



CONSORTIUM

des médias communautaires
de langues officielles
en situation minoritaire

of Official Language Minority
Community Media

WHITE PAPER

TRUTHS, CHALLENGES, OPPORTUNITIES, AND PATHWAYS FOR THE FUTURE

A vital exercise in clarity and courage
for Canada's official language minority
community media

**Current landscape, issues, and levers for action
in support of sustainable development**

August 2025

This document was produced with the support of



Funded by the
Government
of Canada

Canada



TABLE OF CONTENTS

A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONSORTIUM	1
PREAMBLE	3
Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media	3
Why a White Paper?	5
CONTEXT	7
CURRENT OVERVIEW OF THE CANADIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE	11
A sector in transition	11
News consumption habits in Canada	11
Revenues that continue to decline	13
Declining trust	16
OLMCM: CURRENT LANDSCAPE	19
Overview	19
Realities that mirror those of the broader media sector, but are amplified by certain specific characteristics	22
Challenges of proximity and perceptions of the role of OLMCM	22
Differences among sector stakeholders	23
Shifting and varied consumption habits within OLMCM.	24
Access to financial resources – A major challenge	27
Essential strategic government support	28
Access to human resources – Another major challenge	29
OLMCM’s digital shift: Another differentiating factor	31
Organizational Health: Another Key Dimension	33
DIAGNOSIS AND CHALLENGES	35
A revealing diagnosis that calls for action	35
An ecosystem weakened by structural paradoxes	35
Common issues manifesting in different ways	36
Challenges related to visibility and discoverability	36
Challenges related to recognition and value	37
Financial challenges	38
Human resource challenges	38
Technological challenges	39
Many opportunities to support sector evolution	39



PILLARS FOR A COORDINATED, CONCERTED, AND COLLECTIVE MOBILIZATION	41
Organizational pillar: Media by media	42
Sectoral pillar: Under the leadership of the Consortium and its member representative organizations	43
Community pillar: in collaboration with the associative movement, institutions, and the official language minority populations served by the OLMCM	44
Government pillar: Toward structural measures and strategic support	45
CONCLUSION	47
GLOSSARY	48
REFERENCES	49



A MESSAGE FROM THE PRESIDENT OF THE CONSORTIUM



Every so often, a storm sweeps through in the night with such devastating force that it unleashes havoc and upheaval of unprecedented scope, upending what once had stood firm for decades, even centuries.

The extent of the destruction merges only gradually in the days and months that follow, but the true impact of all the turbulence and change takes much longer to measure, to assess, to comprehend.

This White Paper focuses on that impact — the impact of the social, technological and economic storm that has forever changed this country's media landscape. And in doing so, it provides a blueprint to reinforce a vital part of the Canadian media that has suffered and staggered in the storm's wake.

This document does not merely focus on how to rebuild the Official Language Minority Community Media sector in Canada. **It explains why it is crucial to rebuild it on renewed and sustainable foundations, in order to fully seize the unique opportunities it holds.**

For in this rebuilding process lies a singular and unique opportunity.

It is an opportunity for Canada to be Canada.

It is an opportunity to reaffirm our democratic values.

It is an opportunity to ensure that all Canadians in all corners of the country and in the vast array of communities in all provinces and territories are part of the public conversations that shape our shared future.

This White Paper also highlights a fundamental shift in the media landscape, one that has been overlooked. Beyond technology, a crucial structural change has taken place: that shift is in the directional flow of news. It has been reversed.

News no longer flows down from large media outlets to the grassroots.

As big media slashed jobs and pulled its coverage, it has retreated to centre its coverage only on big cities and jurisdictional capitals of this country, leaving smaller communities abandoned.

But the stories of ordinary Canadians in their communities and their grassroots concerns have not been abandoned by community media. Providing the only journalistic boots left on the ground in these regions, community media outlets continue to report the stories of ordinary Canadians, and the struggles of their individual communities.

And because of this, those stories are not lost. Now, they flow upward. Anchored in context and local understanding, they travel from community media to larger outlets, eventually reaching national attention. This synergy ensures that no story is left behind.

Community media is different. Proudly different. It has an important role to play in Canada.

Its purpose is not only to inform, but to strengthen the fabric of community life and reflect its vitality. In the official language minority communities, this dual function is even more crucial, so that all Canadians can live and thrive in the official language of their choice wherever they are in our country.

And in our age of online information silos and poorly punctuated social media comment sections, this dual role.

In today's fractured information environment, crowded with social media silos and unreliable sources, this dual role should be seen as providing a double-authentication process that safeguards public discourse for everyone.

We are proud to present this White Paper as an invitation to all stakeholders committed to safeguarding Canadian values and democratic practices to help secure the future of Official Language Minority Community Media in this country, while also recognizing its potential to strengthen the Canadian local media sector as a whole.

We are proud to present this White Paper as an invitation to all stakeholders who have an interest in safeguarding Canadian values and democratic practices to help us secure a future for Official Language Community Media in this country.

That is why this document outlines clear pillars that provide a pathway for progress. Pillars that span every level of engagement:

- at the organizational level, to help each media outlet strengthen its roots;
- at the sectoral level, under the leadership of the Consortium and its member organizations;
- at the community level, in partnership with citizens, institutions, and associations; and
- at the governmental level, where strategic support and recognition must be secured.

We understand the challenges.

We see the opportunities ahead.

And we have mapped out a path forward.

Join us. This is the moment!

Brenda O'Farrell

President of the Board of Directors
Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media

PREAMBLE

Official language minority community media, referred to in this White Paper as OLMCM¹, are deeply rooted in Canada’s minority anglophone and francophone communities.

Whether it is the *Chronicle-Telegraph* in Quebec, the country’s oldest English-language newspaper founded in 1764, or the *Moniteur Acadien*, launched in 1867, year of the Confederation of Canada, these media outlets reflect a long tradition of local journalism. This rootedness extends to the most remote regions of the country: from the Lower North Shore, with community radio stations such as *CJAS* in Saint-Augustin and *CFBS* in Blanc-Sablon, to the arctic territories, with *Radio Taïga* in Yellowknife and *CFRT* in Iqaluit.

Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media

Created in 2016, the Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media (hereinafter the “Consortium”) is the result of a concerted effort by the main representative organizations² of the OLMCM subsectors to join forces to move the local media sector serving official language minority populations all across the country forward.

Both a space for strategic coordination and a platform for unified representation, the creation of the Consortium provided a structuring response to the common challenges faced by OLMCM across Canada, while complementing the mandates of subsector representative organizations.

In 2024, the Consortium became a national non-profit organization. Today, it brings together and represents nearly one hundred media outlets from the following OLMCM subsectors:

- **English-language community print media:** Newspapers and publications in print or digital format serving official language minority communities in nine provinces and three territories.
- **French-Language community print media:** Newspapers and publications in print or digital format serving official language minority communities in Quebec.
- **French-language community radio and television:** Radio or television stations serving official language minority communities in nine provinces and three territories.
- **English-language community radio:** Radio stations serving official language minority communities in Quebec.

1 In this document, an OLMCM refers either to a non-profit organization or a business that operates at least one community newspaper (print or digital) which serves an official language minority community in Canada, or to a non-profit organization holding a licence issued by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) to a community radio station which serves an official language minority community in Canada.

2 The four representative organizations of the OLMCM are:
Alliance des radios communautaires du Canada (French-language community radio stations and community television)
English Language Arts Network (English-language community radio stations in Quebec)
Quebec Community Newspapers Association (English-language print and digital media in Quebec)
Réseau.Presse (French-language print and digital media)



The Consortium's mission is to coordinate the advocacy and collective action efforts of the OLMC media sector in order to maximize its influence, ensure its sustainability, and strengthen its capacity to effectively serve official language minority communities. It also administers several national funding programs, such as the Community Media Strategic Support Fund (CMSSF), the Local Journalism Initiative (LJI), and the Internship Program for Official Language Minority Community Media.

Serving as the lead voice with institutional and governmental partners, the Consortium advocates a vision based on equity, the recognition of the democratic role of community media, and the importance of sustainable access to independent local news produced in the language of the minority community.

Since its creation, the Consortium has been concerned about the evolution of the media landscape, the growing fragility of OLMCM and the systemic challenges that undermine their ability to fully carry out their mission.

The Consortium's annual strategic reflection session in May 2024 marked an important milestone: by collectively analyzing the available data on OLMCM and the results achieved since 2019, the members of the Consortium recognized the need to take decisive action and lay the groundwork for national levers of change.

This is how the idea of developing a White Paper on the future of OLMCM was born.



Why a White Paper?

The OLMCM sector is at a crossroads. Carried forward by passionate teams who are overstretched and under-resourced, it faces an unprecedented convergence of structural, technological, economic, and human challenges.

Despite its well-recognized role in community vitality, local democracy, and cultural identity transmission, the sector remains marginalized in public policy, little known among certain segments of the population, and excluded from major funding and discoverability mechanisms.

This White Paper is therefore a call for clarity, dialogue, and action.

- It presents a rigorous, uncompromising portrait of the reality of OLMCMs.
- It highlights specific issues that remain too little documented, identifies concrete levers for progress, and proposes avenues for engagement at the organizational, sectoral, community, and governmental levels.
- It also fills a persistent gap: the absence of reliable, comparable, and contextualized data on OLMCMs.

This white paper is not a traditional report, a one-time demand, or a simple snapshot of the OLMCM media landscape. Rather, it is a strategic tool designed to spark collective mobilization. It is addressed to public decision-makers, partner organizations and institutions, academic researchers, minority-language communities, and of course, to OLMCMs themselves. It also seeks to contribute to greater recognition of the distinct role of local media in the Canadian media ecosystem and to the establishment of conditions necessary for their sustainability.

Given the rapid evolution of media consumption patterns and the erosion of public trust, it is more necessary than ever to strengthen the media that speak to communities, for communities, and with communities.

This White Paper serves as an invitation to turn this necessity into a shared priority.



CONTEXT

OLMCM share with other Canadian local media a fundamental role in supporting grassroots democracy.

But their mission goes further: they occupy a central place in affirming the identity of official language minority populations. By anchoring information in the language and culture of the community, they nurture a sense of belonging, strengthen collective memory, and support intergenerational transmission. Their ability to reflect lived realities, amplify often marginalized voices, and build lasting connections makes them a driving force in Canada's media landscape.

OLMCM fulfill a crucial identity mission. By enabling minority anglophone and francophone populations "to preserve their language, culture, and traditions³", these media help affirm the existence and vitality of these populations in the public sphere.

Their presence in a minority-language community is both a significant indicator⁴ and a lever of vitality for an official language minority community, as defined by the Government of Canada⁵

In its funding policy and official languages support program, under the *Community Life* Component in the section on *Cooperation with the Community Sector*, Canadian Heritage highlights the ways in which OLMCM serve as indicators of vitality for official language minority communities:

- Presence of media aimed at promoting the cultural identity of linguistic communities
- Presence of media (radio, television, print, websites) that reflect the reality of the linguistic minority
- Presence of regional or pan-Canadian media or communication channels that facilitate exchanges

This concrete contribution to linguistic and cultural vitality aligns fully with the federal government's obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*⁶, which requires federal institutions to take positive measures to support the development of official language minority communities.

Since the modernization of the *Act* in 2023, these measures must aim for substantive equality⁷ between French and English, a principle that recognizes that equality of outcomes may require differentiated and tailored support according to the specific needs of the communities concerned.

