

Not Netflix, Sans Spotify: Canadians back continued CRTC regulation, but not for online content

Younger Canadians show strongest opposition to regulating digital media

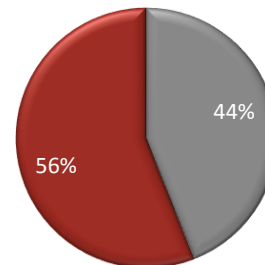
June 3, 2016 – As the federal government continues public consultation ahead of the first comprehensive review of Canada's cultural policies [since 1991](#), a new public opinion poll from the Angus Reid Institute finds Canadians supportive of the process, but reserved about the idea of traditional regulation in contemporary space.

Indeed, the public is broadly in agreement with Heritage Minister Melanie Joly that Canadian content policies are sorely in need of an update. However, a majority of Canadians to draw a line in the sand when it comes to “Can-Con” policies for online media.

Key Findings:

- A majority of Canadians (56%) say online media should not be subject to the same CRTC regulations as traditional media, though roughly four-in-ten (44%) disagree, and would like to see all media regulated the same
- Asked whether current Canadian content policies do a good job of promoting this nation's cultural content, Canadians are largely unconvinced. A 40 per cent plurality says yes, but one-in-four (26%) say no, (the rest say they're uncertain)
- Most Canadians believe their culture is unique (83% do) and in need of government support to survive (61%)

The role of the CRTC in regulating online media



- The CRTC should regulate online media in the same way it regulates traditional media
- Online media should not be subject to the same types of CRTC regulations as traditional media

METHODOLOGY:

The Angus Reid Institute conducted an online survey from May 10 – 13, 2016 among a representative randomized sample of 1,517 Canadian adults who are members of the [Angus Reid Forum](#). For comparison purposes only, a probability sample of this size would carry a margin of error of +/-2.5 percentage points, 19 times out of 20. Discrepancies in or between totals are due to rounding. The survey was self-commissioned and paid for by ARI. Detailed tables are found at the end of this release.

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- Six-in-ten (60%) say current Can-Con rules should be reviewed and updated, while only 13 per cent say they should not

A culture that needs protection?

From the earliest days of broadcasting, [Canada has sought to protect its culture](#) by ensuring that Canadian airwaves are populated – at least in large part – by Canadian programming.

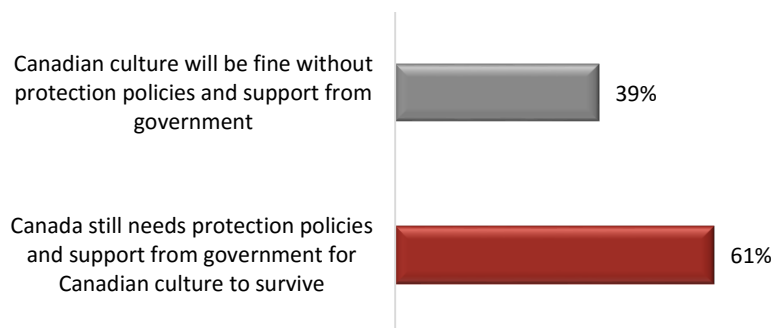
In this environment, [Canadian production companies produced](#) 700 television series and 103 feature films – at a cost of nearly \$3 billion – in 2014-15. Many of these productions received monetary support from Canada’s government, either in the form of direct subsidies or tax breaks. Moreover, they all received certification – either from the Canadian Audio-Visual Certification Office (CAVCO) or the CRTC – as Canadian content, which gives broadcasters an incentive to air them in order to meet domestic content quotas.

But media has changed. And in this country much of the consumption of traditional media has converted to the online realm. In fact, [Canadians reportedly use more internet](#) than any country in the world, and recent data shows that more than half of young adults (18-34) [have a Netflix subscription](#).

