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**Submission to Canadian Heritage's "Canadian Content in a Digital World" consultations****November 25, 2016****Submitted by: Matthew Holmes, President and CEO****Magazines Canada****mholmes@magazinescanada.ca | 416.504.0274 x223****Introduction: the role and reach of magazine media in Canada**

Magazines Canada is the national not-for-profit association representing the interests of Canadian-owned, Canadian-content consumer, cultural, specialty, professional and business magazines. French and English member titles cover a wide range of interests across multiple platforms including arts and culture, business and trade/professional, lifestyle and food, news and politics, sports and leisure, women and youth. The association focuses on government affairs, professional development, coordinating national awards programs and marketing campaigns, and delivering services that meet the needs of the magazine industry. The association works closely with and receives grants or project funding from: Canadian Heritage, the Canada Council for the Arts, the Ontario Media Development Corporation, the Ontario Arts Council and other provincial government bodies.

Since the rise of the magazine form in the 18<sup>th</sup> and 19<sup>th</sup> centuries, magazines have had a special role in reaching and serving the middle class: whether as vehicles of news and political debate, entertainment, literature and art, or to educate and serve the needs of rapidly growing professional and trade populations. Magazines, more than any other print media, have served distinct and diverse communities of readers with the information, arts, and cultural discourse that is as relevant and necessary in 2017 as it was in 1867.

Canada's magazines have been pioneers in delivering Canadian content on multiple channels and social platforms. Roughly 80–90% of Magazines Canada's members are active on digital platforms: publishing Canadian content on websites and apps, via digital replica editions, social platforms, and through immersive interactive portals that engage their readers in new and responsive ways. In fact, before Apple launched its newsstand, Magazines Canada partnered with Zinio in 2009 to launch a digital newsstand showcasing Canadian magazines. Texture, Molto and Press Reader are more recent examples of bold Canadian digital discovery and reading platforms, which continue to link readers with verified, trusted, and entertaining content featuring Canadian voices and perspectives.

There are approximately 2000 Canadian magazines in the market today, including 1300 consumer and 700 business titles. This number represents an increase of over 30% in Canadian magazine titles since 2000. Though numerous magazines have closed in recent years due to an incredibly challenging marketplace, we still see new entrants and start-ups every year: to date these have significantly outnumbered the number of closures. Magazine media in Canada is a \$2-billion-dollar-a-year sector, directly creating tens-of-thousands of high-quality, knowledge-economy jobs. As more Canadian magazines adopt digital-first strategies or innovate on new



platforms, the value and breadth of the ecosystem of jobs that create magazine content will grow: from the individual creator, through the editorial department, into IT and design, and finally the delivery of a final product and its discoverability at market. Magazine media underscore the fact that Canada’s cultural industries have the potential to be important drivers of growth for the economy and high-quality middle-class employment.

Despite these trends and digital innovations, however, and although we have one of the highest Internet-usage rates in the world, it is clear that Canadians are not overwhelmingly ‘digital’ in all their consumption habits. Over 70% of all Canadians (across all age groups) are regular readers of magazines across print and digital platform, and a majority of magazine readers still prefer to consume in print-only (57%) or a mix of print and digital (35%), over those who consume exclusively digital (8%). Notably, Vividata’s November 2016 data does show that sports, business, and news magazines have a higher digital readership than other genres.

Clearly, and for a variety of reasons, magazine media continue to be trusted brands that bring Canadian content to the majority of Canadians in a number of ways: on their mobile devices during their commute, as a reference and guide to the latest innovations in their art or business practice, or as ‘unplugged’ leisure reading on their dock at the cottage.

While readership remains steady and new magazines continue to enter the market, the real challenge felt by many magazine brands is the rapid deterioration of ad revenues—which are shifting to large digital platform corporations based outside of Canada. Even with robust multi-platform brand presence, it is still difficult for Canadian magazines to compete with the likes of Facebook, Google and various social platforms.