3 The Government of Canada announces an investment of \$12.5 million to support official language minority community media, [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)

4 Framework for the Vitality of Official-Language Minority Communities (OLMC)

5 Official Language Minority Communities' Frame of Reference for Vitality, [Canada.ca](https://www.canada.ca)

6 *Official Languages Act* (R.S.C., 1985, c. 31 (4th Supp.))

7 *Act for the Substantive Equality of Canada's Official Languages* (S.C. 2023, c. 15)



In this perspective, support for OLMCM is not simply desirable: it is a legislative obligation and an essential condition for implementing substantive equality.

OLMCM ensure an active presence of the language in the public sphere, give voice to official language minority populations, and help make effective their right to information, civic participation, and representation in their own language.

Beyond making language use tangible, OLMCM demonstrate the many ways it can be used. As both informational and cultural relay instruments, they strengthen the sense of belonging to the community at the local, regional, provincial, or territorial level, depending on their geographic reach.

“OLMCM are also, without question, a privileged—even essential—channel for reaching minority language communities,”

— an academic researcher

“They foster community engagement by broadcasting content that highlights local events and community-specific initiatives,”

— an institutional leader

“Media are the glue that holds communities together,”

— a community leader

“Having a local media outlet means having power. It means having someone to carry the community’s demands,”

— a former media chair

“Organizations are often approached for advertising placements. Media outlets benefit from working closely with them. They fund advertisements to share their message, and media can rely on them to help reach their targets,”

— a community leader⁸

It can therefore be said that, beyond delivering essential information and local news relevant to the realities and expectations of the population, OLMCM are one of the tools that allow communities to fully thrive in their language.

In the case of community radio, this mission relies largely on the direct involvement of the members of the community they serve. In accordance with the conditions of their license issued by the CRTC, these stations must ensure active, structured, and meaningful participation of the local population in their activities. This deep community embeddedness is a distinctive marker that clearly sets them apart from private commercial radio.

For their part, print media benefit from strong community engagement with the content they produce. Whether through loyal readership, sharing of articles, reactions to published content, or participation in special editorial initiatives, this visible attachment reflects recognition of their role within the community. This mobilization serves as an essential lever for sustaining local information that is vibrant, relevant, and rooted in the reality of the minority language.

The proliferation of news platforms, both public and private, is one of the most visible phenomena, alongside the evolution of consumption habits and the erosion of audience trust and loyalty. It is clear that OLMCM, particularly with respect to information and current affairs, must operate within this rapidly and profoundly changing media landscape.

It is therefore necessary to take a clear-eyed look at the place occupied by OLMCM, and by local media more broadly, in today's Canadian media landscape.

This reflection takes place in a context where the organizational health of community organizations is more fragile than ever⁹. Their sustainability remains uncertain, both in terms of human resources and financial and logistical capacity¹⁰.

The literature review provided essential but general information on news consumption habits¹¹, without distinguishing the realities specific to people living in minority-language communities. The data available, whether from the media themselves or other sources, are often partial, scattered, and difficult to compare.

8 The quotations presented in this document come from interviews conducted by PGF Consultants during consultations with key stakeholders in the OLMCM ecosystem. These interviews were carried out under conditions of anonymity so that each participant could feel comfortable expressing themselves freely. To preserve this anonymity, only general indications of the participants' profiles (e.g., community leader) are provided, without reference to gender. In this context, masculine pronouns are used throughout this document as gender-neutral.

9 On this subject, for anglophone organizations, see the document: *Working Together to Strengthen the Voice of English-speaking Quebec*, Quebec Community Groups Network, 2020

10 On this subject, for francophone organizations, see the document *Éviter le point de rupture : des organismes francophones en santé pour des communautés en santé*, Fédération des communautés francophones et acadienne, 2022

11 *Digital News Report Canada : Synthèse des données 2025*



For these reasons, this White Paper is based on an approach that combines multiple sources and cross-referenced data, including:

- A literature review of about twenty publications on the Canadian media landscape;
- Semi-structured individual interviews conducted between November and December 2024 with around thirty key figures from the nonprofit, community, and institutional sectors, as well as from academia, regulatory bodies, and funding organizations;
- A survey conducted in February 2025 with OLMCM on their practices, challenges, and priorities;
- An appreciative inquiry carried out in April 2025 with OLMCM, asking them to self-assess their digital maturity and related needs;
- A nationwide survey conducted by the Nanos firm in spring 2025 with over 1,000 people living in minority-language communities to determine their awareness of OLMCM, their consumption habits, and their views on the relevance of these media.

The data collected, derived from a rigorous combination of multiple sources and complementary tools, provides a first nuanced portrait of the situation of OLMCM. While not intended as a substitute for academic studies or sectoral government surveys, these evidence-based findings offer a concrete foundation to guide decisions, foster collective reflection, and inform strategic choices.

However, in a context marked by the absence of specific, reliable, and comparable data on OLMCM, the set of findings gathered in this White Paper constitutes the most comprehensive and reality-based analysis available to the sector to date.

Far from being trivial, this data clearly reveals a series of structural, systemic, and urgent issues impacting the sustainability, legitimacy, and above all the influence of OLMCM. Together, they draw a portrait that is both concerning and mobilizing, calling for immediate strategic reflection.

Such reflection can only take place by bringing together all stakeholders—media, community organizations, institutions, funders, and governments—in a collective, structured process that is firmly action-oriented.

Ensuring the sustainability of OLMCM in Canada is no longer optional: it is a democratic, identity, and linguistic necessity.

CURRENT OVERVIEW OF THE CANADIAN MEDIA LANDSCAPE

A sector in transition

The Canadian media landscape is undergoing profound evolution, driven by several converging factors.

- News consumption habits are evolving, notably due to the growing dominance of major technology companies grouped under the acronym GAFAM (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, Microsoft), the increased use of smartphones as the primary means of accessing information, and the accelerated migration of media to digital platforms, a trend intensified by the COVID-19 pandemic.
- The way information is produced is also changing, spurred by the growing popularity of user-generated content and digital content created by independent creators.

This structural transformation of the media ecosystem has profoundly disrupted traditional modes of information production, distribution, and consumption.

News consumption habits in Canada

Canadians' news consumption habits continue to evolve significantly. According to the *Digital News Report Canada: 2025 Data Summary*¹² from the Media Studies Centre, 83% of respondents reported being interested in the news.

Television remains the primary source of information (40%), ahead of news websites and apps (26%). Among those aged 18–34, 40% said they get or share news mainly on social media, compared to 20% among those aged 35 and over.

Online news is now accessed mainly through smartphones (64%), followed by computers (57%) and tablets (34%). Other devices, such as voice-activated speakers and smartwatches, are increasingly used to access news online, though their use remains marginal.

The main gateways to online news are search engines (26%), social media platforms (25%), and news websites or apps (24%).

Among social media platforms used to access news, YouTube (28%), Instagram (13%), WhatsApp (10%), and TikTok (9%) are gaining slightly in popularity, while X (formerly Twitter, 11%) has remained stable since 2021. Facebook (25%) has stopped its decline, showing stability for the second year in a row after several years of decrease.

¹² *Id.*



The multiplication of digital platforms allows Canadians to easily access news from around the world, eliminating traditional boundaries of information. Simultaneous use of multiple platforms has become the norm, especially among younger generations.

According to Environics Research, Canadians consult an average of 2.6 social platforms per week, rising to 3.4 for millennials and 3.9 for Generation Z¹³. The use of multiple platforms and the variety of content fragments attention and leads to dispersed news consumption, which in turn reduces loyalty to traditional media.

According to the study *Les habits neufs de la radio: la métamorphose de l'industrie de l'audio*¹⁴, traditional radio is also undergoing significant change. A majority of Canadians continue to listen (83% in 2022, down from 91% in 2012). However, it now faces competition from music streaming services, whose adoption has grown sharply from 10% in 2012 to 55% in 2022. Spotify alone captures 35% of audio market revenues.

Canadians now listen to more radio or audio content than they did ten years ago—an average of 45 minutes more per day—with even higher listening rates among those under 25. More than half (55%) listen to radio or audio content through mobile apps, while 17% use voice-activated speakers. As for AM/FM radio broadcasts online, a quarter of the population regularly listens, although this share is lower among younger audiences (22%).

The gap between the listening habits of younger and older audiences is widening. Younger audiences seek more engaging, inspiring content tailored to their needs; whether to stay informed, be entertained, spark conversations, or broaden their perspectives. Podcast listening is particularly widespread among this group (56 %)¹⁵.

To adapt to new online consumption habits, media outlets have diversified their formats (videos, podcasts, visual radio, infographics, etc.) and expanded their distribution platforms in order to reach a fragmented audience and capture the attention of younger consumers¹⁶, who are also targeted by web giants. This transition, however, comes with major challenges: a sharp decline in advertising revenues, a drop in paid subscriptions, and an erosion of trust in traditional media. To address these challenges, significant investments are needed to adapt media offerings and fully integrate digital.

13 2024 Trends: Social Media in Canada, Environics Research

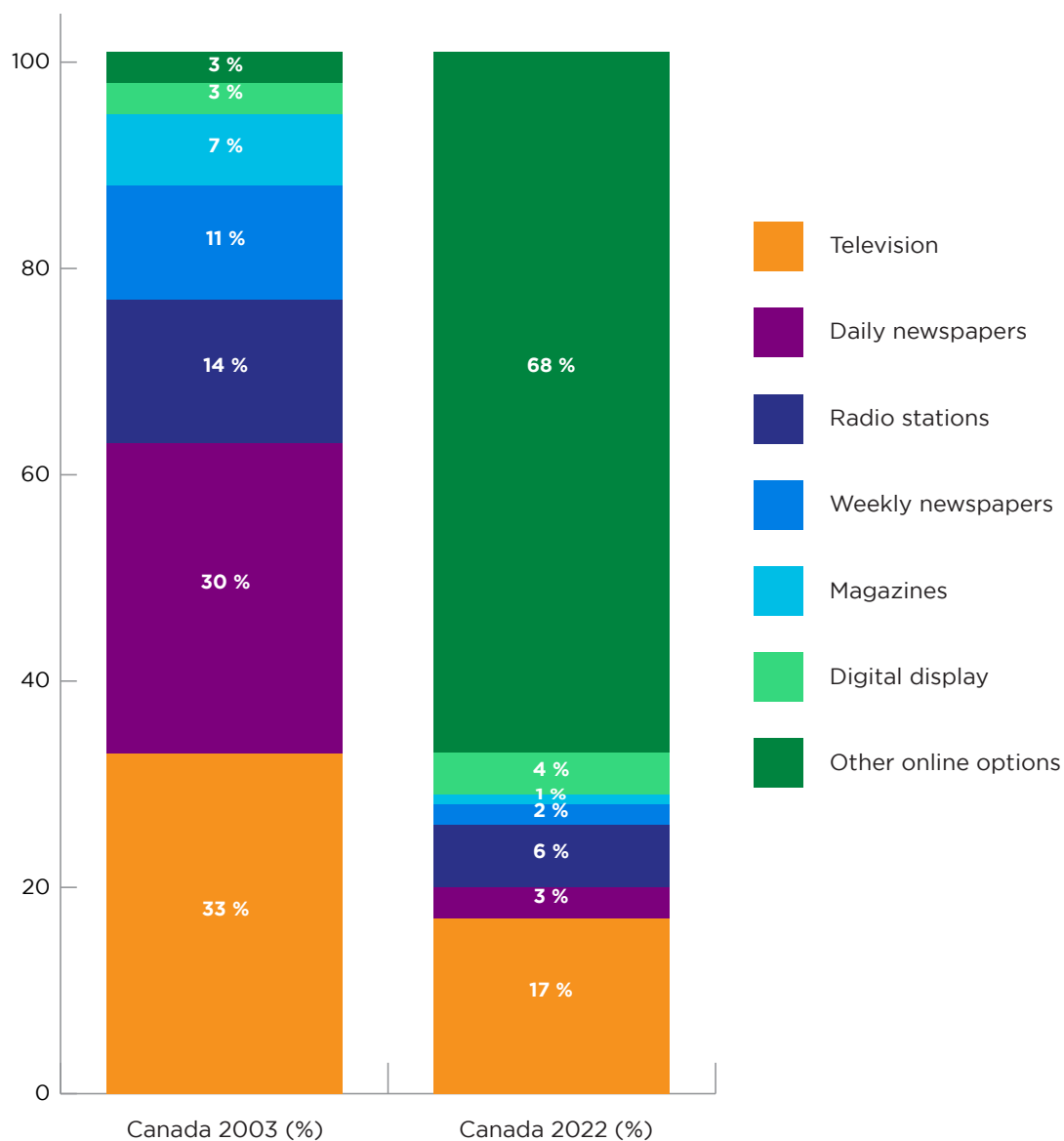
14 *Les habits neufs de la radio*, HEC Montréal, communiqué de presse, 2023

