

**Aboriginal Media in Alberta:
Report of Aboriginal Media Partnership Project**



Aboriginal Commission On Human Rights & Justice



Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights & Justice

The Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights & Justice (ACHR&J) advocates for Aboriginal people in Alberta, researches human rights issues, and initiates public education regarding Aboriginal human rights from the unique legal and historic position of Aboriginal people in Canada.

Our goal is to provide support, research, and analysis to reduce or prevent crimes against Aboriginal people as well as to advocate for positive race relations.

In 2014, ACHR&J initiated the Aboriginal Media Partnership Project. The first component of this one-year project involved research on the how mainstream media reports on Aboriginal issues and events. Workshops were offered on how to make Aboriginal issues and events heard by mainstream media outlets and how to respond to the media when its reporting raises concerns within the community. Finally, we brought media and communities together for a panel discussion and workshop on reporting. This project resulted in greater collaboration and communications between media organizations and Aboriginal communities.

Acknowledgements

Project Lead:

Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights & Justice

Project Manager, Co-Writer, and Editor Krista McFadyen

Research and Initial Writing Jay Smith

Report reviewed by Commissioners of ACHR&J:

Muriel Stanley Venne

Lewis Cardinal

Marggo Pariseau

Roy Louis

Project Contributors:



Aboriginal Commission on Human Rights & Justice

201, 10812 - 178 St. Edmonton, Alberta T5S 1J3

Phone: 780-479-8195 Fax: 780-471-2169

website: www.aboriginalhumanrights.ca email: aboriginalrights@gmail.com

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Aboriginal Representation in the Media

Executive Summary

This report is a compilation of research about news coverage of Aboriginal issues across print and online media in Alberta from 2011-2014. In the first of two research components, ACHR&J commissioned a media research organization, Infomart, to retrieve all articles occurring between July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2014 that contained mentions of Aboriginal issues within select print and online publications in Alberta. Infomart identified the amount of coverage of Aboriginal issues, key themes, and whether these issues were positive, neutral, or negative in tone. Following this initial research, ACHR&J conducted a more critical research analysis to understand the complexity of issues behind some of the statistics. This report presents a synthesis of both research components.

The combined research suggests Aboriginal people have a contentious relationship with mainstream media in Canada. There is less news coverage of Aboriginal issues in Canada than what would be expected considering the proportion of the Canadian population that is Aboriginal, the gravity of select issues, and the recognized place of Aboriginal people in Canadian society. The tangible result of this disparity is that the public cannot register the scope of issues that might bolster political or policy review. For example, when issues such as the disappearance of Aboriginal women fail to make news, there is an appreciable effect on public pressure to force more thorough police investigations.

Coverage of Aboriginal issues is sparse, and when it exists, is often centered around conflict and is rife with stereotypes. News that is presented on Aboriginal issues is too often created without a workable awareness of Aboriginal history or current affairs and stereotypes are common. The persistence of these stereotypes characterize a more pressing problem for Aboriginal people and self-representation and contribute to prejudice and discrimination in our society.

Research shows lack of diversity in newsrooms presents part of the problem. Aboriginal people are not adequately represented in newsroom staff and are not, therefore, authors of media representation. However, the past two decades have seen considerable improvement with the creation of Aboriginal-run media, as well as dedicated sections earmarked for Aboriginal content within mainstream media sources.

Recommendations

Good news reporting – Success stories can dispel myths and stereotypes about Aboriginal people and communities and there are many of them. If bad news stories are shared, reporting should equally cover how community and political leaders are addressing the problems.

Journalism for dialogue not discord – Media that enhances dialogue typically employs strategies such as holistic reporting rather than dualisms, reporting on shared interests or common ground, and reporting that represents diverse Aboriginal community experts and leaders.

Aboriginal Stories with information and context – provide as much information as possible through graphics or story supplements to provide information and context

Aboriginal self-representation – Getting more Aboriginal people into mainstream newsrooms and supporting autonomous Aboriginal self-representation would be a significant turning point towards more representative media on Aboriginal issues.

Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues

This report examines the news coverage surrounding Aboriginal issues across print and online media in Alberta.

Methodology

Infomart searched for all mentions of Aboriginal issues within a set of print and online publications in Alberta from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2014. The monitoring consisted of a search for mentions that included any of the following keywords: Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and Indigenous.

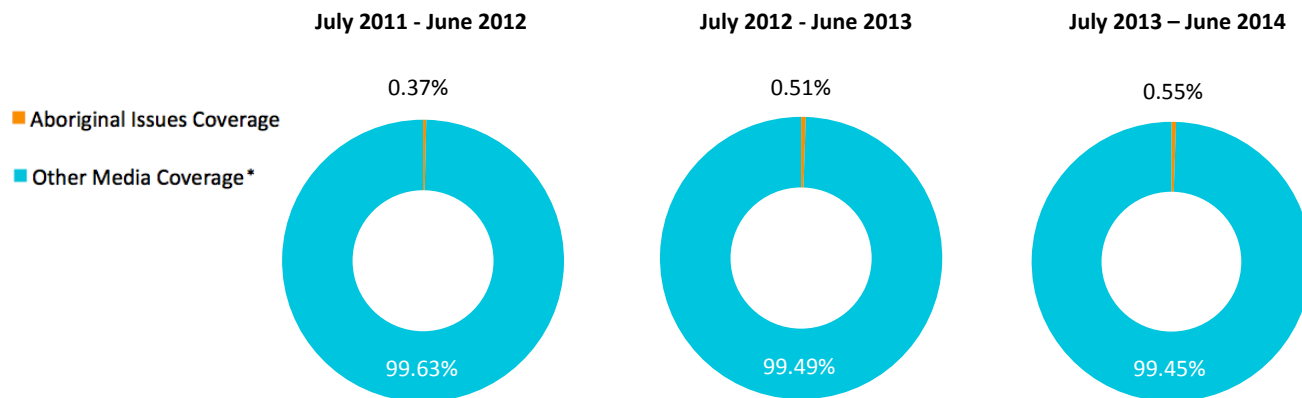
According to the Infomart, the coverage of Aboriginal issues constitutes 0.5% of the total coverage in Albertan media. Considering that Aboriginal people make up 4.3% of the Canadian population and 5.5% of the Albertan population according to Statistics Canada, this is a significant disproportion.¹

Figure 1: Media Coverage of Aboriginal Issues

As measured by hit count, media activity surrounding Aboriginal issues in Alberta did not vary significantly across the past three years. Prevalence of Aboriginal coverage gradually increased in relation to total media coverage in the three years examined.

Share of Media Coverage*

Aboriginal issues vs. Overall



Hit Count

	July 2011 - June 2012	July 2012 - June 2013	July 2013 - June 2014
Aboriginal Issues	1,572	2,107	1,940
Other **	426,124	393,447	362,505
Total	427,696	395,554	364,445



* Represents percent of Aboriginal issues coverage in relation to total coverage in Alberta media

** Refers to all the stories that have originated from print and online sources within Alberta during the period under analysis.

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¹ (<http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-011-x/99-011-x2011001-eng.cfm>)

Key Themes within Media on Aboriginal Issues

From the total media coverage, Infomart identified key themes within the total media coverage. The following slide illustrates the measured media hits, defined as the aggregated coverage of news, stories, editorials, and letters to the editor related to a set of keywords and media sources.

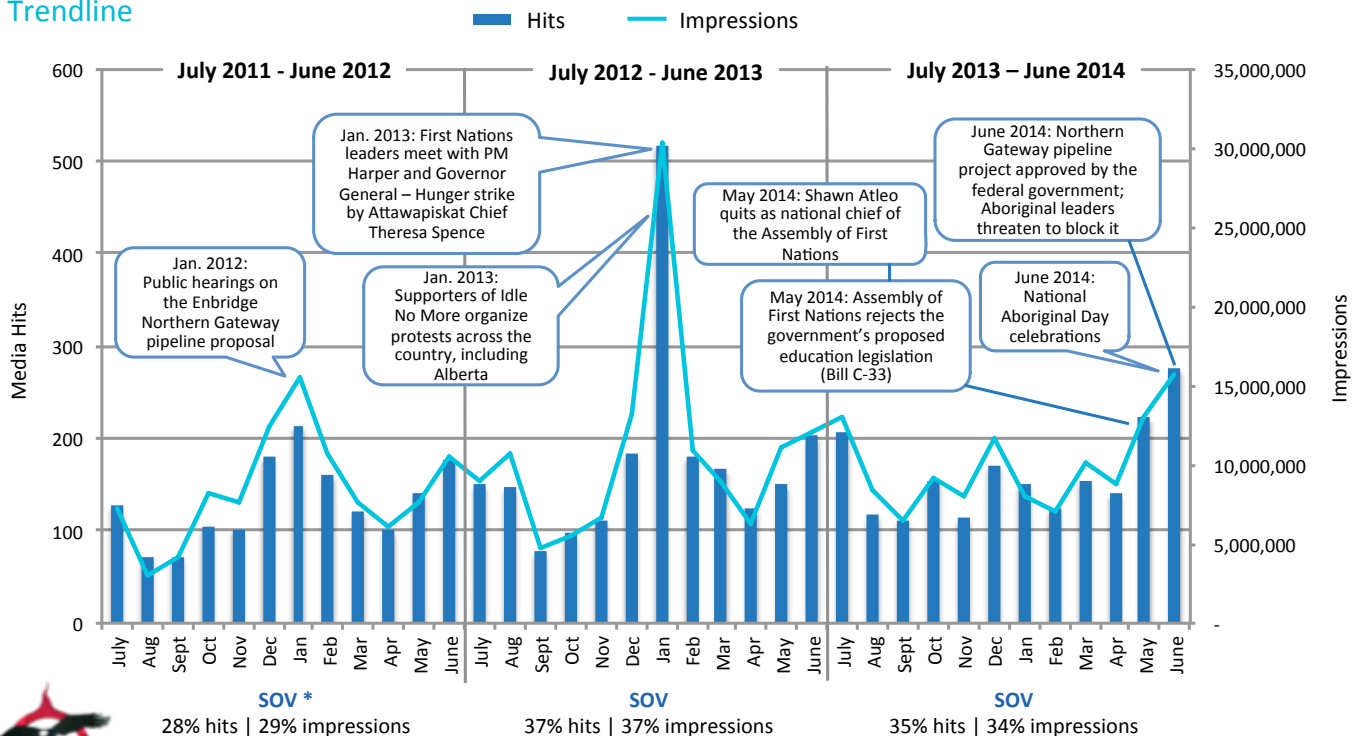
The impressions bar illustrates the potential number of views for all content pieces under search, both on print and online sources. Impressions numbers are calculated for print sources using circulation numbers, whereas online impressions was calculated by adding the average number of daily visitors for each site.

