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Report of the Standing Senate
Committee on Official Languages

INTERNET, NEW MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA



October 2012

RESPECT FOR LANGUAGE RIGHTS!

The Honourable Maria Chaput, Chair
The Honourable Andrée Champagne, P.C., Deputy Chair

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MEMBERS

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and

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Danielle Labonté

Excerpt from the *Journals of the Senate*, of Wednesday, 5 October 2011:

The Honourable Senator Chaput moved, seconded by the Honourable Senator Hubley:

That the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages be authorized to examine and report on the use of the Internet, new media and social media and the respect for Canadians' language rights; and

That the committee report from time to time to the Senate but no later than October 31, 2012, and that the committee retain all powers necessary to publicize its findings until December 31, 2012.

The question being put on the motion, it was adopted.

Gary W. O'Brien
Clerk of the Senate

At the beginning of the 41st Parliament, the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages agreed to carry out a study on Internet use, new media and social media and respect for Canadians' language rights. This being a timely matter, we sought to understand the place of the two official languages at a time when new technologies and Web 2.0 are growing in popularity.

The Internet, new media and social media have become a way of life for many Canadians. These new forms of communication are affecting the lives of Anglophone and Francophone Canadians, who are using them in many areas. These new tools are both instant and accessible. The use of these new technologies is spreading quickly, but are Canadians' language rights being respected?

During the course of our study, we met with more than 50 stakeholders (represented by 83 witnesses) at public hearings in Ottawa. We also received briefs from individuals, organizations and departments that were unable to appear in person. The public hearings took place over a nine-month period. We sought to determine whether the two official languages are being treated equally in this new digital world. Witness statements gave us food for thought and steered us toward solutions that will ensure that the language rights of Canadians are respected.

This report highlights four key ideas. First of all, accessibility is key. The federal government must ensure that all Canadians have access to broadband Internet and digital networks as soon as possible. Second, as is the case for services in person or by phone, online services must be made available based on the principle of substantive equality of both official languages. French remains underused in the new digital world, and measures are needed to increase its presence. Third, young people are the most avid users of new communication tools. They need to be reached where they are, in their language of choice. This issue is particularly important for the development of official language minority communities. Fourth, the federal institutions that achieve the best results take linguistic duality into careful account at every stage of their communication strategies, from understanding obligations to monitoring results. Exemplary behaviour must therefore be encouraged and shared, and appropriate strategies must be put in place across the public service.

We would like to sincerely thank the witnesses who honestly and enthusiastically shared their views with us. However, we regret that the Minister of Industry, a key figure in the Internet access issue, was unable to find the time to appear before us. We trust that the federal government will duly consider the results of our study to ensure that the language rights of Canadians are respected, regardless of where they live or any special needs they may have. We also trust that both Anglophones and Francophones will benefit from this digital world that, ultimately, belongs to them.

Maria Chaput
Chair

Andrée Champagne, P.C.
Deputy Chair

Executive Summary



The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages began its study on the use of Internet, new media and social media and respect of Canadians' language rights in the fall of 2011. In its nine months of hearings, the Senate Committee heard from more than 50 stakeholders (represented by 83 witnesses). It also received briefs from individuals, organizations and departments that were unable to appear in person.

The Internet, new media and social media have become a way of life for many Canadians. These new forms of communication are affecting the lives of Anglophone and Francophone Canadians, who are using them in many areas. These new tools are both instant and accessible. The use of these new technologies is spreading quickly, but are Canadians' language rights being respected? The Senate Committee sought to understand the place given to both official languages at a time when new technologies and the Web 2.0 are growing in popularity.



The Senate Committee's study showed that the Internet, new media and social media offer tremendous potential for the development of official language minority communities. The study also identified a number of success stories in the public service respecting the use of Web 2.0 technologies. It took into account the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks in place. The study also showed that young people are at the heart of the digital strategies adopted by federal institutions. One of the key messages that came out of the public hearings was the importance of reaching young people wherever they are. Most of the witnesses encountered agreed that this must be done in the language of their choice. The study recognized that French remains underused in the new digital world. It showed the importance of collaboration among federal institutions. It addressed accessibility, regardless of which official language users choose, where they live or any special needs they may have.



The Senate Committee report highlights four key ideas.

- @ **First of all, accessibility is key.** The federal government must ensure that all Canadians have access to broadband Internet and digital networks as soon as possible. Access must be universal, adequate and affordable. Ongoing support is also needed for innovative projects in official language minority communities that reflect the positive measures set out in Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

- @ **Second, as is the case for services in person or by telephone, online services must be made available based on the principle of substantive equality of both official languages.** French remains underused in the digital world, and measures are needed to increase its presence. This takes the cooperation of key federal departments, the private sector and Francophone and Acadian communities. This content must reflect the realities of these communities.
- @ **Third, young people are the most avid users of new communication tools. They need to be reached where they are, in their language of choice.** This issue is particularly important for the development of official language minority communities. The federal government needs to support the development of these communities in the digital world. This means supporting innovative projects for fostering the development and use of social media and mobile applications. This also means providing long-term support for building the capacity of these communities to use the Internet, new media and social media. This also means recognizing the special needs of minority schools, community media and the arts and culture sector in terms of support for new technologies.
- @ **Fourth, the federal institutions that achieve the best results take linguistic duality into careful account at every stage of their communication strategies, from understanding obligations to monitoring results.** Exemplary behaviour must therefore be encouraged, and appropriate strategies must be put in place across the public service. The federal government must conduct formal research on how official languages figure into the Government of Canada's use of social media and undertake to share good practices, particularly those outlined in this report.

With the Web 3.0 almost upon us, it is critically important to provide Canadians with the tools to actively participate in the digital economy and online activities in their language of choice. Consequently, the Senate Committee calls on the federal government to take note of the findings in this report and take action to allow Anglophone and Francophone Canadians to truly harness the full potential of new technologies and Web 2.0 tools. Ultimately this world, which encourages collaboration and direct participation, belongs to them.

A clear commitment by the federal government to respect the language rights of Canadians, regardless of where they live or any special needs they may have, can only bode well for long-term success. Consequently, the Senate Committee makes **six recommendations** to the federal government to give both official languages their rightful place.



INTERNET, NEW MEDIA AND SOCIAL MEDIA

RESPECT FOR LANGUAGE RIGHTS!

“Communicating promptly and directly with employees and with Canadians is a challenge, but it is also a great opportunity to promote democracy, to promote communication between the public and the Canadian government. It is very important for the future.”

The Hon. Tony Clement, President of the Treasury Board,
Proceedings, 27 October 2011.

INTRODUCTION

In the mid-1990s, the Commissioner of Official Languages regularly identified problems with how federal institutions used the Internet. However, by 2010–2011, only a dozen federal websites did not comply with the *Official Languages Act*.¹ The Internet has become one of the most important communication tools, if not the most important tool, that federal institutions use to interact with Canadians. As the annual report submitted last year by the Commissioner of Official Languages shows, the vast majority of federal institutions respect linguistic duality in their online activities.

However, new tools and methods have come into play. We are now living in the Web 2.0 era, where collaboration and direct contact with the public are becoming the norm. These new tools are both instant and accessible. The federal public service is called on to integrate this new philosophy into its practices, and, more importantly for our purposes, it is called on to do so while respecting both of Canada’s official languages.

The Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages (“the Senate Committee”) began its study on the Internet, new media and social media in the fall of 2011. As it is a broad topic that raises many questions, the Senate Committee adopted comprehensive terms of reference to examine the issues relating to the public service, the media, education, accessibility, and the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks.² The Senate Committee established the following objectives:

- Identify the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks currently in place in Canada that govern the use of the official languages on the Internet, in the new media and in social media.
- Determine whether, in this new digital world, the current system protects the language rights of Canadians in terms of communication with and services to the public (Part IV), the rights of federal employees in regions designated bilingual for language-of-work purposes (Part V) and whether it ensures that federal institutions are meeting their obligations regarding the development of official language communities and the promotion of linguistic duality (Part VII).
- Determine whether, in this new digital world, the rights of Anglophone and Francophone Canadians are being respected in the media and in official languages education.
- Determine whether, in this new digital world, all Canadians have access, irrespective of which official language they choose, where they live or any special needs they may have.
- Identify best practices.
- Recommend to the federal government ways of protecting the language rights of Canadians who use the Internet, new media and social media.

The study undertaken by the Senate Committee showed that the Internet, new media and social media offer tremendous potential for the development of official language minority communities. These tools promote networking, allow people to collaborate, make access to arts and culture more easily accessible and allow people to access services remotely. However, these tools cannot be used to their full potential until all Canadians have access to broadband connections and digital networks.

The study also identified a number of success stories in the public service. A number of federal institutions have already taken steps toward using Web 2.0 technologies, including social media. Some are still in the early stages, while others have already fully integrated Web 2.0 into their operations. In general, the federal institutions that achieve the best results take linguistic duality into careful account at every stage of their communication strategies, from understanding obligations to monitoring results.

The study also showed that young people are at the heart of the digital strategies adopted by federal institutions. One of the key messages that came out of the public hearings was the importance of reaching young people where they are. Most of the witnesses we heard from agreed that this must be done in the language of their choice. French remains underused in the new digital world, and measures are needed to increase its presence.

This report is divided into six sections. The **first section** defines the scope of the study and presents some recent statistics on the use of Web 2.0 tools. The **second section** covers the legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks in place. It shows the importance of collaboration among federal institutions and identifies the main legislative and regulatory

challenges. The **third section** addresses accessibility, irrespective of which official language users choose, where they live or any special needs they may have. The **fourth section** reports on the measures taken by federal institutions, primarily as regards social media, along with the successes and challenges in implementing these measures. The **fifth section** looks at the importance of new technologies for the development and vitality of official language minority communities, with special emphasis on the following areas: access to government services, education, youth, media and culture. It identifies a number of challenges that must be addressed so that these communities are better equipped. The **sixth section** summarizes the Senate Committee's main observations as regards respect for Canadians' language rights and presents recommendations to the federal government.

“Web 2.0 refers to Internet-based tools and services that allow for participatory multi-way information sharing, dialogue, and user-generated content. This can include social media, which allow participants with distinct social/user profiles to create, share and interact with user-generated content, including text, images, video and audio (e.g., Facebook, Twitter, YouTube, LinkedIn, blogs) as well as collaborative technologies that allow multiple users to collaboratively create content (e.g., Wikis, Google Docs).”

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat,
Guideline for External Use of Web 2.0.

WEB 2.0: AN OVERVIEW

Before we address the main subject, that is, respect for language rights, it is important to provide some background on the Internet, new media and social media, and Web 2.0 in particular. This first section defines the scope of the study and presents some recent statistics.

Scope of the study

The Senate Committee planned to study the use of the Internet, new media and social media in various contexts: the public service, media and education. Other themes surfaced during public hearings, such as access to digital networks, the development of mobile applications and the place of new technologies in the arts and culture sector. For each of these themes, we examined **how language rights are respected**, particularly as regards communication with the public, language of work, the development of official language minority communities and promoting linguistic duality.

Web 2.0 usually includes the concepts of interactivity, collaboration between users and shared content. In other words, online users take an active role: they create content and interact with each other. Social media is a key part of Web 2.0, but the term “social media” can refer to any number of concepts. Therefore, it is difficult to find one universally accepted definition. Generally, the term encompasses blogs, social networking sites, forums, media-sharing sites and wikis—in short, any tool that allows user-generated content to be created or shared.

CEFRIO,³ a centre that facilitates organizational research and innovation with the help of information and communications technology and brings together members from universities, industry and government, published a white paper in the fall of 2011 that outlined common uses of social media:

- ▣ **Share and collaborate:** sharing content and integrating individual contributions into the same document or product leverages collective knowledge by enabling multiple people to collaborate on developing products and services.

- ▣ **Chat:** create a two-way channel (communication, socialization) with colleagues, clients, users, partners and community members; externally, it helps build customer loyalty, in-house, it encourages employee engagement.
- ▣ **Research and collect:** use collective intelligence to more easily and effectively research relevant information; this helps tap into collective knowledge to generate and focus on innovative ideas.
- ▣ **Communicate:** share information, either in-house or outside the organization; this allows for the rapid dissemination of information to a targeted audience and maintenance of corporate memory.
- ▣ **Monitor:** keep abreast of the latest developments in an organization; this makes it possible to take the pulse of employees in-house and clients outside the organization.

Web 2.0 platforms are creating innovative opportunities for interaction between federal institutions and Canadians. They give Canadians a chance to provide input into policy- and decision-making processes. More and more federal institutions are using them as quick and instant ways to reach and communicate with Canadians. These platforms are also used in the education, media and arts and culture sectors. Generally, they are cheaper to use than traditional communication methods. Using social media requires fewer resources than traditional media. However, as we will see later in this study, respect for language rights can increase the cost (e.g., translation), and some federal institutions are unable to cover the additional expense. The same can be said for organizations working in official language minority communities that have not yet had an opportunity to embrace Web 2.0. This is the case for a number of community media organizations, for example.

Some statistics

Internet use: variation according to region, age and income

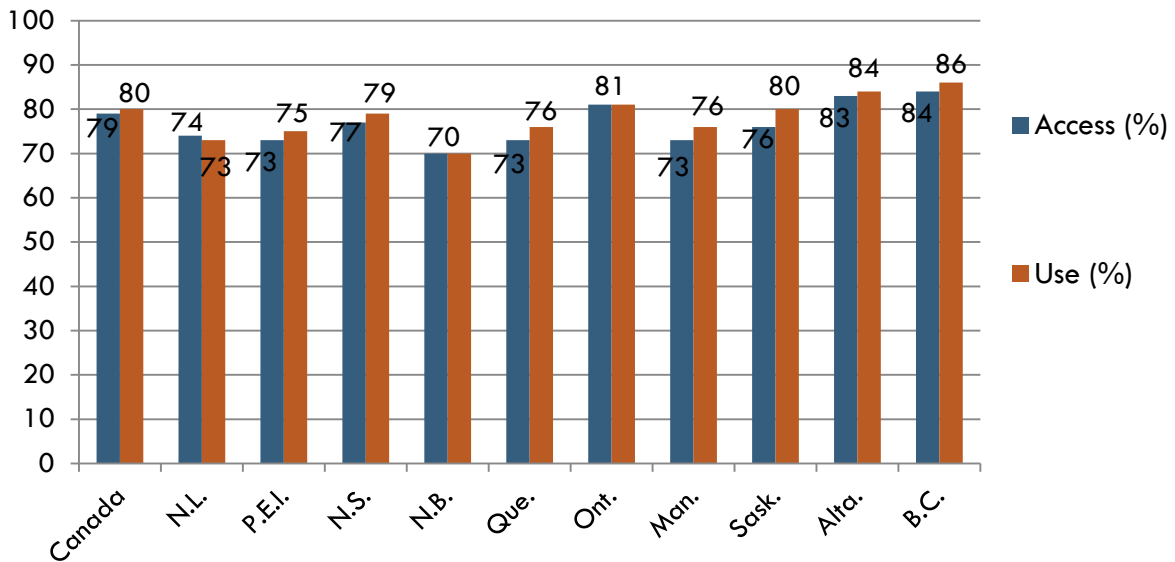
A recent United Nations survey ⁴ showed that Canada is doing fairly well as regards online service delivery (ranked 6th in the world), available infrastructure (ranked 6th in the world) and the regulatory framework in place to promote the development and implementation of new technologies (ranked 3rd in the world). However, Canada is not doing quite so well in matters such as the e-inclusion of its citizens, particularly as regards digital literacy (ranked 19th in the world). These results are supported by another report published by the World Economic Forum, ⁵ which ranked Canada 9th in the world overall for leveraging information and communications technology (ICT). Canada ranked lower for regular use of ICT by individuals, businesses and government, coming in 18th in this category.

Recent statistics show that a large number of Canadians have access to the Internet and use it regularly. According to data from Statistics Canada's 2010 *Canadian Internet Use Survey*, ⁶ approximately 79% of all Canadians had Internet access, and approximately 80% used it regularly. **It is important to highlight that Internet use is not the same for all Canadian**

households. Use varies according to region, income level and age. The term “digital divide” describes the varying levels of access, use and skill associated with new technologies.

As the following figure (Figure 1) shows, **Internet use varies from province to province**. Rates are lowest in New Brunswick and highest in British Columbia.

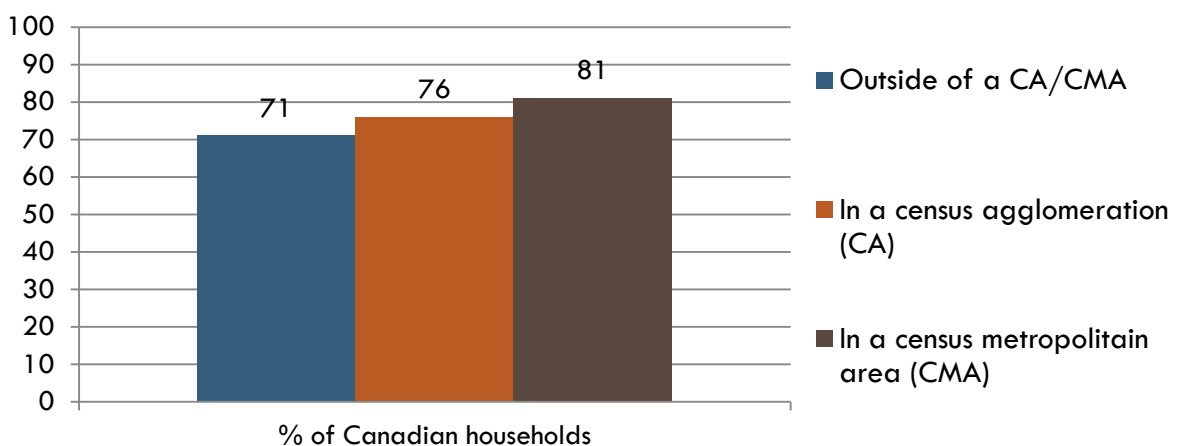
Figure 1 – Access and use of Internet in Canada, Canada and provinces, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada, *Canada Internet Use Survey*, 2010.

It is also important to note that **the type of access (broadband, dial-up, mobile, etc.) varies from region to region**. Approximately three quarters of Canadian households have access to a high-speed Internet connection at home, and one third have access through a mobile device. **Home Internet access varies by location**, as the following figure (Figure 2) illustrates.

Figure 2 – Home Internet access by location of household, 2010

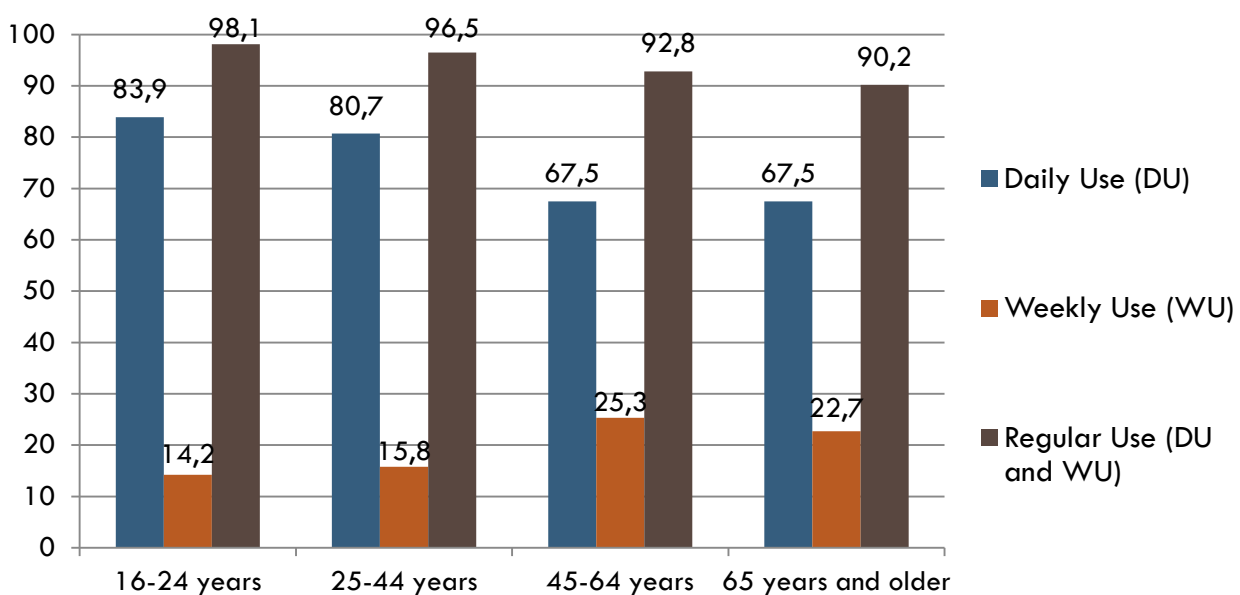


Source: Statistics Canada (2010).

The Statistics Canada survey also showed that **Internet use varies by income level.**⁷ In 2010, 97% of households in the top income quartile (\$87,000 or more) had home Internet access, compared with a rate of 54% of households in the lowest quartile (\$30,000 or less).

Unsurprisingly, the Statistics Canada survey⁸ showed that **daily Internet use in 2010 was highest among young people.** Canadians aged 16 to 24 had the highest rate of daily Internet use. This rate fell significantly for those aged 45 and older. Weekly use, however, was proportionately higher among those between the ages of 45 and 64 and those 65 years and older. The following figure (Figure 3) illustrates that there is approximately an 8% gap between the younger generation and the older generation if we compare their total regular use (daily use plus weekly use).

Figure 3 – Internet use by age group, 2010



Source: Statistics Canada (2010).

Broader use of social media and new media

Internet users participate in a wide variety of activities online. **Email** remains the most popular online activity for Canadians. In terms of **social media**, the number of people signing up for social networking sites such as Facebook and Twitter is constantly on the rise. Recent studies by CEFRIO⁹ have shown the increasingly significant role of social media in the lives, and the lifestyles, of young adults in Quebec. In fact, 73% of Internet users in Quebec are active on social media sites. Quebecers aged 18–34 use social media the most. Among Internet users in Quebec, young adults blog twice as much as any other age group. These findings appear to apply equally to the rest of the country. The following table (Table 1) shows the variety of activities carried out online in 2010 across Canada using data from Statistics Canada.

Table 1 – Online activities from any location (% of Internet users), Canada, 2010

Online activities	Percentage (%)
E-mail	93
Window shopping or browsing for information on goods or services	74
Electronic banking (e.g., paying bills, viewing statements, transferring funds between accounts)	68
Reading or watching the news	68
Travel information or making travel arrangements	65
Visiting or interacting with government websites	65
Searching for medical or health-related information	64
Using social networking sites	58
Researching community events	54
Using an instant messenger	47
Downloading or watching movies or video clips online	47
Obtaining or saving music (free or paid downloads)	46
Searching for employment	37
Formal education, training or school work	37
Listening to the radio online	37
Obtaining or saving software (free or paid downloads)	35
Playing online games	33
Downloading or watching TV online	33
Researching investments	27
Making telephone calls online	24
Selling goods or services (e.g., through auction sites)	19
Contributing content or participating in discussion groups (e.g., blogging, message boards, posting images)	19

Source: Statistics Canada, "Individual Internet use and E-commerce," *The Daily*, 12 October 2011.

The Statistics Canada data presented above shows that nearly 58% of Canadians use social networking sites. However, relatively few people (19%) contribute content or participate in discussion groups.

A number of other online activities are becoming more popular. The most recent *Communications Monitoring Report* from the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) showed that **broadcasting in new media** is being used by a growing number of people. The adoption and growth rate of various **video** technologies (by Internet, on smartphones, on tablets) rises on a yearly basis, both for Anglophones and Francophones.¹⁰ More and more people are watching **television programming online**. These statistics support the data published by CEFRIO¹¹ in the fall of 2011, which showed that online television viewing is on the rise and that watching videos online is increasingly popular, especially for young Quebecers. Across the country, Anglophones spend more time **streaming radio online**, on smartphones or on tablets, than do Francophones; the same is true for **downloading music**, listening to **satellite radio**, and using

podcasts. ¹² Few Canadian Francophones have embraced **e-books**. This trend may be explained by the lack of available tools in French, although initiatives have been developed to address this problem. We will examine this issue in greater detail later on. Lastly, it is worth noting the statistic presented in the table above that shows that approximately four in ten Canadians use the internet for **education** purposes, whether in the form of formal education, training or school work.

Websites, social media and the government

A representative from the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages estimated that federal institutions have made approximately 30 million web pages available to the public, with 15 million in English and 15 million in French. ¹³ Internet users are visiting government websites more frequently, especially to search for information, make transactions and consult files online. A CEFRIO study ¹⁴ showed an increased interest in online government transactions and showed that one in three Internet users in Quebec accessed their government files online in 2011. The following table (Table 2), compiled using data from Statistics Canada, shows the proportion of people in Canada and certain provinces who accessed **government websites** by mother tongue.

Table 2 – Proportion of Canadians who are aged 15 years and older who used the Internet to access information on government programs or services in Canada, at least once a month, by mother tongue, Canada and some provinces,ⁱ 2008

Region	Mother tongue	Proportion of persons within each language group who used the Internet (%)
Canada	Total	61.9
	English	61.0
	French	62.8
	English and French	67.6
	Other	64.4
Quebec	Total	61.2
	English	53.8
	French	62.6
	English and French	N/A ⁱⁱ
	Other	58.5
Canada minus Quebec	Total	62.1
	English	61.2
	French	64.0
	English and French	73.2
	Other	65.4

Region	Mother tongue	Proportion of persons within each language group who used the Internet (%)
Ontario	Total	60.6
	English	59.5
	French	65.9
	English and French	83.1
	Other	62.6
New Brunswick	Total	60.9
	English	61.5
	French	56.6
	English and French	N/A ⁱⁱ
	Other	86.9
Canada minus Ontario, New Brunswick and Quebec	Total	64.0
	English	62.9
	French	64.3
	English and French	N/A ⁱⁱ
	Other	69.2

- i Given the sample size used by Statistics Canada, it was not possible to obtain data from the other provinces.
- ii Suppressed to meet the confidentiality requirements of the *Statistics Act*.

Source: Statistics Canada, *General Social Survey, Cycle 22, 2008*.

CEFRIO pointed out that more and more Internet users in Quebec (one in five) are using **social media** to interact with departments and agencies. This statement could apply equally to federal institutions as well. Representatives from the Treasury Board Secretariat (TBS) appeared before the Senate Committee in the fall of 2011 and noted that 36 federal institutions have bilingual Facebook accounts, while 66 institutions have bilingual Twitter accounts.¹⁵ As the public hearings continued, this number only increased.

“THE CONTINUALLY EVOLVING AND CHANGING NATURE OF THE FEDERAL PRESENCE ON SOCIAL MEDIA POSE CHALLENGES IN THE PRODUCTION OF RELIABLE DATA ABOUT ITS USAGE.”¹⁶

Zegov.ca provides access to an index of Government of Canada organizations with a social media presence. Launched in March 2012, it keeps track of how federal institutions use various Web 2.0 tools. A statistical report shows how social media is being used within the government. As of 16 April 2012, the Government of Canada and its institutions hosted 228 Twitter accounts, 95 Facebook pages and 11 official blogs.¹⁷ Another recent study by CEFRIO¹⁸ showed that social media use varies from government to government, even within Canada. The governments of Canada, Ontario and British Columbia all have distinct visions for using Web 2.0.

Use by language

Recent statistics and the witness statements made before the Senate Committee show that **Anglophones and Francophones use the Internet, new media and social media differently**. In 2011, Anglophones spent an average of 18.2 hours a week online, compared with 13.1 hours for Francophones.¹⁹ Internet use has changed considerably in the last few years. It is very popular with young people and it varies according to the language group. As the following table (Table 3) shows, in 2011, the gap in Internet usage between Anglophones and Francophones was non-existent for the 18–34 age group and minimal for the 35–49 age group; however, the gap was much wider for the oldest age group.

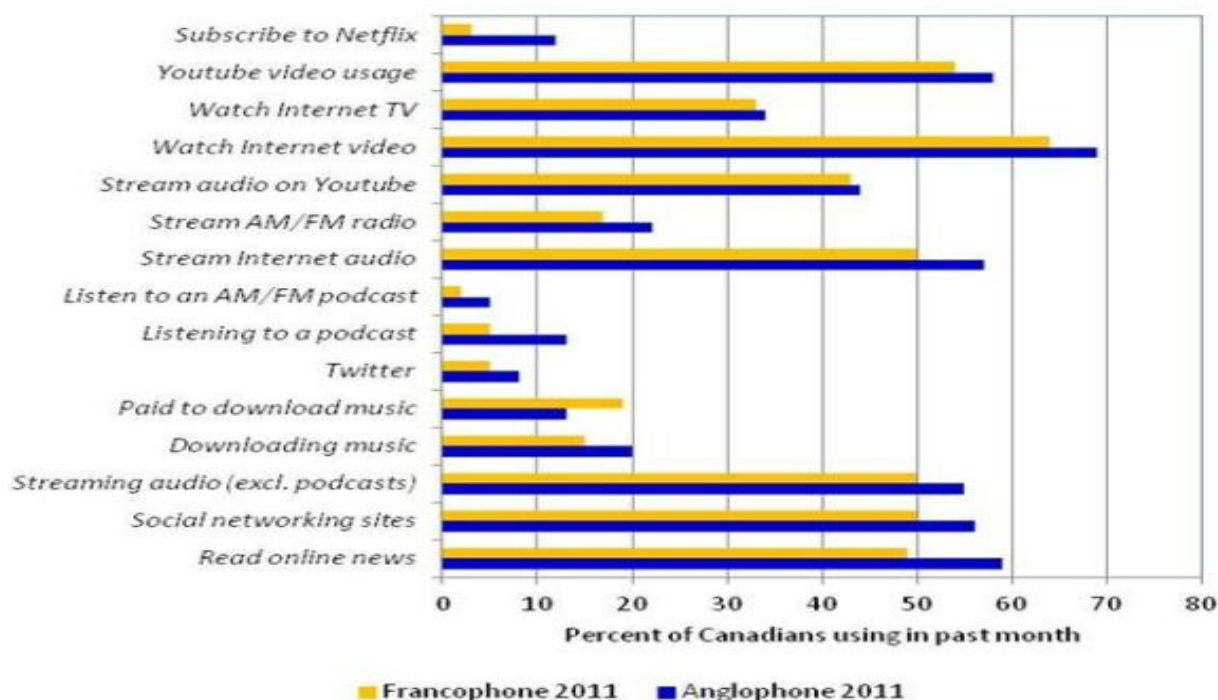
Table 3 – Canadian Internet usage, by language groups, from 2005 to 2011

	2005		2007		2009		2010		2011	
	Anglo. (%)	Franco. (%)	Anglo. (%)	Franco. (%)	Anglo. (%)	Franco. (%)	Anglo. (%)	Franco. (%)	Anglo. (%)	Franco. (%)
Overall Usage	77	65	83	83	83	76	86	79	87	82
18–34 years	91	86	94	94	94	93	96	97	97	97
35–49 years	84	76	91	91	91	88	92	90	94	92
50 years and older	60	43	69	69	69	59	74	63	75	63

Source: Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (September 2012), p. 109.

The *Survey on the Vitality of Official-Language Minorities*²⁰ provides data on linguistic behaviour for members of official language communities, but offers very little information on Internet use. The vast majority of Francophones in minority communities (with the exception of regions in Ontario and New Brunswick that are near the Quebec border) use English to access the Internet. The same is true for watching television programming, listening to the radio, reading newspapers and books, etc. **This fact was brought up again and again during the public hearings: English is used everywhere online, even by Francophones.** As for social media, we do not have reliable data on its use among Anglophones and Francophones across Canada. According to data from CEFRIO,²¹ 68.3% of Anglophone and allophone Internet users in Quebec and 57.2% of Francophone Internet users in that province participate in at least one social media activity a month. As shown in the following figure (Figure 4), more recent data published by the CRTC sheds some more light on the current situation.

Figure 4 – Popular Internet activities for Canadian Internet users, by language group, 2011



Source: Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (September 2012), p. 110.

According to a Leger Marketing survey ²² carried out with the participation of Canadian Heritage between November 2010 and April 2011, 78% of minority Francophones across Canada surf the Internet for an average of 9.5 hours a week. Internet habits vary according to region, as illustrated by the table below (Table 4).

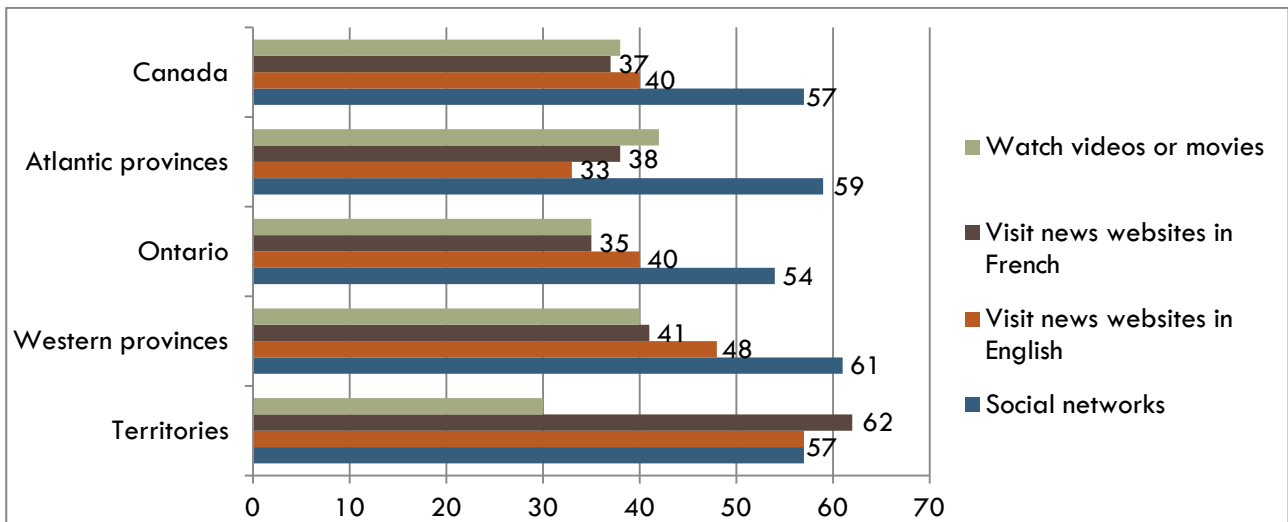
Table 4 – Internet habits, Francophone communities Canada and regions, November 2010 to April 2011

Region	Percentage of Francophone population surfing the Internet (%)	Average time per week (hours)
Canada	78	9.5
Atlantic provinces	72	9.8
Ontario	78	9.4
Western provinces	84	9.4
Territories	92	9.0

Source: Leger Marketing, *Study of the Media Habits of Official Language Minority Communities – Highlights*, with the participation of Canadian Heritage, March 2012.

According to the same survey, the main reasons people used the Internet were to access social networks (57%), watch movies or videos (38%), and visit news websites in English (40%) and in French (37%). Once again, Internet habits varied by region, as indicated in the following figure (Figure 5).

Figure 5 – Internet habits, Francophone communities, Canada and regions, November 2010 to April 2011



Source: Leger Marketing (March 2012).