15 *Id.*

16 *Id.*

Revenues that continue to decline

Breakdown of the advertising market in Canada in 2003 and 2022



Source : <https://www.cem.ulaval.ca/economie/donnees-financieres/publicite/>



Canadian media have traditionally drawn their revenues from various sources such as advertising, subscriptions, and single-copy sales. Among these, advertising has long represented the main financial cornerstone of the traditional media business model, accounting for 55.5% of their total revenues in 2023, according to the *Media in Canada*¹⁷ report.

However, advertising revenues for Canadian traditional media are in decline, having fallen by nearly \$6 billion since 2008¹⁸. At the same time, online advertising sales have continued to grow, generating \$12.3 billion in 2021¹⁹.

Advertising investments are now directed toward digital platforms. Public and private advertisers alike favour digital advertising, which allows for precise targeting and better tracking of impact, at lower cost. Today, three-quarters of advertising spending in Canada is done on online platforms²⁰. The Government of Canada is also following this trend. In 2023–2024, the Government of Canada's Advertising Coordination Service invested 64% (over \$39 million) of its total advertising budget of more than \$76 million in digital media, compared with 36% in traditional media²¹.

Yet, the Canadian Media Concentration Research Project revealed in 2021 that the vast majority (80%) of digital advertising revenues in Canada benefited exclusively American companies Google and Meta²².

This reallocation of advertising resources by advertisers, combined with the lack of revenue earned by media for the distribution of their content on GAFAM's digital platforms, exacerbates the financial losses of Canadian media outlets. Moreover, in 2024, 17% of adults across a panel of 20 high-income countries reported having paid for online news in the previous year²³.

According to a national survey conducted in 2023 by Léger with 1,564 respondents in Canada, only 6% said they were willing to pay for a subscription to directly access information. Two out of three Canadians believe that access to information should be free²⁴. This perception is reinforced by the ease of accessing free news on websites, search engines, news aggregators, social media, mobile apps, radio, or audio services. In 2025, in Canada, just over one in five (21%) people aged 18 to 34, and only 12% of those aged 35 and over, reported having paid for online news or access to paid content²⁵.

The loss of revenue that media depend on to operate and inform the public has led to the closure of an alarming number of outlets across the country. Between 2008 and April 1, 2025, a total of 566 media outlets shut down in 372 Canadian communities: 40 daily newspapers (free or paid), 422 community print media outlets, 45 radio stations, 11 television stations, and nearly 50 digital/online media outlets²⁶.

In 2015, the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages of Canada received some 52 complaints from organizations and individuals generally claiming that the Government of Canada had not taken into account the impact of its decisions on minority-language

17 *Media in Canada—Research and Markets*

18 *Facebook and Google continue to gobble up digital advertising dollars, new reports shows*, News Media Canada

19 *Total reported media expenditures in Canada topped \$17 billion in 2021*, News Media Canada

20 *Les dépenses publicitaires explosent au profit de Google, Facebook et compagnie*, Le Devoir

21 *Annual Report on Government of Canada Advertising Activities 2023 to 2024*

22 *Facebook and Google continue to gobble up digital advertising dollars, new reports shows*, News Media Canada

23 *Reuters Institute, Digital News Report 2024 – Executive Summary*

24 *La plupart des Canadiens pensent que l'information devrait être gratuite*, Le Devoir

25 *Digital News Report Canada : Synthèse des données 2025*

26 *Local News Map Data (April 1, 2025)*, Local News Research Project

newspapers and radio stations when it chose to place federal advertising with major digital platforms (GAFAM).

In an investigation report published in June 2017²⁷, the Acting Commissioner emphasized, among other points:

“To ensure the vitality of a community, the minority language must be visible, heard, and accessible. Radio and print media are precisely communication tools that make this language visible, heard, and accessible. They are part of ‘linguistic spaces,’ just as schools and government services in the minority language are, and these spaces are very important for communities.”

In that report, the Acting Commissioner concluded that the complaints alleging that Canadian Heritage and Public Works and Government Services Canada (now Public Services and Procurement Canada) had increasingly turned to the Internet to disseminate their advertisements and public notices, at the expense of traditional media, were substantiated. The Commissioner also made three recommendations regarding the Government of Canada’s Communications Policy, so that both departments would fulfill their obligations under Part VII of the *Official Languages Act*.

Following this report, Canadian Heritage introduced a series of measures to support the Canadian media sector, including OLMCM, in the face of economic challenges. Among these measures are programs under the responsibility of the Consortium: the [Canada Periodical Fund](#), the [Local Journalism Initiative](#), the [Community Media Strategic Support Fund](#), and the [Internship Program in Official Language Minority Community Media](#).

For its part, Public Services and Procurement Canada reported certain positive measures in the follow-up reviews conducted by the Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. However, these measures had no effect on OLMCM, as they were purely administrative in nature and did not address the needs expressed in the complaint.

In addition, since 2023, the Canadian journalism labour tax credit has been enhanced. The annual cap on eligible labour expenses has been increased from \$55,000 to \$85,000 per eligible newsroom employee²⁸. While helpful, as long as it remains in place, this tax credit does not address the immediate wage pressures facing media outlets. It is also only available to media organizations with at least two full-time journalists, according to defined criteria. The vast majority of OLMC media generally do not meet these eligibility requirements.

The Government of Canada also adopted two new legislations in 2023. The [Online Streaming Act](#) subjects online streaming platforms (such as Netflix, Disney+, YouTube, and Spotify) to the same rules as traditional broadcasters in Canada. It also requires them to contribute to the creation and promotion of Canadian content. The [Online News Act](#), meanwhile, obliges major digital platforms such as Google and Meta to provide financial compensation to media outlets for the distribution of their news on their digital platforms.

27 Office of the Commissioner of Official Languages. Final investigation report of the Interim Commissioner of Official Languages, Public Works and Government Services Canada, Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, Privy Council Office, Canadian Heritage, Ottawa, June 2017.

28 Canadian journalism labour tax credit



These acts aimed to improve the situation of the media sector, but their effects remain mixed. For example, in response to the *Online News Act*, Meta blocked Canadian news content from its platforms as early as August 2023. This decision created major issues regarding access to essential information sources during emergency situations (e.g., wildfires, floods). It also significantly reduced the discoverability, community engagement, reach, and therefore revenue-generating capacity of local media²⁹.

To this day, Canada remains the only G7 country where news is no longer accessible on Facebook and Instagram³⁰, a direct consequence of the *Online News Act* coming into force. Google, for its part, reached an agreement with the Government of Canada to provide CAD \$100 million annually, redistributed to media outlets through the Canadian Journalism Collective³¹. This sum is well below the advertising revenues that many outlets have lost to the digital giants³².

Declining trust

Public trust in news in general is also in decline. According to the Media Studies Centre, in 2016, 55% of Canadians said they trusted most news, most of the time. By 2025, for the second consecutive year, that proportion had fallen to 39%³³. This loss of trust can be explained by several factors: the overabundance of information; the difficulty of distinguishing truth from falsehood on social platforms (such as TikTok, X, Facebook, Instagram, and YouTube); the spread of fake news on sensitive issues; growing concerns about the use of artificial intelligence in content production; and widespread lack of awareness about journalistic methods, specifically how news is verified, prioritized, and produced in newsrooms³⁴.

At the same time, concerns about misinformation and disinformation are growing: two in three Canadians (64%) worry about their ability to distinguish real news from fake news online. The *Digital News Report Canada 2025* notes that influencers and online personalities (54%), political actors, both foreign (50%) and Canadian (48%), as well as activist groups (43%) are considered by Canadians to be significant threats when it comes to online disinformation and misinformation. Platforms and communication channels such as Facebook (54%), TikTok (52%), and X (47%) are widely perceived as major vectors of misleading information³⁵.

29 *How Meta's news ban reshaped Canadian media*, Digital Content Next

30 Transcript of the April 30, 2024 meeting of the Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics, House of Commons

31 Government of Canada

32 Government of Canada, *The Online News Act*

33 *Digital News Report Canada : Synthèse des données 2025*

34 *Les jeunes adultes québécois face à la désinformation et la mésinformation*

35 *Digital News Report Canada : Synthèse des données 2025*

The emergence of artificial intelligence as a content production tool reinforces these concerns. In 2025, more than half of the Canadian population (52%) reported feeling uncomfortable consuming news generated by artificial intelligence—even when validated by a human. Respondents tended to perceive such content as less trustworthy (39%), less transparent (33%), less accurate (33%), and less impartial (28%) than content produced by humans³⁶.

“There are also media deserts in Canada and in Quebec, places where there is no news coverage at all, because they are smaller or more remote communities,”

— an academic researcher

Another factor likely to erode public trust is the disappearance of local media. As highlighted in a NiemanLab article entitled *Why some towns lose local news and others don’t*, the closure of these outlets creates “news deserts” that weaken local democracy, notably by limiting oversight of public institutions and exacerbating political polarization³⁷.

The absence of local news increases certain risks, such as reduced transparency and accountability of government institutions, lower civic participation, growing political division and tension, lower voter turnout, faster spread of false news, and higher expenses borne by local governments³⁸. When a media outlet weakens, the community tends to disengage, and the more the community disengages, the weaker the media becomes, creating a vicious circle.

Local media therefore have “a mission that must be upheld despite market upheavals,”³⁹ because they are essential pillars for ensuring equitable access to information, representing a diversity of voices, holding public institutions accountable, and maintaining a healthy democratic process.

In light of these significant developments, local media now bear the responsibility of demonstrating their relevance and real impact to their communities, so that these communities may rally behind them and provide support.

³⁶ *Id.*

³⁷ *Why some towns lose local news—and others don’t*, Nieman Journalism Lab

³⁸ *The Crisis – Rebuild Local News*

³⁹ *Les habits neufs de la radio*, HEC Montréal, communiqué de presse



OLMCM: CURRENT LANDSCAPE

Overview

The media landscape of official language minority communities in Canada includes 92 community media outlets (print, radio, and television) operating across the ten provinces and three territories.

