Canadian Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression

Recommendations to Strengthen Canada's Response to the Spread of Disinformation Online

JANUARY 2022

DEMOCRATIC EXPRESSION DÉMOCRATIQUE

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The Public Policy Forum works with all levels of government and the public service, the private sector, labour, post-secondary institutions, NGOs and Indigenous groups to improve policy outcomes for Canadians. As a non-partisan, member-based organization, we work from "inclusion to conclusion," by convening discussions on fundamental policy issues and by identifying new options and paths forward. For more than 30 years, the PPF has broken down barriers among sectors, contributing to meaningful change that builds a better Canada.

HOW TO CITE THIS REPORT

Visit the Assembly website: https://www.commissioncanada.ca

Watch the 2020 Project video: https://youtu.be/glPGGl6z6tE

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ABOUT THE INITIATIVE

DEMOCRATIC EXPRESSION DÉMOCRATIQUE

The Canadian Commission on Democratic Expression is a three-year initiative, led by the Public Policy Forum that aims to bring a concerted and disciplined review of the state of Canadian democracy and how it can be strengthened. The centerpiece is a small, deliberative Commission which will draw on available and original research, the insights of experts and the deliberations of a representative citizen's assembly to assess what to do about online harms and how to buttress the public good. The Commission is designed to offer insights and policy options on an annual basis that support the cause of Canada's democracy and social cohesion. The Commission is supported by national citizen assemblies as well as by an independent research program.

This initiative grew out of earlier insights about the relationship of digital technologies to Canada's democracy covered by the Public Policy Forum's ground-breaking report, The Shattered Mirror and its subsequent interdisciplinary research outlined in the Democracy Divided report (with UBC) and through the Digital Democracy Project partnership with McGill University.

The initiative is stewarded by a Project Secretariat, chaired by PPF and delivered in partnership with MASS LBP and the Centre for Media, Technology and Democracy at McGill University's Max Bell School of Public Policy, who are executing the national citizen assemblies and research program, respectively.

To learn more about the initiative and how you can become involved, please visit www.ppforum.ca/project/demx. The initiative will run from April 2020 to March 2023.

CHAIR'S NOTE

Since the start of our work in 2019, public interest concerning the impact of social media has grown. Proposed legislation introduced during the last parliament ignited widespread public debate, while revelations about the inner workings of the platforms sparked outcry as well as calls for greater accountability.

In this, our second year, we again invited Canadians to volunteer to advise the Commission on Democratic Expression as well as the federal government on the regulation of digital platforms. In the midst of a pandemic, more than 600 Canadians volunteered to serve and 42 were randomly selected to represent the provinces and territories.

PETER MACLEOD

This year's Assembly was asked to consider whether there should be legal penalties or other consequences for the spread of disinformation. It did not hesitate to call for aggressive public action.

As the Assembly observes, disinformation is a scourge of the digital age — and one set to worsen. The Assembly is alarmed at the prospect of a digital public square awash in scams that fleece consumers and sophisticated campaigns that distort and manipulate public opinion.

Like the members of the 2020 Assembly, they are perplexed and disappointed by the slow pace of government action and believe this is an issue that cuts across partisan lines. Their message is clear: action is overdue and urgently required.

They believe that criminal penalties should apply to those who knowingly conspire to deceive Canadians. They contend that Canadian authorities should be relentless in their efforts to safeguard core democratic institutions, beginning with our electoral system, reaffirming the need for limits to deceptive speech during campaign periods.

But the Assembly members are also mindful of the challenges law enforcement face in apprehending and successfully prosecuting individuals who perpetrate disinformation campaigns — especially when they originate outside of Canada.

Consequently, they build on the recommendations of the 2020 Assembly and deem user ownership and control of data essential. They believe that allowing users to better manage and filter their online experience can provide important protections. This includes introducing standardized labelling, adopting consistent codes of conduct, and disclosing exactly how algorithms and advertisers are shaping what users see and experience online.

The members also believe that public awareness of these issues is low and that Canadians by-and-large lack the digital literacy skills to discern credible online content. It may be easy to call for more public education but it's a recommendation that deserves to be taken very seriously. As the members discussed, the rapid pace of technological and social change has vastly outstripped any commensurate efforts to ensure that Canadians are ready to engage with these technologies confidently and on a more equal footing.

This second report again affirms that at the crux of the debate about platform regulation is an alarm that social cohesion and trust are being undermined. It reflects a strong desire to see governments step into the breach and reaffirm core national values — including the rule of law and our Charter rights. The members well appreciate that democracies rely on credible information that is broadly understood by the wider public. The COVID-19 crisis has been a poignant backdrop to their deliberations by demonstrating how dangerous unchecked disinformation can be.

Their report, written in their own words and contained in the middle section of this document, spells out the measures they believe governments and industry should adopt and which Canadians themselves should demand.

The 2021 Assembly members should be commended for their diligence and collegiality. They found themselves in the midst of a charged debate and worked to find common ground. Their recommendations represent a consensus view by Canadians working without any partisan or commercial considerations. Over more than forty hours — first online over three Saturdays and then during four days in Ottawa before the Omicron wave — they heard from 13 speakers and, working in both official languages, articulated their values, concerns and priorities.

I would also like to thank those parliamentarians who attended this year's Assembly as well as the OECD for its interest in this work. The Canadian Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression is one of more than 400 deliberative processes that the OECD has tracked over the past decade, predominantly in North America and Europe. Together these processes are helping to demonstrate the capacity of the public to play a far greater and more sophisticated role in policy making.

Sincerely,

Peter MacLeod
Chair, Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression

WHAT POLICY MAKERS SHOULD KNOW: EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

The Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression is a body of 42 randomly selected Canadians representing every province and territory as well as the breadth of perspectives and diversity of Canada. The second edition of the Assembly was convened in October 2021. Due to the pandemic, the Assembly was conducted in a hybrid model. The Assembly met during three-hour online sessions on three Saturdays in October and November and then gathered in person in Ottawa for five days at the end of November. Working in both official languages, the Assembly heard from more than a dozen recognized experts as well as a senior representative from Twitter.

The Assembly is one part of the Canadian Commission on Democratic Expression — a three-year initiative funded by the Government of Canada and the McConnell Foundation and led by the Public Policy Forum. This year's Assembly was mandated to provide consensus recommendations on whether there should be legal penalties or other consequences for individuals and organizations that knowingly spread disinformation online with the intent to cause harm. The previous year's assembly considered how to reduce the impact and prevalence of harmful speech online. Their report can be found here. A third and final assembly will be convened in 2022 and will address a different topic related to technology and democratic expression in Canada.

The Assembly identified seven values that should shape Canada's approach to internet regulation and unanimously endorsed 27 recommendations which they believe will help to safeguard and strengthen our democracy while reducing the prevalence of disinformation online.

The Assembly strongly believes that disinformation erodes public trust, threatens our democratic institutions, and has the potential to destabilize our society. They believe that the matter is complex and multifaceted, impacting national security, personal privacy, individual rights and freedoms, and social cohesion. The Assembly is concerned that digital platforms have operated for too long with a lack of accountability and transparency. While these platforms have become a part of daily life for so many people, they don't always operate in the best interests of the public. The Assembly members assert that action must

be taken by the government, and that it must be swift with ongoing review and revision to keep up with the latest technologies and threats.

The members of the Assembly see the unchecked spread of online disinformation as detrimental to physical and mental health, social cohesion, and democratic engagement. The potential weaponization of disinformation can cause significant harm to individuals, businesses, and societies. The Assembly is equally concerned about the financial and reputational challenges that disinformation can create, and acknowledges that women, minorities, and other vulnerable communities are at even greater risk of being targeted and hurt.

Disinformation engages online audiences much more than factual information. This is leading to an erosion of reputable journalism and trusted sources of information, a risk that the Assembly members would like to address with dedicated resources in these areas.

Simultaneously, the Assembly members see the importance of preserving freedom of expression and the ability of online users to maintain some element of anonymity in order to protect themselves while sharing dissenting or unpopular opinions.

The Assembly's recommendations advocate for robust research, an ethical framework for the tech industry, and a variety of improved and increased educational programs to promote digital literacy at all ages. The members call for a digital regulator, fast and easy access to justice, and international cooperation to tackle this complex issue and protect individuals. User control over data and experience is also deemed paramount, attempting to rebalance the power between platforms and people. Finally, a series of legal reforms are presented to strengthen and adapt existing laws and protections.

Highlights of their recommendations include:

- Establishing an independent research centre to examine the spread of disinformation and its impacts;

- Creating a new professional body for software developers to uphold their own professional and ethical standards of practice;

- Funding an independent, interdisciplinary, and dedicated digital regulator to help combat the effects and prevalence of disinformation;

- Establishing an e-court system to allow swift access to justice and promote platform and user accountability;

- Launching a global forum on disinformation for the purpose of securing greater cooperation and agreements to reduce the prevalence of disinformation;

- Implementing a series of platform standards including: disclosure of takedown activities, identifying and flagging sources of harmful disinformation, and sharing of algorithmic impacts and intentions;

- Reviewing and updating current laws, especially the Elections Act and the Criminal Code;

- Strengthening whistleblower protections;

- Enacting the necessary regulatory framework to give users full ownership and control of their data and the ability to shape their online experience;

- Establishing the Canadian Centre for Prevention of Disinformation (CCPD), a well-resourced organization with a mandate to educate the public about disinformation through programming, toolkits, and curriculum co-development; and

- Investing in quality information and reputable journalism at the national, regional, and community levels.

ASSEMBLY OVERVIEW

WHAT IS A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY?

A Citizens' Assembly is a long-form deliberative process that typically involves 36 to 48 randomly selected citizens and residents, who meet to examine an issue, reach consensus, and draft recommendations for public authorities.

WHAT IS A CIVIC LOTTERY?

A civic lottery is a balanced way of selecting the members of a Citizens' Assembly. It is based on a form of sortition that uses the postal system and a randomized selection process to recruit panelists. The result is a group of volunteers that broadly match the demographics of the jurisdiction they represent.

ASSEMBLY PROFILE (42 MEMBERS*)

Gender

Female: **20**

Male: **20**

Nonbinary: **2**

Language

French: **12**

English: **30**

Age bracket

18-29: **9**   30-44: **9**   45-64: **16**   64+: **8**

Internet use per week

Less than 5 hours: **4**

5 to 10 hours: **9**

10 to 20 hours: **10**

20 plus hours: **19**

Members per province/territory

Alberta - 4	Nunavut - 1
British Columbia - 5	Ontario - 12
Manitoba - 2	Prince Edward Island - 2
New Brunswick - 2	Quebec - 6
Newfoundland and Labrador - 2	Saskatchewan - 2
Northwest Territories - 1	Yukon – 1
Nova Scotia - 2	

Members who identify as

Indigenous: **5**

Part of a racialized group: **13**

Hours of meeting time per member: 50

Cumulative session hours: 2,100

*Owing to COVID travel restrictions and the BC flooding, three members were not able to travel to Ottawa for the final sessions.