In our view, as we consider the “digital shift” for Canada’s magazine sector, the question is not whether magazines themselves or the funding programs that support them should be oriented to print or digital—with 92% of readers still choosing print as part of their reading experience, the question instead is how to support magazines in both print and digital platforms as they innovate and evolve into robust cross-platform media brands.

### **Principle #1: Focusing on Citizens and Creators**

#### ***Principle #1 – Magazines Canada Summary Conclusions:***

- Magazines Canada believes policies and programs should themselves be platform-agnostic regardless of the final product or means of delivery: not privileging digital over traditional media, while also opening current programs to more digital, cross-cutting and multi-platform applications where possible.
- We should place a premium on investing in Canadian content creation, regardless of platform or sector silos: the importance of businesses, institutions and the supportive ecosystem of the cultural industries is just as important as support for individual creators: programs should be designed with the entire ecosystem in mind and not simply focused on individuals: magazines are more than the sum of their parts.
- Priority should be placed on supporting current creative industries to adapt and pivot through increased capacity development (including focused trainings, webinars, and consult support



programs), professional development supports (including conferences and delegations), and collective marketing initiatives (to promote Canadian content, grow market share, and ensure discoverability in an incredibly competitive environment). Associations and industry groups play a critical role in ensuring broad reach and return on government investment.

**How can we reflect the expectations of citizens and enable Canadians to choose the content they want to see, hear and experience?**

We strongly believe that policies should be *platform-agnostic* rather than platform-specific so as to acknowledge and respect citizens' desire to access content when, where and how they wish to. That is, the way and means by which citizens choose to access and consume content is their choice. Programs should be broad enough to acknowledge this.

This does not mean that support programs cannot continue to be designed with specific sectors in mind (e.g. the Canada Periodical Fund is designed to meet the specific needs and context of the magazine sector, and would have little relevance to the performing arts or broadcast forms).

There is an important consideration to stress regarding a platform-agnostic approach: Government programs and policies should also be platform-agnostic when it comes to “digital” or non-digital platforms and modes of delivery (e.g. “analogue”, “legacy”, “live” or “traditional” platforms)—it is up to the individual creator and the cultural business or organization to determine the best final means of delivery or output, based on what Canadian consumers want and are willing to actively support and consume. Within the magazine sector, for example, we have digital-only and digital-first magazine brands which are at the forefront of multichannel news and entertainment, virtual reality and other new media and social platform content; meanwhile, we also have many specialty magazines that are inherently bound to being presented on paper as a physical medium, or which can better monetize in export markets by offering a tangible product. Further, Magazines Canada also represents magazine brands whose intended audiences are Indigenous or remote communities in which Canada's broadband gap and digital infrastructure deficit undermines the reliability and relevance of some digital platforms: programs must remain accessible to all and evolve in a manner that encourages participation.

This means that in some instances current programs, including the Canada Periodical Fund, will need to be carefully expanded in scope to include eligible digital formats. It is also incumbent on us to ensure that programs remain broad enough so today's digital platforms do not become entrenched in government policy when we cannot possibly anticipate tomorrow's new platforms or venues for creative engagement and dissemination. (The last time the *Broadcast Act* was updated, email was a new form: we must avoid having programs tied to specific modes of delivery in order for them to remain relevant and long-reaching.) Note that there is no definition of what a digital magazine is: the government needs to work with key industry stakeholders to determine how to define, evaluate and measure digital magazines and how their content may be considered Canadian or not.

**How can we fairly support creators in the creation and production of content that stands out? What partnerships will be needed to achieve this? How can we help creators have successful and viable careers in the digital world?**



Because citizens/audiences have so much choice in terms of *what* content they experience and *how* they experience it as a result of evolving digital technologies, and because policies and programs going forward should aim to be *platform-agnostic*, we should place a premium on *investing in Canadian content creation*. Outstanding content transcends the technological platform upon which it is presented. And, as digital platforms continue to evolve or become obsolete at an accelerated pace, the priority should be in supporting content creation rather than the “format” or means through which that content is delivered.

