A National Study on Children's Television Programming in Canada

by / par

A Content Analysis Conducted for the

The Centre for Youth and Media Studies
Le groupe de recherche sur les jeunes et les médias

Alliance for Children and Television
L'Alliance pour l'enfant et la télévision

Département de communication
Université de Montréal

GRJM
Groupe de recherche sur les jeunes et les médias
CYMS
Centre for Youth and Media Studies

L'Alliance pour l'enfant et la télévision
The Alliance for Children and Television

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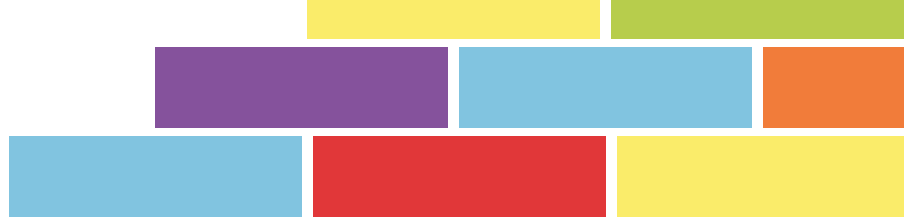Yvon Bergeron

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For 35 years, the Alliance for Children and Television (ACT-AET) has been monitoring the quality of Canadian children's television and all screen-based content, and actively contributing to the vitality of the industry. The ACT-AET also actively undertakes research projects to advance understanding of children's television and multi-platform issues. Working with the CRTC and other government agencies, the ACT-AET continues investigating issues concerning screen-based content for children in Canada.

The current national study on children's television programming in Canada, sponsored and supported by the ACT-AET and CTVglobemedia (CTVgm) through the CTVgm/CHUM tangible benefits, provides a unique and timely analysis of children's programming in Canada at the end of the first decade of the 21st century. This groundbreaking national content analysis study was led by a team from researchers of the Centre for Youth and Media Studies at the Département de Communication at the Université de Montréal, under the supervision of Dr. André H. Caron, Ed.D.

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Introduction

The Alliance for Children and Television (ACT-AET) established a partnership with the Centre for Youth and Media Studies (GRJM/CYMS) at the Université de Montréal to conduct a study of television programming for Canadian youth (children 2-12 years old). The current project has been presented at the Children, Youth & Media Conference at Toronto, November, 2009, a special invited session at the CRTC in January, 2010, and will be presented at the Karlstad World Summit meeting on children and media in June 2010 in Sweden.

With approximately 5.6 million children between 0-14 years old, young people comprise more than one sixth (17.5%) of Canada's total population. Almost half (48%) of the 8 to 15 year old Canadian children have their own televisions (Canadian Teacher's Federation, 2003). Canadian preschoolers (2-6 years old) are estimated to spend approximately 19 hours (18.8) per week watching television, and this number is in the same range for older children (7-12 years old) (BBM Canada, 2009). Young Canadians are not only our future but will also give television a future on whatever platform the content will be viewed. For these reasons, children's television programming should be a central priority of the broadcasting industry and the funding and regulatory institutions.

Canadian children's programming has been widely recognized for its high quality, but what is the state of this programming in 2010? To address this issue, the current study went beyond the focus of traditional studies on television violence and stereotypes, and looked at other relevant questions for understanding the new media landscape. For example, are Canadian productions different from productions from other countries? Considering Canada's new demographic realities, how are visible minorities and/or Aboriginal people being portrayed on children's TV? Are seniors present in children's programs? What is the overall level of well-being of the characters presented? Do they engage in cultural activities? Do they read, play music, or paint? Are they environmentally conscious? How much of Canadian culture is really present? Do Canadian children prefer Canadian productions?

Questions like these guided this nationally representative content analysis of children's programming in Canada, whose results are reported here. Content analysis is designed for media studies that uses systematic, replicable techniques for compressing large numbers of texts (visual content included) into content categories based on explicit coding rules. The results of the content analysis in this report provide the industry with an overall portrait of where children's programming stands, what its strengths are, and what new paths could be considered. However, this report goes one step further by providing an analysis of audience viewing behavior. This allows us to see what programs young Canadians are actually watching, at what time, and what are the most popular shows. Detailed methodological information, such as the development of specific content measures that were unique to this study, and matters related to inter-coder reliability will be discussed at the end of the report.

The second phase of this study, which will be conducted in the coming year, will focus on the ways children and parents appropriate media and media content. This research will further explore the role of media content in young people's lives based on their media usage (including the Internet) and the meanings they give to media during daily social interactions with family and friends.

In the week of March 30 to April 5, 2009, over four thousand (4,102) children's television programs were broadcast by the major Canadian television broadcasters and recorded for this study. In total, these programs included more than one thousand (1,065) hours of children's programming across nineteen broadcasters. These television broadcasters included ACCESS, APTN, BBC Kids (CANWEST MEDIAWORKS), CBC, CFTO/CTV, Discovery Kids, Family Channel, Knowledge, SRC, SCN, TELETOON English, TELETOON French, Treehouse, TQS, TVO, TFO, Télé-Québec, VRAK, and YTV.

During a four-week period in June 2009, the research team of the Centre for Youth and Media Studies (CYMS/GRJM) at the Université de Montréal systematically developed a coding scheme. The coding scheme organized these 4,000 plus programs based on the network and the number of program series that were broadcast. It allowed the team to create a nationally representative sample for the content analysis.

The first criterion for selecting a representative sample was the program unit. The sample included all individual programs and at least one episode of each of the series broadcast. The second criterion was the length of the program. The content analysis focused on programs that were at least five minutes in length.[1] Thus, the final representative sample included close to 200 hours (196 hours and 22 minutes in total) and more than 500 (563) programs.

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1   Of the more than 1,000 hours of recorded programs, about 30 hours were excluded. These programs were either less than five minutes in length or feature movies of 2 hours or more.

19 TV Broadcasters
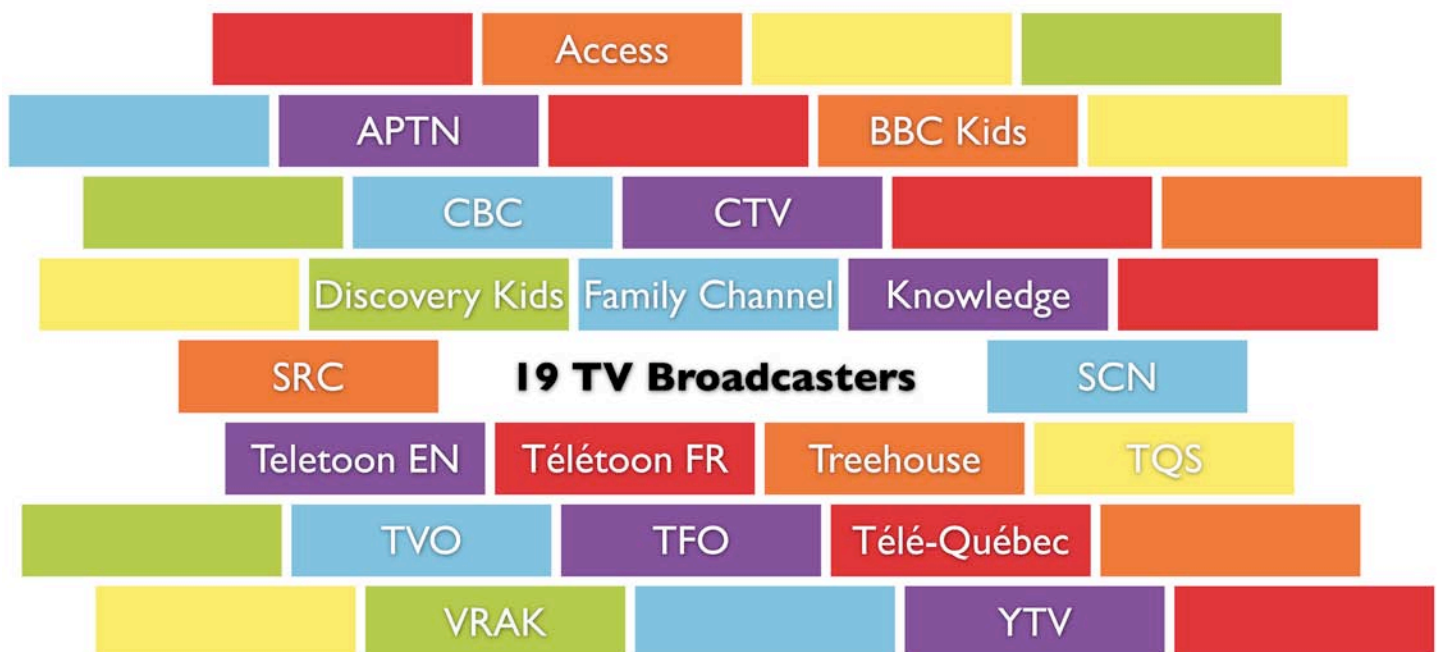
Results

Children's Programming on Canadian Television: What Is Available and When?

Children's television programs were broadcast in Canada throughout the week (i.e., 69% during weekdays and the rest during weekends) and were available throughout the day from 6:00 a.m. to 9:00 p.m. More than half (54%) of them were broadcast in the morning between 6:00 – 11:59 a.m., and the rest were broadcast in the afternoon and early evening (34% and 10%, respectively).

Regarding programs' target audiences, more than half (55%) of the children's programs targeted 6-12 year olds; 42% of the programs targeted preschoolers; and 3% targeted other audiences (e.g., 13+ teens). Looking at the program schedule and target audience together, preschool programs were mostly broadcast in the morning, while programs targeting 6-12 year olds were aired more in the afternoon (see Table 1).

Table 1 Children's Program Schedule by Target Audience		
Weekday	**Preschool**	**6-12**
Morning	74%	37%
Afternoon	22%	48%
Evening	4%	15%
Night	0%	0%
Weekend	**Preschool**	**6-12**
Morning	67%	57%
Afternoon	29%	31%
Evening	4%	10%
Night	0%	2%

Furthermore, several cues (e.g., viewer advisories and on-screen ratings) are available to help parents control children's TV viewing. For instance, one can watch the on-screen rating appearing in the top left-hand corner of the screen at the beginning of each TV program and after each commercial break. These content ratings for children's programming are provided by Canadian broadcasters. Our analysis shows that 85% of children's programs showed specific ratings (e.g., C, C8+, G, and PG) to indicate age appropriate content. Another indicator that allows young viewers and their parents to determine whether a program is a Canadian production is to look for a small icon of a Canadian flag in the opening scene. Accordingly, we found that less than 5% (4.5%) of children's programs were identified as such, and all were provided by the same TV broadcaster. More information about Canadian productions will be provided later.

Generally, four types of TV broadcasters are present in the Canadian broadcasting industry: educational, specialty, public generalist and private generalist. Both educational and specialty broadcasters accounted for more than 90% of children's programming in Canada (41% and 49%, respectively), followed by public (9%) and private (1%) generalist broadcasters (see Table 2).[2]

Table 2 Type of TV Broadcasters		
Type of TV Broadcasters	**n**	**%**
Educational	232	41%
Public Generalist	50	9%
Private Generalist	6	1%
Specialty	275	49%

Note: n = number of programs

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[2]   Only two private generalist broadcasters were included in this study and the rest informed us that they did not broadcast programs for 2-12 year olds.