MEET THE ASSEMBLY MEMBERS

ANDRÉ CYR, THETFORD MINES, QUÉBEC

I come from a family of 13 children. I spent five years in the military, from the ages of 19 to 24, where I learned to speak English and obtained a diploma in technical radio. I worked in the field of alarm systems. Now I'm in pre-retirement and self-employed. I want to get involved in the Assembly because I believe that communication is important, and I am looking for the truth. We live in a world of communication, and so I want to open my eyes to this reality.

ANN BURNS, CORNWALLIS PARK, NOVA SCOTIA

Having been retired for 12 years, I have been involved in many community initiatives. I feel it is important to give back, and being a transplant from Saskatchewan this is a great way to meet people! I worked with the Dominion Command of the Royal Canadian Legion for many years and was fortunate to meet and assist many of our veterans. I finished up my career with the Regina Catholic School Board, so I have interacted and worked with a wide variety of people from children to elderly veterans. I have served on the provincial and local board of the Special Olympics. I believe that everyone, regardless of their abilities, deserves respect and inclusion. I look forward to serving on this Citizens' Assembly and helping to make a difference!

ANOUK ADAM, ORLEANS, ONTARIO

As a teenager, my love for wildlife led me to work in camps and exhibits at the Museum of Nature in Ottawa. After high school, I continued my studies in environmental technology with a specialization in nature interpretation. This led me to work at the Montreal Biodome for 14 years as a guide, before returning to Ottawa in 2007 to work at the Canada Science and Technology Museum as an Education and Interpretation Assistant.

I chose to participate in the Citizens' Assembly because the subject of information and misinformation circulating on the internet interests me greatly. As an educator, I believe that fact-based knowledge is essential to the education of any society. And I believe I can bring my ideas to the table.

CHARLIE MORIN, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

My name is Charlie Morin, I am a writer and editor based in Winnipeg, Manitoba, on Treaty 1 territory. My work focuses mainly on harm reduction, reproductive health, and gender identity. I have a B.A. in Rhetoric, Writing and Communications from the University of Winnipeg. I currently hold the position of Features Editor for *The Uniter* and work as assistant editor creating the Hansard transcript for the Manitoba Legislative Assembly. In my spare time, I draw cartoons and travel. I look forward to voicing my thoughts on the uses of digital technology and learning more about the impacts of a Citizens' Assembly on legislation.

CRYSTAL SIMPSON, SACKVILLE, NEW BRUNSWICK

I was born and raised in New Brunswick but spent seven years in Toronto and 19 years out west in Alberta. I've travelled from one end of the country to the other, except for Newfoundland or the territories, mostly doing fairs and markets. My craft is making jewelry using crystals and precious stones and gems. I have three kids — two boys and one girl — and eight grandkids. I also have two cats; I love my kitties.

DARA TUGWELL, DARTMOUTH, NOVA SCOTIA

My name is Dara Tugwell and I am a proud east coaster! I am an Occupational Therapist and presently work for the provincial early intervention program run through the local children's hospital. More specifically, I support several teams across the province in a variety of areas, such as clinical decision making, capacity building, and teaming/communicating with others. When not at work, I love spending time with my husband of over four years and our 20-month-old son! I decided to participate in this Assembly as I spend a lot of time on various social media sites, and I'm hoping my level head can bring an important perspective to the group.

DAVE BLAINE, ST. ALBERT, ALBERTA

I'm a photographer, videographer, and mapmaker, and I specialize in visual storytelling with big data. I finished my undergraduate degree in Archaeology at the University of Calgary in 2002, my certificate in Photography at SAIT Polytechnic in 2006, and my Bachelor of Applied Technology in Geographic Information Systems in 2016. My wife and I accepted positions at NAIT in Edmonton in the Fall of 2019 and relocated our family to St. Albert. Having no clue what 2020 had in store, I began my master's program at Athabasca University that January, where I'm currently pursuing a dual focus in Writing and New Media, and Heritage and Social History.

Moreover, I'm also a project member on the Stann Creek Regional Archaeology Project in Belize. I've been an excavation supervisor and their digital content creator since 2017.

I was delighted to volunteer for the Citizens' Assembly because I'm fascinated with how digital technologies have shaped our culture, and I'm honoured to have the chance to contribute to this very important discussion.

DAWN SUGIMOTO, LETHBRIDGE, ALBERTA

Born and raised in southern Alberta, I spent 20 years in print journalism at the *Lethbridge Herald*, where I was a finalist for a National Newspaper Award for editorial writing (2005) and served in several roles, including managing editor. Journalism provided an opportunity to explore my interests in health care, local history, and politics. In 2009, I switched careers and entered communications, first in a K-12 school system and, currently, at a post-secondary institution. I continue to have the great privilege of writing about interesting people and things. My husband and I have a son who attends university, and our family is made complete by a dog and a cat that thinks she's a dog.

DESMOND ARSENAULT, WELLINGTON, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

I am a retired manager from the Canada Revenue Agency, where I worked for 33 years. I am quite involved in my community, having participated on various boards. I am a 20-year veteran of the Wellington Volunteer Fire department, and I also hold the position of President and Communications officer. While with the CRA, I was a regional spokesperson for three years. I am used to acting as an emcee at various events such as festivals, weddings, elimination draws, and benefit auctions. I am well in touch with technology and can see its benefits and challenges. Personally, I don't have any social media presence, don't waste your time trying to creep me.

EARL HALL, WINNIPEG, MANITOBA

My name is Earl, and I am a resident of Winnipeg, Manitoba, and used to work in tech. I am interested in the Assembly process and in understanding what changes can be made.

ELLEN STEWART, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

Born, raised, and currently living in Saskatoon, I have been a bookkeeper for 39 years. When the brown envelope arrived in the mail, certain red flags were raised. I researched the Commission and the Assembly process and then realized this was for real.

Once selected, I felt honoured to be able to provide some civic duty participation. Being able to participate in this type of event is a once-in-a-lifetime opportunity, regardless of topic. As someone on the Assembly team said, there is something special about participating in this process, and I could not agree more. A life experience/opportunity that one should grab.

ERIC MARK, TORONTO, ONTARIO

My name is Eric Mark. I am a born-and-raised Torontonian, who lived in BC, Alberta, and southwestern Ontario before returning to Toronto. I am bilingual in French, have an urban planning background, and currently work for a federal crown corporation.

I joined the Assembly as a lover of Canadian politics so I could have a say in shaping policy on an issue that will only continue to increasingly affect us all. I was very curious and eager to see how the Assembly process would work to gather a joint statement from such a cross-section of Canadians.

FOUZI BOUAITA, MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC

I have been living in Montréal since 2019 in the Ahuntsic neighbourhood. I am originally from Algeria, where I studied civil engineering. In Québec, I obtained two additional degrees in construction management and data modelling for buildings. Currently, I work for Parallèle 54, an engineering and consulting firm, as a trail supervisor in the construction field. I'm married to a woman who works in civil engineering as well, and we have two children aged 8 and 11. I love sports, especially soccer, and travel when the context permits. Committing myself to the current process will give me the chance to express my opinions on the abuse of freedoms on social networks. The

internet has changed our way of seeing things, but there are people who use the internet to do harm, and I look forward to discussing how to increase the accountability of social network users.

FRÉDÉRICK BARRETTE, QUÉBEC, QUÉBEC

Originally from Quebec City, I have a bachelor's degree in history and geography from Laval University. I am currently in my first official teaching position as a young 23-year-old in charge of six groups of Secondary III students for the "History of Quebec and Canada" course. On another subject, at the age of 13, I started to be part of the Cadets of Canada program. After reaching my majority, I enrolled as an officer in the Royal Canadian Air Force to continue my involvement in this wonderful program. One of the key elements of this program is the development of citizenship. I believe that the mission of the Assembly falls directly into my area of expertise. I hope to contribute to the discussions and learn from others in attendance.

IAN SHEPPARD, NORTH BAY, ONTARIO

My name is Ian Sheppard and I am from North Bay, Ontario. I have an advanced diploma as a Computer Programmer Analyst, and hold a 310T Journeyman license. Ever since I was a child, my father always taught us to be caring and helpful when it comes to others. Holding on to that principle, I have become a volunteer firefighter to better serve my community and help keep people safe. I am an active member of my community and volunteer at many of the local annual events. When this opportunity presented itself to me, I became excited to be part of this process and lend my help.

IRENE XIA ZHOU, GLOUCESTER, ONTARIO

I was born and raised in Spain with a Chinese background, so I am fluent in four languages: English, French, Spanish, and Chinese Mandarin. I came to Canada alone as an international student at the age of 15 and currently live in Ottawa.

I am a graduate of the University of Ottawa in International Studies and Business Administration. I am an active youth and entrepreneur advocate, and also very involved with various visible minority groups and the Franco-Ontarian community. Volunteering for CADE is at the heart of my mission as I am passionate about civic engagement and community involvement.

I am also the co-founder of BoXia Partage, a social enterprise specializing in the marketing and promotion of Canadian organizations' products and services, in addition to creating and developing educational tools to raise awareness of Canadian heritage and culture.

JADA MCLEOD, OTTAWA, ONTARIO

My name is Jada, and I am a committed and fun mother of two teenage boys as well as a wife of over 20 years. While I have called Ottawa home for the last 30 years, I am no stranger to the east coast of Canada. I spent my childhood with my family in St. John's, Newfoundland, and my high school years in Barrington, Nova Scotia. I moved to Ottawa to complete my secondary school education, and have since put down roots and stayed.

I gained experience in the legal department through my work for the Children's Aid Society as well as making time to volunteer on Parliament Hill for former Liberal MP Judy Sgro and Senator Grant Mitchell. My time there was used to produce a composition that investigated and reported on the rights of women and how our status in Canada had changed over recent years. Currently, I am employed with Ottawa's largest school board as the Office Administrator in an elementary school. In my down time, you will find me cheering for my Ottawa Senators NHL team, biking on the many trails in the Gatineau hills, or working on my vegetable garden.

I am Wolastoqiyik from the community of Neqotkuk in New Brunswick and I carry my Indigenous heritage proudly. I have a special interest in the rights of Indigenous Peoples as well as those from across this country. When the opportunity to participate in this Assembly presented itself, I signed up.

I am aware of misinformation on the internet and always question and try to confirm the veracity of information while considering how it may influence others.

I am excited to add my voice to this very special group that has been chosen to participate in this Assembly. My experiences and knowledge as a mother, an Indigenous person, and an education professional allow me to observe issues from many points of view. I look forward to purposeful discussions regarding the impacts of digital technologies and the process of creating recommendations to ensure this information is delivered with integrity.