Ontario has the lowest rate of social networking use (54%) and the lowest rate for visiting news websites in French (35%). It is striking to see the high rate of traffic for visiting news websites in French in the Territories (62%). The percentage of people who visit social networking sites varies little from region to region, while the percentage of people who visit news websites in English ranges from 40% to 57%. In total, 62% of minority Francophones have social media accounts: the vast majority use Facebook (60%), and a smaller number use Twitter (7%) and LinkedIn (5%). There is also a marked contrast as regards the language used on social networking sites. As the table below (Table 5) shows, minority Francophones across Canada use these platforms in French only (38%), in English only (37%), or in both languages (25%).

Table 5 – Language used on social networking sites, Francophone communities, Canada and regions, November 2010 to April 2011

Region	French only (%)	English only (%)	Both (%)
Canada	38	37	25
Atlantic provinces	48	30	21
Ontario	36	39	25
Western provinces	30	39	31
Territories	43	27	27

Source: Leger Marketing (March 2012).

This first section has shown that use of the Internet, new media and social media covers a broad range of issues and presents unique challenges as regards respect for language rights. During its public hearings, the Senate Committee sought to understand the place of official languages at a time when new technologies, digital technologies and Web 2.0 are growing in popularity. The following sections summarize the content of public hearings from various angles.

“As the use of Web 2.0 tools and services, such as social media and collaborative technologies, has become more widespread with the Government of Canada, it became apparent that there was a need to develop specific policy guidance for departments and employees to help them fulfill their existing legislative and policy obligations when using these powerful new communications technologies.”

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat,
Proceedings, 31 October 2011.

NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND OFFICIAL LANGUAGES: THE LEGISLATIVE, REGULATORY AND POLICY FRAMEWORKS

To better understand the language challenges stemming from the use of the Internet, new media and social media, it is important to first understand the governance structure. This second section provides a general overview of the current legislative, regulatory and policy frameworks and the particular challenges of implementing parts IV, V and VII of the *Official Languages Act*.²³

The existing framework

The Government of Canada uses the Internet as a platform to disseminate information quickly and to communicate with the public. More and more federal institutions are using the Internet to provide online services. At the same time, social media is making it possible for groups all across the country to engage in live, instant interaction. Blogs, social networking sites, sharing sites and wikis are among the new platforms that are creating innovative opportunities for interaction between federal institutions and Canadians. They give Canadians a chance to provide input into policy- and decision-making processes. Within government, they provide new ways for public servants to work together. More and more federal institutions are using them as quick and instant ways to reach and communicate with Canadians.

It is important to remember that the *Official Languages Act* was passed before the Internet, new media and social media came into being. The Regulations made under this Act²⁴ were designed to meet the needs of an environment based on written communication and services provided in person or by phone. The Regulations have not been updated to reflect the emergence of new methods of communication that are both instant and interactive. They also do not address online or virtual services.

Some **federal government policies** address the issues of technological innovation, new media, the Internet and digital communications, and respect for official languages, as listed below:

- **Communications Policy of the Government of Canada:** This policy outlines the government's obligations as regards communications with the public in both official languages, which is enshrined in the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*, the *Official Languages Act* and the accompanying regulations and policies. Federal institutions must respect official language requirements when engaging in a communication activity. The policy encourages technological innovation and the use of new media, but reminds institutions that some members of the public may have limited access to technology or may prefer to receive government information through more traditional means. ²⁵
- **Policy on the Use of Official Languages for Communications with and Services to the Public:** This policy addresses written and oral communications and services, specifying that both language versions must be available simultaneously and that the equal status of both official languages must be respected. It outlines specific measures for unilingual offices. Language obligations must be respected when the public communicates with or receives services from a third party acting on a federal institution's behalf. ²⁶
- **Policy on Language of Work:** This policy outlines the conditions that apply regarding the use of English and French as the language of work, both in unilingual and designated bilingual regions. In regions designated bilingual for language-of-work purposes, employees may use their preferred official language to interact with their supervisor, to obtain personal and central services, to obtain training and professional development, and to work with regularly and widely used work instruments and electronic systems. The policy gives a list of work instruments and computer systems that must be available in both languages. ²⁷
- **Directive on the Use of Official Languages in Electronic Communications:** This directive establishes conditions for using one or both of the official languages for electronic communications. This includes electronic bulletin boards, email, discussion forums, chat rooms and voice mail. Again, the English and French versions must be of equal quality and third parties with contracts or agreements with offices designated bilingual must comply with clauses setting out the institution's linguistic obligations. Electronic communications may take place in only one official language under certain conditions. ²⁸
- **Directive on the Use of Official Languages on Web Sites:** This directive outlines the requirements for bilingual websites (in offices or facilities designated bilingual) and unilingual websites (in offices or facilities designated unilingual). The English and French versions of a bilingual website must be of equal quality and be made available simultaneously. These requirements regard information originating from the office or facility. When the office or facility collaborates with a third party, the agreement must include clauses setting out the office or facility's linguistic obligations with which the third party must comply. Information can be made available to the

public in only one language under certain conditions. In certain cases, the office or facility must post a notice explaining that the information is available in only one official language because the source of the information is not subject to the *Official Languages Act*. These obligations do not apply to unilingual offices or facilities when the content addresses only the public served by that office or facility.²⁹

These policies and directives do not yet address social media. Over the past year, TBS has been reviewing its policy instruments and has invited Anglophone and Francophone communities to participate in the process. It is anticipated that some of the revised policies will come into effect in the fall of 2012 and that they will reflect the principle of substantive equality, as outlined in the Supreme Court of Canada decision in *DesRochers*.³⁰

In the meantime, TBS has established two **guidelines** that address social media directly. In November 2008, TBS adopted a guideline on the internal use of new technologies such as wikis and blogs.³¹ It addresses the internal use of the government's private electronic networks and internal collaboration tools. Its key points are summarized in the box below.

GUIDELINE TO ACCEPTABLE USE OF INTERNAL WIKIS AND BLOGS (2008)

- The requirements of the statutes, policies and directives listed above still apply.
- Federal institutions must create and maintain a work environment conducive to the use of both official languages. In regions designated bilingual for language-of-work purposes, blogs and wikis are considered bilingual work instruments. Interfaces must be available in both official languages and permit all users to choose the official language of their choice.
- In regions designated unilingual for language-of-work purposes, blogs and wikis are not required to be bilingual when used exclusively by unilingual employees. The language of use is the language that predominates in that region.
- For bilingual blogs and wikis, official posts must be published in both languages and users are free to respond in their language of choice. Responses to users' posts are to be made in the language of the post, but summaries must be provided in both official languages simultaneously and be of equal quality. The department must post a notice indicating the terms of reference regarding the use of both official languages.

In November 2011, TBS adopted another guideline, this time on the external use of Web 2.0.³² It applies to Web 2.0 tools and services developed and/or hosted by the federal government and third parties. Its key points are summarized in the box below.

GUIDELINE FOR EXTERNAL USE OF WEB 2.0 (2011)

- The requirements of the statutes, policies and directives listed above still apply.
- Official languages are recognized as one of the legal obligations that must be met as relates to Web 2.0 usage.
- The guideline covers three types of use: official use, professional networking use and personal use.
- When an institution undertakes a Web 2.0 initiative, it must consider the target audience (language preference, persons with disabilities, literacy levels, etc.) and allocate appropriate resources (human, technical and financial) in order to manage the accounts in both official languages.
- An institution using Web 2.0 must actively encourage participation in both English and French and ensure the equality of services and quality in both official languages. This requires planning ahead for the resources required (e.g., translation).
- Web 2.0 posts must be made simultaneously in both official languages, and users must be free to respond in the language of their choice. Responses must be provided in the language in which contact was initiated. Questions of general public interest must be answered in both English and French.
- Active offer of service is encouraged: users should know that communications are available in both official languages and that they can access an equivalent site in the other official language.
- Using tools already available in both official languages is strongly encouraged. Both the English and French versions of applications should be carefully monitored.

For the most part, the federal institutions that appeared before the Senate Committee found these guidelines very useful. A good number of institutions have established their own **internal guidelines** (see Table 8 of this report), but others have not (e.g., the Bank of Canada). The point was made many times before the Senate Committee that the practices governing the use of social media are constantly evolving and that institutions are doing their best to adapt using the means at their disposal.

A number of witnesses expressed the opinion that the principles in the *Official Languages Act* and the accompanying regulations are still relevant in the Web 2.0 era. The Commissioner of Official Languages made the following statement:

“DESPITE THE CHALLENGES ASSOCIATED WITH ADVANCED TECHNOLOGIES, THE INTERPRETIVE PRINCIPLES OF THE ACT MUST CONTINUE TO GUIDE US IN ADOPTING AN APPROACH. ONE OF THE MOST IMPORTANT PRINCIPLES IS CLEARLY THE SUBSTANTIVE EQUALITY OF THE TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.” ³³

TBS representatives confirmed this interpretation, saying that offline rules apply online as well and that the legislative foundation for official languages must be interpreted in ever-changing circumstances.

“JUST AS THE CHARTER HAS TO ADAPT TO CHANGING CIRCUMSTANCES, THE ACT IS ALSO INTERPRETED AGAINST A CHANGING BACKDROP. THE ACT REFERS TO SERVICES AND COMMUNICATIONS. THERE IS NO REASON TO BELIEVE THAT THESE PRINCIPLES, THESE CONCEPTS OF COMMUNICATIONS AND SERVICES, ARE NOT PERFECTLY SUITED TO THE LATEST TECHNOLOGIES WE ARE DISCUSSING TODAY. ... THERE THEREFORE SEEMS TO BE NO REASON TO DOUBT THE CAPACITY OF OUR POLICY INSTRUMENTS TO APPLY TO ALL THESE NEW CIRCUMSTANCES. THEY HAVE DONE IT. THEY HAVE MANAGED TO APPLY, EVEN THOUGH CERTAIN CONCEPTS NEEDED TO BE TWEAKED FROM TIME TO TIME TO DEAL WITH THE FEATURES OF EMERGING TECHNOLOGIES.” ³⁴

TBS representatives did not recommend changing the existing regulations. Only the Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada (FCFA) called for amendments to the *Official Languages Regulations*. We will return to this point later.

When he appeared before the Senate Committee, the Commissioner of Official Languages also mentioned that he had been looking into the issue of social media with a view to identifying principles that would guide federal institutions. ³⁵ When this report was written, the Commissioner had not yet revealed his findings.

The Senate Committee looked briefly at what is done elsewhere in Canada. It took note of several initiatives in Ontario and New Brunswick. For example, since January 2009 the French Language Services Commissioner of Ontario has had a bilingual blog that is a venue of exchange, interaction and discussion. The Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick made recommendations about the use of official languages in social media in its annual report last year. ³⁶ According to the Commissioner, it is a given that the province must establish guidelines for public agencies regarding this matter. The Commissioner was invited to appear before the Senate Committee to expand on his point of view, but he declined, saying that he had no further comments to make. ³⁷

However, the Senate Committee did have the opportunity to hear from an information specialist who has studied the issue. She gave an overview of the various usage models in New Brunswick. According to the witness, the complexity of a public organization using social media often affected the ability of that agency to comply with its official languages obligations. ³⁸ She believes that, to be effective, a regulatory framework must take users' needs into consideration.

“WE REALLY SHOULD BE LOOKING INTO WHAT CITIZENS WOULD LIKE TO SEE AND HOW THEY WANT TO PARTICIPATE IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA REALM WITH THE GOVERNMENT. SINCE CITIZENS ARE EMPOWERED AND FEARLESS IN THE SOCIAL MEDIA REALM, THEY REALLY SHOULD BE CONSULTED BEFORE WE MAKE A REGULATION THAT WE HAVE TO LIVE WITH.” ³⁹

That said, no clearly defined model at the provincial level exists to dictate the course of action for these new platforms as regards respect for linguistic duality.

Cooperation among federal institutions

The sharing of best practices was brought up repeatedly as one of the ways federal institutions could improve how they use the Internet, new media and social media.

Collaboration is a key part of Web 2.0 and is what has allowed a number of federal institutions to improve their performance, especially as regards respect for official languages. A TBS representative said the following about the advantages of collaboration:

“SOCIAL MEDIA IS A GRASSROOTS FORUM THAT IS SELF-SUSTAINING. ... IT IS A COLLABORATIVE MEDIUM THAT REACHES OUT TO EVERYONE AND ALLOWS THEM TO COLLABORATE, NO MATTER WHERE THEY LIVE [.] IT MAKES IT POSSIBLE TO EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND TO CONTRIBUTE TO COLLECTIVE KNOWLEDGE. ... THE POWER IS IN THE COMMUNITY. THE COMMUNITY TRIES TO COLLABORATE, INTERVENE, EXCHANGE INFORMATION AND CREATE DIALOGUE.” ⁴⁰

During its public hearings, the Senate Committee heard from the Communications Community Office (CCO). Its mandate includes supporting the use of new technology and new media within the federal administration. This interdepartmental initiative aims to increase knowledge, networking and the sharing of best practices among communicators in federal departments and agencies.

To accomplish this, the Emerging Technologies Working Group was established. It provides resources, expertise and conferences on networking. It has a virtual centre of excellence on GCpedia, the federal government’s internal wiki, and it has developed a toolkit with social media resources for external communication. More than 30 federal institutions participated in developing this toolkit, and they used social media to do so. The representative from the Communications Community Office made the following observation:

“A LOT OF THAT WORK WAS DONE VIRTUALLY ON [GCPEDIA], AND THAT IS HOW THE CCO WAS ABLE TO PUT TOGETHER A SOCIAL MEDIA TOOLKIT ON [GCPEDIA], EVEN BEFORE WE HAD A GUIDELINE. THOSE PEOPLE, ON [GCPEDIA], ALSO CONTRIBUTED TO THE GUIDELINE THAT WAS ISSUED IN NOVEMBER. WHEN SOMETHING NEW COMES UP, SOME BASIC GROUND WORK HAS TO BE DONE BEFORE A GUIDELINE CAN BE ESTABLISHED. THAT IS PART OF THE WORK THAT WAS DONE BY THE CCO.” ⁴¹

Several witnesses who appeared before the Senate Committee noted that an unofficial collaborative group had been formed to identify and share best practices for social media and information technology. It is called the Web 2.0 Practitioners Group. Other witnesses mentioned that collaborating this way allowed federal institutions to be innovative in their Web 2.0 activities, despite their sometimes limited resources.

Challenges

Relevant, up-to-date and accessible information

For some witnesses, keeping abreast of the new Web 2.0 platforms is a challenge in itself. In a world where more and more information is available online, the public wants access to relevant information that is readily available and easy to understand. A representative from Environment Canada said that the main difficulty his department faces is the **volume of information**.

“IF ANYTHING, WE NEED TO RETRENCH A LITTLE TO FOCUS OUR COMMUNICATIONS OUT, OBVIOUSLY IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES. SOMETIMES THE ISSUE IS NOT SO MUCH ACCESS TO INFORMATION BUT ACCESS TO TOO MUCH INFORMATION. WHEN YOUR CLIENTS ARE ASKING FOR REAL-TIME QUALITY INFORMATION AND YOU HAVE A MULTITUDE OF POINTS WHERE THEY CAN COLLECT THAT INFORMATION, IT MIGHT NOT BE SERVING OUR CLIENTS AS BEST WE COULD SERVE THEM.” ⁴²

A number of federal institutions are therefore looking to improve their online presence. As the President of the Treasury Board sees it, having an online presence is both a challenge and an opportunity. ⁴³ Of course, all of this must be done while ensuring that both official languages are of equal quality. However, as we will see later on, **translation takes time and resources, which does not always lend itself well to the instant and free nature of social media**. A representative of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada said the following:

“THE CHALLENGE IS IN TAKING THE TIME TO DO IT RIGHT AND TO RESPECT ALL OF OUR OBLIGATIONS IN THIS NEW MEDIUM. WE WILL CONTINUE TO LEARN AND ADAPT OUR APPROACHES AS WE GO ALONG.” ⁴⁴

Appropriate use of platforms

In general, people expect government employees and the public to be aware of the **obligations, expected behaviours** and **risks** related to using Web 2.0. It is important for government employees to follow certain terms of use for social media and to demonstrate integrity in their online activities. A representative from CEFRIO made the following statement:

“THERE IS A MAJOR CHALLENGE IN GOVERNMENT REGARDING THE FREEDOM OF EXPRESSION THAT SOCIAL MEDIA ENTAIL. WHEN YOU ARE A GOVERNMENT EMPLOYEE, YOU HAVE A DUTY OF RESTRAINT THAT IS LESS CONSISTENT WITH THE NOTION OF SOCIAL MEDIA. THE FACT REMAINS, HOWEVER, THAT THIS ASPECT IS UNDERSTOOD AND ACCEPTED. EVEN IF WE USE SOCIAL MEDIA, WE HAVE OBLIGATIONS AND DUTIES. A LOT OF WORK ALSO HAS TO BE DONE TO EDUCATE YOUNGER PEOPLE. ... SO THERE IS A STEP THAT HAS TO BE TAKEN AT THE GOVERNMENT LEVEL. THERE HAS TO BE A CERTAINTY THAT STAFF ARE EDUCATED ENOUGH TO UNDERSTAND THE ROLE AND IMPACT OF SOCIAL MEDIA.” ⁴⁵

Privacy and information security rules must also be considered, both for those who create the content and those who use the content. There are other considerations as well. When an institution begins using social media, it may have a hard time finding its stride. What are the advantages of having a Twitter account over a Facebook page? How can a blog help the institution carry out its activities? How and when should it consult the public on decisions to be made, and what conditions must be met for it to use online consultations? **Answering these questions requires good planning, from understanding obligations to monitoring results.** We will look at this issue in greater depth later on.

A flexible and adaptable legislative and regulatory framework

Many witnesses emphasized the importance of **having a suitable framework to govern the use of these new platforms**, whether for official languages, privacy protection, or any other issue relating to social media. The President of the Treasury Board acknowledged how important—essential, even—it is to have such guidelines.⁴⁶

Rules have been established at the federal level to govern participation in social media. There are guidelines for official use, professional networking use and personal use. Risks associated with using social media include failure to comply with official language requirements and failure to monitor third-party use. The guideline adopted by TBS in November 2011 outlines rules to ensure that content is presented in both languages, that English and French are treated equally, that the public is actively offered to interact in either language, and that official language needs (e.g., translation) are taken into account ahead of time. The guideline mentions that federal departments must comply with Part IV of the *Official Languages Act* (communications with and services to the public) and Part VII (promoting linguistic duality and community development) in their use of Web 2.0 tools and services. However, the guideline does not refer to the obligations in Part V of the Act (language of work). That section was addressed in a previous guideline adopted in November 2008 on the internal use of Web 2.0 within the federal government.

Several witnesses pointed out that if the framework is too restrictive, some institutions may limit themselves to the prescribed obligations without taking any initiative to go beyond them. **The main goal is to provide interesting content that reflects the reality of the people who are consuming it.** A representative of the National Film Board made the following observation:

“CANADIANS WANT TO SEE THEMSELVES, WHETHER THEY ARE YOUNG OR NOT SO YOUNG. THEY WANT TO SEE THEIR OWN STORIES. AND IF WE CAN MAKE THESE STORIES AVAILABLE I THINK IT WOULD BE MORE EFFECTIVE THAN TRYING TO REGULATE.”⁴⁷

According to an information specialist who appeared before the Senate Committee, the very culture of social media must be taken into account when it is used in a context where **it is understood that communications with the public must take place in both official languages.**⁴⁸ This culture is **instant** and **interactive**. Most social media content is generated by and for users. In this context, institutions need a framework that clearly establishes rules,

while also being flexible enough to take users' needs into account. When an institution decides to begin using social media, it should consult with its target audience and be able to adjust its practices accordingly.

The vast majority of federal institutions that appeared before the Senate Committee were satisfied with the recent guidelines established by the federal government. Since new technology changes so rapidly, practices often develop before statutes and regulations can be enforced.

Promoting the use of French

Many of the witnesses that appeared before the Senate Committee emphasized the importance of raising the profile of the French language, both online and through new tools that are being developed, such as mobile applications. This is not a new idea. From 1999 to 2005, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages published a number of studies about the use of official languages on the Internet.⁴⁹ Then-commissioner Dyane Adam noted shortcomings regarding the use of French. It would appear that, still today, the federal government is interested in **supporting content development in French**. The current Commissioner of Official Languages, Graham Fraser, made the following statement:

“MICROSOFT HAS DEVELOPED PROGRAMS IN WELSH. I THINK THE NUNAVUT GOVERNMENT IS WORKING WITH APPLE TO DEVELOP PROGRAMS IN INUKTITUT. IN MY OPINION, THE MEDIA REPRESENT A GREAT OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP NEW COMMUNICATION NETWORKS AMONG [FRANCOPHONES].”⁵⁰

The place of French is of great importance within the federal government, as a representative of CEFRIO pointed out:

“IF WE CONSIDER THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, ONE OF THE MAJOR CHALLENGES WILL OF COURSE BE ENSURING THAT FRENCH IS AS MUCH IN EVIDENCE AS IT IS ELSEWHERE IN OTHER FORUMS.”⁵¹

As we will see later on, federal institutions have already tried to promote the use of French online. **The public hearings showed that special attention must be paid to the French language and that measures must be taken to increase its presence.** The Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française sums the situation up well:

“ORGANIZATIONS AND GOVERNMENTS MUST HAVE THE ABILITY TO COMMUNICATE IN FRENCH USING ALL POSSIBLE MEDIA, INCLUDING THE WEB. BUT MORE THAN SIMPLY PROVIDING INFORMATION IN FRENCH, WE MUST ESTABLISH AND MAINTAIN TWO-WAY COMMUNICATION IN FRENCH. USING ALL THESE METHODS WILL ENABLE CANADA'S [F]RANCOPHONE YOUTH TO GROW AND DEVELOP IN FRENCH IN EVERY ASPECT OF THEIR LIVES.”⁵²

This second section has shown that the use of the Internet, new media and social media is governed in various ways, which include measures targeting respect for official languages. In general, all federal institutions must comply with this framework. However, Web 2.0 activities pose certain challenges. Information must be relevant, timely and accessible. Platforms must be used appropriately. The framework must be adequate, without being excessive, and French should be featured prominently in a digital world that is still English-dominant.

“Although major progress has been made in the past two years to improve broadband coverage in rural areas, there are still [F]rancophone regions that are poorly served. I am thinking of the Port au Port Peninsula in Newfoundland, which is home to a large part of the province’s [F]rancophone community. I could also mention the West Prince region in Prince Edward Island, as well as rural regions in southern Manitoba. For those [F]rancophones, who often still use a 56K connection, as they did 10 years ago, access is the basis of everything. It is fine to be sitting in the driver’s seat, but if you do not have the key, you will go nowhere.”

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada,
Proceedings, 14 November 2011.

“In terms of our communities, the ones most at risk of not having broadband access would be in the far east of the province, the Lower North Shore, the Magdalen Islands, the Gaspé, and then areas of the townships, just because of the geography of the townships. Once you get out of the Sherbrooke CMA and down closer to the American border, broadband is always a problem.”

Quebec Community Groups Network,
Proceedings, 14 November 2011.

ACCESS IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

The use of the Internet, new media and social media raises questions about accessibility, irrespective of which official language people choose, where they live or any special needs they may have. Some people have a very limited knowledge of the two official languages. Others live in remote areas where access to broadband Internet service and digital networks appears to be limited. And there are Anglophone and Francophone Canadians with a visual or hearing impairment, are illiterate or have other special needs. In this context, the Senate Committee looked at access to new forms of communication. This third section gives an overview of the main findings and challenges in this regard.

Broadband Internet

Access still lacking in rural areas

Broadband Internet access was identified as a key issue during the public hearings. There appears to be a digital divide based on where Canadians live. The CRTC’s *Communications Monitoring Report* published in September 2012 showed that approximately 97% of Canadian households have access to broadband Internet; however, broadband availability changes according to the type of technology used, it varies from province to province and on whether the area in question is rural or urban.⁵³ There are also cases in which access is not

available, even near large cities, simply because it is not cost-effective for private companies to cover these regions.

While the lack of Internet access is not limited to official language minority communities, these communities are often in rural areas and are at a disadvantage as a result. These communities must overcome a double barrier to Internet access, and yet this access is a key factor to ensuring their own prosperity and that of the region.

It must be noted from the outset that expanding Internet access is not the sole jurisdiction of the federal government. The CRTC believes that expanding broadband Internet services must be achieved through **public-private partnership**. The CRTC has adopted regulatory measures to encourage private companies to expand their broadband Internet services to reach all Canadians. The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages acknowledged that the issue of Internet access is complicated.⁵⁴ The President of the Treasury Board noted the following:

“[I]T IS THE RESPONSIBILITY OF BOTH SIDES: THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND THE GOVERNMENT. IT IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE REGULATIONS AND DIRECTIVES FOR THE PRIVATE SECTOR IN ORDER TO INCREASE THEIR BROADBAND COVERAGE. AT THE SAME TIME, WE CREATED A PROGRAM UNDER THE [E]CONOMIC [A]CTION [P]LAN FOR OTHER UNDERSERVED REGIONS. THE PROGRAM TARGETS THE PRIVATE SECTOR, AND IT INCLUDES A FUNDING PLAN FOR BROADBAND.”⁵⁵

The federal government created the Broadband Canada Program as part of its Economic Action Plan. This program aims to develop and implement a strategy to make broadband service available to as many unserved/underserved Canadian households as possible.

“CURRENTLY, THE PROGRAM IS PROVIDING APPROXIMATELY \$118M IN FINANCIAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO 85 PROJECTS (IN BC, AB, MB, ON, QC, NWT) THAT WILL MAKE BROADBAND SERVICE AVAILABLE TO ABOUT 214,000 PREVIOUSLY UNSERVED/UNDERSERVED HOUSEHOLDS.”⁵⁶

According to more recent data, between 2009 and 2012, the Broadband Canada Program provided broadband Internet access to 218,000 unserved or underserved households. However, the Program expired on 31 March 2012. From information available on the Industry Canada website, there does not appear to be any other rural broadband program planned at this time.⁵⁷ Based on the most recent CRTC data, only 83% of Canadians had access to broadband at home in 2011, up 3% from the previous year.⁵⁸

In its updated Economic Action Plan, published in March 2012, the federal government committed to further measures to improve rural access to broadband services but did not provide any details.

“THE GOVERNMENT RECOGNIZES THAT HIGH-QUALITY BROADBAND NETWORKS ARE ESSENTIAL FOR ENHANCING LOCAL ECONOMIC OPPORTUNITIES AND FOR PROVIDING ACCESS TO VALUABLE SERVICES.”⁵⁹

A 2009 CRTC report found that official language minority communities were at a disadvantage as regards broadband Internet access, and it called on the government to act quickly to deploy affordable technology in rural areas.⁶⁰

Standards and needs

In Canada, broadband is defined as a minimum of 1.5 megabits per second (Mbps). During the public hearings, some witnesses noted that this transmission speed may not be sufficient to meet the needs of the public. In the United States, broadband speeds are a minimum of 4 Mbps. In Sweden, Australia and Finland, the standard is 100 Mbps. The following quote is from a recent CRTC report:

“CANADIAN INTERNET NEEDS, IN ALL REGIONS OF CANADA, HAVE CHANGED AND CONTINUE TO CHANGE. CANADIANS ARE DEMANDING HIGHER SPEEDS, HIGHER DATA TRANSFER CAPACITY, AND FLEXIBILITY IN THE USE OF THEIR FIXED, MOBILE, AND HANDHELD DEVICES.”⁶¹

In this regard, the CRTC set as a target that, by 2015, all Canadians are to have broadband access at certain **minimum speeds**. It expects that this target will be reached through a combination of **investments** and **public-private partnerships**, targeting speeds of at least 5 Mbps for downloads and 1 Mbps for uploads.⁶²

TBS representatives noted that some of the new communication tools do not require a large amount of bandwidth.⁶³ While this is true of Twitter, which broadcasts information in short messages, this does not apply to all social media. As for the Internet, opinions vary. TBS representatives shared the following opinion:

“AND REGARDING THE INTERNET, IT IS TRUE THAT THAT THERE IS CONTENT THAT REQUIRES A LOT OF BANDWIDTH, BUT THERE IS ALSO A LOT OF TEXT CONTENT THAT IS ACCESSIBLE EVEN IF PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE LATEST, HIGHEST-SPEED DEVICES.”⁶⁴

CEFRIO representatives thought that 1.5 Mbps was not fast enough to meet users' needs. At that speed, it is difficult for users to share large files or stream high-resolution video, or for artists to collaborate in virtual creative meetings.⁶⁵ During a public hearing, CEFRIO made the following statement:

“WHILE WE ARE TRYING TO CONNECT THE LOWER NORTH SHORE OR CERTAIN REGIONS OF THE EASTERN TOWNSHIPS AT 1.5 MEGABITS/SECOND, BACK HOME I GET 40 MEGABITS/SECOND, AND IN HONG KONG THEY HAVE 1,000 MEGABITS/SECOND. SO THAT AFFORDS OPPORTUNITIES TO WHICH PEOPLE IN THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES WILL NOT NECESSARILY HAVE ACCESS IF THOSE COMMUNITIES HAVE 1.5 MEGABITS/SECOND PLATFORMS. GOOD ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET IS NECESSARY. ... I THINK THE CRTC'S ROLE IS TO RAISE THE BAR AND TO ENSURE THAT ALL CANADIANS, WHEREVER THEY LIVE AND WHATEVER THEIR FIRST OFFICIAL LANGUAGE, HAVE HIGH-SPEED INTERNET ACCESS THAT IS AS GOOD AND FAST AS POSSIBLE. ... ONE

THING IS CERTAIN, AND THAT IS THAT SPEEDS OF 1.5 MEGABITS/SECOND, WHICH IS THE LEVEL CERTAIN REGIONS OF CANADA MUST BE SATISFIED WITH, IS VERY LOW.”⁶⁶

A researcher who testified before the Senate Committee also commented on the risks associated with the lack of Internet capacity in some regions:

“SOME REGIONS MAY NOT YET HAVE ACCESS TO HIGH-SPEED INTERNET. ONLINE CONTENT IS BECOMING INCREASINGLY SOPHISTICATED. SOMETIMES IT TAKES A VERY LONG TIME, AND A LOT OF SPACE AND MEMORY TO DOWNLOAD IT. IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THESE REGIONS TO ACCESS THIS CONTENT. THERE IS THEREFORE AN INEQUALITY IN THIS REGARD AS WELL.”⁶⁷

This lack of capacity also affects some minority-language schools, as the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones and LEARN Quebec testified:

“INDEED, SEVERAL SCHOOLS DO NOT HAVE ACCESS TO LARGE ENOUGH BANDWIDTH TO OFFER ONLINE COURSES.”⁶⁸

“WHEN DEMAND IS VERY HIGH AT SOME TIMES, THERE MAY BE LESS ACCESS TO CERTAIN RESOURCES ON THE INTERNET.”⁶⁹

Subscriptions to services

While it is true that access to broadband networks is increasing, **affordability is a key factor for Canadians**. As we saw at the beginning of this report, there seems to be a digital divide based on income level. In its *Broadband Report* published in November 2011, the CRTC noted that 70% of households subscribed to the Internet.⁷⁰ The CRTC's most recent *Report on Plans and Priorities* targeted an annual 3% increase in the percentage of Canadians that subscribe to broadband Internet services at 1.5 Mbps or higher.⁷¹ Its September 2012 *Communications Monitoring Report* indicated that 72% of households subscribed to 1.5 Mbps broadband Internet service last year, compared to 68% the year before; moreover, some 54% of Canadian households subscribed to services of 5 Mbps or more in 2011.⁷²

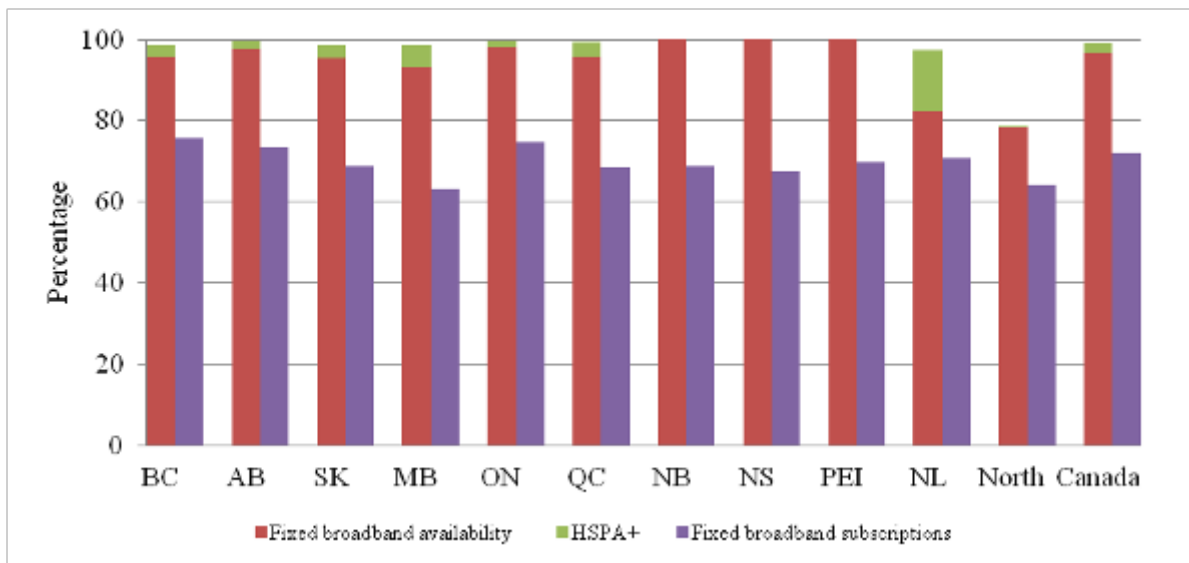
According to a 2010 study by Harvard University's Berkman Center, Canada ranked 20th out of 30 OECD countries for the cost of subscribing to high-speed Internet services.⁷³ According to the Berkman Center, Canada has some of the poorest high-speed Internet service and wireless access in the developed world and is an example of what not to do from a policy perspective. Canada's penetration performance has been in steady decline over previous years. As well, the country has been performing poorly with respect to speed, capacity and plan pricing. Some of the data obtained by the Berkman Center is reproduced in Appendix B of this report. Recent OECD and CRTC data show that the situation is slowly improving, although further progress is needed to improve subscriptions.⁷⁴

CEFRIO made the following point:

“THESE HIGH COSTS HAVE A NEGATIVE IMPACT ON THE EXTENT TO WHICH ALL CANADIANS ARE CONNECTED, AND PARTICULARLY, IT WOULD APPEAR, ON CANADIANS LIVING IN MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN SOME OF THE MOST DEVITALIZED PARTS OF THE COUNTRY.”⁷⁵

The following figure (Figure 6) shows, for 2011, broadband availability in comparison with broadband subscriptions, broken down by province. It **shows that subscription rates do not necessarily follow availability**.

Figure 6 – Broadband availability v. broadband subscriptions, Canada, provinces and territories, 2011



Source: Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (September 2012), p. 158.