It must be stressed that there is a risk in adopting too narrow a definition of “creators” (i.e. individuals). In many of the culture industries, whether it be performance, music or magazine media, there is an essential content creation and production role played by a number of supporting actors, brands and businesses. For example, in magazines, editors, fact-checkers, designers and art-directors, photographers and videographers, IT specialists and publishers all play a role in the final product: supports which prioritize the “creator” alone would result in many unrefined stories with no magazine brands left to carry them.

Further, given today’s onslaught of global content, much of which is of poor quality and delivered through channels with no tie to Canadian domestic policy or authority, there is a very real risk of fake news and echo-chambers of views—these can create a barrier to the discovery of Canadian voices and verified content both. For this reason, support of a Canadian-owned content-creation ecosystem is essential: with magazine media, content comes to readers across multiple platforms from brands that they trust and know to carry quality: it has been vetted, fact-checked, curated, and tailored to the audience while providing a diversity of voices. An open-source social media or content-sharing platform or the proliferation of unedited, individual voices will deliver very different outcomes.

Investing in “cultural entrepreneurs”—or as we like to describe it: the content-creation ecosystem—can more effectively ensure that Canadian content is cultivated, brought to market (domestic or export), promoted, discovered and monetized or built upon. Cultural organizations, such as Canadian magazine publishers who curate, edit, produce and present outstanding Canadian content to domestic and global audiences, cannot be left out of the concept of “creators”. Successful and viable content-creation ecosystems and cultural businesses will more sustainably support individual creators than direct government intervention can. This is one of the reasons that the Canada Periodical Fund is so effective and has been praised in recent program reviews for providing stability and flexibility to magazine publishers: it enables eligible magazines to create the venue and marketplace for Canadian creative content to reach audiences. However, the current CPF structure does not apply to all magazines (e.g. digital magazines, those below certain circulation- or Canadian-content thresholds, or those using non-traditional distribution models): eligibility could be broadened and enriched to make it more widely adopted—supporting more Canadian content producers.

Regarding “partnerships” industry groups and associations play critical roles to organize, facilitate, give voice to and educate their sectors. Industry groups and associations are critical partners with government bodies to deliver real outcomes that are meaningful, have lasting impact and provide return on investment that goes beyond one single recipient creator or business: collective outcome initiatives, investment in professional development, and the support



of collective marketing efforts have broad, sectoral impacts. There is a gap in partnerships between industries: often associations or groups do not have the capacity to foster more cross-fertilization with other sectors.

## **Principle #2: Reflecting Canadian Identities and Promoting Sound Democracy**

### ***Principle #2 – Magazines Canada Summary Conclusions:***

- Canadian magazines reflect the full diversity of Canadian communities and populations, consumer attitudes and interests, and audience needs (news, views, entertainment).
- Magazines are strong purveyors and champions of Canadian content by showcasing and giving a platform to Canadian voices and Canadian stories: as trusted brands already operating across multiple channels, the brands of magazines need to be strengthened and enabled to compete in print, digital and across multiple channels to ensure Canadian content and perspectives are discoverable in light of globalized digital content.
- Canada’s magazine brands produce news information and local, subject-specific content that is credible and reliable, and which reaches a diverse range of very specific communities (whether geographic, ethnic or artistic).
- Canadian magazines are uniquely positioned for “long-read” / investigative journalism, news and reports (where other legacy media have lost some capacity and new digital media have not yet invested) and work against fake news or algorithmic filtering with well-researched content that opens up our perspectives to a diversity of views.

