

Digital Media at the Crossroads (DM@X)

What's in the Future for Canadian Creators?

Eleventh Annual Conference

Location: Walter Hall, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto

February 7-8, 2025

DAY ONE: Friday, February 7, 2025

- 12:30 p.m. Registration (to register, go to: www.digitalmediaatthecrossroads.com)
- 2:00 p.m. Welcome and Introduction: Carlyne Sumner, Executive Director, DM@X, Assistant Professor and Cross-Cultural Programming Advisor at the University of Toronto's Faculty of Music
- 2:10 p.m. **The Digital Media Universe in Canada: Measuring the Revenues, the Audiences, and the Future Prospects**

The DM@X conference has commissioned a special report from Nordicity to review revenues, employment and future trends in certain sectors of the digital media universe in Canada. In this presentation, Nordicity will outline the projected future for Canadian production in the audiovisual, IDM and music sectors. including reframing our understanding of IP.

Speakers: Kristian Roberts, Managing Partner and CEO, Nordicity
Nicole Matiation, Sector Lead AV Production, Nordicity

3:15 p.m. Refreshment Break

3:30 p.m. **The Impact of AI on the Canadian Creative Sectors**

As Canada navigates the complexities of AI legislation, the creative sector finds itself at a pivotal crossroads. The rise of generative AI in creative processes presents many challenges, with existential implications for creators, storytellers, producers and the broader cultural landscape. This panel will explore what it means to use generative AI tools in a fair, ethical, and responsible manner within the screen industries. As AI becomes integral to content creation, distribution, and production, how do we establish transparency around its usage? Should AI-generated content be clearly labeled, and if so, how do we implement such standards?

What concrete steps can industry stakeholders—including producers, unions, guilds, funds, and governments—take to protect copyright, preserve creative autonomy, and safeguard authors' rights in an AI-driven landscape? The panel will explore actionable guidelines and encourage dialogue on how creators can ethically integrate AI while maintaining the integrity of their work and preserving their jobs.

Key Topics:

- ❑ Setting protections and safeguards for widespread AI usage: What levels of intervention are necessary?
- ❑ Creating transparency and labelling standards: How should the industry approach recordkeeping and AI disclosure?
- ❑ Licensing content and data banks: How can we develop consent-based models that ensure fair compensation for the use of cultural content?
- ❑ Upskilling artists: What knowledge and skills are required for creators to integrate AI into their practice responsibly?
- ❑ How can guilds, unions, and smaller creators maintain authenticity in storytelling while using AI?

- ☒ Industry-specific regulations: What policies should the entertainment sector develop to regulate AI ethically?
- ☒ Addressing bias in AI: How do we ensure AI tools remain transparent and free from bias, particularly in storytelling where representation and diversity are paramount.

Moderator: Dave Forget, Executive Director, Directors Guild of Canada

Speakers: Music: John Rowley, President, Screen Composers Guild of Canada
 Writing: Neal McDougall, Director of Policy, Writers Guild of Canada
 Production: Stephen Stohn, Chair, CMPA AI Committee

4:30 p.m. **Where the CRTC Stands with its Full Agenda**

The CRTC is in the middle of proceedings to implement the *Online Streaming Act*. The CRTC Vice-Chair Broadcasting will provide an update on where things stand.

Speaker: Nathalie Théberge, Vice-Chair, Broadcasting, CRTC

5:00 p.m. **Networking Reception**

At the conclusion of the first day of the DM@X conference, a networking reception will be held on the main level of the Faculty of Music.

DAY TWO: Saturday, February 8, 2025

8:20 a.m. Breakfast

9:00 a.m. **Online Harm: What Needs to be Done to Address This?**

The Canadian government has introduced Bill C-63 to address online harm. What level of responsibility should platforms have? How would such legislation affect freedom of expression?

Speaker: Emily Laidlaw, University of Calgary

9:15 a.m. **Competition Policy and Online Advertising**

The Competition Bureau has taken legal action against Google for anti-competitive conduct in online advertising technology services in Canada. What are the issues involved? Given the immense power of social media platforms, are there concerns over their impact on the creative sector?

Speaker: Michael Caldecott, McCarthy Tétrault LLP

9:30 a.m. **Social Financing of Arts and Media: New Developments**

Investment groups are increasingly providing funding for arts and media projects. Can this be a good and stable source of cultural project funding? What are the problems or pitfalls?

Speaker: Lorena Escandon, Graduate Program Director, Master of Digital Media, TMU

9:45 a.m. **Interoperability: The Benefits and the Challenges**

What are the challenges in increasing interoperability in the arts sector, to the benefit of creators and audiences? Should there be federal standards? What creator tools are available? How can one enhance the user experience?

Speaker: Catherine Moore, Adjunct Professor, Faculty of Music, University of Toronto

10:00 a.m. **Digital and Media Literacy: The Challenge**

Digital and media literacy has emerged as a key policy issue, particularly with regard to young people. What efforts are under way to address this matter?

Speaker: Kathryn Ann Hill, Executive Director, Mediasmarts.ca

10:15 a.m. **What is the Future for Canadian Music?**

Canadian music has long relied on Canadian radio stations to play and promote their songs. But with listeners moving to Spotify and YouTube, should there be new policies to develop and support Canadian music? What can be done?