JAMES DAVIES, OTTAWA, ONTARIO

I was born in Surrey, England and moved to Canada in 1978. I spent four years in Montréal before moving to Ottawa with my wife (a French-Canadian) in 1982. I served as a police officer for 39 years in both Canada and the UK, before I retired. While police work has been my primary career, I have also held several other jobs in my life such as travel agent, teacher, social worker, and recruiter. I volunteered for the Assembly for several reasons: my interest in the topic, my sense of civic responsibility as a citizen, and (primarily) because my wife told me to. She was correct as participating in the Citizens' Assembly has been such a rewarding experience.

JEAN-GUY LAFRENIÈRE, BOUCHERVILLE, QUÉBEC

My name is Jean-Guy Lafrenière and I was born in Montreal in October 1947. I have three children and six grandchildren. My career began teaching in public high school, but after ten years, I moved into a management position at a High School on the South Shore of Montréal. I continued my career at the School of International Education and finally ended my last years at the Collège Notre-Dame-de-Lourdes as director of educational services. My 19 years as a retiree allowed me to collaborate in the development of the Société des Établissements du Baccalauréat International au Québec (SÉBIQ), as well as offer my services to several schools for the production of a master schedule for the new school year (school organization). I like to offer my services for any kind of DIY required in a home. I also had the opportunity to travel and visit several regions such as Australia, New Zealand, Vietnam, Cambodia, Fiji, several European countries, Peru, Panama, Mexico, Guadeloupe, the United States, and Canada from Vancouver to Nova Scotia. I appreciate the frank, dynamic discussions that lead to operational consensus. I take pleasure every day in solving my Sudoku or other similar games.

JOHN KAMASSAH, HAMILTON, ONTARIO

My name is John, and I am a resident of Hamilton, Ontario. I am excited for the opportunity to participate in this conversation about an important and pervasive issue.

KEITH SHEPPARD, PARADISE, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

I'm 70 years old, married to Joanne for 37 years. We have three daughters who are independent women contributing to society; we are very proud of them. We have three teenage grandchildren who live close by and visit regularly. I've been involved in my community all my life in various positions and served two terms as the councillor of Paradise. I've also been involved with the church from my teenage years, and later studied theology at Queens College to become a deacon in the Anglican church. For my studies and work, I attended Memorial University in Education and taught in schools for 30 years as a special needs teacher. When I retired, I spent time travelling and went back to Queens to become a priest. I served as chapelman in a hospital and had a half-time position in the parish. My wife and I believe in staying healthy and fit and attend the YMCA to do shallow water fitness. I also love cooking.

LAE YEE, LANTZVILLE, BRITISH COLUMBIA

My name is Lae, and I am a former resident of friendly Manitoba, who now lives on Vancouver Island with my husband. I have sat on both sides of the table as an employer and employee in a data-driven marketing discipline. I have noticed that no matter how small the conversation, it can help echo the importance of social concerns. I enjoy participating in large public forums, such as the Statistics Canada project, First Nations project, Amnesty International Vancouver chapter, Community roundtable, and was recently acquainted with the Citizens' Assembly. Outside of work, I enjoy comedy shows, radio, podcasts, and visiting local markets.

LAURA MATHIAS-JOE, NORTH VANCOUVER, BRITISH COLUMBIA

My name is Laura and I was born and raised in North Vancouver, BC. I am a full-time student as well as a fulltime advisor for Audi. I volunteered for the Assembly because it sounded like an amazing opportunity to learn about disinformation and provide input. I honestly wasn't expecting to get chosen (with my luck), and I'm so happy I did! It was one of the most memorable, humbling experiences I've ever had!

LORI SPONAGLE, MONTRÉAL, QUÉBEC

My life has had variety, as I've lived in multiple provinces and had multiple professions. During my career, I have worked as an architect, both in Canada and abroad, and later as a software developer. Now that I am retired, I am pursuing a Bachelor in Fine Arts at Concordia University, with a major in Fibres and Material Practices. The common thread has always been looking for ways to indulge my creativity and to keep learning.

The pandemic severely curtailed my community volunteer work, and I see participating in the Citizens' Assembly as another way to contribute and give back to society. The question before us is an important one, and I look forward to examining the issues around it.

MALIN ROZON, SASKATOON, SASKATCHEWAN

I'm a tutor and digital artist with a degree in Linguistics (Philosophy minor) from the University of Saskatchewan. I have a history of formal debate and public speaking, having spent over 10 years as a debater, judge, and coach at various levels. My day job is in administrative support with the Government of Saskatchewan, where I'm also proud to contribute to the employee Pride Alliance Network and to equity and inclusion work within Disability Programs. I'm participating in this Assembly because I have been an enthusiastic citizen of the internet since I was old enough to use a computer, and I care deeply about responsibly fostering online spaces. I look forward to contributing to this important discussion.

MICHAEL METCALFE, ST. THOMAS, ONTARIO

My name is Mike Metcalfe. I am an e-commerce entrepreneur who specializes in selling other people's junk. In 2006 I attended the University of Ottawa where I obtained a BSS in Criminology. I briefly worked in the security industry before returning to Southern Ontario. I am recently engaged, a brain injury survivor, and an excellent cat dad. My passions include: recycling, politics, technology, and the environment.

MICHELLE CHRISTENSEN-TOEWS, WHITEHORSE, YUKON

My career has been varied. I have worked in a bank, a travel agency, and in government, but returning to school as a mature student of 32 sent me on a new trajectory. I became a paramedic and emergency planner, which led to my final career as a health and safety professional. I recently retired from the 9-to-5 crowd. Being a northern girl I hike, bike, split wood, hunt, and snowmobile to a friend's trapline. The opportunity to participate in the Assembly fit my desire to learn and play my part in making the world a place where all are safe and able to flourish.

NAIMA KAGUKU, EDMONTON, ALBERTA

I work in the commercial modelling industry and am based out of Edmonton. Currently, I am enjoying being a new mother to a baby boy named Philip. I very much enjoy getting involved in my community, and want to give back whenever I can. This opportunity is exciting because I thrive in working with others on social projects.

NAOMI DUFFUS, SURREY, BRITISH COLUMBIA

My name is Naomi and I've lived in Vancouver, British Columbia, my entire life, though I love to travel. Currently, I am a student working on my Bachelor of Science degree in Molecular Biology and Biochemistry, and I am looking forward to graduating this summer! As a 22-year-old who is constantly immersed in the ever-changing world of technology, I thought participating in this year's Citizens' Assembly would be a great opportunity for me to learn and gain insight from other Canadians on the topic, as well as offer some insight myself. I hope that together we

can come up with ideas that accurately represent the needs of all Canadian citizens living today, and will also protect future generations to come.

OLIVIER EMOND-GODIN, YELLOWKNIFE, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES

My name is Olivier Emond-Godin, from La Malbaie, Quebec. I am thirty years old and have been married to my wife Kelsey for two years. We had our first child this October. I joined the Canadian Armed Forces in 2014 and currently work as a line technician in Yellowknife. I have great interest in philosophy, psychology, history, mythology, and theology. I believe the path for a meaningful life is a combination of great responsibilities, high and defined goals, and rigorous honesty toward yourself and others. That is why I joined the Forces and answered yes to the Assembly on Democratic Expression. Being out of my comfort zone, serving others, taking on responsibilities, and overcoming challenges give order and structure to my life — only then can I try to improve things in my community.

PATRICIA FAYS-MARSZALEK, QUÉBEC, QUÉBEC

I like to define myself as a woman of the world: born in Paris, my blood is a melting pot of all the continents — Europe, Africa, Asia, India — because my origins come from the island of all mixtures: Reunion Island. I have always loved to travel, and after a few trips to Europe, I have been living in Canada with my family for 10 years, and I became a citizen two years ago. I am passionate about cooking and everything that concerns the well-being of humans, and as a good communicator, I am also passionate about new technologies that allow me to better exchange information with my friends and family around the world. Participating in this Citizens' Assembly is a way for me to participate in my Canadian community, and to help everyone better communicate with each other and with our ultra-connected world.

PAULINE RANKIN-BLANKENHORN, NORTH YORK, ONTARIO

Originally from Trinidad, I now live with my husband Uli in Don Mills, Ontario. I have lived a varied life full of ups and downs that has taught me resilience. I have helped family members struggling with addiction, violence, and illness, and have also managed a variety of disabilities myself (including disc problems and FSHD-muscular dystrophy), but have always found solace in religion. I worked in real estate and owned a chocolate shop. I am a certified LifeSuccess Coach and a member of the National Speaker Association. I have one son, Kai, and I love talking to people. I am excited about the opportunity to participate in the Assembly.

RANDY PAULOOSIE PIJAMINI, IQALUIT, NUNAVUT

I was born in Iqaluit and have lived there my entire life. I'm currently in my first year at Nunavut Arctic College studying Office Administration. Once I graduate, I aim to continue my education by going to university (preferably outside of Nunavut). When I received the invitation, I didn't really know what to expect but decided to see where it goes and use it as an opportunity to learn and grow.

RABINSON RAJU, SUDBURY, ONTARIO

I was born in India in the state of Punjab and moved to Canada in 2015. I settled in Sudbury, Ontario, where I was a student at Cambrian College. Currently, I am an Area Manager of the A&Ws across Sudbury. Even though I didn't know what to expect, I volunteered for the Assembly as it seemed like a good opportunity. Immediately the space made me feel welcome, and I'm excited to learn more about democracy and our role in it.

SHANNON SNAKE, BOTHWELL, ONTARIO

I work for the First Nations Ontario Works Department of the Delaware Nation at Moraviantown, Thamesville, Ontario. I am Oneida of the Oneida Nation and I'm learning today how to speak Oneida. I'm currently taking care of my mother and living with my loving cat. I'm looking forward to participating in this Assembly to discuss the spread of truth online, specifically concerning Indigenous peoples and communities. We don't always find the right information.

SOUBHI ABLA, CHARLOTTETOWN, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND

I was born in Charlottetown, PEI, and have lived there my entire life. I currently work as a mortgage broker but my past work experience in web-hosting support and as a server administrator were the driving forces behind my participation in the Assembly. I have always been interested in the topic of disinformation and online harm, and look forward to being able to learn and share my perspectives on this important topic.

STEPHANIE TUCKER, ST. JOHN'S, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

I am a communications and marketing professional in Newfoundland and Labrador, with interests in content creation, videography, social media management, and event planning. Currently, I work for a municipal government organization, and prior to this I worked in the not-for-profit sector with an environmental education organization. I hold a Bachelor of Arts Degree with a double major in Communication Studies and English Language and Literature, and a Diploma in Performance and Communications Media. I'm passionate about animal welfare, and my husband Daniel and I have two rescues, our dog Calvin and our cat Nacho. We love spending time with friends, kayaking, hiking, and travelling. As someone who works with digital communications on a regular basis, I see the impact that social media can have on shaping perspectives. I am excited to join the Citizens' Assembly to share and learn from others through conversation on this year's important topic.