**With so much online content available today and given Canada’s diverse and multicultural makeup, does the concept of “Canadian content” resonate with you? What does “Canadian” mean to you? Do we need to be more flexible in how we support the production of content by Canadians?**

Magazines are strong purveyors and champions of Canadian content by showcasing and providing a venue for Canadian voices and Canadian stories. The Canadian magazine media sector represents an incredible array of diverse communities: multicultural groups, official language minorities, LGBTQ2, gender-studies and feminist groups, Indigenous populations, various modes of artistic practice, trade and business, as well as reflecting regional, provincial, municipal and even sub-municipal levels of identity and community.

From the perspective of Canada’s magazine media, more flexibility in supports is needed. Currently Canadian Heritage’s Canada Periodical Fund, various programs at the Canada Council for the Arts, and some provincial funds support individual Canadian magazine titles for their circulation and marketing costs, for their editorial and Canadian content costs, or for special projects and business innovations. The Canada Periodical Fund is one of the newest support programs for cultural industries in Canada, and has undergone a favorable program review that concluded it provides stability to a dynamic industry going through transformative change. However, unlike some cultural sectors, the magazine media sector does not have access to tax credits, to funds for the creation of new Canadian content, nor to cross-platform interactive media project funds (with the exception of Ontario, where the OMDC has introduced the Interactive Digital Media Fund for videogames, magazines and the book sector). Further,



magazine media do not have access to current export initiatives or funding programs—a recent poll of Magazines Canada’s members found a majority export or would like to explore export market opportunities, while it is clear that other nations see Canada as a lucrative market for their own exported magazines.

**In an ultra-competitive, global market, how can the private sector support the production of content made by Canadians? What is the role of Canada’s national cultural institutions, such as CBC/Radio-Canada and the National Film Board?**

Many members of Magazines Canada feel that CBC holds an unfair advantage: competing with them directly for advertising dollars, while having major core costs covered by government—this is especially acute on digital platforms. The content generated by CBC is generally good and serves the public well, but the business model and mandate are ill-defined, particularly on digital platforms, and can be seen to compete with private *content-creation ecosystems*. A full strategic review should be undertaken regarding CBC, including its role in supporting Canadian content and third-party Canadian productions as well as clarity on its mandate and parameters within digital platforms.

What these national institutions have, which relatively few private cultural brands or institutions have been able to establish, are robust archives of content in various media and platforms. It warrants investigating how partnerships can be established to better enable private cultural industries to access, use, and repurpose archival content from our national cultural institutions.

Investing directly in “cultural entrepreneurs”—or as we like to describe it: the *content-creation ecosystem*—can effectively ensure that Canadian content is cultivated, brought to market (domestic or export), promoted, discovered and monetized or built upon by the private sector. Successful and viable content-creation ecosystems and cultural businesses will more sustainably support individual creators than direct government intervention can.

**Canadian content reflects the diversity of Canada. Do you think there is greater flexibility needed in terms of *what* we consider to be “Canadian content”?**

Currently for print magazines, there are guidelines in place regarding *how* we support the production of Canadian content: In order to be eligible for federal government investment, the content must consist of a minimum of 80% Canadian content and be produced by Canadian organizations/entities. For Canadian magazines, this would include creation/authorship; photography, illustration, and editorial and art direction. All of these activities involved in bringing a creative/cultural experience to market need to be carried out by Canadian citizens/individuals and by Canadian organizations/entities. There is no current definition of what a Canadian digital magazine is (how is it unique from a website or blog platform? What is its readership engagement and how consistently can this be measured? How is Canadian content defined, tracked and measured?). The government needs to work with key industry stakeholders to determine how to define, evaluate and measure digital magazines.



The Canada Periodical Fund currently has an 80% eligibility threshold in place, and generally it works well—Magazines Canada supports maintaining a strong Canadian content approach, based on clear Canadian ownership rules. However, the model for determining Canadian content still based on a manual mark-up of print magazines, raising the question of how this threshold can be applied consistently to digital formats. Some magazines use stock imagery rather than commissioned photography, and this can bring them below the required “Canadian-content” threshold, though in all other senses of the word they are exclusively Canadian. Finally, there is a tension at play as the government considers ways to better promote export marketing of Canadian cultural products: Canadian content requirements can have the effect of diminishing the ‘international relevance’ of some cultural products: more needs to be done to review the basis by which Canadian content is measured, how this can be realized in digital formats and products, and how support for export can complement these policies. The government’s policies are at times vague or at cross-purposes in this regard.

