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**EKOS Research Associates Inc.**

# Media Habits of Minority Language Canadians

## *Summary*

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**Public Services and Procurement Canada**

Ce rapport est aussi disponible en français

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# SUMMARY

Over the past decade the media landscape in Canada has undergone enormous changes. The emergence of new technologies, more offshore media platforms, shifting immigration demographics, and First Nations groups reconnecting with their linguistic roots, are some of the changes we have seen. During this time, some media industries have benefitted greatly from these shifting consumer tastes, while others have faced challenges in retaining core audiences.

Communications are central to the Government of Canada's work and essential for informing the public of what it is doing for their benefit. The government communicates with the public in both official languages, to inform Canadians of policies, programs, services and initiatives, and of Canadians' rights and responsibilities under the law. Shifts in how Canadians prefer to receive information have led us to look at how we communicate with Canadians in the best manner possible.

To better understand media usage by linguistic minorities we surveyed Canadians who live where the majority official language of their community is not the language they speak at home. An official minority language community (OLMC) is a community of individuals who speak English within the province of Quebec, and French in the rest of Canada. For parts of the survey, we did not exclude media usage of other minority languages, such as ethnic and Indigenous languages, to ensure we had a clear picture of the minority linguistic preferences of various media in Canada rather than just official language minorities. This public opinion research, commissioned by Public Services and Procurement Canada (PSPC), explores the ability of Canadians, including those living in OLMCs, to receive government communications in the official language of their choice. Information was gathered on the media usage habits of the target population (adult Canadians, including OLMCs and other minority language media users). The results of this study will support Government of Canada institutions in the strategic development of advertising campaigns for which they are responsible to better target their audiences and the appropriate media outlets.

The four target populations surveyed were:

1. Adult Canadians living in Quebec and report French as their preferred official language;
2. Those living outside Quebec with English as their preferred official language;
3. Quebecers who speak English at home, or prefer to access media in a language other than French; and
4. Canadians living outside Quebec who speak French at home or prefer to access media in French.

The 10 to 15 minute telephone survey was completed with 2,873 Canadians 18 years of age or older. The sample comprised of 1,233 language majority respondents (511 Francophones living in Quebec and 722 Anglophones living in the rest of Canada). The language majority sample was based on randomly selected households across the country using a Random Digit Dial (RDD) method of sampling households which is a probabilistic method. The margin of error associated with this language majority sample is 2.8 per cent overall<sup>1</sup>. It also includes 1,640 language minority respondents, including 461 Anglophones living in 73 selected Quebec census subdivisions (CSDs), and 1,179 Francophones living in 70 other selected CSDs across Canada. The language minority sample was constructed through the selection of random phone numbers with postal codes located in selected dissemination areas within communities where language minority was most concentrated.

### ***Overall Use of Media Sources for Information***

The Internet was by far the most popular medium for all groups; 88 per cent indicate they have used it in the past month, followed fairly closely by radio (81 per cent) and television (79 per cent). Other media are less used: six in ten read community print newspapers and just over half (53 per cent) read daily print newspapers, with magazines bringing up the rear as an information source (45 per cent).

When it comes to seeking information about government programs and services, the primary source is the Internet, followed by television, radio and talking to acquaintances. Four in ten respondents suggested that Service Canada centres and daily newspapers were preferred sources for government information. Community print newspapers, 1 800 O-Canada and magazines were the least preferred information sources.

Respondents of all linguistic backgrounds report similar use of the Internet, radio and community print newspapers. Nevertheless, official language minority Anglophones are somewhat less likely to have watched television, or read daily print newspapers or magazines.

Among Internet users, websites rank as the most popular digital medium (92 per cent), followed at a distance by social media (77 per cent). Further down the list, half read daily online newspapers, and just over four in ten (43 per cent) stream television through the Internet. Fewer still listen to Internet radio broadcasts (26 per cent) or read community online newspapers (23 per cent). When

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<sup>1</sup> Margin of error is calculated on the language majority sample. No comparable margin of error is calculated on the language minority sample due to the clustering of the sample design in more heavily language minority areas of selected communities across the country.

seeking information about government programs and services digitally, government websites are the primary source of information, followed by social media, and daily online newspapers.