There are 32 print outlets, 28 community radio stations, and 1 community television channel, for a total of 61 French-language minority media distributed across Canada, with the exception of Quebec. Depending on their local, regional, or provincial reach, these outlets serve segments of the 992,306 francophones⁴⁰ living in minority settings.

In Quebec, there are 26 print outlets and 5 English-language radio stations, for a total of 31 OLMCM. Primarily located in the western part of the province and on the Island of Montreal, these outlets serve an estimated 1,253,578⁴¹ anglophones living in a minority context.

In addition, more than one-third (35%) of surveyed OLMCM across the country reported serving communities of fewer than 10,000 people, while 31% target communities of 50,000 people or more.

The self-assessment survey conducted in early 2025 in preparation for this White Paper also highlighted a disparity in penetration rates of target markets: nearly two in five outlets (37%) reported a penetration rate of 25% or less, while 21% reached a rate of 75% or more.

⁴⁰ Official Languages Branch, Canadian Heritage (2023), based on data from the 2021 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada 2021, Statistique Canada.

⁴¹ Official Languages Branch, Canadian Heritage (2023), based on data from the 2021 Census of Canada, Statistics Canada

Newspapers



NEWSPAPERS

- 1 AURORE BORÉALE, YUKON
- 2 L'AQUILON, NORTHWEST TERRITORIES
- 3 LE NUNAVOIX, NUNAVUT
- 4 THE/LA SOURCE, BRITISH COLUMBIA
- 5 LE FRANCO, ALBERTA
- 6 L'EAU VIVE, SASKATCHEWAN
- 7 LA LIBERTÉ, MANITOBA
- 8 LE NORD, HEARST
- 9 LE VOYAGEUR, SUDBURY
- 10 TRIBUNE, WEST NIPISSING
- 11 LE GOÛT DE VIVRE, SIMCOE
- 12 LE RÉGIONAL, HAMILTON-NIAGARA
- 13 L'ACTION, LONDON-SARNIA
- 14 LE REMPART, WINDSOR-ESSEX
- 15 L'EXPRESS, LE MÉTROPOLITAIN, TORONTO
- 16 AGRICOM, LE DROIT, OTTAWA
- 17 PERSPECTIVES VANIER, VANIER
- 18 L'ORLÉANAIS, ORLEANS
- 19 ON A LE CHOIX, CORNWALL
- 20 LE REFLET, EMBRUN
- 21 VISION, ROCKLAND
- 22 LE CARILLON, LE RÉGIONAL, HAWKESBURY
- 23 PONTIAC JOURNAL, PONTIAC
- 24 LOW DOWN TO HULL & BACK NEWS, WAKEFIELD
- 25 THE EQUITY, SHAWVILLE
- 26 AYLMER BULLETIN, GATINEAU BULLETIN, WEST QUEBEC POST, GATINEAU
- 27 THE 1019 REPORT, 1510 WEST, WEST ISLAND, VAUDREUIL-SOULANGE

- 28 MAIN STREET, LACHUTE
- 29 THE GLEANER, ORMSTOWN
- 30 LAVAL NEWS, PARC EXTENSION NEWS, NORTH SHORE NEWS, LAVAL
- 31 THE SUBURBAN, WESTMOUNT INDEPENDENT, MONTREAL COMMUNITY CONTACT, MONTREAL-ST. LAURENT
- 32 QUEBEC FARMERS ADVOCATE, LONGUEUIL
- 33 IORIWASE, EASTERN DOOR, KAHNAWAKE
- 34 THE RECORD, BROME COUNTY NEWS, THE TOWNSHIP WEEKEND, SHERBROOKE
- 35 QUEBEC CHRONICLE TELEGRAPH, QUEBEC
- 36 THE GASPÉ SPEC, NEW CARLISLE
- 37 NUNATSIAQ NEWS, NUNAVIK
- 38 ACADIE NOUVELLE, NEW BRUNSWICK
- 39 LE MONITEUR ACADIEN, SHEDIAC
- 40 LE SAINT-JEANNOIS, SAINT JOHN
- 41 LE COURRIER DE LA NOUVELLE-ÉCOSSE, NOVA SCOTIA
- 42 LA VOIX ACADIENNE, PRINCE EDWARD ISLAND
- 43 LE GABOTEUR, NEWFOUNDLAND AND LABRADOR

Radio and TV Stations



RADIO AND TV STATIONS

- 1 RADIO VICTORIA (CILS), VICTORIA
- 2 NORD-OUEST FM (CKRP), PEACE RIVER
- 3 RADIO CITÉ (CFED), EDMONTON
- 4 BORÉAL FM (CHPL), PLAMONDON
- 5 RADIO TAÏGA (CIVR), YELLOWKNIFE
- 6 CFRG FM, GRAVELBOURG
- 7 ENVOL 91 FM (CKXL), WINNIPEG
- 8 CINN FM, HEARST
- 9 CKGNFM, KAPUSKASING
- 10 CFRH FM, PENETANGUISHENE
- 11 CHOQ FM, TORONTO
- 12 UNIQUE FM (CJFO), OTTAWA
- 13 CJRO FM, CARLSBAD SPRINGS
- 14 GO FM (CHOD), CASSELMAN
- 15 TVC 22, ROCKLAND
- 16 CHIP FM, FORT-COULONGE
- 17 CIDI FM, LAC BROME

- 18 CJMQ FM, SHERBROOKE
- 19 CFBS FM, LOURDES-DE-BLANC-SABLON
- 20 CJAS FM, ST. AUGUSTINE
- 21 CFAI FM, EDMUNDSTON
- 22 ROUTE 17 FM (CFJU), SAINT-QUENTIN
- 23 SOMMET (CIMS), BALMORAL
- 24 CKRO FM, POKEMOUCHE
- 25 CKMA FM, MIRAMICHI
- 26 PLUS, CJSE FM, CFBO FM, SHEDIAC
- 27 CJPN FM, FREDERICTON
- 28 CHQC FM, SAINT JOHN
- 29 CIFA FM, COMEAUVILLE
- 30 OUI 98 (CKRH), DARTMOUTH
- 31 CITU FM, PETIT-DE-GRAT
- 32 CKJM FM, CHETICAMP
- 33 CFRT FM, IQALUIT



Realities that mirror those of the broader media sector, but are amplified by certain specific characteristics

As early as 2017, the White Paper *Les médias francophones en Ontario*⁴² reported, among other things, a “period of financial turbulence and redefinition of mandate and audience,” “precarious financial reality,” “limited clientele,” an “exodus of advertising revenues,” and an “audience appetite for immediate news on social networks.”

As previously established, strong turbulence continues to shake the Canadian media landscape, and OLMCM are not exempt—indeed, they feel the impacts even more acutely.

They must contend not only with the challenges shared across the sector but also with constraints specific to their environment. Notably, they serve small and geographically dispersed communities spread across vast territories. Their markets are further complicated by significant demographic, cultural, and generational diversity, as well as the existence of media deserts.

They also face competition from majority-language media and digital giants (GAFAM, Netflix, etc.) or, in the case of the anglophone minority, traditional U.S. media. Additional challenges include:

- difficulties in recruiting and retaining qualified staff (both paid and volunteer) in the language of the minority
- higher operating costs due to their size and minority status
- particularly high community expectations regarding their role as vehicles of linguistic, cultural, and identity vitality.

Challenges of proximity and perceptions of the role of OLMCM

Another complex issue and significant obstacle specific to OLMCM is their positioning within the community.

The identity-driven mission of OLMCM sometimes makes their relationship with certain regional or sectoral advocacy organizations more delicate. These organizations often see OLMCM simply as communication tools, rather than as independent actors tasked with holding power to account and fostering transparency.

It is important to emphasize that OLMCM are not mandated to broadcast, without analysis, the messages and positions of any organization. The occasionally critical approach of some OLMCM can generate tension in different circles and expose them to undue pressure, owing to their closeness to both their community and its representative organizations.

This situation can, among other things, affect the willingness of some community members to engage with OLMCM, whether as advertisers, donors, or volunteers. It can also, in certain cases, shape the perceptions of stakeholders, elected officials, and municipal administrators regarding the importance, or even the relevance, of certain OLMCM within the community.

⁴² *Les médias francophones en Ontario : Livre blanc*, Assemblée de la francophonie de l’Ontario

The perception of OLMCM among key stakeholders varies by region, community, and generation. While some value these outlets, others view them as “outdated,” “amateurish,” or “an obsolete model”.⁴³ Yet many note that the more a media outlet engages with and invests in its community, the more it is perceived positively, respected, and supported.

Differences among sector stakeholders

As with any overall overview, it would be inaccurate to assume that the picture outlined above reflects the situation of every OLMCM in detail. A closer analysis reveals significant differences among community media outlets.

The analysis of the results from two surveys conducted with OLMCM revealed that each one operates under very different circumstances. These variations are explained by factors such as:

- type of media: print, radio, or community television
- official language of broadcast: French or English
- legal status: private business, nonprofit organization, or cooperative
- setting: urban, rural, remote, or mixed
- geographic reach: local, regional, provincial, or territorial
- organizational health: human resources, financial resources, technological/digital/logistical resources

A first survey, conducted by PGF Consultants in February 2025 with OLMCM in preparation for this White Paper, provides an initial overview of their realities. This survey was based on self-assessment by the media outlets⁴⁴.

The majority of respondents (63%) came from the community print media sector, while 37% represented community radio stations. From a linguistic perspective, 63% were French-language media and 37% English-language. Furthermore, 61% of respondents were nonprofit organizations, while 39% were private businesses. This diversity therefore offers a representative snapshot of the sector.

The survey results show that most OLMCM perceive themselves as relevant to the communities they serve and believe they have a positive influence on community vitality. This perception also aligns with that of the target audiences. According to a survey conducted by the Nanos firm with 1,119 Canadians from official language minority communities, most francophones and anglophones believe that OLMCM are doing a good or very good job of adapting to the needs of their communities and reflecting their realities.

All OLMCM surveyed by PGF Consultants have a website, and the vast majority also maintain a presence on social media. Several also publish electronic newsletters to interact with their audiences and improve their online visibility.

⁴³ Comments drawn from individual interviews with key stakeholders conducted as part of the consultation process led by PGF Consultants in preparation for the white paper.

⁴⁴ The data analysis is based on 54 complete responses, representing a participation rate of 59%.

However, the dominance of GAFAM—particularly the algorithmic biases of their platforms and Meta’s blocking of Canadian news—limits the reach of OLMCM. Some outlets have recently adopted live streaming (37%) and on-demand audio services (35%), while others use mobile apps (31%) to diversify their content distribution methods.

In general, OLMCM identify 25–34 year-olds as their primary target audience, followed by 35–54 year-olds, and then 18–24 year-olds, according to data gathered by PGF Consultants.

Attracting younger audiences is among the priorities identified by leaders in the radio and audio sector, along with focusing on local news (community journalism), evolving content and formats, recruiting new talent, and developing and rethinking their organizational structures⁴⁵.

Shifting and varied consumption habits within OLMCM.

As with the media sector as a whole, OLMCM are facing major shifts in their audiences’ consumption habits.

They identify three main challenges in this regard: generational disparities (59%), simultaneous consumption of content across multiple platforms (43%), and the abundance of globally accessible content, in the language of one’s choice (37%)

Two in five francophones outside Quebec (44%) reported listening to a local French-language community radio station in the past year, compared with 24% of anglophones in Quebec who reported listening to a local English-language community radio station. Among youth aged 18–34, the figures are even higher: 58% of francophones and 51% of anglophones reported listening to minority-language community radio.