### **What models can we build to support the creation of and access to local information and news in a global context?**

Canadian magazines have always provided an essential service as vehicles of news and Canadian views, from current affairs and political news, to sub-municipal local magazines that highlight the issues of importance to citizens within a specific ward. Further, given their traditional model and frequency, magazines have long held a pride of place in the delivery of long-read formats, investigative journalism, and deep political debate which have had an impact on public opinion on issues critical to our country and on public policy itself, all the while ensuring Canadians have access to Canadian voices and perspectives on the issues that affect their day-to-day lives as citizens.

Magazines also continue to invest in fact-checking as part of their brand promise: more critical today than ever given the rise of “fake news” and social “echo chambers” that the digital shift has magnified within the news realm. As essential news and views sources such as magazines and newspapers are finding it more challenging to serve their audiences and remain financially viable, and as there become fewer trusted brands that provide a consistent and curated approach to Canadian news and views, there are serious and troubling implications for our democracy and the ability of our citizens to be informed by real news which is also Canadian-produced and distributed and relevant to their country and its place in the world.

Due to their specific areas of editorial focus, cultural practice, or locality, magazine media have cultivated audiences and communities of readership that reflect the full diversity of communities and interests in Canada. From Persian-Canadian law journals to dance and performance magazines, to local community lifestyle and politics, Canadian magazines serve to inform, educate and entertain very precise audiences. This tie to communities (whether geographic, ethnic, artistic or trade) is critical to community engagement and the democratic agency of the individual.

As program supports evolve, and as magazines bring their brands to multiple channels and digital platforms, one of the unique challenges of finding new ways to meaningfully support them will be to base funding programs on auditable, meaningful metrics which are transparent



and transferable across platforms. The current Canada Periodical Fund is based upon “proven wantedness”—showing demand and audience through audited paid print circulation, while magazines in digital formats run the range of free content to pay-wall subscription, with no consistent metric with which to compare them. However, moving to digital cannot simply use reader “impressions” or some other basic analytic to bridge the “proven wantedness” concept to digital: this risks incentivizing a volume approach that rewards “click-bait”-style content rather than responsible journalism or quality content creation. Metrics for evaluating and auditing audience engagement across print and digital platforms will be key to broadening supports for digital content, and will have to be transparent, replicable, and meet Treasury Board standards.

The Canada Periodical Fund and Canada Council programs for magazines are positioned to support various public policy objectives as they relate to magazine media: in some instances, this is to support brands that deliver Canadian content to the general population (whether news, entertainment and business or culture), while in others it is to provide a venue for voices and perspectives of underrepresented and priority communities such as Indigenous groups, LGBTQ2, Official Language Minorities, and others—which generally tend to be small and more volunteer-driven. Given this, the following important considerations must be raised as these programs and supports are updated and renewed: First, content produced by and for priority / minority groups may not always have to meet the same eligibility requirements as more general reader or “mainstream” magazine media—there is the option of having parallel funds or specific eligibility and envelopes within the program(s) (e.g. to meet specific capacity development needs). Second, many of these small, niche magazines or priority groups are the least advanced in adopting digital innovations and are thus highly reliant on print-based program supports: program changes which give privilege to digital platforms and delivery will very likely have the unintended consequence of undermining the ability of these groups to continue creating and distributing their content across all platforms. A very orderly and careful transition is needed in any future iteration of supports to ensure all groups can adapt.

