



media awareness network  
réseau éducation-médias

<http://www.media-awareness.ca>

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*Media Awareness Network  
Réseau Éducation-Médias*

**1998 - 1999**

**Annual Report**

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## **Mission**

The mission of the *Media Awareness Network* is to promote and support media education in Canadian schools, homes and communities through a world-class Internet site. Our aim is to encourage critical thinking about media information, media entertainment and new communications technologies, and to stimulate public debate about the power of the media in the lives of children and young people.

## **Profile**

The *Media Awareness Network* is a non-profit Canadian organization that incorporated in 1996. It received charitable status in January 1999.

*MNet's* bilingual web site provides information, teaching resources, community programs and discussion forums on a wide range of media topics – from a uniquely Canadian perspective. The site covers news reporting, media ownership, advertising, the media's influences on behaviour and choices, protection of personal privacy, online marketing directed at children, authentication of online information, and more.

*MNet* is a world leader in providing educational approaches to emerging new technology issues, and is committed to maximizing the positive aspects of all media for the benefit of children and youth.

## Letter from the Chair

Since our last AGM a short six months ago, a great deal has been accomplished by the *Media Awareness Network*. This period of achievement is marked by a number of Canadian "firsts" for the organization.

*MNet* completed a major research project to determine the status of media education in Canada. The report, which links curriculum learning outcomes for each province and territory to *MNet's* rich teaching resources, is now online.

Also this year, *MNet* has produced unique web literacy resources that are beginning to be recognized as essential tools for today's teachers as well as for teachers-in-training.

Our new flagship programs for the community – *Media Awareness Through Guiding* and *A Media ToolKit for Youth* – both demonstrate how grass-roots media education can really work.

In April 1999, we were pleased to learn that our application to the Québec Government's *Fonds de l'autoroute de l'information* had been approved. This project, entitled *L'actualité en classe*, is our first project with a provincial ministry of education, and it represents a new and important advance for our organization.

Careful groundwork has been laid this year for the first Internet education and public awareness campaign to be held in Canada – *Web Awareness '99: Knowing the Issues*. The partnerships being forged for the 1999 Ontario campaign will provide a strong base for the pan-Canadian *Web Awareness 2000* campaign.

In March 1999, the *Media Awareness Network* was awarded the Canadian Race Relations Foundation's inaugural Award of Excellence for its innovative anti-racism education through the study of media. The most recent addition to *MNet's* anti-racism program – *Challenging Online Hate* – is another Canadian innovation, a unique tool to help parents, educators and communities in their efforts to fight racism and prejudice.

We are proud to welcome many teachers' federations, as well as Canadian broadcasters, individual educators and

community leaders as members of the *Media Awareness Network*. This demonstration of support for our work is an important step in our organization building.

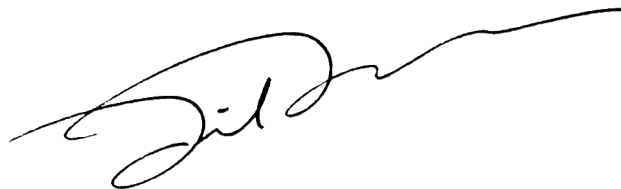
In January 1999, we received charitable status. I am hopeful that this will help our ongoing efforts to establish a stable base of funding for the organization.

The Board of Directors has continued to play a vital role in the organization this year. In November 1998, a strong representation from the Board, along with the Co-Directors, made a presentation to the CRTC's New Media Hearings.

We presented one central message to the Commission: if we are to optimize the strengths and minimize the pitfalls of the Internet for young Canadians, we must all be prepared to help them develop the critical thinking skills which the new media demand. These skills are becoming increasingly important for a healthy society. This is why the *Media Awareness Network* is such a vital part of the Canadian educational landscape.

In January 1999, the Québec Board members met for a full day with Co-Directors Anne Taylor and Jan D'Arcy. They developed a broad strategy to maximize the exciting opportunities facing the *Réseau* in Québec.

