



November 21, 2024

Subject: Advocating for Increased Investment in Canada Media Fund's Interactive Digital Media Programs for Children and Youth

Dear Valerie Creighton, Nathalie Clermont, Rod Butler and Janine Steele,

On behalf of the Canadian Interactive Alliance, I am writing to advocate for an increase in funding for the Canada Media Fund's (CMF) Interactive Digital Media programs. This investment is vital to addressing the challenges currently faced by traditional linear content in engaging and educating children and youth audiences.

Children's and youth programming, as defined by CMF, serves a critical role in shaping the next generation's creativity, learning, and sense of identity. However, traditional linear formats are increasingly losing ground in capturing the attention of younger audiences who gravitate toward interactive, immersive experiences produced outside of Canada. According to the Entertainment Software Association of Canada, 89% of individuals aged 6 to 17 engage in video gaming, compared to 61% of adults aged 18 to 64. In terms of screen time activities, a March 2023 survey revealed that 50% of Canadian children spend most of their screen time playing games, while 38% primarily watch TV.* With these shifts in media consumption habits, the importance of supporting Canadian-owned interactive digital media (IDM) projects has never been greater.

Children and Youth culturally focused Interactive digital media (IDM) has the potential to transform how we engage children and youth audiences by meeting young audiences where they are—online and in interactive spaces—offering dynamic, participatory content that moves beyond passive consumption. Possible outcomes include:

1. Fostering Creativity and Learning

With adequate backing, IDM could empower children to become active participants, encouraging creativity and problem-solving through tailored experiences. Games and immersive storytelling featuring child or youth protagonists or relatable animated characters could align closely with CMF's definitions of children's and youth programming, delivering impactful opportunities for learning and entertainment.

2. Reflecting Culture and Identity

Canadian interactive media, with appropriate support, could create culturally relevant content that mirrors the diversity of Canada's children and youth. Interactive platforms might enable young audiences to explore stories reflecting their realities while celebrating Canada's heritage and multiculturalism.

3. Addressing Linear Media Distribution Challenges



Supported IDM initiatives could overcome the limitations of traditional linear distribution by providing flexible new paths to audiences. Games and XR experiences adapt and iterate to evolving audience demands, fostering user-driven narratives and highly personalized storytelling opportunities.

Alignment with CMF's Programming Definitions:

- **Children's Programming:** With the right investment, programming could be tailored to children aged 12 and under, addressing their needs and perspectives through stories featuring relatable characters, child or youth protagonists, or creative figures such as animated characters or folkloric heroes. Such initiatives could combine entertainment with significant learning experiences.
- **Youth Programming:** Programs designed for ages 13 to 17, supported by appropriate resources, could feature youth protagonists and reflect reality from their point of view, creating meaningful and relatable narratives.

By securing support, IDM could realize its potential to enrich content and empower young Canadians to see their stories and identities reflected in innovative, engaging ways.

Despite the enormous potential of IDM, demand for CMF funding significantly outpaces availability. With \$179M requested in the last fiscal year against \$47M allocated, hundreds of innovative Canadian projects, including those aimed at children and youth, remain unrealized. This funding gap risks stifling innovation and undermines Canada's ability to lead globally in digital content creation.

An increase in CMF funding for IDM would enable Canadian creators to develop groundbreaking projects that address these challenges while ensuring that Canada's children and youth have access to high-quality, culturally resonant, and engaging digital media experiences. As digital media continues to dominate young audiences' lives, this investment is both timely and necessary to support Canadian talent and stories in a competitive global market.

Our request to double the CMF spending in the IDM sector remains unchanged. At the same time, we also urge you to consider that any dedicated funding set aside for children's and youth content at the CMF necessarily include financing of IDM projects, to ensure that Canada remains at the forefront of interactive media innovation for children and youth. The Canadian Interactive Alliance would welcome the opportunity to meet with you and discuss how we can further support this important

Sincerely,

Loc Dao, Chair of the Board of Directors of Canadian Interactive Alliance / l'alliance interactif Canadienne:



La Guilde du jeu vidéo du Québec
Interactive Ontario (IO)
DigiBC
Xn Québec
New Media Manitoba
Digital Alberta
SaskInteractive
Videogames PEI
Interactive Society of Nova Scotia
Interactive New Brunswick

About the Canadian Interactive Alliance

The Canadian Interactive Alliance / L'Alliance Interactive Canadienne (CIAIC) is a not-for-profit industry alliance that represents Canada's IDM (interactive digital media) industry which includes the video game, virtual reality, augmented reality, XR, and immersive sectors. CIAIC is governed by Canada's 10 existing provincial IDM industry associations. Canada's IDM sector comprises more than 937 companies, employing 37,850 Canadians, and generates over \$5.5 billion in annual revenue.

À propos de l'AIC

L'Alliance Interactive Canadienne / The Canadian Interactive Alliance (AIC/CIAIC) est une alliance industrielle à but non lucratif qui représente l'industrie canadienne des MNI (médias numériques interactifs). Ce secteur inclut les jeux vidéo, la réalité virtuelle, la réalité augmentée, la XR et les expériences immersives. L'AIC est dirigée par les 10 associations provinciales existantes de l'industrie des MNI au Canada. Le secteur des MNI au Canada comprend plus de 937 entreprises, employant 37 850 Canadiens, et génère plus de 5,5 milliards de dollars en revenus annuels.

Les membres de l'AIC incluent :

Members of the CIAIC include:

- [DigiBC](#)
- [Digital Alberta](#)
- [Interactive Society of Nova Scotia](#)
- [Interactive New Brunswick](#)
- [Interactive Ontario \(IO\)](#)
- [La Guide du jeu vidéo du Québec](#)
- [New Media Manitoba](#)
- [SaskInteractive](#)
- [Videogames PEI](#)
- [Xn Quebec](#)

*https://www.statista.com/statistics/1422374/canada-ways-time-spent-online-kids/?utm_source=chatgpt.com