What Are the Countries of Origin of Children's Programs on Canadian Television?

In addition to a complex network of TV broadcasting, Canada has a distinctive communication system that reflects its dual cultural origins as well as other ethnic groups through different broadcast languages. Among the 563 children's programs analyzed, about two thirds (67%) were broadcast in English, and the rest in French (30%) and other languages (1%; Aboriginal languages[3]). Most children's programs (97%) did not include any subtitles.

When it comes to the country of origin of children's programs, over thirty countries of production were found in our sample. Specifically, close to half of the children's programs on Canadian television were Canadian productions and Canadian co-productions (36.6% and 11.5%, respectively); 8.7% were Canadian and American co-ventures; 23.6% were U.S. productions; and the rest (19.6%) were other foreign productions (UK, France, Australia, Japan, etc.).

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3   The Aboriginal languages that were present in our sample included Cree, Inuktitut, Innu, Ojibway, and Tlingit.

Our study also investigated the degree to which Canadian children were exposed to specific cultural elements of their country. The results showed that about one in six (16%) children's programs depicted a number of Canadian identities/references (e.g., the Canadian flag, Québec flag, CN tower, Québec City, bilingual signs). Looking more closely at these programs, we found that one out of three (34%) were Canadian productions.

In terms of other types of identities/references, such as religious symbols in children's programs, only 6% of the programs contained or mentioned such examples. They included Christmas holidays, the Christian cross, and yin and yang (taiji).
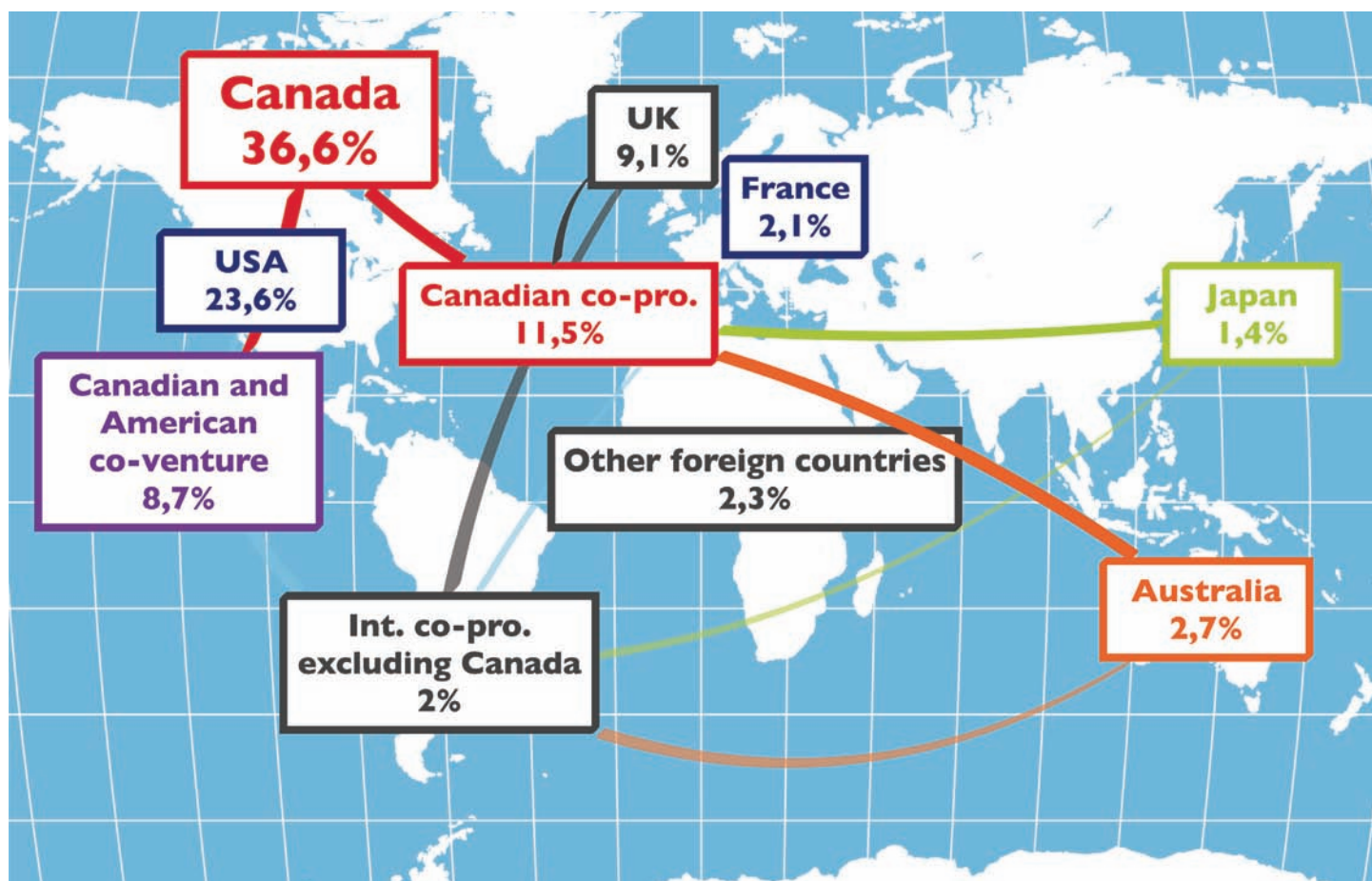
What Are the Program Characteristics?

Having presented the context of children's programming on Canadian TV, the following section focuses on specific program characteristics and relevant character attributes in children's programs. In our sample, over sixteen hundred (1,613) unique main characters were identified.

What Kinds of Program Genres Are Found in Children's Programming?

Among the 563 children's programs analyzed, animation (59%) was the most dominate genre on Canadian television, followed by live-action (26%), mixed genre (combination of previous genres mentioned, 13%), and puppets (2%) (see Figure 1). Within animation programs, 2D and/or traditional animation (70%) were the most used techniques (besides stop-motion or 3D animation).

Figure 1 Program Genre

Mix 13%
Puppets 2%
Live-action 26%
Animation 59%
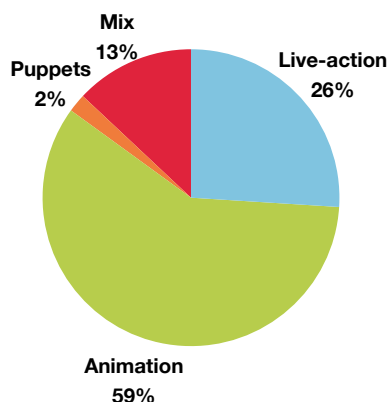
Looking at the time period in which the program took place, more than nine in ten (93%) were in the present; 3% were about the past; 1% about the future.

What Are the Most Prevalent Program Categories in Children's Programming?

Different types of program categories were analyzed to classify the format of children's programs. These included action/adventure (i.e., action-oriented rather than dialogue, usually involving exciting experiences), comedy, drama, formal education (i.e., subject-matter curriculum), informal education (i.e., recreation & leisure activities to develop skills and knowledge), and mixed category (combination of previous mentioned categories). Most of the 200 hours of children's programming were either some form of informal education or action/adventure (39% and 29%, respectively) (see Figure 2).

Figure 2 Program Category

Mix and Other 11%
Action/Adventure 29%
Informal Education 39%
Comedy 8%
Drama 10 %
Formal Education 4%
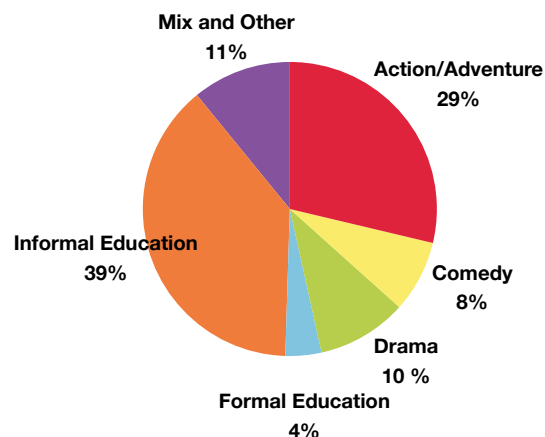
What Are the Main Character Attributes?

Who Are the Main Characters and Where Do They Appear in Children's Programs?

As mentioned earlier, over sixteen hundred main characters were identified in our sample. Looking at the main characters on children's television in Canada, human-type characters were seen the most (63%), followed by animal-type characters (22%), supernatural creatures (9%), and other types of characters (6%). In terms of gender, 61% of the main characters were male and 36% female; 3% of them were gender unspecific.

Many of these characters were introduced to the storyline in a home setting (34%, living room, backyard, etc.) as well as in nature (19%, such as beach, forest) and public space (19%, including street, square, etc.) (see Figure 3). More than one in four (28%) of them appeared to have family and nearly nine in ten (89%) maintained a good relationship with their family members.

Figure 3 Context of Character's First Appearance

Other 8%
Nature space 19%
Home 34%
Public space 19%
School 10%
Work 10%
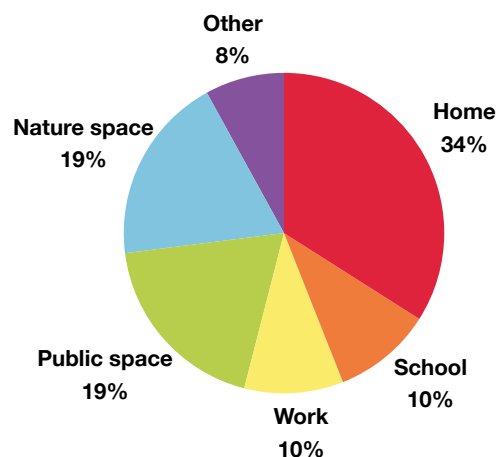
Specifically, when it comes to human-type characters, their social age, race, apparent height and weight, and interracial/intercultural interactions were analyzed (see Table 3)[4]. The results showed that there were more adult characters (39%, ages 18 to 64 years) than teens (30%, ages 13 to 17 years) and elementary school children (25%, 6-12 years). Few were babies/toddlers (0-5) and seniors (65+) (3% for both age groups). Most human-type characters in our sample were of average height (93%) and weight (95%).

Regarding the race of human-type characters and their interracial/intercultural interactions, nearly eight in ten (78%) were identified as European white, less than one in ten (8%) as Black, 6% as Asian, 5% as Aboriginals, 2% as Latinos, and 1% as Middle Eastern.

