

**media and Internet literacy....
the new ABCs**



Media Awareness Network

Annual Report

2000-2001

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1500 Merivale Road, 3rd Floor, Ottawa, Ontario K2E 6Z5
Tel: (613) 224-7721 Fax: (613) 224-1958
info@media-awareness.ca
www.media-awareness.ca

April 2001

Letter from the CHAIR

One of the most recent surveys on Internet use, conducted by the Ipsos-Reid organization, tells us that 75 per cent of Canadians say the Internet has had “a significant impact on their lives in a variety of areas, affecting learning, communication and entertainment.”

The exponential growth and influence of this new medium of communication, culture and commerce is also reflected in the scope and nature of the activities of the Media Awareness Network over the past year. As this unique organization celebrates its fifth birthday, MNet can be justly proud of its achievements.

When the Canadian government was looking for an underpinning for its new policy to encourage safe, wise and responsible use of the Internet, it came to the Media Awareness Network. MNet’s public education program, *Web Awareness Canada*, was identified as a “foundation” upon which the government could build effective solutions in its five-point strategy. The government opted for an approach to educate Canadians about illegal and offensive content, and to empower them to take action in their homes by using the tools developed by MNet, as they increasingly integrate the Internet into their daily affairs.

MNet’s work continues to receive critical acclaim and recognition. In November 2000, we were honoured with NAWeb’s Best of the Web Award, in the category for Best Educational Web Site, K-12. NAWeb recognizes outstanding achievement in the field of Web-based education. This is our fourth consecutive award from this organization.

MNet’s early leadership in the field of Internet literacy was recognized in April 2001, when we were awarded the coveted CANARIE IWAY Award. The award recognizes MNet’s innovative and creative contribution to the development of Canada’s information society, through its public education program *Web Awareness Canada*. We were very pleased that the nomination for this award came from Stan Skrzyszewski, President of the Canadian Library Association, and Françoise Bertrand, Chair of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

In terms of the internal growth and development of the organization, it has been another non-stop year, but then, what else is new at MNet?

The Board of Directors and staff spent considerable time during 2000

undertaking an intensive examination of MNet from philosophical, strategic and operational points of view. The result is a vision document that articulates our mission, as well as goals for the next few years, and provides a guide for management and staff in the daily operation of the organization.

The year 2000 also saw a number of very positive developments in the funding of MNet's work. The public benefits that have accrued to us from CanWest Global's purchase of WIC Western International Communications, CTV's acquisition of NetStar, and the BCE-CTV purchase have resulted in funding contributions totalling \$1.45 million over seven years. These funds provide a strong addition to our core Gold sponsorships from Bell Canada, Rogers Cable and Shaw Communications. We were also delighted this past year to welcome CHUM Television as a Silver Sponsor, and A&E Television Networks and AOL Canada as Bronze Sponsors.

From a financial perspective, the Media Awareness Network is, for the first time in its existence, facing a period of relatively stable financing. This will provide a foundation upon which the organization can evolve, and allow it to plan for future growth.

We continue to benefit from the contributions of an outstanding Board of Directors, who share their expertise on an on-going basis, providing forward

thinking, leadership and commitment to the development of the organization. We are also fortunate to have an exceptional team in the management and staff of the Media Awareness Network, individuals who bring unparalleled energy, dedication and enthusiasm to their work.

It's been my privilege this past year to work with a group of wonderful Canadians, and to serve as Chair of this gem of an organization.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Al MacKay', with a stylized, cursive script.

Al MacKay, Chair
Media Awareness Network
Ottawa, April 2001

PROFILE

The Media Awareness Network is a non-profit Canadian organization that was incorporated in 1996. In 1999, MNet became a registered charity.