For print media, 45% of francophones outside Quebec and 50% of anglophones in Quebec said they had read at least one local community newspaper in their language. Among francophones, the highest readership was reported among 18–34 year-olds (59%), while among anglophones, it was highest among those aged 55 and over (64%). The 35–54 group also showed significant readership (45% for francophones, 55% for anglophones).

Among francophones outside Quebec, consumption of OLMCM varies widely by region: 59% reported listening to community radio and 56% reading community print media in the Atlantic provinces, compared with only 30% and 34%, respectively, in the West and the territories.

Among anglophones in Quebec, those living outside Montreal were more likely to listen to a local English-language community radio station (31% compared with 19% in Montreal), whereas anglophones in Montreal were more likely to read at least one local English-language community newspaper (59% compared with 38% elsewhere in Quebec).

The reasons cited for consuming OLMCM vary by language group. According to surveys conducted by PGF Consultants, audiences prefer local news, followed by music, municipal news, and local events.

These findings are largely corroborated by results from the Nanos survey. For francophones, the three main reasons for listening to minority-language community radio were music (30%),

⁴⁵ *Les habits neufs de la radio*, HEC Montréal, communiqué de presse

broadcasting in their preferred language (28%), and local news (21%). Anglophones cited the same top three reasons, but placed greater emphasis on broadcasting in their preferred language (32%) than on music (29%) or local news (22%).

Both linguistic groups also share the same top three reasons for reading minority-language community newspapers. For francophones, the main draw was local news (41%), followed by articles and reports (31%), and the fact that the newspapers are published in their preferred language (27%). Anglophones reported reading them primarily for local news (47%), followed by the preferred language factor (27%) and articles and reports (22%).

It is also worth noting that OLMCM inspire more trust than private media, though slightly less than CBC/Radio-Canada. Among francophones, the average trust index for community print and radio media is 6.6 out of 10, compared with 7.0 for the public broadcaster. Among anglophones, trust is slightly higher for OLMCM, with an average of 7.1 for print media and 7.0 for radio. Social media, by contrast, received the lowest trust ratings: 5.3 among francophones and 4.2 among anglophones.

The personal importance attributed to access to local news in the minority official language also differs. On a scale of 10, anglophones in Quebec assigned it an average importance score of 7.1, compared with 6.2 among francophones outside Quebec. A similar trend was observed for cultural and sports content (6.8 among anglophones compared with 5.9 among francophones).

“The transition to digital media remains slow, particularly among older generations who prefer print format,”

— a manager of an OLMCM

“Print is still valued, but increasingly less viable due to paper costs,”

— an academic researcher

The survey results also highlight a paradox: although OLMCM are perceived as essential by their target audiences, as confirmed by respondents in the Nanos survey, the actual level of consumption of their programming and content does not fully reflect this favorable perception.

Several respondents (around two in five) reported continuing to prefer national television or CBC/Radio-Canada as their main sources of local news.

The preference for majority-language stations is the main reason why francophones (38%) and anglophones (36%) do not listen to local minority-language community radio.

As for print, 35% of francophones in minority settings said they prefer to read English-language newspapers, compared with 14% of anglophones in Quebec who prefer French-language newspapers. Meanwhile, the share of people who reported not reading any minority-language print media was similar across the two groups: 30% among francophones and 33% among



anglophones. Finally, about 15% of francophones and 20% of anglophones said they were not even aware of the existence of OLMCM.

These findings confirm the perceptions expressed by media outlets themselves and the observations collected during interviews. OLMCM are known within their immediate circles, but their reach beyond this core remains limited, even among young people. According to some OLMC managers interviewed, this lack of visibility is partly due to organizational challenges that limit their outreach efforts and, consequently, hinder their visibility and ability to build lasting ties with their community.

Three consumer profiles emerged from the Nanos survey:

- Moderately interested individuals (51% of francophones and 34% of anglophones), who maintain an occasional link with OLMCM
- Actively engaged individuals (29% of francophones and 33% of anglophones), who show sustained interest in OLMCM but whose engagement could be strengthened
- Fully invested individuals (20% of francophones and 33% of anglophones), who maintain a strong and diverse connection with OLMCM. Among francophones outside Quebec, immigrants, the more educated, or those with higher incomes are predominant in this group.

Thus, while challenges remain in expanding the number of people actively engaged with OLMCM, several strategies could be implemented to foster greater participation.

In this regard, local news remains one of the most sought-after types of content among minority-language populations, and factors such as digital accessibility and discoverability could be decisive in strengthening the reach and influence of OLMCM within the communities they serve.



Access to financial resources – A major challenge

“Funding is a major issue. Relying on grants rather than advertising revenues proves to be complex, and on top of that, distribution costs remain high,”

— a manager of an OLMCM

“The digital model relies on volume. You need to reach very high numbers for it to work, which isn’t realistic for hyperlocal media. Even if every member of my community visited my site ten times a day, it still wouldn’t be enough: I would eventually go bankrupt,”

— a manager of an OLMCM

The financial challenges were raised by the vast majority (78%) of key stakeholders in the media ecosystem during individual interviews. This is reflected in the results of the self-assessment survey, which show that about two-thirds of OLMCM operate with an annual budget of less than \$500,000, and nearly one-third with less than \$250,000.

Their sources of funding rely primarily on government grants (96% of respondents) and advertising (94%), followed by subscriptions (50%) and partnerships or sponsorships (41%). However, as with Canadian media in general, OLMCM advertising revenues and subscriptions continue to decline. It is also worth noting that, despite the federal government’s obligation to communicate in both official languages, OLMCM appear to receive only a tiny fraction of the federal government’s advertising budget.

For example, according to data collected by the Consortium from OLMCM, in 2012, one French-language community radio station in a minority setting received approximately \$112,000 in advertising revenue from the federal government, compared with just \$8,400 in 2024. This decline is even more alarming when adjusted for inflation. Consortium data show that this downward trend is widespread across OLMCM.



Essential strategic government support

As part of the modernization of the *Official Languages Act* and the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028*, the Government of Canada has introduced, in addition to existing funding programs, specific measures to support OLMCM.

The *Community Media Strategic Support Fund* (CMSSF), with a budget of \$10 million over five years, aims to strengthen the capacity of eligible media outlets to fulfill their essential mission within francophone and anglophone minority communities. This fund supports local content production, operational sustainability, and innovation within a rapidly changing media ecosystem.

With a budget of \$5 million over five years, the *Internships in OLMCM* program provides for the creation of about 125 paid internships. It allows OLMCM to strengthen their capacity by welcoming an additional human resource while also training the next generation of professionals. Interns gain practical experience that enhances their professional, communication, and organizational skills.

Other regulatory measures (such as the *Online News Act* and the *Online Streaming Act*), as well as various tax measures, have also been introduced by the federal government to support Canadian media. However, the restrictive eligibility criteria of these measures limit their benefits for OLMCM.

“To qualify for a federal tax credit, you need at least two full-time journalists. Small media outlets that rely on contributors or part-time staff are often excluded,”

— a former OLMCM president

“The specific realities of OLMC media should be recognized in the tax credit, because almost all of them are currently excluded,”

— a manager of an OLMCM

Some OLMCM are also turning to philanthropic activities to diversify revenues and fulfill their public service mission. However, these solutions, often rooted in hyperlocal contexts, are difficult to transfer to other communities because they also require a significant investment of time, something OLMCM often lack due to their very small teams.

Current business models, based on small and geographically dispersed audiences, struggle to ensure OLMCM viability without external support. Access to government grants is therefore essential, but it comes with a heavy administrative burden, particularly in terms of accountability. This requirement consumes a large share of their already limited human resources, often at the expense of strategic activities such as business development, marketing, or digital innovation, efforts that are crucial to better reach audiences and respond to their evolving needs.

Moreover, reliance on project-based funding makes long-term planning more difficult and does not guarantee stable or recurring financial support.

“Grants should support ongoing activities and not be limited to short-term projects. The day-to-day management of a newspaper consumes all our resources,”

— an OLMCM manager

Access to human resources – Another major challenge

When it comes to human resources, OLMCM face greater difficulties than other local media. The pool of qualified candidates proficient in the minority official language is limited and often sought after by other community organizations. This reality—felt even more strongly on the francophone side—makes recruitment even more difficult for OLMCM. As a result, they struggle to attract and retain staff in the minority official language, which hampers their ability to produce quality content and support community development. More than half of OLMCM (53%) consider the difficulty of attracting and retaining qualified personnel to be their primary challenge.

The human resource constraints of OLMCM are especially visible. More than a quarter of surveyed outlets (26%) have fewer than two full-time employees, 47% fewer than two freelancers or contract workers, and 40% fewer than two volunteers. In addition, 19% of respondents reported having no volunteers at all. In this context, small teams struggle to maintain a continuous presence, particularly in rural, remote, or dispersed areas, which directly affects their capacity to engage actively with their communities.

“In recent years, there have been HR issues at the radio station, which has made it much less well-known than before. There’s been enormous staff turnover,”

— a community leader



To address these needs, the Government of Canada invested \$5 million over five years in the *Internships in Community Media* program, under the *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028*. This funding provides for 125 paid internships in minority-language community radio stations and print media across the country.

While this measure is welcomed by media outlets as a partial response to the labor shortage and a means of supporting existing teams, it remains temporary and does not solve the structural HR challenges. Recruiting interns in small, rural, or remote media outlets, for example, remains difficult, as confirmed by findings from the evaluation of the Local Journalism Initiative⁴⁶.

Beyond recruitment, retention is an equally pressing challenge. Factors such as job insecurity (short-term contracts, uncertain funding), uncompetitive salaries, and demanding working conditions (irregular hours, coverage of large territories, lack of resources) make it difficult to keep staff in place. These conditions also limit the development of a management-ready talent pool. High staff turnover weakens organizational stability and undermines operational effectiveness.

In addition, skills development, whether for permanent staff, contract workers (e.g., journalists, managers, technical staff), or volunteers, represents another major challenge for retention. In a rapidly changing context, teams must adapt to new consumption habits, adopt digital tools, and strengthen their online presence.

“Not only do you need people trained in journalism, production, and broadcasting, but they also have to be proficient in the language,”

— a university researcher

“It’s going to take a lot of training, and a cultural shift (within community media),”

— an OLMCM manager

One in five surveyed media outlets (20%) cited the need for training (e.g., journalism, management) as a necessary condition for their sustainability. Training and professional development needs are particularly acute in minority-language community radio stations, with 30% of respondents identifying this requirement. Training resources in minority languages are limited, and the few available programs are sometimes discontinued; such as the Television Production Program at Collège La Cité⁴⁷ in Ottawa and the Journalism Program at the University of Sudbury.

The number of institutions offering journalism training in Canada is very limited: only two university programs in English, both concentrated in Montreal; one college program in

⁴⁶ Evaluation of the Local Journalism Initiative, 2019-20 to 2021-22, Canada.ca

⁴⁷ Fin du programme de production télévisuelle à La Cité : choc et inquiétude pour la relève francophone, ONFR

French in Ottawa; and one bilingual university program in Ottawa. This limited availability forces interested individuals living outside these cities to leave their region, which creates an additional barrier. In this context, OLMCM often act, sometimes by necessity, as training environments where many young people or new collaborators learn on the job. This role of “improvised trainer,” essential but unrecognized, requires expertise that varies significantly from one outlet to another, and consumes additional human and financial resources, often without structured support.