In terms of their interracial interactions, about half of them (48%) interacted exclusively with people from the same race/culture, and the other half (52%) interacted with people from their own and different race(s)/culture(s). Nonetheless, characters with a disability were rarely seen in our sample (0.3%).
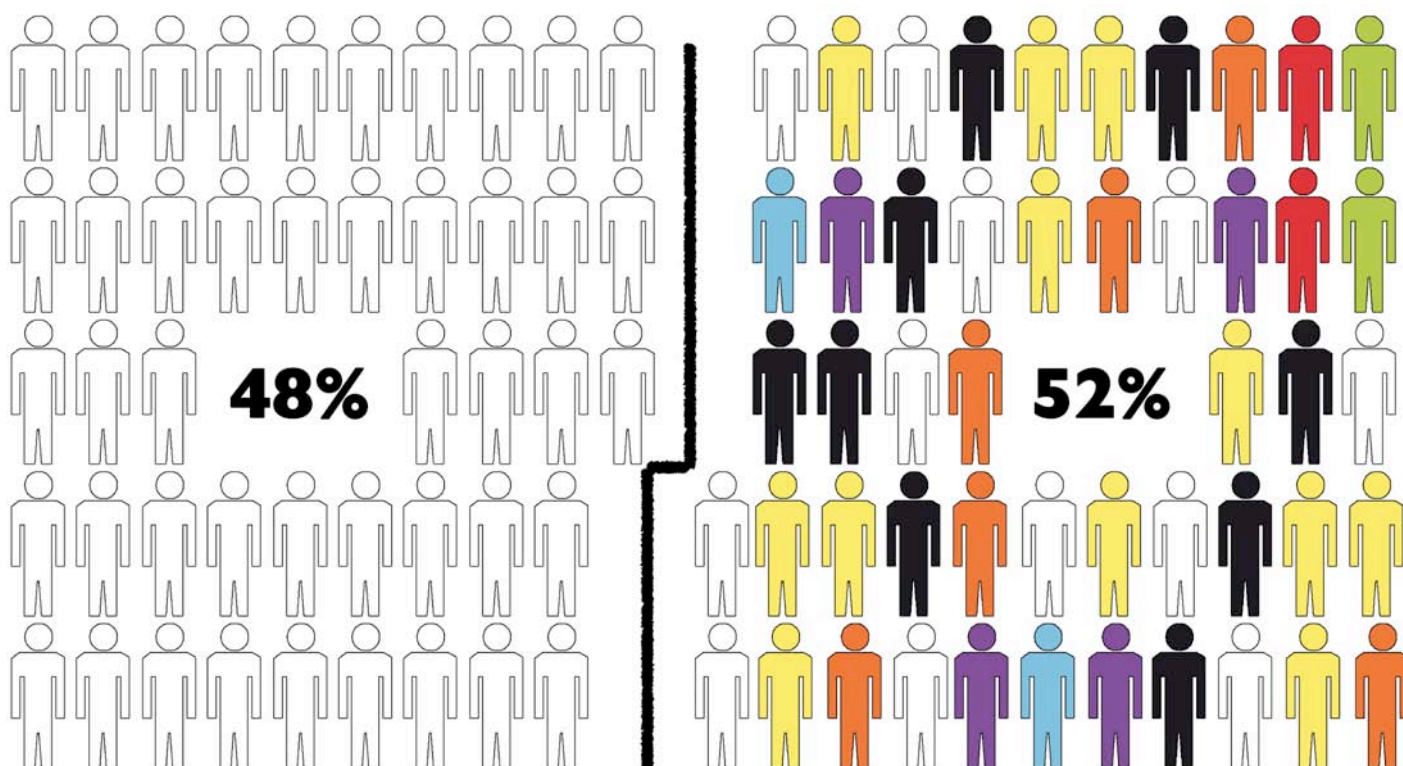
Table 3 Profile of Human-Type Characters			
Social Age	**%**	**Height**	**%**
Baby/toddler	3%	Short	3%
Child	25%	Medium	93%
Teen	30%	Tall	4%
Adult	39%		
Senior	3%		
Race	**%**	**Weight**	**%**
European white	78%	Thin	1%
Middle Eastern	1%	Medium	95%
Black	8%	Heavy	4%
Aboriginal	5%		
Asian	6%		
Latino	2%		

How Do the Main Characters Feel about Themselves in Children's Programs?

All main characters were evaluated in terms of their roles and their relation to others in the storyline. Close to nine out of ten (88%) were good in nature and only about one in ten (9%)

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4   The number of human-type characters varies in the following analysis. This variation is due to missing data for different variables. Overall, the maximum number of cases was used.

played the role of bad (even villainous) characters. When examining characters' relation to others, the results were similar; that is, more than eight in ten were protagonists or supporters of protagonists (49% and 35%, respectively), while just one in ten were antagonists or supporters of antagonists (9% and 1%, respectively); the rest were neutral (6%).

Not surprisingly, most of these main characters in children's programs were good-natured. Looking a little closer at their emotional well-being[5] in the ways they feel and react in most social interactions, we found that these characters exhibited relatively strong pleasant feelings (the average was 5.71 on a seven-point scale), which reflected high ratings in terms of being positive, good, pleasant, interested, happy, contented, loving, and joyful.

Overall, based on the above results, main characters in children's programs were quite good, happy and positive.

Do the Main Characters Go to Movies or Visit a Museum? Do They Use Computers? – A Closer Look at Cultural Activities and the Use of New Information and Communication Technologies (ICTs) in Children's Programs

The current study aimed to understand cultural appreciation in children's programming through characters' daily activities. In addition, we were interested in knowing the current depiction of the use of new ICTs in children's television.

We found that one out of four (27%) of these main characters engaged in cultural production (painting/drawing, writing, dancing, etc.) and more than one in ten (13%) characters engaged in cultural consumption activities, including reading, visiting an exhibition, museum or zoo, and going to the movies.

In light of the growing popularity of new ICTs in people's daily lives, it was surprising that only a little more than one in four (28%) of the children's programs showed a number of such technologies, including desktop/laptop computers, cellular phones, or futuristic gadgets. Furthermore, when looking at the program characters, we found that more than one in ten (13%) used new ICTs in the programs.

We also analyzed whether a program website or a URL was presented to young television viewers, because multiplatform delivery of media content has been used by TV broadcasters for various purposes, like informing their audiences about upcoming programs, providing additional entertainment, and so forth. Only 6% of the programs provided such information within the programming.

5   Over one thousand (1,062) main characters were analyzed for their emotional well-being.

Is There Diversity in Children's Programming?

As suggested in the introduction, the current study used new approaches to examine the inclusion of several unique elements in children's programming on Canadian TV, such as measures of diversity, positive program issues and human social values.

Based on previous analysis of human-type characters' races and their interracial interactions, we learned that although the majority of them were European white, they also interacted with other people from different racial or cultural backgrounds. This observation was further examined by looking more closely at another program variable, the presence of visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginal people. We found that about four out of ten (42%) children's programs presented such characters. Moreover, when it comes to references to human social values in children's programs, close to one in four (22%) of the programs emphasized "friendship with people from other races/cultures."

By examining the dominance of positive program issues, to which explicit reference of several positive program issues was made in the storyline, we also found that more than two-thirds (70%) of children's programs explicitly addressed "encouraging positive social values," more than half (54%) explicitly demonstrated "understanding about the world we live in," and more than one in three (36%) specifically stimulated "reflection, creativity and interactivity in the viewer."

All these program characteristics, along with the results of characters analysis, showed that children's programming on Canadian TV exhibited quality content in terms of diversity and positive values.

What Are the Themes Addressed in Children's Programming?

Next, our analysis focused on program themes and other relevant information related to this variable. The program theme refers to a specific and distinct message or concern of a children's program. In our sample, more than one in three (34%) of the programs focused on social relationships, followed by close to one in four (23%) on learning and 18% on action/adventure (see Figure 4). These results actually match our previous findings of program categories: most of the children's programs were categorized as either educational or adventurous, and their central theme reflected the nature of the informative and entertaining aspects of the storyline.

However, two program themes were found to be less prevalent in our sample. First, only 2% of the children's programs focused on environmentalism. Similar findings showed that only slightly more than one in ten (13%) children's programs made explicit references to "respect for the environment and nature." Also

Figure 4 Program Theme
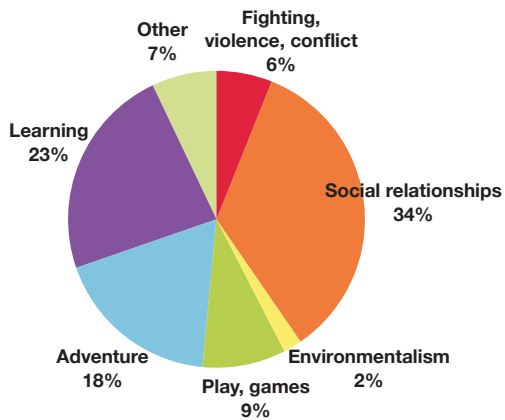
looking at main characters' ecological practices, less than one in ten (8%) of the characters engaged in such behavior (or demonstrated this awareness or concern). Recycling was often the most observed behavior.

Second, we found that fighting/violence (6%) was rarely a central theme in children's programs. This finding was further examined in terms of specific violent behaviors of the main characters. Past content analysis measures of violence often investigated merely the sheer amount of violence on children's television. However, we found it more important to also focus on the type of violence in use and its consequences. In our study, only about one in ten (12%) of the main characters engaged in violent behaviors, whereas most of the characters were not aggressive toward each other either physically or verbally. With such small numbers of violent incidents, it became trivial to report the types and consequences.

Despite the small amount of violence in children's programs, we were interested in the ways main characters solve major conflicts they encounter. Hence, we analyzed their problem solving/ management style. We found that more than two-thirds (73%) of the main characters did not encounter any major problems or conflicts. The rest of the main characters either solved the problem by competing (19%) or collaborating (4%) and accommodating (1%); 3% decided to avoid the problem completely.

Summary

The results of this first part of our analysis help us answer some key questions about the overall content of children's television in terms of program genre, diversity, type of characters and gender representation, as well as characters' overall level of well-being and cultural activities.

The findings of our study indicate that Canadian children are offered high quality content with positive values, but that some broadcasters are not contributing as much as they could in terms of number of programs (few were offered by the private generalists), diversity of genres (i.e., high prevalence of animation with less comedy and drama) and amount of Canadian productions (on average 50% of Canadian productions in the late 1990s vs. 36% today). In the next part of our report, we will further examine the differences between types of TV broadcasters in relation to different program genres.

Our analysis also shows that with respect to the issue of diversity, almost half of the programs depicted visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginals; about a quarter of the main characters engaged in cultural production and more than one in ten engaged in cultural consumption. Although the majority of the human characters in children's programs were European white, these characters interacted with people from different cultures as well as their own. Specifically, more than two-thirds of children's programs explicitly addressed "encouraging positive social values," and more than half explicitly demonstrated "understanding about the world we live in." One question to investigate in more detail based on these findings is how Canadian productions distinguish themselves from those of other countries. Hence, a detailed analysis of different countries of origin will be provided in the next section of the report.

As far as the main characters are concerned, the results show that more than 60% were humans, and the rest were animals (22%) and supernatural creatures (9%). In addition, the representation of males and females was not equal (i.e., more male than female characters were shown). Based on these results, it will be interesting to examine main characters' gender differences in relation to their types. It will also be worth investigating gender differences in relation to other characters attributes, such as their emotional well-being and cultural activities.