This changing environment has led some to question the place of the CRTC and whether Canada should be doing more to regulate content in digital spaces. Some say the government has a continued role to play in this new paradigm and has a responsibility to promote and protect Canadian content. Others look to stars like [Lilly Singh](#) or [Justin Bieber](#), both of whom got their ‘big break’ online, contending that unfettered access to new audiences means the CRTC has a diminished role in helping Canadian content get a leg up.

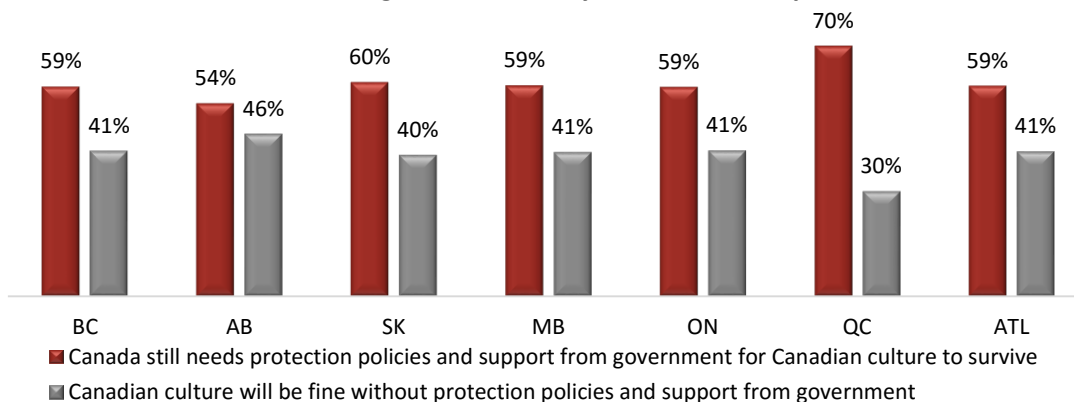
On this question, roughly six-in-ten Canadians (61%) say they believe protections are still needed for Canadian content, compared to 39 per cent who say Canadian culture “will be fine without specific protection policies and support from government.”

Which of the following best describes your own overall point of view?



Regionally, Quebecers are the most convinced of the need for cultural protection policies (70%), though it is the majority view in all major regions (dipping as low as 54% in Alberta):

Which of the following best describes your own overall point of view?

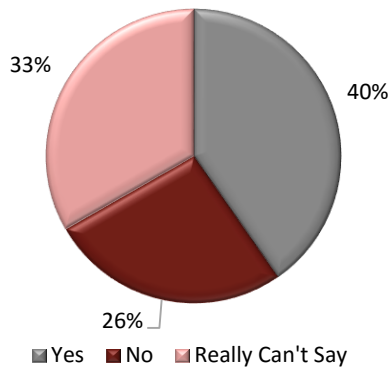


This finding echoes results from a [previous ARI study](#), looking at opinions of the CRTC and the CBC in depth (indeed, an even wider 70 – 30 split was recorded then, likely reflecting the presence of different questions that were asked alongside this one). That 2015 study further highlighted widespread fears – voiced by nearly half (47%) of those surveyed – that without promotion policies, Canadian culture would be “completely swallowed up by American and foreign culture.”

So-so marks for current cultural protections

Asked for their overall views of the current policies and protections in place for Canadian content – broadly defined as programming, music, writing, or other creative works produced by Canadians – some two-in-five Canadians (40%) say these policies “do a good job promoting Canadian cultural content”, compared to 26 per cent who say they do not. Fully one-in-three (33%) of those polled felt unable to offer an assessment on this.

Would you say Canada's current cultural content policies do a good job promoting Canadian cultural content?



Online media pose a challenge for regulators

Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly's stated goals for her ministry's review of cultural policies are "to foster the creation of Canadian content across the country," and to "increase the international audience for Canadian creators."