The work of MNet is based on the premise that to be functionally literate in the world today, young people need lifelong critical thinking skills to “read” all the messages that are informing, entertaining, and selling to them daily. This involves learning how to examine the techniques, technologies and institutions that are involved in media production, developing the ability to critically analyze media messages, and recognizing the role that audiences play in making meaning from those messages. These media literacy skills are at the heart of a healthy, informed democracy, and have become increasingly important in today's interactive and rapidly changing media environment.

The Media Awareness Network maintains one of the largest and most successful educational Web sites in Canada. It offers, in both official languages, uniquely Canadian teaching resources, community programs, information, and discussion forums – all pertaining to the media in our society. MNet's educational programs support core curricula in every province of Canada. Its community programs are designed to enhance programming offered by parent and youth-serving organizations.

MNet's keynote presentations, professional development workshops and information sessions are in high demand in the education, library and community sectors across Canada.

MNet's educational resources examine a wide range of media, including television, films, video games, popular music, and the Internet, and media-related topics such as gender portrayal, protection of personal privacy, marketing to children, media violence, portrayal of diversity in the media, and the authentication of online information.

MNet's programs aim to be balanced and unbiased, and of high quality. Designed to educate, not advocate, they address areas of shared and timely interest to Canadians across many different communities – parents, teachers, librarians, health and community workers, government and industry leaders – all of whom have a vested interest in supporting healthy cultural and social environments within which children can learn about the world and develop their beliefs and values.

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

MISSION

The mission of the Media Awareness Network is to support and encourage media education, and its widest possible integration into Canadian schools, homes, and communities. Our aim is to encourage critical thinking about media information and communications technologies, and to raise public awareness about the media's influences on children and young people.



Executing the MISSION

The Media Awareness Network has established the following goals:

Development of media education resources: Through its Web site, MNet's goal is to produce and distribute high-quality, balanced and relevant media education resources and programs for use by adults who are working with, or caring for, children and young people. Primarily, this means educators, parents and caregivers, public librarians, and community leaders whose organizations serve children and young people.

Providing leadership: MNet is committed to sharing its expertise and knowledge with its user groups, and contributing to public policy and dialogue in Canada on the power of the media in the lives of children and young people.

Expanding our reach: MNet's communications strategy is designed to build broad public interest in, and support for, our mission of helping young Canadians to become media literate; to promote and encourage the widest possible use of MNet's resources by education, library and community user groups; and, to encourage parents, through the mass media and other intermediaries, to become involved in helping their children become media literate.

Ensuring good management: MNet is committed to managing its human and financial resources effectively and efficiently, and to achieving recognition for its funders, who are contributing to a valuable public education program.

Report from the CO-DIRECTORS

Speaking both as Industry Minister and as a parent, I can't overstate the importance of making sure our kids harness the incredible learning potential of the Internet without being subject to potentially harmful content. Industry Canada is proud to support MNet's work in promoting and supporting safe, wise and responsible Internet use across Canada.

The Hon. Brian Tobin,
Minister of Industry
Government of Canada

It is challenging to be at the front of the field in technology. MNet has accomplished this daunting task in the rapidly changing, and ever-expanding Internet.

William Collins, President
Ottawa Centre for Research
and Innovation

MNet's foresight, energy and talent have helped develop public awareness and public action to ensure that the Internet is not just information and wires, but rather a contributor to a healthy society.

Stan Skrzyszewski, President
Canadian Library Association

Highlights

The past year has been one of unprecedented success and new financial stability for the Media Awareness Network/ Réseau Éducation-Médias (MNet). Now completing our fifth year of operation, we are beginning to realize our goal of establishing a sustainable Canadian institution for media education.

Our comprehensive program on children and the Internet, *Web Awareness Canada/La toile et les jeunes*, has been the main focus of MNet's activities this past year, and has situated our organization as a world leader in Internet education. The *Web Awareness Canada* program was identified as the foundation upon which the Government of Canada has built *The Canadian Strategy to Promote Safe, Wise and Responsible Internet Use*.