The *Media Awareness Network* staff continue to demonstrate an outstanding commitment to excellence in their work. Without this commitment, the successes of the past year would not have been possible.



Fil Fraser, C.M.  
Chair, *Media Awareness Network*  
President & CEO, Vision TV

## Report from the Co-Directors

*Thanks so much for this site.  
I have searched hundreds,  
and this one is easily the best  
and most compact I have  
found.*

*-Mike Gange,  
Media Studies teacher,  
Fredericton High  
School, New Brunswick*

*Votre réseau constitue un  
trésor national, une  
excellente ressource pour  
initier les futurs enseignants  
à la littératie des médias et  
de la technologie – elle est  
accessible, fournit des  
ressources originales aux  
enseignants.*

*-Gisèle Painchaud,  
Ph.D., Présidente,  
l'Association  
francophone de doyens  
d'éducation du Canada*

*Thank you for providing all  
those wonderful lesson plans.  
In a teacher's busy day, it is  
hard to make time to prepare  
lesson plans on such an  
important issue.*

*-Patsy Ho, teacher,  
Alberta*

This report finds us taking stock at an exciting and challenging moment in the development of our organization.

We have completed the first phase of *MNet's* Education Action Plan. This has resulted in a working relationship with a number of partners in the education sector – one of the foundation posts upon which our future depends. Our work next year will be to solidify and increase these partnerships.

Our work with community organizations, especially those that are youth-based, is giving us an insight into how important this sector will be to our fulfilling our mandate. As the number of children and young people using the Internet will rise dramatically over the next decade, our initiatives in web literacy programming will become increasingly important. This new program area gives us a unique leadership position that is both challenging and rewarding.

Site production continues to be a primary focus – especially our programming that supports the development of critical thinking skills for young Canadians on topics such as gender relations, anti-violence, and anti-racism. And we continue to forge ahead with our new web literacy programs.

In March this year, our French-language site Coordinator, Nathaly Isabelle, moved to Radio-Canada. Nathaly was a founding staffer of *MNet*, starting with us in 1994. Her commitment and achievements in building the *Réseau Éducation-Médias* site are gratefully acknowledged and we wish her the best in her new endeavours. We are pleased to welcome her replacement, France Aubin, who comes to us with a Masters degree in media education, and is currently completing her Ph.D.

As our organization grows, we are starting to address staff needs in areas such as basic benefits. Resources for development and training will increasingly become a priority in order for the *Media Awareness Network* team to maintain its edge in the competitive online world.

## Web site report

*We strive to have available resources that are easily accessible, that support our student teachers to use technology effectively, and that embody standards of excellence which allow our student teachers critical perspectives. The Media Awareness Network/Réseau Éducation-Médias materials fulfill all our educational criteria with flying colours.*

*-Stan M. Shapson, Ph.D.  
President, Canadian Association of Deans of Education*

*Ce que vous faites est très important pour nos écoles. Il est rare de trouver un site qui respecte les principes que l'on doit véhiculer.*

*-Jacqueline LeVert,  
conseillère en sciences humaines, Ministère de l'Éducation,  
Nouvelle-Écosse*

*This summary of media issues is the best on the web. I've been searching for how much the Canadian alcohol industry spends (top companies, top commercials) for weeks. This source is extremely helpful. Thank you for your efforts!!!*

*-Diane McKenzie,  
Policy and program analyst, Toronto*

At the last annual meeting<sup>1</sup> we reported that the site was 320 megabytes in size and receiving 600,000 hits a month. The past five-month period has seen an increase to over 900,000 monthly hits, while the site has grown to 350 megabytes. We have produced new online programming this year in several areas.

