Commissioner of Ontario

[Privacy Pursuit: My Privacy, Your Privacy](#)

[Privacy Pursuit: What is Privacy?](#)

[Privacy Pursuit: The Value of Privacy](#)

[Privacy Pursuit: Protecting Your Privacy](#)

Workshops

The ABC's of Health Misinformation with the Canadian Institutes of Health Research

[Unpacking the Black Box: Explaining Algorithms and AI](#) with Fraser Valley Regional Library

Digital Media Literacy in the New Ontario Language Curriculum with Lakehead University

Tip Sheets

[Supporting healthy media experiences for kids](#) with YouTube Canada

[Managing your privacy when using smart devices](#) with Amazon Canada

Digital Citizenship Tip Sheets and Videos

[Empathy and Community](#)

[Positive Technology Use](#)

[Sharing Information](#)

[Ethics and Privacy](#)

Resources with TELUS Wise

[Understanding artificial intelligence \(AI\) tools](#) - lesson plan

[AI and the classroom](#) - social media video

[Helping kids push back against online hate](#) - social media video



Programs

My Voice is Louder Than Hate & Facing Online Hate — Educator Outreach and Training

With support from the Anti-Racism Directorate of Ontario, we conducted a multi-staged outreach and implementation plan to promote the utilization of the *My Voice is Louder Than Hate* program, a multimedia tool and suite of resources originally developed in 2022 with funding from Public Safety Canada designed to teach students how to push back against online hate.

This outreach and training included: meetings and information sessions with key stakeholders; info sessions for school boards; a train-the-trainer workshop for Ontario teachers, schools, and school boards; evaluation of the train-the-trainer workshop; an update to our existing *Facing Online Hate* workshop for parents/guardians, teachers and trusted adults; a self-directed HTML5 version of the *Facing Online Hate* workshop; and four live *Facing Online Hate* online workshop sessions.



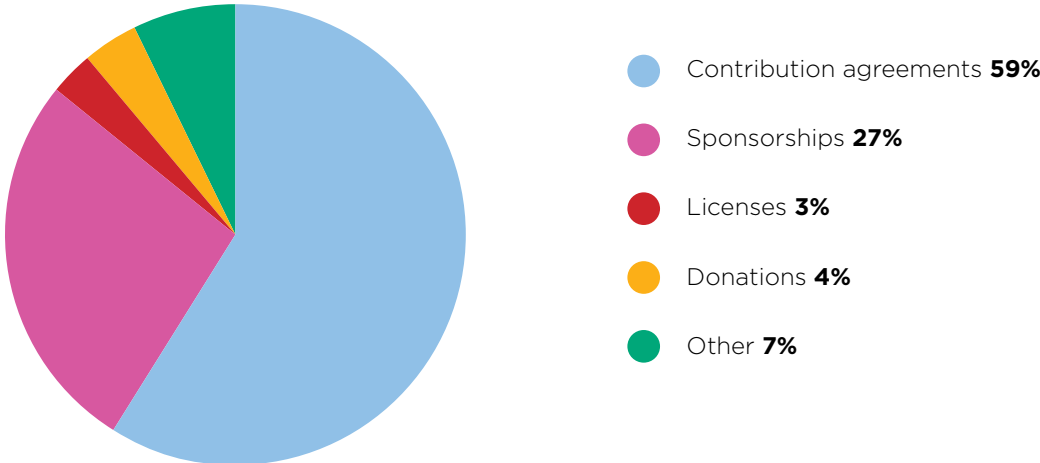


“I wish to commend MediaSmarts on the work that is done through your organization. Teaching media and digital literacy is crucial for helping children, youth and adults become responsible digital citizens.”