Interestingly, very few senior and disabled people appeared in the programs we analyzed. In this regard, we may question why Canadian children are not more exposed to such realities of Canadian society.

After having looked at the general landscape of children's TV, we will now look at comparisons between specific program characteristics and character attributes. As mentioned earlier, this advanced analysis will show detailed information about the differences between two measures and it helps to explores questions, such as: Can we find differences in children's programming in terms of types of television broadcasters? How are the preschool programs different from those scheduled for 6-12 year olds? Is the content of animated children's programs different from live-action ones? Are there gender differences between the main characters in children's programming? What are the differences between English and French language children's programs? To what extent do Canadian productions distinguish themselves from those of other countries?

These six questions were examined by using Chi-square analysis.[6] Hence, the program and character variables that were selected for this kind of analysis included: types of TV broadcasters, program genre, target audience, broadcast language, gender of the main characters, and country of origin.

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6   The Chi-square analysis allows us to investigate the statistical significance of the association between different program and character variables in children's programs. Where a statistically significant relationship is found between two variables, it is unlikely that the relationships has occurred by chance, the differences are therefore statistically meaningful. The criterion we used to determine whether a difference is statistically significant was .05 (p-value) or greater.

Do Children's Programs Differ in Terms of Types of Television Broadcasters?

As we know, there are four types of television broadcasters that air children's programs in Canada. They are educational, public generalist, private generalist, and specialty broadcasters. **The comparison* presented here will only include** educational, public generalist and specialty television broadcasters**, given that the number of programs private generalists provided was extremely limited.**

How do types of TV broadcasters differ in terms of their program target audiences?

First of all, children's programs for our two distinct target audiences (i.e., preschoolers and the 6-12 year olds) were compared among the three types of TV broadcasters. This relationship was found to be statistically significant (p < .01). Both educational broadcasters and public generalist broadcasters scheduled more than half of their children's programs for preschoolers (55% and 62%, respectively), whereas more than two-thirds (70%) of the specialty broadcasters' children programs targeted children between 6-12 years old (see Figure 5).


Figure 5 Target Audience by TV Broadcasters*****
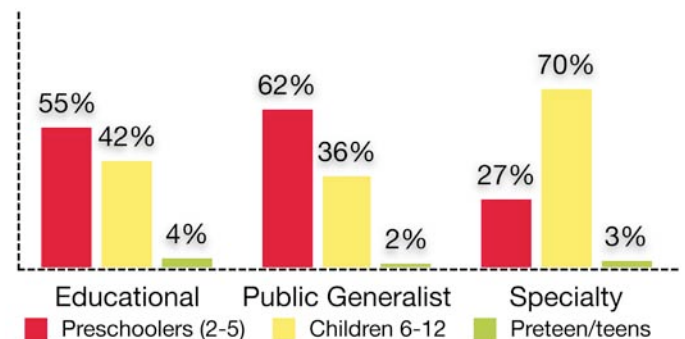
How important is the animation genre?

The relationship between program genre and types of TV broadcasters was also found to be statistically significant (p < .01). Within public generalists, more than eight out of ten (82%) programs were animation. Although educational broadcasters also scored high in animation (53%), the next most prevalent genre was live-action (32%). Specialty broadcasters had the second highest percentage of animation (61%), followed by live-action (25%). Interestingly, the overwhelming presence of animation in public generalist programs leaves very little room for much diversity in their programming (see Figure 6).

Figure 6 Program Genre by TV Broadcasters*
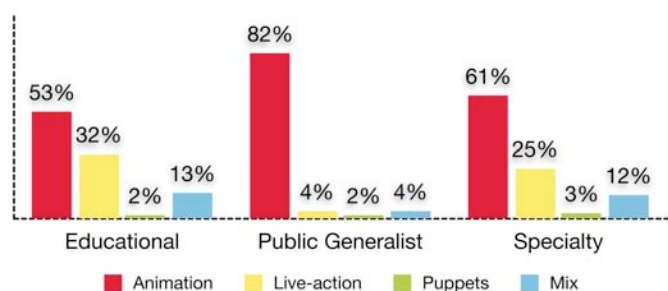
What are the most important categories in relation to types of TV broadcasters?

The relationship between types of TV broadcasters and program category was also found to be statistically significant ($p < .01$). The highest amount of informal education, as could be expected, was presented by educational broadcasters (57%), closely followed by public generalists (46%), whereas specialty broadcasters lag at 23%. A reverse trend was observed when looking at the action category. Programs in the action category were aired the most by specialty broadcasters (40%), followed by public generalists (34%) and educational broadcasters (15%). Overall, comedy and drama appeared to be the most neglected categories especially for educational and public generalists (see Figure 7).

Are some types of broadcasters more "Canadian" than others?

Looking at country of origin, public generalists had the highest percentage of Canadian productions (58%), followed by one in three programs of both educational (35%) and specialty (33%) broadcasters, while one third of the specialty network programs also consisted of U.S. productions. In terms of Canadian co-productions, they were equally present on all three types of broadcasters, as well Canadian and American co-ventures (11%, 10% and 7%, respectively) (see Figure 8).

How important are themes such as social relationships or violence for TV broadcasters?

While social relationships were the dominant program theme for all three types of broadcasters, it was most present in almost one in two (48%) programs for public generalist broadcasters. Educational broadcasters, for their part, highly promoted the theme of learning (39%). Finally, besides social relationships, specialty broadcasters had the most adventure-theme programs (one in four). The latter also had the most violence-theme programs (although relatively low), at slightly more than one in ten programs (see Figure 9).

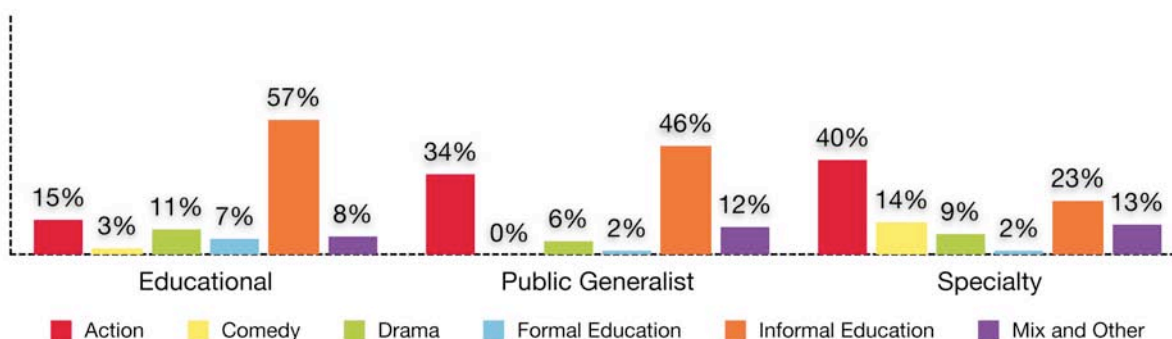## Figure 7 Program Category by TV Broadcasters*

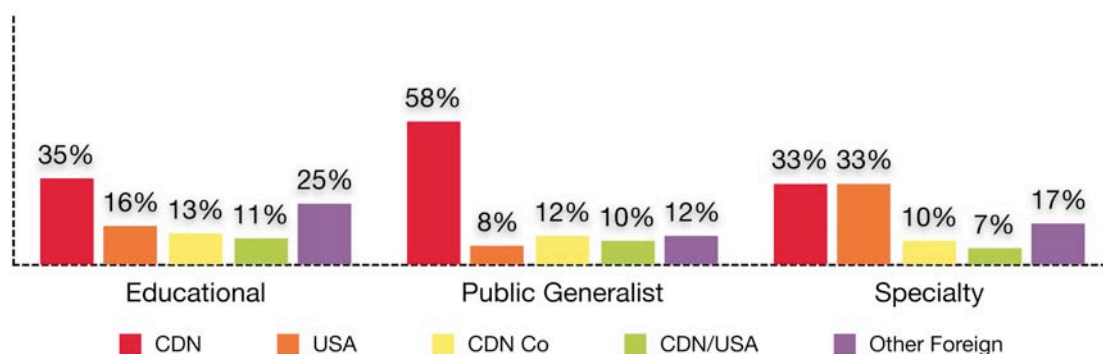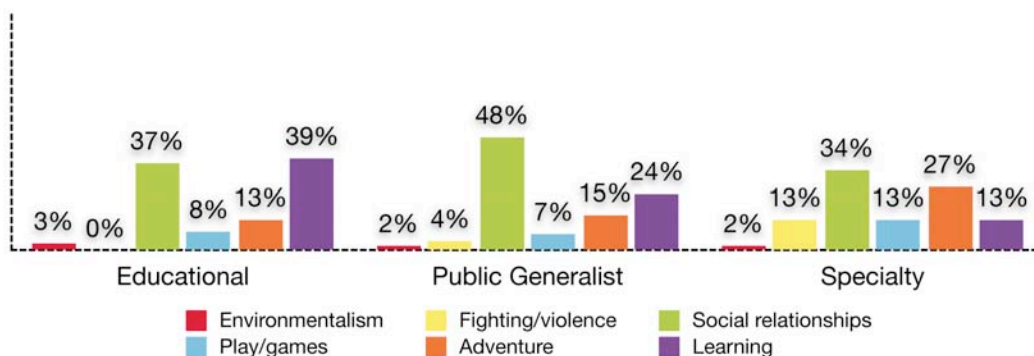## Figure 8 Country of Origin by TV Broadcasters*

Figure 9 Program Theme by TV Broadcasters*****

How are positive issues presented in children's programs in relation to types of TV broadcasters?

A final analysis looked at positive program issues (see Figure 10). Both public generalists and educational broadcasters scored the highest in terms of promoting "positive social values" (84% and 77%, respectively). More than one in seven (73%) programs of educational broadcasters highly encouraged understanding the world we live in and close to one in two (46%) stimulated reflection, creativity, and interactivity in viewers. Although appearing more present in educational broadcast and public generalist programs, specialty broadcasters also encouraged positive social values (62%) and understanding the world (41%).

Figure 10 Positive Program Issues by TV Broadcasters*****
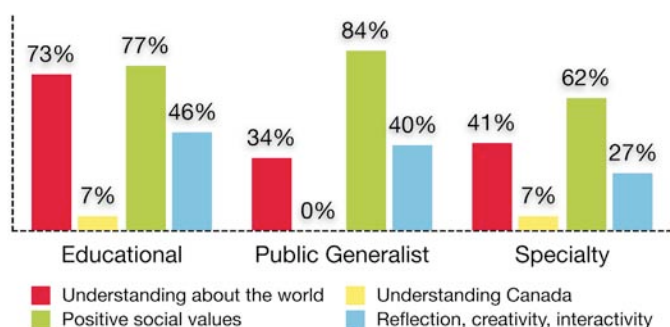
Summary

When comparing these three types of TV broadcasters, children's programs on educational networks mostly targeted preschoolers and had the highest percentage of other foreign productions. Although more than half of its programming was animation, educational broadcasters had the highest percentage of live-action programs. Informal education was the most prevalent program category for this type of broadcasters, and its main theme focused on learning.