- **Challenging Online Hate.** With funding from the Canadian Race Relations Foundation (CRRF), the RCMP, Solicitor General Canada and Justice Canada, this new section was developed in partnership with law enforcement agencies, Internet service providers, and the community and education sectors. In March 1999, the program was launched at the CRRF Award of Excellence Symposium and showcased at the B'nai Brith International Symposium on Hate on the Internet.
- **For Community Leaders** is now underway, thanks to support from Health Canada's Population Health Fund. A media awareness program to support the YWCA's *Week Without Violence* was the first online initiative for this section. *Media Awareness Through Guiding*, which encourages girls to examine the messages about fashion, food, and beauty that they receive daily from the popular media, went online in February. With added support from the Crime Prevention Partnership Program, we produced *Making Your Voice Heard: A Media Toolkit for Youth*. Working with YouCAN!, the Youth Action Network and the National Youth in Care Network, MNet staff have designed and tested this dynamic new action tool for young Canadians.
- **Media Education in Canada.** Based on MNet's comprehensive study on the status of media education, new curriculum learning outcomes for media education are now linked by province to the teaching units on the MNet site.

<sup>1</sup> This report covers only a five-month period. We have adjusted the timing of our Annual General Meeting so that it follows our year-end financial reporting and audit.

*Votre site est un instrument pédagogique formidable pour les enseignants de la formation personnelle et sociale.*

*-Rodrigue Emond,  
retraité de  
l'enseignement,  
Rimouski, Québec*

*Children are our greatest resource. The Media Awareness Network's work and online resources can do nothing but make cyberspace a better place for children.*

*-Keith Daniels, High  
Tech Crime Unit,  
Ottawa-Carleton Police  
Services*

*At a time when children often precede their parents and even educators on the information highway, your contribution is inestimable.*

*-Françoise Bertrand,  
Chairperson, Canadian  
Radio-television and  
Telecommunications  
Commission*

*As I am teaching a technology in the curriculum course at USD, I plan on incorporating some of your information into my class.*

*-Rosanne Yost,  
University of South  
Dakota*

- **Le Réseau Éducation-Médias.** More than thirty new teaching units have been added to the *Réseau* site. These are supported by student handouts and background information for teachers. Major navigational changes have been made to ***Pour les enseignants***. This new structure is now being tested with user groups.

### **Web Awareness '99: Knowing the Issues**

As we move from accessing the Web to assessing the Web, new challenges are becoming apparent. This fall, in partnership with Ontario education organizations and libraries, *MNet* will be launching a public education campaign to raise awareness about the many issues that are arising as children and young people go online. A new section on the site is being designed to support the *Web Awareness* campaign, which will include online professional development for teachers and librarians.

Next year, *Web Awareness 2000* will be introduced across Canada.

### **Education activities**

Having completed the first phase of its Education Action Plan (English Program), the *MNet* team has met with over 50 officials from nine ministries of education as well as numerous school boards, teacher organizations and faculties of education across Canada.

With funding from CIDA, the Canadian Race Relations Foundation and Canadian Heritage, *MNet* conducted a major review of new English-language curricula in Canada. The project culminated in three reports: *The Real Picture*, a proposal for teaching materials to explore how the media shape Canadians' perceptions of Third World issues; *The Study of Portrayal of Diversity in the Media*, which surveys race relations education across Canada and recommends ways in which the media's portrayal of minorities and aboriginal peoples can most effectively be integrated into Canadian curricula; and *The Status of Media Education in*

*Un réseau efficace pour nous permettre de comprendre le fonctionnement des médias et apprendre à réagir face aux oublis des médias.*

*-Myriame El Yamani,  
Centre des Études  
Ethniques, Université  
de Montréal*

*Ces activités s'inscrivent parfaitement dans les orientations nouvelles que la Ministère de l'Éducation du Québec vient d'indiquer aux concepteurs des nouveaux programmes d'études québécois.*

*-Robert Bibeau,  
Coordonnateur de  
l'édition éducative dans  
Internet, Ministère de  
l'Éducation du Québec*

*À l'école ou mes enfants démarre avec le Net, les enseignants n'ont pas encore selon moi une culture d'internaute suffisamment critique. Merci à votre dossier que je leur transmets dès que possible.*

*-Henri Paturel, parent,  
Montpellier, France*

*This website has been such a great resource for me as a health educator. Media literacy is one of the most important topics that I teach, and this information has been very valuable!!*

*-Rebecca Pulkinen,  
Health educator, Oak  
Street Elementary  
School, Massachusetts,  
U.S.A*

*Canada*, the most detailed report ever produced in Canada on media education.