Across digital media, respondents of all linguistic backgrounds have similar patterns of use. Nevertheless, OLMCs outside of Quebec are noticeably less likely to have watched television streaming through the Internet than OLMCs within Quebec.

### ***Use of Media in a Minority Language (including official, ethnic or Indigenous languages)***

Among those people who reside within a majority language community and access information in another language, the preferences are similar. Internet and television are the primary sources for minority language information, followed by radio and magazines. Minority language daily print newspapers (22 per cent), or community print newspapers (22 per cent) both were the least preferred source of information.

One-third of minority language Internet users watch online television streaming (35 per cent), visit websites (33 per cent), use social media (30 per cent), or read daily online newspapers (29 per cent). One-quarter listen to online radio (27 per cent) or read community online newspapers (25 per cent).

### ***Sources for Government Information***

Canadians expect to receive information about government programs and services primarily through Internet (84 per cent), in particular Government of Canada websites (75 per cent of Internet users), followed by people they know (63 per cent) and television (62 per cent). Service Canada centres, and daily newspapers form a second tier of preferred sources for government information, according to about half of respondents. Fewer Canadians use community print newspapers, magazines and 1 800 O-Canada to access government information.

In terms of key differences, OLMCs in Quebec are less likely than Francophones within or OLMCs outside Quebec to watch television (54 per cent), read daily (33 per cent) or community print (31 per cent) or read magazines (15 per cent) to get news about Government of Canada programs and services. While OLMCs outside of Quebec are more likely than Anglophones to rely on community print newspapers (40 per cent), this represents the sixth most popular source for Government of Canada information.

Canadians seek information about government programs and services primarily through Internet (74 per cent) and television (70 per cent), followed by mail issued by the Government of Canada (65 per cent) then radio (63 per cent).

Asked within the context of the most relied on source for first receiving new information about Government of Canada programs or services, half of all language groups said they expect to receive this information through a combination of news coverage and advertising. One-third expect to receive this information through news coverage alone, and very few anticipate getting the information through advertising alone.

### ***Satisfaction***

The vast majority of Canadians are satisfied with the various means through which the Government of Canada has sought to inform citizens about its programs and services. One in five (18 per cent) expressed a high level of satisfaction with the Government of Canada's communication efforts, and another six in ten (62 per cent) said they are moderately satisfied. One in ten (11 per cent) expressed limited satisfaction and just five per cent said they are "not at all" satisfied.

### ***Access to Official Minority-Language Media***

Results suggest that the availability of OLMC newspapers is consistent across both language groups. Consumption habits of OLMCs within and outside Quebec are virtually identical. There is, however, a notable disparity in terms of access to OLMC radio; seven in ten minority Francophones (70 per cent) report access to OLMC radio in their area, compared to just half of minority Anglophones (49 per cent).

### ***Major Conclusions***

Although Canadians use a wide array of media to keep themselves informed, the Internet (namely websites), and television are the primary sources used.

Media sources more likely to be accessed in a minority language (i.e., other official minority language or ethnic or Indigenous language) are Internet and television, followed by online television. Print newspapers are the least likely to be accessed in a minority language.

OLMCs outside Quebec routinely access media in a minority language, particularly through the Internet. By contrast, OLMCs living in Quebec are much less likely to access media in a minority language on a monthly basis. When asked to explain why they accessed minority language media, both said they use these media primarily to follow local news and events.

Canadians get their information about government programs primarily through the Internet, particularly government websites, as well as through acquaintances, television, and radio. In fact, so few people selected community newspapers, or radio as a preferred source that no reliable conclusions can be drawn. The vast majority of Canadians looked for information about government services at least once in the past year, particularly related to taxes, passports, health, and pensions.

Most Canadians are generally satisfied with the ways in which the Government of Canada communicates information about its programs. Satisfaction levels are slightly higher among Francophones. Among the relatively small minority who are less satisfied, many attributed this to issues with the programs themselves, rather than with the government's communication efforts. Lack of internet access is also a reason for limited satisfaction, primarily among majority Anglophones (rather than among language minority respondents).

Among official minority language residents not accessing language minority community media sources, most say that they prefer other sources or lack the time or interest. Few say that they lack access to these sources.

The total expenditure for the POR project is \$196,574.01 (including HST).

Supplier Name: EKOS Research Associates

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