YVAN GOSSELIN, LAC BAKER, NEW BRUNSWICK

I was born in Québec in the Montérégie region. I studied wildlife technology and got a BAC in bio-ecology. I worked in community and socio-economic organizations in the Estrie region. Life took me to the Témiscouata region of New Brunswick. Currently retired, I like hiking and picking mushrooms that I cook with my girlfriend. I also do hunting, kayaking, and nature travel. I am involved in the Assembly because the approach to democratic expression is close to my heart; if we want to understand each other, we must speak to each other and speak well.

We must determine where our freedom begins and ends and develop a language that allows discussion and understanding of the other.

ZENIA LEIGH, OTTAWA, ONTARIO

I am a retired nurse (BScN, CHE), widow, mother, and grandmother. Travelling with a husband in the military, I've had the opportunity to work in eight hospitals across this country and in the U.S., progressing from bedside through to hospital administration. Following retirement, volunteerism has become my focus. Currently, as a Director with the May Court Club of Ottawa, Canada's oldest women's service club, I serve as volunteer Property Manager for its 120-year-old clubhouse plus the attached Hospice managed by Hospice Care Ottawa. Over the past several years, I have greeted the explosion of technology with both excitement and concern, so I welcome participation in discussions about how we might effectively harness the power of this medium without compromising its value.

UNDERSTANDING THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY PROCESS

THE ISSUE AND RESPONSE

In 2018 and 2019 respectively, the McConnell Foundation and the Department of Canadian Heritage agreed to fund a three-year Commission to examine the impact of digital technologies on Canadian democracy and society.

The institutions and regulations that safeguarded people and the public interest throughout the era of print media, landlines, cinema, and broadcast TV are less equipped to deal with this new era of digital technologies. The Canadian Commission on Democratic Expression was created to better understand, anticipate, and respond to the effects of new digital technologies on public life and Canadian democracy. The Commission chose to create a Citizens' Assembly in order to centre the voices and values of Canadians from all backgrounds and corners of this country in this discussion.

WHAT IS A CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY AND CIVIC LOTTERY?

A citizens' assembly is a group of residents who are selected using a process called a civic lottery, a random selection method that prioritizes fairness and wide representation. The individuals selected for a citizens' assembly come together to learn about, and then advise public authorities on, divisive and complex issues that typically involve trade-offs or compromises. The assembly members' objective is to reach a consensus on a series of recommendations that can be directed to government, industry, and society at large.

The 2020 Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression provided advice and recommendations concerning how governments and industry should regulate digital technologies to both protect democratic expression and shield people from hatred, misinformation, and exploitation. Their full report can be found here.

The 2021 Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression was mandated to consider whether there should be legal penalties or other consequences for individuals and organizations that knowingly spread disinformation online with the intent to cause harm.

In spring 2021, 12,500 invitations were sent to randomly selected households across Canada. The invitations were transferable to anyone aged 18 or over living in that residence.

The letter invited recipients to volunteer their time to meet online and in person, learn about issues, and discuss and propose recommendations to inform the work of the Canadian Commission on Democratic Expression, as well as governments across Canada.

Over 650 invitees volunteered for the Citizens' Assembly, and from this pool of eligible volunteers, 42 were selected by Civic Lottery. This stratified sampling methodology ensured that members were selected at random, but in a way that broadly represented the demographics of Canada — balancing for gender, geographic representation from all ten provinces and three territories, and representations of age groups, preferred official language (English and French), and Indigenous communities. Civic lotteries produce broadly diverse groups without selection criteria such as ethnicity, income, educational level, familiarity with the topic, or other attributes. In short, the Assembly was composed in such a way as to deliver good demographic diversity and to ensure that it was broadly representative of the residents of Canada.

Each of the 42 members generously agreed to spend three Saturdays in three-hour online sessions and five days in Ottawa working on behalf of all Canadian residents to fulfill a five-part mandate:

1. **Learn about the principles of democratic expression and the social impact of digital technologies;**

2. **Examine existing institutions and regulations that safeguard both democratic speech and the public interest;**

3. **Consider the effectiveness of existing Canadian laws;**

4. **Explore how other countries are responding to this challenge; and**

5. **Issue a series of consensus recommendations concerning the measures the federal government and industry should take.**

UNDERSTANDING THE PROCESS

Session 1: Saturday, October 9, 2021

Assembly Chair Peter MacLeod and co-host Émilie Hervieux began the first virtual session by welcoming all members and providing a quick overview of the Assembly's mandate, tasks, and meeting schedule. Members were then given the chance to introduce themselves and talk about their hopes for the process.

The session featured three presentations followed by Q&As. First, former lawyer and CBC journalist Lisa Taylor defined the issue of misinformation and outlined possible ways to tackle the problem. Second, award-winning reporter Jane Lytvynenko spoke about Networked Disinformation and the threats it poses to society and democracy. Third, Gallit Dobner, Director of the Centre for International Digital Policy at Global Affairs Canada, helped members understand the dangers of foreign state sponsored disinformation and the challenges in responding to it domestically.

The session included one small group breakout discussion, where Assembly members described their own experiences with misinformation on the internet and shared their major concerns based on what they had heard from the day's speakers.

Session 2: Saturday, October 23, 2021

Assembly Chair Peter MacLeod and co-host Émilie Hervieux began the second virtual meeting by welcoming members, recapping what was heard in the previous session, and briefly outlining the health measures put in place for the following month's in-person meetings in Ottawa.

The session featured three presentations followed by Q&As. First, Cara Zwibel, Director of the Fundamental Freedoms Program at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association, discussed relevant legal principles that surround the regulation of false information online. Second, Anne-Marie Boisvert, a specialist in criminal law and professor at University of Montreal, discussed the nuances of making new laws for penalizing individuals or organizations that spread disinformation online. Third, Kent Roach, Professor of Law at the University of Toronto, spoke about other legal remedies and alternatives that could help regulate disinformation without resorting to criminal law.

The session included two small group breakout discussions, where Assembly members considered when disinformation should be addressed through criminal law and when other legal alternatives would be preferable. A representative of each group shared their group's views in plenary as the final activity of the day.

Session 3: Saturday, November 6, 2021

The third virtual meeting began with a general recap of the previous session, particularly the different levels of legal instruments to tackle disinformation. Assembly Chair Peter MacLeod and co-host Émilie Hervieux also revisited the Assembly's mandate, outlined the day's general agenda, and encouraged members to share their thoughts on what had been heard so far.

The session featured two presentations followed by Q&As. First, Karim Benyekhlef from the University of Montréal's Faculty of Law shared his thoughts on regulating online disinformation. Second, Dr. Heidi Tworek, associate professor of international history and public policy from the University of British Columbia, shared some ideas and examples on how platforms could be regulated on a global level.

The session included two small group breakout discussions after the presentations, followed by a full group or plenary discussion. Assembly members shared their thoughts on what objectives should guide Canada's anti-disinformation efforts and what could be learned by looking at other countries.

Session 4: Wednesday, November 17, 2021

The Assembly's first in-person gathering was an informal meeting where the members shared a meal together and met each other for the first time. They were addressed by Ed Greenspon, President and CEO of the Public Policy Forum, who acknowledged their volunteerism and the difficulty of the task at hand. Over dinner, members got to know each other by chatting about where they were from, why they decided to volunteer, what they were hoping to contribute to the Assembly, and what advice they got from friends and family back home.

Session 5: Thursday, November 18, 2021

The first full day of working sessions began by establishing the only real ground rule of the process: respect for one another is paramount. Peter and Emilie then provided a review of the learnings that had been presented in the online sessions. The day's first presenter was Richard Fadden, former National Security Advisor to the Prime Minister and Director of CSIS. Mr. Fadden shared his concerns about the extent to which disinformation is part of clear foreign policy by some state actors and how a suite of regulations, legal remedies, and diplomacy will all be needed in some combined effort to manage the threat. He addressed the group with suggestions from a national security perspective, and presented more international context to the issue.

Assembly members then worked in small groups to determine the values that they felt should guide their approach to regulating the spread of disinformation online. Through distillation work, seven values were prioritized and defined.

Members heard from Laura Tribe, Executive Director of OpenMedia, who spoke about the three tenets of her organization's work: keeping the internet open, affordable, and surveillance-free. She promoted a user-centred approach to regulation that prioritizes transparency, user-empowerment, and freedom of expression.

Finally, the members enjoyed a keynote address and lively question and answer period with Michael Geist, Law Professor at the University of Ottawa and Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law, as well as contributor to *The Globe and Mail* and host of the Law Bytes podcast. Professor Geist gave an overview of the reach of the issue, the approach Canada has taken, and a variety of suggestions including: transparency; corporate responsibility; a refusal to allow corporations to profit from misinformation; accountability; legal reform including privacy/data governance, platform liability, and competition law; and individual responsibility.

Session 6: Friday, November 19, 2021

Friday's session began with some reflections from the members on the previous day's work, and was observed by some special guests including public servants and staff from MP and Senators' offices.

Eve Gaumond from University of Laval and contributor to the *Lawfare* blog, and Michele Austin, Head of Policy at Twitter Canada, shared their thoughts on the issue.

Ms. Gaumond provided some concrete suggestions for regulation options including: regulating deep fakes, giving users more control of their experience and data, strengthening privacy laws to prohibit the use of personal data for microtargeting, and enacting a narrower version of section 91(1)CEA.

Ms. Austin spoke about what Twitter does to protect users including their "Report" feature and the ability to turn the algorithm on and off. She also admitted that there are some elements of their product and its algorithms that they will always want to protect from public scrutiny. She acknowledged that disinformation can create significant harms, but that Twitter as a platform has also done a lot of good in the world including the Arab Spring and the #MeToo movements.

With all of this in mind, the members then began discussing the most important threats that disinformation poses to government, society, individuals and families, and business. After some work to define and consolidate, eight potential threats were established and refined. The group continued their discussions by identifying the reasons why Canadians should care about these threats, the factors that cause these threats, and the remedies that could be considered to address them.

Session 7: Saturday, November 20, 2021

This day was spent entirely focused on policy options to address and manage the threats identified earlier. After a variety of potential remedies were suggested, six overarching objectives were established: Legal

Reform, User Requirements and   Controls, Research, Public Education and Awareness, Platform Standards and Disclosures, and Regulatory Oversight.

The members worked in small groups, each devoted to one of the objectives above, to dive deep into specific recommendations for policy options. After extensive deliberation and discussion, including presentations to and feedback from the wider group, 27 recommendations were advanced.