This has been a pivotal year in our fundraising efforts. We have been greatly assisted in our undertakings this year by the CRTC, which has encouraged the involvement of Canada's telecommunications, cable and broadcasting companies in MNet's work, by declaring financial support of our organization to be a qualifying public benefit in licence renewals and broadcast acquisitions.

Staff and Board were actively engaged in a planning process in the past year, examining organizational strengths, pinpointing areas for change and creating a shared vision for the future of the organization. The outcome of this exercise is a document entitled *A Strategic Direction for 2001 – 2002*, which expresses our mission, values and goals, and defines a two-year operational plan.

Je tente de faire le tour de l'ensemble du site et ce que j'y trouve m'intéresse grandement. Je pense que cela me sera très utile pour alimenter le programme d'activités sur l'influence des médias que j'anime avec les élèves du secondaire V de ma polyvalente.

Sandra Brisson
Psychoéducatrice
Chicoutimi, Québec

The Media Awareness Network leads the country in providing excellent support for safe and wise use of the Internet.

Larry Booi, President
Alberta Teachers' Association

This is a great site. As a media educator in the UK, I wish we had equivalent resources here.

John Savage, media educator
Swindon College, U.K.

Every pre-service teacher should attend this Web Awareness Canada presentation.

Carolyn Boyd
Pre-service teacher
University of Ottawa

We have increased our staff this past year, addressing the need to strengthen the French-language side of our operations, and in response to the growing demand for our services.

MNet's new Web site

We are mid-way through a full redesign of our Web site. The redesign includes the updating of all information, enhanced site aesthetics and architecture, the implementation of new navigation and search tools, increased interactivity and an infrastructure which will facilitate efficient site maintenance. MNet's two Web sites – on media education and on Web awareness – will be combined to capitalize on the branding strength of one URL – <www.media-awareness.ca>. MNet's new site will be launched in the fall/winter of 2001.

An Intranet discussion forum has been created, to give Canadians the opportunity to share experiences, resources and ideas on media and Internet literacy. It will be launched this spring with two Web awareness discussion groups – one for librarians and one for educators.

Web Awareness Canada

MNet has continued to develop and expand its *Web Awareness Canada/La toile et les jeunes* program, which aims to provide adults with information and resources to help children become safe, wise and responsible Internet users. In the past year, the *Web Awareness Canada* program was introduced across the country, with some spectacular results.

The Canadian Library Association (CLA) and the Media Awareness Network have formed a partnership to produce and deliver the library component of the *Web Awareness Canada* program. Under this agreement, MNet is producing the presentation tools that will support the delivery of a *Web Awareness* public education program through public libraries across Canada.

I thoroughly enjoyed this learning opportunity. You are doing a first-class job in promoting public awareness to parents, teachers and librarians. Keep up the terrific work you are doing in this pioneering field.

Gloria Dingwall, Librarian
Calgary Public Library

We have been following with great interest the efforts of MNet in promoting online safety, particularly MNet's recent public opinion research initiatives.

Carmee Lim, Chairperson
Parents Advisory Group for the Internet (PAGI), Singapore

MNet's workshops will help teachers and students better understand the Web environment so that they can make safe decisions on handling Internet information and avoid undesirable online situations.

The Hon. Lyle Oberg
Minister of Learning
Government of Alberta

There is no one stateside who has done the type of extensive research and developed programs on the basis of such research as MNet has done.

Ferdi Serim, Director
Online Internet Institute
Santa Fe, New Mexico

In the past year, for the first time, the Media Awareness Network offered licences for three professional development workshops (*Safe Passage*, *Kids for Sale*, and *Fact or Folly*) to school boards and ministries of education. The ministries of education in Alberta, New Brunswick, Nova Scotia and the Yukon have purchased province-wide licences for use of the workshops, and over 50 licences have been purchased by individual schools and school boards in other provinces.