Public generalist broadcasters also targeted mainly preschool audiences and had the highest percentage of animation and Canadian productions. Their most prevalent program category was informal education with a special focus on social relationships.

Finally, specialty broadcasters mostly targeted 6-12 year olds. About two-thirds of their programs were animation and the rest were live-action programs. The majority of their programs were Canadian and U.S. productions. For this type of broadcasters, the most prevalent program category was action/adventure with a particular focus on social relationships.

Overall, all three types of TV broadcasters scored high in terms of positive program issues.

Is the Content of Animated Children's Programs Different from Live-Action Ones?

As stated earlier, the majority of the 563 children's programs analyzed were animation (59%), followed by live-action (26%), puppets (2%) and mixed genre (13%). For the following comparisons, the differences between two major program genres, animation/puppets mixture and live-action mixture[7], are discussed.

What distinguishes these two genres most?

The first was the presence or absence of visible minorities/Aboriginal people in children's programs (see Figure 11). The program genre revealed that two-thirds of the animation/puppets did not present such presence, whereas in live-action mixture, visible minorities were seen in almost one out of two (49%) programs. This could be partly explained by the use of animal-type characters in animation, which also reduces the portrayal of human characters in general. Second, several positive pro-

Figure 11 Visible Minorities by Program Genre
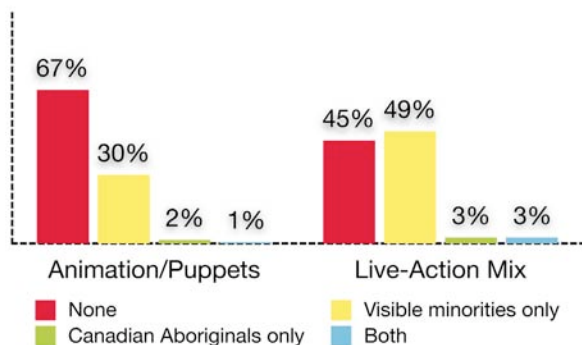
gram issues were statistically related to program genre (p < .05). Overall, most of these positive issues were more pronounced in live-action mixture than animation/puppets. This is particularly true for "demonstrating understanding about the world we live in" (71%), "stimulating reflection, creativity and interactivity" (56%), and to a lesser extent of "demonstrating understanding about Canada" (11%). In other words, these findings indicate that animation/puppets score much lower in terms of these positive program issues (see Figure 12).

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7   The live-action mixture included 100% live-action programs and live-action including a mix of various other genres.

Figure 12 Positive Program Issues by Program Genre
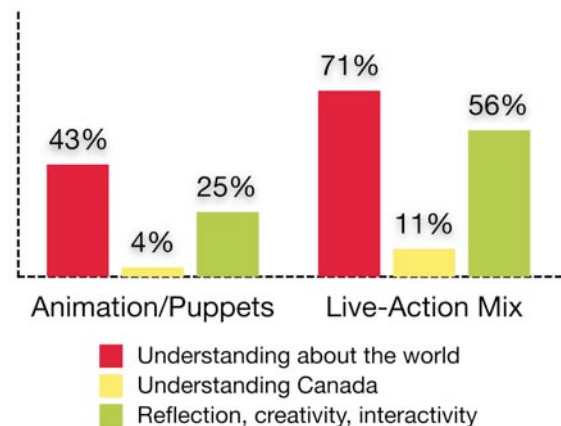
Finally, the same trend appeared in human social values (i.e., "friendship," "respect for the elderly," and "respect for the environment"), where three out of the four values were more associated with live-action programs than animation/puppets (p < .01). As mentioned, "respect for the elderly" remained quite low for both genres (see Figure 13).

Figure 13 Ref. to Human Social Values by Genre
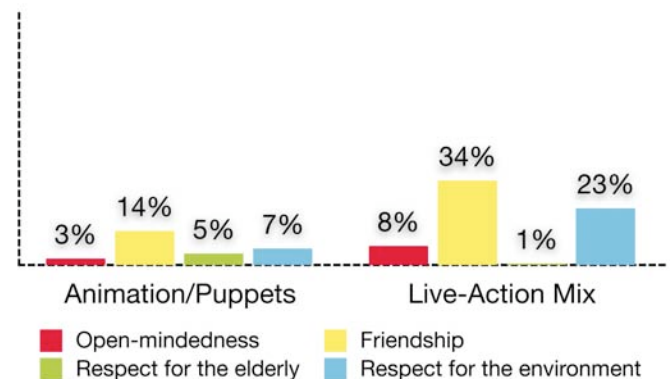
Summary

Looking only at these two distinctive program genres (i.e., animation/puppets and live-action mixture) and their relationships with other program variables, several interesting results were found.

In general, live-action programs presented more diverse results than animation/puppets. Live-action programs presented more visible minorities and explicitly promoted more positive issues and human social values, such as understanding the world we live in, stimulating reflection and interactivity, and friendship.

What Are the Differences between English- and French-Language Children's Programs?

Among the 563 children's programs, about two thirds (67%) were broadcast in English and the rest in French (30%).

How do programs in different broadcast languages differ in terms of their target audiences?

A higher percentage of English-language (46%) than French-language (31%) preschool programming was observed (p < .01). One possible explanation is the presence of one English-language specialty channel, which specifically targets this age group (see Figure 14).

Figure 14 Target Audience by Broadcast Language
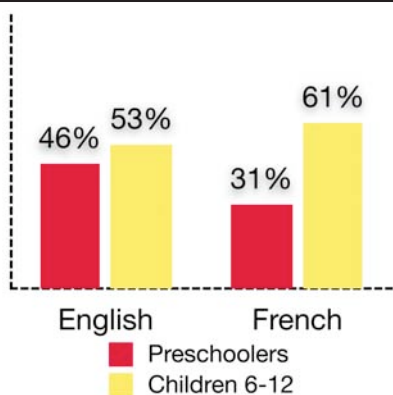
Between English- and French-language programs, which have more animation or live-action programs?

Program genre was found to be significantly different when comparing the broadcast languages (p < .01). Animation was more prevalent in French (71%) than in English programs (54%), whereas live-action programs were only slightly more present in English (29%) than in French programs (21%). The mixed genre was twice as prevalent with English-language broadcasters. This could be partially explained by the presence of one speciality French-language animation broadcaster that might weigh more in the French market, given the more limited number of broadcasters compared to English Canada (see Figure 15).

Figure 15 Program Genre by Broadcast Language
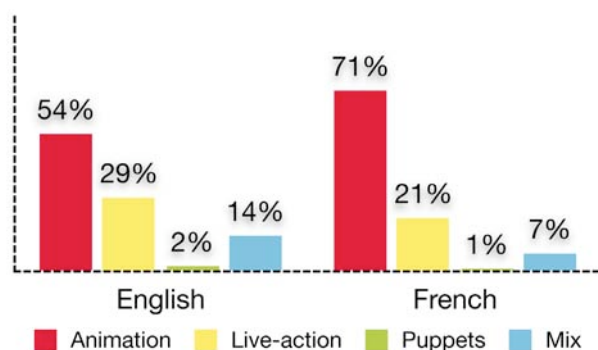
How do themes differ in terms of broadcast languages?

The relationship between broadcast language and program theme was found to be statistically significant (p < .01). Specifically, the most dominant program theme in English-language programs was social relationships (31%), followed by learning (28%). As for French-language programs, social relationships were the dominant theme as well (39%), followed by adventure (25%). Interestingly, the program theme focusing on play/game was mostly found in English-language programs, and programs involving violence as the main theme were found very little in both English- and French-language programs (see Figure 16).

Figure 16 Program Theme by Broadcast Language
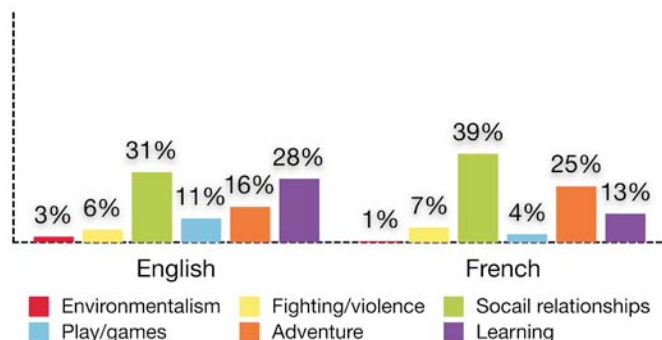
Are there differences in positive program issues?

Our analysis showed that three of the five positive program issues were strongly present in both English- and French-language programs. However, English-language programs were higher in demonstrating "understanding about the world we live in," "encouraging positive social values," and "stimulating reflection and creativity" than French ones (see Figure 17).

Figure 17 Positive Program Issues by Language

Figure 17 Positive Program Issues by Language
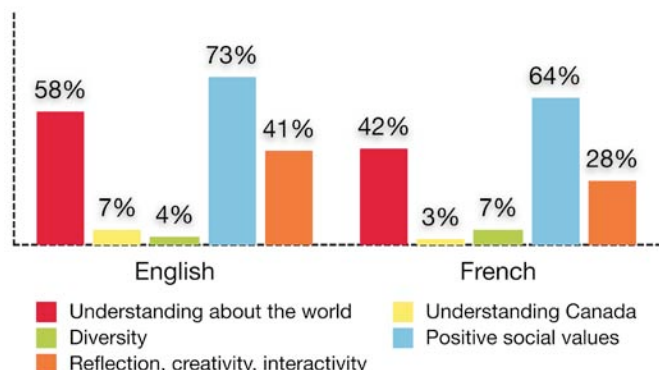
Summary

Our study revealed some interesting findings in terms of broad-cast languages.

First of all, English-language programs have more live-action programs. These programs are centered especially on social relationships, environmentalism and play/games.

French-language programs have a higher percentage of animation. The two main themes in French-language programs were social relationships and adventure.

Although there were some variations, both language programs did well in terms of promoting positive program issues in the programs.

How Are Preschool Programs Different from Those Scheduled for 6-12 Year Olds?

Of 500 children's programs analyzed, more than half (55%) targeted 6-12 years old and 42% targeted preschoolers.

Is animation a prevalent genre for both target audiences?

The relationship between target audience and program genres was found to be statistically significant ($p < .01$). For preschool programs, animation was a very dominant genre in two out of three programs (67%). For programs that targeted 6-12 year olds, this proportion was less, found in more than one in two (56%) programs. One in three (33%) were live-action programs in this age group (see Figure 18).

Figure 18 Program Genre by Target Audience
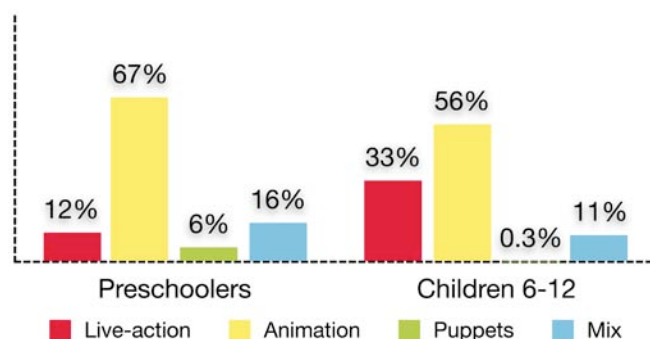
What are the typical program categories for pre-school programs and 6-12 programs?