Some training mechanisms and tools are offered by sectoral representative organizations, but they generally take the form of ad hoc or specialized training (mentorship, targeted workshops) rather than a complete, structured program that ensures a full training pathway.

In terms of training and support for staff in digital transformation, 49% of surveyed OLMCM expressed such a need, with anglophone outlets particularly affected (67%), compared with 42% among francophone outlets. Anglophone respondents were also more likely to report immediate needs, such as developing a mobile app (58%) or redesigning their website (42%), compared with 29% and 23% respectively among francophones.

OLMCM’s digital shift: Another differentiating factor

OLMCM face numerous challenges in terms of size, market reach, changing consumption habits, positioning within their communities, funding, and human resources. These challenges alone weigh heavily on small, overextended teams already busy trying to deliver quality content that meets audience needs. The daily reality drains much of their energy, leaving many struggling to keep their heads above water. On top of this comes another major challenge: the digital transition.

While some funders have encouraged or even supported OLMCM to engage in the digital shift, it is clear that none can fully escape the transformation currently reshaping the entire local news sector. Some outlets have already begun the transition. Of course, this does not mean that all media must abandon traditional models to go “all digital.” In some markets, such a shift might even be ill-advised, as suggested by previously presented data on consumption habits.

“The role of OLMCM is more relevant than ever, provided they adapt to today’s realities. The digital shift is necessary, but it alone is not enough to reach all audiences, especially those with limited Internet access or low digital literacy.”

— Community leader

“By going digital, we lose older (readers or listeners) to possibly gain younger ones, but there’s little real renewal. It would take a massive and very risky investment to try new things.”

— Community leader



For OLMCM, the digital transition must be considered in light of their particular realities. These include a limited critical mass, the dominance of global tech giants (GAFAM), and resulting dependencies, particularly in terms of content distribution and advertising revenues.

It seems unlikely that any media can avoid integrating digital solutions in some form. Whether in content creation, distribution, audience engagement, or management, investments in technology are unavoidable.

The April 2025 OLMC Digital Maturity Self-Assessment Survey revealed sharp divisions in how outlets view their own technological advancement: nearly half (45%) reported only low to moderate ease with adopting and using digital tools, while 55% described their comfort level as good or excellent.

More than half of respondents (56%) reported having no dedicated digital technology staff, and three-quarters (74%) said they lacked a clearly defined digital transformation plan. Nearly half also indicated they did not track specific indicators to measure how audiences use their products and services.

In addition, almost nine out of ten outlets identified limited or insufficient human resources as a major obstacle to digital transition, regardless of their current maturity level. Nearly two-thirds (65%) cited lack of time as a barrier to exploring or integrating digital tools. As a result, OLMCM primarily use digital tools for their core functions—content production (84%) and dissemination (74%)—and less for strategic positioning (visibility, discoverability, reputation) or sales. In this context, seven in ten outlets (70%) felt that having access to a specialist in digital advertising and monetization would contribute significantly to a successful digital transition, and all judged such access as urgent or very urgent.

“Cross-promotion, content sharing, and co-productions are ways to foster collaboration between media outlets.”

— Institutional leader

While human resource challenges are common across the sector, technological needs vary by media type. Nearly three-quarters of community radio stations (73%) reported their top needs as basic equipment, such as more powerful computers and updated software. By contrast, more than half of community print media (52%) sought automation and distribution tools to strengthen or optimize their digital presence.

Artificial intelligence could be leveraged to automate administrative tasks. However, more than half of surveyed outlets (58%) reported little to no use of AI in their operations, primarily citing (36%) lack of knowledge or expertise. Among those that use AI more frequently, the most common applications are summarizing written content and providing translations.

Finally, and unsurprisingly, lack of financial resources to support digital transformation was identified as another significant barrier by 81% of OLMCM. When asked about their top priorities for effectively deploying digital technologies, nearly nine in ten outlets (86%) cited the need for increased predictable and recurring funding specifically dedicated to digital tools.

Organizational Health: Another Key Dimension

When asked about their organizational health⁴⁸, OLMCM outlets provided mixed responses: more than half (56%) considered their situation problematic (2%) or fragile (54%), compared with 44% who described it as good (39%) or even excellent (5%).

It is worth noting that community print media were more likely to perceive themselves as being in fragile organizational health than radio stations (62% vs. 45%). Similarly, English-language OLMCM were proportionally more likely than their French-language counterparts to report fragility (67% vs. 48%).

Nearly 70% of privately owned OLMCM reported fragile organizational health, a higher proportion than among nonprofit-owned outlets (54%)⁴⁹. Provincial-level outlets were also more likely (67%) to identify as fragile than local (55%) or regional (48%) outlets.

This fragility is particularly pronounced in Western Canada and the territories, where geographic realities and resource scarcity exacerbate imbalances. The phenomenon is also spreading eastward, although less acutely, likely due to a more favorable operating environment (e.g., concentrated audiences, stronger community presence). Overall, this situation highlights systemic vulnerability requiring urgent response.

Notably, adopting a hybrid broadcasting model, as several OLMCM have done, does not necessarily ensure greater stability or reduced fragility. This may be explained by limited human and financial resources, which make it difficult to sustain both digital and traditional formats simultaneously.

⁴⁸ For the purposes of the self-assessment survey, the media outlets were asked to assess their organizational health over a three-year horizon, taking into account factors such as the level and predictability of funding, diversification of revenue sources, staff stability, relevance to their audience, etc.

⁴⁹ The three media outlets organized as cooperatives, for their part, consider their organizational health to be good.





DIAGNOSIS AND CHALLENGES

A revealing diagnosis that calls for action

The mission of OLMCM lies at the heart of the development and lasting vitality of the communities they serve. By ensuring access to relevant, local information in the minority language, these outlets contribute to community vitality, a sense of belonging, civic participation, and the preservation of cultural identities. Yet, their crucial democratic role remains largely underestimated, or even unknown, by parts of the public and by decision-makers.

Survey results and consultations conducted in preparation for this white paper show that the relevance, value, and role of OLMCM are still insufficiently understood and recognized. For many, these outlets fly under the radar outside their immediate ecosystem, fail to spark broad or structured engagement, do not rank high among community priorities, or are simply taken for granted. This situation quietly undermines mobilization and support.

This is compounded by limited consumption: only 20% of francophones and 33% of anglophones in minority settings report regularly consuming OLMCM programming or content⁵⁰. Most OLMCM struggle to reach their potential audience. Even when they succeed, their viability and growth are constrained by the small size of the communities they serve.

They must contend with difficult realities: large geographic areas to cover for print outlets, dispersed audiences with rapidly changing consumption habits, niche markets that are hard to monetize, and intensified competition from both national media and global web giants.

An ecosystem weakened by structural paradoxes

Another structural paradox compounds these difficulties: while OLMCM must uphold journalistic integrity as critical observers of community affairs, they are not always recognized as key partners in community priorities. This lack of centrality weakens their ties with community organizations; natural allies in principle. Furthermore, reporting in a minority-language context presents unique ethical challenges due to close geographic, social, and cultural proximity. This closeness can generate both editorial and financial pressures on OLMCM

At the institutional level, federal departments and agencies, as well as other levels of government, are not required to go through OLMCM to reach official language minority communities. They often prefer channels they believe offer broader reach at lower cost, which structurally disadvantages small, community-based outlets despite their cultural and linguistic relevance. This efficiency-driven logic restricts OLMCM access to institutional advertising revenues while weakening perceptions of their legitimacy.

On top of this is a very real digital divide. The now unavoidable digital shift demands significant investment in infrastructure, human resources, technology development, and strategic guidance.

50 Nanos Survey, March 10 to April 15, 2025



Yet, despite such efforts, financial returns remain insufficient to make digital channels a viable revenue source capable of sustaining newsrooms or operations. Rarely do OLMCM have the means or time required. In trying to catch up with limited resources, they suffer a double penalty: failing to meet growing audience expectations while lacking the ability to invest in sustainable organizational integration.

Given such conditions, it is no surprise that these small, often exhausted, under-resourced teams struggle to fulfill their mission. Already under pressure, they must also shoulder the demands of integrating digital tools to compete in the marketplace. This extra burden adds unsustainable strain in a status quo environment, further compounding the vulnerability of OLMCM.

Common issues manifesting in different ways

The picture drawn in previous sections highlights the absence of a single, uniform reality across the OLMCM sector. On the contrary, it is marked by a wide diversity of contexts: print or broadcast outlets, French or English, private enterprises or nonprofits. This diversity results in distinct operational realities, different needs, and therefore priorities unique to each segment.

Despite these differences, data from interviews, surveys, and consultations point to five cross-cutting challenges that affect the sector as a whole to varying degrees:

- Visibility and discoverability
- Recognition and value
- Economic viability
- Human resources
- Technological transformation

Challenges related to visibility and discoverability

The question of visibility and discoverability is a major strategic challenge for OLMCM. A significant portion of minority-language populations, as much as one in five, according to the Nanos survey, are unaware of the very existence of these media in their communities.

This lack of awareness drastically limits OLMCM reach and their ability to play their role as providers of information and social cohesion. In a saturated media environment, with intense competition from large digital platforms, OLMCM struggle to stand out and capture the attention of their target audiences. Lack of visibility becomes the biggest barrier to access: audiences must make the effort to actively search for their local outlet in order to access community information.

Several structural factors contribute to this situation. OLMCM's natural reach is restricted by the minority language they use, the small size of their market, and the geographic dispersion of their audiences. Digital platform algorithms create an additional barrier, as they tend to privilege dominant players, limiting the discoverability of content produced in minority-language contexts. Furthermore, their digital presence often lacks optimization for search engines (SEO) and multi-platform distribution.

This weakness is amplified by a general lack of skills and resources in marketing, branding, and digital communications. Very few OLMCM have a clear, coherent, and visible positioning strategy. Even when audience or readership data exist, they are rarely used systematically to tailor content, guide programming, or refine strategic choices.

Without a significant improvement in their ability to make themselves visible and accessible in the digital public sphere, OLMCM risk remaining on the margins of contemporary information circuits.

Challenges related to recognition and value

Although they are seen as an important driver of vitality in minority-language communities, OLMCM play a role that remains underestimated, not only by the communities they serve, but also by institutional and community actors and by different levels of government.

The visibility of OLMCM remains low among certain segments of the population, particularly young adults, who are less inclined to consume local or minority-language content. Beyond a lack of visibility, the absence of a clear positioning strategy built around their mission and added value prevents OLMCM from explicitly asserting their difference and distinct role compared to other Canadian media. This insufficient recognition of their unique mission limits their ability to mobilize support. It also makes it difficult to justify the level of investment required to overcome structural barriers linked to digital transformation, while competing with the disproportionate reach of Web giants, who undermine their efforts to reach their audiences and expand their market.

This lack of recognition also makes it difficult to demonstrate and communicate their actual impact on belonging, identity representation, and local development. Few, if any, shared tools exist to rigorously measure the social, cultural, or democratic value of these media. The absence of solid evidence in this respect is glaring. As a result, OLMCM struggle to obtain the institutional, political, and financial recognition that their mandate requires.

Furthermore, according to data from the Nanos survey⁵¹, even though OLMCM enjoy a much higher trust rating than social networks and private commercial media, part of the public still places less trust and credibility in them than in Radio-Canada/CBC.