The Media Awareness Network team made almost 100 *Web Awareness* presentations in the past 12 months, reaching over 7,000 Canadian educators, parents and public librarians on the issues emerging as young people go online.

Research on young people's use of the Internet

In the summer of 2000, following the March 2000 release of *Canada's Children In A Wired World: The Parents' View*, MNet undertook a second phase of research, with funding from the Government of Canada. Environics Research Group was contracted to conduct focus group sessions with young Canadians and parents, to identify key issues to be included in a 2001 school-based survey and to clarify the parent survey findings. These focus group sessions were conducted in Montreal and Toronto.

This qualitative research provided insightful information for *Young Canadians in a Wired World*, a nation-wide school-based survey of over 6,000 Canadian students, which took place during March 2001. The goal of this massive research project was to assess the overall Internet use patterns of young Canadians, determine the extent to which they engage in risky activities online, and ascertain the strategies they have developed to deal with illegal and other inappropriate content, interactions with strangers, and invasions of their personal privacy online. The findings from this student survey will be released during the upcoming year.

Every librarian in public service needs to know these issues.

Julie McKenna
Regina Public Library

Bell Canada is not only committed to connecting Canadians to the Internet, but to supporting initiatives that use the Internet to help Canadians in inspiring and innovative ways. This is why I am pleased that Bell Canada supports the pioneering work of the Media Awareness Network.

Jean C. Monty
Chairman and CEO
BCE Inc.

Je viens tout juste de découvrir votre site. Quelle petite merveille. J'enseigne un cours à la Faculté d'éducation à l'Université d'Ottawa cet automne et votre site sera dans ma liste de références électroniques dans mon plan de cours.

Diane Lavoie
Consultante en éducation
Université d'Ottawa

Establishing MNet's powerful partnerships with educators and librarians has been no small victory, especially when one considers that this work has been done by a small and very modestly funded not-for-profit organization.

Françoise Bertrand
Former Chair
Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission

Launch of the Government of Canada's *Strategy to Promote Safe, Wise and Responsible Internet Use*

Canadians are using the Internet in greater and greater numbers, and this is especially true of young people. In response to this growth, and the accompanying concerns about offensive and illegal content, the Government of Canada launched a multi-pronged initiative, *Canada's Strategy to Promote Safe, Wise and Responsible Internet Use*. The Media Awareness Network was identified as the government's key partner in both the research and public education components of this strategy, a recognition of our expertise and public leadership on these issues.

Increased public profile

MNet's national and international visibility increased this past year, due to a more aggressive communications plan and the media's high interest in media violence, video games and children's use of the Internet. Now recognized as the Canadian experts on these topics, MNet staff were interviewed for stories appearing in the Ottawa Citizen, The Edmonton Journal, The Globe and Mail, the National Post, Today's Parent, Chatelaine, Canadian Press, the Southam chain of newspapers, and on CBC Radio, CTV, and many local print and television outlets.

A strategic decision this past year was to use television to reach Canadian parents. With the help of CTV's Ottawa station, CJOH, MNet created two television Public Service Announcements (PSAs) – *Take a minute...* and *Prenez un instant...* These two PSAs were aired throughout the year by over a dozen Canadian broadcasters, cablecasters and specialty channels including CanWest Global, Rogers Cable, Shaw Communications, CTV, CHUM, Teletoon/Télétoon, Videon and Radio-Canada. The 30-second spots urged parents to "take a minute" to involve themselves in their children's online activities and promoted <www.media-awareness.ca>

Just wanted to thank you for this Web site! We got the Internet in our home a year ago and it's been an enigma to myself and my husband. Then I saw your ad on TV and came to your Web site. In less than 24 hours, I have called up the history of where my child has been, drawn up an online agreement and feel armed with information and knowledge. So many parents feel a little out at sea with the Net, but now I feel like it's something that I can monitor and control, rather than it controlling us!