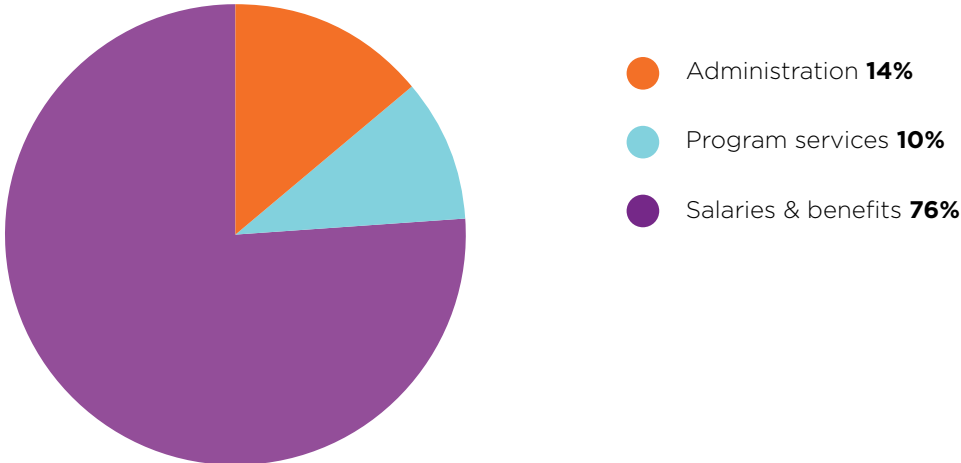
— Honourable Wayne Ewasko, Minister of Education and Early Childhood Learning, Manitoba

Financials

Revenues



Expenditures



Message from our Board Chair

As we wrap up another year of digital transformation, it's my privilege to reflect on the work being done at MediaSmarts to foster digital media literacy in Canada.

The team at MediaSmarts has been tireless in creating resources that empower individuals across all age groups. In 2023, MediaSmarts expanded our repository with over 80 new or updated resources, including lesson plans, videos and articles. From educators to parents, from youth to lifelong learners, these free and accessible materials have made a significant impact.

MediaSmarts' unique organizational structure allows us to delve into the lives of young Canadians through independent research, which then informs the resource creation process. The team doesn't just guess what our audience needs: they know it because they've studied it. The commitment to research ensures that the resources resonate with authenticity and practicality.

Through strategic partnerships, MediaSmarts extends our reach far beyond our immediate sphere - from urban centers to communities in the North, from classrooms to community centers, working with equity-deserving groups is a priority for the organization and our partnership work reflects this. Digital media literacy is not a privilege; it's a right, and we're committed to making it accessible to all.

I extend my sincere gratitude to our dedicated Board of Directors, whose commitment fuels our mission. To our sponsors and supporters, thank you for believing in our cause and making our work possible. Together, we are shaping an informed and digitally resilient society.

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.

Partners

MediaSmarts relies on the generosity and commitment of our valued partners, who understand the importance of providing tools to help people develop the critical thinking skills they need to interact with all forms of media. Thanks to our partners, we were able to garner greater impact by creating new resources and mobilizing digital media literacy knowledge across Canada.

2023 Corporate Partners





Community Partners

Agence Science-Pressé

Actua

Amazon Canada

Anti-Racism Directorate
of Ontario

AT&T

Canadian Commission for
UNESCO

Canadian Heritage

Canadian Institutes of
Health Research

Canadian Journal of
Communications

Canadian Paediatric Society

Canadian Sociological Association
(CSA)

Canadian Teachers' Federation

CBC Kids

Canadian Commission
for UNESCO

Centre for Indigenous Innovation
and Technology

Centre for International
Governance Innovation

Centre for Research and
Education on Violence Against
Women & Children

Centre québécois d'éducation aux
médias et à l'information

CIRA

Competition Bureau

Cree Health Board

DIY - Digitally Informed Youth

Durham Radio Inc.

Financial Consumer Agency
of Canada

GAPMIL

Get Cyber Safe

HelpAge

Information and Privacy
Commissioner of Ontario

International Handbook of
Research in Digital Literacies
contributors

Internet Technology Digital
Sociology Cluster (at CSA)

Le Ciel

Le Curieux

Maskwacis Cultural College

Mosaic Institute

NAMLE

Nia Centre for the Arts -
Project Blackout

Ofcom

Prime Ministers Teachers Awards
National Advisory Committee

Public Health Agency of Canada

Public Safety Canada

SickKids

Stolen From Africa

Toronto Public Library

Transcare BC

YWCA Canada