It is still too early to tell whether the regulatory action taken by the CRTC to encourage private companies to expand broadband Internet services to all Canadians has had a real impact on subscriptions and related costs. As we saw in the first section of this report, recent statistics tend to point to a persistent **digital divide** in Canada, from both a technical and socio-economic perspective, that varies by region, income and age. **Low population density in certain regions of the country is certainly a major factor in roll-out costs and broadband access fees.**

In 1995, Industry Canada introduced the Community Access Program (CAP) to provide affordable Internet access from public locations such as schools, community centres and libraries. In 2010–2011, the program had enabled 694 sites to provide Internet access to 748 official language minority communities in Canada.⁷⁶ The program focused on those most affected by the digital divide. The federal government ended its contribution to the community component of the Community Access Program on 31 March 2012, saying that most people now have access to the Internet at home or on their mobile devices. However, witness statements showed that, in certain locations, high-speed Internet access is limited to schools or main roads.⁷⁷ In a brief submitted to the Senate Committee, CEFRIO suggested that creating zones with free Internet access would increase access for people with lower

incomes.⁷⁸ That said, it is not clear whether the federal government's decision to eliminate the CAP will affect the needs of official language minority communities, especially in regions where the infrastructure is not available or the cost of subscribing is too high.

Community innovation

Some communities, for example in Saskatchewan and Manitoba, have come up with **innovative ways** of encouraging **increased broadband Internet access**. An FCFA representative gave the following example:

“[I]N SASKATCHEWAN, THE ASSEMBLÉE COMMUNAUTAIRE FRANSASKOISE DECIDED TO TAKE THE BULL BY THE HORNS AND CREATED A SMALL BUSINESS THAT PROVIDES INTERNET SERVICES TO THE CITIZENS OF AN ENTIRE RURAL [F]RANCOPHONE VILLAGE. AS YOU KNOW, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS DO A LOT OF DEVELOPMENT WORK, OFTEN WITH FAIRLY LIMITED FUNDS. ... BUT STILL, WITH THE RESOURCES THE ASSEMBLÉE COMMUNAUTAIRE FRANSASKOISE HAS RIGHT NOW, IT CLEARLY REMAINS LIMITED. SO THERE MIGHT BE A FEW THINGS WE CAN EXPLORE TO DETERMINE WHAT WE CAN DO THAT WOULD ALSO INVOLVE THE COMMUNITIES IN FINDING LOCAL SOLUTIONS TO LOCAL PROBLEMS.”⁷⁹

The Senate Committee heard from a representative from the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities who has done extensive work in this field in the last few years. The Executive Director of the Association described his experience as follows:

“WE WANTED TO DEMONSTRATE THAT OUR ASSOCIATION COULD BE A PIONEER AND SHOW LEADERSHIP WITH REGARD TO THE INTERNET AND TECHNOLOGICAL TOOLS. ... THE IMPORTANT PART FOR OUR ASSOCIATION WAS TO DEVELOP THESE TOOLS AND OUR COMMUNITIES TO PRESERVE THE CULTURE AND LINGUISTIC IDENTITY OF OUR COMMUNITIES. ... THE BIG TELECOMMUNICATION COMPANIES DID NOT SEE ANY REASON TO PROVIDE SERVICE TO THESE PEOPLE. THE COOPERATIVES AND OTHER ORGANIZATIONS FILED APPLICATIONS WITH [CANADIAN HERITAGE] AND INDUSTRY CANADA. THE PROVINCE OF MANITOBA STRONGLY SUPPORTED THESE PROJECTS AND CONTRIBUTED TO THE START-UP OF SMALL BUSINESS SERVICE PROVIDERS. THESE SMALL BUSINESSES STILL EXIST BUT THEY ARE TRYING TO SURVIVE. ONCE THESE SMALL COMPANIES STARTED OFFERING PEOPLE THE SERVICE, THE BIG COMPANIES SHOWED INTEREST. ... WE HASTENED THE OFFER OF SERVICE.”⁸⁰

Very early on, the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities understood the **potential of using the Internet to develop Francophone minority communities**. The Executive Director of the Association gave a few examples of companies who, thanks to broadband Internet access, were able to contribute to the economic vitality of several small communities by creating wealth and jobs. He explained the situation as follows:

“IF WE HAD NOT BEEN ABLE TO OFFER THIS SERVICE, WE COULD HAVE LOST 200 OR 300 DIRECT JOBS IN THE COMMUNITY, WHICH WOULD HAVE MOVED TO WINNIPEG. THE RESULT OF THIS WAS TO FILL OUR SCHOOLS AND INCREASE OUR SERVICES.”⁸¹

Some witnesses, when talking about Internet access, spoke about the federal government's obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*. They suggested that **positive measures** be taken to increase access to these services in official language minority communities⁸² or in minority-language schools.⁸³ These suggestions line up with a recommendation the CRTC made in 2009, which reads as follows:

“THE COMMISSION CONSIDERS IT URGENT THAT ALL LEVELS OF GOVERNMENT, FOLLOWING THE EXAMPLE OF THE DEPARTMENT OF CANADIAN HERITAGE AND THE DEPARTMENT OF INDUSTRY, USE VARIOUS MEANS (FINANCIAL AND OTHERWISE) TO ENCOURAGE THE ADOPTION AND IMPLEMENTATION OF COST-EFFECTIVE TECHNOLOGIES IN OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN REMOTE RURAL AREAS TO ENSURE ACCESS TO BROADBAND INTERNET IN THE SHORT TERM. ... THE GOVERNMENT MAY WISH TO ENSURE THAT REMOTE OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES WITH A LOW POPULATION DENSITY ALSO BENEFIT FROM THESE INVESTMENTS.”⁸⁴

In a written brief sent to the Senate Committee, Industry Canada indicated the following:

“[W]HERE PROJECTS PROVIDE OR RESULT IN BROADBAND SERVICES TO OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES, PROGRAM RECIPIENTS WILL SUPPORT AND ASSIST THE DEVELOPMENT OF THOSE COMMUNITIES BY ENSURING THAT THE MARKETING AND PROMOTION OF THE PROJECT IS DESIGNED TO ENHANCE OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY ACTIVITIES.”⁸⁵

Based on the data available, it is not clear how many of the projects funded under the Broadband Canada Program directly affected official language minority communities.

Mobile networks

While the Senate Committee did not explore this topic in great depth, **the need to increase access to mobile networks** came up often during the public hearings. In Canada today, as in many other regions in the world, **mobility is key**. In June 2010, the Standing Senate Committee on Transport and Communications published a report⁸⁶ on digital communications, including the wireless sector. It made a number of recommendations to ensure that all Canadians, including those who live in rural or remote areas, are an integral part of a digital society.

In general, the public hearings showed that smartphones and tablets are growing in popularity. These devices provide Canadians with a new way to access government information. As we will see in greater detail later in this report, several federal institutions have taken the initiative to create free, easily accessible mobile applications in a format popular with users, especially younger Canadians. However, here again, **access to mobile networks is not universal**. For example, many regions in Manitoba do not have access.⁸⁷

Once again, the President of the Treasury Board emphasized the **complementary roles of the various stakeholders** in increasing access to digital networks:

“IN MY VIEW, THIS DIGITAL STRATEGY IS A MUST. SOCIETY AS A WHOLE IS RESPONSIBLE FOR THIS TYPE OF STRATEGY, NOT JUST THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT, EVEN THOUGH THE GOVERNMENT DOES PLAY A PART. THIS IS ALSO THE RESPONSIBILITY OF THE PROVINCES AND TERRITORIES, AS WELL AS OF MUNICIPALITIES AND COMMUNITIES.”⁸⁸

Of course, we cannot overlook the cost of introducing these technologies—nor can we ignore the fact that **more and more Canadians are using smartphones and tablets to access the Internet**. The CRTC’s *Communications Monitoring Report* published in September 2012 showed that 48% of wireless devices can access broadband services.⁸⁹ In March 2012, the Minister of Industry announced that he would take action to provide Canadians in rural areas with more choices at low prices for wireless services.⁹⁰

The FCFA believes that embracing the digital era is a promising and cost-effective way of providing access in some Francophone communities.⁹¹ A representative from the National Film Board (NFB) gave the example of Nunavut, where mobile networks are more easily accessible than broadband. The NFB is taking special measures to increase access to its products in schools and libraries in these areas.⁹² In Acadia, the NFB has put in place a number of digital movie theatres, which the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française (FCCF) believes represents a significant investment in the Acadian community.⁹³

The NFB representative remarked that smart TVs and mobile devices will probably outpace computers and the Internet for accessing information.⁹⁴ Representatives from the Bank of Canada and the Communications Community Office agreed that a multi-platform approach is essential in order to reach the largest number of users possible.⁹⁵ CBC/Radio-Canada agreed as well, adding that it sees this as a way for regions to raise their profiles across Canada.⁹⁶ Transport Canada remarked that, while it currently does not have any mobile applications, it plans to develop one in the near future to reach Canadians where they are, ensuring that it keeps up with current trends.⁹⁷

Special needs

Some people have visual or hearing impairments that prevent them from accessing information on websites or through social media in their current form. Some people simply do not have a high enough reading level. Recent studies have shown that **some Canadians are still slow to embrace new technologies**.⁹⁸

The Senate Committee wanted to know whether the federal institutions took these limitations into account in developing these new forms of communication. Witnesses noted the following **standard** and **guidelines** on accessibility and ease of use for websites:

- ▣ **Web Content Accessibility Guidelines (WCAG) 2.0:** These guidelines explain how to make Web content more accessible to people with functional limitations (visual, auditory, physical, cognitive and neurological disabilities) or disabilities relating to speech, language and learning. The guidelines provide a common, standardized, global framework on Web content accessibility. They include five conformance

requirements and twelve basic rules to make Web content more accessible to users. As regards language, the guidelines include measures to provide alternatives to time-based media, such as sign-language interpretation, and to make text content readable and understandable. Websites must have mechanisms to switch between languages easily, limit the use of unusual words or abbreviations and adapt to a reading level that is appropriate for as many users as possible.⁹⁹

- **Standard on Web Accessibility:** This standard acknowledges that the Internet is a key part of the federal government's commitment to service delivery. Therefore, the websites of federal institutions must respect internationally recognized accessibility guidelines.¹⁰⁰

The TBS guideline on social media recommends that published content comply with accessibility requirements. Witness statements showed that Canada would benefit from following the lead of other countries.¹⁰¹

A number of government websites remain inaccessible to people who have trouble reading, who have a disability or who do not have the technological capabilities required to use these new tools. It appears that seniors have the most trouble with the skills required to use new technologies. CEFRIO studied the ability of seniors to use a computer and shared its results with the Senate Committee.

“THE SENIORS WENT ONTO THE COMPUTER AND HAD TO ENQUIRE ABOUT THE TAX CREDIT OR SERVICES TO WHICH THEY WERE ENTITLED. WE OBSERVED THAT 100 PER CENT OF THEM FAILED THE TEST, WHICH CONSISTED IN FINDING INFORMATION, DESPITE THE FACT THAT THE INFORMATION WAS IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE. ... THE GOVERNMENT HAS A RESPONSIBILITY TO ENSURE THAT CITIZENS OBTAIN INFORMATION IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE, BUT ALSO AT A LEVEL OF LANGUAGE THAT FACILITATES ACCESS TO GOVERNMENT SERVICES.”¹⁰²

In a number of follow-up briefs to the Senate Committee, it was mentioned that federal institutions had evaluated their websites and made changes in order to meet the accessibility standards.¹⁰³ **Best practices** have been established in this area. An NFB representative said the following regarding content accessibility:

“THAT IS AN AREA OF CONCERN FOR US. MOST OF OUR PROJECTS ARE CLOSED-CAPTIONED FOR THE HEARING-IMPAIRED. IT WAS INCLUDED IN OUR PROJECT LAUNCHED ON WWW.NFB.CA. WE ARE ALSO WORKING ON ACCESSIBILITY NEEDS FOR PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY. MUCH OF OUR WORK IS ACCESSIBLE TO THE HEARING-IMPAIRED. SOME IS ALSO ACCESSIBLE TO THE VISUALLY IMPAIRED, WHICH IS MORE COSTLY AND COMPLEX. THERE IS ALSO VIDEO DESCRIPTION ON OUR WEBSITE, BUT LESS OF IT, GIVEN THE HIGH COSTS. WE MADE SURE THE SITE AS SUCH WAS ACCESSIBLE TO PEOPLE WITH REDUCED MOBILITY. IT IS A BIT MORE COMPLEX WHEN IT COMES TO SOCIAL NETWORKS BECAUSE WE DO NOT CONTROL THAT ACCESSIBILITY, BUT WE DO IT DIRECTLY ON OUR WEBSITE'S PLATFORM [WWW.NFB.CA].”¹⁰⁴

Other institutions mentioned that they had taken measures to make their websites more easily accessible and user-friendly (e.g., Canada Border Services Agency, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Health Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Veterans Affairs Canada) or are preparing to do so (e.g., Parks Canada). Measures to increase website accessibility are important particularly with regard to respect for language rights, as technologies can vary from one language to another. Unfortunately, the Senate Committee did not have enough time to study this issue in greater detail.

A representative from the Communications Community Office explained that social media, when used properly, can increase accessibility:

“[S]OCIAL MEDIA AND ELECTRONIC TOOLS, IF CREATED IN AN ACCESSIBLE MANNER, ENABLE THOSE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE MUCH MORE THAN THEY WERE PREVIOUSLY ABLE TO DO. COMPUTERS TALK; PEOPLE WHO DO NOT SEE WELL HAVE TOOLS THAT REALLY ENABLE THEM TO ACCESS INFORMATION AND OBTAIN SERVICES, EVEN IF THEY HAVE PROBLEMS SUCH AS THOSE. ... THAT IS WHY, IN SOCIAL MEDIA, ... WE ALWAYS PROVIDE HYPERLINKS TO OUR WEBSITES WHERE INFORMATION IS AVAILABLE IN ACCESSIBLE FORMATS.” ¹⁰⁵

The CRTC has also implemented several initiatives to increase access to telecommunications services for Canadians with disabilities. ¹⁰⁶ In 2010–2011, the CRTC held public hearings on new media broadcasting undertakings in order to set reporting requirements for accessibility. A working group was created to establish definitions and criteria for producing reports. The CRTC estimated that more than 4 million Canadians with a disability would benefit from improved access to radio-television and telecommunication services. In its 2012–2015 Three-Year Plan, the CRTC committed to connecting Canadians to quality and innovative communication services at affordable prices, including services to Canadians with disabilities. ¹⁰⁷

This third section has shown that universal and affordable access to broadband Internet and mobile networks is not yet available in all of Canada’s regions. The access being offered must meet users’ needs. Users have varying levels of skill as regards new technology. Innovation in official language minority communities, especially those in remote rural areas, must be encouraged.

“The use of Web 2.0 by the Government of Canada is even newer, with the first pilot project starting only four to five years ago, yet today virtually every department within the Government of Canada has some type of Web 2.0 presence. Every day, tens of thousands of public servants are using internal and external Web 2.0 tools to conduct official government business, to network within their professional communities and, of course, to connect with people in their personal lives.”

Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat,
Proceedings, 31 October 2012.

“Some departments definitely use social media more than others. ... Every department uses social media in accordance with its purpose and targets the group it wants to reach by age, subject or other criteria.”

Communications Community Office,
Proceedings, 30 April 2012.

MEASURES TAKEN BY FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS

The Internet is the primary way that the vast majority of federal institutions reach Canadians and provide them with services. A number of federal institutions have already taken steps toward using Web 2.0 technologies, including social media. Some are still in the early stages, while others have already fully integrated Web 2.0 into their operations. This fourth section presents an overview of how federal institutions use social media, mobile applications, online consultations and internal collaborative tools. It provides examples of best practices and identifies the main challenges of their use.

Social media

A growing number of federal institutions are including social media in their communications strategies. For the vast majority of these institutions, social media is seen as a **complementary tool** to reach Canadians. In other words, social media initiatives are used in addition to, not instead of, the institutions' websites or other more traditional methods of communicating with the public.

As we have mentioned previously, **not all federal institutions use social media**. Some use Twitter, while others use Facebook or YouTube. Some use a combination of all three (e.g., Veterans Affairs Canada, Transport Canada). Some have a presence on LinkedIn or Flickr (e.g., Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Bank of Canada). Others have live chat sites (e.g., Statistics Canada). Most federal institutions publish information on RSS feeds. A very small number have blogs (e.g., the NFB). A representative from Statistics Canada gave a succinct summary of the potential of these tools:

“THE DISCUSSION FORUM REACHES AN EDUCATED AUDIENCE, TWITTER IS POPULAR WITH NEWS BUFFS, FACEBOOK ALLOWS FOR MORE ANIMATED CONVERSATIONS, CHAT SESSIONS PROVIDE A PLACE FOR DISCUSSION ON PARTICULAR TOPICS, AND YOUTUBE SHOWS STATISTICS IN ACTION AND REACHES YOUNGER AUDIENCES.” ¹⁰⁸

The type of use varies from one institution to the next. Some use social media only to steer users to information already available on the website (e.g., Bank of Canada, Public Service Commission). Others use these tools to engage the public in a dialogue (e.g., live chat sessions with Statistics Canada experts) or intend to do so in the near future (e.g., Health Canada). Some institutions have chosen not to go this route and have restricted subscribers to commenting on information posted by the institution (e.g., Canada Border Services Agency).

Some institutions use social media for recruitment (e.g., Transport Canada, Natural Resources Canada, Public Service Commission, Bank of Canada). Others have created unique tools (e.g., “Working in Canada” program by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada and the “DrugsNot4Me” campaign by Health Canada). A few institutions use social media to inform the public about advisories and recalls (e.g., Health Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, Transport Canada) or to show photo galleries online (e.g., Transport Canada, National Defence, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Environment Canada, National Capital Commission). Two of the institutions that appeared said they used social media on a more regional level. The Royal Canadian Mounted Police (RCMP) uses social media in some of its provincial divisions, as does the Canada Border Services Agency at some of its border crossings.

As for online videos, approaches vary. Video is used to present information of public interest, to explain complicated concepts in a simple, easy-to-understand way, or simply to promote the institution’s activities. Most institutions use YouTube to publish their videos (e.g., Transport Canada, Canada Revenue Agency, Veterans Affairs Canada, Environment Canada, Parks Canada, Passport Canada, Bank of Canada, Statistics Canada, CRTC). Some institutions embed videos on their own websites (e.g., Veterans Affairs Canada, Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, Public Service Commission). Others present information in other languages (e.g., Citizenship and Immigration Canada). Still others provide information in podcast form (e.g., Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada, National Defence).

Very few federal institutions seem to use public blogs. However, the NFB uses its blog extensively and sees many advantages to doing so:

“WE ALSO USE A BLOG TO REACH OUR CLIENTS QUITE A BIT. IT IS AN IDEAL SHOWCASE FOR THE NFB’S ACTIVITIES. IT IS A USER-FRIENDLY SITE WHERE FILM BUFFS AND TECHNOLOGY ENTHUSIASTS OR EDUCATORS — WE HAVE AN EDUCATION BLOG — CAN LEAVE COMMENTS AND INTERACT WITH OTHERS AND TALK ABOUT THE FILMS. TWO WRITERS ARE RESPONSIBLE FOR THE BLOG, ONE FRENCH-SPEAKING AND ONE ENGLISH-SPEAKING. THEY SUSTAIN THESE SITES AND THEY ARE TRANSLATED IN THE OTHER OFFICIAL LANGUAGE FOR THE BLOG.” ¹⁰⁹

Many federal institutions are motivated to engage in social media because it allows them to reach a younger audience. For example, Parks Canada let 32 young students produce a video highlighting the heritage and history of national parks and sites.

“THEY PUT THEIR TALENTS TO WORK, IN THEIR OWN WAY CONVEYING TO CANADIANS OF THEIR GENERATION PLUGGED IN TO THE SOCIAL MEDIA NETWORKS THE HISTORY OF OUR NATIONAL HISTORIC SITES, OUR PARKS AND OUR PEOPLE, WHILE SHARING THEIR OWN EXPERIENCE.” ¹¹⁰

Meanwhile, the “DrugsNot4Me” campaign sponsored by Health Canada, which aims to discourage young people from using drugs, had more than 88,000 followers on the department’s Facebook page as of 31 May 2012.

Another motivating factor for some institutions is that they can draw the public’s attention in a more direct and less formal manner. Social media provides a new method of reaching the public. A Transport Canada representative made the following observation:

“SOCIAL MEDIA IS LESS FORMAL THAN OTHER FORMS OF COMMUNICATION, AND HAS ALLOWED US TO CREATE A MORE HUMAN FACE FOR THE DEPARTMENT.” ¹¹¹

As regards **respect for official languages**, some institutions have two separate accounts for users to subscribe to: one in English, one in French. Most of the federal institutions that appeared use this method (e.g., @bankofcanada and @banqueducanada, and @CdnHeritage and @Patrimoinecdn). Others publish information in both official languages on one page (e.g., @CCO-BCC, @ExportDevCanada, @CitImmCanada, “Canadian Citizenship / Citoyenneté canadienne” Facebook page). Some institutions were required to change their approach along the way, by creating two separate accounts after previously having had just one (e.g., CRTC). When it comes to ensuring respect for both official languages in online videos, there are several strategies. Some institutions prepare two separate videos, one in each language, while others use subtitles or voice-overs. Still others prepare fully bilingual versions.

Most of the institutions said that they respond to members of the public in the language of their choice, based on the language of the subscriber’s account. Furthermore, general answers are provided in both official languages when the information is likely to benefit a broader audience. This means that the content on English and French accounts may be different, depending on the comments made by members of the public. Some federal institutions commented that social media tools provide a better way of reaching official language minority communities (e.g., Parks Canada). While we were not given specific examples of this, it seems likely that institutions that actively comply with Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* would have a greater impact on these communities. Other institutions said that although social media activities were not tailored to these communities specifically, the fact that posts are published in both official languages makes this objective easier to attain (e.g., Human Resources and Skills Development Canada).

According to Zegov.ca, some social media accounts for federal institutions are available in only one language.¹¹² For example, the Twitter accounts for the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety (@CCOHS) and the RCMP divisions for Newfoundland and Labrador (@RCMPNLTraffic) and British Columbia (@KamloopsRMCP) are unilingual. Other irregularities regarding language rights were noted in certain accounts. For example, Canada Research Chairs (@CRC_CRC) tweets in both languages, but information about the institution is available only in English. On Facebook, discrepancies regarding respect for linguistic duality were noted on the Canadian Centre for Occupational Health and Safety page and the page for the Prince Edward Island RCMP's Commercial Crime Program. These pages are available only in English.

It appears that there are as many different approaches to social media as there are federal institutions. When the Senate Committee's public hearings took place, the Treasury Board had not conducted any formal and definitive research into how the Government of Canada uses social media in both official languages.¹¹³

Mobile applications

Developing mobile applications means innovation. The President of the Treasury Board spoke about recent government initiatives in accountability and accessing government data online. He believes that this type of initiative encourages the development of mobile applications and services that make users' lives easier.

"THAT IS POSSIBLE BECAUSE OF OPEN DATA. THIS IS THE REALITY. THE MORE DATA WE CAN GET OUT THERE, THE MORE APPLICATIONS CAN BE THOUGHT OF BY BRILLIANT PEOPLE, ENTREPRENEURS. IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, I HOPE. I THINK SO. I AM SURE."¹¹⁴

The issue of official languages is important to consider when developing mobile applications. Federal institutions prefer to use applications developed externally that are available in both official languages right away. A representative from Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada made the following observation:

"THESE ARE PRIVATE COMPANIES THAT OFFER THIS, SO IT TAKES SOME CONVINCING AND SOME WORK SOMETIMES TO GET THESE PRIVATE COMPANIES TO HAVE A FRENCH APPLICATION OR ANOTHER LANGUAGE APPLICATION. THERE ARE MANY AVAILABLE, BUT NOT ALL ARE BILINGUAL. ... AT THE VERY BEGINNING OF TWITTER, THE APPLICATION WAS ONLY OFFERED IN ENGLISH. IT IS WITH USE, WHERE THERE IS MONEY TO BE MADE, THAT MORE AND MORE [F]RANCOPHONES, FROM FRANCE, FROM AFRICAN COUNTRIES, FROM [F]RANCOPHONE COUNTRIES, STARTED TO USE THE APPLICATION AND ASK THAT IT BE OFFERED IN FRENCH. [...] IT IS THE SAME FOR FACEBOOK AND YOUTUBE. THERE ARE A NUMBER OF OTHER PLATFORMS THAT ARE CURRENTLY ONLY AVAILABLE IN ENGLISH, BUT DEMAND FROM THE WORLD'S [F]RANCOPHONE MARKET WILL CAUSE THESE COMPANIES TO DEVELOP THEIR PLATFORM IN ANOTHER LANGUAGE, WHETHER IT BE FRENCH, ENGLISH OR ANOTHER WORLD LANGUAGE. ... AT THE DEPARTMENT OF FOREIGN AFFAIRS, WE STRIVE TO USE BILINGUAL PLATFORMS[.]"¹¹⁵

The public hearings showed that several federal institutions are already working on bilingual mobile applications (e.g., Veterans Affairs Canada, Canadian Heritage, the NFB, Statistics Canada, the Bank of Canada, National Capital Commission, Canada Border Services Agency, CBC/Radio-Canada) or are on the verge of doing so (e.g., the Translation Bureau).

Most of these institutions noted that mobile applications make it easier to reach young people. An NFB representative said that its iPhone app was the key to getting youth interested in NFB products.¹¹⁶ A representative from Health Canada talked about an interactive application and a ringtone that could be downloaded online to make youth aware of the “DrugsNot4Me” campaign.¹¹⁷ Veterans Affairs Canada believes that 25% of its youth audience uses its services, which is why the institution decided to develop mobile applications: to do a better job of reaching youth where they are.¹¹⁸

A few institutions have developed widgets. In some cases, these widgets allow users to quickly access web content by scanning a barcode with their mobile device (e.g., Health Canada, National Capital Commission). In other cases, these widgets provide access to the most up-to-date information in an alternative format (e.g., Statistics Canada) or provide direct access to free and up-to-date information on job opportunities (e.g., “Working in Canada” widget by Human Resources and Skills Development Canada).

Online consultations

In the last few years, a number of federal institutions have consulted the public online (e.g., Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada, Passport Canada, Statistics Canada, Public Health Agency of Canada, CRTC). **Two main challenges associated with online consultations are ensuring that linguistic obligations are respected and that both Anglophones and Francophones are encouraged to participate.** Most of the time, far more Anglophones participate than Francophones, but the rate is roughly equivalent to the representation of the language groups in the general population.

For example, in May 2012, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages launched consultations across Canada about official languages, including online consultations and a survey available in both official languages. The consultations were still going on when this report was written. Passport Canada also used online consultations to prepare for the launch of the enhanced security ePassport. The institution described its experience as follows:

“THIS WAS THE FIRST TIME THAT WE TOOK ADVANTAGE OF THE INTERNET AS A TWO-WAY PUBLIC ENGAGEMENT TOOL. THE QUESTIONNAIRE GENERATED MORE THAN 7,200 RESPONSES. WITH A SPECIFIC VIEW TO OBTAINING INPUT FROM OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES IN THE CONSULTATIONS, WE ALSO SENT INVITATIONS TO PARTICIPATE TO THE FÉDÉRATION DES COMMUNAUTÉS FRANCOPHONES ET [ACADIENNE] DU CANADA, AND THE QUEBEC COMMUNITY GROUPS NETWORK.”¹¹⁹

The Communications Community Office also encouraged organizations representing official language minority communities to participate in its online consultation process.

“IN THIS CONTEXT, WE LEARNED IT WAS NOT JUST ENOUGH TO HAVE A TWITTER ACCOUNT AND IT WAS NOT JUST ENOUGH TO DO AN ONLINE CONSULTATION. WE ACTUALLY HAD TO GO OUT AND, THROUGH INVITATIONS, THROUGH USING NETWORKS AND COMMUNITIES, WE HAD TO REALLY INVITE PEOPLE TO PARTICIPATE.” ¹²⁰

As part of its “Our Health, Our Future” campaign, the Public Health Agency of Canada combined online consultations with other engagement strategies, including an interactive website, a series of learning resources and social media applications, all of which were bilingual. ¹²¹ The CRTC combined its online consultations with a series of short videos in English and French to encourage people to participate. ¹²²

Internal collaborative tools

It is difficult to determine where things stand for wikis and internal blogs, given that these tools are often for internal use and that little information on these tools is available externally. However, some institutions gave statements about their experiences with these types of tools. Several institutions mentioned that they had developed their own mechanisms so that departmental employees could share information and collaborate with one another. (e.g., Passport Canada, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada, Natural Resources Canada, RCMP, Veterans Affairs Canada, National Defence, Statistics Canada, TBS, School of Public Service, Industry Canada).

There are also tools to encourage collaboration among federal institutions. One of the most popular is **GCpedia**, a wiki created in 2008 and used by many Government of Canada employees. Users can create content, exchange information and collaborate on shared files. A social media newsletter is published each month. A TBS representative spoke about the advantages of GCpedia:

“GCPEDIA ALLOWS ANY PUBLIC SERVANT FROM ACROSS CANADA TO SHARE INFORMATION WITH OTHER PUBLIC SERVANTS. GCPEDIA IS USED IN A NUMBER OF DIFFERENT WAYS, WHICH RANGE FROM SHARING OFFICIAL DOCUMENTATION, FOR EXAMPLE MINUTES FROM AN INTERDEPARTMENTAL WORKING GROUP, TO THE POSTINGS OF INDIVIDUAL PUBLIC SERVANTS ON TOPICS OF INTEREST TO THEM. AGAIN, ANALOGOUS TO EMAIL, THIS WEB 2.0 TOOL CAN BE USED IN A VARIETY OF DIFFERENT SCENARIOS AS IT RELATES TO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES. ... THE EMPLOYEE HAS THE ABILITY TO CONTRIBUTE TO GCPEDIA IN THE LANGUAGE OF THEIR CHOICE.” ¹²³

Another department representative talked about how these tools are accessible to a large number of public servants from across the country:

“[W]HEN A TOOL IS AVAILABLE CENTRALLY, THE MAGIC OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES ENSURES THAT IT IS MORE READILY AVAILABLE TO ALL USERS IN ALL REGIONS.” ¹²⁴

According to CEFRIO, however, using these types of tools carries a risk because French is marginalized. If users are not openly encouraged to use these platforms in the language of

their choice, chances are that English will dominate. Proactive measures are required to encourage employees in designated bilingual regions to use the language of their choice; for example, certain employees could be designated to participate in French.¹²⁵

Natural Resources Canada shared with the Senate Committee a copy of the guidelines that were established for using its internal wiki in both official languages.¹²⁶ According to the established rules, all official messages must be published in both languages. However, certain parts of the site can remain unilingual so that employees can share their knowledge in the language of their choice. A department representative made the following observation:

“WE RECENTLY NOTICED THAT THE WIKI IS USED MORE AND MORE AS A COMMUNICATION TOOL AND, AS A RESULT, FRENCH CONTENT HAS INCREASED. ... THE USE OF THESE TOOLS HAS CREATED A CULTURE OF TRANSPARENCY, INCLUSIVENESS AND COLLABORATION IN THE DEPARTMENT.”¹²⁷

Best practices

The TBS guideline adopted in November 2011 includes a list of practical ways to help institutions comply with official language requirements. A number of institutions have developed their own best practices to govern their use of social media. We have compiled a **summary of best practices**, taken from witnesses who appeared before the Senate Committee.

- ❑ **The Public Health Agency of Canada** uses Twitter in English and French to notify Canadians about food recalls and allergy level warnings. It actively offers service in both official languages in social media. Links to the account or page in the other language are clearly displayed.
- ❑ **Veterans Affairs Canada** has two Facebook pages for its “Canada Remembers” campaign: one in English, the other in French. More than 500,000 Canadians have shared their memories, in the language of their choice, about friends and family who have served under the Canadian flag. The “Veterans Matter” mobile app was made available to the public in both official languages so people could find information about commemorative events and the services and benefits available to veterans. The popularity of these tools speaks for itself.
- ❑ **Service Canada** created a video to raise awareness among its employees about active offer of service in both official languages. It plans to use this video in its training sessions on official languages, which are available online and are mandatory for employees who serve the public.
- ❑ **The Public Service Commission** posts job offers on Twitter using two accounts: one in English, one in French. On the jobs.gc.ca portal, it offers online services of equal quality in both English and French for those who want to apply for a job in the public service.

- ▣ **The National Film Board** created an educational resources portal and made a series of products available online in both official languages for Canadian teachers. This program appears to have been quite a success with schools and teachers across the country. Among other things, it increases the French-language content available to students attending Francophone minority schools. Access to these products also allows teachers to expose their students to the two cultures associated with the official languages, as well as key events in Canadian history. Furthermore, the NFB has special measures that can be implemented if the broadband connection is not fast enough. This ensures that everyone has access to NFB content, regardless of where they live.

- ▣ **The Canada Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission** has changed how it uses its Twitter account. At first, there was only one CRTC Twitter account, with simultaneous updates in both English and French. However, in March 2012, the institution decided to establish two separate accounts. Members of the public can now follow the CRTC in the language of their choice and interact in their language of choice as well. When necessary, the institution publishes general information on both accounts simultaneously, respecting the principle of equal quality.

- ▣ **Canadian Heritage** launched cross-Canada consultations in May 2012 about developing the next federal official languages strategy. An online questionnaire was made available to the public to help Canadian Heritage identify current challenges and priorities for official languages. The consultation website and questionnaire are available in both official languages and allow users to respond in the language of their choice. Furthermore, many of the department's programs have digital components that encourage the creation of more English and French content. For example, the Canada Book Fund provides funding for the publication and promotion of e-books in English and French and increases their online presence, while the Cultural Development Fund publishes the cultural and artistic heritage of official language minority communities online.

- ▣ **The Canada Revenue Agency** chose to limit its social media use to Twitter and YouTube, passing over Facebook. The Agency believes that Twitter and YouTube are more efficient and cost-effective ways to broaden the scope of its communications activities. During the 2012 personal income tax filing season, the Agency increased its number of tweets and retweets in both official languages. Around 15 videos provided clear, simple and concise information on the institution's two YouTube channels (one in English, the other in French). The videos were filmed separately in both official languages and were subtitled for the hearing impaired. The Agency typically prefers to create separate versions in each language rather than using voice-overs.

- **The Translation Bureau** announced the upcoming launch of a mobile application for its terminology database, TERMIUM®. Since 2009, the database has been available to all Canadians through the Language Portal of Canada. Many of the witnesses who appeared before the Senate Committee agreed that it is a very useful tool. Having it available on mobile devices will make it even more accessible to the general population, especially to young people.

- **Parks Canada** established clear and detailed oversight measures to monitor the use of both official languages in social media. For example, it ensures that the platforms chosen have bilingual interfaces, that the English and French channels have links to the other language, that mobile applications can be downloaded in the user's language of choice, and that all unilingual videos have an equivalent version in the other language, either through voice-overs or subtitles.

- **Passport Canada** invited representatives from Anglophone and Francophone minority communities to participate in public consultations as part of the launch of the enhanced security ePassport. This measure was seen as a positive step in terms of Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

- **Health Canada** uses YouTube to address health issues in ways that would not have been possible using a traditional news release. The interface is available in both official languages. To date, the English and French versions have been viewed at about a 2:1 ratio, with 260,000 views in English and 130,000 views in French. This means that the rate of use is much higher for Francophones compared to their demographic weight.