J.A. Torrens, parent
Nova Scotia

The Web Awareness Canada program has been an unqualified success. The foresight, energy and talent of the Media Awareness Network is helping to ensure that the Internet becomes a key contributor to a healthy civic society.

Andrew Bjerring, President
CANARIE

Rogers@Home is strongly committed to Internet safety and proudly supports MNet's work in Internet literacy.

John Tory
President and CEO
Rogers Cable Inc.

as the place for parents to go for information and guidance on children's use of the Internet.

MNet's sponsors also helped to raise our public profile. Rogers Cable produced and widely distributed a brochure on Internet safety, highlighting the work of the Media Awareness Network. At the federal government's Internet strategy launch in February, the Canadian Cable Television Association unveiled two new television PSAs promoting Internet education and MNet's Web site.

Strengthening the MNet team

This past year has afforded the opportunity to expand our staff complement and bring new resources to our staff team. Key new positions include an education specialist on the French program team and a staff person to deliver the *La toile et les jeunes* program in Québec and in francophone communities across Canada. We have also hired one staff person dedicated to delivering our library program and a full-time finance officer to handle our increasingly sophisticated financial affairs.

Memberships

MNet's membership base continues to grow. Renewals this year came from provincial teachers' associations, and we welcomed new non-profit members from universities, provincial library associations, school boards, teachers' associations and the Canadian Home and School Federation. Aliant Telecom Inc. became a Corporate Member of MNet, and Big Orbit joined in the Small Business membership category.

Awards

MNet won two prestigious awards this year, the NAWEB Best of the Web, K-12 Award for excellence in Web-based education, and the CANARIE IWAY Award for Community Service. The IWAY (short for

I am very impressed with the quality of the MNet site. This is a wonderful resource for teachers all over the world who want their students to be able to "read" media as they would anything else.

Carla Beard
webenglishteacher.com

CLA is proud to be associated with the Web Awareness Canada program. It articulates and implements an important mission – helping children and young people to acquire the knowledge and to develop the life-long critical thinking skills to be safe, wise and responsible Internet users.

Leacy O'Callaghan-O'Brien
Associate Executive Director
Canadian Library Association

Je suis webmaster du serveur pédagogique de l'Académie de Grenoble en France et nous sommes très attentifs à la sécurité sur Internet pour nos élèves. Bravo pour votre site et tout particulièrement pour vos programmes mettant en scène les "Cyber cochons".

Claude Marcel
Gestionnaire du serveur
pédagogique de l'Académie de
Grenoble
Grenoble, France

Information Highway) awards, now in their fourth year, celebrate "the exceptional achievements of visionaries in the field of advanced broadband innovation."

Fundraising

2000 was a pivotal year in our fundraising efforts.

We have been greatly assisted in our work this year by the MNet Board's active Fundraising Committee, and by substantial public benefits from three CRTC-approved broadcasting transactions. The first of these benefits came from the CanWest Global/WIC Western International Communications acquisition, which provided MNet with \$500,000 over five years (2000 to 2004). The CTV/NetStar deal identified MNet as a recipient of a public benefit of \$450,000 over five years (2000 to 2004), and the BCE/CTV acquisition established the amount of \$500,000 for MNet, over seven years (2001 to 2007).

We were as well very pleased to welcome three new corporate sponsors this year, CHUM Television, as a Silver Sponsor, and A&E Television Networks and AOL Canada as Bronze Sponsors.

These generous public benefits and new sponsorships, along with the annual sponsorships we receive from Bell Canada, Rogers @ Home, Shaw Children's Programming Initiative and CTV, have given the Media Awareness Network a stable financial base upon which to build our plans for the next five years.

New government and non-profit funding partners

We have been successful this year in establishing multi-year funding agreements with two federal government departments, Human Resources Development Canada and Canadian Heritage. These two agreements, along with the current multi-year agreement we have with Industry Canada, provide

I'm a post-grad student teacher in Western Australia who is immensely relieved at having found such a valuable resource as MNet provides. Issues such as ethnicity and the representation of race in the media are familiar to the Australian context and practically all of the lessons I have checked out so far are perfectly adaptable to the Aussie classroom.