Without shared indicators, without solid evidence of their influence, at the very least, of their actual market share, and without formal recognition of their added value, OLMCM risk, at best, being taken for granted by the communities they serve, or worse, being overlooked by governments and public institutions in community development strategies and public policies. It is therefore imperative to equip the sector to properly document, evaluate, and promote its irreplaceable role within the Canadian media and community ecosystem.

51 Nanos Survey, March 10 to April 15, 2025



Financial challenges

OLMCM operate in an economic environment marked by increasing precarity, instability, and a lack of sustainable financial resources. The majority of these media struggle to secure stable funding that would allow for medium- or long-term planning.

This financial fragility makes them dependent on short-term grant programs that are often uncertain and subject to fluctuating eligibility criteria. On top of this comes a weak diversification of revenue sources: very few OLMCM have internal capacity or robust strategies to generate sufficient, diversified autonomous revenue through services, subscription campaigns, philanthropy, or commercial partnerships.

Market trends exacerbate this vulnerability. Both government and commercial advertising investments are in steady decline, particularly for local media. Subscription revenues are also falling due to heightened competition from free, easily accessible online content. Meanwhile, operating costs are increasing: production costs, staffing, technology, management of digital platforms, printing, and distribution. All of these expense categories weigh heavily on already strained budgets.

This unfavorable economic equation directly impacts working conditions. Salaries are often uncompetitive, and benefits are limited, which hampers staff recruitment and retention. In short, without structural reinvestment and a redesign of business models adapted to digital realities and the specificities of minority-language markets, OLMCM risk becoming trapped in a cycle of economic precarity incompatible with their long-term mission.

Human resource challenges

Human resources are another weak link in the OLMCM ecosystem. Attracting and retaining qualified staff is a major challenge, worsened by often unfavorable pay conditions. This situation frequently leads to a reliance on volunteerism, which, while valuable, does not guarantee stability in retaining skilled workers, nor does it foster skill development within teams.

As in other minority-language community sectors, OLMCM face very strong competition to attract competent, committed, and reliable volunteers. This human resource base, whether salaried, contractual, or voluntary, remains difficult to recruit in the minority language.

In addition, digital expertise is critically lacking. Few media outlets have staff trained in digital technologies, multi-platform content management, or discoverability optimization. The absence of designated roles or in-house expertise in this area significantly slows their ability to adapt to the digital environment. This shortfall is compounded by limited access to ongoing training and professional development due to financial and logistical constraints. Staff turnover among both permanent and volunteer personnel often forces organizations to start over again.

Finally, existing teams often work under constant pressure. A lack of staff, combined with high expectations and demands, leads to overwork, fatigue, and, ultimately, organizational burnout. This “survival culture” limits the ability of media outlets to develop long-term visions or to implement structural changes. In this context, strengthening human capacity, professionalizing teams, and ensuring better working conditions are essential to the sector’s resilience.

Technological challenges

OLMCM also face significant technological challenges that hinder their digital transition. Adoption of digital technologies remains uneven, both in terms of technological equipment and digital tools and practices. While some media have successfully begun their digital shift, others still struggle to integrate even basic solutions. Access to equipment and tools varies greatly depending on available resources.

Artificial intelligence, which could improve discoverability, content personalization, and operational efficiency, remains rarely used among OLMCM, largely due to a lack of expertise. Ethical concerns about its use, even for non-editorial tasks, also act as an additional barrier to adoption.

Furthermore, a majority of OLMCM lack a structured and clearly defined digital action plan. This lack of planning undermines their ability to prioritize necessary investments, track performance indicators, or adapt their content to new consumption habits. Connectivity is also a challenge: access to high-speed Internet remains uneven and particularly difficult in rural and remote areas. Finally, part of the target audience remains reluctant to consume digital content, either because of a preference for traditional formats or a lack of digital literacy.

Many opportunities to support sector evolution

It would be wrong to interpret the candid diagnosis and the nature of the challenges identified in this document as a sign that the situation is hopeless.

Far from it! This diagnosis is intended only to underline the importance of sector-wide evolution and the engagement required from all relevant stakeholders. Many opportunities exist, some easy to implement, others requiring greater investment and commitment.

OLMCM must reinvent themselves to respond to new consumption habits, diversify their business models, and strengthen their role in the information ecosystem. But such reinvention cannot rest solely on their shoulders.

This evolution cannot happen without the commitment of all stakeholders, not only to ensure the survival of these media, but also for the collective good, in support of renewed community vitality and healthy local democracy. It requires a coordinated, collective effort. This means active involvement from the media themselves (both teams and boards of directors), their associations, the Consortium, communities, and governments.

Without this broader engagement, OLMCM risk becoming even more marginalized, with direct consequences for the democratic, cultural, and identity life of minority-language communities for which they play an essential role.

Proposed solutions to support this coordinated, collective effort are presented in the following pages.



PILLARS FOR A COORDINATED, CONCERTED, AND COLLECTIVE MOBILIZATION

The proposed mobilization pillars below are based on four axes of intervention, to be carried out in a complementary and interdependent manner. Acting on only one axis is not enough: it is the convergence of all four that will ensure lasting results. Without concerted action, the vulnerability of OLMCM will only increase.

Although OLMCM are called upon to evolve by innovating and adapting their business model in order to ensure their relevance and sustainability as essential vectors of vitality for official language minority communities, structured and collective support remains indispensable to enable them to succeed in this evolution while fully carrying out their mission in the short term.

As Roberto Suárez Candel, Ph.D., Director of Strategy and Media Intelligence at the European Broadcasting Union, reminded us:

“Media organizations should define their success not only in terms of financial performance, but also in terms of the significant contributions they make to society⁵².”

It is in this spirit that the proposed projects are structured around four levels of intervention.

- These projects are complementary and inseparable: none will bear fruit in isolation.
- Their effects can only fully unfold if implemented simultaneously, coherently, and in an interconnected manner.



Organizational pillar: Media by media

Each OLMCM must assert its role not only as a provider of local information but also as a creator of cultural, linguistic, and identity value. The goal is to ensure greater recognition of this unique contribution among the populations they serve, as well as among community and institutional partners, businesses, and funders. Such recognition is essential to strengthen the relevance of OLMCM, consolidate their community roots, and ensure their long-term viability.

Priority actions for OLMCM:

- **Raise awareness in their local ecosystem** (organizations, institutions, businesses, citizens, etc.) about the critical findings presented, the urgency of a deep transformation of the sector, and actively seek support from this ecosystem.
- **Gain recognition for their structuring role** among stakeholders by documenting their real impact on community vitality, linguistic inclusion, and citizen participation.
- **Redefine their business model**, with the support of the Consortium and the representative organizations of the four subsectors, drawing on best practices adapted to their local reality and organizational capacity.
- **Continue the digital transition** by developing a clear and progressive action plan that includes technological, editorial, and operational objectives.
- **Adapt content and distribution platforms** to the real needs of their audiences, using a participatory and targeted (“pull”⁵³) approach that integrates input from communities.
- **Strengthen discoverability efforts** by optimizing their digital presence, search engine ranking, and visibility within the local and regional media landscape.
- **Actively engage younger generations** by adapting content offerings, formats, and distribution channels to their consumption habits in order to build new loyalty.
- **Leverage evidence-based data** (audience, engagement, reach) to guide strategic decisions and measure the effectiveness of implemented initiatives.

53 The ‘pull’ model refers to an approach whereby a media outlet draws the public toward its content rather than imposing it. It develops this content based on the needs, interests, and priorities expressed by the communities, and then disseminates it in a way that fosters their voluntary engagement, thereby strengthening its relevance and influence.

Sectoral pillar: Under the leadership of the Consortium and its member representative organizations

The Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media (Consortium), together with the representative organizations of the four OLMCM subsectors, plays a strategic role in supporting, coordinating, and defending the interests of these media.

Together, and while respecting their complementary mandates, the Consortium and the representative organizations are well positioned to support the sector's evolution by facilitating the redefinition of business models, pooling resources, and implementing structuring strategies on a national scale.

Priority actions for the Consortium and representative organizations:

- **Actively support media outlets** in redesigning their business models, taking into account their linguistic, geographic, and organizational realities.
- **Encourage the pooling of key resources**, such as continuous training, access to specialists in digital transformation, marketing, or monetization, in order to strengthen media capacity at lower cost and on an ongoing basis.
- **Advocate for sustainable, predictable, and equitable funding**, as well as for better working conditions in the sector, to attract and retain qualified staff.
- **Build strategic partnerships** with other media groups or bodies, both within Canada's majority-language communities and internationally, to foster knowledge transfer, cross-innovation, and the strengthening of transversal skills.
- **Develop a coordinated dialogue strategy** with major digital platforms (GAFAM), to defend the interests of OLMCM and improve their discoverability and online revenues.
- **Support digital presence** through structuring initiatives such as innovation labs, practice-sharing networks, and shared tools.
- **Design and implement a structured framework** for collecting and analyzing sectoral data, in order to document the value, influence, and needs of OLMCM and inform strategic decisions.
- **Launch a national campaign to promote OLMCM**, whether at the sectoral or cross-sectoral level, to raise awareness of their role, influence, and relevance among communities, institutions, and the general public.



Community pillar: in collaboration with the associative movement, institutions, and the official language minority populations served by the OLMCM

Community organizations and institutions, businesses, and citizens all have a key role to play in supporting OLMCM. Their active engagement is indispensable, whether as audiences, content partners, advertisers, or strategic allies. Integrating OLMCM into local dynamics means recognizing their essential contribution to the identity, linguistic, and democratic vitality of official language minority communities.

Priority actions for the community sector:

- **Integrate OLMCM into community action plans and local development strategies**, considering them as full partners in the cultural, social, and economic development of the communities they serve.
- **Foster active and ongoing engagement with OLMCM** by listening to community radio programming and reading local newspapers.
- **Increase visibility and discoverability of OLMCM** by sharing their content, promoting them in local networks and beyond, and highlighting their contribution in community spaces.
- **Support the financial sustainability of OLMCM** through subscriptions, advertising purchases, sponsored content placements, and by encouraging local businesses and organizations to invest or act as patrons.
- **Support the production of relevant, community-rooted local content** by acting as information sources, field relays, or collaborative partners, while respecting the editorial independence of OLMCM.
- **Create favorable conditions for sustainable partnerships** between OLMCM and local institutions (schools, libraries, cultural centers, youth centers, etc.), to multiply opportunities for visibility, co-creation, and community anchoring.
- **Engage post-secondary institutions as partners**, particularly those with programs in communications, journalism, or media production, to support training and integration of the next generation.
- **Raise awareness among municipal, provincial, and federal elected officials** of the importance of OLMCM and their role in the community fabric, in order to strengthen their legitimacy within public policy.

Government pillar: Toward structural measures and strategic support

Federal, provincial, territorial, and municipal governments can play a driving role in maintaining formal recognition of OLMCM and in providing strategic support.

By collaborating on the implementation of structural measures, they will help remove obstacles and create an environment conducive to the growth and sustainability of OLMCM.