- **Citizenship and Immigration Canada** uses language-neutral identifiers for its various social media accounts. For example, its Twitter account, @CitImmCanada, refers to both Citizenship and Immigration Canada in English and Citoyenneté et Immigration Canada in French. On Facebook, the department uses the bilingual URL facebook.com/CitCanada. This allows both Anglophone and Francophone users to find the department quickly.

- **Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada** limits its use of social media to platforms that are already available in both official languages. The department publishes general-interest videos for Canadians on its own website and on YouTube. When the videos are available only in one language, the department ensures that subtitles or a transcription of the video are available in the other official language. The links directing users to the site in the other official language are clearly visible, both on its website and on YouTube.

- **The Bank of Canada** keeps abreast of new technologies and uses multiple platforms (Internet, Twitter, YouTube, Flickr) to reach Canadians based on their interests and needs. The institution is committed to respecting TBS guidelines. It regularly consults with other central banks and international financial institutions with a view to adopting best practices as regards using new technologies.
- **The Canada Border Services Agency** has bilingual Twitter accounts for 22 border crossings across the country in order to rapidly publish information about wait times at the border. Users can choose to follow the account in the language of their choice.
- **Environment Canada** uses the Internet as its main communication tool with Canadians. The number of hits on its website is close to the proportion of Anglophones and Francophones in the population: 76% of visits are to the English site and 24% of visits are to the French site. The institution ensures that all online content is posted in both languages simultaneously and is of equal quality.
- **Human Resources and Skills Development Canada** has been using internal collaboration and knowledge-sharing tools for a number of years. This includes blogs written by senior management, a wiki for departmental employees across the country, a knowledge portal for employees and online communities of practice. Departmental employees can contribute in the language of their choice.
- **The National Capital Commission** implemented best practices to better promote official language policies. It integrates online and offline content, adapting its programs to the needs of each language group. Its website is linked to multiple platforms, making content widely available through these external platforms. It has implemented around 30 pilot projects to streamline its internal procedures and directives. Its primary goal is to reach visitors where they are. The mobile applications it developed for two recent events, Canada Day and Winterlude, were very successful. Between 15% and 20% of the hits to its Twitter account and Facebook page were in French. The institution's multi-platform approach doubled the number of hits to its website.
- **National Defence** developed a mobile news reader application for iPhones and iPads that provides access to departmental news. Users can toggle between the official languages at any time.
- **Transport Canada** adopted an integrated communications approach, which means that its social media activities are an integral part of the department's communications strategy. Messages on social media are published at the same time as other communications products and messages, minimizing costs. Furthermore, the messages are translated internally, which also keeps costs down. The employees who are assigned to this task are fluently bilingual.

- ▣ **Royal Canadian Mounted Police** has established its own internal guidelines for Facebook and Twitter use. It regularly monitors its social media accounts. Employees who use these tools are informed of existing official language requirements.
- ▣ **Natural Resources Canada** has been using a wiki since 2007 that now has more than 10,000 pages of content, of which 15% is French-only and 30% is bilingual. The department pioneered the use of this kind of tool. Guidelines were established specifying that employees could use the wiki in either or both of the official languages. The department also created blogs, discussion forums, virtual collaboration spaces and “NRCan’s Expertise Network,” all of which are available in both official languages.
- ▣ **Statistics Canada** held bilingual live chat sessions when the 2011 Census results were released, during which approximately 50 people signed on to interact in real-time with a demographics expert. During these sessions, a full transcript was published in both official languages with just a short lag time. The institution plans to use this tool again when future Census results are released.
- ▣ **CBC/Radio-Canada** launched the online television platform Tou.tv a few years ago, in collaboration with around 20 other partner broadcasters and producers. It is the biggest online Francophone entertainment platform in Canada. It provides free, on-demand Francophone content to all Canadians. A free mobile app that allows users to watch Tou.tv videos is also available.
- ▣ **Public Works and Government Services Canada** installs a prominent link to Canada’s Language Portal on every new employee computer. This encourages employees to use both official languages in an office setting. The Language Portal provides easy access to a wealth of language tools, including the TERMIUM® terminology database.
- ▣ **The Canada School of Public Service** designed and now offers a course on GCpedia. It is currently developing other courses to support public servants in their use of social media. To ensure that the needs of all public servants are met, social media initiatives designed by the Canada School of Public Service will be offered in both official languages.

Challenges

A question of resources

As with all communications activities, **having an online presence and using social media require an investment of financial and human resources by federal institutions.** Most of the federal institutions that appeared before the Senate Committee noted that the Internet is an indispensable tool, providing an effective, low-cost and timely way of sharing information. In most cases, it is their primary means of communicating. The Internet is available 24/7 and is a fairly static tool that does not require sustained interaction with the

public. Most—but not all—of the institutions that appeared seem to have the resources required to carry out activities online.

As for **social media**, practices vary. Given their unique characteristics, **these tools require resources to be instant and interactive**. The public hearings showed that some institutions limit their participation to normal office hours (e.g., Public Works and Government Services Canada, Transport Canada), while others are more active, with greater participation, even on evenings and weekends (e.g., NFB, Translation Bureau). In some cases, 24-hour response times have been established to allow employees to present information quickly and in language of high quality (e.g., Canada Border Services Agency).

At the beginning of the public hearings, it became apparent that the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages (OCOL) did not have adequate resources. The Commissioner reported to the Senate Committee that the Office was unable to participate in Web 2.0 initiatives because it had insufficient resources to update its information technology infrastructure.¹²⁸ In its updated Economic Action Plan, published in March 2012, the federal government stated that the Office would reallocate its operating savings to address this issue.¹²⁹ In other words, the Office would have to redirect part of its budget to update its outdated IT infrastructure. The Commissioner has committed to redirect 7.8% of its budget allocation over the next four years to resolve this issue.¹³⁰ In its most recent *Report on Plans and Priorities*, the Commissioner made the following two commitments:

“OCOL WILL ... ESTABLISH A SOCIAL MEDIA PRESENCE TO RAISE AWARENESS AMONG THE GENERAL PUBLIC, AND IN PARTICULAR AMONG YOUTH, OF THE IMPORTANCE AND VALUE OF LINGUISTIC DUALITY AND BILINGUALISM. ... OCOL PLANS TO ... RAISE AWARENESS AMONG FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS OF THEIR LINGUISTIC OBLIGATIONS WHEN THEY USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO COMMUNICATE WITH THEIR EMPLOYEES AND THE PUBLIC.”¹³¹

On 25 September 2012, after the public hearings had ended, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages launched its two Facebook pages and two Twitter feeds.

A number of institutions recognize that it is important to participate in social media and are doing the best they can with the resources they have. Some witnesses said that they were unable to invest as much as they wanted in order to have an adequate social media presence in both official languages. This was the case for a number of provincial RCMP divisions. An RCMP representative mentioned that, in some of the more remote regions of Canada, the infrastructure simply does not exist.

“THAT IS WHY YOU WOULD NOT SEE US USING A FACEBOOK PRESENCE, FOR EXAMPLE, IN NUNAVUT BECAUSE THE COMMUNITIES WE WOULD SERVE THERE JUST WOULD NOT BE ABLE TO ACCESS IT. THE PEOPLE DO NOT HAVE THE INFRASTRUCTURE TO ACTUALLY USE THAT TOOL TO CONNECT WITH US.”¹³²

An information specialist was in favour of a centralized model that would offer information in both official languages by bilingual employees. She believes that this would ensure that the quality of information would be the same for both Anglophones and Francophones.

“THERE IS A SITUATION WHERE YOU COULD HAVE A [F]RANCOPHONE ANSWERING QUESTIONS FOR THE FRENCH FEED AND AN [A]NGLOPHONE FOR THE ENGLISH FEED. I THINK IT WILL BE A TOUGH SELL, STAFF RESOURCE-WISE, TO HAVE TWO PEOPLE DEDICATED TO SEPARATE ACCOUNTS. ALSO, WE WOULD WANT THE SAME INFORMATION SHARED TO BOTH COMMUNITIES. I FEEL THAT WHATEVER IS POSTED ON ONE FEED SHOULD BE POSTED ON THE OTHER FEED. I THINK IT IS IMPORTANT TO PROVIDE SOME EQUALITY IN THE INFORMATION THAT IS BEING SHARED.” ¹³³

The Senate Committee asked the federal institutions that appeared during the public hearings to provide information on the budgets and resources they allocated to social media. There are variations from one institution to the next, as shown in Table 6. Since the data that is presented is not easy to compare, it is difficult to make definitive conclusions. However, one observation that can be made is that social media participation generally falls to the department’s communications section and most of the time makes use of bilingual resources. The number of people involved, however, ranges from less than one person to up to 10 employees. Some institutions rely on internal translation services, while others have their translations done externally. In most cases, it is difficult to pinpoint exact costs, because social media services are not separated from the institution’s general communication activities. The table on the following page (Table 6) presents data on annual budgets and resources allocated to social media participation.

In summary, witness statements showed that it is important to allocate appropriate resources to accomplish the tasks at hand while respecting official language obligations and preserving the immediacy and flexibility of new media. However, CEFRIO did emphasize that, in addition to the issue of available resources, the will to respect language rights in social media must be demonstrated. ¹³⁴ A Parks Canada representative also spoke about employee training and support needs, especially for older employees or those who are less familiar with new technologies. ¹³⁵

A question of terminology and translation

It can be challenging to use social media while meeting language obligations and preserving the immediacy and flexibility of new media. A statement by a Passport Canada representative summarizes the situation well:

“MUCH CONTENT CAN BE PREPARED IN ADVANCE, BUT WHEN WE DO NEED TO POST AN URGENT MESSAGE, THE NECESSARY REVIEW AND TRANSLATION DO TAKE SOME TIME.” ¹³⁶

Federal institutions engaging in this venture must do so in both languages, while respecting the need for equal quality and speed in publishing information. The TBS guideline published in November 2011 states that institutions must do the following:

“PLAN AHEAD FOR TRANSLATION AT KEY MILESTONES TO ENSURE EQUALITY OF SERVICES AND QUALITY IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.” ¹³⁷

Table 6 – Annual Budget and Resources Allocated to Social Media, Federal Institutions that Appeared During the Public Hearings, Spring 2012

Institution	Section	Annual Budget – Amount (\$) and/or Percentage (%)	Resources
National Film Board	N/A	5% of the operating budget is allocated to the digital transformation	Two employees responsible for one account in each language
Passport Canada	Communications Division	\$88,000 + \$70,725 (salaries and video production)	Bilingual employees with the Communications team; mostly internal editing
Environment Canada	Communications Branch	\$85,000 + \$25,000 (salaries, software and training) 1% of the Branch budget	Bilingual employees: one full-time equivalent (FTE); internal and external support for editing and translation, depending on the nature of the project
Canada Border Services Agency	Communications Branch	N/A	Bilingual employees: two FTEs; internal editing
Parks Canada	External Relations and Visitor Experience Directorate	\$60,000 (research, policy and strategic development, occasional use of external services) 0.01% of the Agency budget	A number of bilingual employees: 10.5 FTEs; internal and external support for editing and translation, depending on the nature of the project
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	Several teams (e.g. Corporate Web division, Media Services division, Learning Communications unit, etc.)	\$758,000 (overall budget, salaries and video production) From 1.25% to 14% of the teams' budget	Identified employees for social media in several departmental teams: 8.88 FTEs across the department.

Institution	Section	Annual Budget – Amount (\$) and/or Percentage (%)	Resources
Health Canada	Communications Directorate (Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada)	\$172,000 (salaries)	Internal translation and editing; integrated function within the communications team of both institutions: 2 FTEs
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	Internet Strategy team	\$75,000 to \$80,000 (salaries)	Bilingual employees: one FTE; internal editing
National Capital Commission	Capital Experience, Communications and Marketing Branch	\$60,000 + \$5,000 (salaries and development costs for special projects)	One bilingual employee who is dedicated to social media: one FTE, supported by other internal employees
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	National Communication Services Directorate	N/A	N/A
Public Health Agency of Canada	Communications Directorate (Health Canada and Public Health Agency of Canada)	\$172,000 (salaries)	External translation services and internal editing; integrated function within the communications team of both institutions: 2 FTEs
Veterans Affairs Canada	N/A	N/A	N/A
Bank of Canada	Web Communications Service	(social media costs are not covered by one budget item in particular)	Various bilingual employees
Transport Canada	Communications and Marketing Group	(salaries and one-time costs for certain campaigns)	Bilingual employees, two FTEs, supported by other teams
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada	Directors General (BCD and CSM)	From \$150,000 to \$200,000 + \$10,000 (salaries, translation of the social media tool kit)	Bilingual employees, one FTE, supported by other department officers; internal editing

Institution	Section	Annual Budget – Amount (\$) and/or Percentage (%)	Resources
National Defence	Public Affairs Group (PAG)	(salaries and translation, covered by the PAG budget)	Bilingual employees: .5 FTE for regular personnel and .33 FTE for military personnel
Natural Resources Canada	Centre of expertise for social media	\$120,000 (salaries)	Bilingual employees: 1.7 FTEs
Statistics Canada	Outreach and New Media Section (within Communications Division)	\$106,000 (salaries, product development, graphic design, translation)	Bilingual employees: 1.33 FTEs
Canada Revenue Agency	Public Affairs Branch	\$90,000 (salaries) 0.18% of the Branch budget	Bilingual employees: 1.5 FTEs

Sources: *Proceedings*; Memorandums to Members of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages,
6 June 2012, 12 June 2012, 13 June 2012 and 5 September 2012.

The majority of the federal institutions that appeared before the Senate Committee mentioned the need to **respect the equal quality of services and communications in both official languages**. A representative from the Canada Border Services Agency even went so far as to say that, if this criterion cannot be met, social media involvement should not take place.¹³⁸

As regards translation and editing, a number of institutions use internal resources. Most institutions use external resources when producing videos, the cost of which covers both production and translation.

The Translation Bureau offers translation services to federal institutions on a cost-recovery basis. With the arrival of social media, the institution and its translators have had to adapt to the new reality of instant communication.

“THANKS TO WIKIS, BLOGS AND OTHER SOCIAL MEDIA, WE ARE PLUGGED INTO WHAT IS HAPPENING 24 HOURS A DAY, 7 DAYS A WEEK.”¹³⁹

Some witnesses emphasized the risks associated with using lower quality French on these new digital platforms. The immediacy of new media has made some users place less importance on language quality. A TBS representative made the following observation:

“BECAUSE OF THE SPEED AT WHICH COMMUNICATIONS ARE CREATED AND TRANSMITTED, PEOPLE MAY NOT GO BACK TO CHECK THEIR SPELLING AND THE RICHNESS OF THEIR VOCABULARY. ... THAT IS THE RISK WITH ANY NEW TOOL. THEY CAN ALWAYS BE USED WITHOUT RIGOUR. ... IT IS UP TO EACH INDIVIDUAL WHO PUBLISHES A DOCUMENT TO ENSURE THAT THE QUALITY OF THE LANGUAGE IS GOOD.”¹⁴⁰

The Translation Bureau noted that it plays an active role in helping the federal institutions that rely on its services respect the requirements of the *Official Languages Act* when they integrate social media into their internal and external communications strategies.¹⁴¹ CEFRIO added that there was no need to worry about this too much when users are aware that the level of language changes depending on the forum used.¹⁴² It is to be expected that the quality of language will not be the same in a personal context as in a professional context.

Furthermore, witnesses emphasized that all translations are adaptations. In order to ensure equal quality, the information must not only be updated simultaneously, of course, but also have equivalent, although not necessarily identical, content. An NFB representative provided the following explanation:

“IT IS A COMPLETELY BILINGUAL SITE AND THE APPLICATIONS ARE BILINGUAL. THEY ARE NOT NECESSARILY MIRRORED BECAUSE WE HAVE SPECIFIC FILMS IN FRENCH AND IN ENGLISH, AND AS MUCH AS POSSIBLE, SUBTITLED VERSIONS IN BOTH.”¹⁴³

A number of witnesses pointed out that the 140-character limit imposed by Twitter can be a challenge, especially as regards terminology. This challenge affects both Anglophones and

Francophones, but it is a bigger one in French. A Translation Bureau employee explained the challenge as follows:

“THE CHALLENGE IS NOT SO MUCH TRANSLATION AS IT IS TIME, WHICH IS VERY SHORT. AND YOU HAVE TO THINK FAST, ESPECIALLY WHEN WE ARE TALKING ABOUT TWITTER, TWEETS. SO THE IDEA IS TO GET A CLEAR UNDERSTANDING OF THE AUTHOR’S THINKING IN ORDER TO RENDER IT. THAT IS THE CHALLENGE.” ¹⁴⁴

In this context, where the use of new platforms is spreading like wildfire, it can be difficult to encourage the use of French terminology. For example, while the official French term for “tweeting” is “gazouiller,” the most common term used in French is “tweeter.” However, terminology databases have the potential to influence online usage in French. A researcher who appeared before the Senate Committee made the following statement:

“I BELIEVE THAT ONE OF THE VERY IMPORTANT FACTORS IN MAINTAINING HIGH-QUALITY LANGUAGE, AS IT PERTAINS TO TERMINOLOGY, IS THE ABILITY TO QUICKLY OFFER FRENCH TERMS WHEN ENGLISH TERMS ARISE. ... TODAY, THANKS TO WEB 2.0, WE CAN CONSULT PARALLEL TERMINOLOGY BASES SUPPLIED BY OTHER PEOPLE IN OUR LANGUAGE. THIS IS AN INTERLINGUISTIC AND PLURILINGUISTIC PHENOMENON. THERE ARE ENTHUSIASTIC PEOPLE WHO ARE PASSIONATELY INTERESTED IN A FIELD AND WHO WANT TO CONTRIBUTE BY ADDING FRENCH EQUIVALENTS AS A HOBBY. ... ONE MAY WELL THINK THAT THE MORE [F]RANCOPHONES IN THE WORLD COMMUNICATE WITH EACH OTHER, THE MORE THEY WILL BE ABLE TO AGREE ON A COMMON TERMINOLOGY THAT WILL ENABLE THEM TO COMMUNICATE EFFECTIVELY. ON THAT QUESTION, IT SEEMS TO ME THAT WE SHOULD BE MORE OPTIMISTIC THAN PESSIMISTIC.” ¹⁴⁵

According to the researcher, Web 2.0 can promote the sharing knowledge and the creation of French terminology that is accepted by users. He named a few federal government initiatives in this area:

“SOFTWARE HAS BEEN DEVELOPED UNDER THE ACTION PLAN FOR OFFICIAL LANGUAGES AT THE LANGUAGE TECHNOLOGIES RESEARCH CENTRE ON THE OTHER SIDE OF THE RIVER. I AM THINKING OF A PRODUCT LIKE WEBiTEXT, WHICH WILL TAKE ALL THE DOCUMENTS ON THE “GC.CA” WEBSITES, SEARCH FOR AN ENGLISH TERM AND FIND THE CORRESPONDING FRENCH SENTENCE IN WHICH THE TERM IS TRANSLATED. THE RESULTS PRESENTED TO USERS WILL INCLUDE ALL “GC.CA” WEB PAGES. THIS IS INVALUABLE TO LANGUAGE WORKERS, BE THEY TRANSLATORS, TERMINOLOGISTS, WRITERS, REVISERS OR UNDOUBTEDLY INTERPRETERS AS WELL.” ¹⁴⁶

A Translation Bureau representative also commented on the potential of language technologies to respond to the challenge of immediacy, speed and language quality. However, he noted that, in Canadian universities that offer translation programs, the issue of social media has not yet been addressed directly. ¹⁴⁷

Numerous witnesses praised the potential of the terminology database TERMIUM®, which contains more than four million terms in English and French. This database has been made available to all Canadians thanks to funding allocated under the *Roadmap for Canadian Linguistic Duality*. One TBS representative mentioned that this tool promotes language quality in Canadian society.¹⁴⁸ TERMIUM® is used by public servants, editors, translators, teachers and students from Canada and around the world. A mobile app for TERMIUM® will be launched shortly. Translation Bureau representatives made the following statement:

“THESE RESOURCES ALLOW USERS TO HONE THEIR SKILLS IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH. CANADIAN INTERNET USERS CAN GO TO THE PORTAL TO FIND EVERYTHING THEY NEED IN ORDER TO STUDY, WORK AND COMMUNICATE MORE EFFECTIVELY IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.”¹⁴⁹

A question of visibility

Most of the federal institutions that appeared before the Senate Committee agreed that **using social media increases their visibility and allows them to reach more people**. One Canada Revenue Agency representative summarized the situation well:

“IT IS VERY EARLY DAYS, BUT IT IS ABSOLUTELY REQUIRED THAT EFFORTS BE MADE TOWARD LETTING PEOPLE KNOW THAT THOSE TOOLS EXIST IN ORDER TO CONTINUE TO INCREASE. OF COURSE IF THEY SEE VALUE IN THEM THEY TELL THEIR FRIENDS, AND THAT IS THE REAL POWER OF THE SOCIAL MEDIA.”¹⁵⁰

A CBC/Radio-Canada representative made a similar observation:

“WE DEFINITELY HAVE TO BE WHERE THE USERS ARE. MOST OF OUR PROGRAMS HAVE A FACEBOOK ACCOUNT AND USE TWITTER AND SOCIAL MEDIA, NOT JUST TO ENCOURAGE CONVERSATION, DEBATE, THE EXCHANGE OF OPINIONS AND A DIVERSITY OF VOICES ON ALL SORTS OF TOPICS, BUT ALSO TO REACH PEOPLE WHO POTENTIALLY WOULD NOT KNOW THAT RADIO-CANADA IS THERE OR THAT CERTAIN PROGRAMS OR CERTAIN TYPES OF CONTENT ARE AVAILABLE.”¹⁵¹

However, even if an institution has a social media presence, it is not necessarily visible to the public. Most of the federal institutions that appeared before the Senate Committee had posted prominent links somewhere on their website, sometimes even on their home page, directing users to various social media platforms. Some use their existing networks to ensure greater visibility (e.g., Statistics Canada, Natural Resources Canada).

Many of the institutions that appeared before the Senate Committee concluded that Anglophones and Francophones use the Internet, new media and social media differently. In order for the activities of federal institutions to be visible, they must be adapted to the needs and interests of the target audience. An NFB representative commented that it is important to adjust the message to the audience, as Anglophones and Francophones do not consume the same type of content.¹⁵² A CRTC representative noted that Anglophones use the Internet and social media much more than Francophones.¹⁵³

As regards the visibility of federal institutions among minority Francophone communities, an FCFA representative made the following statement:

“I AM NOT SURE TO WHAT EXTENT PEOPLE ARE AWARE THAT FEDERAL INSTITUTIONS ARE PRESENT AND ACTIVE IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES.” ¹⁵⁴

Other witnesses pointed out that members of these two language groups have different needs in terms of the content and information they are looking for. A representative of the Public Health Agency of Canada provided the following example:

“IT ... BECAME APPARENT THAT [F]RANCOPHONES AND [A]NGLOPHONES SOMETIMES HAD DIFFERENT INFORMATION NEEDS AND INTERESTS. IN PARTICULAR, THE ISSUE OF PREGNANCY AND VACCINES WAS OF SPECIAL INTEREST TO [F]RANCOPHONES. IN RESPONSE TO THIS FINDING, THE AGENCY QUICKLY ADJUSTED ITS GOOGLE AD MARKETING CAMPAIGN TO MAKE THAT TYPE OF INFORMATION EASIER TO FIND FOR THIS COMMUNITY. OUR RESEARCH SHOWS THAT [A]NGLOPHONE AUDIENCES TEND TO SEARCH FOR MORE INFORMATION ON IMMUNIZATION DETERMINANTS OF HEALTH AND DISEASE SYMPTOMS.” ¹⁵⁵

A representative from Veterans Affairs Canada described a similar situation and explained that it sought to increase its presence among Francophones:

“INTERESTINGLY, THE CONVERSATION, DRIVEN BY THE AUDIENCE FOUND ON THE FRENCH FACEBOOK PAGE, TENDS TO LEAN MORE TOWARD OUR CURRENT MILITARY ACTIVITIES. ON THE OTHER HAND, THE ENGLISH PAGE LEANS MORE TOWARD TRADITIONAL THEMES, FOR EXAMPLE, REMEMBERING THOSE INDIVIDUALS WHO WERE PART OF THE FIRST WORLD WAR OR THE SECOND WORLD WAR. THE NATURE OF SOCIAL MEDIA ALLOWS US THE FLEXIBILITY NECESSARY TO ENSURE THAT CONVERSATIONS AND INFORMATION ARE DRIVEN BY THE USERS’ LANGUAGE OF CHOICE. ... WE WANT TO INCREASE OUR PROFILE AMONG [F]RANCOPHONES.” ¹⁵⁶

The Senate Committee asked the federal institutions it met with to provide data on the number of hits to their websites and social media accounts by Anglophones and Francophones. When the statistics on the number of visits to their websites, Facebook pages and Twitter accounts are compared, it becomes apparent that there are significant gaps between institutions. Some online activities are definitely more popular than others. Some institutions reach more Francophones than others.

For example, the “Canada Remembers” Facebook page run by Veterans Affairs Canada had close to 645,000 “likes” as of 31 May 2012. Only 7% of these “likes” were for the French page. As an aside, it is worth noting that the number of “likes” increased by 75% after Veterans’ Week. ¹⁵⁷

The Facebook pages of Statistics Canada and the Canada Border Services Agency had only 580 “likes” and 425 “likes” respectively as of the same date. However, the French version of the Statistics Canada page had 32% of the hits.

In some cases, the ability to reach the public varies according to the social media tool that is used. For example, 25% of the RCMP’s followers on Twitter are Francophones, but this rate drops to 4% for Facebook.

The following table (Table 7) provides an overview of the number of hits by Anglophones and Francophones to the websites and social media accounts of the federal institutions that met with the Senate Committee.

Table 7 – Anglophone and Francophone Traffic on the Websites,ⁱ Facebook Pages and Twitter Feedsⁱⁱ of the Federal Institutions that Took Part in Public Hearings, Spring 2012

Institution	Website (% by number of hits)		Facebook (% by number of “likes”)		Twitter (% by number of followers)	
	Anglo.	Franco.	Anglo.	Franco.	Anglo.	Franco.
National Film Board	67	33	59	41	74	26
Passport Canada	67	33	77	23	76	24
Environment Canada	76	24	73	27	88	12
Canada Border Services Agency	N/A	N/A	80	20	83	17
Parks Canada ⁱⁱⁱ	81	16	86	14	89	11
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada ^{iv}	87	13	65	35	81	19
Health Canada ^v	72	28	73	27	83	17
National Capital Commission ^{vi}	85	15	80	20	85	15
Citizenship and Immigration Canada ^{vii}	85	11	83	12	85	15
Royal Canadian Mounted Police ⁱⁱⁱ	80	15	96	4	75	25
Public Health Agency of Canada	76	24	83	17	83	17
Veterans Affairs Canada ^{viii}	N/A	N/A	93	7	86	14
Bank of Canada	78	22	N/A	N/A	90	10
Transport Canada	81	19	76	24	81	19
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada	87	13	N/A	N/A	86	14

Institution	Website (% by number of hits)		Facebook (% by number of "likes")		Twitter (% by number of followers)	
	Anglo.	Franco.	Anglo.	Franco.	Anglo.	Franco.
National Defence	81	19	N/A	N/A	94	6
Natural Resources Canada	80	20	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Statistics Canada	86	14	68	32	78	22
Canada Revenue Agency	89	11	N/A	N/A	89	11

- i Departmental websites only.
- ii The data shows that virtually all institutions maintain a social media presence. When not available in the *Proceedings* or in follow-up documentation provided by the federal institutions, information on social media subscribers is based on data available as of 31 May 2012.
- iii A small percentage of the websites visited are bilingual.
- iv The Department does not maintain a corporate Facebook presence. This data refers to the Working in Canada program.
- v The Department does not maintain a corporate Facebook presence. This data refers to the "DrugsNot4Me" campaign and the "Healthy Canadians" and "Healthy First Nations and Inuit" initiatives (overall rate).
- vi The NCC does not maintain a corporate Facebook or Twitter presence. This data refers to Canada Day and Winterlude activities (overall rate).
- vii Technical limitations prevented some data from being identified for this website.
- viii The Department does not maintain a corporate Facebook presence. This data refers to the "Canada Remembers" initiative.

Sources: *Proceedings*; Memorandums to Members of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, 6 June 2012, 12 June 2012, 13 June 2012 and 5 September 2012; social media subscriptions as of 31 May 2012.

Witnesses said that being visible to Anglophone and Francophone audiences goes hand in hand with presenting information in a balanced way. According to one NFB official:

"IT IS A DELICATE BALANCE, BECAUSE IF WE DO TOO MUCH PROMOTION, WE REALIZE THAT WE ALSO LOSE PEOPLE. YOU HAVE TO CATCH THEIR INTEREST IT IS NOT ENOUGH FOR PEOPLE TO SUBSCRIBE TO THE NFB, WE MUST ALSO OFFER A RICH AND INTERESTING CONTENT THAT WILL LEAD TO MORE SUBSCRIBERS." ¹⁵⁸

An information specialist heard by the Senate Committee highlighted the importance of defining best practices in terms of the relational aspect of social media. ¹⁵⁹ In other words, user preferences need to be taken into account and the necessary steps need to be taken in order to reach them as effectively as possible. Identifying these needs takes some degree of consultation. ¹⁶⁰

A question of planning

Several witnesses stressed how important it is to **adequately plan** when it comes time to post information on the website or engage in social media. **Taking this step seriously often leads to improved official languages performance.**

The decision of whether to engage in social media may be based on what other institutions are already doing. It may be part of a more or less elaborate strategy or part of a pilot project. This is how one CRTC official described the institution's experience:

“LAST JUNE, THE CRTC CONDUCTED A PILOT PROJECT ON THE USE OF TWITTER DURING A PUBLIC HEARING. ALL CRTC COMMUNICATIONS WERE IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, INCLUDING HASH TAGS AND REAL TIME RESPONSES FROM STAFF TO QUESTIONS PUT TO US. WE ALSO SAW THIS AS AN OPPORTUNITY TO IMPROVE PUBLIC UNDERSTANDING OF OUR MANDATE AND TO QUICKLY CORRECT ANY MYTHS, RUMOURS OR MISINFORMATION. THE CRTC HAS HAD AN ACTIVE PRESENCE ON TWITTER SINCE THAT PILOT PROJECT.” ¹⁶¹

At the time of the public hearing, the CRTC was putting the final touches on its social media plan for 2012–2013. ¹⁶² The Public Service Commission described its approach:

“[I]T IS IMPORTANT TO HAVE A STRATEGY. ... ONCE WE KNOW OUR OBJECTIVE, WE HAVE TO DEVELOP A SOCIAL MEDIA STRATEGY, DETERMINE WHAT WE WANT TO DO AND IDENTIFY OUR TARGET CLIENTELE. ... WE WANT TO MAKE SURE THAT WE DO IT FOR THE RIGHT REASONS AND IN THE RIGHT WAY. WE WERE ASKED WHY TWITTER AND NOT FACEBOOK?

WE WANTED TO REACH OUT TO RECENT GRADUATES AND PEOPLE WHO ARE AT THE MIDWAY POINT IN THEIR CAREERS AND MAY BE WANTING TO CHANGE JOBS. WE WANTED TO REACH OUT TO PEOPLE BETWEEN THE AGES OF 25 AND 44. THE INFORMATION WE RECEIVE FROM SPECIALISTS IN THE FIELD INDICATES THAT TWITTER IS REALLY THE TOOL REQUIRED TO REACH OUT TO THIS SEGMENT OF THE POPULATION. THAT IS WHY WE CHOSE TWITTER.” ¹⁶³

In a follow-up document to the Senate Committee, the School of Public Service reported that it limits its social media engagement to LinkedIn, where it promotes its learning activities, and to internal and external wikis. The School does not currently see the value of maintaining a presence on other platforms for the following reasons:

“THE SCHOOL’S USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA HAS BEEN LIMITED TO THESE PLATFORMS UNTIL NOW, SINCE ITS CLIENTS AND PRIMARY TARGET AUDIENCE ARE PUBLIC SERVANTS, WHO MAY NOT HAVE ACCESS TO MAINSTREAM SOCIAL MEDIA (SUCH AS FACEBOOK, TWITTER AND YOUTUBE) AT WORK, WHERE THEY PLAN THEIR LEARNING AND DEVELOPMENT. ... AS AN ORGANIZATION THAT HAS TO RECOVER ITS COSTS, THE SCHOOL NEEDS TO ENSURE THAT THE USE OF SOCIAL MEDIA WILL BE COST-EFFECTIVE, BENEFICIAL AND ALIGNED WITH ITS BUSINESS OBJECTIVES AS WELL AS WITH REQUIREMENTS UNDER SEVERAL GOVERNMENT POLICIES AND ACTS, INCLUDING THE OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACT.” ¹⁶⁴

However, the School might soon have to reconsider. As public servants increasingly gain access to social media, together with the desire to instill a culture of learning within the public service, the School is currently looking at developing a strategy based on Twitter and YouTube, where it could inform public servants about learning opportunities and present brief videos on its most popular and interesting courses. ¹⁶⁵

In terms of tracking, some institutions measure the number or type of comments received through social media (e.g., NFB, Parks Canada). Others conduct surveys to validate their approach (e.g., Canada Revenue Agency). Some of them analyze website traffic regularly (e.g., Passport Canada). Still others have developed quantitative and qualitative indicators

to measure performance (e.g., NFB). As noted by one TBS official who appeared before the Senate Committee, website monitoring can be cumbersome.

“THE NUMBER OF GOVERNMENT WEBSITES, FOR ALL DEPARTMENTS AND AGENCIES, IS CONSIDERABLE, AS IS THE AMOUNT OF INFORMATION PUBLISHED IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES. IT WOULD BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE TO CONTINUALLY MEASURE OR VALIDATE IT. THE NUMBER OF SITES AND PAGES IS HUGE. WE THEREFORE RELY ON AN ANNUAL PROCESS INVOLVING SAMPLING AND THE ANSWERS THAT DEPARTMENTS PROVIDE TO QUESTIONS RELATED TO THEIR PERFORMANCE CRITERIA.”¹⁶⁶

In terms of social media monitoring, one institution explicitly outlined the criteria used. Parks Canada ensures that social media content is always posted and available in both official languages simultaneously, while maintaining equal quality.¹⁶⁷ Its approach can be summarized as follows:

BEST PRACTICES IN TERMS OF PLANNING: THE CASE OF PARKS CANADA

- Parks Canada (PC) ensures that the primary platforms selected (e.g., Twitter, Facebook, YouTube) have bilingual interfaces and allow posting of content in both official languages.
- PC requires that its content be posted to any platform in both official languages equally and concurrently.
- PC requires that separate English and French channels be established with links to the alternate language version.
- PC requires that all smartphone/tablet applications be available for download in English and French, with a presence on both English and French app stores.
- PC requires that for all mobile platforms, all unique Parks Canada content (i.e., content that is not already on the website) be posted on the PC website in both English and French concurrently.
- PC ensures that all unilingual videos are fully versioned in the alternate language either through voiceover or subtitles before posting to YouTube.