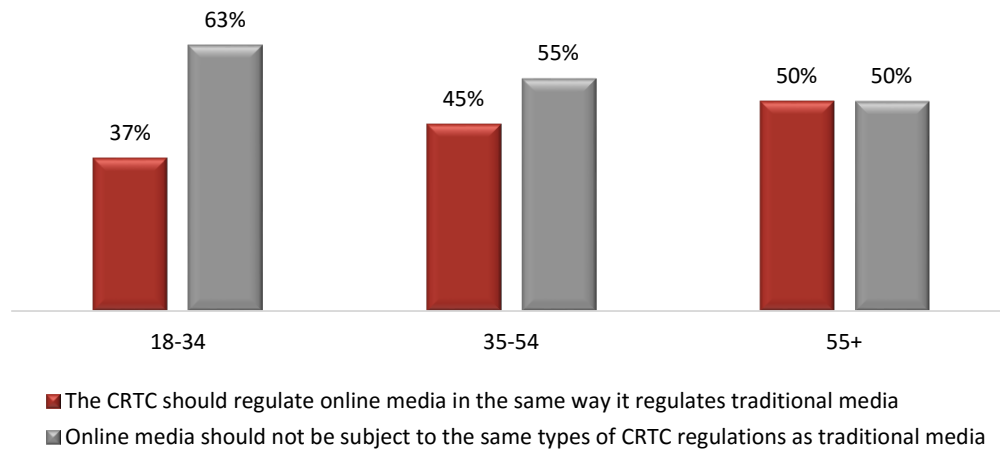
Internet-based distribution channels – from social media to Netflix – will be a key tool in achieving both of these goals, but they also present a variety of challenges to the existing system of rules and regulations, nearly all of which predate the Internet.

Canadian public opinion already tilts away from the CRTC playing its traditional regulatory role where online media is concerned. Asked for their broad view of the CRTC's role here, a majority (56%) of Canadians surveyed take the view that: "*Online media should not be subject to the same types of CRTC regulations as traditional media*" while the rest (44%) take the opposing view that "*The CRTC should regulate online media in the same way it regulates traditional media*".

Views on this question differ markedly across generations. Younger Canadians (those ages 18 – 34), the heaviest consumers of new media, do not believe it should be subject to traditional CRTC regulation.

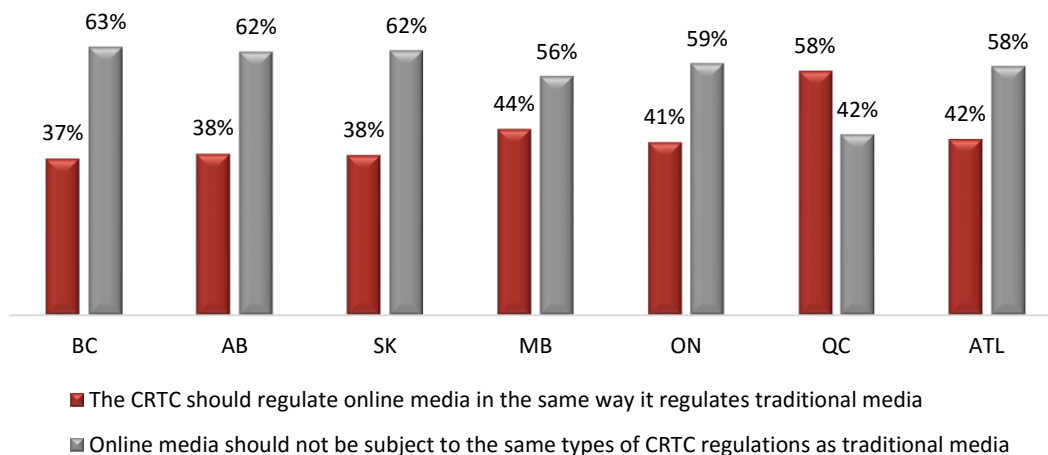
This is also the prevailing view of those in the 35-54 group. Canadians aged 55 and older, meanwhile, are evenly split on whether the CRTC should regulate online media in the same way it does traditional media:

The role of the CRTC in regulating online media, by age



There are also strong regional differences on this question, with Quebecers and residents of English-speaking regions of the country taking opposing positions. Whereas six-in-ten (58%) of Quebecers see a strong role for the CRTC in overseeing online media, the same number (60%) of Canadians elsewhere take the opposite view and do not want online media subject to traditional CRTC regulation:

The role of the CRTC in regulating online media, by region



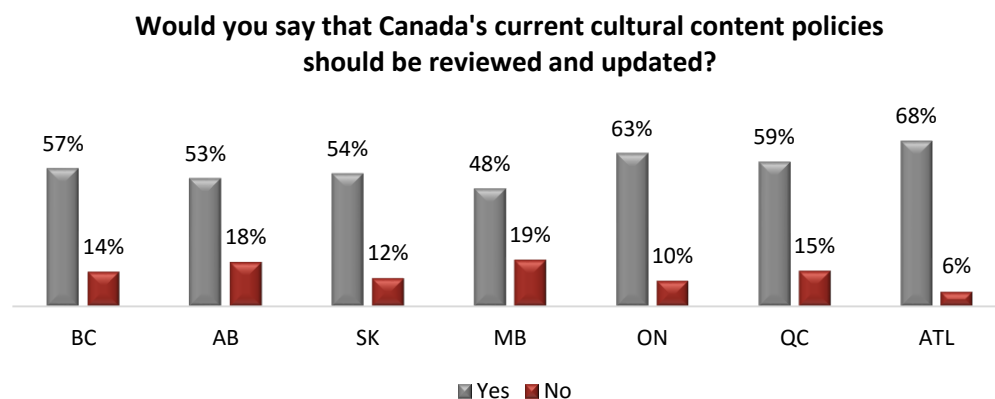
These findings help to characterize the challenges of continued CRTC regulation within the digital realm. Updated policies will have to square the widespread desire for protection and promotion of Canadian content with the reality that foreign media will always be available online for those who want to consume it.

Canadians support overall heritage review

In announcing the government's review of Canadian content policies, Minister Joly [told the Globe and Mail](#) "everything is on the table" – from laws (such as the Broadcasting Act and the Copyright Act), to institutions (such as the CBC and the National Film Board), to tax credits and funding programs for Canadian media producers.

On the need for such a review, this survey finds a strong public consensus that current cultural policies "should be reviewed and updated," with 60 per cent of surveyed Canadians agreeing with this broad statement, compared to only 13 per cent who disagreed. Again, a fairly large number (28%) felt unable to say.

This consensus varies quite substantially by region, as illustrated by the following graph:



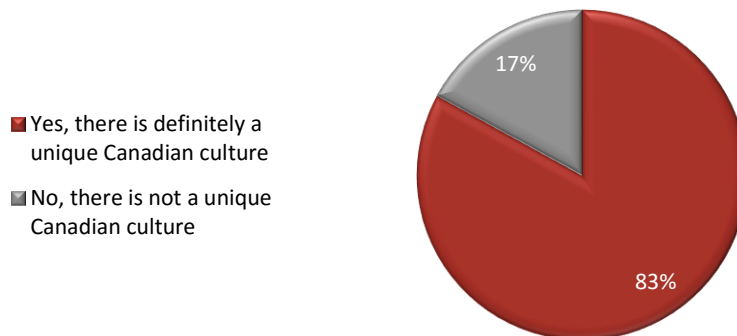
A unique culture of our own

Canadian culture exists in a constant state of concern about being swallowed up by the 'noisy neighbours' to the south. But out of this anxiety, most Canadians feel their country has forged a strong identity unto itself.

By a margin of five-to-one, Canadians answer affirmatively when asked if there is such a thing as "a unique Canadian culture" (83% versus only 17% who don't think so).