Figure 2: Media Exposure of Aboriginal Issues

More often than not, spikes in coverage were driven by opposition from and protests by Aboriginal leaders regarding treaty rights, the Northern Gateway pipeline and the education bill legislation.

Media Exposure | Aboriginal Issues

Trendline



* Share of Voice: Percent of media coverage in relation to the overall time period under analysis

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Key Themes within Media on Aboriginal Issues con't

Figure 3: Top Themes within Aboriginal Media

Even though coverage themes were diverse, media attention tended to be focused on Canadian government legislation related to Aboriginal treaty rights as well as discussion about energy projects and the implications for Aboriginal people, particularly in regards to land rights and revenue sharing.



Top Themes | Aboriginal Issues

	Hits *	SOV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government Relations: variety of topics where government is discussed in terms of laws, bills (e.g. Indian Act), funding and treatment. Includes coverage of talks and/or negotiations between First Nations leaders and the federal or provincial government regarding housing, health care, revenue sharing, treatments, territorial claims, etc. 	1,461	26%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Energy Development: Aboriginal communities consulted or needed to be consulted, protesting or opposing projects such as pipelines (e.g. Enbridge Northern Gateway), oil sands, hydro projects, etc. 	1,405	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idle No More: Attawapiskat housing crisis and Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike. Protests surrounding talks between Assembly of First Nations and federal government (Jan. 2013) 	618	11%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education: Programs, initiatives discussed, funding needs, opposition to educational bill (Bill C-33). Issues and challenges including low attendance and graduation rates for Aboriginal youth. 	225	4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aboriginal Art and Culture: Includes mentions of art displays or awards associated with TV shows, movies and artwork. Coverage of events celebrating Aboriginal culture and heritage (e.g. National Aboriginal Day) 	223	4%



* Human analysis was carried out on a statistical random sample of 413 articles. Results were then projected to represent the entire sample (5,619 articles)

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The Infomart report observes that the majority of news that mentioned Aboriginal people or issues dealt with government affairs: the relationship of Canadian federal and provincial governments with Aboriginal communities, particularly in terms of treaty rights, land rights, and revenue sharing. From July 2011 – June 2014, the Northern Gateway pipeline was a frequent topic of Albertan media and entirely representative of the sort of coverage that characterizes Aboriginal content in mainstream media -- Aboriginals at odds with the rest of Canada over natural resources and economic development.

Spikes in media coverage coincided with conflict and governmental consultation. The Infomart report notes that media coverage increased in the immediate wake of public hearings on the Enbridge Northern Gateway pipeline, Idle No More protests, Harper's meetings with Attawapiskat Chief Theresa Spence, and the resignation of Shawn Atleo from the position of national chief of Assembly of First Nations.

Absence and Misrepresentation: The failure to tell Aboriginal stories

The most striking observation in the Infomart report is the astonishing dearth of stories about Aboriginal issues. Having less than 0.5% of stories representing 5.5% of the population is not, by any metric, an acceptable ratio. It is also noteworthy that the majority of the stories that are included relate to issues of governmental relations or resource extraction. Just as representations of Aboriginal people cluster around key themes the greater conversation about Aboriginal affairs is incredibly limited.

This oversight is not for a lack of stories to tell. Nor does it seem to be that stories that feature minorities are seen as “soft” (or human interest) stories instead of “hard” news (current affairs or politics). According to the Infomart study, the opposite bias seems to be the case for Aboriginal stories -- the vast majority of the news coverage concerning Aboriginals is “hard” news. Choosing stories that have immediate relevancy to non-Aboriginal Canada means that important stories such as the disappearance of women along the “Highway of Tears”, for example, only make news when it is clear to reporters that white women have been lost. This is a disservice to all Canadians.

Tone of Aboriginal Stories in the Media

The Infomart research attempted to measure the overall attitude conveyed in a news item toward a particular issue. Tone captures how a target audience is likely to feel about the issue after reading the item. Here, tone is captured as positive, neutral, or negative but, as the commentary suggests, it is a concept that requires critical assessment.

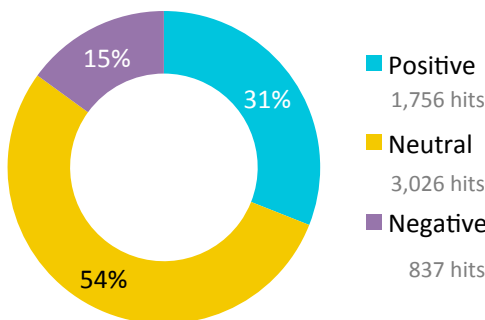
Figure 4: Tone of Aboriginal Issues in the Media

Coverage was largely favourable with only 15% of mentions regarded as negative. Support of Aboriginal treaty rights and praise of Canadian government initiatives were two themes driving positivity, specifically in editorial content and opinion columns. Negative mentions were often spurred by Aboriginal leaders condemning negligence from the Canadian federal and provincial government as well as opinion columns criticizing First Nations protests and corruption on reserves.



Tone | Aboriginal Issues

Total



Projected from a sample of 416 hits



Key Positive Themes

- Federal and provincial government praised for initiatives aimed at improving conditions of Aboriginal people;
- Acknowledgment of Aboriginal treaty rights on oil development projects and education legislation;
- Positive outcomes of talks between Canadian government and Aboriginal communities (e.g. long-term funding arrangements with Métis communities in Alberta);
- Cultural events (Métis Week, Alberta Indigenous Games, community pow wows) portrayed as a way to connect with Aboriginal heritage;
- Aboriginal art (film, TV, paintings, sculptures).

Key Negative Themes

- Legislation: Aboriginal leaders criticize the Harper government for cutting funding for education and special projects, as well as making changes to Indian Act;
- Idle No More protests: Criticism of First Nations for causing trouble during blockades in January 2013;
- Revenue sharing on oil projects: Accusations of greed from First Nations;
- Aboriginal foster care: Government management portrayed as a failure;
- Missing Aboriginal women: Government criticized for not taking action;
- Management of reserves: Criticism of both government and Aboriginal groups due to violence and lack of opportunities for native residents despite the money that has been invested;
- Criticism of exorbitant salaries of chiefs at some reserves.

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About Media Tone

The Infomart results suggest that the majority of news coverage was positive or neutral, with only 15% deemed negative. What was determined as a negative or positive news story, however, was not necessarily an indication of *how* Aboriginal people were portrayed in these stories. Analyzing 416 stories, the Infomart researchers considered stories positive if the federal or provincial governments were praised for improving the conditions on reserve or if talks between Aboriginals and governments

went well. Any story about Aboriginal art or cultural event was considered positive, presumably even if it propagated the sort of stereotypes that commonly inform stories about Aboriginal cultural events. Conversely, stories critical of reserve management, for instance, were considered negative, as were stories about missing Aboriginal women. The nuances of tone behind or within these pieces were not considered; for example, an opinion written by an Aboriginal Elder critical of reserve management is a much different piece than one written by someone from a conservative “think tank” that invoked images of stereotypical corrupt Aboriginal leadership.

The positive, neutral, negative lens offers limited insight into the extent to which depictions of Aboriginals are stereotyped. So while it is telling that so few stories, as proportionate to the Aboriginal population in Alberta, are told about Aboriginal people, the Infomart report does not present a complete picture of the media landscape vis-a-vis Aboriginal people. In other words, as University of Lethbridge professor of Native Studies Yale Belanger argues, merely taking into account the amount of native content is missing the point. “Beyond simply printing stories with ‘Native content,’ there is a need to present a balanced portrayal of the role Native people historically have played in Canada and the contemporary realities they face.” (p. 399)

Stereotypes about Aboriginal People in Mainstream Media

The discussion of representation of Aboriginal people in the media far exceeds a depictions of good news/bad news stories. Even “positive” stories can be rife with stereotypes. Duncan McCue², a veteran reporter on CBC television and an adjunct professor at UBC’s graduate school of journalism, summarizes the problem of representation as such:

An elder once told me the only way an Indian would make it on the news is if he or she were one of the 4Ds: drumming, dancing, drunk or dead.