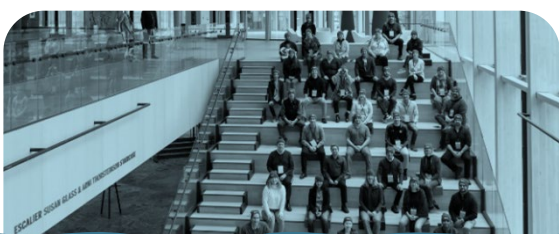## Session 8: Sunday, November 21, 2021

The final day of the Assembly saw the group refine their recommendations and clarify who they are as individuals and as a group, why they volunteered, what they learned throughout the process, and why they think the government should act.

The Assembly concluded with a presentation to the members of the Canadian Commission for Democratic Expression, public servants, constituents from the Public Policy Forum, and other interested parties. The members then fielded questions from the audience and were officially thanked with certificates of appreciation.

THE REPORT ON THE CITIZENS' ASSEMBLY ON DEMOCRATIC EXPRESSION

SECTION 1:
WHO WE ARE

We are a diverse group of 42 Canadians, coming together from all corners of our vast country. Like Canada, we represent both Indigenous and non-Indigenous identities, as well as new Canadians and long-established citizens. We are diverse by ethnicity, age, gender, and — importantly for this process — in our thinking, ideas, and experience with digital platforms.

We come from different backgrounds, including non-democratic countries, and find ourselves on all sides of the political spectrum.

Having observed the continued negative impact of disinformation during our lives, we hope to be a part of positive change to help build a stronger Canada.

We are privileged to have seen the excellent quality of work that emerged from our combined effort.

Together we have a voice!

SECTION 2:
WHY WE VOLUNTEERED

We volunteered because we are concerned and want to improve and protect the state of democratic expression in Canada now and for future generations.

We volunteered out of personal and social responsibility with a unified goal of strengthening our democracy and preserving its ethics.

We are exercising our civic duties by participating firsthand in the democratic process, striving to improve the state of democratic expression in Canada.

We volunteered as individuals and became a group.

SECTION 3: WHAT WE LEARNED

The speed of the internet transforms the village of Canada into the whole world with all of the impacts and effects this entails. There are no national borders for information and disinformation in our online world. That said, while disinformation affects all Canadians, it affects communities differently, causing particular harm to First Nations communities, new Canadians, and marginalized groups.

The threat we're dealing with is targeted, deliberate disinformation from both foreign and domestic sources with the aim of destabilizing Canadian society and eroding trust in Canadian institutions. These systemic campaigns can exist as an extension of foreign policy from certain state actors. While the extent of our freedom of expression laws makes up the core of being Canadian, it also leaves us susceptible to these kinds of disinformation attacks.

Technology and culture change at a pace that Canadian law cannot keep up with. Our laws need to be quickly reviewed and updated. However, the impact of what Canada can do alone is limited since digital platforms operate internationally and are mostly headquartered in other jurisdictions.

Furthermore, digital media companies' intentions are focused on profit, and not on personal or societal well-being. Each platform has its own business model, and thus regulations and

legislation must be flexible enough to apply broadly to different platforms and different forms of social interaction.

The magnitude and the scope of the problem is eye-opening.

No easy solutions exist and no one policy alone will be able to address the issue, but there are many viable ideas. Importantly, a collaborative national and international approach to solving the problem should be prioritized.

SECTION 4: WHY WE THINK GOVERNMENT SHOULD ACT

As members of the Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression, we come from across Canada, representing all generations, backgrounds, and experiences. Despite our differences, we all agree — and believe Canadians agree — that we need immediate action to address disinformation.

Democracy is a Canadian value. It is fragile and it needs protection. Disinformation erodes public trust, threatens our democratic institutions, and has the potential to destabilize our society. Disinformation can disrupt the public discourse on any issue, making progress more difficult. Addressing disinformation must be a public priority.

The threat is real.

We have seen examples in other countries of the real consequences of, and the damage caused by, disinformation. We know the threat exists at home and abroad. We have seen the road ahead and we must course-correct now.

We have been reactive. To this point, social media platforms have gone unchecked. Profitability has prevailed over privacy and data ownership. Inadequate data protection policies and the lack of recognition of our data privacy rights have disempowered us. It is overdue that we take a proactive approach for the public good.

As Canadians we need to assert control and restore our voices.

This is not only a threat to Canadians who have digital lives online. The impacts are cascading across generations. We must all learn digital literacy skills to question what we see online, and to discern for ourselves what is credible and what is not.

We all appreciate that technology changes quickly. We must also acknowledge it can change our society just as fast. Technology has changed in the time you've taken to read these words. We can't afford delay.

We can't wait until we have the perfect solution. The time to act is <u>now</u>.

SECTION 5:
VALUES

The following values were determined by the Assembly members to be essential to guiding their work and were considered in the recommendations in section 7.

5.1 **Transparency**

Transparency ensures the open availability of information in a format that is user-friendly, readily accessible, and concise. This encourages societal trust and empowers individual users, researchers, and decision-makers to make informed choices.

5.2 **Doable**

Doable policies and interventions do not exceed available human and financial resources, and are created with realistic timelines and with measures proportionate to need.

5.3 **User Privacy and Protection**

User protection empowers Canadian citizens, in particular vulnerable and marginalized populations, to hold people and organizations accountable for undue online harm. Individuals should own their data and be able to control who uses and accesses their data.

5.4 Dynamic

Dynamic policies and interventions meet the needs of today's technological landscape while being adaptable to future technological and societal changes. These policies should be subject to routine evaluation and review.

5.5 Ethical

Ethical practice strives to cause no harm to individuals or the public. Harms can be physical, emotional, mental, political, or financial. Ethical practice is a foundation for values such as accountability and transparency and includes the duty to act responsibly in every online environment.

5.6 Expression

Expression preserves Charter rights, such as the fundamental freedom to dissent and express one's ideas and opinions, within legal limits.

5.7 Accountability

Both individuals and platforms must face repercussions when they do not act ethically, responsibly, or transparently. Consequences should vary proportionately based on scale of infraction and type of perpetrator.

SECTION 6:
THREATS

6.1 National Security

Disinformation is a matter of national security. Foreign or domestic actors are using social media platforms to instill doubt, fuel division, and create social instability. We understand that Canada is vulnerable to targeted campaigns to erode confidence in our democratic system and social order. This concerns Canadians because this disinformation from state and non-state actors can jeopardize our democracy, freedom, prosperity, and way of life.

6.2 Financial Loss and Harms

Individuals, businesses, and organizations may be vulnerable to loss of income or assets if targeted by disinformation. Vulnerable individuals are more likely to be targeted by scams resulting in financial loss. Mitigating and recovering from damages caused by disinformation incurs its own financial burden.

6.3 Health and Well-being

Disinformation is a threat to our health and well-being because it can cause physical, mental, and developmental harm.

- Harms to physical health can result when someone is misled by inaccurate scientific or medical information;

- Harms to mental or psychological health result from being a target of disinformation that seeks to marginalize or harass an individual or group; and

- Developmental harms can impact children and youth who are learning, socializing, and relating to the world through social media.

The speed at which disinformation spreads and the reach of social media platforms are undermining people's trust in health professionals.

6.4 Polarization and Social Division

Disinformation increases polarization and divisions within society. It increases the perception of threats between groups, creating an "us versus them" narrative. This reduces our ability to talk freely with one another. In a diverse society like Canada, these divisions should be avoided in order to better protect democratic society and vulnerable communities.

Canadians should care about polarization and social division because it pushes people into combative attitudes that erode trust in our relationships with each other and in our political and institutional structures. Ultimately, this fuels confusion, anger, and disengagement and weakens our democratic society. Disinformation breaks down democratic systems and diversity of thought.

6.5 Radicalization and Weaponization of Disinformation

Disinformation campaigns can lead individuals and groups to take violent, hateful, or extreme actions. Unfettered access to harmful sources of information and the amplification of disinformation can be dangerous to the safety of

Canadians, the cohesion of society, and our democratic balance. We believe that maintaining social cohesion and building a better informed public should be explicit objectives of government policies to combat disinformation.

6.6 Discrimination and Victimization

Disinformation contributes to discrimination and victimization and disproportionately affects women, minorities, and other marginalized groups. Canadians should understand that these impacts are not felt equally, but that discrimination ultimately impacts everyone and can create a domino effect that weakens our society. We need policies that help to protect those who are most vulnerable, and which provide recourse and access to justice.

6.7 Reputation and Information Integrity

Disinformation campaigns can cause profound damage to an individual's or an organization's reputation, and erode confidence in mainstream sources of information. We note the particular impact on public persons — including political figures and activists — where false allegations or information can severely impact reputation. Regrettably, disinformation and outrage engages and mobilizes people, and social media platforms play an unparalleled role in amplifying these harms.

6.8 Democratic Participation and Public Trust

Disinformation can dampen democratic participation and contribute to cynicism and disengagement. It obscures expertise and undermines trust in society's institutions. It

discourages informed decision-making and civic-mindedness. We are concerned about the fragility of our democracy and the threats posed to it. Disinformation is corrosive and demands a robust response.

SECTION 7:
RECOMMENDATIONS

RESEARCH

7.1 We urge the federal government to fund an independent research centre to examine the social effects of digital networks and artificial intelligence.

7.2 We urge the federal Tri-Council of national research funders to prioritize the expansion of the "Imagining Canada's Future" initiative or similar initiatives like "Just Tech" to promote interdisciplinary research that examines the spread of digital disinformation: understanding how it happens, who is most targeted and impacted, and the resulting harms. This is necessary to inform policies and better understand the social and commercial impact of disinformation.

7.3 We urge the creation of a new professional body for Canadian software developers and computer engineers that would uphold their own professional and ethical standards of

practice. This could build on the efforts underway at the Institute of Electrical and Electronics Engineers, and would recognize the maturation of the field as well as its social impact.

7.4 We urge Canadian post-secondary institutions to strengthen their research ethics training and guidelines with respect to software development and artificial intelligence so they are comparable with other sensitive research studies. This is necessary because software development and artificial intelligence are not adequately covered by current research ethics guidelines. It also recognizes that digital networks have profound social impacts and therefore merit closer scrutiny and care.

REGULATORY OVERSIGHT

7.5 We urge the Canadian government to fund an independent and dedicated digital regulator to help combat the effects and prevalence of disinformation. It would engage stakeholders including members of the public, researchers, and legal and industry representatives.

The regulator would:

a. Enact a Canadian cross-platform code of conduct with obligations proportionate to the size and scope of the platform;

b. Investigate complaints against platforms through an e-court system allowing swift access to justice and promoting accountability;

c. Ensure that the platforms comply with their own codes of conduct and provide recourse to the law as well as appropriate enforcement mechanisms to compel compliance;

d. Provide critical coordination with different government departments, other government agencies, and law enforcement; and

e. Compile and publish an annual report detailing the number, nature, and outcomes of complaints.