### **Principle #3: Catalyzing Economic and Social Innovation**

#### ***Principle #3 – Magazines Canada Summary Conclusions:***

- Current tools that work: The Aid to Publishers component of the Canada Periodical Fund should continue: it provides stability to many multi-channel media companies invested in magazine brands; it could be expanded to support both print and digital brands if reliable and accessible measurement systems were in place. The CPF’s Collective Initiatives component has supported professional development and collective marketing efforts which will assist in discoverability.
- Magazines need more accessible marketing supports so magazines can promote their Canadian magazine brands (on all platforms) for all markets, so that consumers discover and see Canadian magazine brands in everyday life: support programs need to better enable collective marketing and discoverability initiatives developed by the sector itself.
- Increasingly, magazines are multi-channel media companies with output on various unique platforms and media, from print to social media. They support a broad ecosystem of skills (from editorial and art direction to videography and IT). The new skills they need may come from outside the traditional journalism or publishing realm; silos restrict us.

- Many magazines have indicated they currently export or would like to explore new markets—however these magazines cannot access export programs tailored to other culture industries.
- Section 19 of the *Income Tax Act* should be reviewed to better incent the purchase of Canadian digital advertisers as was previously done to repatriate print advertising; the government should also implement policies to direct its advertising budget in part to Canadian print and digital media, including magazines.

**Canadians make great content; how can we build our exceptional cultural industries and support the growth of new creative enterprises as part of Canada’s innovation agenda? What tools do the government and the private sector already have at their disposal? What new tools could we consider? How do we incent more risk-taking from creators and cultural entrepreneurs?**

There are a number of opportunities to build our cultural industries, in particular through supporting the *content-creation ecosystem* here in Canada—we note that the Ontario Ministry of Tourism, Culture and Sport shares Magazines Canada’s perspective on an expanded definition of talent: “to include both producers and creators”. From a magazine media perspective, in both print and digital, there is a diverse set of skills and positions clustered around the production of a single magazine. From a broader economic vantage, this “ecosystem” approach acknowledges and can better reward the creation of quality skills-based jobs for the middle class. Further, establishing thresholds or minimum requirements for “Canadian content” could take into consideration not only creator-individuals, who may be in the spotlight, but also the broader community of actors, investment and businesses which are supporting and enabling that creative product in reaching the marketplace.

We have a number of current tools that work: The Aid to Publishers component of the Canada Periodical Fund provides stability to many multi-channel media companies invested in magazine brands; it could be expanded to support both print and digital brands if reliable and accessible measurement systems were in place. The CPF’s Collective Initiatives component has supported professional development and collective marketing efforts. As Canada’s cultural industries continue to compete in an increasingly digitized and globalized market, we need to increase targeted investments through these or similar programs to enable professional development and retooling, cross-sectoral partnerships and collective marketing opportunities.

The department’s discussion paper speaks of a shift from protecting Canadian culture to promoting it: this can only be done by assisting businesses and associations in developing capacity and new skills, exploring and internalizing innovations (including risk-taking), investing in new digital infrastructures, and prioritizing professional development (including attending or holding conferences). This investment in professional development should include dedicated courses, support for conferences, webinars, podcasts, travelling consultant programs (for example, the Canada Council supports Magazines Canada to provide a matchmaking service for small arts magazines with professional business experts), and international conference attendance to enable Canadian magazines to build their skills, invest in their staff, and develop their competencies and capacity to innovate and grow.



Other new tools that are needed: More accessible marketing supports so magazines can promote their Canadian magazine brands on all platforms and across domestic and targeted export markets, so that consumers discover Canadian magazine brands in everyday life and see them as relevant and current. As they make the digital shift, consumers are confronted with more options from more places than ever before. As a relatively small nation, Canadian content is quickly subsumed by the sheer volume of what our cultural producers compete with. To compete in this context, we will need to prioritize investments which help promote discoverability and market Canadian cultural products.