As could be expected, preschool programming had the highest number of informal education content (61%). For programs that targeted children ages 6-12, action/adventure (40%) was the top program category (see Figure 19).

Figure 19 Program Category by Target Audience
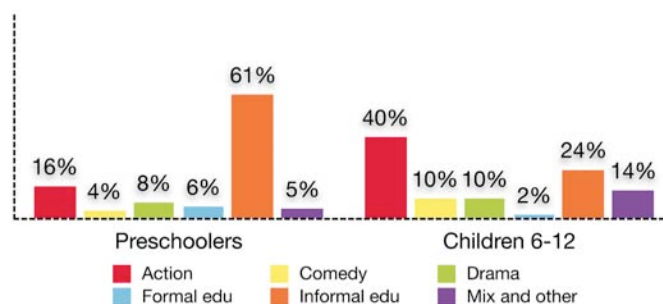
How do themes differ in terms of target audiences?

If one considers the main themes in preschool programming, social relationships and learning received high scores (43% and 31%, respectively). For the 6-12 year olds, we found a similar representation of these two main themes (though less than in preschool programs), and a high percentage of adventure-theme programs (24%). Interestingly, fighting and/or violence was absent in preschool programs but appeared in one in ten (11%) programs for the 6-12 year olds. In addition, programs for the 6-12 year olds also focused on learning, though less so than in preschool programs (see Figure 20).

Figure 20 Program Theme by Target Audience
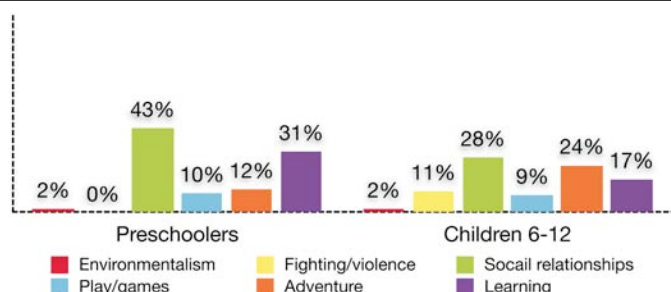
Are visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginals present in both kinds of programs?

Our analysis showed that absence was very high in preschool programs (see Figure 21). This could possibly be explained by the high percentage of animated programs. Hence, it was less likely to see human-type characters in this kind of genre, since animation presented more animal-type characters. Both visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginals were seen more in programs that targeted 6-12 year olds.

Figure 21 Visible Minorities by Target Audience

Summary

Of note, preschool programming was high in animation and was mostly categorized as informal education focusing on social relationships and learning. These programs scor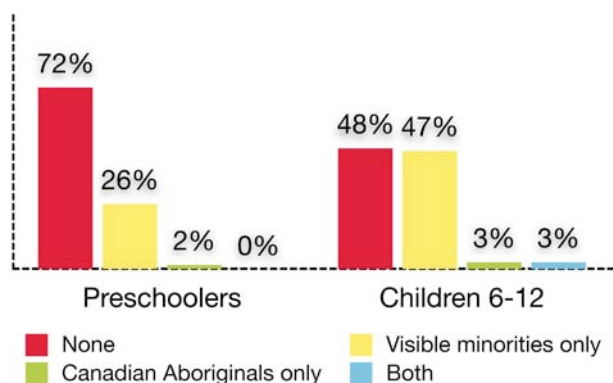ed highest in terms of promoting positive social values, understanding the world we live in, and stimulating refection and interactivity in the viewer.

In terms of programs that target 6-12 year olds, at least half of the programs were animation, followed by one in three live-action. The most prevalent program category was action that focused on adventurous events or activities. Some of these programs contained some elements of fighting, conflict and vio-

lence. Program intended for this age group also tended to show more visible minorities as well as Canadian Aboriginals in their content. In addition, programs for 6-12 year olds made more explicit references to promoting understanding about Canada and diversity than preschool programs.

Are There Gender Differences between the Main Characters in Children's Programming?

Among the 1,613 main characters, 61% of them were male and 36% were female.

What is the relationship between gender and type of character?

Type of characters was statistically different when comparing males and females (p < .01). Specifically, female characters were more likely to be humans (73%) than their counterparts (60%), while male characters are more likely to be portrayed as animals, plants/objects, and/or robots and machines (see Figure 22).

Figure 22 Character's Type by Gender
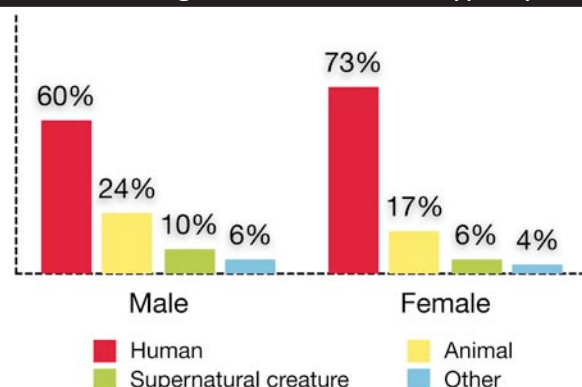
Are there age differences between male and female human characters?

In terms of human character's social age, gender differences were found for teen and adult characters (see Figure 23). That is, young children and children human characters appeared about equally in terms of gender. However, when it comes to adult characters, more males were shown than females. For teenage characters, more females were shown than males.

Figure 23 Human Character's Social Age by Gender
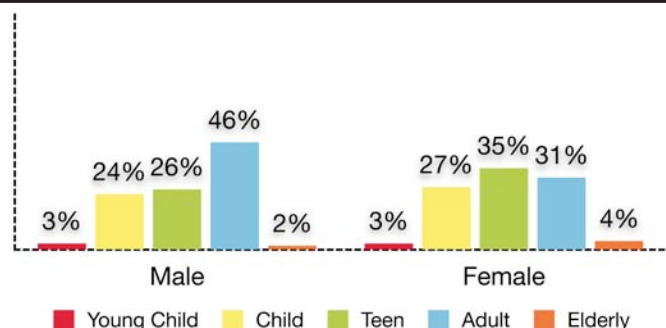
Other gender differences were found in terms of characters' role as well as their relation to others in the storyline. Overall, both genders were high as being good characters: about nine in ten (92%) for females versus more than eight in ten (86%) for males. However, male characters played the bad guys slightly more than females (11% and 6%, respectively). Similarly, both male and female main characters were quite close in terms of being protagonists (49% and 51%, respectively) or supporters of protagonists (34% and 36%, respectively). However, male characters played antagonists and/or supporters of antagonists more often than their counterparts.

Summary

Overall, the most observed gender differences were found in terms of types of characters and human characters' social age. However, the non-significant statistical differences were also meaningful. We found that characters' race, violent behaviors and problem-solving styles, interracial interaction, use of new ICTs, ecological practices and cultural consumption did not differ by gender at all. This means that there were no statistical differences within the above mentioned observations based on characters' gender. Male and female characters seemed to be portrayed quite similarly in these aspects.

To What Extent Do Canadian Productions Distinguish Themselves from Those of Other Countries?

As mentioned earlier, close to half of the children's programs on Canadian television were Canadian productions and Canadian co-productions (36.6% and 11.5%, respectively); 8.7% were Canadian and American co-ventures; 23.6% were U.S. productions; and the rest (19.6%) were other foreign productions. The following section will further examine the differences between different countries of production (i.e., CDN, USA, CDN co-productions, CDN and USA co-ventures, and other foreign productions) in relation to several key program characteristics and character attributes. This is especially important for understanding how Canadian productions distinguish themselves from other countries of production, and if applicable, what their specific differences are.

How do preschool and the 6-12 programs differ in terms of country of origin?

First, the target audience of children's programs was cross-examined in relation to country of origin; the relationship was statistically significant (p < .01). As we can see, Canada and the U.S. were the top two countries producing children's programs targeting the 6-12 year olds (64% and 67% respectively), whereas Canadian co-productions (58%) and other foreign productions (60%) had the highest percentages of preschool programming (see Figure 24).

Figure 24 Target Audience by Country of Origin
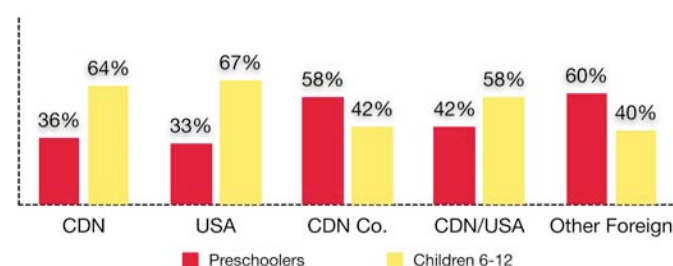
Does animation vary in terms of country of origin?

Next, looking at country of origin and program genre together, we found that Canadian producers offered a much better balanced proportion of animation and live-action programs, while animation dominated in nearly nine in ten (89%) of Canadian co-productions and close to eight in ten (78%) of co-ventures with the U.S. Two in three (65%) of other foreign productions

Figure 25 Program Genre by Country of Origin
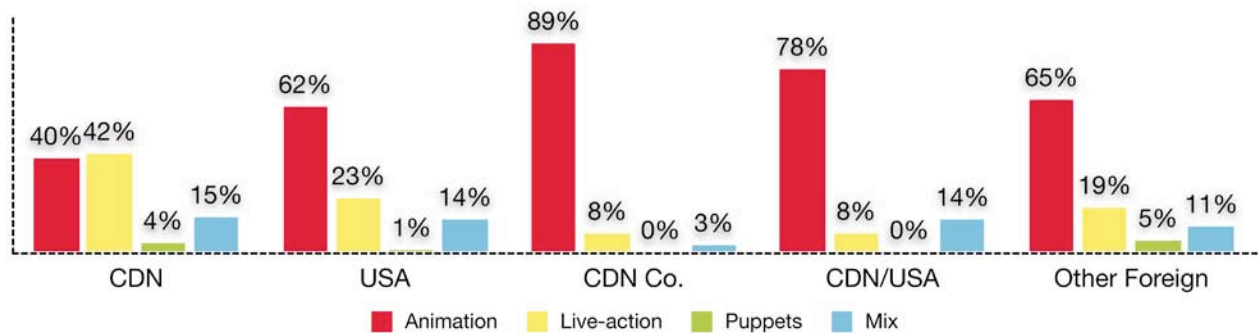
were also animation. These findings suggest that most foreign or partially foreign productions rely extensively on animation. Canadian productions thus offer the best balance in terms of program genre (see Figure 25).

How do program categories differ in terms of country of origin?

In spite of country of origin, the pattern found in the next figure shows that informal education and action/adventure were the top two program categories (see Figure 26). However, a higher presence of action/adventure content in Canadian co-productions (48%) can be observed. Comedy was seen the most in U.S. productions, but remained fairly low for the other kinds of productions. Similarly, drama had relatively low percentages in all productions.