C’mon, I said, that’s simplistic. I can show you all kinds of different news stories—about Aboriginal workers running a forestry operation, an Aboriginal student winning a scholarship or an Aboriginal group repatriating a sacred artifact.

But then I started looking more closely at Aboriginal people in the news. Those 4Ds sure do show up an awful lot (if that repatriation event has some drumming and dancing goin’ on, the reporter is bound to squeeze both into the story).

In fact, if you take that elder’s four “Ds,” and add a “W” for warrior, you could make it a rule: The WD4 Rule on how Indians make the news.³

In a speech that he gave at the “Seeing Each Other: Ka Na Ta” conference in January of 2014⁴ McCue elaborated on this thesis. Through a series of slides, he points out that a picture of an Aboriginal in regalia was used to illustrate a CBC online story on the “third-world” living conditions on many native reserves. Photos of Aboriginal drumming were used to illustrate a story about residential school abuse, a story about missing and murdered Aboriginal women, a story about native education, and a story about the Robert Pickton trial. Some of these stories are “positive” some of them are “negative.”

² Duncan McCue is Anishinaabe of the Chippewas of Georgina Island First Nation in southern Ontario. He is a CBC television reporter with 15 years experience and an adjunct professor at UBC’s graduate school of journalism.

³ <http://j-source.ca/article/does-aboriginal-canadian-need-be-drumming-dancing-drunk-or-dead-make-news>

⁴ Available online: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=8TKd1MCp8Ms>

None of them are appropriately illustrated by a native drummer. McCue found that the Elder's summary of Aboriginals in the media was uncannily accurate: much coverage of Aboriginals can be boiled down to the WD4.

The media template for Aboriginal representation, so succinctly expressed in McCue's "WD4", is troublesome. Aboriginals and their lived experience are far more rich and complex than drumming, dancing, dying, drinking, or being a warrior. (Stereotypes leads to prejudice, discrimination, etc.)

In "Killing' the True Story of First Nations: The Ethics of Constructing a Culture Apart," Romaine Smith Fullerton and Maggie Jones (2008) similarly argue that attempting to do justice to Aboriginal stories is not as easy as simply including them — even if Aboriginal people are shown in a "good news story". Fullerton and Jones note that uninformed and insensitive media do injustices to Aboriginals by failing to recognize cultural "otherness" or uniqueness.

Fullerton and Jones give the example of a 1998 photograph of Stony Point Chippewas Warren George who had just being found guilty for offences during the Ipperwash standoff. In this image journalists' lack of education about Aboriginal culture missed major cultural cues. Fullerton and Jones write,

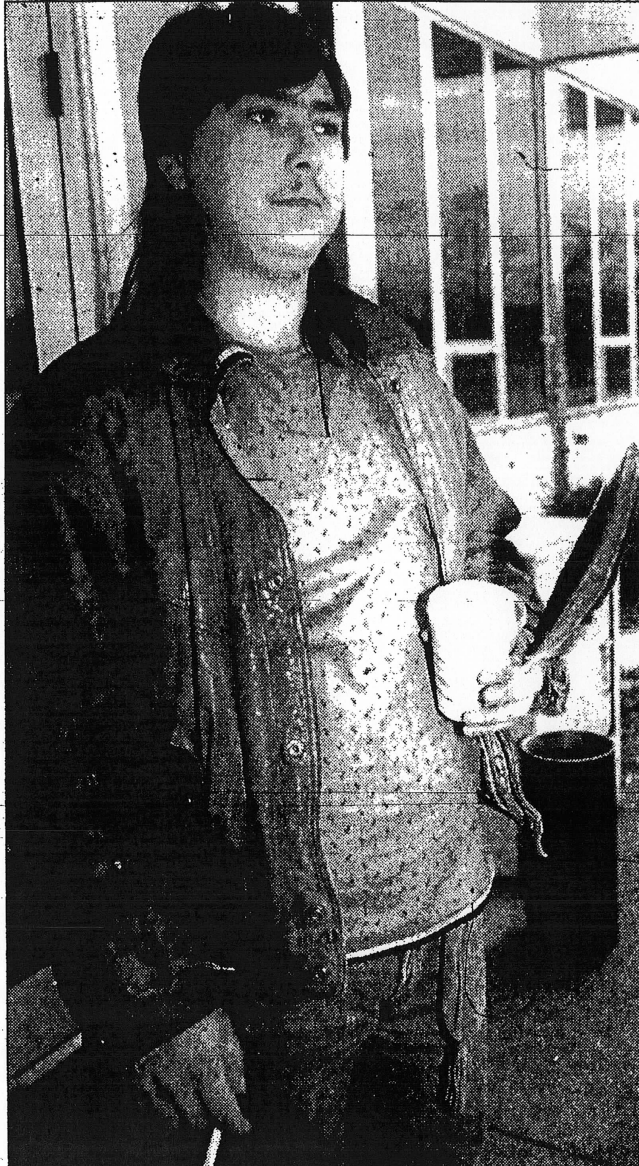
In the photo, Warren George wears blue jeans and jean jacket over what appears to be a patterned casual shirt. He holds a coffee, a cigarette, and a feather. His gaze is averted as he stands outside the courthouse. To many non-native newspaper readers, his appearance suggests a casual disrespect for the legal system. (p. 202)

Contrary to this impression of "casual disrespect" Fullerton and Patterson point out that the shirt is that of his tribe "and it is his most formal attire. The feather is that of an eagle, a spiritual talisman, and is a way of asking for divine intervention and aid." (p. 202) His refusal to make eye contact is a sign of respect. None of these details that would have helped non-natives understand more about George's intentions were mentioned in the article. Fullerton and Patterson believe that journalists should be versed in the nuances of the cultures they represent and recognize that their work is also that of cultural mediators.

Fullerton and Patterson note that "newspaper readers come to this photograph [of Warren George] with a context and a history already in place, and it is through this 'lens' that they interpret what they see" (p. 214). In other words, the best journalism on Aboriginal issues is not just that which accurately and sensitively portrays them, but which also *anticipates* the fact that the audience may need extra context or assistance for correct understanding. The best media arrives resistant to the stereotypes of Aboriginal people helps their audiences to overcome whatever prejudices there may be.

Verdict outrages natives

Native convicted on charges stemming from Ipperwash clas



MENNO MEIJER Special to The Free Press

Warren George outside the courthouse in Sarnia Thursday.

By John Hargilton
Free Press Reporter

SARNIA — Natives and supporters screamed abuse at police outside court here Thursday after a judge convicted a native on driving charges in a 1995 clash between protesters and police outside Ipperwash Provincial Park.

At one point a police officer had to struggle to get to his car, which was briefly surrounded in the confrontation following the decision by Judge Greg Pockele in Ontario Court, provincial division.

Pockele found Warren George, 24, guilty on three charges in connection with the clash with police on Sept. 6, 1995, in which Dudley George, one of the protesters, was shot and killed.

George will be sentenced April 3 on charges of criminal negligence causing bodily harm and assault with a weapon, his car.

The judge stayed action on the third conviction, dangerous driving causing bodily harm. That conviction would remain stayed and not registered unless the other convictions are appealed.

Crowd pursued officer

Outside court, angry natives pursued one plainclothes officer to his car before uniformed officers stepped in and a marked cruiser escorted the car away. Other supporters shouted at police and court officials, arguing the decision was unjust.

They were irate at the judge's ruling, which blamed protesters for the turmoil at Ipperwash and absolved the police.

The Ipperwash confrontations with police came two days after protesters occupied the park, arguing they were reclaiming land where a burial ground had been desecrated.

George was shot and killed by police. OPP Acting Sgt. Kenneth Deane was later convicted of criminal negligence causing death.

Another protester, Cecil Bernard George, has filed a civil action against police, arguing he was badly beaten by officers using excessive force.

After court Thursday, Melva George, Warren's grandmother, brushed back tears. "I felt like bawling my eyes out in there. We've been denied justice again," she said.

Chief Irvin George of the Kettle and Stony Point band called the ruling "rubbish."

"It's typical that it sides with police and picks on our people."

Pierre George, a brother of Dudley George and second cousin of Warren George, was among the group who sued the police officer to his car.

"Where's the justice? It's a cover police action," he said.

George, who drove his dying brother to hospital after he was shot, said another example of an innocent being nailed. We were defending land.

Defence surprised

Defence lawyer Jeff Hause was surprised and very disappointed by the ruling and the verdicts. He said judge dismissed "all the defence testimony and argument and accepted all Crown's."

Hause said he's considering appeal but won't decide until after Warren George is sentenced.

The melee at Ipperwash erupted an OPP riot squad moved to clear parking lot at one of the park's gates.

With rocks and stones being hurled at police, Warren George drove his car out of the park and into the parking lot where protesters were fighting officers.

The judge dismissed Warren George's testimony that he was trying to rescue Cecil Bernard George, police and Cecil Bernard George's money that he was trying to be a maker.

Pockele said the actions of protesters were "extremely dangerous, violent and assaultive" and caused "all kinds of injuries which occurred overnight and the death of a man."

He said "there was no reason for a man which would justify this violence," with protesters attacking with bats and poles after officers retreated from the park.

One officer was injured and four others knocked to the ground when Warren George drove his car into a group.

Dismissing much of George's testimony as "incredible, hyperbolic, emotional and unworthy of belief," Pockele said he didn't buy George's argument he hadn't intended to hit the officer with the car.