Priority actions for governments:

- **Explicitly recognize the essential role of OLMCM** in legislation, public policies, and strategic frameworks related to official languages, the media sector, culture, regional development, and local democracy.
- **Allocate a fair, recurring, and stable share of government advertising to OLMCM**, in order to strengthen their visibility, institutional credibility, and capacity to generate autonomous revenue.
- **Introduce new fiscal incentives**, such as a federal tax credit for businesses and organizations that invest in advertising with OLMCM, to stimulate autonomous financing and strengthen economic ties with their communities.
- **Ensure stable, multi-year funding adapted to the realities of the sector**, enabling not only long-term planning but also stabilization of teams and retention of qualified staff.
- **Support the digital transformation of OLMCM** through dedicated funds for technological modernization, ongoing training, editorial innovation, and the implementation of sustainable business models.
- **Adapt** existing fiscal measures and programs by revising eligibility criteria to better reflect the realities of small local media, which are often excluded from current measures.
- **Support research, data collection, and knowledge-sharing** to better understand and identify sector needs, document its impact, and guide public policy on objective and rigorous foundations.



CONCLUSION

This White Paper delivers a clear and candid finding: OLMCM are in difficulty—just like most local media in Canada.

Yet, despite the many challenges and obstacles, OLMCM enjoy a higher level of trust than the Canadian media average. Their future depends on strategic and structured mobilization, translated into concrete measures and a shared commitment to act.

Modernization, and indeed, evolution of their structures and business models is an unavoidable path that requires recognition, support, and guidance.

The survival, as well as the growth, of these media is not solely the responsibility of their managers, staff, and volunteers. It concerns Canadian society as a whole, in its recognition of the value of linguistic duality, cultural and socio-demographic diversity, the historical and identity anchoring of communities, and the role of local journalism as a driver of community vitality.

In an era marked by information overload, weakened by disinformation and media concentration, OLMCM, like other local media across the country, remain indispensable allies of a representative, inclusive, and pluralist democracy. To disregard their role and responsibilities is to weaken democracy itself. It is time to ensure stable and sustainable conditions for OLMCM so they can fully exercise their mission and influence with independence and rigor.

In this light, it is essential to create open spaces for dialogue and trust among media, community, academic, and government partners, to foster commitments toward the strategic and sustainable repositioning of OLMCM within the media ecosystem.

Such spaces must reaffirm the fundamental role of OLMCM as catalysts of social vitality, collective pride, and identity and linguistic affirmation in minority language settings.

The goal is to collectively build a local media ecosystem that is united, resilient, and sustainable—one that can address not only the challenges faced by official language minority populations but also the broader issues of Canadian society.

To achieve this, **all key stakeholders, at every level, must be mobilized around a common, structured, and ambitious approach, in order to define shared priorities, deploy concrete actions, and put in place the essential conditions for the sustainability and influence of OLMCM** in their key democratic role.



GLOSSARY

Community-based journalism (hyperlocal journalism)

Journalistic practice focused on local issues, realities, and voices, designed to strengthen civic engagement, community involvement, and social cohesion.

Digital content produced by creators

Content produced and distributed by individuals or groups, often not professional journalists, on digital platforms, playing a role in shaping and evolving media practices.

Digital transformation (digital shift)

The transition of media toward digital models, tools, and formats to produce, distribute, and monetize content, while adapting to new consumption habits.

Discoverability

The ability of content to be easily noticed, found, and accessed, especially in a saturated digital environment.

GAFAM

Acronym referring to the American tech giants (Google, Apple, Facebook, Amazon, and Microsoft) that dominate the global digital ecosystem.

Hybrid broadcasting

A method of delivering content that relies on both traditional formats (print, AM/FM radio, etc.) and digital formats (websites, podcasts, newsletters, etc.).

Linguistic duality

The existence of two official languages, French and English, which the Government of Canada is committed to recognizing, valuing, and sustaining at the core of its identity, laws, and social fabric.

OLMCM

Official Languages Minority Community Media.

Substantive equality

Substantive equality is achieved when differences in the characteristics and circumstances of a minority community are taken into account, where necessary, by offering services with distinct content or through different delivery methods to ensure the minority receives services of the same quality as the majority.

User-generated content

Informational content created and shared by members of the public, often voluntarily or non-professionally, aimed at relaying facts, testimonies, issues, or local events, typically through digital tools or community media.

REFERENCES

Assemblée de la francophonie de l'Ontario. (2017). *Livre blanc sur les médias francophones en Ontario*. https://monassemblee.ca/assets/images/uploads/2022/03/LivreBlanc-Media-2017_09_20.pdf

Canada. (2023). *Online Streaming Act* (S.C. 2023, c. 8) https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/fra/LoisAnnuelles/2023_8/

Canada. (2023). *Online News Act* (S.C. 2023, c. 23) https://laws-lois.justice.gc.ca/fra/loisAnnuelles/2023_23/

Centre d'études sur les médias. (2025). *Digital News Report Canada : synthèse des données 2025*. dnrcanada2025f.pdf

Centre d'études sur les médias. (2022). Les jeunes adultes québécois face à la désinformation et la mésinformation. Évaluation d'ateliers éducatifs en mode mobile. <https://www.cem.ulaval.ca/wp-content/uploads/2022/11/cem-desinformation-atelier-2022.pdf>

Centre d'études sur les médias. (2024). Publicité. <https://www.cem.ulaval.ca/economie/donnees-financieres/publicite/>

Standing Committee on Access to Information, Privacy and Ethics. (2024). *Testimonies: April 30, 2024*. Ottawa, House of Commons of Canada. <https://www.noscommunes.ca/documentviewer/fr/44-1/ETHI/reunion-114/temoignages>

Denham, Brittany. (2024). *2024 Trends: Social Media in Canada*. Environics Research. <https://environics.ca/insights/articles/2024-trends-social-media-in-canada/>

Official Languages Branch, Canadian Heritage. (2023). *Portrait of Official Language Minority Communities in Canada*. Based on data from the 2021 Census and institutional databases of Canadian Heritage. Government of Canada. <https://www.canada.ca/fr/patrimoine-canadien/services/langues-officielles-bilinguisme/publications/communautes-situation-minoritaire.html>

Evaluation Services Directorate. (2024). Evaluation of the Local Journalism Initiative , 2019-2020 to 2021-2022. Ottawa, Canadian Heritage. <https://www.canada.ca/fr/patrimoine-canadien/organisation/publications/evaluations/evaluation-initiative-journalisme-2022.html>

Canada Media Fund. (s.d.). Changing Narratives Fund

Government of Canada. (2021). *Framework for the Vitality of Official-Language Minority Communities (OLMC)*. Ottawa, Canadian Heritage. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/publications/vitality-minority-communities.html>

Government of Canada (2024). CRTC approves Google's application and paves way for annual \$100 million contribution to Canadian news organizations. <https://www.canada.ca/en/radio-television-telecommunications/news/2024/10/crtc-approves-googles-application-and-paves-way-for-annual-100-million-contribution-to-canadian-news-organizations.html>



Government of Canada. (2025). Canadian journalism labour tax credit. Ottawa, Canadian Revenue Agency
<https://www.canada.ca/en/revenue-agency/services/tax/businesses/topics/corporations/business-tax-credits/canadian-journalism-labour-tax-credit.html>

Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media. (2025). *Community Media Strategic Support Fund (CMSSF). 2026–2027 Grant Application Guide*. Initiative funded by the Government of Canada. https://olconsortiumlo.ca/content/user_files/2025/05/CMSSF-GUIDE-2026-2027.pdf

Government of Canada. (2020). *Official Language Minority Communities' Frame of Reference for Vitality*. Ottawa, Canadian Heritage. <https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/funding/official-languages/cooperation-community/frame-reference-vitality.html>

Government of Canada. (2025). *Annual Report on Government of Canada Advertising Activities 2023 to 2024*. Ottawa, Central Government Agency.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/public-services-procurement/services/communication/government-advertising/annual-reports/2023-2024-report.html>

Government of Canada. (2024). *The Government of Canada announces an investment of \$12.5 million to support official language minority community media*. Ottawa, Canadian Heritage.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/news/2024/10/the-government-of-canada-announces-an-investment-of-125-million-to-support-official-language-minority-community-media.html>

Government of Canada. (2023). *Action Plan for Official Languages 2023–2028: Protection-Promotion-Collaboration*. Ottawa, Canadian Heritage.
<https://www.canada.ca/en/canadian-heritage/services/official-languages-bilingualism/official-languages-action-plan/2023-2028.html>

Harmach, Mohammed Amine. (2025). Fin du programme de production télévisuelle à La Cité : choc et inquiétude pour la relève francophone. ONFR.
<https://onfr.tfo.org/fin-du-programme-de-production-televisuelle-a-la-cite-choc-et-inquietude-pour-la-releve-francophone/>

La Presse. (2023). *La plupart des Canadiens pensent que l'information devrait être gratuite*.
<https://www.lapresse.ca/affaires/medias/2023-09-20/la-plupart-des-canadiens-pensent-que-l-information-devrait-etre-gratuite.php>

Lindgren, April et Corbett, Jon. (2025). *Local News Map Data: April 1, 2025*. Local News Research Project. <http://localnewsresearchproject.ca/category/local-news-map-data>

News Media Canada (2023). *Total reported media expenditures in Canada topped \$17 billion in 2021*. <https://nmc-mic.ca/2023/03/09/total-reported-media-expenditures-in-canada-topped-17-billion-in-2021/>

News Media Canada. (2021). *Facebook and Google continue to gobble up digital advertising dollars, new reports shows*. <https://nmc-mic.ca/2021/11/25/the-canadian-media-concentration-research-project-releases-latest-report/>

Nanos Research. (2025). *Analysis of the consumption habits of official language minority community media audiences*.

Youran Qin, Abby. (2025). *Why some towns lose local news—and others don't*. NiemanLab.
<https://www.niemanlab.org/2025/06/why-some-towns-lose-local-news-and-others-dont/>

Paré, Étienne. (2024). *Les dépenses publicitaires explosent au profit des GAFAM*. Le Devoir.
<https://www.ledevoir.com/culture/medias/808025/medias-depenses-publicitaires-explosent-profit-gafam>

Patterson, Jessica. (2024). *How Meta's news ban reshaped Canadian media*. Digital Content Next.
<https://digitalcontentnext.org/blog/2024/09/12/how-metas-news-ban-reshaped-canadian-media/>

Pôle Médias HEC Montréal. (2023). *Les habits neufs de la radio. La métamorphose de l'industrie de l'audio*.
https://www.hec.ca/salle_de_presse/communiqués/2023/habits-neufs-de-la-radio.html

Canadian Media Concentration Research Project (CMCR). (2021). Study on the distribution of digital advertising revenues in Canada.

Final Investigation Report — Interim Commissioner of Official Languages (June 2018), Complaints 2015-0963 and 52 prior complaints.

Rebuild Local News. (2025). *The Local News Crisis*.
<https://www.rebuildlocalnews.org/research-on-local-news/>

Research and Markets. (2024). *Media in Canada – Market Report Summary*.
<https://www.researchandmarkets.com/reports/6028926/media-in-canada>

Reuters Institute. (2024) *Digital News Report 2024 – Executive Summary*.
<https://reutersinstitute.politics.ox.ac.uk/digital-news-report/2024/dnr-executive-summary>

Suárez Candel, R. (s.d.). Déclaration sur la valeur sociale des médias. Union européenne de radio-télévision.

P.G.F Consultants Inc. (2025). *Results of the Self-Assessment Survey on Digital Maturity*. Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media

P.G.F. Consultants Inc. (2024). *Results of the survey on the issues, practices, and needs of OLMCM*. Consortium of Official Language Minority Community Media

Key Stakeholder Testimonials. (2024). Qualitative interviews conducted with 30 community, institutional, and sectoral leaders (November–December 2024).