7.6 We urge the federal government to appoint a special envoy on disinformation. The envoy would foster dialogue with social media platforms, foreign governments, and multilateral bodies in an effort to identify threats as well as opportunities to cooperate on solutions to the global challenge of disinformation.

7.7 We urge the creation of a global forum on disinformation for the purpose of securing greater cooperation and agreements to reduce the prevalence of disinformation.

PLATFORM STANDARDS AND DISCLOSURE

7.8 We urge the government to mandate the digital regulator to identify the sources of harmful disinformation and to require platforms to report them with standardized labels and flags.

7.9 We urge the government to mandate the digital regulator to require platforms to disclose takedown activities in order to prevent over-zealous content removal and protect freedom of speech.

7.10 We urge the government to mandate platforms to track disinformation and work with the digital regulator to make algorithmic changes that reduce the prevalence of disinformation.

7.11 We urge the government to compel platforms to share with the digital regulator and accredited researchers information that can demonstrate how their algorithms work. This should be evidence-based and verifiable and show how demographics are targeted, how information gets amplified, and various interaction trends.

LEGAL REFORMS

7.12 We urge the government and lawmakers to provide a technical and legal definition of disinformation as well as online harm for the purpose of establishing standards and regulations.

7.13 We urge the federal government to revive section 91(1) of the Canada Elections Act, which refers to reinstating the word "knowingly" in order to specify intent with respect to false statements regarding political candidates.

7.14 We urge the federal government to review and update the Canada Elections Act to enable law enforcement to hold responsible those who orchestrate disinformation campaigns that aim to undermine election integrity, while protecting statements that are made in good faith, as fair comment, in jest, or parody.

7.15 We urge the government to review and strengthen whistleblower protections to safeguard those who can demonstrate corporate actions that intentionally contribute to the prevalence of disinformation.

7.16 We urge the government to reform the Criminal Code to make possible the successful prosecution of domestic organizations and individuals conspiring with others to create disinformation campaigns, as defined by Parliament, which cause significant harm(s) to the public interest.

7.17 We urge the government to study and enact measures to better protect minors from disinformation and associated online harms, including removing platforms' ability to individually target content and advertising to minors.

7.18 We believe that any new digital regulations must be backed up by substantive and proportionate penalties and that regulations will be most effective when undertaken in unison with other jurisdictions.

USER REQUIREMENTS AND CONTROL

7.19 We urge regulators to require the use of plain language in the terms of service for digital platforms.

7.20 We call on the Canadian government to enact the necessary regulatory framework to give users full ownership and control of their data. This framework would:

a. Change how user data is collected and shared by enacting personal data privacy as a default;

b. Insist that users opt-in to data collection and sharing schemes, while ensuring those who opt-out are still able to access a substantial portion of platform services. (Platforms may still require data to be collected to enable some specific services.); and

c. Ensure that any data collected by default must be absolutely necessary.

7.21 We also believe that Canadians should be able to shape their online user experience and be required to provide informed consent before algorithmically derived content is displayed. Users must have the ability to opt-out of certain keywords, topics, phrases, etc.

PUBLIC EDUCATION AND AWARENESS

7.22 We call on the federal government to fund a new Canadian Centre for Prevention of Disinformation (CCPD). We believe that a well-resourced organization must exist with a mandate to educate the public about disinformation. The CCPD would be established as an independent branch of the digital regulator.

7.23 The Centre would produce new tools and resources to support Canadians to be better informed and able to identify disinformation. It would also produce materials for school programs as well as adult and senior outreach programs.

7.24 This Centre would also lead several initiatives to raise awareness and educate Canadians about the risks and dangers of disinformation including:

a. A large-scale awareness campaign on disinformation and digital literacy. This public education campaign must reach all demographics, therefore requiring a multi-medium approach because our population consumes media in many different ways. Multiple recommended platforms for this mass communications campaign include:

- Online, television, radio, and print messaging;

- An awareness week; and

- Public service announcements.

7.25 Toolkits should be created and provided to various stakeholders (individuals, children, parents, community service providers, educators, business groups, etc.). These toolkits will include a definition of disinformation, as well as resources available for those interested in learning about and addressing the issue.

7.26 We also urge the provinces and territories to address disinformation and digital safety in existing curricula for a range of age groups. Reaching the younger age groups is important because it will help develop their critical thinking skills and reduce future victimization.

7.27 We urge governments to invest in quality information and reputable journalism at the national, regional, and community levels. News articles should contain identifiers making them easier to track and validate. Quality journalism is essential to ensuring people have access to verifiable and trustworthy information.

APPENDICES

MINORITY REPORTS

Members were encouraged to share all points of view throughout the Assembly process. Discussion remained lively but respectful throughout the proceedings, and while some minor differences in opinion remained, every member of the Assembly endorsed the recommendations in this final report. However, members also were given the opportunity to write a minority report if they wished to highlight any points of agreement or disagreement, or to include their own commentary.

From Keith Sheppard:

I was very satisfied with the whole process. The Assembly was well organized. The guest speakers and follow-up discussions were very informative.

From Dawn Sugimoto:

Regarding the Assembly's Public Education and Awareness recommendations (7.23 and 7.24), I suggest the regulator require online platforms to use their algorithms to target free public service announcements linking to educational resources created by the new centre. We know these algorithms are highly successful in targeting age- and interest-appropriate content. This promoted content should be considered an industry social responsibility and provided at no cost to taxpayers. The occasional message ("Some of what you've read is not true. Learn more…") would also provide a moment of pause, slowing us from immediately sharing something without considering the source or reliability. Let's leverage the power of these algorithms for public education and awareness as we work toward more transparency and user control over their application.

From Yvan Gosselin (translated from French):

Our priority is to protect and promote the integrity of citizens who live in a democratic society. The Assembly represented our collective action and was a container and protector of our individual liberty. We could always improve the democratic discourse around issues, but what about our real convictions in the need to act?

The Assembly is a messenger of a democratic society that proposes a realistic and human-centred approach to immediate action. It is a light in a dark world of lies and disinformation. These lies act like a virus destroying the integrity and well-being of people that make up our democracy.

The Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression represents the nature of our democratic thinking and the soul of our Canadian society. It emphasizes the importance of action.

We have discussed enough, it is time to act towards disinformation.

Talk less, act more.

From James Davies:

Regarding section 7.16, I disagree with the "conspiring with others" wording in this recommendation. Conspiracy is already defined under S.465 C.C.C. and it is not necessary to include that wording here as it is an inherent part of any indictable or summary Criminal Code offence. More to the point, if left this way it would mean that individuals committing this offence would be immune from prosecution unless they conspired with others. The salient point is "significant harm" which would have to be proved and would preclude any prosecution for minor or insignificant occurrences.

From André Cyr (translated from French):

I would like to thank your entire team for all the work you have done to make this Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression possible.

Everything was well prepared with logic and promptness including the food (As Obelix says so well in *Asterix*: When the appetite goes well, all goes well!), the guest speakers, the different focus groups, and topics for discussion. I felt at ease throughout the process with our group representing all of Canada.

You contribute with your assemblies to building a better world not only in Canada but around the world.

We have a tall ladder to climb. Each step up this ladder brings us a little more light and understanding to try to live better in our everyday lives.

You helped us build a new bar on this scale to go higher.

If I may quote Mr. Neil Armstrong's sentence when he set foot on the moon: This is a small step for man, a great step for humanity.

I humbly say to you: It has been an honour for me to have been able to participate in this Assembly. It's an experience I'll remember for the rest of my life.

Thank you to all.

GLOSSARY OF TERMS

Algorithm: In computer programming, a set of instructions designed to perform a specific task. Digital platforms and search engines use proprietary algorithms to organize and display content and search results to users, based on input that may include user data and past activity on the platform.

Digital platform: An internet company and/or service on which registered users post information and communicate digitally, including popular social media sites/companies such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, TikTok, and more.

Disinformation: Intentionally false or misleading information shared to make money, have political influence, or maliciously cause trouble, harm, or sow distrust.

E-court: An online and accessible tribunal that adjudicates complaints concerning harmful speech as well as other breaches to laws, regulations, and standards that govern digital realms.

Internet (or digital) literacy: The knowledge, skills, and behaviours required to access and use internet services and tools, social media and digital platforms, devices that connect to the internet, and related technology. This includes the ability to appropriately judge the nature and truthfulness of content.

Misinformation: False information that one does not realize is false or misleading, often shared because one is trying to help, is afraid, is trying to protect people, for fun, or as a display of their identity.

GLOSSARY OF LAW

Administrative law: Ensures that the government deals with citizens fairly and lawfully.

Canada Elections Act, S.C. 2000, c. 9

91(1) No person or entity shall, with the intention of affecting the results of an election, make or publish, during the election period,

> (a) a false statement that a candidate, a prospective candidate, the leader of a political party or a public figure associated with a political party has committed an offence under an Act of Parliament or a regulation made under such an Act — or under an Act of the legislature of a province or a regulation made under such an Act — or has been charged with or is under investigation for such an offence; or

> (b) a false statement about the citizenship, place of birth, education, professional qualifications or membership in a group or association of a candidate, a prospective candidate, the leader of a political party or a public figure associated with a political party.

Civil law: A body of law that outlines rules on settling disputes between individuals.

Constitutional law: A body of law derived from the common law or a written constitution that defines the powers of the executive, legislature and judiciary and guides the duties and rights of citizens.

Criminal code: The Criminal Code of Canada is federal legislation that sets out criminal law and procedure in Canada. Criminal law prohibits harmful or undesirable conduct, and sets out the processes in which the Crown responds to it.

Criminal law: A body of law that defines conduct prohibited by Parliament because it threatens or harms public safety and sets out punishments for those acts.

R v Zundel [1992] 2 S.C.R. 731 is a landmark Supreme Court of Canada decision where the Court struck down the provision in the Criminal Code that prohibited publication of false information or news on the basis that it violated the freedom of expression provision under section 2(b) of the Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms.

Section 181 of the Canadian Criminal Code: Spreading false news; Every one who wilfully publishes a statement, tale or news that he knows is false and that causes or is likely to cause injury or mischief to a public interest is guilty of an indictable offence and liable to imprisonment for a term not exceeding two years.

This section was struck down by the Supreme Court of Canada in 1992 in response to R v Zundel, and officially repealed from the Criminal Code in 2019.

KEY PLAYERS:

Canadian Heritage and its portfolio organizations play a vital role in the cultural, civic and economic life of Canadians. Arts, culture and heritage represent more than $57 billion in the Canadian economy and close to 673,000 jobs in sectors such as film and video, broadcasting, music, publishing, archives, performing arts, heritage institutions, festivals and celebrations.