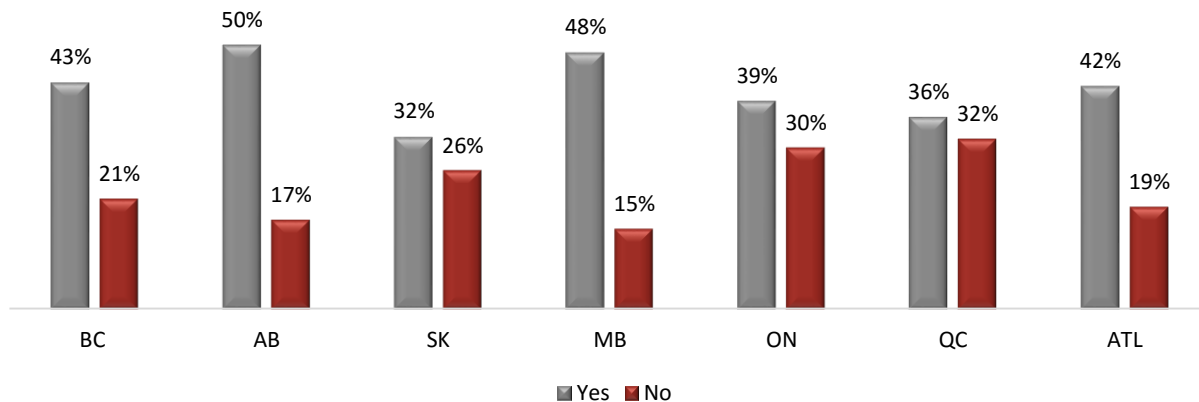
This is the strong consensus among Canadians from all walks of life, but especially among those living in smaller provinces in the Atlantic region and on the prairies, as well as among women and younger Canadians ([See the comprehensive tables for greater detail](#)).

Do you think there is such a thing as a unique Canadian culture, or not?



These findings also fit roughly in line with those of [the 2015 Angus Reid Institute study](#). In that study, 76 per cent said there is a unique Canadian culture, and roughly the same number (74%) said this culture is "something special" as opposed to "basically boring".

Do Canada's current cultural content policies do a good job of promoting Canadian cultural content?



The government says it will continue to explore avenues to support and empower Canadian content creation, meeting with members from the television, radio, film, digital media and magazine industries before putting research into action in 2017. Canada's "[cultural-policy toolkit](#)", equipped with YouTube, Netflix, and Facebook strategies, will certainly appear much different than it did after the last review, a full quarter-century ago.

The **Angus Reid Institute (ARI)** was founded in October 2014 by pollster and sociologist, Dr. Angus Reid. ARI is a national, not-for-profit, non-partisan public opinion research organization established to advance education by commissioning, conducting and disseminating to the public accessible and impartial statistical data, research and policy analysis on economics, political science, philanthropy, public administration, domestic and international affairs and other socio-economic issues of importance to Canada and its world.

Summary tables follow. For detailed results by age, gender, region, education, and other demographics, [click here](#).

Do you think there is such a thing as a unique Canadian culture, or not?		
(weighted sample sizes)	Feb. 2015 (1525)	May 2016 (1517)
Yes, there is definitely a unique Canadian culture	76%	83%
No, there is not a unique Canadian culture	24%	17%

Which of the following best describes your overall point of view?		
(weighted sample sizes)	Feb. 2015 (1525)	May 2016 (1517)
Canada still needs protection policies and support from government for Canadian culture to survive	70%	61%
Canadian culture will be fine without protection policies and support from government	30%	39%

There's been some discussion about what the CRTC's role should be when it comes to new media that only distribute content over the internet, such as Netflix (video-on-demand) or Spotify (music on-demand).

Overall, what do you think the CRTC's role should be here:

(weighted sample sizes)	Feb. 2015 (1525)	May 2016 (1517)
Online media should not be subject to the same types of CRTC regulations as traditional media	56%	56%
The CRTC should regulate online media in the same way it regulates traditional media	44%	44%