

# The DCI Newsletter

Vol. 2 Ed. 1  
May 2021



Through our newsletter, the Digital Citizen Initiative (DCI) aims to foster a community of practice in Canada by keeping stakeholders abreast of recent developments and activities. The DCI works to create opportunities and spaces for knowledge mobilization to help the community combatting disinformation move forward together. To this end, the DCI has continued to host events and engage with stakeholders, including domestic and international colleagues such as the Public Health Agency of Canada, Public Safety Canada, Health Canada, Innovation, Science and Economic Development Canada, the OECD, the USA, Australia, and the European Union.

## Call for Proposals

The Digital Citizen Contribution Program (DCCP) has launched a new regular call for proposals for 2021-22, providing time-limited financial assistance of up to \$100,000. The call is open to [research projects](#) related to the following three key priorities:

- Understanding the role of algorithms, artificial intelligence, and other system-level factors on mainstream and fringe online platforms as they pertain to the spread, uptake, and impacts of disinformation and related harms, including on user behaviour and content consumption, and their potential uses towards a diverse and healthy information ecosystem;
- Understanding the domestic and transnational spread, evolution, and impacts of online disinformation and related harms through and on diaspora, Indigenous, and non-English primary language communities in Canada using a GBA+ lens, including impacts on societal outcomes; and
- Evaluating existing Canadian or international research and programming related to online disinformation and their effectiveness in furthering positive societal outcomes, such as citizen resilience, social cohesion, media literacy, and participation and trust in democratic processes.

For more details and to apply before the closing date of May 28, 2021, please click [here](#). We look forward to your proposals!

## March Conference Series: “Building Today for a Resilient Tomorrow”

Thank you to everyone who joined us for this year’s DCI conference series! The conference was opened by the Minister of Canadian Heritage and brought together stakeholders, funding recipients and experts to discuss five key themes over the month of March:

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- The Role of Media in Combatting Disinformation
  - Strengthening Communities: Combatting Disinformation and Discrimination
  - Putting our Responses to the Test: The Lessons of COVID-19
  - Working Together: Collaborations and Partnerships
  - The Importance of Trust in Combatting Disinformation

Each session featured engaging presentations from experts and select DCCP recipients with projects related to the theme, followed by a lively question period. If you missed the sessions or would like to revisit the thought-provoking discussions, all five sessions are available as podcast episodes in the original floor language, French and English, and written summaries of each session are available in French and English on the DCI's SharePoint site [here](#).

*Note on the podcast episodes:*

The interpretation between English and French was intended for live communication only and cannot be used as a verbatim record or translation by any party since the word-for-word accuracy of the content cannot be ensured.

## Ministerial “Site Visits” and February News Release

On February 9, the Honourable Steven Guilbeault, Minister of Canadian Heritage, and the Honourable Dominic LeBlanc, President of the Queen's Privy Council for Canada and Minister of Intergovernmental Affairs, issued a news release to highlight the organizations benefitting from federal support from the DCCP, which has provided \$7.2 million in funding since January 2020. On the day of the release, Minister Guilbeault also met virtually with two recipients: Concordia University – Montreal Institute for Genocide and Human Rights, whose project works to better understand how digital disinformation and online harms targeting Canadian women have an impact on Canada's democracy and social cohesion, and ISOC-Québec, whose project seeks to study and understand the causes and effects linked to the Canadian public's lack of exposure to diverse online content.

Click [here](#) for the new release, and [here](#) for a full list of organizations receiving funding from the DCCP.

## Community Spotlight!

The edition of the newsletter shines a spotlight on four projects supported by the DCCP:

[First Peoples Radio](#) undertook a project to create a series of [public service announcements](#) (PSA) to debunk myths about COVID-19. The PSAs were produced in English, Cree, and Ojibwe and aim to educate listeners about pandemic misinformation, supply them with facts, and encourage them to further their knowledge on this important topic by visiting the Government of Canada's COVID-19 website. These PSAs are available for use by radio stations in Indigenous communities throughout the country, and are supported by a social media campaign.

MacEwan University (under the direction of Dr. Shelley Boulianne) undertook a research project to inform efforts to address misinformation and empower citizens to combat misinformation on their social media feeds. The project conducted a four-country bilingual (English-French) survey on the use of eight social media platforms to identify factors that motivate individuals to combat misinformation, rather than spread it. Survey data was analyzed to determine which social media activities are best for empowering citizens to correct, fact-check, report and/or challenge misinformation. The project aimed to reveal which countries have expanded their resilience to misinformation, and offer insights for Canadian policymakers about effective practices in combatting misinformation. The final report can be viewed [here](#).

[La Voix acadienne](#) undertook a project to create an online game with five interactive scenarios related to COVID-19 disinformation. Players can choose actions that identify false news and lead them to factual information, thereby learning the tools and skills to combat disinformation. Each scenario is followed by an educational video about fake news and information research techniques. The project targets the Acadian and Francophone communities in Prince Edward Island and across Canada. You can play the game in French [here](#).

[SUPRE](#) produced a documentary short, entitled ‘What Flowers They Bloom’, based on the real-life experiences of Toronto-based florist, Andy Sue. The documentary dispels myths and shares factual information about COVID-19, increases citizen

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resiliency and digital literacy, and depicts Canadians affected by racist misinformation and/or social inequities. SUPRE is evaluating the impacts of the documentary through audience pretesting as well as analysis of user-generated content. You can watch the documentary [here](#) and we encourage you to share your impressions by email at [whatflowerstheybloom@suprecontent.com](mailto:whatflowerstheybloom@suprecontent.com) or publicly in the comments section.

**Questions? Have an idea for our newsletter?**

**Here's the best way to reach us: [pch.icn-dci.pch@canada.ca](mailto:pch.icn-dci.pch@canada.ca)**