Paul McKenzie
Student teacher
Australia

As a Web producer, I found your site invaluable for its information and great links. In particular, your information on kids and marketing has been very useful to me.

Sam Ladner
Multimedia producer
Toronto, Ontario

MNet's presentation on Internet safety for children to JRSC Elementary School staff was a huge success, and I have been asked to continue this initiative in the fall. I want to extend my thanks to you and your team on a fantastic job in the content of these presentations.

Michelle Manning
Labrador City, Newfoundland

support for the *Web Awareness Canada* program.

We were fortunate as well this past year to receive funding from CA*net Institute for the *Web Awareness Canada* program. A second year of funding has been requested from the Institute.

MNet's partnership agreement with the Canadian Library Association also provides funding to the *Web Awareness Canada* program, thanks to the financial participation of the governments of British Columbia, Alberta, Ontario and Nova Scotia, the National Library of Canada, the CLA, and Industry Canada's LibraryNet.

International recognition

Increasingly, MNet is recognized as the Canadian expert on issues pertaining to young people's use of the Internet. This past year, MNet was invited to appear before the U.S. Congress-appointed Commission on Online Child Protection and to be one of the keynote speakers at the Safe Surfing 2001 International Conference in Singapore.

The next year

In the upcoming year, we will complete our new Web site; we will extend the solid base of support that we have for *Web Awareness* with educators and public librarians, and step up our PSA campaign to reach Canadian parents; and we will begin to promote *Web Awareness Canada* in the international arena as a model for public awareness and education in this age of converging media channels.

We will address key internal management areas, including roles and responsibilities of staff, human resource policies and responsibility and decision-making authority within the organization. We will create a reserve fund and develop a long-term investment strategy for the organization.

*Toutes mes félicitations pour
votre site dont l'intérêt est
incommensurable surtout pour
les gens qui s'intéressent à
l'exploitation de l'actualité au
sein de leur classe.*

Ihoussain Hammach
Professeur
Maroc

We will begin to chart new program directions, and new partnership opportunities.

These activities reflect the fact that we now have a stable foundation on which to build our institution. We are proud of this achievement, and look forward with renewed energy to our next year of work.



Jan D'Arcy
Co-Director



Anne Taylor
Co-Director

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2000 – 2001

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2000 – 2001

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AOL Canada

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National Film Board of Canada
Queen's University, Faculty of Education
Stiles Associates, Inc.
Toronto District School Board

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Recreation
Telefilm Canada

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2000 – 2001

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Association des enseignantes et des enseignants
francophones du Nouveau-Brunswick
British Columbia Teachers' Federation
Canadian Association of Deans of Education
Canadian Association of Principals
Canadian Association of Public Libraries
Canadian Home and School Federation
Canadian Library Association
Canadian School Library Association
Canadian Teachers' Federation
Centre de ressources en éducation
aux médias (CREM)
College of Education, University of Saskatchewan
Concerned Children's Advertisers
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Library Boards Association of Nova Scotia
Mothers Against Drunk Driving (MADD)
New Brunswick Teachers' Association
Newfoundland and Labrador Teachers' Association
Niagara District School Board
Nova Scotia Provincial Library
Nova Scotia Teachers' Union
Ontario Secondary School Teachers'
Federation
Ontario Teachers' Federation
Owl Children's Trust Inc.
Peel District School Board
Prince Edward Island Teachers' Federation
Québec Provincial Association of Teachers
Saskatchewan Teachers' Federation
School of Library and Information Studies,
University of Alberta

AWARDS

2000 – 2001

NAWeb 2000 Best of the Web, K-12
November 2000

CANARIE IWAY Award for Community Service
April 2001