The judge also described Cecil Bernard George's testimony as exaggerated and his actions as "morally inconsistent with bravado and antagonistic to an attempt to defuse a confrontation."

Bus driver's attacker won't be jailed

By Don Murray
Free Press Courts Reporter

The man who stabbed a London Transit driver in a bizarre downtown

paranoid schizophrenia at the time, leaving him incapable of appreciating the nature and quality of his act.

Assistant Crown attorney John Hanbidge told Baker earlier that MacBain,

who came to Canada in 1956 from Italy, followed MacBain when he turned the bus over to a replacement driver and began walking south across the Queens Avenue and Richmond Street

has no close friends or relatives, Prakash.

He said the prognosis is dark because of Rossi's refusal to take medication and because "delusional

Effects of Media Stereotypes on Aboriginal People and Communities

Media that is either overtly or covertly stereotypical or racist undeniably has negative repercussions for everyone. Yet determining the specific social repercussions of media bias is difficult to establish. However, those investigating effects of social prejudice and racism have identified it a form of micro-aggression where the cumulative effect is harmful to 1. Aboriginal self-image; 2. to the relationship between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people; and 3. to the substantiation of rights and justice for Aboriginal people.

Aboriginal self-image: “How we see ourselves”

Mass media works to create national and cultural identity. But what happens when the images within mass media is rife with stereotypes and is unduly negative? In “Sharing Our Stories with All Canadians: Decolonizing Aboriginal Media and Aboriginal Media Politics in Canada,” (YEAR) Kerstin Knopf explores the questions: “What if our self-image is incongruent with the national self-image constructed in the mass media? What kind of consequences does such an incongruence have for individuals?” (p. 89) Noting that Aboriginal people are presented as “second class citizens” in the media, Knopf finds that Aboriginal people do internalize racist viewpoints.

“Many Aboriginals saw (and see) themselves through the eyes, mind-set, and lenses of the colonizing group and ‘learned’ their framework of thought,” Knopf writes. Aboriginal people hear that “Aboriginal cultures and religions are inferior; Aboriginal people are less effective, rational, intelligent, and organized; and Aboriginal people are second-class citizens” (p. 89) As a result, she says, Aboriginal people have appropriated this “imaginary” Indian, a second-class citizen within Canada, “which has resulted in confusion, self-denial, cultural alienation and identity crises—one side of colonial legacy with which whole generations still battle.” (p. 92) In other words, if Aboriginal people are constantly told that we can only aspire to tired clichés of Aboriginal culture, forging a positive identity in the twenty-first century is challenging.

After winning the prestigious Polaris Music Prize in October 2014, Inuk performer Tanya Tagaq speak about missing and murdered Aboriginal women in her acceptance speech and found it “scary” that the takeaway amongst non-Aboriginals is that Inuit culture permits seal hunting. “When there’s the names of 1,200 missing and murdered Indigenous women scrolling behind you at a big show like the Polaris and everyone’s losing their minds over seals? It’s a little terrifying” she told CBC’s *The National*. “I’m tired of this. I don’t want to be worried for my daughters’ lives. They’re four times more likely to be murdered than your daughters. Like, that’s not cool.”⁵ Tagaq wonders about the message that Aboriginal people receive when non-Aboriginal people use a legitimate outcry surrounding the thousands of missing and murdered Aboriginal women to launch objection to traditional hunting practices.

Negative effects on community dynamics

The media stereotypes of Aboriginal people contribute to discord between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people within broader Canadian society, particularly when the justice system is involved.

⁵ From: http://www.huffingtonpost.ca/2014/09/29/tanya-tagaa-missing-murdered-aboriginal-women_n_5899980.html

In “Aboriginal Justice, the Media, and the Symbolic Management of Aboriginal/Euro-Canadian Relations”, Elizabeth Furniss connects prejudicial attitudes in media to the failure of the justice system to treat Aboriginals fairly. Furniss notes that this shortfall is related both to the imposition of “Western concepts of justice” onto Aboriginal cultures and, ironically, to the exaggeration of their cultural difference (2).

Furniss cites a trend that when Aboriginal/non-Aboriginal conflict relates to economic resources, the media tends to generate negative images of Aboriginal people as troublemakers, emphasizing their “negative and contentious behaviour” to impede “law and order”. For example, in her analysis of the Oka crisis, “the blockade was not reported as a significant issue until four months after its erection, when the Quebec provincial police, equipped with riot gear, arrived at the scene to confront the Mohawks” (p. 29). In other words, Aboriginal issues, time and time again, are not considered newsworthy until they affect non-Aboriginal notions of justice. The media misses an opportunity to mediate these sorts of conflicts and impedes reconciliatory progress between Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal people.

In short, nuanced portraits of Aboriginal issues can have the power to unsettle long-established power dynamics within communities. Sometimes reporting a story fully involves revealing that RCMP are not always “the good guys”, or that the criminal justice system is biased and that can lead to social disruption. In contrast, only reporting Aboriginal stories when conflict takes place and then insisting on stereotypical or biased perpetuates the status quo.

Omission of Aboriginal stories delays justice

Non-reporting of Aboriginal stories until there is a clear relevance to non-Aboriginal people is common enough, as the example from Oka suggests. The consequences of this myopia, however, can be tragic. The issue of missing and murdered Aboriginal women is a sordid reality facing contemporary Canadian society, yet media reluctance to cover these stories comprehensively has perpetuated the disappearances. Aboriginal women are four times more likely to be murdered than their non-Aboriginal counterparts, yet when an Aboriginal woman goes missing, the media response is more often to blame the woman for bringing it on herself than to explore what went wrong (Tordoff).

The Highway of Tears is an 800-kilometre stretch of Highway 16 that runs through northern British Columbia. Between 1969 and 2011, as many as 40 women have disappeared in the area. In 2010, Adriana Rolston analyzed media coverage of the Highway of Tears, using the conservative police estimate of 18 women reported missing. Mainstream newspapers such as *The Globe and Mail* and *CanWest* dailies, she found, refused to cover the missing women until the 2002 disappearance of 25-year-old Nicole Hoar. Nicole Hoar was white. Rolston shows that, although white women had gone missing before, reporters were under the mistaken impression that only Aboriginal women had gone missing up until that point, when, in reality, eight of the eighteen missing women were white.

The media is powerful. When the media chose to focus on the disappearances marginalized women killed by Robert Pickton, media exposure led to public outcry which led to more robust police investigation.

While a lack of media response to a woman’s disappearance does not necessarily preclude police investigation, media coverage does lead to better police investigations. In *On the Farm: Robert Pickton*

and the Tragic Story of Vancouver's Missing Women, Stevie Cameron claims that the work of three journalists at *the Vancouver Sun* succeeded in raising public empathy surrounding the disappearances which, in turn, pressured the Vancouver Police department into launching a serious investigation. This investigation led to Pickton's arrest. Moreover, the extensive coverage of these missing women, and the eventual discovery of many of their bodies on Pickton's farm⁶, led to projects across the country dedicated to trying to improve the safety of sex trade workers.

⁶ From: <http://mediasmarts.ca/diversity-media/aboriginal-people/media-portrayals-missing-and-murdered-aboriginal-women>

Diversity and Culture in the Newsroom

Newsrooms, simply put, are not diverse places. When looking at the lack of stories about Aboriginal people and minorities in Canadian media, and that these representations are often rife with stereotypes, it is hard not to draw a connection to the “locations” of privilege from which journalists emerge. As Belina Alzner reports in a recent [JSource.ca](http://j-source.ca) article⁷ newsrooms are mostly white. She summarizes the available statistics:

A 2000 study by Laval University showed that the vast majority of journalists across all media were white – 97 per cent, to be exact. In 2004, the Canadian Task Force for Cultural Diversity on Television discovered that visible minorities add up to 12.3 per cent of anchors and 8.7 per cent of reporters and interviewers in English-language news. That same year, John Miller, former director of newspaper journalism at Ryerson University, found that non-white newspaper reporters made up a mere 3.4 per cent. In 2010, CBC/Radio-Canada reported that minority groups – including Aboriginal people – made up 8 per cent of their reporting staff.

Considering that Statistics Canada reports⁸ that 19.1% of the population identify as visible minorities, this is a sordid ratio. How can we expect the media to represent accurately the experiences and concerns of Aboriginal people and visible minorities when only 8.7% reporters identify as visible minorities?

Additionally, a [JSource.ca](http://j-source.ca) diversity audit found that the majority of newspaper columnists are middle-aged and male - median age of 58.5 and 73% of whom were male. Although this particular audit, published in January 2014, did not consider race, we can perhaps conjecture that the majority of these middle-aged men were also white.

To their credit, journalism schools are not oblivious to this problem, Alzner notes. Many have scholarships and incentives set aside for minority students, even if they are rarely claimed. (stats?)

The Culture in the Newsroom: Token Diversity is not Enough

The problem of representation cannot be solved by adding token visible minority journalists into an otherwise all-white newsroom. In “‘Walking Up a Down Escalator’: The Interplay Between Newsroom Norms and Media Coverage of Minority Groups” (unpublished), Brad Clark (date) argues against the impression that minorities immediately increase the diversity and cultural sensitivity of a newsroom. Culling from various sources, Clark argues that minority journalists are constrained by the corporate culture of many newsrooms that fundamentally distrust minority perspectives.