Another institution, the National Capital Commission, stated that each of its social media projects is evaluated based on three criteria:

- ▣ **Importance:** Does the project warrant a social media campaign?
- ▣ **Sustainability:** Do we have the resources to maintain an ongoing exchange on the program through social media?
- ▣ **Presentation in both official languages:** Can we develop and maintain an exchange with the public in both official languages?¹⁶⁸

For Statistics Canada, participation in social media follows a governance structure and rules of engagement that cover the principles of planning, risk management and vigilance.¹⁶⁹

Certain social media platforms are easier to evaluate in terms of their reach and results. This appears to be the case for YouTube, as noted by Citizenship and Immigration Canada in a follow-up to the Senate Committee:

“SOCIAL MEDIA SUCH AS YOUTUBE ALLOW US TO EVALUATE THE ABILITY OF EACH VIDEO IN TERMS OF REACH AND HOLDING VIEWERS’ INTEREST. THIS ANALYSIS CAN THEN BE USED TO INFORM DECISIONS IN MAKING FUTURE VIDEOS IN AN EFFORT TO MAXIMIZE VALUE PER DOLLAR.” ¹⁷⁰

The Senate Committee asked the federal institutions that appeared during the public hearings to provide information on the measures they use for evaluating and monitoring Internet and social media. Several of the federal institutions developed their own rules for using social media. The various internal tools used include a guide, rules of engagement, conditions of use, directives and protocols. Most federal institutions strive to ensure that these rules follow TBS guidelines.

In terms of evaluation and monitoring measures, although the data is not easily comparable, practices appear to vary greatly among institutions. Two institutions stated that they have not developed any specific measures for evaluating websites (Bank of Canada, National Defence). For social media, the degree of monitoring varies by institution. Some conducted preliminary analyses prior to establishing a presence on a given platform. Others regularly monitor content. Some use geo-targeting techniques so as to better tailor the content available on these platforms. Still others have established highly specific criteria for measuring compliance with language requirements.

The table on the following page (Table 8) summarizes the data received from these institutions. It notes whether there are any guidelines for social media use and presents each institution’s overall performance based on report card data prepared annually by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages.

To sum up, this fourth section has shown that a number of good practices are in place in federal institutions regarding the use of the Internet, new media and social media and respect for language rights. These practices need to be promoted so other institutions can follow suit. However, institutions must consider certain challenges when deciding to venture into the world of social media. First, they must allocate the appropriate resources – financial, human resources and translation. Then they must be able to identify the intended reach of their Web 2.0 activities. The public hearings revealed deficiencies in terms of reaching Francophones through these tools. Lastly, more effort is needed in terms of planning, design and monitoring. Generally, it was noted that the federal institutions that achieve the best results take linguistic duality into account at every stage of their communication strategies.

Table 8 – Evaluation and Monitoring of Internet and Social Media Activity of the Federal Institutions that Took Part in Public Hearings, Spring 2012

Institution	Website		Social Media			Institution's Overall Performance According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
	Yes	Details	Yes	Details	Guidelines	
National Film Board	√	Quantitative criteria (number of visitors, video views)	√	Regular monitoring (number of subscribers, number and kinds of comments and content sharing)	Social media use by NFB employees: Code of Conduct	Good (2008–2009)
Passport Canada	√	Weekly and monthly reports on usage statistics; language quality reviewed to ensure that writing is clear, easy to understand	√	Future evaluation focusing on the impact of social media on call volumes, applications received by email and general client knowledge of Passport Canada	Passport Canada directives on posting information in social media tools	Good (2009–2010)
Environment Canada	√	Periodic research projects (analysis of objectives, Web content and statistics on number of visits, time spent on the site, etc.); approach to performance evaluation currently under review	√	Monitoring of key statistics (number of subscribers, “likes,” retweets, etc.); approach to performance evaluation currently under review	Environment Canada Guidelines for User Submissions in Social Media Tools	N/A ⁱ

Institution	Website		Social Media			Institution's Overall Performance According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
	Yes	Details	Yes	Details	Guidelines	
Canada Border Services Agency	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	Facebook terms of use; Twitter terms of use; YouTube terms of use	Very poor (2009–2010)
Parks Canada	√	Compliance with policies and standards for publishing content in both official languages and for accessibility	√	Preliminary analysis of platforms (reach, audience, sustainability); regular monitoring (number of subscribers, analysis of comments); regular monitoring of respect for both official languages	A Roadmap for Parks Canada's Entry into Social Media	Fair (2008–2009)
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada	√	Management committees and internal Web governance mechanisms; centralized governance; Web management framework	√	Analysis based on the social media participation guidelines and the Web management framework	Social Media Participation; Standards for providing comments and for services	N/A ⁱ
Health Canada	√	Central content management; WebTrends; measures for ensuring quality and access in both official languages	√	Review and assessment of tools, tactics, methods and processes to ensure effective integration of Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada social media; internal monitoring	Twitter Protocol; YouTube Protocol	Fair (2009–2010)

Institution	Website		Social Media			Institution's Overall Performance According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
	Yes	Details	Yes	Details	Guidelines	
Citizenship and Immigration Canada	√	Central content management; the institution ensures that information is published simultaneously in the same way in both official languages	√	Content is checked regularly using established guidelines; all content is reviewed by the translation unit and approved prior to publication; social media evaluation conducted for each project (objectives and success factors)	Social Media Guidelines	Fair (2009–2010)
National Capital Commission	√	Validation mechanisms similar to those used for traditional communication tools; central content management	√	Each social media project is evaluated based on three criteria (importance, sustainability, presentation in both official languages)	NCC's rules for public participation in social media (under approval)	Good (2008–2009)
Royal Canadian Mounted Police	√	Compliance monitoring through twice-monthly checks; automated site content management tools to ensure compliance with language requirements (information of equal quality published simultaneously)	√	Compliance monitoring through twice-monthly checks; daily monitoring of comments; enforcement of established rules of engagement and terms of use	Rules of engagement for the RCMP Facebook account; Twitter terms of use	Fair (2008–2009)

Institution	Website		Social Media			Institution's Overall Performance According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
	Yes	Details	Yes	Details	Guidelines	
Public Health Agency of Canada	√	Quality assurance practices in order to provide the linguistic resources required to maintain the website; needs assessment by language, location and type of online behaviour; public opinion research; central content management; Google Analytics	√	Review and assessment of tools, tactics, methods and processes to ensure effective integration of Public Health Agency of Canada and Health Canada social media	Twitter terms of use; YouTube terms of use	N/A ⁱ
Veterans Affairs Canada	√	Release of information planned so that information is published simultaneously and in the same way in both official languages	√	Planning tools to ensure quality and speed in both languages; marketing methods use geo-targeting	N/A	N/A ⁱ
Bank of Canada	–	There has been no effort to evaluate the website, although the institution does publish information simultaneously and in the same way in both official languages	–	No evaluation of social media participation has been conducted	–	N/A ⁱ

Institution	Website		Social Media			Institution's Overall Performance According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
	Yes	Details	Yes	Details	Guidelines	
Transport Canada	√	Web content management system and method for evaluating desired outcomes (reach, awareness, trust); the department does not currently have any evaluation materials that look specifically at language, but it does post information simultaneously in both official languages	√	Monitoring of comments received; staying on top of new trends; using only bilingual tools; evaluation of desired outcomes (reach, awareness, trust)	Social media terms of use; Transport Canada on Facebook; Transport Canada on Twitter; Transport Canada on YouTube; Transport Canada on Flickr	Fair (2009–2010)
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada	√	Central Web page validation model	√	Various tools used to gauge the impact of social media presence (e.g., Hootsuite, Tweetreach, The Archivist, Social Mention); number of subscribers, information shared with other users, “likes,” comment quality and quantity; use of bilingual tools only	General Comments and Trackback Policy; Twitter Policy	Very poor (2009–2010)

Institution	Website		Social Media			Institution's Overall Performance According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
	Yes	Details	Yes	Details	Guidelines	
National Defence	-	No specific criteria to evaluate the website. The department complies with TBS policies, uses regular Web statistics.	√	Any new initiative must receive pre-approval and is reviewed annually; regular monitoring to ensure official languages compliance; indicators to gauge impact of Twitter accounts (increased website traffic and fewer calls to the Media Liaison Office)	Acceptable use of social media; Social media disclaimer	N/A ⁱ
Natural Resources Canada	√	Usability testing in March 2011; measures to reduce content volume, enhance search functionality and implement a consistent navigation scheme; other testing planned for 2012–2013; central content management	√	Any new initiative must be planned using a number of criteria (e.g., presence, strategic objectives, compliance with applicable legislation and policies, official languages); pilot projects on the use of other social media	NRCan Social Media Comment Guidelines; NRCan Wiki Official Languages Guidelines	Very poor (2009–2010)

Institution	Website		Social Media			Institution's Overall Performance According to the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages
	Yes	Details	Yes	Details	Guidelines	
Statistics Canada (SC)	√	SC systematically measures access to its website (number of visits, number of users starting their search on the website rather than by external link, percentage of users having obtained what they needed)	√	Governance structure and rules of engagement that combine the principles of planning, risk management and vigilance; evaluation before engaging in other social media; number of users; number of conversations mentioning SC; increase in traffic to the website from social media sites; analysis of comments, etc.	Rules for participation in social media; Rules for participating in chat sessions	N/A ⁱ
Canada Revenue Agency	√	2010 survey of CRA website users; regular testing (public opinion research, prototype trials, expert analysis); participation by both official language groups in the evaluation process; central content management	√	Use of monitoring tools such as Google Analytics and WebTrends; number of retweets	Twitter terms of use; YouTube terms of use	Good (2008–2009)

i These institutions have not been evaluated by the Office of the Commissioner since 2008–2009.

Sources: *Proceedings*; Memorandums to Members of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, 6 June 2012, 12 June 2012, 13 June 2012 and 5 September 2012; federal institution websites; Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages, *Report Cards*.

“The revolution in the information technologies that has been going on for the past decade and is picking up more and more speed directly affects the way our communities communicate, get information, get entertainment and receive services in their own language. ... That is where we need to be and where we need to produce content for our young people, and we are not there yet. ... That is where our young people are, and that is where we need to interact with them.”

Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada,
Proceedings, 14 November 2012.

“Here in this community, we do not lack for content in our language; we lack for content that reflects us.”

English-Language Arts Network,
Proceedings, 14 May 2012.

THE IMPORTANT ROLE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN OFFICIAL LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES

Participation and collaboration: these are the key concepts guiding the use of Web 2.0 tools. These are also the ideas upheld by the obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*. For official language minority communities, new technologies are crucial for enhancing their vitality and ensuring their development. Several community initiatives with these objectives in mind have already been put in place. This fifth section presents the progress made and the challenges that remain in access to government services, education, media and culture. It also addresses other issues regarding youth, the creation of content in French, and federal programs designed to allow communities to participate in information and communications technology. But first, this section presents the enormous potential of new technologies for connecting communities.

Networking: reducing isolation

Spread over a vast area, quite a few official language minority communities are far apart from each other. **New technologies, such as social media, present these communities with opportunities to open up doors and break down barriers of isolation.** For a number of witnesses, these technologies are a source of **vitality** for official language minority communities and provide new avenues for **collaboration**. During his appearance in October 2011, the Commissioner of Official Languages stated the following:

“THE NEW MEDIA, THE NEW TECHNOLOGY, IS A TOOL. IT CAN BE USED TO HOMOGENIZE, TO ASSIMILATE, BUT ALSO TO DIFFERENTIATE, TO CREATE NEW COMMUNICATION LINKS AND MAKE INFORMATION ACCESSIBLE FOR PEOPLE WHO WOULD NEVER HAVE HAD CONTACT WITH THE OUTSIDE WORLD.” ¹⁷¹

In 2007, four researchers from the Université du Québec en Outaouais and the University of Ottawa submitted a research paper, *Le Web comme outil pour le renforcement de la gouvernance des communautés francophones minoritaires*,¹⁷² to the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities. The researchers looked at how Francophone communities are harnessing the potential of new technologies to encourage their political engagement, enhance public Francophone space and take part in discussions and issues that affect their future. According to one of the study's authors who appeared in fall 2011:

“[O]UR STUDY ENABLED US TO DEMONSTRATE THAT THE ORGANIZATIONS OF THE [F]RANCOPHONE COMMUNITY THAT WE STUDIED WERE USING THE WEB’S POTENTIAL FOR DEMOCRATIC RENEWAL IN QUITE A MARGINAL WAY. AT LEAST TO DATE, THOSE ORGANIZATIONS APPEAR TO HAVE HESITATED TO EMBED THEIR POLITICAL PRACTICE IN THE WEB. THE WEB’S DELIBERATIVE POTENTIAL THUS REMAINS UNDEREXPLOITED.”¹⁷³

However, there is no doubt that new technologies present enormous development potential for communities, especially the smallest ones. As stated by one CEFRIO official:

“OUR ARGUMENT IS THAT TECHNOLOGY CAN HELP EQUIP SMALL COMMUNITIES — BOTH [F]RANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES OUTSIDE QUEBEC AND [A]NGLOPHONE COMMUNITIES IN QUEBEC — BY GIVING THEM ACCESS TO KNOWLEDGE, AND ENABLING THEM TO WORK, DEVELOP THE ECONOMIES OF THEIR COMMUNITIES, AND INTRODUCE HEALTH AND EDUCATION PROJECTS IN THEIR MOTHER TONGUE AND THE LANGUAGE OF THEIR CHOICE.”¹⁷⁴

In Quebec, one striking example would be Community Learning Centres (CLCs). Initially, these centres were opened to provide services to Anglophone communities outside the classroom. They appeared as a way to improve access to services for these communities, especially cooperation opportunities. The centres work with partners in a wide range of areas, such as health, education and economic development. Their missions are tailored to the needs of each community they serve. These centres have the technological facilities to communicate with one another and provide certain services to remote communities. During his appearance before the Senate Committee, one Quebec Community Groups Network (QCGN) official took pride in describing how useful these centres are to Anglophone communities:

“THESE CLCs ARE LINKED THROUGH A VIDEO CONFERENCING NETWORK THAT HAS ALLOWED OUR YOUNG PEOPLE FROM REMOTE AREAS TO CONNECT WITH THE MOST REMARKABLE PLACES, INCLUDING SPACE. IT PERMITS COMMUNITY WORKERS AND VOLUNTEERS TO SHARE IDEAS, WORK COLLABORATIVELY ON PROJECTS, AND PARTICIPATE IN WIDER COMMUNITY DISCUSSIONS AND CONSULTATIONS.”¹⁷⁵

For **Anglophone minority communities**, social media serves as a **promotional tool**, an opportunity to **collaborate** among community members, and a **way to interact with Quebec’s Francophone majority**.

“THROUGH THESE TOOLS, OUR LEADERS AND STAKEHOLDERS REMAIN CONNECTED, AND WE ARE ABLE TO OUTREACH TO NEW AUDIENCES AND INNOVATE IN OUR OWN COMMUNICATIONS. SOMETIMES THESE PLATFORMS ARE THE BEST WAY TO COMMUNICATE WITH SOME OF OUR STAKEHOLDERS, PROMOTE OUR NEXT BIG EVENT OR GET ON THE MEDIA AND POLITICIANS’ RADAR SCREEN. ANOTHER VERY IMPORTANT POINT FOR OUR COMMUNITIES IS THAT SOCIAL NETWORKS ARE AVAILABLE TO ALL ORGANIZATIONS, WHICH ALLOWS US TO BETTER PROMOTE OUR MEMBERS’ ACTIVITIES AND SUPPORT OUR REGIONS.”¹⁷⁶

For **Francophone and Acadian communities**, new technologies allow them to **connect with others who share a common language**, whether in the same region, elsewhere in the country or around the world. As such, social media presents a range of opportunities:

“THE FCFA AND A GROWING NUMBER OF MEMBER ORGANIZATIONS AND EVEN THEIR MEMBERS ARE CURRENTLY ACTIVE AND FOLLOWED ON FACEBOOK AND TWITTER, BECAUSE THESE ARE EXTRAORDINARY WAYS OF REACHING CITIZENS, INFORMING [F]RANCOPHONES ABOUT THE ACTIVITIES TAKING PLACE AT HOME, ENGAGING CANADIANS IN THE ISSUE OF THE [F]RANCOPHONIE AND LINGUISTIC DUALITY, AND PROMOTING EVERYTHING OUR COMMUNITIES ARE CONTRIBUTING TO CANADA’S RAPID EXPANSION.”¹⁷⁷

Access to government services in the language of choice

Federal institutions provide services to the public through a number of channels: in person, by phone or online. The provision of services is subject to the *Official Languages (Communications with and Services to the Public) Regulations*. In certain cases, new technologies may be useful for delivering services in the language of the individual’s choice. Services delivered online are not subject to geographic limitations and provide everyone with access at all times in the language of their choice. However, points of service in federal offices continue to be constrained by specific rules (e.g., significant demand) that result in services not being available everywhere at all times.

In accordance with the principle of substantive equality, federal institutions must undertake to provide service of equal quality in both official languages, whether in person, by phone or online. Year after year, most of the complaints received by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages pertain to active offer in person. In his appearance before the Senate Committee, the Commissioner of Official Languages noted the potential for new technologies to improve service delivery to the public:

“ONE OF THE REASONS WHY THE NUMBER OF COMPLAINTS IS DECLINING IS THAT IT WAS POSSIBLE, WITH THE TELEPHONE SYSTEM, FOR THE GOVERNMENT TO DIRECT PEOPLE TO EMPLOYEES WHO COULD ANSWER THEM IN FRENCH. IT IS THEREFORE EASIER TO SYSTEMATICALLY ORGANIZE A TECHNOLOGY TO CONNECT [F]RANCOPHONES OR [A]NGLOPHONES RATHER THAN NECESSARILY ORGANIZING STAFF AT A SPECIFIC COUNTER.”¹⁷⁸

However, in his annual report last year, the Commissioner noted deficiencies in terms of services provided by email. According to his report card findings, both official languages were not always treated equally, and response times depended on the language, even when compared to services provided in person and by phone.¹⁷⁹ Given that new technologies are playing an increasingly greater role in providing services to the public, federal institutions need to pay close attention to respect for linguistic duality.

A number of witnesses agreed that new technologies present enormous potential for official language minority communities in accessing federal services. This involves providing the public with an active offer of services, in English and in French, and to make services available on as many platforms as possible. The Communications Policy of the Government of Canada states that institutions must provide 24-hour electronic access to public programs, services and information. An information specialist pitched the idea of setting up social media centres, similar to call centres, as a way to meet demand on these new platforms.¹⁸⁰

Service Canada was cited a number of times as an example of an institution that has been able to go beyond existing regulatory obligations. According to practices in place, when a member of the public visits a local Service Canada office that does not have obligations under the *Official Languages Act*, the unilingual employee can refer the visitor to a service in that individual's preferred language under a directive issued in spring 2011.¹⁸¹ The Web is one of the tools being considered by the institution for ensuring access to services in the language of choice. Members of the public can access their file online, in English or French. One Service Canada official remarked that many transactions are carried out online.¹⁸² Other federal institutions (e.g., Veterans Affairs Canada, Citizenship and Immigration Canada, Parks Canada, Canada Revenue Agency) also provide online services to the public. Industry Canada, for its part, has undertaken to modernize its CommunAction website.

“THIS SITE WILL ALLOW ELECTRONIC ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON FEDERAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT PROGRAMS AND SERVICES THAT COULD BE OF USE TO [OFFICIAL-LANGUAGE MINORITY COMMUNITIES]. OUR DEPARTMENT CONSULTED WITH THESE COMMUNITIES IN THE EARLY FALL TO FIND OUT WHAT THEIR INFORMATION NEEDS ARE AND HOW THEY WOULD PREFER TO OBTAIN INFORMATION FROM INDUSTRY CANADA. THE REDESIGN OF THE SITE WILL HIGHLIGHT THE BENEFITS OF WEB 2.0, IN PARTICULAR BY INCLUDING AN RSS FEED FOR SUBSCRIBERS TO RECEIVE INFORMATION ON DEPARTMENTAL DEVELOPMENTS IN THE AREA OF ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT.”¹⁸³

During the public hearings, the FCFA took the opportunity to renew its call for an in-depth review of the current regulations regarding services. In its view, the regulations do not reflect recent technological advances:

“[E]XTENDING THOSE OBLIGATIONS TO THE WEB UNIVERSE CLEARLY SHOWS THAT THE [REGULATIONS] ARE OBSOLETE. AS YOU KNOW, THESE REGULATIONS DATE BACK TO 1991, A TIME WHEN THE INTERNET DID NOT EXIST. [...] IT WOULD BE INCONCEIVABLE THAT, IN 2011, AN OFFICE DESIGNATED BILINGUAL OR NOT WOULD PUBLISH SOMETHING

ON THE WEB IN ONLY ONE LANGUAGE. ... I THINK THE REALITY IS MORE ADVANCED THAN WHAT IS CURRENTLY SET OUT IN THE REGULATIONS, AND THAT LIMITS SOME FEDERAL ORGANIZATIONS' ABILITY TO ACT. ... SOME THINGS ARE BEING DONE, BUT THEY GO AGAINST CURRENT REGULATIONS.” ¹⁸⁴

That said, it appears that any move toward expanding services provided online by federal institutions would be welcome, based on Committee evidence. However, the fact remains that although service delivery using new technologies is promising, some members of the public still prefer to receive government information through more traditional channels (e.g., in person or by phone). This makes it important to keep both groups in mind and consider user preferences.

Quebec's Anglophone communities raised other important points concerning service delivery. First, access to government services in English remains a significant challenge in Quebec given the requirements of the *Charter of the French Language*. Provincial services are provided in English under certain conditions in education and health care, as well as in designated bilingual municipalities. Beyond that, Anglophones find it extremely difficult to access provincial services in their language. As for federal services, their availability is limited to areas that satisfy significant demand criteria. On the subject of social media, one QCGN official spoke about regional access to services provided by federal institutions and the potential lack of flexibility in the information provided through this kind of platform:

“THE TWITTER ACCOUNTS AND FACEBOOK PAGES ARE MANAGED CENTRALLY. WHEN THE PRESIDENT OF THE TREASURY BOARD IS IMPRESSED BY THE FACT THAT TWEETS ARE COMING OUT IN BOTH LANGUAGES SIMULTANEOUSLY, IT CAN DO SO BECAUSE THOSE TWO INDIVIDUALS ARE SITTING IN AN OFFICE NEXT TO EACH OTHER, HERE IN OTTAWA, CONTROLLING THAT INFORMATION. WHAT DOES THAT MEAN IN TERMS OF REGIONAL ACCESS TO REGIONALLY SPECIFIC INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY IN AREAS WHERE NUMBERS DO NOT WARRANT THE PROVISION OF SERVICES IN ENGLISH AND FRENCH? ... THE TOOLS ARE ONLY AS GOOD AS THE STRUCTURE IN WHICH THEY ARE USED. IF THE STRUCTURE IS A CENTRALIZED CONTROL MODEL OF INFORMATION THAT IS COMING FROM OTTAWA, FROM A NATIONAL HEADQUARTERS, THEN THE INFORMATION THAT IS COMING OUT IS GENERALIZED, IT IS NOT REGIONALLY SPECIFIC AND MAY NOT BE TERRIBLY USEFUL TO THE PEOPLE ON THE GROUND.” ¹⁸⁵

Lastly, it is worth highlighting the way some communities are innovating in an effort to improve access to government services. Such is the case of the Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities. It invested in the development of “*DirectionManitoba.com*,” a Web portal that provides Manitobans with access to products and services in both official languages. ¹⁸⁶ It would be difficult to ignore other innovative projects underway in that province. Bilingual service centres provide the public with one-stop access to municipal, provincial and federal services in the language of their choice. Then there is BizPal for permits, licensing and business registrations, all available online and in both official languages. ¹⁸⁷

Education: exploring and experimenting with new technologies in schools

The growing use of new technologies in minority-language schools

Schools play a crucial role in the development of official language minority communities. The mission of minority schools is twofold: promote educational success, and pass on the language and culture to students. **These schools need to learn how to use new technologies for a number of reasons: recruit students, reach remote communities, and ensure that young people have access to French-language content.** The needs in terms of networking and support for new technologies in these schools were brought to the Senate Committee's attention in 2005, when it carried out a major study on Francophone minority education.¹⁸⁸ The Senate Committee responded to similar calls in the report it issued last year on Quebec's English-speaking communities.¹⁸⁹

NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN MINORITY SCHOOLS

The needs in terms of support for new technologies in minority schools were brought to the Senate Committee's attention a few times. French-language minority schools and Quebec's English-language minority schools experience similar situations since most of their schools are far apart. Consequently, they had to learn to innovate and harness new technologies in order to ensure their long-term survival. They used a virtual medium to collaborate and share information. The Senate Committee had made a recommendation to the federal government in its report on English-speaking communities regarding long-term support for Community Learning Centres. However, the government did not take any action. In its response released in spring 2012, although the government did praise the success of CLCs, it stated that to make such support a priority the Government of Quebec had to be on board as well. Canadian Heritage pledged to support these kinds of projects throughout the current Canada-Quebec agreement on education, but made no promises beyond 2013.

In some remote schools, new technologies help reduce isolation. As one LEARN Quebec official told the Senate Committee, Internet dependence is higher in remote areas.¹⁹⁰ According to CEFRIO:

“IN THE FIELD OF EDUCATION, TECHNOLOGY CAN BE USED TO PROVIDE A BETTER EDUCATION TO STUDENTS LIVING IN COMMUNITIES THAT ARE ISOLATED OR THAT REQUIRE REVITALIZATION TO VARYING DEGREES. ... NETWORKING VIRTUAL CLASSROOMS OF STUDENTS, WHO IN SOME INSTANCES MAY BE SEPARATED BY HUNDREDS OF KILOMETRES, IS A VERY PROMISING APPROACH.”¹⁹¹

New technologies used in the classroom may serve as a springboard to enhance the vitality of all communities. The Quebec English School Boards Association sees these new tools as a

learning and development opportunity for students rather than a threat.¹⁹² According to the Canadian Teachers' Federation:

“[W]E TRULY BELIEVE IN THE POTENTIAL OF TECHNOLOGIES TO ENHANCE THE VITALITY OF OUR FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES THROUGH SCHOOLS ACTING AS SPRINGBOARDS FOR INFLUENCING USERS' HABITS.”¹⁹³

The growing accessibility of these new technologies and the ease with which young people use them have transformed how students learn in many minority schools.¹⁹⁴

Several of these schools already use leading-edge technologies. In Quebec, an official from LEARN Quebec estimated that 25%–30% of schools use digital tools in the classroom.¹⁹⁵ For Francophones, an FCFA official stated that use varies by location:

“THE INTENSITY VARIES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. IN SOME PLACES, STUDENTS COME IN TO CLASS WITH THEIR IPAD 2. THE CHILDREN OF THE FUTURE GENERATION ARE AT THAT POINT AND ARE USING THESE TECHNOLOGIES MORE AND MORE. THE QUESTION IS TO WHAT EXTENT THEY ARE ABLE TO FIND FRENCH CONTENT ON THOSE PLATFORMS.”¹⁹⁶

The **lack of French-language content** is often one of the main concerns raised by Francophone teachers working in minority schools about the use of new technologies in the classroom. Creating virtual Francophone spaces to encourage networking appears to be essential. This need is particularly pressing in the smallest schools and in remote areas. An official from the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française told the Senate Committee the following:

“[W]E WOULD LIKE TO TELL YOU ABOUT THE NEED TO INVEST IN ORDER TO CREATE [F]RANCOPHONE SPACES ONLINE; SPACES IN WHICH YOUNGSTERS WILL BE ABLE TO FIND THEMSELVES, RELISH THEIR [F]RANCOPHONE IDENTITY AND MEET OTHER YOUNG [F]RANCOPHONES. ... WE NEED TO CREATE FRANCOPHONE ONLINE SPACES WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN EXPERIENCE THEIR [F]RANCOPHONIE, SPACES FOR FREEDOM, CONTENT CREATION, THE EXCHANGE OF IDEAS, DISCOVERING OTHERS, OTHER CULTURES AND THE WORLD. SPACES WHERE YOUNG PEOPLE CAN BE KNOWN AND RECOGNIZED AS [F]RANCOPHONES, PROUD OF THEMSELVES, WISHING TO INTERACT AS MEMBERS OF A [F]RANCOPHONE COMMUNITY AND OF A BILINGUAL AND FORWARD-LOOKING CANADIAN SOCIETY.”¹⁹⁷

In September 2011, the Canadian Teachers' Federation released the findings of a national survey on the impact of information and communications technology on building Francophone identity in young people attending minority schools.¹⁹⁸ The study confirmed that French is used very little by young Francophones in social settings and that support is needed to create tools for exchanging knowledge. As pointed out by the study authors, technology is changing rapidly, and in English. The study identified ways to try to rectify the situation. According to the Canadian Teachers' Federation, it is imperative to:

- Foster initiatives that encourage experimentation and share the results in schools across the country;

- Invest in raising awareness in young people and making them responsible digital citizens;
- Create a digital literacy strategy for French-language schools;
- Develop the French vocabulary specific to technology, to exploring the world of entertainment and digital communication, and to modernizing the French language for use in text messaging;
- Foster critical judgment and creation on the Web, where young people can rediscover the pleasure of writing in French;
- Draw on successes in certain regions to gain a better understanding of how user habits can be influenced in a positive way; and
- Promote networking among technology specialists and begin discussions with firms that produce software and technological applications.¹⁹⁹

Networking appears to be just as essential for post-secondary distance education. A recent study by the Réseau d'enseignement francophone à distance du Canada²⁰⁰ found that purchasing technological tools for educational purposes is costly and that educational institutions would find it worthwhile to form partnerships in order to fully benefit from these tools. Post-secondary distance education is growing in popularity, which is due to expanded course offerings, a younger target audience, and the fact that it is well suited to language instruction. Distance education appears to play a large role in the teaching of French as a second language.

In Quebec, a number of English-language schools are making use of new technologies through Community Learning Centres, an initiative funded under the Canada-Quebec agreement on minority-language education. This initiative was highly praised when the Senate Committee visited Anglophone communities last year. There are currently 37 CLCs across the province. LEARN Quebec works in partnership with these centres to provide educational technology and learning resources electronically. We will revisit this a little later.

Lastly, witnesses stated that students who make use of new technologies generally do quite well. An official from LEARN Quebec explained academic achievement by highlighting the dynamic, interactive aspect of these new tools, along with significant support from parents.

“WE ARE VERY ENGAGED IN BEST EDUCATIONAL PRACTICE. WE ARE COMMITTED TO SOCIAL CONSTRUCTIVISM IN OUR CLASSROOMS. OUR STUDENTS ALWAYS SCORE HIGHER. I SAY ‘ALWAYS’ BECAUSE THEY ALWAYS SCORE HIGHER. IT GOES AGAINST THE CONVENTIONAL THINKING OF PEOPLE WHO DO NOT UNDERSTANDING E-LEARNING AND ONLINE EDUCATION, BUT IN FACT IT IS DYNAMIC AND INTERACTIVE. WE DO NOT BELIEVE IN LETTING STUDENTS SIT IN FRONT OF A COMPUTER FOR HOURS ON END. ON THE CONTRARY, THEY ARE INVOLVED AND VERY MUCH ENGAGED. IT IS COLLABORATIVE. OUR STUDENTS AND TEACHERS MUCH PREFER THE VIRTUAL SETTING TO THE BRICK-AND-MORTAR SETTING, AS A RULE. ... WHEN YOU HAVE THE SUPPORT FROM HOME, THERE IS NO

QUESTION YOU GET BETTER RESULTS. WE HAVE SEEN THAT ON MANY OCCASIONS. THE REASON FOR THAT IS NOT JUST THAT YOU HAVE A COMPUTER AT HOME BUT THAT YOU NORMALLY ALSO HAVE THE PARENTS' SUPPORT. IT IS NOT SIMPLY THE TECHNOLOGY; AS A RULE, IT IS THE PARENTS' SUPPORT AND ENGAGEMENT THAT MAKES THE DIFFERENCE ALONG WITH THE TECHNOLOGY.”²⁰¹

The Commission nationale des parents francophones presented a similar opinion regarding the importance of supporting parents in learning about new technologies. In fact, it has made it its goal to staunch the assimilation of young minority Francophones:

“IT IS THEREFORE OBVIOUS THAT WE SHOULD FOCUS OUR EFFORTS ON CONTACTING AND GUIDING PARENTS BECAUSE THEY ARE THE INITIAL AND PRIMARY EDUCATORS OF THE YOUNG PEOPLE WHO WILL BUILD CANADA'S FUTURE. IN ADDITION, SINCE EACH FAMILY IS A MICROCOSM OF SOCIETY, IF FAMILIES ARE FLOURISHING, SOCIETY IS TOO. ... [W]E FIRMLY BELIEVE IN THE NEED TO EQUIP INDIVIDUALS, AND PARENTS IN PARTICULAR, TO USE THE INTERNET AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES [.]”²⁰²

Federal institutions' efforts to bring new technologies into schools

Anglophone and Francophone schools are eligible to receive funding in support of new technologies under federal-provincial/territorial agreements on education. Small schools, particularly those in remote areas, are generally the ones in greatest need of support for new technologies. Often these schools are more commonly found in minority communities.

Resources made available through federal-provincial/territorial agreements on education provide these schools with support and are seen as crucial. As pointed out by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages, these agreements have made it possible to:

“... ESTABLISH DISTANCE TEACHING NETWORKS FOR REMOTE COMMUNITIES. THEY HAVE ALSO ENCOURAGED THE USE OF COMPUTERS IN THE CLASSROOM, AND ACCESS TO ONLINE TEACHING MATERIALS AND ONLINE OPPORTUNITIES FOR EXCHANGES.”²⁰³

Other federal institutions have also gotten involved in supporting new technologies in schools. One such institution is the NFB, which maintains a presence in schools across the country by providing them with access to a range of teaching and arts resources. An NFB representative told the Senate Committee that licence agreements have been signed with several provinces as well as with minority schools and teachers across Canada. This is how she described her institution's approach:

“WE HAVE APPROXIMATELY EIGHT MILLION CANADIAN STUDENTS WHO HAVE ACCESS TO NFB'S ONLINE SERVICE IN THE CLASSROOM. IT IS OF PARTICULAR VALUE TO TEACHERS WHO ARE TEACHING IN THE MINORITY LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES ACROSS CANADA WE PROVIDE EDUCATIONAL GUIDES, CHANNELS AND ORGANIZED FILMS. WE HIRE TEACHERS SO THAT WE ORGANIZE THE FILMS ACCORDING TO CURRICULUM AND AGE GROUPS, FILM DESCRIPTIONS, ONLINE VIRTUAL WORKSHOPS AND APPLICATIONS IN BLOGS AND NEWSLETTERS FOR EDUCATORS ALSO.”²⁰⁴

Since some teachers are not as comfortable with using new technologies in the classroom, training workshops are held to show them how to use NFB tools in class. LEARN Quebec, one of the organizations that appeared before the Senate Committee, spoke favourably about its use of NFB-developed educational resources.²⁰⁵

Statistics Canada is another example of an institution providing online educational resources. Its products are designed for teachers, students and post-secondary institutions. They were developed to provide Canadians, especially young people and educators, with direct access to information on current trends and issues.