Unlike other cultural sectors, the magazine media sector does not have access to tax credits, to funds for the creation of new Canadian content, nor to cross-platform interactive media project funds (with the exception of Ontario, where the OMDC has introduced the Interactive Digital Media Fund for videogames, magazines and the book sector). A broadened toolkit should be considered for magazines: with strong consideration of the role tax credits can play to incent Canadian content creation and production.

Finally, the federal government also has a role to play in directing its advertising budget in part to support Canadian magazine brands in both print and digital: these media produce local and national news, reach a majority of Canadians of all ages, and contribute to Canadian jobs and the tax base. Additionally, the *Foreign Publishers Advertising Services Act* and Section 19 of the *Income Tax Act* could be reviewed to better enable Canadian digital advertisers to compete, as has been done to incentivize print ads.

**How do we ensure that our national cultural institutions, such as the CBC/Radio-Canada and the National Film Board, are a source of creativity and ingenuity for the creative sector more broadly?**

There is a need to invest in our national cultural institutions to enable creators, as well as viable companies and organizations. Magazines, and most multi-channel media companies, are complex entrepreneurial environments that are based on a broad team of practitioners with a range of skills to develop the final product. The creator is the start, but without editorial, art direction, videography, design, IT infrastructure, communications and publishing, the finished product won't reach the public.

Increasingly, magazines are becoming multi-channel media companies with output on various unique platforms and media, from print to social media. The new skills they need may come from outside the traditional journalism or publishing realm: they may be in virtual reality, or information technology for example. Our national institutions can play a role in helping to bring together and foster cross-platform partnerships and opportunities, in addition to the sharing of archived content and material.

**What is needed to best equip Canadian creators and cultural industries to thrive in a global market and exploit the country's competitive advantages? In a global market, what conditions need to be in place to encourage foreign investment in Canada's cultural industries? How can we better brand Canadian content internationally?**



Magazines are written by and for specific demographics and areas of interest or practice: thus they often reflect Canada’s rich diversity. This could be leveraged for global markets by increases in marketing (e.g. to increase the discoverability of Canadian magazines in target markets or for target groups that relate specifically to the magazine’s output). This is as true for multicultural periodicals as it is for trade publications—both serve the unique needs and interests of defined groups, and this content is highly transferable and can be valuable in export markets. Magazines Canada continues to support clear, strong rules on Canadian ownership: it is fundamental to ensuring Canadian content creation.

However, magazines need access—Canadian Heritage clearly wishes to promote “risk-taking”, however we note that only “safe” traditional export sectors (such as books, music, performance) have enjoyed dedicated support under export programs. A recent poll of Magazines Canada’s members found a majority export or would like to explore export market opportunities, while it is clear that other nations see Canada as a lucrative market for their own exported magazines. There is an opportunity to make modest changes to existing export programs so they become more universally applicable among Canada’s various cultural industries.

It should be noted that there is a tension at play as the government considers ways to better promote export marketing of Canadian cultural products: Canadian content requirements can have the effect of diminishing the ‘international relevance’ of some cultural products: more needs to be done to review the basis through which Canadian content is measured, how this can be realized in digital formats and products, and how support for export can complement these policies. The government’s policies are at times vague or at cross-purposes in this regard.

Finally, there is a pronounced gap in quality data available at both the sector and public policy levels. The review of the Canadian Periodical Fund noted this and recommended that more be done to track and base policy on industry-specific data. In the past, Magazines Canada has partnered with the Canada Council for the Arts to collect, aggregate, and analyze data from their submissions so that industry players (small and arts magazines) can establish benchmarks. However, there is no such tool for consumer and business titles apart from industry voluntary measures: information from the Canadian Periodical Fund is not recorded or shared by Heritage Canada in a similar fashion (and is limited to those magazines that fall within the eligibility thresholds of the program). Statistics Canada has also significantly reduced its tracking of the cultural industries. Only with data will be able to measure our competitiveness, the effectiveness of our programs and the opportunities ahead.