Le *Réseau Éducation-Médias* is continuing to expand and is now well positioned to play a dynamic role in Québec, where media education is to be integrated throughout the curriculum from Primaire to Secondaire V (Grades 1 - 12). Le *Réseau* sits on the Ministry of Education's media education advisory committee.

With funding from the Québec government, three projects are now underway in our Montreal office. The Québec Ministry of Education has funded *InterAgence jeune-press*, a project to stimulate young cyber-journalists, which le *Réseau* is carrying out in partnership with Cyberscol. The Québec Ministry of Culture and Communications has contracted le *Réseau* to conduct an evaluation of the study of newspapers in the classroom (*Le journal en classe*). And le Fonds de l'autoroute de l'information has provided major funding for le *Réseau* to initiate a project (*l'Actualité en classe*) to stimulate critical analysis of news reporting in secondary classrooms. This ambitious project will be carried out in collaboration with Radio-Canada, Micro-Intel and the new Québec consortium, Le centre de ressources sur l'éducation au médias.

Le *Réseau* continually receives supportive feedback from around the world, and is well poised to be a world leader in media education across la Francophonie.

### **Directions for 1999-2000**

In the next year the *MNet* team will focus its work in a number of strategic areas.

In the education sector, we will work closely with faculties of education to develop pre-service programs on web and media literacy. We will work with provincial ministries of education with the goal to establish the *MNet* site as an official resource for Language Arts, Health and Personal Development and Social Studies curricula. We will also begin to promote the use of *MNet's* online resources for in-service professional development. In Québec, education outreach and involvement in professional development will



*All the feedback I have heard is very positive about your site. We have also included it as a resource in our Senior 2 (Grade 10) Foundation document.*

*-Ray Lavery, Manitoba  
Department of  
Education and Training*

*Bravo pour votre site, nous sommes en train de créer quelque chose de semblable pour la Suisse romande. Je transmets votre adresse aux collègues des centes cantonaux.*

*-Louis-Joseph Fleury,  
formateur enseignement  
et médias, Suisse*

*Your work is extremely valuable, and increasingly is essential to what we are trying to do as teachers.*

*-Larry Booi, Vice  
President, Alberta  
Teachers' Association*

be the main focus of activity and work will begin to link our teaching units to French-language curricula in Québec and other provinces.

We will continue to expand the *For Community Leaders* section, to include resources for Boys and Girls Clubs and Scouts Canada and will work with youth organizations to integrate media education into conflict resolution programs across the country.

In the coming year we will extend the *Web Awareness* campaign to libraries, school boards, faculties of education and parent councils across Canada, in English and French.

The *MNet* site will be retooled to improve its navigability and extend its search capacities.

We will continue our organization building efforts. With charitable status now officially in hand, our fundraising efforts will increasingly be directed towards foundations. We will seek financial support from ministries of education across Canada, and continue our efforts to expand our corporate sponsorships. Increasing our membership base will also become a priority in the upcoming year.

As we begin our 1999-2000 year, we feel more than ever that the usefulness of our work is being recognized. Education and community institutions are beginning to acknowledge the importance of media literacy as a basic life skill. The emergence of the Internet as a mainstream medium of communication is increasing the imperative to give children and young people the critical thinking skills required to deal wisely with all sources of information and entertainment. Our work is cut out for us and we look forward to the future.

Jan D'Arcy

Anne Taylor

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Canadian Heritage

**1998 - 1999  
Awards**

*Award of Excellence in Race Relations*, Canadian Race  
Relations Foundation, March 1999

*Best of the Web*, NAWeb '98, October 1998

*Award of Excellence*, AMTEC, June 1998

*Magic Lantern Award for Outstanding  
Achievement in the Field of Media Literacy in  
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