Competition Bureau, as an independent law enforcement agency, ensures that Canadian businesses and consumers prosper in a competitive and innovative marketplace. They are a federal institution that is part of the Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada portfolio. Headed by the Commissioner of Competition, the Bureau is responsible for the administration and enforcement of the Competition Act, the Consumer Packaging and Labelling Act (except as it relates to food), the Textile Labelling Act and the Precious Metals Marking Act.

Digital Citizen Initiative is a multi-component strategy through the Department of Heritage that aims to support democracy and social cohesion in Canada by building citizen resilience against online disinformation and building partnerships to support a healthy information ecosystem. The Digital Citizen Initiative also supports a community of Canadian researchers that promote a healthy information ecosystem to help Canadians and the Government understand online disinformation and its impact on Canadian society, and in turn build an evidence-base to identify potential action and develop future policy-making.

Office of the Privacy Commissioner of Canada provides advice and information to individuals about protecting personal information. They also enforce two federal privacy laws: the Privacy Act and the Personal Information Protection and Electronic Documents Act, that set out the rules for how federal government institutions and certain businesses must handle personal information.

GUEST PRESENTERS

Thirteen experts generously gave their time and shared their knowledge with the Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression. The Assembly extends its sincerest thanks to each of them.

MICHELE AUSTIN

Michele Austin is the Head of Policy at Twitter Canada. She works closely with government partners, policy stakeholders, advertisers, and civil society to craft policies that respect the principles of an open internet while keeping conversations safe.

Michele brings more than 25 years of communications and policy experience to her role at Twitter. She has worked at the executive level in the public, non-profit, and private sector. In 2006 she became the first female Chief of Staff at Industry Canada in the federal government.

KARIM BENYEKHLEF

Karim Benyekhlef has been a professor in the Faculty of Law at the Université de Montréal since 1989. He has been seconded to the Centre for Research in Public Law since 1990 and served as its Director from 2006 to 2014. He was also the Director of the Strategic Law, Change and Governance Group. At the same time, he was the Scientific Director of the Université de Montréal's International Research and Study Centre from 2009 to 2012. He is now the Director of the Cyberjustice Laboratory, which he founded in 2010.

ANNE-MARIE BOISVERT

Anne-Marie Boisvert is a specialist in criminal law who started her career with the Faculty of Law at Université de Montréal in 1986. She has published numerous articles on criminal responsibility; notably, on the subject of fraud and the criminal responsibility of legal persons. For many years, Professor Boisvert was President of the Criminal Law Committee at the Barreau du Québec and she has presided over a work group mandated by the Quebec Ministry of Public Safety to review provincial policies regarding the management of collaborators of justice (Boisvert Commission). Anne-Marie Boisvert has been the editor of Canadian Criminal Law Review since it first appeared in 1996.

GALLIT DOBNER

Gallit Dobner is Director of the Centre for International Digital Policy at Global Affairs Canada, with responsibility for the G7 Rapid Response Mechanism to counter foreign threats to democracy as well as broader issues at the intersection of foreign policy and technology. She formerly served as Political Counsellor in The Hague, where she was responsible for bilateral relations and the international courts and tribunals (2015-19), and in Algiers (2010-12). Gallit has also served as Deputy Director at Global Affairs Canada for various international security files, including Counter Terrorism, the Middle East, and Afghanistan. Prior to this, Gallit was a Middle East analyst at Canada's Privy Council Office.

RICHARD FADDEN

Richard Fadden was National Security Adviser to the Prime Minister of Canada (2015-2016). Previously, he was Deputy Minister of National Defence (2013-2015) and served as Director of the Canadian Security and Intelligence Service (2009-2013). He also served as Deputy Minister for Citizenship and Immigration Canada (2006-2009) and Natural Resources Canada (2005-2006). He was President of the Canadian Food Inspection Agency (2002-2005) and Deputy Clerk and Counsel in the Privy Council Office (2000-2002), during which he assumed the additional duties of Security and Intelligence Coordinator in 2001. Over the course of his career, Richard worked in a variety of positions in the Department of External Affairs, the Office of the Auditor General of Canada, Natural Resources Canada, and the Treasury Board Secretariat. He holds a Graduate Diploma in Law from the University of Ottawa, a Bachelor of Laws from the University of Montreal, and a B.A. (Political Science) from McGill University. He was made an Officer of the Order of Canada in 2017.

EVE GAUMOND

Eve Gaumond is a scholar working at the intersection of law and technology. She holds a degree in law and is an affiliate at Quebec's Observatory on the societal impacts of AI and digital technology. She is also a contributor to *Lawfare*.

MICHAEL GEIST

Michael Geist is a law professor at the University of Ottawa where he holds the Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law and is a member of the Centre for Law, Technology and Society. Dr. Geist's column on technology law issues regularly appears in *The Globe and Mail*. He is the editor of several copyright books, several monthly technology law publications, and the author of a popular blog on internet and intellectual property law issues.

He has received numerous awards for his work and was named one of Canada's Top 40 Under 40 in 2003. Dr. Geist was appointed to the Order of Ontario in 2018.

JANE LYTVYNENKO

Jane Lytvynenko is an award-winning reporter in the field of disinformation and online investigations. She recently joined the Technology and Social Change Project at the Shorenstein Center at Harvard University as a senior research fellow. At Harvard, she is focusing on developing training on investigating disinformation and researching the issue for the Media Manipulation Handbook. Lytvynenko previously spent nearly five years at BuzzFeed News, where she was a senior reporter. Her work has focused on the rise of conspiracy theories, hyperpartisan news, and extremism globally.

KENT ROACH

Kent Roach is Professor of Law at the University of Toronto Faculty of Law. He is a graduate of the University of Toronto and of Yale, and a former law clerk to Justice Bertha Wilson of the Supreme Court of Canada. Professor Roach has been editor-in-chief of the *Criminal Law Quarterly* since 1998. In 2002, he was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada. In 2013, he was one of four academics awarded a Trudeau Fellowship in recognition of his research and social contributions. In 2015, he was appointed a Member of the Order of Canada.

LISA TAYLOR

Lisa Taylor has focused on the intersection of law, ethics, and journalism throughout her career. She is a former lawyer and Canadian Broadcasting Corporation journalist who teaches journalism law and ethics. Lisa is a Senior Fellow with Ryerson University's Centre for Free Expression and a member of the Canadian Association of Journalists' ethics advisory committee. She also leads the Canadian Worlds of Journalism study team, an interdisciplinary group that, together with researchers from 70 countries, regularly assesses the state of journalism throughout the world.

LAURA TRIBE

Laura Tribe is the Executive Director at OpenMedia, a community-based organization working to keep the Internet open, affordable, and surveillance-free. Laura has over a decade of experience advocating for communications policies in the public interest, including issues of connectivity, free expression, and privacy. She has testified before the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC), numerous parliamentary committees, and the Senate of Canada, representing the public interest. Laura holds a BA in Media, Information and Technoculture from Western University, and an MA in Communications from Carleton University, where she studied the intersection of human rights and information communications technologies in projects attempting to bridge the digital divide.

HEIDI TWOREK

Heidi Tworek is associate professor of international history and public policy at the University of British Columbia, Vancouver, Canada. She is an award-winning researcher of media, history, health communications, international organizations, and platform governance. She is a member of the Science and Technology Studies program, the Language Science Initiative, and the Institute for European Studies at UBC. She is a senior fellow at the Centre for International Governance Innovation as well as a non-resident fellow at the German Marshall Fund of the United States and the Canadian Global Affairs Institute. She co-edits *Journal of Global History*.

CARA ZWIBEL

Cara Zwibel is the Director of the Fundamental Freedoms Program at the Canadian Civil Liberties Association. She has been with the CCLA in other roles since 2010 and prior to that practiced in commercial litigation, public law, and health law at a national law firm. She articled as a law clerk to the Honourable Justice Ian Binnie at the Supreme Court of Canada before being called to the Ontario bar in 2005. Cara also received her Master of Laws degree from New York University, as an Arthur T. Vanderbilt Scholar.

ABOUT THE COMMISSION AND PARTNERS

THE COMMISSION ON DEMOCRATIC EXPRESSION

The Canadian Commission on Democratic Expression has been constituted to better understand, anticipate, and respond to the effects of new digital technologies on public life and Canadian democracy. In the second of a three-year process, the Commission will deliberate on the central question: "How can governments and the public incentivize greater transparency and accountability measures to minimize the potential harms of online platforms including mis- and disinformation, online hate, and abuses of privacy?" To this end, the Commission will explore a range of policies being debated around the world to make online systems more transparent to users and researchers and accountable to the public interest.

Nine eminent Canadians have agreed to serve as Commissioners in 2021-22. The Commissioners bring a range of perspectives and skills and have extensive experience in the areas of law, media, technology, citizen participation, and politics:

RICK ANDERSON, PRINCIPAL, EARNSCLIFFE STRATEGY GROUP

Rick Anderson brings decades of senior-level experience in business and government to Earnscliffe, with a focus on providing strategic advice and counsel on corporate strategy and public issues management.

Rick works with senior executives in the world's largest and most successful organizations, as well as assisting early-stage and high-growth entrepreneurs. He has deep experience working with C-Suite leaders, and familiarity with public policy, governance, political and regulatory affairs, mergers and acquisitions, and communications and marketing.

Prior to joining Earnscliffe, Rick spent fifteen years in Canada, the US, and the UK with a foremost strategic communications firm and ran his own professional consulting practice. He currently divides his time between Vancouver and Ottawa, working out of Earnscliffe's offices in both cities.

Highly active in politics and public affairs commentary throughout his life, Rick has served in senior advisory positions to prime ministers, party leaders and leadership candidates. He is a frequent political affairs commentator on Canada's leading news organizations.

WENDY CHUN, CANADA 150 RESEARCH CHAIR IN NEW MEDIA, SIMON FRASER UNIVERSITY

Wendy Hui Kyong Chun is Simon Fraser University's Canada 150 Research Chair in New Media and leads the Digital Democracies Institute. She is the author of several works including *Discriminating Data, plus three* other books from MIT: *Updating to Remain the Same: Habitual New Media (2016)*, *Programmed Visions: Software and Memory* (2011), and *Control and Freedom: Power and Paranoia in the Age of Fiber Optics*

(2006). She has been Professor and Chair of the Department of Modern Culture and Media at Brown University, where she worked for almost two decades. She has held numerous visiting chairs and fellowships from institutions such as Harvard, the Annenberg School at the University of Pennsylvania, the Institute for Advanced Study (Princeton), the Guggenheim, ACLS, and American Academy of Berlin.

