



Recommended Actions, Targets & Timelines

This section recommends a series of actions that should be taken to begin implementing the national digital literacy strategy presented in the previous chapter.

It responds to the following discussion questions:

- Should we set targets for our made-in-Canada digital strategy? If so, what should those targets be?
- What should be the timelines to reach those targets?

In responding to these questions, this chapter assumes that the consultation document has already accepted a number of basic targets — e.g. that all Canadians should have digital skills, and that investments in technology and infrastructure development should be balanced by investments in digital literacy.

With these targets and objectives established as preconditions of the consultation, we have concentrated our recommendations on the organizational and procedural targets and timelines needed to move toward their achievement.

1. The federal government must develop a national digital economy strategy with digital literacy as its cornerstone. To that end the government should:
 - Create a Digital Literacy Taskforce – The federal government, most specifically Industry Canada, HRSDC, and Canadian Heritage, should immediately convene a digital literacy taskforce comprising key stakeholders at all levels of government (both federal, provincial and territorial), as well as those representing both business and communities across Canada. This taskforce should be charged with developing a cross-jurisdictional blueprint for a **NATIONAL DIGITAL LITERACY STRATEGY** that will ensure that all Canadians have the necessary digital literacy skills in order for Canada to become a leader in the global digital economy.
 - Host a Digital Literacy Stakeholder Conference – Within one year, a gathering of all stakeholders from all four spheres of implementation should be held. Attendees should include educators, industry leaders, government officials, community groups and digital media content producers and technology experts. The goal of such a conference should be to develop and launch a national coordinated strategy focused on strengthening digital literacy in Canada as a fundamental cornerstone of the digital economy strategy. It should examine the unique situations in which different organizations operate and how digital literacy should be integrated in to those environments. Additionally, the conference should be a venue for government to announce digital literacy initiatives.

2. Parallel to the work of the Taskforce the federal government needs to fund a national study of students and teachers in order to determine, from each of their perspectives, the digital skills that are most needed by Canadian children and youth. The most recent national survey on the behaviours, attitudes, and opinions of Canadian children and youth relating to digital technology was conducted in 2005.⁵⁶ New findings will ensure that programs and tools meet the needs of Canadian youth and educators and will support future program evaluation.

3. In preparation for a Digital Literacy Stakeholder Conference, the Digital Literacy Taskforce should:
 - Prepare an inventory of digital literacy programs in Canada, including those provided by the federal government, provinces and territories.
 - Review the results achieved by and the lessons learned from previous targeted digital literacy initiatives, such as SchoolNet and CAP, as well as from previous government initiatives to foster digital literacy through job training, economic development, and regional development programs.
 - Review the current and potential roles of federal departments and agencies in leading and supporting a whole-of-government approach to the development of digital literacy, including regulatory and cultural institutions such as the CRTC, CBC and NFB, as well as institutions with economic, social, and regional development responsibilities.
 - Develop a national balance sheet comparing investments in technology development and infrastructure access with investments in digital literacy.

4. The Digital Literacy Taskforce should also study the following policy options and prepare recommendations for consideration by the conference.
 - Launching a comprehensive federal/provincial/territorial digital literacy initiative aimed at fostering digital literacy in learning institutions, with emphasis on the development of a K-12 and post secondary open source digital learning repository as recommended by Canada 3.0; in the marketplace, particularly among SMEs; and among consumers, with emphasis on the linkages between digital literacy and other forms of literacy, including financial literacy and identity management, in the online environment.
 - Creating a national facilitator for digital media cooperative education programs and placements (as recommended by Canada 3.0).
 - Establishing community technology centers in rural Canada and a national program similar to the Digital Literacy Corps in the United States to implement training amongst citizens – especially those who may be regionally, economically, or socially disadvantaged.
 - Increasing collaborative research funding and commercialization support for digital media at the federal and provincial levels, using the program innovations launched by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council as a model for action (as recommended by Canada 3.0).

56. Media Awareness Network (2005). *Young Canadians in a Wired World: Phase II*.
<http://www.media-awareness.ca/english/research/YCWW/phaseII/>



- Developing an Online Digital Portal – a federally sponsored online digital portal should act as the starting point for individuals to strengthen their digital literacy. It should incorporate easy to understand explanations of digital media, tutorials on how to use digital technology, links to relevant government resources, an easy to use forum where users can post questions about digital media, and a community resource section where users can find more information about digital resources in their community.
- Creating an online data portal where public information created across all forms of government and by any public institution is regularly published in a machine-readable format.
- Establishing a Digital Media Knowledge Transfer Network – a knowledge transfer network designed for educators and companies to share information on digital media education and job training initiatives should be established and maintained. This should be a website designed for educators, administrators, trainers, career counsellors, and e-learning designers but also a regular online meeting place where knowledge can be shared and ideas generated. Through this Knowledge Transfer Network, educational initiatives will not function as proprietary enterprises but rather as ideas, programs and projects donated back to the community.