In an unnamed CBC newsroom in Western Canada, Clark identified the following problems:

- seeing diversity in news stories as an add-on or bonus only when the resources were available instead of an essential value for news production;
- considering stories that featured minorities as “soft” versus “hard” news (i.e. human interest instead of breaking news);

⁷ From: <http://j-source.ca/article/minority-report-taking-closer-look-newsroom-diversity>

⁸ From: <http://www12.statcan.gc.ca/nhs-enm/2011/as-sa/99-010-x/99-010-x2011001-eng.cfm>

- subject matter experts (for topics without an ethnic angle) were too often white;
- the expertise of minorities was lacking and networking into their communities was insufficient;
- minorities often felt conflicted by representing their communities— but simultaneously not to represent their communities because doing so compromises their so-called journalistic impartiality — when they were working.

Clark concluded that the “traditional, mainstream news gathering routines and values” underpinning these problems were what primarily inhibited inclusive news and current affairs.

Looking at the issue from the perspective of non-Aboriginal people creating news about Aboriginal issues, Duncan McCue (date) has also identified deficits in the newsroom culture. Too many journalists, he says, feel uneducated about Aboriginal issues and are, therefore, uncomfortable pitching stories about them. Tight deadlines prevent reporters from taking the time necessary to investigate Aboriginal stories.

And then there are the experiences of minorities in the newsroom. Alzner (date) relates the story of Maureen Googoo who, with little success, started promoting stories about Aboriginal people when she was a student at Ryerson. Some editors told her that she lacked the impartiality required to cover Aboriginal stories. At the same time, Googoo was also cautioned about being pigeonholed because of her commitment to covering Aboriginal issues.

At first I was encouraged to cover Aboriginal (news) but then after a while that encouragement started to fade and I started getting resistance,” she says. “I got into a huge argument with a bureau chief telling me if I kept pushing Aboriginal stories or if I kept continuing on with this ‘Native-kick’ that I was never going to be promoted or considered for prestigious beats.

That was several years ago. Today, Googoo feels things are getting better.

For these reasons, Clark concurs that placing minorities into virtually all-white newsrooms is far from a magic bullet for increasing the sensitivity and volume of minority stories. Quoting Wilson [citation?] who speaks of an American context, “Placing Black journalists in the almost total racial and cultural isolation of the newsroom where operative news values, procedures and policy have long been ingrained to exclude the African American perspective obviates their effectiveness as agent for change” (qtd. 6). The Canadian situation that Clark investigates a CBC newsrooms is not that different, though CBC is distinguished amongst newsrooms for its commitment to diversity.

Why is it All The Same?: Homogeneity of Media Coverage

There is a term, assembly-line journalism, that captures the sense when one turns on the radio and hear four top news stories, then checks the newspapers and it's the same four top news stories, and the nightly news covers the same four news stories. Oftentimes the same experts are interviewed and rarely does the angle of the story vary.

The Infomart research identifies the top sources for Aboriginal issues and it is not surprising, because of the large populations, that greatest percentage of coverage with the widest circulation comes from Edmonton and Calgary. However, after a review of some headlines from the smaller publications, there did not seem to be much difference or localized attention to Aboriginal issues within mainstream media despite a variety of issues emerging in different geographic locations.

Figure 5: Aboriginal Coverage in Alberta's Top Media Sources

Media exposure of Aboriginal issues was largely driven by a limited number of broad-reaching publications in Calgary and Edmonton. Conversely, coverage activity in the rest of the province came from over 100 smaller publications that generated about 3% of overall media impressions.

Top Sources | Aboriginal Issues

Metropolitan (Calgary, Edmonton)

SOV: 63% hits | 97% Impressions
10 publications

	Platform	Hits	Impressions
Edmonton Journal	Print	886	111,456,458
Calgary Herald	Print	779	97,539,361
calgaryherald.com	Online	605	49,005,000
edmontonjournal.com	Online	526	42,606,000
The Edmonton Sun	Print	348	17,976,381
The Calgary Sun	Print	250	12,474,885
24 Hours Calgary	Print	61	3,620,655
24 Hours Edmonton	Print	58	2,773,125
Edmonton Examiner	Print	42	7,088,592
Calgary Herald Blogs	Online	7	567,000

Other

SOV: 37% hits | 3% Impressions
111 publications

Most Active *	Platform	Hits	Impressions
Fort McMurray Today	Print	278	678,586
Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune	Print	188	1,016,646
Rocky Mountain House Mountaineer	Print	85	335,983
Lac La Biche Post	Print	82	227,770
St. Albert Gazette	Print	74	1,638,865

Most Influential **	Platform	Hits	Impressions
St. Albert Gazette	Print	74	1,638,865
Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune	Print	188	1,016,646
Fort McMurray Today	Print	278	678,586
Red Deer Express	Print	17	524,550
Sherwood Park News	Print	19	491,671



* Ranked by number of hits
** Ranked by media impressions

For audiences of contemporary journalism, it is easy to imagine that what appears in the news, what stories receive resources and which do not, which stories are promoted in front-page headlines and which are relegated to the back pages, is governed by an impartial and culturally- neutral rationale. Yet University of Lethbridge professor Yale Belanger (date) discovers something he called “assembly line journalism” is behind the production of media. He explains how, operating under the guise of free speech, this system of media production ends up condoning this squeezed production model of coverage.

“Simply put,” Belanger (year) writes, “reporters were covering the same events and interviewing the same sources in their search for stories, and columnists and editorialists engaged in parallel discourse regarding current events both nationally and globally without offering unique perspectives” (398).

The homogeneity of journalism is, as the term ‘assembly line’ suggests, the product of a *system*. This system sees journalism as a product to be sold for profit -- and the shrinking newsroom budgets since the industry destabilization on account of the Internet has crushed the bottom line. All news media are increasingly relying on wire services such as Associated Press, Reuters, and Canadian Press for their content. Foreign correspondents around the world have been recalled in the past 20 years and, in their stead, Twitter accounts of crisis are quoted. In short, there is incredible pressure to create journalism with as few resources as possible in order to maximize profit.

Not surprising, this system sees the effort required to tell off-the-beaten-trail stories as an unnecessary expense. Duncan McCue talks about the difficulties in convincing their assigning editors to allocate extra resources to cover Aboriginal stories. Travelling or even just rooting out someone knowledgeable on a given topic that’s not already on the list of “experts” for a given topic takes too much time. The same occurs when doing the research on a topic that would allow a more in-depth and nuanced consideration of a topic that lies outside the mainstream.

Assembly-line journalism also encompasses all of the biases of a homogenous newsroom. When authorities in a newsroom are primarily white, male, and middle-aged, and the newsroom is financially strapped, it’s unlikely that alternative perspectives will make headlines.

Recommendations for Newsrooms

Newsrooms can make improvements in how they report on Aboriginal issues without a significant effort or expense.

McCue's website, *Reporting in Indigenous Communities*, is a comprehensive resource for journalists. Created alongside the John S. Knight Journalism Fellowships at Stanford University, the website provides a step-by-step guide to producing news content that offers greater insight into Aboriginal issues.

On his site, McCue stresses the importance of “decolonizing journalism education.” Having taught non-natives about reporting on Aboriginal issues, McCue has found that students feel that their lack of education about Aboriginal issues impairs their ability to report accurately and sensitively on topics related to Aboriginal people.⁹

To that end, the media guide provides information on how to cover Aboriginal stories. He advises about cultural protocol — whether to offer gifts and whether to accept them, how to respond to requests not to photograph or film in order to maintain trust (turn cameras off and point them towards the ground), customs surrounding deaths (different from non-Aboriginal norms). He offers basic information such as: Aboriginal people are not a homogenous group, and those heterogenous groups, or bands, have names. Aboriginals have both traditional leadership and elected leadership and stories should seek out commentary from both types of leadership.

Good or Bad News Reporting?

Non-Aboriginal (and Aboriginal) journalists (and readers) should also ask themselves if another bad-news story needs to be told. McCue suggests there are many depressing stories that could be told - there is rotten housing and poor drinking water on some reserves, Aboriginal people have poorer health than the population at large, etc. But, McCue insists, these stories don't reflect the lived reality for much of the Aboriginal population.

Whenever faced with another “bad news” story, McCue implores journalists to ask: What are Aboriginal people doing to solve the problem? Almost always, he says, another Aboriginal individual or community will be doing something to address the problem, in their own way and on their own terms (assuming that it's seen as a problem!). Find these success stories and include them in your piece.

Journalism for Dialogue or Discord?

Journalists can also explore if stories foster dialogue or discord. Too often stories featuring Aboriginal issues situate them in opposition to the needs or desires of the rest of Canada. Yet telling stories that emphasize dialogue can create positive change.

McCue suggests Journalists ask these questions in order to promote positive dialogue:

- Do you only quote leaders who make familiar demands? Are you interviewing “ordinary” community members, who are being impacted by the conflict? Are you using first-hand sources?
- Is your reporting framing the conflict as consisting of only two opposing sides?

⁹ From: <http://www.riic.ca/2014/07/11/najataalks-decolonizing-journalism-education/>

- Are you asking questions that may reveal common ground? Are you reporting on the shared interests or goals of groups involved?
- Are Aboriginals shown as active participants in the story?

McCue gives the example of a reporter covering a health crisis on reserve, but who builds the story around a non-Aboriginal doctor, a non-Aboriginal government official, and fails to interview any Aboriginal people – let alone Aboriginals in positions of power who are relevant to the story. This bias in media has repercussions: it undermines the impression given to all Canadians that Aboriginal people are autonomous actors.