NATHALIE DES ROSIERS, PRINCIPAL, MASSEY COLLEGE, FULL PROFESSOR, FACULTY OF LAW (COMMON LAW) UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA, DISTINGUISHED VISITOR, FACULTY OF LAW, UNIVERSITY OF TORONTO

Nathalie Des Rosiers is the Principal of Massey College. From 2016 to 2019, she was an MPP representing the riding of Ottawa-Vanier. She was Minister of Natural Resources and Forestry from January to June 2018. Prior to politics, she was the Dean of Law, Common Law, University of Ottawa (2013-2016), General Counsel of the Canadian Civil Liberties Association (2009-2013), Vice-President, Governance, University of Ottawa (2008-2009), Dean of Law, Civil Law (2004-2008), and President of the LAW Commission of Canada (2000-2004).

With Peter Oliver and Patrick Macklem, she co-edited *The Oxford Handbook of the Canadian Constitution* (2017). She also wrote with Louise Langevin and Marie-Pier Nadeau, *L'indemnisation des victimes de violence sexuelle et conjugale* (Prix Walter Owen, 2014). She has received the Order of Canada, the Order of Ontario, honorary doctorates from Université UCL (Belgium) and the Law Society of Ontario, le Prix Christine Tourigny (Barreau du Québec), and is a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada.

AMIRA ELGHAWABY, DIRECTOR OF PROGRAMMING AND OUTREACH, CANADIAN RACE RELATIONS FOUNDATION

Amira Elghawaby is a journalist and human rights advocate.

She currently serves as the Director of Programming and Outreach at the Canadian Race Relations Foundation.

Previously, Amira worked in Canada's labour movement and additionally spent five years promoting the civil liberties of Canadian Muslims at the National Council of Canadian Muslims between 2012 and 2017. She has supported several national initiatives to counter hate and to promote inclusion, including as founding board member of the Canadian Anti-Hate Network and past board member at the Silk Road Institute.

Amira obtained an honours degree in Journalism and Law from Carleton University in 2001.

MERELDA FIDDLER-POTTER, VANIER SCHOLAR, PHD. CANDIDATE, AND EXECUTIVE IN RESIDENCE, JOHNSON SHOYAMA GRADUATE SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY

Merelda is currently a PhD candidate at the Johnson Shoyama Graduate School of Public Policy in Regina. Awarded a Vanier Canada Graduate Scholarship in 2019, her research explores the media's role in helping Canadians learn the truth of our colonial policies, the impact it has on Indigenous people, and how the media can keep Indigenous issues high on the public agenda.

Merelda is also a former journalist and documentary filmmaker, who spent 16 years working for the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation [CBC] in radio, television, and online. She also launched her own documentary film company, making numerous films for national Canadian broadcasters. Merelda has a Masters of Arts in Canadian Plains Studies and a Bachelor's in Journalism and Communications, both from the University of Regina.

In addition to her doctoral studies, Merelda is a sessional lecturer at First Nations University of Canada, where she teaches Indigenous Studies, Indigenous Communication Arts, Indigenous Business, and the Reconciliation Certificate. She was also the Dallas W. Smythe Chair at the University of Regina School of Journalism from 2017-2018.

As a Métis woman committed to creating space in all institutions for Indigenous peoples, Merelda consults with organizations looking to learn about Indigenous Reconciliation and how to employ it effectively in the workplace.

PHILIP HOWARD, DIRECTOR, PROGRAMME ON DEMOCRACY AND TECHNOLOGY AND PROFESSOR OF INTERNET STUDIES, BALLIOL COLLEGE, UNIVERSITY OF OXFORD

As Director of Oxford University's Programme on Democracy and Technology, Phil Howard oversees a large research team working on the use of new information technologies in politics, with the aim of raising civic engagement and improving public life around the world. In addition to his position as Director, Howard is a Professor and Fellow of Balliol College.

Howard, a scholar of political communication and an authority on global media, has long been immersed in the study of elections, conflict, and international affairs. He has done field work in 16 countries — democracies and authoritarian regimes — and even worked as an election observer.

Ground-breaking investigations by Howard and his team have changed the global conversation about the role of social media in public life. Since 2014, Howard has led the study of misinformation around the world, through public writing and lectures, and has advised world governments, the technology industry, and key civil society groups on the best responses to election interference, fake news, and misinformation.

As an academic, Howard has taught courses on political communication, globalization, comparative media systems, international relations, and social science research methods. He has published ten books and edited volumes and authored over 130 scholarly articles, book chapters, and working papers. He has won best book prizes from multiple professional organizations across the social sciences.

He was recently named a "Global Thinker" by Foreign Policy, and the National Democratic Institute gave him their "Democracy Prize" for pioneering the social science of fake news.

VIVEK KRISHNAMURTHY, SAMUELSON-GLUSHKO PROFESSOR OF LAW AT THE UNIVERSITY OF OTTAWA

Vivek Krishnamurthy is the Samuelson-Glushko Professor of Law at the University of Ottawa and Director of CIPPIC — the Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic.

Vivek's teaching, scholarship, and clinical legal practice focus on the complex regulatory and human rights-related challenges that arise in cyberspace. He advises governments, activists, and companies on the human rights impacts of new technologies and is a frequent public commentator on emerging technology and public policy issues.

Vivek was previously the Assistant Director of Harvard Law School's Cyberlaw Clinic and Counsel in the Corporate Social Responsibility Practice at Foley Hoag LLP. He is a Rhodes Scholar and clerked for the Hon. Morris J. Fish of the Supreme Court of Canada upon his graduation from Yale Law School. Vivek is currently a Fellow of the Carr Center for Human Rights Policy at the Harvard Kennedy School, a Faculty Associate of the Berkman Klein Center for Internet & Society at Harvard University, and a Senior Associate of the Human Rights Initiative at the Center for Strategic and International Studies in Washington, D.C.

THE RIGHT HONOURABLE BEVERLEY MCLACHLIN, PC, CC

Beverley McLachlin served as a Justice of the Supreme Court of Canada from 1989 to 2000 and as Chief Justice of the Court from 2000 to 2017.

Ms. McLachlin received her post-secondary education at the University of Alberta: B.A. (Hon.) 1965; M.A. 1968; LL.B. 1968. She practiced law in Alberta and British Columbia and taught law at the University of British Columbia, before being named to the bench in British Columbia, where she served as a trial and appellate judge before being named to the Supreme Court of Canada.

Since retiring from the Supreme Court of Canada, Ms. McLachlin has pursued her interest in dispute resolution as an arbitrator and mediator, as a member of the Hong Kong Court of Appeal, the Singapore International Commercial Court, and the Hong Kong International Arbitration Centre. She continues to work for access to justice and to write and speak on legal and other matters in Canada and abroad.

Ms. McLachlin is a Companion of the Order of Canada and the recipient of numerous awards and honours.

TAYLOR OWEN, BEAVERBROOK CHAIR IN MEDIA, ETHICS AND COMMUNICATIONS AND ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR, MAX BELL SCHOOL OF PUBLIC POLICY, MCGILL UNIVERSITY

Taylor Owen is the Beaverbrook Chair in Media, Ethics and Communications, the founding director of The Center for Media, Technology and Democracy, and an Associate Professor in the Max Bell School of Public Policy at McGill University. He is the host of the Big Tech podcast, a Senior Fellow at the Center for International Governance Innovation, a Fellow at the Public Policy Forum, and sits on the Governing Council of the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC). He was previously an Assistant Professor

of Digital Media and Global Affairs at the University of British Columbia and the Research Director of the Tow Center for Digital Journalism at the Columbia School of Journalism. His Doctorate is from the University of Oxford and he has been a Trudeau and Banting scholar, an Action Canada Fellow, and received the 2016 Public Policy Forum Emerging Leader award.

He is the author of Disruptive Power: The Crisis of the State in the Digital Age (Oxford University Press, 2015) and the co-editor of The World Won't Wait: Why Canada Needs to Rethink its Foreign Policies (University of Toronto Press, 2015) and Journalism After Snowden: The Future of the Free Press in the Surveillance State (Columbia University Press, 2016). His forthcoming book with Emily Bell will be published by Yale University Press in 2021. His work focuses on the intersection of media, technology and public policy and can be found at www.taylorowen.com and @taylor_owen.

PROJECT ORGANIZERS

Public Policy Forum: Project Lead

The Ottawa-based Public Policy Forum is an independent, non-partisan, non-profit organization and a registered charity. PPF builds bridges among diverse participants in the policy-making process and gives them a platform to examine issues, offer new perspectives, and feed fresh ideas into policy discussions. They believe good policy makes a better Canada.

MASS LBP: Project Partner

MASS LBP is Canada's recognized leader in the design of deliberative processes that bridge the distance between citizens, stakeholders, and government. For more than a decade, MASS has been designing and executing innovative deliberative processes that help governments develop more effective policies by working together with their partners and communities.

Max Bell School of Public Policy, McGill University: Project Partner

McGill University's Max Bell School of Public Policy is committed to the research, teaching, public outreach, and practical advocacy of sound public policy. The Max Bell School tackles the complexities of the policymaking process from different perspectives to prepare the next generation of policy leaders for Canada and the world.

PROJECT FUNDERS

Government of Canada: Department of Canadian Heritage

The Department of Canadian Heritage and its Portfolio organizations play a vital role in the cultural, civic, and economic life of Canadians. Their policies and programs promote an environment where Canadians can experience dynamic cultural expressions, celebrate our history and heritage, and build strong communities. The Department invests in the future by supporting the arts, our official and Indigenous languages, and our athletes and the sport system.

The McConnell Foundation

The McConnell Foundation is a private Canadian foundation that develops and applies innovative approaches to social, cultural, economic, and environmental challenges. They do so through granting and investing, capacity building, convening, and enabling co-creation with grantees, partners, and the public.

Assembly development and facilitation

The Citizens' Assembly on Democratic Expression was designed and facilitated by MASS LBP. MASS is Canada's leader in the use of long-form deliberative and participatory processes to shape public policy.

Since 2007, MASS LBP has led some of Canada's most original and ambitious efforts to engage citizens in tackling tough policy options while pioneering the use of Civic Lotteries and Citizens' Reference Panels. As of 2019, 1 in 36 Canadian households had received an invitation to participate in one of 39 Citizens' Assemblies and Reference Panels formed by governments to address a wide range of issues.

Assembly Team:

Peter MacLeod, Assembly Chair

Sarah Yaffe, Project Director

Chris Ellis, Technical Director

Émilie Hervieux, French co-host

Facilitators:

Chimwemwe Alao

Émilie Hervieux

Mélanie Hughes

Jasmin Kay

Gifty MacKay

Laura McPhie

Iavor Puchkarov

Sarah Yaffe

To learn more about their work, please visit masslbp.com.

To follow developments on this project, please visit www.commissioncanada.ca.

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