Some Francophone cases

The Senate Committee took particular interest in a few Francophone initiatives. One involved the use of laptop computers in British Columbia. During his appearance before the Senate Committee last fall, the Commissioner of Official Languages gave the example of a Francophone school in British Columbia that provided online courses to all Francophone Grade 11 students:

“THE CLASS WAS IN VICTORIA, AND [F]RANCOPHONE STUDENTS WERE ATTENDING IT IN VANCOUVER, CAMPBELL RIVER AND A HOST OF OTHER SCHOOLS THAT DID NOT HAVE THE OPPORTUNITY TO HAVE A GRADE 11 PHYSICS TEACHER. THROUGH THIS METHOD OF COMMUNICATION, IT WAS POSSIBLE TO GIVE THE CLASS TO ALL GRADE 11 STUDENTS IN THE SMALL SCHOOLS ALL ACROSS BRITISH COLUMBIA.”²⁰⁶

Similar examples were given for Saskatchewan. To some extent, new technologies can help explain the rise in enrolment in Francophone minority schools. An official from the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française gave the following example:

“IN SASKATCHEWAN, NOT SO LONG AGO, SCHOOLS THAT WERE FAR FROM CERTAIN CENTRES, AND THERE ARE MORE OF THEM THAN THERE ARE SCHOOLS IN THE URBAN CENTRES, HAD GOOD ACCESS TO VIRTUAL NETWORKS. WHEN THERE WERE NOT ENOUGH STUDENTS, MAINLY AT THE SECONDARY LEVEL, TO OFFER A MATH COURSE, THEY WOULD BE BROUGHT TOGETHER AS A VIRTUAL FIVE-CLASSROOM CLASS TO BE TAUGHT MATH WITH A TEACHER AND CAMERAS. SO ACCESS TO LEARNING IN SASKATCHEWAN, AND PROBABLY ELSEWHERE AS WELL, IS FAR GREATER.”²⁰⁷

Some school boards, particularly in British Columbia, have set up blogs so that young Francophones can express themselves online. These tools are seen as useful for encouraging students, teachers and school board staff to network and share. They are highly useful and indispensable for reducing isolation. During his appearance before the Senate Committee, an official from the Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française had this to say:

“ON THE ONE HAND, YOUNG [F]RANCOPHONES LIVE IN A VIRTUAL UNIVERSE THAT IS QUITE [A]NGLOPHONE, AND ON THE OTHER HAND, THE SCHOOL FORBIDS — NOT EVERYWHERE, BUT IN MANY PLACES — MOST OF THESE PLATFORMS. LUCKILY, THERE ARE MANY INITIATIVES AIMED AT CREATIVELY INTEGRATING THE USE OF THESE NEW PLATFORMS

FOR EDUCATIONAL REASONS. FOR EXAMPLE, THE USE OF TEXTING FOR COLLECTIVE POETRY, THE CREATION BY THE STUDENTS OF MINI-WEBSITES AND BLOGS WHERE THEY CAN EXPRESS THEMSELVES AND STATE THEIR POSITION ON ISSUES THAT INTEREST THEM SUCH AS SPORTS, MOVIES, FASHION, AND SO FORTH.” ²⁰⁸

The Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française raised the point that parents and teachers need to be actively involved in the process:

“[S]O AS NOT TO BECOME QUICKLY OUT OF TOUCH WITH YOUTH, AND TO BE ABLE TO FULFIL OUR ROLE AS EDUCATORS THROUGHOUT THEIR CULTURAL DEVELOPMENT, BOTH FAMILIES AND SCHOOLS MUST DEVELOP THE INTERPERSONAL AND TECHNOLOGICAL SKILLS THAT HAVE BECOME NECESSARY IN TODAY’S WORLD. ... FOR EXAMPLE, WE SHOULD OFFER PARENTS ONLINE RESOURCES THAT PROVIDE THEM WITH TIPS AND IDEAS TO DEVELOP THEIR CHILDREN’S [F]RANCOPHONE IDENTITY IN THE CONTEXT OF THE NEW TECHNOLOGIES THEY USE. WE SHOULD ALSO OFFER TEACHERS RESOURCES IN FRENCH ON THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN THE CLASSROOM, AT SCHOOL, ET CETERA. ... EDUCATORS MUST BE ATTENTIVE AND MENTOR YOUNG PEOPLE ON SOCIAL NETWORKS. IF IT DOES NOT HAPPEN AT SCHOOL, CHILDREN ARE ON THEIR OWN. AND IN ADDITION, EVERYTHING HAPPENS IN ENGLISH IN OUR COMMUNITIES.” ²⁰⁹

During its public hearings, the Senate Committee met with officials from two schools – one primary, the other secondary – that use new technologies extensively.

First, there is the Centre d'apprentissage du Haut-Madawaska (C@HM), a rural school with an enrolment of about 220 serving the villages of Clair, Lac Baker, Baker Brook and St. Hilaire, New Brunswick. It strives to incorporate information and telecommunications technologies into its activities. It does this by maintaining an active Web presence, regularly using social media in its instruction and providing its teaching staff with a wide range of learning and development opportunities. The school's principal explained the approach as follows:

“OUR STUDENTS ARE DIFFERENT, AND SCHOOLS WILL HAVE TO ADAPT TO THEM. WE WILL HAVE TO CHANGE OUR TEACHING METHODS TO ENSURE THAT STUDENTS WITH DIFFERENT NEEDS CAN LEARN VARIOUS THINGS. I WOULD SAY THAT IS A MAJOR CHALLENGE FOR SCHOOLS. ... [S]CHOOLS MUST BE ABLE TO CONNECT. ... WE MUST EXPERIMENT AND TRY THINGS. SOME THINGS WORK BETTER THAN OTHERS WHEN IT COMES TO ORGANIZATIONAL CULTURE. RISKS HAVE TO BE TAKEN, AND THERE ARE CERTAIN AREAS WHERE MORE RISKS CAN BE TAKEN. WE MUST CONSIDER EDUCATIONAL USE.” ²¹⁰

C@HM is deeply involved in Web 2.0 initiatives. For instance, it created a blog for students in grades 7 and 8 to provide educational support and to compile student assignments and thoughts by focusing on communication, collaboration and feedback. It is also a way to encourage reading and writing. The principal described how the blog is used:

“PARENTS CAN SUBSCRIBE TO THEIR CHILD’S BLOG. SO, WHEN A CHILD WRITES SOMETHING, THEIR GRANDFATHER, GRANDMOTHER OR UNCLE — MAYBE EVEN IN FLORIDA — MAY RECEIVE AN EMAIL SAYING THAT PIERRE OR PAUL HAS WRITTEN SOMETHING AND THEY CAN COMMENT ON IT. SO WHEN WE KNOW THAT PEOPLE ARE GOING TO READ WHAT WE HAVE WRITTEN, WE TEND TO PREPARE BETTER AND BE MORE CAREFUL. THINK ABOUT THE POTENTIAL OF A YOUTUBE VIDEO. WHEN WE KNOW THAT WE WILL BE POSTING SOMETHING ON YOUTUBE AND THAT THE POTENTIAL IS THROUGH THE ROOF, WE TEND TO PREPARE BETTER.” ²¹¹

C@HM also uses wikis, tablets and an online portal to help students develop their technological skills and encourage creative collaboration, all of this tailored to their individual needs and varied interests. According to the principal, experimentation and the sharing of best practices are important, as is support for teachers’ professional development. ²¹²

Then there is Collège Éducacentre. Established in 1992, it has three physical campuses (Vancouver, Victoria and Prince George) and one virtual campus. According to the latest census data for British Columbia, there are four times as many non-Francophones who speak French as there are native French-speakers. This means that in BC a significant pool of potential students is interested in studying French as a second language. The Collège Éducacentre has made francization one of its niche activities, providing a wide variety of courses and programs to meet the demand for instruction in French-as-a-second language, all of it available by distance education.

Collège Éducacentre offers a diverse range of educational services to BC’s Francophone community. A number of college-level programs were developed in the 2000s, including a number of them available through distance education starting in 2004 (e.g., administration, education, languages and communications, health, tourism and hotel management). This is how the Collège Éducacentre representative described the benefits of social media in post-secondary education:

“AT THE COLLÈGE ÉDUCACENTRE, WE RECOGNIZE THE POTENTIAL OF SOCIAL MEDIA AND USE ALL MEANS AVAILABLE TO BENEFIT FROM IT. FRANCOPHONES FROM BRITISH COLUMBIA ARE SPREAD OUT OVER A LARGE AREA. MOST OF OUR STUDENTS ARE TAKING PART-TIME COURSES WHILE WORKING. DISTANCE EDUCATION ENABLES STUDENTS TO TAKE COURSES AT HOME AT THEIR LEISURE. ... IN A [F]RANCOPHONE MINORITY CONTEXT, THE SOCIAL MEDIA BREAKTHROUGH ALSO HAS THE POTENTIAL TO INCREASE THE NUMBER OF SERVICES AND PROGRAMS SO AS TO ACHIEVE A LEVEL SIMILAR TO THE ONE AT [A]NGLOPHONE INSTITUTIONS.” ²¹³

The Director General of the Collège Éducacentre presented recommendations on funding aimed at encouraging the development of digital infrastructure, supporting the use of social media in adult education and training, maintaining French-language distance education networks, fostering the sharing of new programs and supporting teacher and trainer development. ²¹⁴

Some Anglophone cases

During public hearings last year, the Eastern Townships School Board was greatly admired for the way it had embraced new technologies. The School Board provides a range of development opportunities to staff through podcasts, videos, teleconferencing, interactive boards, etc. Every student is given a laptop computer starting in Grade 3. The School Board's embracing of new technologies appears to have led to improved academic achievement, lower drop-out rates and development opportunities for teaching staff. Witnesses spoke about the importance of providing long-term access to financial resources in order to continue this initiative and help new teachers embrace new technologies as well.²¹⁵

In Quebec, the pilot project *École éloignée en réseau* was launched about a decade ago. The project brings together the expertise of CEFRIO and a team of academics to support pilot projects in small schools throughout the province. It aims to come up with new solutions for improving the vitality of small schools, based in part on the use of new technologies. This project is active in about one hundred schools, some of them English-language schools. A CEFRIO representative described the initiative:

“WE ARE ALSO AWARE OF THE [A]NGLOPHONE COMMUNITIES IN THE REGIONS AND IN MONTREAL. WE HAVE WONDERED WHAT WE CAN DO FOR THOSE GROUPS WITH REGARD TO EDUCATION. WE HAVE ADAPTED THE ÉCOLE ÉLOIGNÉE EN RÉSEAU PROJECT I SPOKE TO YOU ABOUT EARLIER, CONSIDERING THE FACT THAT WE ARE NO LONGER IN A MULTI-AGE SITUATION, BUT WITH LARGE CLASSES AND ISOLATED TEACHERS WHO HAVE TO DELIVER THE SAME TEACHING PROGRAM WITH FEWER TOOLS. WE HAVE MADE SURE TO CREATE THE COMMUNITIES OF TEACHING PRACTICES NECESSARY TO MAKE THOSE SUPPORTS AVAILABLE. ... THE RESEARCHERS SUPPORT US IN OUR EFFORTS AND PROVIDE THEIR EXPERTISE TO ENSURE THAT THIS TECHNOLOGY IS SIMPLE AND INTUITIVE. THOSE ARE TWO KEY QUALITIES TO WHICH WE ASPIRE. CHILDREN ARE LIKE SPONGES. THEY DO NOT KNOW HOW TO READ, BUT THEY ABSORB EVERYTHING INSTANTANEOUSLY. THEY USE TECHNOLOGY IN A HIGHLY INTUITIVE MANNER WITH THE TYPE OF PROGRAMS WE DEVELOP.”²¹⁶

A representative from the Quebec English School Boards Association spoke about the importance of new technologies to English-language schools in remote communities:

“FOR STUDENTS AT A SMALL ENGLISH SCHOOL IN BONAVENTURE, IN GASPÉ OR CHIBOUGAMAU, HOOKING UP IN REAL TIME WITH A TEACHER FROM QUEBEC CITY OR MONTREAL CAN BE THE ONLY WAY OF GETTING ACCESS TO A SECONDARY 5 CHEMISTRY COURSE, OR A WORKSHOP ON PREVENTING CYBERBULLYING.”²¹⁷

One of LEARN Quebec's roles is to provide such online learning services. An official from the organization outlined the types of activities offered, including distance education courses, homework support, online tutorials, videoconferencing and e-newsletters with multimedia content.

“THESE ARE RESOURCES THAT ARE AVAILABLE 24 HOURS A DAY, SEVEN DAYS A WEEK. THEY SIMPLY HAVE TO COME ON TO OUR WEBSITE. OUR WEBSITE IS MUCH MORE THAN A WEBSITE. IT IS A CONTENT MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, A SOPHISTICATED, OPEN-SOURCE DATABASE. WE HAVE OVER 300,000 PAGES OF MATERIAL ON THIS PARTICULAR SITE, INCLUDING RESOURCES FOR EDUCATORS, STUDENTS, BUT ALSO FOR PARENTS OFTEN WHO WANT TO KNOW WHAT IS GOING ON INSIDE THE CURRICULUM.”²¹⁸

An official from the organization spoke about the importance of having access to qualified teachers, which is why LEARN Quebec offers real-time workshops and provides access to online communities so that Quebec’s Anglophone teachers can learn, collaborate and share knowledge.²¹⁹

Social media is seen as extremely useful to Quebec’s English-language schools since they provide easy and quick access to information in English that would otherwise be difficult to obtain. An official from LEARN Quebec had this to say:

“WE USE TWITTER, FACEBOOK AND ALL OF THESE DEVICES TO SUPPLEMENT AND COMPLEMENT MUCH OF THE CURRICULUM MATERIAL, SIMPLY BECAUSE WHAT COMES FROM THE PUBLISHERS IN QUEBEC IS NOT ADEQUATE FOR OUR PARTICULAR NEEDS.”²²⁰

Media and culture: reflecting communities

Arts and culture: a promising application of new technologies

The use of new technologies in the cultural sector appears to be quite promising. As in many other sectors, arts and culture organizations in official language minority communities must be at the leading edge of technology in order to compete with what the rest of the industry is doing. We are seeing a growing use of the Web, multimedia tools, digital platforms and mobile applications. The FCCF conducted an online survey²²¹ showing that, while most of its members have a website (67%), these websites are not very interactive (38%) and rarely allow visitors to purchase cultural products (21%).

Developing Web capabilities poses a major challenge for minority Anglophone and Francophone communities alike. **Support for new technologies appears to be essential for reaching young people, fostering the next generation of artists, decentralizing production, leveraging supply and thereby enhancing community vitality.** This was highlighted by the Senate Committee in a 2009 study.²²²

SUPPORT FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN ARTS AND CULTURE

In 2009, the Senate Committee addressed the issue of support for new technologies as part of its study on Francophone arts and culture. It recommended “That the Department of Canadian Heritage, in collaboration with federal institutions working in the arts and culture sector, ensure that Francophone communities in minority settings have access to sufficient resources (both human and financial) to support the development of arts and culture in their region and to enhance their vitality, in particular to support: ... the use of new technologies.” In its response to the Senate Committee’s report, the Government referred to the Interactive Canada Fund, which supported the creation of Canadian online applications and interactive cultural content developed by official language minority communities. This Fund was abolished in the 2012 Budget and will wind up operations shortly.

As pointed out by a FCCF official, the impact of new technologies is being felt at all points of the cultural continuum:

“[T]HE EFFECT OF DIGITIZATION ON ARTS AND CULTURE IS BEING FELT AT ALL POINTS ON THE CULTURAL CONTINUUM: DURING CREATION, BROADCAST, DISTRIBUTION AND RECEPTION OF THE WORK BY THE PUBLIC. SO WE CAN SAY THAT ALL STAKEHOLDERS IN THE CULTURAL CONTINUUM ARE INVOLVED IN ONE WAY OR ANOTHER IN THIS TECHNOLOGICAL REVOLUTION.” ²²³

Regarding access to technological tools for supporting arts and culture organizations, the situation varies. **As for Francophones**, the FCCF pointed out that the extent to which new technologies are taken up depends on the region, arts sector and, as we will see later, available resources. ²²⁴ In an online survey ²²⁵ of its members, the FCCF identified a number of challenges that include unfamiliarity with tools and the lack of capacity to use them, a lack of time and money, and risks surrounding copyright compliance. Francophones appear to be highly engaged in social media: close to 83% of the FCCF membership say they have a Facebook profile or page. In total, 74% of respondents reported having access to any equipment they need to meet their Internet and social media needs. It seems that, in general, the clear lack of minority Francophone digital culture may be contributing to Francophone assimilation, which is advancing as quickly as the Internet and its ever-growing presence in their day-to-day life.

As for Anglophones, the English-Language Arts Network (ELAN) spoke about difficulties accessing the Web in some regions and the potential of social media for the work of Quebec’s Anglophone artists and for promoting linguistic duality. Four themes emerged: accessibility, connection, control and funding. ²²⁶ According to ELAN:

“THE BOUNDARIES BETWEEN LINGUISTIC AUDIENCES ARE LESS DEFINED ONLINE WHERE AUDIENCES TEND TO BE LINKED DUE TO COMMON NICHE INTEREST, RATHER THAN THE LANGUAGE OF DELIVERY.” ²²⁷

Federal institutions in support of connected arts and culture

Under the Canada Interactive Fund, funding was made available to minority Canadian educational institutions, museums and cultural associations beginning in 2009. The FCFA and the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages referred to the Fund during their appearances before the Senate Committee in fall 2011.²²⁸ The Senate Committee learned of the Fund's elimination in June during the FCCF's appearance.²²⁹ The Canadian Heritage website states that the program will wind down in 2012–2013.²³⁰

The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages said that other programs supporting culture now have special digital media components (e.g., Canada Book Fund, Canada Periodical Fund, Canada Music Fund, Canada Media Fund, Cultural Development Fund). For example, the Canada Media Fund supports the development of software applications for current and emerging digital platforms. Other federal agencies are also active online (e.g., NFB, Telefilm Canada, CBC/Radio-Canada, National Arts Centre, Canada Council for the Arts). However, based on the evidence heard, it appears that this support is often ad hoc, such as to set up specific projects without any long-term commitment to maintain them.

During its public hearings, the Senate Committee met with an NFB official who outlined many of the initiatives undertaken since 2008, when the institution embraced digital technology.²³¹ Close to 2,000 of its productions are now available on various platforms: Web, blog, mobile, etc. CBC/Radio-Canada is another example of an institution that has embraced digital technology. The Crown corporation relies heavily on its Web platform to deliver and store audio and video content; this gives all Canadians the ability to play back regional content online and on demand.²³²

Internet, new media and social media in the service of Francophone culture

For Francophone and Acadian communities, new technologies are destined **to change the face of Francophone arts and culture**. Not only do they facilitate communications, networking and exchanges, but they also change how works are delivered and provide new ways for creating them. They also serve to **develop a Francophone digital culture**. Arts and culture organizations believe that not only must there be access to new technologies, but also that their use needs to be promoted. With the existence of these new tools, CEFRIO believes that the consumption of cultural products in French is growing:

“WITH A COMPUTER OR IPAD CONNECTED TO INTERNET THROUGH A HIGH-SPEED NETWORK, VIRTUALLY ANY FRANCOPHONE, WHETHER IN MONCTON OR MAILLARDVILLE, CAN NOW ACCESS CULTURAL PRODUCTS IN THEIR OWN LANGUAGE. THEY CAN WATCH EPISODES OF TEMPS D’UNE PAIX, DOWNLOAD SONGS BY THE GROUP RADIO RADIO, OR READ LE DROIT OR THE E-BOOK OF THE ORIGINAL FRENCH VERSION OF AROUND THE WORLD IN 80 DAYS.”²³³

With the use of the Internet, new media and social media, we are witnessing the emergence of a new generation of Francophone creators. Audiences themselves become content creators and are involved in developing artistic works.²³⁴ Cultural exchanges among French-speaking Canadians are steadily growing. These tools are increasingly used as educational resources or as vehicles for conveying Canada's cultural and linguistic values.²³⁵

That said, one researcher pointed out that, while the tools are there, this does not mean that cultural consumption by audiences not used to consuming this type of product will automatically increase.²³⁶ The FCCF agreed, stating that, while availability and access have expanded in the new digital world, knowledge about the works has not followed suit.²³⁷ Ways must therefore be found to draw attention to them. This involves reaching out to the consumers themselves, as well as those around them. According to one researcher:

“BASICALLY, IF CULTURAL OFFERINGS ARE PLENTIFUL, PEOPLE ARE MORE LIKELY TO CONSUME THEM, BUT IT IS LINKED TO OTHER FACTORS, FOR INSTANCE, TO HOW TASTE IS TRANSMITTED BY THOSE WE CALL OUR PEERS, IN OTHER WORDS, OUR FAMILY, PEOPLE AT SCHOOL, OUR FRIENDS. SO THAT IS WHY, JUST FOR YOUNG CONSUMERS, THAT IS IMPORTANT, BECAUSE PEERS CAN HAVE A BIG INFLUENCE. OTHER YOUNG PEOPLE THEIR AGE WILL TELL THEM THEY LIKE CERTAIN MUSIC OR SUGGEST THEY READ A CERTAIN BOOK, AND THAT IS HOW THEY WILL BE INFLUENCED.”²³⁸

More specifically regarding social media, the researcher said:

“PEOPLE WHO ARE ALREADY BIG CULTURAL CONSUMERS WILL USE SOCIAL MEDIA TO ACCESS MORE CULTURE OR TO FIND EASIER ACCESS TO INFORMATION ON THE WORKS THEY LIKE.”²³⁹

This means that the Francophone cultural community can certainly be delighted with the opportunities provided by new technologies to **forge connections** and **reduce isolation**. Witnesses said that these new technologies have helped change how Canada's Francophones relate to one another and share culture. **However, the use of these technologies also brings risks, since this is an area where English dominates and where young people are naturally drawn to consume cultural products in English.** The FCCF expressed the following challenges:

“[I]T IS SOMETIMES DIFFICULT TO ASSERT YOURSELF AS A MINORITY AND TO DISTINGUISH YOURSELF AS A [F]RANCOPHONE IN THIS SEA OF INFORMATION. THIS IS ESPECIALLY TRUE IN THAT MANY OF THE ORGANIZATIONS WE WORK WITH HAVE FEW FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCES TO DEDICATE TO IT. IT IS A BIG CHALLENGE BECAUSE THE WEB IS GROWING QUICKLY AND IT IS DIFFICULT TO FOLLOW ALL THE NEW TRENDS. AS SOON AS NEW STRATEGIES ARE DEVELOPED, THEY QUICKLY BECOME OUTDATED, SOMETIMES EVEN BEFORE THEY HAVE BEEN FULLY IMPLEMENTED.”²⁴⁰

A few federal arts and culture institutions have already begun **setting up space in French on the Web**. This is particularly true of the NFB. The representative from that organization said the following:

“OUR VIEW IS THAT THE [F]RANCOPHONE PRESENCE IS ALWAYS INSUFFICIENT ON THE WEB. IN FACT ONE OF [NFB.CA’S] MAJOR GOALS WAS TO OFFER A SPECIAL PLACE TO [F]RANCOPHONE CULTURE ON THE WEB. THERE HAS BEEN AN INCREASING PRESENCE OVER THE YEARS, WHETHER THAT BE WITH RADIO-CANADA, TOU.TV OR DAILYMOTION, WHERE ONE CAN FIND MORE [F]RANCOPHONE PRODUCTIONS, BUT WE WOULD LIKE TO SEE EVEN MORE OF THEM. THANKS TO SOCIAL TOOLS NOW THE [F]RANCOPHONE SPACE IS GROWING, BUT IN MANY CASES THE MATERIAL IS TRANSLATED. WE AT THE NFB WERE AWARE THAT WE NEEDED TO OFFER MORE [F]RANCOPHONE CONTENT OR PEOPLE WOULD ACQUIRE OTHER CONSUMING HABITS ON THE WEB.” ²⁴¹

CBC/Radio-Canada has also played a leading role in expanding the amount of French-language content available online. An official from this institution said the following:

“THE MAIN CHALLENGE FACING CANADIANS, PARTICULARLY FRENCH-SPEAKING CANADIANS, IS TO ENSURE A STRONG PRESENCE ON THE DIGITAL LANDSCAPE BY CREATING SPACES ABLE TO SHOWCASE ORIGINAL FRENCH-LANGUAGE CONTENT THAT IS RICH, VARIED AND RELEVANT. THAT IS PRECISELY THE APPROACH ADOPTED BY RADIO-CANADA IN LAUNCHING TOU.TV, NORTH AMERICA’S LEADING FRENCH-LANGUAGE WEB TV SERVICE. CONCEIVED, INITIATED AND OPERATED BY RADIO-CANADA, TOU.TV IS A PARTNERSHIP AMONG A NUMBER OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE PRODUCERS AND BROADCASTERS IN CANADA AND AROUND THE WORLD.” ²⁴²

The public hearings also highlighted gaps in the availability of digital works in French.

An official from CEFRIO pointed out a major imbalance concerning the availability of French-language resources on Amazon. ²⁴³ An official from the Association nationale des éditeurs de livres told the Senate Committee about an e-book warehouse, created in 2009, with over 9,000 French-language titles published in Quebec and elsewhere in Canada. ²⁴⁴ Half of French-Canadian publishers have signed on. ²⁴⁵ The Minister of Canadian Heritage had this to say:

“AN IMPORTANT POINT TO MAKE IS THAT WE ARE ALSO IN EARLY DAYS WITH REGARD TO THIS TECHNOLOGY. ... WHERE YOU ARE PURCHASING YOUR BOOKS ONLINE, FOR EXAMPLE WITH THE IPAD, THEIR ONLINE STORE MAY NOT BE AS EVOLVED WITH REGARD TO FRENCH CONTENT AS OTHER ONLINE BOOKSTORES. IN TIME IT WILL CATCH UP. ... AS MORE PEOPLE BUY THE DEVICE AND REALIZE THE MARKET IS THERE, THINGS WILL SHIFT.” ²⁴⁶

The FCCF added its own comments to explain the challenges facing the book industry:

“[F]OR THE [F]RANCOPHONE BOOK INDUSTRY OUTSIDE QUEBEC, THERE ARE ONLY 17 FRENCH-LANGUAGE BOOKSTORES OUTSIDE QUEBEC. HOWEVER, IT IS THROUGH THEM THAT WE CAN BETTER REACH OUT TO READERS LOCALLY. WE NEED TO MAKE SURE THAT WE SAVE SOME THINGS FROM DIGITIZATION. MOREOVER, THAT IS WHY THE REGROUPEMENT DES ÉDITEURS CANADIENS-FRANÇAIS IS TAKING PART IN THE ‘ENTREPÔT NUMÉRIQUE’ PROJECT BEING CONDUCTED BY THE ASSOCIATION NATIONAL DES ÉDITEURS DE LIVRES. SO THIS SECTOR HAS MANAGED THE TECHNICAL CHALLENGES WITH RESPECT TO THE BOOK DIGITIZATION, BUT THERE IS STILL WORK TO BE DONE TO DEVELOP MIXED MARKETING

STRATEGIES TO ENCOURAGE THE SALE OF PRINT BOOKS, WHILE DEVELOPING THE SALE OF DIGITAL BOOKS. YOU WILL AGREE THAT IT IS A REAL HEADACHE WITH THE LIMITED MEANS THAT SOME OF THE SMALLER PUBLISHING HOUSES HAVE.”²⁴⁷

The Regroupement des éditeurs canadiens-français sent a follow-up to the Senate Committee describing the digital issues in the publishing industry:

- **Formats:** Right now, e-books can be published in two formats: interactive PDF or ePub. Most users prefer the ePub format, but it costs a great deal more to produce and requires an intensive review process. A new and improved format, ePub3, will be available in the near future. All e-readers are not compatible with all formats. As we make the transition to digital media, we can never be sure which format will become the standard or which will be the best. Our publishers do not have the human resources required to conduct the necessary research.
- **The draw of English-language literature:** The English-language book industry has taken the digital world by storm. We often hear complaints from Francophone readers that not enough material is available in French. And, even when our e-books are available, people sometimes cannot find them or do not even think to look for them. In areas where English-language culture is a big draw, as is the case in some Francophone and Acadian communities, we must find ways to distinguish ourselves.
- **Marketing:** E-books do not need to be shipped, and they can be accessed by audiences that have difficulty acquiring hard copies of books from publishers. However, the e-book market has a very broad base (multiple sites). The most popular sites, such as those hosted by Amazon and Apple, tend to promote bestsellers. How can smaller players better reach their audiences in the digital realm?
- **Cost:** People who buy e-books often expect the price to be lower. In French, the standard price is approximately 75% of the cost of the hard copy of a book. People have a hard time understanding that the French-language audience is not large enough to absorb the cost the way the English-language audience can and, for now, going digital represents an investment, not profit.
- **Borrowing:** Quebec has developed a lending system for libraries that uses a built-in expiry date for e-books. Once the borrowing period is up, the file disappears from the e-reader. We are waiting for this kind of system to become universally available (depending on the book chain) elsewhere in Canada.²⁴⁸

For the music industry, it is clear that many young Francophones are consuming music in English. The same goes for movies. Ways to encourage them to consume cultural and artistic products in their language need to be explored. This is why the NFB provides remote communities with access to digital cinema, an effective and affordable way to provide content in minority communities.²⁴⁹ The FCCF pointed to the Alliance nationale de l'industrie musicale, which developed a playlist on YouTube to boost the number of clicks on videos by Francophone minority artists.²⁵⁰

Promoting arts and culture online: bringing communities closer together

Several witnesses acknowledged that promotion helps **expand offerings to interested audiences, increase revenues** and **attract young people**. Creating virtual infrastructure and interactive databases, putting multidisciplinary cultural presentation sites online and supporting artist training and capacity-building initiatives are some of the solutions being considered. However, in this new digital age, some artists are spending more time on promotion than on creating new works.²⁵¹ As for cultural organizations, the desire is strong, but sometimes resources are limited, as stated by one researcher:

“PEOPLE ARE WILLING TO USE THESE TOOLS BECAUSE THEY SEE THE BENEFITS. FRANCOPHONE ARTISTS AND CULTURE CAN BE PROMOTED MUCH MORE EASILY. AT THE SAME TIME, COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS SOMETIMES NEED SIGNIFICANT RESOURCES TO BE ABLE TO USE THESE TOOLS, RESOURCES THAT THEY ARE OFTEN LACKING. SO, IT DEPENDS ON THE PEOPLE INVOLVED. THEY MAY BE MORE OR LESS COMFORTABLE WITH THESE TECHNOLOGIES. THEY MAY SUGGEST FAIRLY INNOVATIVE PROJECTS. THEY MAY SOMETIMES ONLY HAVE TIME TO MANAGE DAILY OPERATIONS AND NOT TO MANAGE A WEBSITE. INEQUALITY EXISTS FROM THAT PERSPECTIVE OR AT LEAST FROM A RESOURCE PERSPECTIVE. HOWEVER, THE WILLINGNESS IS THERE BECAUSE SUCH TECHNOLOGY PROVIDES A GREAT DEAL OF VISIBILITY.”²⁵²

The above findings also appear to apply to Quebec’s Anglophone communities. For them, **networking** opportunities go even beyond the strict community framework since the artists present an opportunity to foster dialogue with the Francophone majority. ELAN told the Senate Committee about a project under development that will draw attention to Anglo-Quebec artists:

“WE ARE GOING TO BE TAKING THE STORIES ABOUT ARTISTS THAT EXIST IN RADIO, TELEVISION, WEB, PRINT, AND TRYING TO COMMUNICATE WITH THE [F]RANCOPHONE MAJORITY, WITH OUR NEIGHBOURS, TO CREATE AN AUDIENCE BUT ALSO TO CHANGE SOME OF THE NEGATIVE STEREOTYPES WITH WHICH WE CONSTANTLY STRUGGLE. ARTISTS PRESENT AS POSITIVE, INTEGRATED AND HIGHLY BILINGUAL.”²⁵³

For Anglophones as well as Francophones, the public hearings showed that it is important to support independent production so as to more accurately reflect official language minority communities. This ensures the vitality and creation of representative, strong and diversified content. Efforts are underway within federal institutions. The NFB, CBC/Radio-Canada and the Canada Media Fund all support independent minority production to some extent. However, for independent producers to be able to fully benefit from the digital economy, they must have access to programs that take into account their specific challenges and their own realities. The FCCF summarized current challenges this way:

“THE VERTICAL INTEGRATION OF THE COMMUNICATIONS INDUSTRY FOCUSES ON THIS TREND AND LEADS TO CONSIDERABLE CHALLENGES. HOW CAN SMALL [F]RANCO-CANADIAN COMPANIES COMPETE WITH BIG COMMERCIAL EMPIRES? THE CHALLENGE OF THE MULTIPLATFORM, WHICH WE HAVE ALREADY MENTIONED, IS ALL ENCOMPASSING AND IS FELT ON A DAILY BASIS IN THIS FIELD OF ACTIVITIES. IN FACT, PRODUCERS WHO WANT TO GET FUNDING FROM THE CANADA MEDIA FUND MUST DEPLOY THEIR PROJECTS ON MORE THAN ONE PLATFORM IF THEY WANT TO OBTAIN THE FUNDING DESIRED. THE TEAMS OF PRODUCERS ARE CERTAINLY WELL INFORMED, BUT THERE ARE NOT MANY [F]RANCOPHONE EMPLOYEES AVAILABLE.”²⁵⁴

The Quebec English-language Production Council felt that Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* could provide solutions to many of the problems experienced by independent producers.²⁵⁵

One researcher made the case for more support for research in arts and culture in order to gain a better understanding of the use of digital formats and new trends in cultural consumption for official language minority communities.²⁵⁶

Community media: a key role in communities

It is generally accepted that community media play a critical role in the development and vitality of both English-language and French-language minority communities. Community newspapers and radio stations contribute to arts and culture development and to community vitality. They allow the Anglophone and Francophone minorities to see and hear themselves. They are often major funding partners for their communities' cultural events. They contribute to the ability to live in one's own minority language. They reach a variety of audiences: Francophones and francophiles, Anglophones, the young and the young at heart, newcomers, etc. These communications tools are the key to reflecting, promoting and developing the minority language and culture. The Senate Committee emphasized this leading role in two of its recent reports, released in June 2009 and October 2011, respectively.²⁵⁷

SUPPORT FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES IN COMMUNITY MEDIA

In 2009 and 2011, the Senate Committee presented recommendations concerning support for community media. In light of recent developments, it appears that the financial situation of community media remains precarious, despite efforts to reverse this trend. In its recent response to the Senate Committee, the federal government recalled the obligations of federal institutions and referred to the work being done by the Consultative Committee on Advertising and Official Language Minority Media. However, the government has remained silent about the possible development of a strategic plan containing specific criteria and sufficient resources to address the challenges identified by community media organizations, nor has it given a clear signal with respect to support for new technologies.

According to a Leger Marketing survey,²⁵⁸ 65% of Francophone readers report that they read community newspapers at least as often as other newspapers. They read them mainly to catch up on community news (55%) and because they are among the only Francophone newspapers available (38%). Readers state that these newspapers are trustworthy (95%) and involved in the community (89%). With respect to Francophone community radio stations, 60% of respondents are listeners, tuning in an average of 7.2 hours per week. Listeners tune in to these radio stations because they are the only Francophone radio stations available (41%). They believe that these stations are involved in the community (92%), that they are different from other radio stations (83%) and that the content is trustworthy and entertaining (78%).