For Aboriginal peoples, being regularly portrayed in the media as lacking in agency has real consequences. Self-governance and self-determination are goals for many Aboriginal communities, but other Canadians may view these aspirations in terms of the threat they pose to their lifestyle and standard of living. If Aboriginal peoples are constructed in news reports as unable to exercise control over their own lives, the public is even less likely to show support for transfer of power or resources.

In order to prevent media bias, McCue recommends community outreach so that Aboriginal people feature amongst experts on all subjects, particularly those that affect Aboriginal communities. Search out these people, then feature them.

Provide Information and Context

The lack of context in Aboriginal stories can do damage, such as the image of Warren George that appeared with no explanation about his supposed “disrespectful” appearance. Without the “back story,” our audiences are hampered in their ability to interpret and make sense of news events and images, especially those who have limited access to a broad source of information about Aboriginal people. Thus, a de-contextualized Indian can become a “problem” Indian: the incompetent manager of a child welfare agency, the homeless drunk on the city street, the needy victim of residential school sexual abuse.

McCue makes concrete suggestion on how to Advocate for and include additional context

- fight for the extra minute or extra 100 words in a story that provides the back story.
- Employ graphics and sidebars to squeeze more information into a small space.
- Suggest web features that would supplement the story.
- Pitch another story on a different angle to supplement the story.

Finally, McCue implores journalists to ask if the story contains correct terminology? Using accurate terminology is one way to demonstrate respect for Aboriginal communities.¹⁰

Aboriginal Self-Representation in the Media

While increasing and improving the stories reported about Aboriginal issues, increasing journalistic education about Aboriginal education, and getting more Aboriginal people into newsrooms are all positive developments, autonomous Aboriginal self-representation is also a significant turning point.

¹⁰ The Strategic Alliance of Broadcasters for Aboriginal Reflection has a comprehensive guide (<http://www.sabar.ca>).

The Aboriginal People's Television Network, APTN, produce television programming for, by, and about Aboriginal people. It began nation-wide broadcasting in 1999 and is considered the first of its kind in the world.

Thinkers such as Kersten Knopf (2010) call this “returning the gaze” on mass media. She states “the works of indigenous visual artists, filmmakers, and media creators permits seeing the process of visual and sonic self-representation as metaphorically returning the neo/colonial gaze ... and employ them for creating self-controlled images and discourses that look critically at colonialist images and discourse.” (p. 93) Knopf argues that the “Aboriginal perspective and news environment [...] ensures more trust with Aboriginal viewers, who more often than not would be antagonized, offended, or patronized by mainstream coverage of Aboriginal issues.”

The station is committed to diversity: it airs in English (56% of its programming), French (16%) and in numerous Aboriginal languages such as Cree, Miqma'aq, Mohawk and Tlingit. When it's not featuring Canadian-made Aboriginal content, it airs content from Australia, Latin America, New Zealand, or the United States. Noteworthy, APTN, which is included in cable packaging, has a significant non-Aboriginal audience.

Other:

Aboriginal-run media available in Alberta include:

Radio: Aboriginal Voices CKAV FM 89.3

CFWE 98.5

CJSR programming: Acimowin, Indigenous Radio

Print:

Windspeaker

Alberta Alberta Sweetgrass

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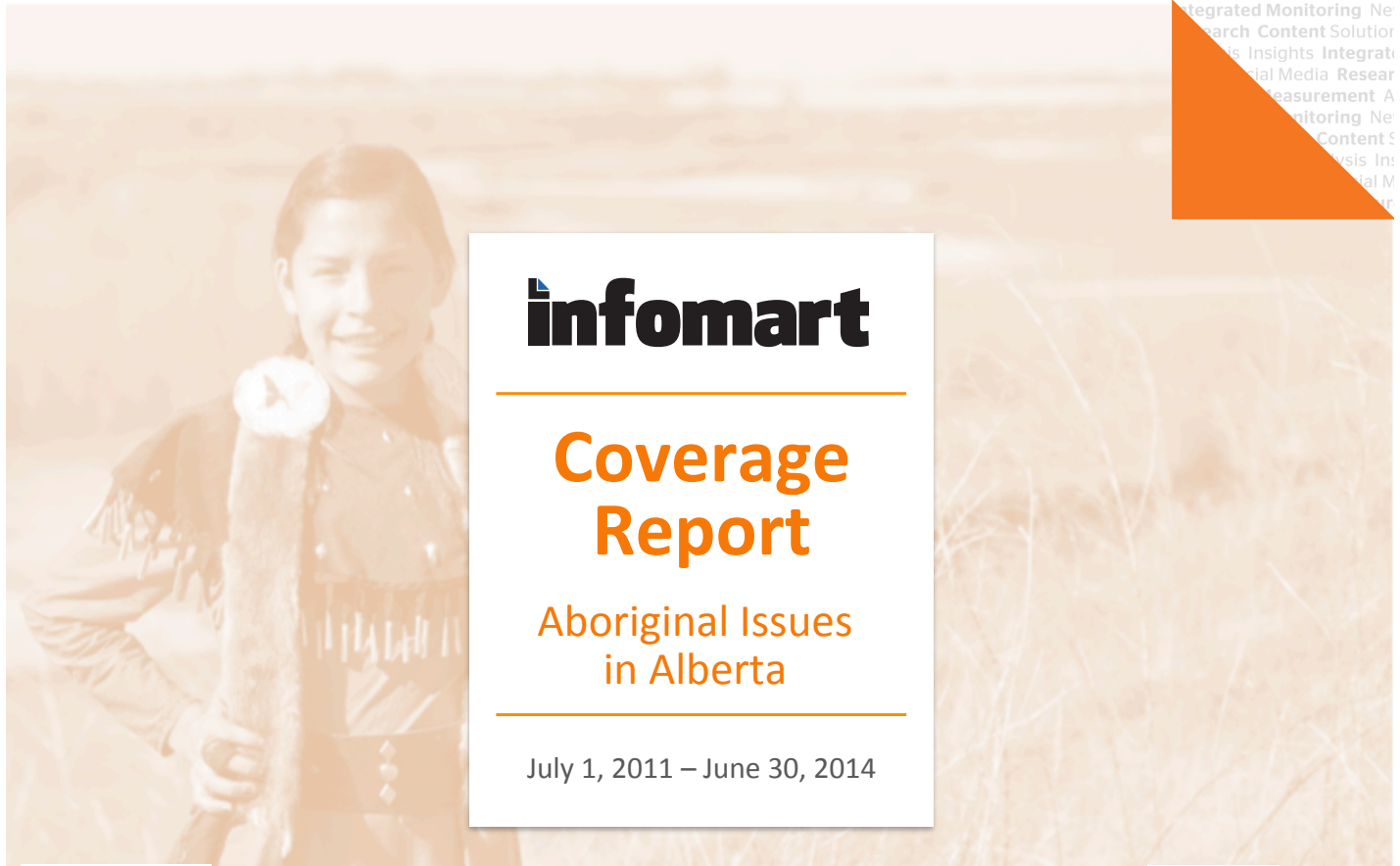
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Appendix A
Infomart Report



Objective

This report examines the news coverage surrounding Aboriginal issues across print and online media in Alberta.

This document delivers a detailed look at specific metrics including media hits, impressions, tone and top themes.

Methodology

Infomart searched for and analyzed all mentions of Aboriginal issues within a specific set of print and online publications in Alberta* from July 1, 2011 to June 30, 2014.

The monitoring consisted of a search for mentions that included any of the following keywords: Aboriginal, First Nations, Métis, Inuit.

Tone and topic of discussion were determined with a combination of automated and human analysis to ensure accuracy. Human analysis was carried out on a statistical random sample of articles.

Article tone was determined based on the sentiment expressed in the article rather than rating the facts described. The following criteria was used:

- **Positive:** Coverage portraying Aboriginal communities/governments and/or the Canadian federal/provincial government as effective, proactive, etc. Also, coverage that is supportive of Aboriginal culture and heritage.
- **Neutral:** Factual coverage without value statements. Also includes positive or negative items reported in a factual manner as well as articles including simultaneously positive and negative views.
- **Negative:** Coverage that is critical of Aboriginal communities/governments and/or the Canadian federal/provincial government and portrays them as ineffective, passive, problematic, etc.