Looking at program category and country of origin together, Canadian productions as well as Canadian and American co-ventures had the highest percentage of informal education programming.

How does the presence of visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginals vary in terms of country of origin?

If the presence of visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginals seemed somewhat uneven for most origins of production, the highest non-presence was found in other foreign productions (67%). The highest presence was found in U.S. productions. However, if one considers the 8% of Canadian Aboriginals (only and both) and the 36% of visible minorities in Canadian productions, this adds up (44%) to a much more even distribution for Canadian productions as well (see Figure 27).

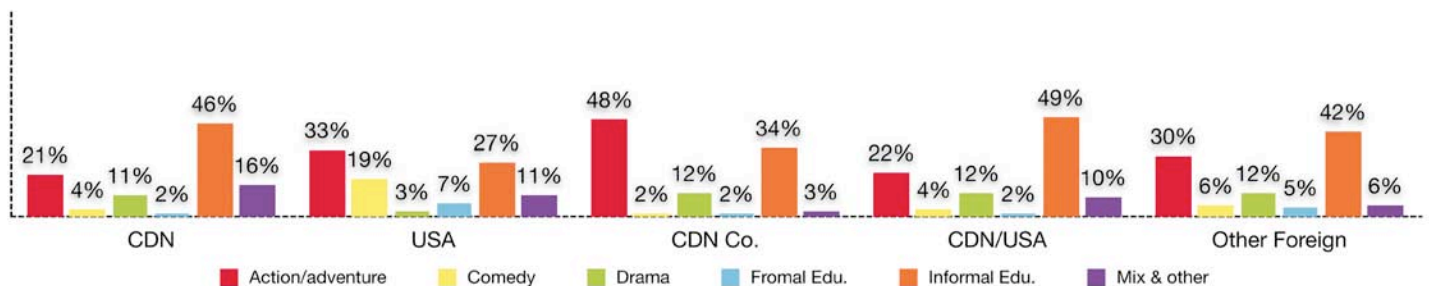**Figure 26** Program Category by Country of Origin

Figure 27 Visible Minorities by Country of Origin
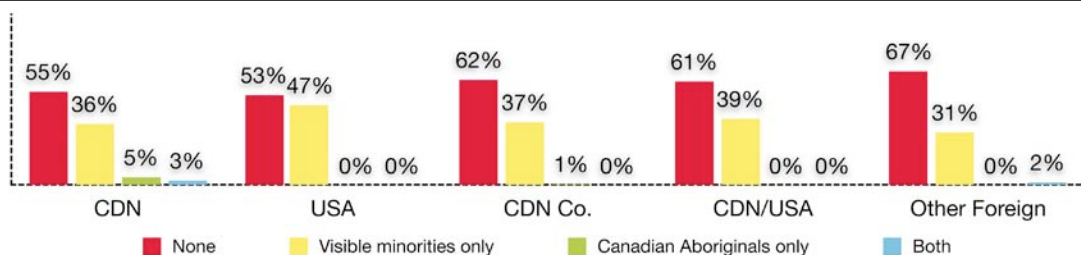
How do Canadian productions differ from those of other countries in terms of positive program issues and human social values?

As could be expected, when looking at positive program issues in relation to country of origin, "understanding of Canada" scored highest in Canadian productions (14%). "Encouraging positive social values" was very prevalent in almost all types of productions from different countries of origin, notably in more than eight out of ten (85%) of Canadian co-productions and in more than seven out of ten (78%) of Canadian and U.S. co-ventures. "Stimulating reflection, creativity, and interactivity in the viewer" was most prominent in Canadian productions: close to half (47%) of the programs explicitly promoted this issue (see Figure 28).

Similarly, when it comes to human social values, "promoting friendship with people from other cultures" was relatively present in all types of productions, with Canadian co-productions scoring the highest (29%). "Respect for the environment" was high in both Canadian productions and Canadian and American co-ventures (18% for both) (see Figure 29).

Are practices and cultural activities portrayed differently in terms of country of origin?

Our analysis showed that characters' ecological practices, cultural activities and uses of new ICTs were statistically related to country of origin ($p < .05$). Among these four activities, cultural production was relatively high in all types of countries of production. The highest percentage (31%) was found for Canadian and American co-ventures. U.S. productions scored the highest in terms of cultural consumption (19%). Canadian productions also scored highest in characters' uses of new ICTs (17%) (see Figure 30).

Figure 29 Reference to Human Social Values by Country of Origin

Figure 28 Positive Issues by Country of Origin
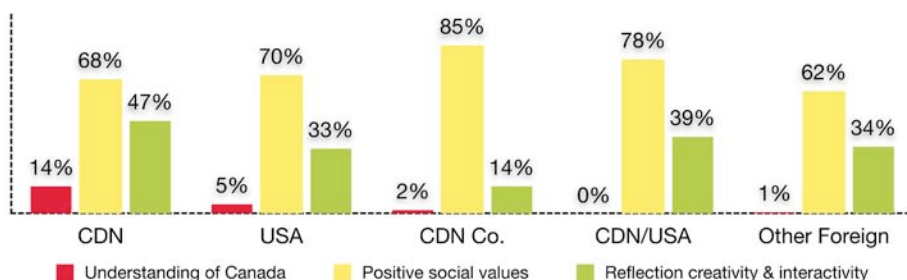
Figure 30 Character's Performance by Country of Origin

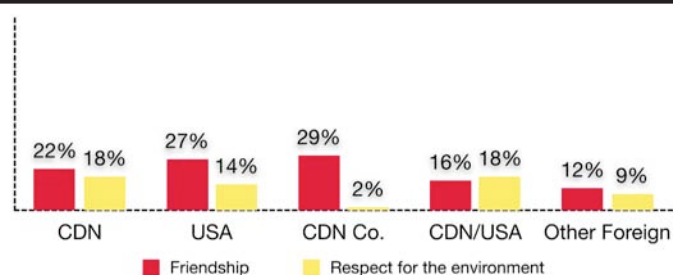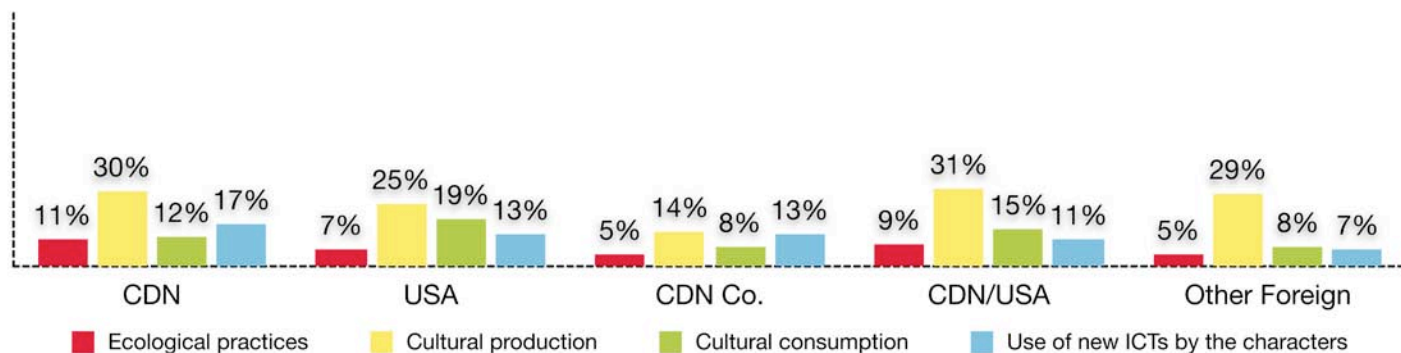### How do productions from different countries present human characters' racial profiles ?

Finally, in terms of characters' socio-demographic attributes, human-type characters' race or ethnic background was also cross-examined in relation to country of origin (p < .01). As Figure 31 shows, a high percentage of European whites was observed in all types of countries of production. Interestingly, the 2006 Canadian Census data shows that the visible minority population in Canada accounts for 17.21% of the total population. Of these visible minority groups, 11.10% are Asians, 2.48% are Blacks, and about 1% are Latinos.

Comparison with 2006 Census Data

Comparing these data with the characters' racial profile in Canadian productions, we see that Canadian productions are very close to actual demographics and present slightly more Black and less Asian characters in their children's programs than are present in the actual population.

Summary

For this part of the analysis, we wanted to find out the extent that Canadian productions distinguish themselves from those of other countries. Clearly, Canadian productions had the highest percentage of live-action programs compared with other countries of origin, even though animation was still very prevalent. Canadian productions also scored highly in terms of positive program issues and human social values (especially for stimulating reflection, creativity and interactivity in viewers and respect for the environment). Visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginals were seen in more than one in four Canadian programs, which showed a substantial diversity in its content. Compared with other countries of origin, the main characters in Canadian productions engaged more in cultural production activities as well as ecological practices. One could also observe that about one in six of these main characters in Canadian productions were shown using new ICTs in the programs.

Figure 31 Human Character's Race by Country of Origin

A final analysis in terms of scheduling Canadian children's programs revealed very different strategies between types of broadcasters.

Prime time scheduling for Public broadcasters

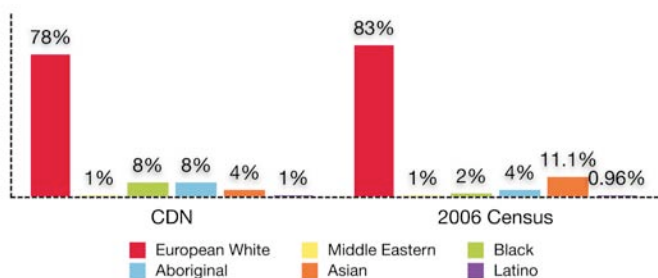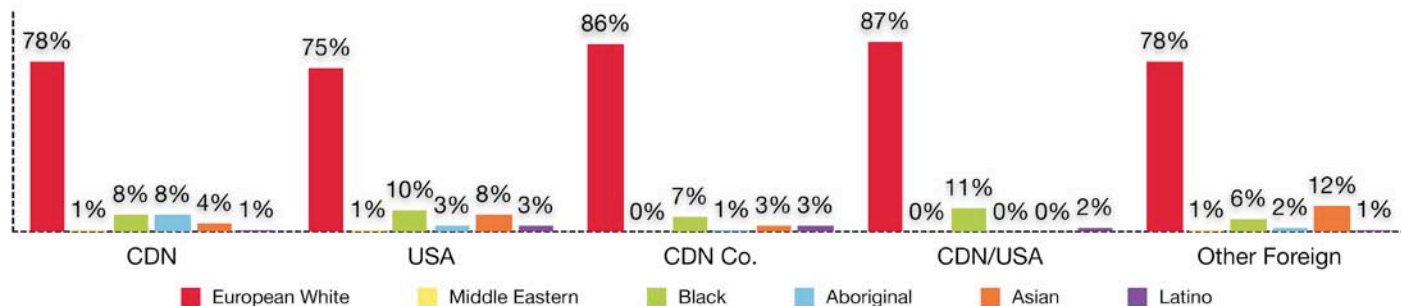For public broadcasters both French and English language broadcasters have abandoned the late afternoon weekly time slots to mainly focus on morning weekly and weekend prime time (6a.m. to 11a.m.). However the English language broadcaster scheduled a much higher proportion (77%) of Canadian programs that are 100% Canadian then their French counterpart (43%). In both cases the genre is overwhelmingly animation.