Community media lacking in resources

Despite their recognized contribution, community media representatives believe they do not receive enough federal assistance to maintain audiences and build capacities. They continue to face certain challenges that prevent them from realizing their full potential, whether in terms of distribution, funding or advertising sales.

Regarding the actual operations of community newspapers, there are some persistent deficiencies, as reflected in the recent financial impacts felt by four Francophone community newspapers in the wake of changes made to the Aid to Publishers component of the Canada Media Fund. As pointed out by the Executive Director of the Association de la presse francophone, the loss of funding for these four newspapers will result in a loss of resources, financial stress and, in the long term, probable loss of viability.²⁵⁹

Since the advent of the Internet, media organizations are undergoing profound transformation. This brings a number of benefits, such as the ability to reach outside their traditional territory, but it also brings drawbacks. As regards **building technological capacities**, it appears that community media faces a tough climb. On the topic of technological advances in communities, the FCFA pointed out that community media outlets were not able to keep up.

“THE MAJOR FRENCH- AND ENGLISH-LANGUAGE PRIVATE BROADCASTERS ARE ALREADY THERE, BUT NOT OUR COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS BECAUSE THEY LACK RESOURCES AND CAPACITY. ... OUR COMMUNITY RADIO STATIONS [DO NOT HAVE MOBILE APPS] BECAUSE THEY DO NOT HAVE THE MEANS. THEIR MAJOR CHALLENGE IS BEING ABLE TO BE ON THE PLATFORMS THAT OUR YOUNG PEOPLE — MORE AND MORE YOUNG PEOPLE — ARE USING.”²⁶⁰

Community media representatives have **acute human and financial resource requirements**, and these needs are even greater when it comes to new technologies. As the Executive Director of the Association de la presse francophone told the Senate Committee:

“HAVING A WEBSITE IS ONE THING; BEING RELEVANT AND FINANCIALLY VIABLE IS SOMETHING ELSE ALTOGETHER. THE LEVEL OF DEVELOPMENT OF OUR MEMBERS’ DIGITAL PLATFORMS VARIES CONSIDERABLY FROM ONE PAPER TO THE NEXT, AND I WOULD EVEN SAY THAT, FOR EACH PAPER, THEIR WEBSITE SUCCESS IS AT BEST UNEVEN, ACCORDING TO THE AVAILABLE HUMAN AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES AT ANY TIME.” ²⁶¹

For a number of community newspapers, Anglophone and Francophone alike, the priority is on publishing a printed product. Few newspapers offer online subscriptions considering its poor profitability. Despite all its acknowledged potential, online publishing is seen as an extra that generates little if any additional revenue. The Executive Director of the Association de la presse francophone went so far as to say the following:

“SO SINCE WEBSITES ARE NOT PROFITABLE, THEY REMAIN A SIDELINE FOR THE NEWSPAPER, AND SOMETIMES EVEN A BURDEN.” ²⁶²

The Senate Committee met with one independent weekly newspaper, the *Hudson/Saint-Lazare Gazette*, which serves an area from Hawkesbury to just west of the Island of Montreal. The English-speaking population in this area is growing very rapidly. The newspaper therefore plays a critical role within the community by promoting Anglophone activities taking place in the region, while at the same time trying to maintain contacts with the Francophone majority.

However, the newspaper continues to face certain challenges in terms of distribution and competition with the major dailies. Last year, as part of other public hearings, representatives from the newspaper pointed out that the *Hudson/Saint-Lazare Gazette* was the first weekly newspaper in Canada to appear on the Web. ²⁶³ This year, they distinguished between the needs of the real community, which consumes a printed product, and the virtual community, which looks for content updated in real time. They spoke about the importance of having a critical mass in order to justify maintaining an online presence:

“AS A WEEKLY NEWSPAPER, ONE OF OUR PROBLEMS IS TO FIND THE CRITICAL MASS TO SERVE BOTH THAT VIRTUAL AND REAL COMMUNITY THAT WE PUBLISH TO EVERY WEEK, WHICH IS EASY. IN THE REAL COMMUNITY, IT IS ON PAPER. IT IS PRINTED. IT IS AVAILABLE. HOWEVER, FOR A VIRTUAL COMMUNITY, YOU HAVE TO BUILD A HABIT. PEOPLE COME TO THE INTERNET BECAUSE THEY KNOW THEY WILL FIND SOMETHING THEY ARE LOOKING FOR. THEY WILL COME BACK ON A WEEKLY OR DAILY BASIS. HOWEVER, IF YOU DO NOT SUPPLY IT ON A DAILY BASIS, DO NOT TRY TO PRETEND THAT YOU CAN SUPPLY THEM A DAILY CONTENT. ... WE HAVE TO BE CAREFUL IN NOT PROMISING TO OUR VIRTUAL COMMUNITY WHAT WE CANNOT DELIVER, LITERALLY, ON PAPER. ... IT IS JUST NOT FEASIBLE TO BECOME MORE OF A PRESENCE THAN YOU CAN REASONABLY SUPPLY. ... WE DO NOT KEEP THE WEBSITE TO MAKE MONEY, BECAUSE WE ARE LOSING MONEY ON IT RIGHT NOW. WE DO IT TO KEEP THE READERSHIP, WHICH IS VERY IMPORTANT.” ²⁶⁴

Newspapers serving official language minority communities wonder whether maintaining a Web presence is worth doing, as well as about the resources they can dedicate to it. This is also the case for Quebec's regional newspapers, although their greatest challenge remains translating content:

“OUR MEMBERS ARE CONSCIOUS OF LINGUISTIC DUALITY, YET THEY LACK THE RESOURCES TO IMPLEMENT. THIS REQUIRES, IN MOST CASES IN OUR NEWSPAPERS, ALLOCATING A REPORTER, A DESIGNER OR ANOTHER EMPLOYEE TO MANAGE THE SITE AND PUTS FURTHER PRESSURE ON THOSE WHO PAY THE BILLS TO FIND A QUALIFIED PROFESSIONAL TRANSLATOR.” ²⁶⁵

Likewise, the *Hudson/Saint-Lazare Gazette* strives to provide the region with information in English that would not otherwise be available given Quebec's current language policies. To illustrate this, the newspaper's editor cited the local municipal election that was about to begin.

“FRANCOPHONES CAN TAKE A LOT OF INFORMATION FOR GRANTED WHEREAS [A]NGLOPHONES DO NOT GET THAT INFORMATION. WE ARE THE ONES WHO HAVE TO TELL PEOPLE ON OUR SITE THAT THERE WILL BE AN ELECTION, THE PLACE AND TIME, AND ANY OTHER RELEVANT INFORMATION.” ²⁶⁶

Community radio stations are facing a similar financial dilemma. The Internet has up-ended the traditional business model, where ad revenue now has to make way for a culture where content is given away for free. ²⁶⁷ At a time of limited resources, the priority for these radio stations continues to be broadcasting rather than maintaining an online presence. According to the Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada:

“IN ORDER TO FULFIL OUR MISSION EFFICIENTLY WHILE ADOPTING THESE NEW TECHNOLOGIES, WE DO NEED HUMAN, TECHNICAL AND FINANCIAL RESOURCES. THE PROBLEM IS, NOT ONLY DO WE NOT HAVE THE SAME MEANS AS THESE MAJOR CORPORATIONS I WAS MENTIONING EARLIER, WHO CAN AFFORD TO GO FULL BORE ON THE INTERNET, NOT ONLY DO WE NOT WISH TO JUST FOLLOW BEHIND, BUT WE ARE INCREASINGLY SUBJECT TO RULES BECAUSE OF OUR STATUS AS COMMUNITY MEDIA. THIS IN NO WAY DIMINISHES THE IMPORTANCE OF OUR ROLE FOR MINORITY LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES IN THE COUNTRY, BUT CERTAIN CONSTRAINTS WITH RESPECT TO SPECIALIZED CONTENT, AND THAT TYPE OF THING, MAY LIMIT OUR MANDATE SOMEWHAT. OUR ROLE IS ESSENTIAL AND RECOGNIZED BY THE ENTIRE MEDIA SECTOR JUST AS IT IS BY THE CANADIAN STATE, BUT WE DO REGRET THE FACT THAT WE LACK ALL THE NECESSARY TOOLS TO REACH OUR GOALS IN A MEDIA UNIVERSE THAT IS CONSTANTLY CHANGING AND MORE COMPETITIVE THAN EVER.” ²⁶⁸

The issue of **government advertising** comes up often when discussing community media. Federal institutions have obligations under sections 11 and 30 of the *Official Languages Act* (i.e., public notices and advertising and use of media). According to the evidence, there are major deficiencies in terms of government advertising on the Web. According to the Association de la presse francophone:

“IN ORDER WORDS, WHEN IT COMES TO ADVERTISING ON THE WEB, THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT DOES NOT USE ESTABLISHED COMMUNITY MEDIA.” ²⁶⁹

For an independent newspaper like the *Hudson/Saint-Lazare Gazette*, its revenue comes entirely from advertising. Since it is a free newspaper, it is not eligible for funding under Canadian Heritage’s Publications Assistance Program. This means that government advertising revenue appears to be that much more important, except that this newspaper rarely sees such advertising. ²⁷⁰

Toward connected community media

Despite the lack of resources, several community newspapers and radio stations, both Anglophone and Francophone, maintain an online presence and engage in social media.

Although community media organizations are fully aware that they need to be out in and engaged with the community, a lot of work remains to be done so that Francophones feel engaged online. ²⁷¹ According to a Leger Marketing survey, ²⁷² 34% of respondents who read French-language newspapers visited those newspapers’ websites over the course of a month. As for community radio stations, 23% of listeners visited the radio station’s website over a similar period.

The *Hudson/Saint-Lazare Gazette* representatives pointed to another challenge with maintaining an online presence: copyright. Online information is available quickly, easily and often for free. This weekly newspaper has therefore taken steps to counter information piracy. ²⁷³

Quite a few innovative community media projects are underway. For example, soon the Alliance des radios communautaires will create mobile applications so that users can listen to radio on their mobile device. ²⁷⁴ There have also been joint projects between Francophone community newspapers and radio stations.

“CURRENTLY, WE ARE SEEING SOME PROJECTS EMERGE THAT COULD IN FACT BE CONSIDERED MULTISECTORAL, WITH WEB, PRINT, AUDIO, AND IN CERTAIN CASES, EVEN VIDEO. WE HAVE SEEN, FOR EXAMPLE, A NEWSPAPER AND A RADIO STATION GET TOGETHER AND SHARE THEIR JOURNALISTIC RESOURCES IN ORDER TO TAKE ADVANTAGE OF THE SITUATION.” ²⁷⁵

Regional Anglophone newspapers, too, have made use of Community Learning Centres to organize videoconferences. ²⁷⁶

Encouraging youth involvement

From the playground...

The Senate Committee's public hearings revealed that young people are particularly interested in new technologies and social media. **Young Anglophones and Francophones must see their realities reflected on the Web, starting at a very early age.** Young children are exposed very early to the new platforms, interactive games and tablets, and they learn very quickly. A way must therefore be found to **grab their attention from the very beginning, engage them where they are, and do so in their language.**

The Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française believes that these media are part of the lives of young people. They have access to computers in the earliest grades, and even at home.

"FOR THEM, THESE ARE NOT 'NEW MEDIA,' BUT RATHER MEDIA THEY KNOW AND TAKE FULL ADVANTAGE OF EVERY DAY." ²⁷⁷

Several initiatives for developing new technologies have already been put in place in official language minority communities. **For a number of these, young people represent essential factors for ensuring the long-term vitality of these communities.** In a number of respects, Francophone and Acadian communities have already recognized the urgency to act. The FCFA gave the following example:

"A FEW PLAYERS HAVE MADE REMARKABLE ADVANCES. FOR EXAMPLE, TFO OFFERS A GOOD NUMBER OF APPLICATIONS, INCLUDING A MINI-TFO APPLICATION FOR CHILDREN AGED TWO TO SIX." ²⁷⁸

The Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages himself recognized the usefulness of social media for reaching young people where they are:

"DIGITAL MEDIA REPRESENTS AN EXCELLENT TOOL FOR CONVEYING INFORMATION TO OUR YOUNG PEOPLE ON ALL SORTS OF SUBJECTS, INCLUDING OUR HERITAGE AND IDENTITY." ²⁷⁹

We already know that youth retention is a major concern to Quebec's Anglophone communities. The QCGN said the following to the Senate Committee:

"IN OUR ENGLISH-SPEAKING COMMUNITIES WE HAVE TO FIND WAYS TO ENCOURAGE YOUNG ENGLISH-SPEAKING PEOPLE TO STAY IN QUEBEC IT IS IMPORTANT FOR US TO HAVE ENGLISH-SPEAKING YOUTH IN QUEBEC FEEL CONNECTED TO CONTENT THAT IS NOT FROM THE U.S. SOMEWHERE, BUT RATHER THAT CONNECT TO CONTENT THAT IS ENGLISH FROM QUEBEC OR [F]RANCOPHONES, BUT WE HAVE TO HAVE THEM CONNECT. WHATEVER IT TAKES AROUND OUR MINORITY COMMUNITY TO RETAIN YOUTH IN QUEBEC, MAKE IT INTERESTING, MAKE IT EXCITING TO BE YOUNG, ENGLISH-SPEAKING QUEBECERS, WE HAVE TO DO THAT." ²⁸⁰

Education experts said that new technologies support Anglophone communities by keeping young people in the region. ²⁸¹

... to the workplace

Young people represent a target group for the public service. **It appears to be important for government organizations to be able to tap into their expertise and interest in new technologies**, as the job market is often fiercely competitive. This means that the public and private sectors need to rethink how they operate in order to accommodate the new generation of digital natives arriving on the job market and the public's rapidly evolving use of Web 2.0.

To ensure that young Canadians continue to see the public service as an employer of choice and that federal institutions are able to meet their official languages obligations, it seems to be crucial for these institutions to consider **recruiting young bilingual graduates**. Recent data shows that young people are extremely savvy users of social media. CEFRIO did a good job at summing up the importance of new technologies for young people arriving on the job market:

“AT CEFRIO, EVERY TWO YEARS WE HAVE MEASURED WHAT WE CALL GENERATION C, THOSE 12 TO 24 YEARS OF AGE, WHO WERE BORN WITH TECHNOLOGY, WITH THE INTERNET. FOR THEM, IT IS A WAY OF BEING. WHEN THEY COME TO WORK IN A BUSINESS — AND MAINLY IN GOVERNMENT — THEY ARE USED TO CO-DEVELOPING. THEY ARE USED TO DEALING WITH THEIR NETWORK IN ORDER TO FIND A SOLUTION.” ²⁸²

The President of the Treasury Board made similar points:

“I DARE SAY, HAVING HAD SOME DISCUSSIONS ON THIS MATTER, THAT IF WE ARE TRYING TO HIRE THE BEST AND THE BRIGHTEST, GREAT YOUNG PEOPLE COMING INTO THE CIVIL PUBLIC SERVICE, AND THEY ARE USED TO HAVING TETHERED TABLETS AND INSTANT SOCIAL MEDIA FEEDBACK AND CAN DO HALF THEIR WORK AT THE COFFEE SHOP WITHOUT ANY DIFFICULTY, AND THEN SUDDENLY THEY ARE TRANSFORMED INTO PUBLIC SERVANTS AND NONE OF THAT IS AVAILABLE, THAT WOULD BE A BIZARRE SITUATION. I THINK WE ALL AGREE THAT WE WANT TO MAKE IT EASY AND EXCITING FOR PEOPLE TO JOIN THE PUBLIC SERVICE AND THAT THEY CAN USE THESE KINDS OF TOOLS IN ORDER TO SUCCEED AND TO DO THEIR JOBS.” ²⁸³

According to a TBS official, social media is far from a passing fad:

“[R]ECENT STUDIES SHOW THAT NOW OVER HALF OF CANADIANS USE SOCIAL MEDIA ON A REGULAR BASIS. AMONGST THE YOUNGER GENERATION THAT IS JUST ENTERING OUR WORK FORCE, THAT NUMBER IS RAPIDLY APPROACHING 100 PER CENT.” ²⁸⁴

A variety of public service programs are available to students and recent graduates (e.g., Federal Student Work Experience Program, co-op program, post-secondary recruitment). In addition to these specific programs, young people interested in a public service career may apply through regular recruitment programs. As we have already seen, the Public Service Commission has taken a number of steps to attract young people to a career in the public service, such as through universities and colleges, its Web portal and social media. According to one Commission official, these efforts have encouraged a number of young Canadians to

continue learning a second language and maintain their language skills.²⁸⁵ As for the use of new technologies, the Public Service Commission would like to eventually move toward the use of un-proctored or unsupervised Internet testing.

“OVER THE LONGER TERM, I BELIEVE THAT ONLINE TESTING WILL IMPROVE ACCESS AND ALLOW MORE PEOPLE TO BE TESTED AND TO HAVE GREATER OPPORTUNITIES TO PARTICIPATE IN THE FEDERAL PUBLIC SERVICE AND OUR HIRING PROCESSES.”²⁸⁶

Under the *Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality*, the School of Public Service gave several hundred students from 10 Canadian universities access to online learning tools, such as English and French course programs. The purpose of this was to foster the development and maintenance of proficiency in both official languages beyond high school, as well as to contribute to public service renewal by ensuring the availability of qualified and competent candidates who meet current and future bilingual requirements.²⁸⁷ The School also offers online courses to public servants, all of them available in both official languages.

“IT NOW HAS OVER 70 ONLINE LANGUAGE TRAINING PRODUCTS AND ABOUT 80,000 HITS A YEAR. [...] THE SCHOOL’S PRIORITY IS TO BE THE SCHOOL OF CHOICE FOR PUBLIC SERVANTS BY OFFERING LEARNING EXPERIENCES OF THE HIGHEST QUALITY IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES ACROSS THE COUNTRY. AN INCREASING NUMBER OF PUBLIC SERVANTS ARE TURNING TO ONLINE AND DISTANCE LEARNING. ALL ONLINE COURSES AND CLASSROOM COURSES ARE MANAGED THROUGH THE SCHOOL’S LEARNING MANAGEMENT SYSTEM, LOGIN ACCESSIBLE TO PUBLIC SERVANTS THROUGH OUR WEBSITE.”²⁸⁸

Challenges

Federal programs: inadequate support

According to witnesses, **federal programs to support official language minority communities in their use of information and communications technology (ICT) are limited.** Apart from funding for the development of interactive cultural content under the Interactive Canada Fund, which expires in 2012–2013, no specific support is outlined in the *Roadmap for Canada’s Linguistic Duality 2008–2013*. The last such program wound up in March 2008.

From 1998 to 2008, the *Francommunautés virtuelles* program funded projects that addressed the special needs of Canada’s Francophone and Acadian communities for participating in ICT. Industry Canada was the department responsible for this initiative. In an evaluation released in February 2008, the authors acknowledged that the program had had positive spinoffs for official language minority communities despite the fact that they were not exclusively targeted.²⁸⁹ However, gaps were observed between the program objectives and the needs expressed by the communities. This was echoed by the FCFA officials during their appearance before the Senate Committee:

“YES, IT DEFINITELY WAS A SUCCESS AT THE TIME. WHEN RE-EXAMINING THE PROGRAM, WE HAD TO REVIEW THE GOALS A BIT. INITIALLY, OUR INTENTION WAS TO PUT CANADIAN

[F]RANCOPHONES ON THE WEB. WE MANAGED THIS SUCCESSFULLY. SIGNIFICANT OPPORTUNITIES WERE PROVIDED TO THE COMMUNITIES AND THE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS. BUT WHAT WAS MISSING, AND WE DID NOT KNOW IT AT THE TIME, WAS THE TRAINING TO ENSURE THAT PEOPLE WERE THEN EQUIPPED TO CONTINUE TO UPDATE THEIR WEBSITES AND IMPROVE THE CONTENT. THAT IS WHAT WE WOULD LIKE TO PUT EMPHASIS ON IN A NEW PROGRAM OF THIS TYPE. WE THINK THAT IT IS IMPORTANT AND NECESSARY FOR THE FUTURE.”²⁹⁰

For Francophone and Acadian communities, **support for website development continues to be important** for small organizations with limited resources, as well as for community media and arts and culture organizations. The Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities spoke about the need for core funding, not only for developing but also for maintaining content.²⁹¹ Speaking about the former *Francommunautés virtuelles* program, the Association de la presse francophone had this to say:

“[T]HAT PROGRAM HAD A MAJOR FLAW: IT WAS ENTIRELY FOCUSED ON SPECIAL PROJECTS. AS WE KNOW, ANYTHING TO DO WITH NEW TECHNOLOGIES EVOLVES VERY QUICKLY. THE REQUIRED KNOWLEDGE AND SKILLS ARE CONSTANTLY CHANGING, SO I THINK THE LONG TERM MAY NOT BE THE BEST APPROACH. A LOWER COST, SUSTAINED AND ONGOING SUPPORT WOULD BE A MUCH MORE REALISTIC APPROACH FOR A NEWSPAPER OR RADIO STATION TO BE ABLE TO, OVER TIME, BUILD UP ITS SKILLS AND BE IN A MODE OF CONTINUOUS IMPROVEMENT.”²⁹²

The FCCF also gave its views on the program’s elimination and the coming cancellation of the Interactive Canada Fund:

“WITHOUT FUNDING FROM THOSE PROGRAMS, IT WILL BE ALMOST IMPOSSIBLE FOR THE ORGANIZATIONS TO KEEP UP WITH THE WORLD OF NEW MEDIA AND TO CONTINUE TO BE PRESENT ON THE WEB, SOCIAL NETWORKS AND MOBILE APPLICATIONS.”²⁹³

Support for content development on Web 2.0 tools appears to be more relevant than ever before. Francophones want to be able to **participate actively in the digital world**. The FCFA said that in terms of access to, and the ability to create, French-language content, a digital divide still exists, with Francophones on the disadvantaged side.²⁹⁴ **In light of the evidence heard, it appears that, while ad hoc support is available to communities, this support is insufficient to reverse the trend.**

Resources and capacity building

Several witnesses spoke about the need to **support capacity building and skills development**, along with enhancing the expertise of content producers in the communities for anything involving the Internet and Web 2.0 tools (e.g., social media, mobile applications, etc.). According to CEFRIO, recent data shows that people do not always have the basic skills or the abilities needed to make use of the Internet and its technologies.²⁹⁵ This is especially true for official language minority communities, which need special skills to be able to meet the needs of their members.

“CONSIDER THE EXAMPLE OF A SMALL [F]RANCOPHONE COMMUNITY IN ALBERTA OR BRITISH COLUMBIA, SUCH AS MAILLARDVILLE, WHICH WANTS TO OFFER ELECTRONIC GOVERNMENT SERVICES TO ITS POPULATION. IN THAT CASE, YOU HAVE TO KNOW MORE THAN SIMPLY HOW TO SEND E-MAIL; YOU HAVE TO ACQUIRE SPECIAL SKILLS, TO KNOW WHAT GOOD E-SERVICES FOR CITIZENS ARE, HOW TO MARKET THEM, WHAT THE CHALLENGES ARE, HOW YOU START UP AN E-STORE. THESE ISSUES ARE MORE COMPLEX. ONCE AGAIN, IT IS NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE TECHNOLOGY; YOU HAVE TO USE IT TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL. TO HELP BUSINESSES AND CITIZENS USE TECHNOLOGY TO ITS FULL POTENTIAL, WE HAVE TO SUPPORT THEM. ONCE AGAIN, ORGANIZATIONS AND PLAYERS ARE ABLE TO SUPPORT CITIZENS AND BUSINESSES IN THEIR UPTAKE OF INFORMATION TECHNOLOGIES AND THE INTERNET. HOWEVER, RESOURCES ARE NEEDED, IN FRENCH FOR [F]RANCOPHONES AND IN ENGLISH FOR [A]NGLOPHONES.”²⁹⁶

New media and social media require special skills that require retraining. According to CEFRIO:

“TO MAKE THE MOST OF DIGITAL TOOLS, IT IS OBVIOUSLY NOT ENOUGH TO HAVE ONLY A RUDIMENTARY KNOWLEDGE OF THEM. SPECIAL SKILLS ARE ALSO NEEDED. ... ACCORDINGLY, CEFRIO BELIEVES THAT THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT SHOULD SUPPORT THE IMPLEMENTATION BY FRANCOPHONE AND ANGLOPHONE MINORITY OFFICIAL LANGUAGE COMMUNITIES OF DIGITAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGIES THAT MEET THEIR OWN REQUIREMENTS.”²⁹⁷

Perhaps the communities are not adequately equipped to keep up, which is why they are pushing to maintain a relevant online presence. According to the FCFA:

“THESE DAYS, THE CONTENT IS GENERATED BY THE USER AND THE PROCESS IS FAST. SO THE SKILLS THAT ARE NEEDED NOW TO BE PRESENT, ACTIVE AND INTEREST PEOPLE ARE IMPORTANT. FOR EXAMPLE, WE KNOW PERFECTLY WELL THAT IF THE FCFA PAGE ON TWITTER OR FACEBOOK IS NOT UPDATED FOR A WEEK, PEOPLE GET BORED AND LEAVE. THINGS ARE MOVING QUICKLY NOW.”²⁹⁸

Francophone and Acadian communities lack both resources and the capacity to create content.²⁹⁹ The need for **training and skills development** is especially acute in **education, arts and culture**, and **community media**. For organizations active in these areas, not having the skills needed to be on the leading edge of technology limits their ability to reach their target audiences. One researcher had this to say about the situation for minority artists:

“THERE IS THUS A NEED FOR TRAINING FOR VERY YOUNG ARTISTS OR SIMPLY FOR CONSUMERS OF CULTURE AS WELL AS FOR PEOPLE WHO ARE FURTHER ALONG IN THEIR CAREERS AND LOOKING FOR PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES. THESE NEEDS EXIST FOR ARTISTS AND FOR THOSE WHO MANAGE THESE ARTISTIC ENVIRONMENTS AND WHO ARE RESPONSIBLE, FOR EXAMPLE, FOR CENTRALIZING INFORMATION OR ASSESSING GRANTS. ... WE MUST ALSO CONSIDER THE FACT THAT DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES HAVE DIFFERENT EFFECTS ON DIFFERENT ARTISTIC DISCIPLINES.”³⁰⁰

With respect to education, it appears essential for teachers to be well equipped, develop an interest in using new technologies and be able to use them effectively in the classroom. This needs to begin with the fundamentals, during university training, and then continue as part of professional development opportunities throughout teachers' careers. Work must also be done to reach out to parents and families, as well as those working in early childhood education. As said by the Commission nationale des parents francophones:

“UNLESS [F]RANCOPHONES IN MINORITY COMMUNITIES ARE ENCOURAGED TO USE FRENCH AND INFORMED PROMPTLY ABOUT THE POSITIVE AND NEGATIVE WAYS OF USING NEW TECHNOLOGIES, WE RISK LOSING SOME OF THE JEWELS OF OUR HERITAGE AND WE WILL AFFECT THE ONGOING GROWTH AND TRANSMISSION OF OUR CULTURE. WE MUST SEEK OUT THOSE MOST IN NEED: PARENTS, STAFF AT FAMILY AND CHILDREN’S CENTRES (INCLUDING DAYCARE CENTRES), AND TEACHERS. WE MUST TRAIN THEM TO EDUCATE FUTURE GENERATIONS ABOUT CURRENT AND FUTURE TECHNOLOGIES.” ³⁰¹

Older people must also find ways to harness new technologies. They generally use the Internet and social media to a lesser extent than do younger generations. That said, an NFB official noted that her institution's digital transformation helped reach both younger and older audiences. ³⁰² A representative from ELAN said that the Internet and social media provide an opportunity for Anglophone seniors to stay in touch with their children and grandchildren; these tools make it possible to reach out to a greater audience, regardless of age. ³⁰³

Access to the appropriate resources also appears to be a problem for Quebec's Anglophone communities, which sometimes do not have the desired staff to stake out and maintain an active online presence. ³⁰⁴ In Quebec, what is even more problematic, as we saw a bit earlier in this report, is the issue of **translating websites**. Some Anglophone organizations have websites in English only. Others make them available in both languages so as to increase their visibility and to reach out to Quebec's Francophone majority. The QCGN spoke about the importance of doing this, while recognizing that capacity building and access to resources pose significant challenges. ³⁰⁵

Creation of French-language content: ensuring a presence

One theme emerged repeatedly during the public hearings: the need to stake out space.

This applies as much to Quebec's Anglophone communities, who want to see their culture reflected on the Web, as to Francophone and Acadian communities, who want to be able to interact with the Web in their language. This applies to all sectors: community, education, media, arts and culture. According to one FCFA official:

“SOCIAL MEDIA ENABLE COMMUNITY ORGANIZATIONS AND INSTITUTIONS TO REACH OUT TO AND MOBILIZE PEOPLE LIKE NEVER BEFORE. OUR NETWORK HAS RECOGNIZED THIS OPPORTUNITY FOR ITS TRUE VALUE, AND WE HAVE DECIDED TO OCCUPY THAT SPACE.” ³⁰⁶

Recent statistics have shown that many young Francophones use English for their online activities. For the most part, they settle for searching information in the language it is available in. **If there is nothing in French, they will naturally resort to English.** This is why new technologies represent an important strategic focus for the future of Francophone and Acadian communities, as pointed out by the Fédération canadienne des enseignantes et des enseignants:

“INDEED, THE PERVASIVENESS OF ENGLISH IS OF PARTICULAR CONCERN TO FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES WHOSE SOCIAL ENVIRONMENT IS ALREADY DOMINATED BY ENGLISH AND WHO SEE CYBERSPACE AS ANOTHER SOURCE OF ASSIMILATION. IN ADDITION, IN VIEW OF OUR YOUNG PEOPLE’S CRAZE FOR NEW TECHNOLOGIES AND SOCIAL NETWORKS, THE TECHNOLOGY ISSUE IS CLEARLY IMPORTANT AND MUST BE GIVEN SERIOUS AND STRATEGIC CONSIDERATION.” ³⁰⁷

An official from the Association canadienne d’éducation de langue française presented his views regarding **the creation of Francophone spaces**:

“VARIOUS NEW PLATFORMS THAT ARE CONSTANTLY AND QUICKLY CHANGING COULD ALLOW OUR YOUTH TO DISCOVER THINGS, TO LIVE AND TO GROW IN FRENCH. MAKE NO MISTAKE, WE ARE NOT TALKING ABOUT CREATING [F]RANCOPHONE SPACES THAT ARE LIMITED TO DISCUSSING ISSUES ABOUT THE [F]RANCOPHONIE. WITHOUT EXCLUDING THAT EXTREMELY IMPORTANT THEME, THE IDEA HERE IS THAT YOUNG PEOPLE BE ABLE TO DISCUSS ALL THE ISSUES ON THE INTERNET AND ON SOCIAL NETWORKS, AND BE ABLE TO DO SO QUITE NATURALLY, IN FRENCH, WITH THEIR FRIENDS, THEIR FAMILY AND THEIR SOCIAL NETWORK. ... IT WOULD PROVIDE AN OPPORTUNITY TO DISCUSS THINGS WITH OTHER YOUNG [F]RANCOPHONES LIVING ALL OVER CANADA; AN OPPORTUNITY TO DEVELOP THEIR [F]RANCOPHONE DIGITAL IDENTITY.” ³⁰⁸

An official from the Association de la presse francophone also weighed in:

“WE NEED TO OFFER SOMETHING RELEVANT TO OUR COMMUNITIES; IF NOT, THEY WILL GO ELSEWHERE AND IN THIS AREA, IT IS EASY TO GO ELSEWHERE [.]” ³⁰⁹

Creating Francophone spaces benefits all Francophones, both here and elsewhere, since this fosters relationships within and outside borders. From what witnesses said, online content needs to meet the needs of users; otherwise, it will quickly become stale. According to one researcher:

“WE CAN DECIDE TO BE PROACTIVE, YES, BUT IF WE DO IT IN A FORMAT THAT IS INCOMPATIBLE WITH WHAT PEOPLE ARE LOOKING FOR, IT WILL GO NOWHERE.” ³¹⁰

As pointed out by the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones, it is also important for all stakeholders (government, the private sector and communities) to work together to provide real and virtual spaces that reflect the diversity of situations and everyone’s needs. ³¹¹ The Commission nationale des parents francophones suggested launching a campaign to promote French in social media as a way to educate parents and

develop French-language resources.³¹² The FCFA highlighted the crucial role of Francophone and Acadian communities in creating French-language content:

“OUR ARTISTS, OUR MUSICIANS, OUR COMMUNITY MEDIA OUTLETS WOULD PRODUCE THE CONTENT. WE HAVE PLENTY OF PEOPLE IN OUR COMMUNITIES WHO HAVE IDEAS, BUT WHO DO NOT NECESSARILY HAVE THE RESOURCES TO COMPETE WITH EVERYTHING THAT IS BEING PRODUCED IN THE PRIVATE SECTOR AND NOT ALWAYS IN FRENCH.”³¹³

Reflecting daily realities and promoting linguistic duality

What official language minority communities want first and foremost is to see their realities reflected in the new platforms. This is as true for community media as it is for the arts and culture sector, for Anglophones as for Francophones. It appears that factors such as profitability and ratings are not adequate. In light of that, community media and arts and culture organizations need access to programs that take into account their impact on the vitality of official language minority communities. Regarding Anglophone communities, the amount of English content online is not cause for concern. The same could not be said about the lack of content that reflects minorities. These issues were raised by the Senate Committee in two recent reports, released in June 2009 and October 2011, respectively.³¹⁴

REFLECTING REALITIES: BUILDING BRIDGES BETWEEN OUR TWO OFFICIAL LANGUAGES

In 2009 and in 2011, the Senate Committee spoke about the importance of reflecting minority experiences. This recognition advances the development of Anglophone and Francophone minority communities. It also helps build bridges between both communities. Part VII of the *Official Languages Act* was intended precisely to achieve these two objectives: supporting and assisting the development of official language minority communities, and promoting linguistic duality. New technologies serve as an additional vehicle for achieving these objectives.

Witnesses also spoke about the importance of building bridges between Canada's Anglophone and Francophone communities. The FCFA stated that an institution that maintains a web presence should automatically be considered an ambassador of linguistic duality.³¹⁵ New technologies present enormous potential for helping to bring the two solitudes closer together. This was behind the NFB's decision to translate its portal, including a special section dedicated to Canada's francophonie. For the institution, this promotes the francophonie within the Anglophone community and reaches other audiences, such as francophiles.³¹⁶ This is what also motivates Anglophone community newspapers to translate their web content. According to an official from the Quebec Community Newspapers Association:

“TO HAVE ALL OUR MEMBERS HAVE THEIR WEBSITES IN BOTH OFFICIAL LANGUAGES, I FEEL, IS THE HIGHEST FORM OF RESPECT FOR A COUNTRY THAT HONOURS LINGUISTIC DUALITY. SUCH AN APPROACH, HOWEVER, WOULD GAIN READERSHIP AND ADVERTISEMENT REVENUE FOR OUR PAPERS. ... I WOULD BE RATHER PROUD TO PURSUE SUCH A PROJECT OF BRINGING TOGETHER ALL OUR NEWSPAPERS IN BOTH LANGUAGES, BUT I WONDER WHAT THE NEED IS AND HOW MANY RESOURCES WILL BE NEEDED TO MAINTAIN THIS IF FUNDING RUNS OUT.” ³¹⁷

While several Anglophone organizations understand the benefits of making their content available in the other official language, some are limited by a lack of resources as to what they can do. For Anglo-Quebeckers, just maintaining visibility in the other language is one way to build bridges with their Francophone neighbours right within Quebec, as well as in the rest of Canada.