* See page 3 for a complete list of sources

List of Sources*

Print

24 Hours Calgary	Cardston Temple City Star	Fox Creek Times
24 Hours Edmonton	Carstairs Courier	Grande Cache Mountaineer
Abbotsford Times	Castor Advance	Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune
Airdrie City View	Claresholm Local Press	Hanna Herald
Airdrie Echo	Cochrane Times	High Prairie South Peace News
Athabasca Advocate	Cold Lake Sun	Hinton Parklander
Banff Crag & Canyon	Consort Enterprise	Innisfail Province
Barrhead Leader	Coronation Review	Jasper Fitzhugh
Bashaw Star	Crowsnest Pass Herald	Lac La Biche Post
Bassano Times	Crowsnest Pass Promoter	Lacombe Globe
Beaverlodge & District News	Didsbury Review	Leduc - Wetaskiwin Pipestone Flyer
Beaverlodge Advertiser	Drumheller Mail	Leduc Representative
Beaverlodge West County News	East Central Alberta Review	Lloydminster Source
Beaverlodge West County News & Advertiser	Eckville Echo	Mayerthorpe Freelancer
Bonnyville Nouvelle	Edmonton Examiner	Morinville Free Press
Bow Valley Crag & Canyon	Edmonton Journal	Mountain View Gazette
Brooks & County Chronicle	Edson Leader	Nanton News
Brooks Bulletin	Edson Weekly Anchor	Okotoks Western Wheel
Brooks Weekend Regional	Elk Point Review	Olds Albertan
Calgary Herald	Fairview Post	Oyen Echo
Camrose Canadian	Falher Smoky River Express	Peace Country Sun
Canmore Leader	Fast Forward Weekly	Peace River Record-Gazette
Canmore/Banff Rocky Mountain Outlook	Fort Macleod Gazette	Pincher Creek Echo
	Fort McMurray Connect	Ponoka News
	Fort McMurray Today	Provost News
	Fort Saskatchewan Record	Red Deer Express



* Limited to content sources available on Infomart's database

COVERAGE REPORT – ABORIGINAL ISSUES IN ALBERTA | 3



List of Sources*

Print

Rimbey Review
 Rocky Mountain House Mountaineer
 Rocky Mountain Outlook
 Rocky View Weekly
 Rycroft Central Peace Signal
 Sedgewick Community Press
 Sherwood Park News
 Slave Lake Lakeside Leader
 Slave Lake Scope
 Smoky Lake Signal
 Spruce Grove Examiner
 St. Albert Gazette
 St. Paul Journal
 Stettler Independent
 Stony Plain Reporter
 Strathmore Standard
 Strathmore Times
 Sundre Round Up
 Swan Hills Grizzly Gazette
 Sylvan Lake News
 The Athabasca Advocate

The Barrhead Leader
 The Calgary Sun
 The Edmonton Sun
 The Fitzhugh (Jasper)
 The St. Paul Journal
 Three Hills Capital
 Tofield Mercury
 Town & Country
 Two Hills & County Chronicle
 Valleyview Valley Views
 Vegreville Observer
 Vermilion Standard
 Vermilion Voice
 Viking Weekly Review
 Vulcan Advocate
 Wabasca Fever
 Wainwright Edge
 Wainwright Star
 Westlock News
 Wetaskiwin Times Advertiser
 Whitecourt Press
 Whitecourt Star

Online

calgaryherald.com
 edmontonjournal.com



* Limited to content sources available on Infomart's database

COVERAGE REPORT – ABORIGINAL ISSUES IN ALBERTA | 4

Glossary

Media Exposure

Describes the impact of media coverage on the topic under analysis. It is measured by hit count and impressions.

Hit Count

Aggregated number of pieces of editorial coverage related to a specific set of keywords and media sources. Editorial pieces include news, stories, editorials and letters to the editor.

Impressions

Potential number of views for all the content pieces under search, both on print and online sources. Impressions numbers are calculated for print sources using circulation numbers, whereas online impressions was calculated by adding the average number of daily visitors for each site.

Tone

Measures the overall attitude conveyed in a news item toward a particular issue. Tone measures how a target audience is likely to feel about the issue after reading the item.



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Share of Media Coverage <i>(Aboriginal issues vs. Overall)</i>	8
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Top Themes – Aboriginal Issues	11
Tone – Aboriginal Issues	12
Top Sources – Aboriginal Issues	13



Summary of Findings

- Overall, coverage of Aboriginal issues garnered 5,619 hits - accounting for 0.5% of the total coverage in Alberta media - and generated over 349 million impressions. Coverage volume did not vary significantly across the three-year period under analysis, with a slight increase in activity taking place during January 2013 due to talks between Ottawa and the Assembly of First Nations.
- Coverage themes concentrated on Canadian federal and provincial government relations with both Aboriginal communities and governments while frequently involving reactions from both parties regarding treaty rights*, project funding and education legislation. Developments surrounding energy projects concerning land rights and revenue sharing (e.g. Northern Gateway pipeline) also became a frequent topic of discussion in Alberta media.
- Tonality of coverage was largely favourable, with 31% positive and 54% neutral. Positivity stemmed from editorial content and opinion columns praising Canadian federal and provincial government initiatives, as well as supportive views of Aboriginal treaty rights and acknowledgment of their heritage. Conversely, negativity (15%) was spurred by criticism of government negligence surrounding Aboriginal treaty rights and betterment, while other voices condemned First Nations protests, perceived greed over revenue sharing from oil projects and corrupt practices on reserves.



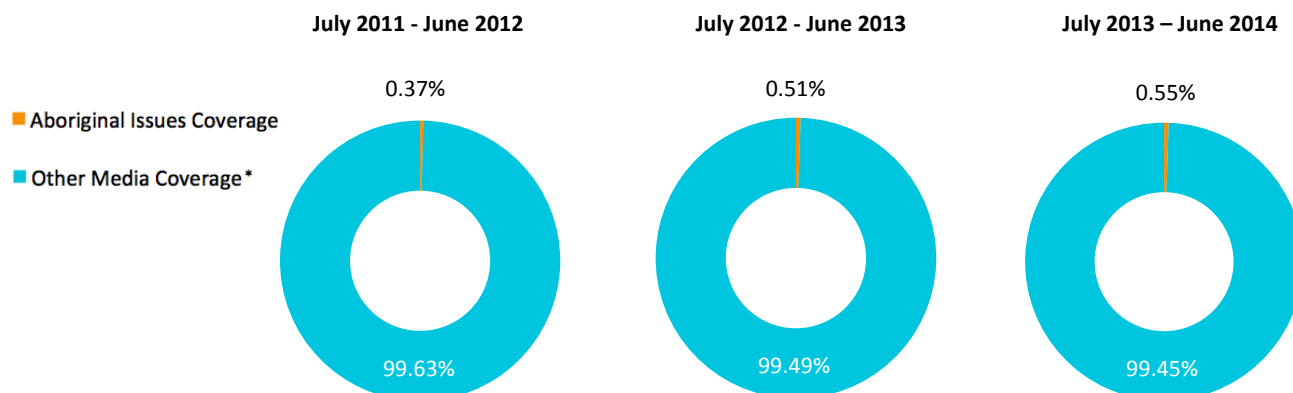
* Refers to any mention of Aboriginal rights (also referred to as First Nations or Indigenous rights) involving specific communities and/or their governments. More often than not, mentions would refer to land rights, revenue sharing, housing, education, health care, environmental protection, among others.

As measured by hit count, media activity surrounding Aboriginal issues in Alberta did not vary significantly across the past three years. Prevalence of Aboriginal coverage gradually increased in relation to total media coverage in the three years examined.



Share of Media Coverage*

Aboriginal issues vs. Overall



Hit Count

Aboriginal Issues	1,572	2,107	1,940
Other **	426,124	393,447	362,505
Total	427,696	395,554	364,445



* Represents percent of Aboriginal issues coverage in relation to total coverage in Alberta media

** Refers to all the stories that have originated from print and online sources within Alberta during the period under analysis.

COVERAGE REPORT – ABORIGINAL ISSUES IN ALBERTA | 8

Media exposure for Aboriginal issues peaked between July 2012 and June 2013 due to coverage of federal government talks with the Assembly of First Nations (Jan. 2013) and the Idle No More protests across Canada.



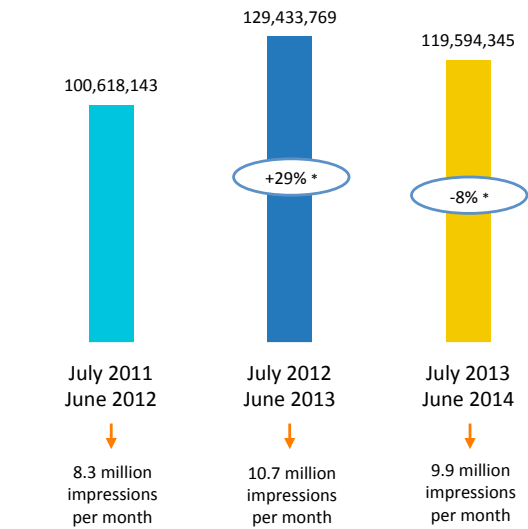
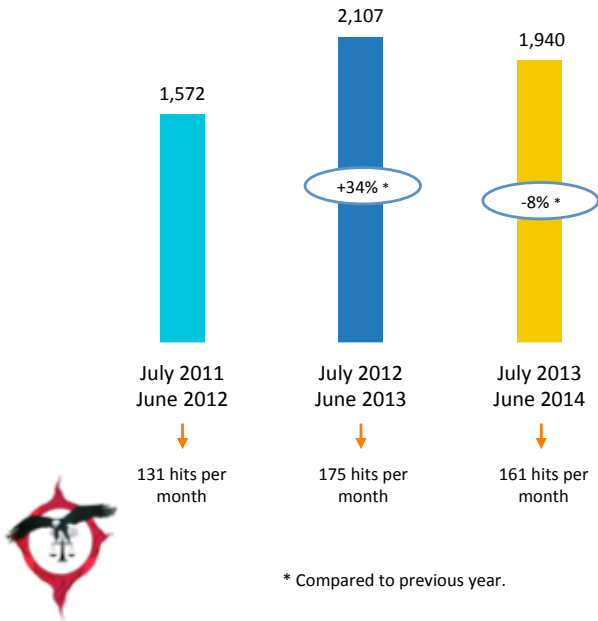
Media Exposure | Aboriginal Issues