Speaker: Howard Law, MediaPolicy.ca

10:30 a.m. Refreshment Break

10:45 a.m. **Supporting Equity Deserving Groups Through the Regulatory System**

Following Phase 1 consultations by the CRTC on base contributions under the new *Online Streaming Act*, the Commission issued a decision last June directing that a portion of streamer base contributions should go to diversity and inclusion funds, and mandated a 0.5% “allocation to any or a combination of the Black Screen Office (BSO) Fund, the Canadian Independent Screen Fund for BPOC creators (CISF), and the Broadcasting Accessibility Fund” (BAF). Community members have identified a number of issues arising from the CRTC decision to leave how the allocation will be directed entirely up to the discretion of the streamers. What is at stake and what should the CRTC be doing as it moves forward in developing the new regulatory framework?

Speakers: Sally Lee, Executive Director, Canadian Independent Screen Fund for BPOC Creators (CISF)

Richard Cavanaugh, Executive Director, Broadcasting Accessibility Fund (BAF)

Tonya Williams, Founder and Executive Director, Reelworld Screen Institute

11:30 a.m. **Evaluating Canadian Screen Media Engagement and Impact - A Roundtable**

Millions of dollars are invested into Canadian screen media investment. yet outside of viewing numbers, we don't adequately measure the ways that content and the context of viewing engages and impacts audiences. Nor do we gather recognition benchmarks such as awards, festivals and earned media. Producers, distributors and funders need tools to represent the impacts of diverse Canadian content on audience segments. This panel discusses what, why and how to measure, how to tailor measurement to genre and demographics, and efforts underway to strengthen measurement systems and why sophisticated measurement tools will be critical in the context of a changing political landscape, platforms, regulation and markets.

Moderator: Sara Diamond, University Research Chair, OCAD U

Panelists: Moyra Rodger, Magnify Digital, creator of ScreenMiner

Dr. Derrick Gray, Chief Research & Operations Officer, Numeris

Francesca Accinelli, Senior Vice President, Program Strategy and Industry Development, Telefilm Canada

Richard Koo, VP Analytics and Strategic Insights, CMF

12:15 pm. **Networking Break and Buffet Luncheon** (provided)

Registrants will be assigned randomly to tables in a number of breakout rooms. Facilitators at each table will animate the discussion and will seek views on a variety of policy questions.

1:30 p.m. **The Future of Canadian Private Broadcasting**

Canadian private broadcasters and cable operators are facing ominous economics. Audiences and revenue is moving to foreign-controlled platforms. Cable subscriptions have declined. What is the future for Canadian private broadcasting?

Speaker: Richard Stursberg, Former President, PEN Canada

1:45 p.m. **The Future of the CBC**

Canada's national public broadcaster is at a crossroads. With a new government in prospect, the future of the CBC will be the subject of discussion.

Speaker: Tara Henley, Canadian writer and broadcaster

2:00 p.m. **Digital Journalism Freelancing**

Digital journalism, also known as netizen journalism or online journalism, is a contemporary form of journalism where editorial content is distributed via the Internet, as opposed to publishing via print or broadcast. The Internet has also given rise to more participation by people who are not normally journalists. What is the impact of these changes?

Moderator: Lisa Henderson, Dean, Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Western University

Speakers: Angela Misri, Assistant Professor, The Creative School, TMU

Chris Arsenault, Chair, Master of Media in Journalism and Communications Program (MMJC), Faculty of Information and Media Studies, Western University

2:35 p.m. **Defining and Supporting Canadian Programs: New Developments**

On March 31, 2025, the CRTC will commence a public hearing into how the term "Canadian program" should be defined and how Cancon should be supported by broadcasters, including streamers. The issues to be discussed will be surveyed by this expert panel, which previously analyzed the existing Cancon rules in a widely seen DM@X-tra session.

Speakers: Douglas Barrett, Adjunct Professor, Arts, Media & Entertainment MBA Program, Schulich School of Business, York University

Erin Finlay, Stohn Hay Cafazzo Heim Finlay LLP

3:15 p.m. Refreshment Break

3:30 p.m. **The Way Forward for Indigenous Content Creation and Distribution**

How will the business models, regulatory, policy and creative developments that are currently impacting the media universe affect the institutions, funding strategies and creative ambitions for Indigenous media?

Moderator: Stephanie Willsey - McCarthy Tetrault LLP

Speakers: Jennifer Podemski - Actor, Producer, Writer, Director

Mike Omelus, Executive Director of Content and Strategy, APTN

Jean Ouellet, Manager, Indigenous Broadcasting Policy, CRTC

Kerry Swanson, Chief Executive Officer, Indigenous Screen Office

4:30 p.m. **Is Investigative Journalism Dying?**

Hundreds of local newspapers have been shut down. Investigative units that flourished have been eliminated in all but a handful of outlets. What's at stake for the country and what does the future hold?

Speaker: Allya Davidson, Executive Producer, The Fifth Estate

4:45 p.m. **Closing Wrapup**

Speaker: Carlyne Sumner

5:00 p.m. Termination of Program