To sum up, this fifth section has shown that new technologies present enormous potential for the development of Anglophone and Francophone minority communities. Whether to reduce isolation, facilitate contact with federal institutions and deliver services more effectively in both official languages, or promote vitality in education, arts and culture or community media, new technologies are indispensable to ensuring respect for language rights. To do this, there needs to be federal programs that allow the communities to participate in information and communications technologies. Resources are needed to build and maintain capacities. Francophone and Acadian communities need to be given the ability to establish spaces and foster the creation of French-language content. There needs to be an acknowledgement of just how important it is to reflect the realities of these communities and to take opportunities to promote linguistic duality throughout Canadian society.

“Federal institutions that have already integrated linguistic duality as a value will know how to adapt their practices to the Web 2.0 universe[.]”

Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages,
Proceedings, 24 October 2011.

OBSERVATIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS: ENSURING RESPECT FOR LANGUAGE RIGHTS

The Senate Committee’s public hearings were an opportunity to learn about the main achievements in the use of new communications tools within the federal government and in official language minority communities. They also identified the major challenges pertaining to official languages. This sixth section presents recommendations for improving approaches to using the Internet, new media and social media that ensure that the language rights of Canadians are respected.

Universal access

As mentioned by many of the witnesses who appeared before the Senate Committee, **access is the very basis of everything**. New technologies seem promising in many respects, such as fostering the development of official language minority communities, promoting linguistic duality, making online services accessible to as many people as possible, or enabling federal employees to work together in the official language of their choice. However, progress in these areas will make a difference only if **access is available everywhere and to everyone**.

The Senate Committee invited the Minister of Industry on several occasions to appear in order to answer questions about Internet access and related programs, but the Minister repeatedly declined. **As a result, the Senate Committee was unable to learn about the government’s real undertakings for the future**. Similarly, the Senate Committee finds it unfortunate that no officials from the Canadian Wireless Telecommunications Association were available to present their perspectives on access to digital networks and the challenges pertaining to respect for language rights.

Of course, issues surrounding access to the Internet and digital networks are of interest not just to official language minority communities. They are relevant to all Canadians affected by the digital divide. They are of concern to Canadians living in rural or remote communities, where the infrastructure is simply not there. They also affect the poorest Canadians who cannot afford even basic Internet access.

For these reasons, the Senate Committee is disappointed with the government's decision to eliminate the community component of Industry Canada's Community Access Program. The Senate Committee believes that this decision ignores the program's rationale, which was precisely to extend a hand to those unable to afford basic Internet access at home. Some official language minority communities may suffer the consequences of this decision. The digital divide also affects seniors, people with disabilities, low literacy skills, and those who do not have the basic skills needed to use new technologies effectively.

The Senate Committee believes that **the federal government must ensure universal access to broadband Internet and digital networks as quickly as possible**. As was pointed out by another Senate committee two years ago, universal access means 100% of Canadians.³¹⁸

Mobile services stand out as having great potential for those who do not necessarily have a home computer. As we have seen in this report, some federal institutions already maintain a digital presence. It is important that the federal government encourage innovation in this area. From a linguistic perspective, equal access to services must be provided to Anglophones and Francophones across the country. Use of the Internet and social media is steadily growing, and **it is important to guarantee access for everyone, regardless of language or location**.

It is also worth pointing out that a number of official language minority communities have been innovative with respect to Internet access and developing the related infrastructure. According to the Senate Committee, **the federal government must commit to providing ongoing support for innovative projects in this area, either for developing or for maintaining broadband Internet infrastructure and digital networks**. Industry Canada and the CRTC have already taken steps to connect all Canadians, but more needs to be done in collaboration with the private sector and in consultation with official language minority communities.

Consequently, the Senate Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 1

That Industry Canada and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, together with the private sector and in consultation with official language minority communities:

- (a) act immediately to ensure that all Canadians have universal, adequate and affordable access to broadband Internet and digital networks; and**
- (b) provide ongoing support to innovative projects for developing and maintaining broadband Internet and digital network infrastructure in Anglophone and Francophone minority communities.**

In French, please!

The Internet, new media and social media represent both an opportunity and a threat for the French language. Although web initiatives promote the language and those who speak it, **the fact remains that the Internet continues to be a place where exchanges take place primarily in English.** According to an official from CEFRIO, 5% of Web content is available in French compared with 45% in English; with regard to mobile applications, only 6% of tools are currently accessible in French.³¹⁹ **French therefore remains underused in this new digital world.** The same also applies to Web 2.0 activities. Although the TBS guideline adopted in November 2011 states that departments must provide content of equal quality and in both official languages, it is silent with regard to the place of French and what action to take to expand its influence.

During appearances before the Senate Committee, representatives from Francophone minority communities stressed the need to expand the availability of French-language content online and to encourage the development of mobile applications in French. **The Web presents a golden opportunity to expand written, audio and video content in French.** It also provides a way to increase the availability of French-language cultural products. According to CEFRIO:

“WHILE IT MAY BE IMPOSSIBLE TO GENERATE THE SAME AMOUNT OF FRENCH-LANGUAGE CONTENT ON THE INTERNET AS THERE IS ENGLISH CONTENT, IT IS CERTAINLY POSSIBLE TO PREVENT THE GAP BETWEEN THE TWO LANGUAGES FROM GROWING WIDER BY ACTIVELY SUPPORTING THE PRODUCTION OF CANADIAN FRENCH-LANGUAGE DIGITAL CONTENT.”³²⁰

The Senate Committee acknowledges the efforts of some federal departments and agencies to **reverse the trend.** Federal institutions such as the NFB and CBC/Radio-Canada have already moved toward establishing space in French on the web and creating content for Francophones. However, most of the time, federal support is limited to ad hoc initiatives that lack long-term commitments that would enable Francophone minority communities to leave their mark in the new digital world. There are currently no federal programs that address the special needs of these communities for participating in new technologies. The only program that facilitated the development of interactive cultural content in French, the Interactive Canada Fund, is winding down over the coming months. The Senate Committee regrets this decision, which stems from Canadian Heritage’s strategic review conducted in connection with Budget 2012.

The public hearings revealed that many Francophone organizations are actively working toward **staking out space in French on the Web.** The FCFA, the FCCF and community media are just a few examples of organizations working to develop products created by and for Francophones that reflect their realities. As said by one official from the Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones:

“THE PRESENCE OF FRENCH ON THE INTERNET, IN NEW MEDIA AND IN SOCIAL MEDIA IS ESSENTIAL SO THAT [F]RANCOPHONES CAN DEVELOP THEIR SENSE OF BELONGING AND INDEPENDENCE, WHILE CONTRIBUTING ACTIVELY TO THE VITALITY OF [F]RANCOPHONE AND ACADIAN COMMUNITIES AND TO THE DEVELOPMENT OF CANADA ITSELF. THIS SENSE OF BELONGING AND IDENTITY HELPS YOUNG CANADIANS FORGE THEIR IDENTITIES.” ³²¹

The goal is to create public spaces where the predominant language used is French. The Government of Quebec, in cooperation with Francophone and Acadian communities, is also actively exploring this issue. Last spring, the Centre de la francophonie des Amériques in Quebec City pledged to make content available online that addresses various themes relevant to the Canadian francophonie. This will help reinforce a sense of belonging among Francophones in the Americas and extend their influence beyond their borders. The Senate Committee wishes to congratulate the various stakeholders for their commitment to creating French-language content; however, in light of what was heard from witnesses, more needs to be done.

It is important to keep in mind the important role for the **private sector**. During his appearance before the Senate Committee, the Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages provided examples of the changes introduced by the federal government to support the development of French-language content by the private sector. For example, when Amazon entered the Canadian market, conditions were imposed regarding the promotion of Canadian books and books in French. ³²² According to CEFRIO:

“THE FEDERAL GOVERNMENT CAN INTERVENE TO ENSURE THERE IS FRENCH-LANGUAGE CONTENT ON THE INTERNET, HIGH-QUALITY CONTENT. WHEN PEOPLE SURF THE INTERNET, THEY GENERALLY DO SO IN THEIR LANGUAGE. THEY PREFER TO DO IT IN THEIR LANGUAGE.” ³²³

The Senate Committee firmly believes that **action must be taken to expand the presence of French in the new digital world**. It also believes that federal institutions, particularly Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and arts and culture institutions, together with the private sector, have an important role to play. Some witnesses suggested that the federal government should intervene to ensure that such content is created, made widely available and relevant to users. To do this, **financial incentives** are needed to help Francophones occupy this space. They must be given the proper tools, and efforts must be made to **ensure that they are reflected in the content created**. As was revealed during the public hearings, new technologies are the future way to ensure the development of Francophone minority communities. The federal government must realize this and provide **ongoing support**.

Consequently, the Senate Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 2

That Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and federal arts and culture institutions, together with the private sector and in consultation with Francophone minority communities:

- (a) provide ongoing support for the development of French-language content on the Internet, in new media and in social media; and**
- (b) ensure that this content reflects the realities of Francophone minority communities.**

Our future: our children

Young people are essential to ensuring the long-term vitality of official language minority communities. Ways must therefore be found to reach them where they are. This is what the Fédération de la jeunesse canadienne-française had to say:

“EXPERIENCE HAS SHOWN US THAT YOUNG PEOPLE COMMUNICATE IN FRENCH WHEN THEY ARE IN A FRANCOPHONE ENVIRONMENT. WE MUST THEREFORE ENSURE ABOVE ALL THAT YOUTH HAVE ACCESS TO A FRANCOPHONE ENVIRONMENT IN THEIR COMMUNITY. WE CANNOT UNDERESTIMATE THE EFFECT OF YOUNG PEOPLES’ SURROUNDINGS ON THEIR LANGUAGE CHOICES. THE VITALITY OF FRANCOPHONE COMMUNITIES WILL BE FELT ON THE INTERNET: IF INFORMATION AND DISCUSSIONS ARE IN FRENCH, THEY WILL FIND IT NATURAL AND POSSIBLE TO USE FRENCH IN TURN.” ³²⁴

As was heard during the public hearings, young people are major users of social media, smartphones, tablets and other mobile devices. It therefore seems that occupying this space is important for federal institutions and official language minority community organizations alike. As the Association canadienne d’éducation de langue française told the Senate Committee:

“AS WE KNOW TODAY, THE SOCIALIZATION OF YOUNG PEOPLE IS GREATLY INFLUENCED BY THE USE OF NEW TECHNOLOGIES.” ³²⁵

The Senate Committee believes it is important to **support innovation within the official language minority communities themselves**. Witnesses said that support for innovative projects involving the development and use of social media and mobile applications is critical to the development of Anglophone and Francophone minority communities. This would draw young people’s attention and encourage them to participate more fully in the community. In other words, this supports them in **building their identity**.

The Senate Committee believes that federal institutions, particularly Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and arts and culture institutions, must take action to ensure the vitality of Anglophone and Francophone minority communities. This type of support will have a **positive impact on young members of these communities**, given how connected and open to new

technology they are. **Community vitality depends on youth, who represent the future.** We need to engage them at a very young age, in all aspects of daily life. This means giving them access to the technological tools to socialize them, in their language, whether directly within the **family**, at **school**, in the **media** or through **arts and culture**.

Consequently, the Senate Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 3

That Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and federal arts and culture institutions, together with the private sector and in consultation with official language minority communities, provide ongoing support to develop new technologies in Anglophone and Francophone minority communities, particularly in the following areas:

- (a) minority schools;**
- (b) youth initiatives;**
- (c) community media; and**
- (d) arts and culture.**

In order to benefit from new technologies, official language minority communities need support. **This means providing support for training and skills development in a number of vital areas.** Unfortunately, no federal programs currently provide ongoing support for this kind of initiative. Federal institutions limit themselves to providing ad hoc funding on a per-project basis without any long-term vision in support of capacity building. It is abundantly clear that undertaking technological initiatives without seeing them through to their conclusion or without ensuring that they are able to keep up with digital developments is a recipe for failure. The FCCF neatly summed up the current challenge:

“AS A RESULT, THE DEVELOPERS OF THESE PROJECTS HAVE TO BE ABLE TO COUNT ON STABLE, ONGOING AND SUFFICIENT FUNDING, WITHOUT WHICH THE BEST EFFORTS WILL BE DOOMED TO FAILURE, DESPITE THEIR EXPERTISE AND DEDICATION.” ³²⁶

The Senate Committee believes that federal institutions, particularly Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and arts and culture institutions, need to provide **ongoing support for innovative projects**, such as those aimed at the development and use of **social media** and **mobile applications**, as well as for **capacity building** in official language minority communities. This kind of support will encourage young people to discover, thrive and grow up in their communities and to do so naturally, in their language, with their friends, families and social networks.

Consequently, the Senate Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 4

That Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and federal arts and culture institutions, together with the private sector and in consultation with Francophone minority communities:

- (a) support innovative projects involving the development and use of social media and mobile applications in Anglophone and Francophone minority communities that allow young people to discover, thrive and grow up in their communities and to do so naturally, in their language, with their friends, families and social networks; and**
- (b) provide ongoing support to Anglophone and Francophone minority communities for building their capacity to use the Internet, new media and social media.**

From understanding obligations to monitoring results

The public hearings revealed that those federal institutions that recognize linguistic duality as a value, from understanding obligations to monitoring results, are more apt to perform well. The November 2011 guideline includes a section on the governance and oversight of Web 2.0 activities and another one on planning and design, therefore clearly spelling out accountability requirements. Of course, each institution is responsible for establishing its own measures.

The Senate Committee believes that all federal institutions engaging in Web 2.0 activities must **establish an appropriate official languages governance structure from design to planning to monitoring**. Some of them are already on board. As the Commissioner of Official Languages wrote in one of his most recent annual reports:

“SUCCESS IN ANY ENDEAVOUR DOES NOT HAPPEN BY ACCIDENT. IT REQUIRES UNDERSTANDING, LEADERSHIP, PLANNING, EXECUTION AND ASSESSMENT. OR... A VIRTUOUS CIRCLE IN WHICH EACH ELEMENT REINFORCES AND ACTS UPON THE OTHER: KNOW (KNOWLEDGE OF WHAT IS REQUIRED), WANT (THE WILL, OR LEADERSHIP, TO ACHIEVE IT), PLAN (A CLEARLY ELABORATED PROCESS TO ACHIEVE IT), DO (PUTTING THE PLAN INTO EFFECT), AND CHECK (AN EVALUATION TO SEE WHAT HAS BEEN ACHIEVED).” ³²⁷

The Senate Committee wishes to point out that federal institutions have obligations regarding implementation of Parts IV, V and VII of the *Official Languages Act*. As for **communications with and services to the public** (Part IV), federal institutions must publish information simultaneously in both official languages, actively encourage participation in English and in French, and adhere to the principle of substantive equality and of services of equal quality in both official languages. As regards **language of work** (Part V), they must encourage their employees to use internal collaboration tools in the official language of their choice. This

applies equally to blogs, wikis, discussion groups and communities of practice. With respect to the **advancement of English and French** (Part VII), institutions have the obligation to take positive measures to directly engage the official language minority communities and to promote linguistic duality within Canadian society.

The Senate Committee believes that by meeting these obligations and establishing an appropriate governance structure, federal institutions will be able to communicate more effectively while respecting Canada's two linguistic communities.

Consequently, the Senate Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 5

That all federal institutions engaged in Web 2.0 activities:

(a) comply with Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat policies, rules and directives regarding official language requirements; and

(b) establish an appropriate official language governance structure, from understanding obligations to monitoring results, that includes measures to:

- **ensure that information is published simultaneously in both official languages;**
- **respect equality of services in both official languages, ensuring that services are of equal quality;**
- **actively promote participation in English and French in all platforms used;**
- **encourage employees to make use of internal collaboration tools in the official language of their choice;**
- **take positive measures to directly engage Anglophone and Francophone minority communities; and**
- **take positive measures to promote linguistic duality within Canadian society.**

This report has identified numerous **good practices** currently in use in federal institutions regarding the use of the Internet, new media and social media. It would be worthwhile for federal departments and agencies to look at and emulate them. Unfortunately, little data on compliance with official language requirements is currently available when it comes to social media.

“THE TREASURY BOARD SECRETARIAT HAS NOT CONDUCTED ANY FORMAL OR DEFINITIVE RESEARCH INTO HOW GOVERNMENT OF CANADA TWITTER AND FACEBOOK ACCOUNTS ARE MANAGED FROM AN OFFICIAL LANGUAGES PERSPECTIVE.”³²⁸

The Senate Committee recognizes that federal Web 2.0 experience is relatively recent and is constantly developing. In its view, TBS must set an example. It must first conduct **formal research** on how official languages figure into the Government of Canada's use of social media (e.g., Twitter feeds, Facebook pages, YouTube accounts) and undertake to **share the findings** with all federal institutions as well as the Senate Committee. Furthermore, it must **share relevant good practices**. This could be done within its annual report or through the Network of Official Language Champions.

As a starting point, it must encourage federal institutions to draw on the good practices presented in this report, with a view to **encourage other institutions to follow suit and adopt exemplary behaviour regarding respect for both official languages**.

Consequently, the Senate Committee recommends:

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat:

- (a) conduct formal research on how official languages figure into the Government of Canada's use of social media and share its findings with all federal institutions as well as the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages; and**
- (b) share good practices with all federal institutions, especially those practices presented in this report.**

In short, this sixth section has shown that it would be worthwhile taking measures to ensure respect for the language rights of Canadians, regardless of where they live or any special needs they may have, with respect to use of the Internet, new media and social media. The recommendations in this report address both the federal government and the private sector. **Respect for linguistic duality must become automatic, which requires planning, resources and special measures to promote the use of French.** In the spirit of the obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*, it is important that all these measures be taken **in cooperation with the official language minority communities** and that they target a single purpose: **the promotion of linguistic duality**.

“To conclude, the federal government must do more than lend support to official language communities to help them embrace the Internet and ITCs. The federal government must also be a model user of such tools, not only from the linguistic standpoint but from other angles as well. Among other things, the federal government needs to ensure that it provides content in both French and English, and that the content in question is of equivalent quality in both languages. The challenge is a major one. ... For French to perform the role it deserves on the federal web, under the existing statutes and regulations, and in order for it to meet the expectations of citizens and federal workers, the Canadian government must show leadership and provide major funding.”

CEFRIO, *Improving Linguistic Duality in Canada's Digital Universe*, 29 November 2011, pp. 8-9.

CONCLUSION

The new digital world permeating our modern societies brings with it new imperatives: speed, versatility, accessibility. This world is constantly evolving. To ensure full compliance with official language requirements, it is important for institutions to observe the principles of the “virtuous circle,” as outlined by the Commissioner of Official Languages.

For quite a few federal institutions, their use of Web 2.0 tools is in its infancy. A number of them are being innovative and are aware of the importance of giving both official languages a major role in how these new tools are developed, used and promoted. Numerous good practices in several respects have been developed. To encourage exemplary behaviours in all federal institutions, it is important to share them. This means encouraging a change in culture so that promoting linguistic duality becomes a reflex, for both the federal government and the private sector.

For official language minority communities, new technologies present enormous potential in a number of ways. They reduce isolation. They bring communities in direct contact with federal institutions and present a channel for receiving federal government services in the official language of their choice, at their convenience and in the comfort of their own homes. They support community vitality in a number of areas, including education, arts and culture and community media. They give children attending minority schools in remote areas access to specialized distance education courses. Some students are even given laptops and tablets to use in the classroom. They allow communities to see and hear each other, and to see their realities widely reflected. They are a major driver for promoting linguistic duality. They promote exchanges within Canadian society. They stimulate economic development.

The Senate Committee report has shown that a number of challenges must be overcome to ensure that both official languages take their rightful place. These challenges involve:

- the relevance, time constraints and accessibility of information;
- the appropriate use of platforms;
- the framework for using these platforms;
- the place of French in a digital world still dominated by English;
- the allocation of appropriate resources – financial, human and translation;
- the desired scope for engaging in Web 2.0 activities;
- the planning required, from design to monitoring;
- the support available for federal programs;
- the resources required to support capacity building and maintenance in official language minority communities ;
- the taking of positive measures to encourage the creation of French-language content; and
- the importance of reflecting community realities and promoting linguistic duality.

With Web 3.0 almost upon us, it is critically important to provide Canadians with the tools to actively participate in the digital economy and online activities in their language of choice. Consequently, the Senate Committee calls on the federal government to take note of the findings in this report and to take action on four fronts:

- ▣ **First, accessibility is key.** Universal, adequate and affordable access to broadband Internet and digital networks must be provided across the country. Phone companies and Internet service providers were in fact given permission about 12 years ago to charge a bit more for existing Internet services in major cities in order to be better able to provide Internet access in regional areas. However, the evidence shows that this never occurred and that a digital divide persists in Canada, from both a technical and socio-economic perspective, and that it varies by region, income and age. Ongoing support is also needed for innovative projects in these areas in official language minority communities, which is consistent with the obligations set out in Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.
- ▣ **Second, online services and communications must be made available based on the principle of substantive equality of both official languages.** It must be acknowledged that French continues to be underutilized in the new digital world. Developing content in this language is important to expand its presence on the Internet, in new media and in social media. This takes the cooperation of key federal departments, the private sector and Francophone and Acadian communities. This content must reflect the realities of these communities.

- ▣ **Third, young people are the most avid users of new communication tools and are critical to the development of official language minority communities.** The federal government needs to support the development of these communities in the digital world. This means supporting innovative projects for fostering the development and use of social media and mobile applications. This also means providing long-term support for building the capacity of these communities to use the Internet, new media and social media. This also means recognizing the special needs of minority schools, community media and the arts and culture sector in terms of support for new technologies.

- ▣ **Fourth, federal institutions engaging in Web 2.0 activities must commit to respecting certain principles stemming from Parts IV, V and VII of the *Official Languages Act*.** The federal government must conduct formal research on how official languages figure into the Government of Canada's use of social media (e.g., Twitter feeds, Facebook pages, YouTube accounts) and undertake to share its findings with all federal institutions as well as the Senate Committee. It must commit to sharing good practices, particularly those outlined in this report.

Only once these measures are taken seriously will Anglophone and Francophone Canadians be able to truly harness the full potential of new technologies and Web 2.0 tools. Ultimately this world, which encourages collaboration and direct participation, belongs to them. A clear commitment by the federal government to respect the language rights of Canadians, regardless of where they live or any special needs they may have, can only bode well for long-term success.

RECOMMENDATION 1

That Industry Canada and the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission, together with the private sector and in consultation with official language minority communities:

- (a) act immediately to ensure that all Canadians have universal, adequate and affordable access to broadband Internet and digital networks; and**
- (b) provide ongoing support to innovative projects for developing and maintaining broadband Internet and digital network infrastructure in Anglophone and Francophone minority communities.**

RECOMMENDATION 2

That Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and federal arts and culture institutions, together with the private sector and in consultation with Francophone minority communities:

- (a) provide ongoing support for the development of French-language content on the Internet, in new media and in social media; and**
- (b) ensure that this content reflects the realities of Francophone minority communities.**

RECOMMENDATION 3

That Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and federal arts and culture institutions, together with the private sector and in consultation with official language minority communities, provide ongoing support to develop new technologies in Anglophone and Francophone minority communities, particularly in the following areas:

- (a) minority schools;**
- (b) youth initiatives;**
- (c) community media; and**
- (d) arts and culture.**

RECOMMENDATION 4

That Canadian Heritage, Industry Canada and federal arts and culture institutions, together with the private sector and in consultation with Francophone minority communities:

- (a) support innovative projects involving the development and use of social media and mobile applications in Anglophone and Francophone minority communities that allow young people to discover, thrive and grow up in their communities and to do so naturally, in their language, with their friends, families and social networks; and**
- (b) provide ongoing support to Anglophone and Francophone minority communities for building their capacity to use the Internet, new media and social media.**

RECOMMENDATION 5

That all federal institutions engaged in Web 2.0 activities:

- (a) comply with Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat policies, rules and directives regarding official language requirements; and**
- (b) establish an appropriate official language governance structure, from understanding obligations to monitoring results, that includes measures to:**
 - ensure that information is published simultaneously in both official languages;**
 - respect equality of services in both official languages, ensuring that services are of equal quality;**
 - actively promote participation in English and French in all platforms used;**
 - encourage employees to make use of internal collaboration tools in the official language of their choice.**
 - take positive measures to directly engage Anglophone and Francophone minority communities; and**
 - take positive measures to promote linguistic duality within Canadian society.**

RECOMMENDATION 6

That the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat:

- (a) conduct formal research on how official languages figure into the Government of Canada's use of social media and share its findings with all federal institutions as well as the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages; and**
- (b) share good practices with all federal institutions, especially those practices presented in this report.**

B. Canada

Introduction

Though it was among the first nations in the world to provide widespread, retail broadband service, Canada's recent broadband development has lagged behind other developed nations. Canada's broadband penetration rates are often lauded, but the country is a poor performer on price and speed and a declining performer in penetration. Canada also faces an urban-rural broadband coverage gap. The Canadian broadband industry is relatively consolidated, and both cable and DSL providers have only recently started to deploy wireless and direct-fiber broadband infrastructure. 3G wireless penetration is substantially weaker than fixed line penetration. Recently, Canada's regulatory bodies have pushed for deregulation of the broadband market in the hopes of promoting a more efficient and affordable broadband market.

Market highlights

Overall, 64.0% of households in Canada have broadband access.*

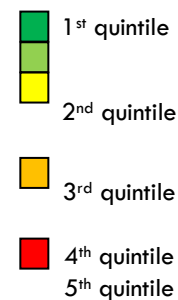
	Fiber/LAN	Cable	DSL	Other	Overall**
Subscriptions per 100 people***	0.0	15.6	13.0	0.4	29.0

Penetration metrics	Rank amongst OECD 30 countries	Speed metrics	Rank amongst OECD 30 countries	Price metrics	Rank amongst OECD 30 countries
Penetration per 100, OECD	10	Maximum advertised speed, OECD	17	Price low speeds, combined	17
Household penetration, OECD	7	Average advertised speed, OECD	25	Price med speeds, combined	18
3G penetration, Telegeography	26	Average speed, Akamai	13	Price high speeds, combined	20
Wi-Fi hotspots per 100,000, Jiwire	20	Median download, speedtest.net	15	Price very high speeds, combined	18

Note: Details in Part 3

Source : OCED, TeleGeography, Jiwire, speedtest.net, Akamai, Point Topic, Berkman Center analysis

Median upload, speedtest.net	12
Median latency, speedtest.net	15
90% download, speedtest.net	22
90% upload, speedtest.net	19



* OECD Broadband Portal, Table 2a, from "Communications Monitoring Report" published by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC).

** Does not include 3G Wireless. Since subscriptions are shared within a household, this number will never be 100.

*** OECD Broadband Portal, Table 1d, OECD estimation based on company reporting, as of 2008.

Source: The Berkman Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, *Next Generation Connectivity: A review of broadband Internet transitions and policy from around the world*, February 2010, p. 247.

Name of organization and spokesperson	Date
Service Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Cheryl Fisher, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizen Service Branch ▪ Julie Lalonde-Goldenberg, Director General, Interdepartmental Partnerships and Service Offerings, Citizen Service Branch 	2011.10.03
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anne Duguay, Director General, Workplace Effectiveness and Communities, Human Resources Services Branch 	
Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Graham Fraser, Commissioner of Official Languages 	2011.10.24
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ghislaine Charlebois, Assistant Commissioner, Compliance Assurance Branch 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lise Cloutier, Assistant Commissioner, Corporate Management 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Johane Tremblay, General Counsel, Legal Affairs Branch ▪ Robin Cantin, Director, Strategic Communications and Production 	
Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Honourable Tony Clement, P.C., M.P., President of the Treasury Board 	2011.10.27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Corinne Charette, Chief Information Officer of the Government of Canada 	2011.10.27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marc Tremblay, Executive Director, Official Languages Centre of Excellence, Office of the Chief Human Resources Officer 	2011.10.31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Mimi Lepage, Executive Director, Information and Privacy Policy 	2011.10.27
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Daphne Meredith, Chief Human Resources Officer 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sue Lajoie, Senior Director, Community and Collaboration 	2011.10.31
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Ryan Androsoff, Senior Policy Advisor, Web 2.0, Community and Collaboration 	

Name of organization and spokesperson	Date
Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne du Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Diane Côté, Director of Government and Community Relations 	2011.11.14
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marie-France Kenny, President 	2012.04.23
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Serge Quinty, Director of Communications 	2011.11.14 2012.04.23
Quebec Community Groups Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Sylvia Martin-Laforge, Director General ▪ Stephen Thompson, Director of Policy, Research and Public Affairs 	2011.11.14
Canadian Heritage <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The Honourable James Moore, P.C., M.P., Minister of Canadian Heritage and Official Languages 	2011.11.17
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Hubert Lussier, Acting Assistant Deputy Minister, Citizenship and Heritage 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Amanda Cliff, Director General, Broadcasting and Digital Communications Branch 	
As Individuals <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guy Chiasson, Researcher ▪ Jean Quirion, Researcher ▪ Marc Charron, Researcher 	2011.11.21
CEFRIO (Centre for the support of organizational innovation), through IT <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jacqueline Dubé, President and CEO ▪ Réjean Roy, General Counsel 	2011.11.28
Université de Moncton <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anne Robineau, Researcher, Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities 	2011.12.12
National Film Board of Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Deborah Drisdell, Director General, Accessibility and Digital Enterprises 	2012.02.27

Name of organization and spokesperson	Date
Passport Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Lisa Pezzack, Acting Director General, Legislation and International Relations Bureau 	
Environment Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ George Enei, Assistant Deputy Minister and Chief Information Officer, Corporate Services Branch 	
Canada Border Services Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Georges Rioux, Vice-President, Corporate Affairs Branch 	
Parks Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Larry Ostola, Vice-President, Heritage Conservation and Commemoration Directorate 	
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ François Morrissette, Director, Corporate Web, Strategic Communications and Stakeholder Relations, Public Affairs and Stakeholder Relations Branch 	2012.03.05
Health Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jane Hazel, Acting Senior Director General, Public Affairs, Consultation and Communications Branch 	
Citizenship and Immigration Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Janice Keenan, Director, e-Communications 	
National Capital Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guy Laflamme, Senior Vice-President, Capital Experience, Communications and Marketing 	
Royal Canadian Mounted Police <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Tim Cogan, Chief Superintendent, Director General, National Communications Services 	
Public Health Agency of Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Louise de Jourdan, Acting Director General, Communications Directorate 	

Name of organization and spokesperson	Date
Veterans Affairs Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Faith McIntyre, Director, Ste. Anne's Hospital Transfer Project, Corporate Services Branch 	
Bank of Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Glen Nichols, Deputy Chief, Communications Department 	
Transport Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Dan Dugas, Director General, Communications and Marketing 	
Foreign Affairs and International Trade Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yan Michaud, Director, E-Communications, Communications Products and Services Division 	
National Defence <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marc Raider, Director General, Marketing 	2012.03.12
Natural Resources Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Joanne Frappier, Acting Director General, Planning, Operations and Information Branch, National Capital Region, Canadian Forest Service 	
Statistics Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Gabrielle Beaudoin, Director General, Communications Division 	
Canada Revenue Agency <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Louise Dorval, Director General, Ministerial Services and Operations Directorate, Public Affairs Branch 	
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Scott Hutton, Executive Director, Broadcasting ▪ Paulette Leclair, Director, Public Affairs ▪ Véronique Lehoux, Legal Counsel 	
CBC/Radio-Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Patricia Pleszczynska, General Manager, Program Director, Regional Services ▪ Diane Laflamme, Chief of Planning, Regional Services, French Services 	

Name of organization and spokesperson	Date
Public Service Commission <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Anne-Marie Robinson, President ▪ Hélène Laurendeau, Senior Vice-President, Policy Branch ▪ Gerry Thom, Vice-President, Staffing and Assessment Services 	2012.04.02
Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Louis Tétrault, Executive Director 	
Public Works and Government Services Canada <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Donna Achimov, Chief Executive Officer, Translation Bureau ▪ Donald Barabé, Vice-President, Professional Services, Translation Bureau ▪ Marc Olivier, Manager, Linguistic Services Division, Translation Bureau 	2012.04.30
Communications Community Office <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Monique Lebel-Ducharme, Chair ▪ Stéphanie Hébert, Executive Director, Strategic Communications and Parliamentary Relations, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat 	
Association de la presse francophone <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Francis Potié, Executive Director 	2012.05.07
Alliance des radios communautaires <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Simon Forgues, Development and Communications Officer 	
Quebec Community Newspapers Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Richard Tardif, Executive Director 	
English-Language Arts Network <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Guy Rodgers, Executive Director ▪ Geoff Agombar, Office Manager 	2012.05.14
Quebec English-language Production Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Kirwan Cox, Researcher 	
Association canadienne d'éducation de langue française <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yves Saint-Maurice, President ▪ Richard Lacombe, Executive Director 	
Fédération nationale des conseils scolaires francophones <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roger Paul, Executive Director 	

Name of organization and spokesperson	Date
Hudson St-Lazare Gazette <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Jim Duff, Editor ▪ Louise Craig, Publisher 	2012.05.28
Quebec English School Boards Association <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Franck Verrillo, Vice-President ▪ David Birnbaum, Executive Director 	
LEARN Quebec <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Michael Canuel, Chief Executive Officer ▪ Suzanne Longpré, Director, Communications and Public Relations 	
Fédération culturelle canadienne-française <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Marie-Claude Doucet, President ▪ Éric Dubeau, Executive Director ▪ Simone Saint-Pierre, Chief of Communications 	2012.06.04
Collège Éducacentre <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Yvon Laberge, Executive Director 	
Centre d'apprentissage du Haut-Madawaska <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Roberto Gauvin, Director 	
As an individual <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Erin O'Halloran, Information Specialist, CloudScout Information Services 	2012.06.18

Association of Manitoba Bilingual Municipalities, *Presentation to the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages – Examination on the use of the Internet*, not dated.

C@HM, PowerPoint Presentation, Senate Committee and Private Legislation Directorate, 2 June 2012.

CEFRIO, *Improving Linguistic Duality in Canada's Digital Universe*, Final report presented by CEFRIO to Senate Standing Committee on Official Languages in connection with its study on the use of the Internet, new media, social media and respect for the language rights of Canadians, 29 November 2011.

Collège Éducacentre, PowerPoint Presentation, *Study on the use of the Internet and social media in education*, 4 June 2012.

Commissioner of Official Languages for New Brunswick, *Letter to the Committee Clerk*, 28 February 2012 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

Erin O'Halloran, *Excerpts – Legal Language Parameters & Social Media: A New Brunswick Case Study*, 4 April 2011.

Guy Chiasson, Jean Quirion, Marc Charron and Judith Lefebvre, *Le Web comme outil pour le renforcement de la gouvernance des communautés francophones minoritaires*, Research paper presented to the Canadian Institute for Research on Linguistic Minorities, 23 August 2007 [AVAILABLE IN FRENCH ONLY].

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LEARN Quebec, *Presentation May 28th, 2012 to the Senate Committee on Official Languages – Study on the Use of Internet and Social Media*, not dated.

Memo sent to the members of the Standing Senate Committee on Official Languages, *Reference Material – Study on the use of the Internet, new media and social media and respect for Canadians' language rights – ANEL*, 6 February 2012.

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