Hits: 5,619

Impressions: 349,646,257

Year by Year Breakdown

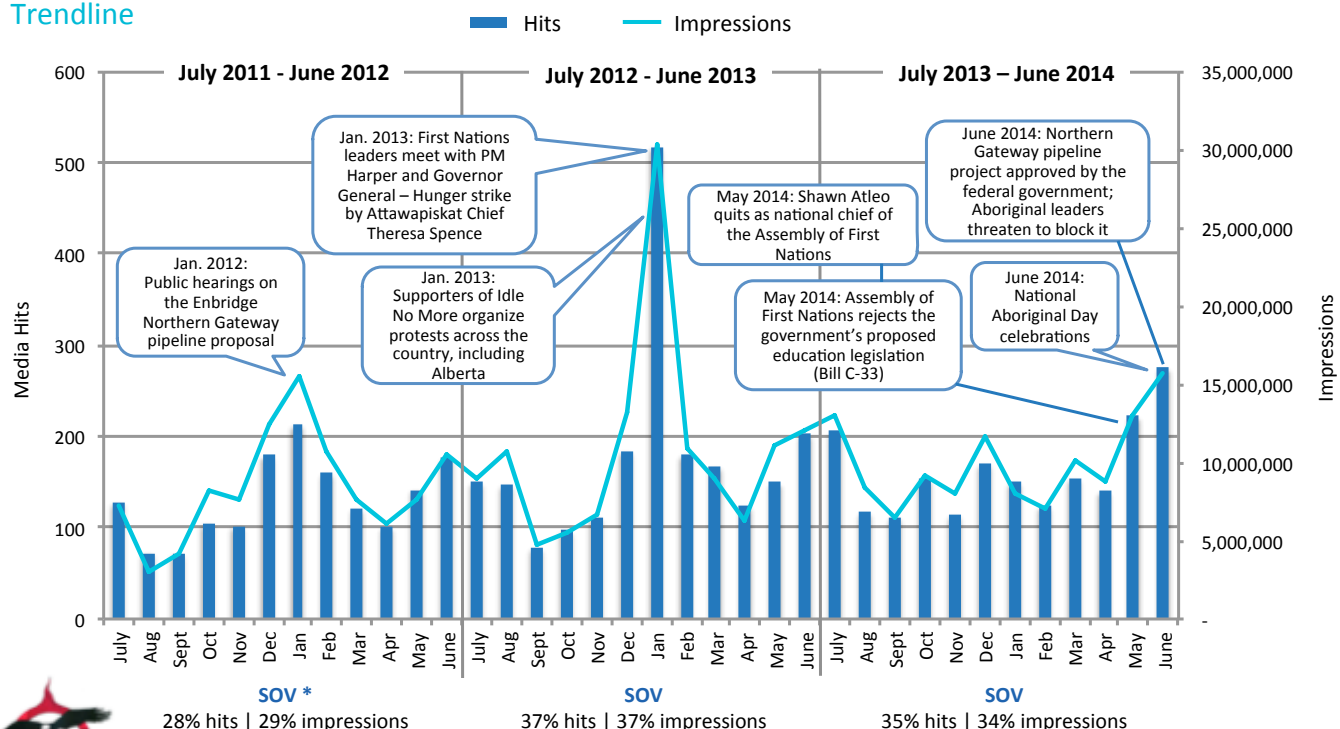
Year by Year Breakdown



More often than not, spikes in coverage were driven by opposition from and protests by Aboriginal leaders regarding treaty rights, the Northern Gateway pipeline and the education bill legislation.

Media Exposure | Aboriginal Issues

Trendline



* Share of Voice: Percent of media coverage in relation to the overall time period under analysis

Even though coverage themes were diverse, media attention tended to be focused on Canadian government legislation related to Aboriginal treaty rights as well as discussion about energy projects and the implications for Aboriginal people, particularly in regards to land rights and revenue sharing.



Top Themes | Aboriginal Issues

	Hits *	SOV
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Government Relations: variety of topics where government is discussed in terms of laws, bills (e.g. Indian Act), funding and treatment. Includes coverage of talks and/or negotiations between First Nations leaders and the federal or provincial government regarding housing, health care, revenue sharing, treatments, territorial claims, etc. 	1,461	26%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Energy Development: Aboriginal communities consulted or needed to be consulted, protesting or opposing projects such as pipelines (e.g. Enbridge Northern Gateway), oil sands, hydro projects, etc. 	1,405	25%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Idle No More: Attawapiskat housing crisis and Chief Theresa Spence's hunger strike. Protests surrounding talks between Assembly of First Nations and federal government (Jan. 2013) 	618	11%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Education: Programs, initiatives discussed, funding needs, opposition to educational bill (Bill C-33). Issues and challenges including low attendance and graduation rates for Aboriginal youth. 	225	4%
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ● Aboriginal Art and Culture: Includes mentions of art displays or awards associated with TV shows, movies and artwork. Coverage of events celebrating Aboriginal culture and heritage (e.g. National Aboriginal Day) 	223	4%



* Human analysis was carried out on a statistical random sample of 413 articles. Results were then projected to represent the entire sample (5,619 articles)

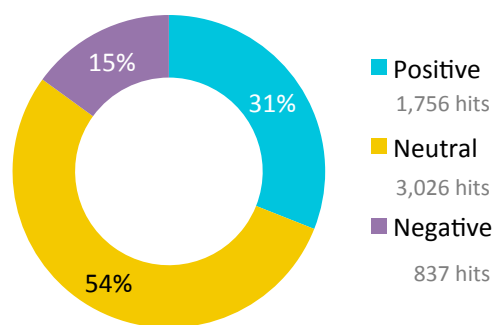
COVERAGE REPORT – ABORIGINAL ISSUES IN ALBERTA | 11

Coverage was largely favourable with only 15% of mentions regarded as negative. Support of Aboriginal treaty rights and praise of Canadian government initiatives were two themes driving positivity, specifically in editorial content and opinion columns. Negative mentions were often spurred by Aboriginal leaders condemning negligence from the Canadian federal and provincial government as well as opinion columns criticizing First Nations protests and corruption on reserves.



Tone | Aboriginal Issues

Total



Projected from a sample of 416 hits



Key Positive Themes

- Federal and provincial government praised for initiatives aimed at improving conditions of Aboriginal people;
- Acknowledgment of Aboriginal treaty rights on oil development projects and education legislation;
- Positive outcomes of talks between Canadian government and Aboriginal communities (e.g. long-term funding arrangements with Métis communities in Alberta);
- Cultural events (Métis Week, Alberta Indigenous Games, community pow wows) portrayed as a way to connect with Aboriginal heritage;
- Aboriginal art (film, TV, paintings, sculptures).

Key Negative Themes

- Legislation: Aboriginal leaders criticize the Harper government for cutting funding for education and special projects, as well as making changes to Indian Act;
- Idle No More protests: Criticism of First Nations for causing trouble during blockades in January 2013;
- Revenue sharing on oil projects: Accusations of greed from First Nations;
- Aboriginal foster care: Government management portrayed as a failure;
- Missing Aboriginal women: Government criticized for not taking action;
- Management of reserves: Criticism of both government and Aboriginal groups due to violence and lack of opportunities for native residents despite the money that has been invested;
- Criticism of exorbitant salaries of chiefs at some reserves.

COVERAGE REPORT – ABORIGINAL ISSUES IN ALBERTA | 12

Media exposure of Aboriginal issues was largely driven by a limited number of broad-reaching publications in Calgary and Edmonton. Conversely, coverage activity in the rest of the province came from over 100 smaller publications that generated about 3% of overall media impressions.



Top Sources | Aboriginal Issues

Metropolitan (Calgary, Edmonton)

SOV: 63% hits | 97% Impressions
10 publications

	Platform	Hits	Impressions
Edmonton Journal	Print	886	111,456,458
Calgary Herald	Print	779	97,539,361
calgaryherald.com	Online	605	49,005,000
edmontonjournal.com	Online	526	42,606,000
The Edmonton Sun	Print	348	17,976,381
The Calgary Sun	Print	250	12,474,885
24 Hours Calgary	Print	61	3,620,655
24 Hours Edmonton	Print	58	2,773,125
Edmonton Examiner	Print	42	7,088,592
Calgary Herald Blogs	Online	7	567,000



* Ranked by number of hits
** Ranked by media impressions

Other

SOV: 37% hits | 3% Impressions
111 publications

Most Active *	Platform	Hits	Impressions
Fort McMurray Today	Print	278	678,586
Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune	Print	188	1,016,646
Rocky Mountain House Mountaineer	Print	85	335,983
Lac La Biche Post	Print	82	227,770
St. Albert Gazette	Print	74	1,638,865

Most Influential **	Platform	Hits	Impressions
St. Albert Gazette	Print	74	1,638,865
Grande Prairie Daily Herald-Tribune	Print	188	1,016,646
Fort McMurray Today	Print	278	678,586
Red Deer Express	Print	17	524,550
Sherwood Park News	Print	19	491,671



For more information, please contact:

Chris Boutet
Senior Manager, Brand Insights
416.442.2962 | cboutet@infomart.com

Camilo Gonzalez
Product Manager, Research & Professional Services
416.442.5618 | cgonzalez@infomart.com

Infomart, a Division of Postmedia Network, Inc.
365 Bloor Street East. Toronto, ON | M4W 3L4