Prime time scheduling for Educational TV broadcasters

Six TV broadcasters are classified as educational: Access, Knowledge Kids, SCN, TVO, TFO, and Télé-Québec.

Among the English language broadcasters only one scheduled during it's morning prime time a certain amount of Canadian productions (50%). The remaining three scheduled in late afternoon prime time (4 p.m. to 8 p.m.) a low percentage of productions (less then one third) that are 100% Canadian but a very high number of co-productions (69% and 35 %). The French language broadcasters for their part offer in late afternoon prime time higher amounts of fully Canadian productions (ranging between 39% and 67%).

Prime time scheduling for Specialty TV broadcasters

Eight TV broadcasters are classified as specialty: BBC Kids, Discovery Kids (now known as Nickelodeon), Family, Teletoon English and Teletoon French, Treehouse, Vrak and YTV.[1]

Late afternoon prime time scheduling of Canadian productions for French language specialty broadcasters reveal both extremes of the spectrum with one scheduling a high of 71% of productions that are 100% Canadian while the other only presenting 16%. In the latter case co-ventures appear highest with 36%.

English language specialty broadcasters in general schedule few productions that are 100% Canadian, percentages ranging from 2% to 26% with only two exceptions in the 40-50% range. Even co-productions remain in the low range (below 28%).

All in all Canadian productions do not appear especially prioritized in prime time scheduling on English language specialty broadcasters and even more so when animation is the principal genre.

Lastly as noted earlier too few children's programs were present in the private broadcaster's schedule to warrant a similar analysis.

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1   As for APTN, some scheduling data were absent and could not be included for this analysis.

In the previous sections, we have described the overall landscape of Canadian children's television and examined specific relationships between various program/character characteristics. These analyses detailed the current television content of children's programming and provided a representative picture of what was being offered on children's television. The logical next step was to look at what children were actually watching during that week. Hence, we requested television viewing data for the same week (March 30 to April 5) of programming analyzed on all 19 broadcasters analysed for this study.[1]

An analysis of the 100 most popular programs in relation to broadcast languages and specific target audiences (i.e., pre-school audiences [aged 2-6] and children of 7-11) was first done to see if children were watching content that was specially produced for them. We then ranked the 10 most popular programs watched by children in terms of country of origin to find out whether the viewers preferred Canadian productions. Hence, the top 100 as well as the top 10 programs based on their BBM Canada[2] AMA (000) (i.e., average minute audience in thousands), both for English-speaking and French-speaking children in the age between 2-6 and 7-11 years old, will be reported.

Top 100 Most Popular Programs

Top 100 Most Popular Programs Watched by English-Speaking 2-6 Year Olds

The top 100 most popular programs viewed by 2-6 years old English-speaking children during the sampled week. Specifically, we found that all these programs were 100% children's programs. One specialty broadcaster dedicated to this younger age group accounted for almost all (92%) of the programs, and the rest were also broadcast by other English-language specialty broadcasters.

Top 100 Most Popular Programs Watched by English-Speaking 7-11 Year Olds

In terms of top 100 most popular programs viewed by 7-11 years old English-speaking children, the BBM data showed that this age group also watched almost television programs (92%) produced for them almost exclusively. These programs were mostly broadcast by specialty networks (92%).

Top 100 Most Popular Programs Watched by French-Speaking 2-6 Year Olds

Next, we looked more closely at the top 100 most popular programs that were watched by young French-speaking preschool children. Similar to the English-speaking preschool audiences but not as exclusively, French-speaking 2-6 year old children watched a very high percentage of children's programs (76%). More than 40% (44%) of the 100 programs were broadcast by public generalist broadcasters, and the rest were mostly by educational (32%) and specialty broadcasters (13%).

Top 100 Most Popular Programs Watched by French-Speaking 7-11 Year Olds

Finally, looking at the top 100 most popular programs watched by French-speaking 7-11 year olds, we observed that this age group, similar to their younger siblings, also watched a high percentage (77%) of children's programs. More than half (59%) of the top 100 programs were broadcast by specialty, followed by public generalist (21%) and educational (8%) broadcasters.

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[1] As previously mentioned, this analysis is based on the 19 broadcasters that scheduled children programs.

[2] BBM Canada, Sondages BBM in Québec, is a not for profit, member-owned tripartite industry organization, which provides broadcast and consumer behaviour data, as well as industry-leading intelligence to broadcasters, advertisers and agencies.

Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs

Now that we know that young people are mostly watching programs that were produced for them, we may ask whether they prefer Canadian produced programs. The number of reruns of a given program during the sample week and their ratings were also taken into consideration.

Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by English-Speaking 2-6 Year Olds

First of all, for English-speaking preschool audiences, the top three programs were *Zigby, Max & Ruby*, and *Toopy & Binoo*. Looking at these programs' countries of origin, eight out of the ten programs were Canadian productions (4), co-productions (2), and co-ventures with the U.S (2) (see Table 4).

Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by English-Speaking 7-11 Year Olds

In terms of the top 10 favorite programs for English-speaking children 7-11 years old, the most popular programs were *SpongeBob SquarePants, the Suite Life of Zack & Cody*, and *Hannah Montana*. However, only three out of these ten programs were Canadian productions and the rest were mostly American productions (60%) (see Table 5).

100 % Canadian

Canadian Co-Venture or Co-Production

Table 4	Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by English-Speaking 2-6 Year Olds				
Ranking	Program	Weekday	#Aired	AMA(000)	Country of Origin
1	ZIGBY	MTWTFSS	16	567	CO CANADA/AUSTRALIA/SINGAPORE
2	MAX & RUBY	MTWTFSS	29	551.5	CO CANADA/USA
3	TOOPY & BINOO	MTWTFSS	18	490.9	CANADA
4	FRANKLIN	MTWTFSS	26	403.4	CO CANADA/USA
5	BIG & SMALL	MTWTFSS	16	381.3	UNITED KINGDOM
6	HARRY BUCKET DINOS	MTWTFSS	17	377.6	CO CANADA/UNITED KINGDOM
7	DORA THE EXPLORER	MTWTFSS	19	354.3	USA
8	MY FRIEND RABBIT	MTWTFSS	13	331.2	CANADA
9	THIS IS EMILY YEUNG	MTWTFSS	8	318.8	CANADA
10	TOOT & PUDDLE	MTWTFSS	8	290.7	CANADA

Programs are ranked based on their AMA(000). AMA(000) is the average minute audience in thousands.
Special Analysis, BBM Analytics. Week of 30th march 2009 to 5th april 2009.

Table 5	Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by English-Speaking 7-11 Year Olds				
Ranking	Program	Weekday	#Aired	AMA(000)	Country of Origin
1	SPONGEBOB SQUAREPANT	MTWTFSS	16	442.3	USA
2	SUITE LIFE ZACK CODY	MTWTFSS	29	406	USA
3	HANNAH MONTANA	MTWTFSS	18	332.2	USA
4	PRANK PATROL	MTWTFSS	26	298.8	CANADA
5	FAIRLY ODD PARENTS	MTWTFSS	16	216.1	USA
6	WIZARDS/WAVERLY PLAC	MTWTFSS	17	199.5	USA
7	ZOEY 101	MTWTFSS	19	175.5	USA
8	PHINEAS & FERB	MTWTFSS	13	171	USA
9	KID VS KAT	MTWTFSS	8	156.3	CANADA
10	LIFE WITH DEREK	MTWTFSS	8	154.3	CANADA

Programs are ranked based on their AMA(000). AMA(000) is the average minute audience in thousands.
Special Analysis, BBM Analytics. Week of 30th march 2009 to 5th april 2009.

Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by French-Speaking 2-6 Year Olds

After looking at the top 10 favorite programs for English-speaking audiences, we now turn to the top 10 favorite programs for French-speaking children. The most popular programs for this age group were *Toc toc toc, Dora l'exploratrice*, and *Bob le bricoleur*. As the table below shows, six out of the ten children's programs were Canadian productions, and the rest were mostly foreign productions (see Table 6).

Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by French-Speaking 7-11 year olds

In terms of the top 10 favorite programs viewed by French-speaking 7-11 year olds, five out of the ten were Canadian productions, and the remaining programs were foreign productions. The three most watched programs are *Une grenade avec ca, Vie de palace de Zack & Cody,* and *Cory est dans la place* (see Table 7).

100 % Canadian

Canadian Co-Venture or Co-Production

Table 6 Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by French-Speaking 2-6 Year Olds					
Ranking	Program	Weekday	#Aired	AMA(000)	Country of Origin
1	Toc toc toc	MTWTF..	12	136	CANADA
2	Dora l'exploratrice	MTWTFSS	7	104.8	USA
3	Bob le bricoleur	MTWTFSS	7	87.6	UNITED KINGDOM
4	Toupie et Binou	.....SS	2	81.5	CANADA
5	Diego	......S	2	73.9	USA
6	Sam Chicotte	....F..	2	59.4	CANADA
7	Cornemuse	MTWTF..	10	57.5	CANADA
8	Schtroumpfs	MT.....	4	55.7	CO USA/BELGIUM
9	Kaboum	MTWT...	8	52.5	CANADA
10	Will et Mathis	..W....	2	46.4	CANADA

Programs are ranked based on their AMA(000). AMA(000) is the average minute audience in thousands.
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Table 7 Top 10 Favorite Children's Programs Watched by French-Speaking 7-11 Year Olds					
Ranking	Program	Weekday	#Aired	AMA(000)	Country of Origin
1	Grenade avec ça, Une	MTWTF..	16	96.7	CANADA
2	Vie de palace de Zack & Cody	MTWTF..	11	92	USA
3	Cory est dans la place	.....S.	9	84.5	USA
4	Kaboum	MTWT...	8	67.8	CANADA
5	Toc toc toc	MTWTFSS	12	64.7	CANADA
6	Simpson, Les	MTWTF..	29	63.5	USA
7	Ramdam	MTWTF..	18	50.1	CANADA
8	Sam Chicotte	....F..	2	31.5	CANADA
9	H20	.....S.	1	54.9	AUTRALIA
10	Bakugan	MTWTF.S	7	36.9	JAPAN

Programs are ranked based on their AMA(000). AMA(000) is the average minute audience in thousands.
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As reported earlier, Canadian productions account for 36.6% of what is offered on air, and another 20.2% were Canadian co-productions and co-ventures combined. When comparing the top preferred programs watched by young Canadians, we may conclude that Canadian children of both age groups show a very high appreciation for Canadian content or programs that contain some Canadian content (including co-productions or co-ventures), which specifically tell their stories and culture. Based on our analysis of the top 10 favorite programs, Canadian content is especially popular among preschool viewers; more than 60% and up to 80% of programs had some Canadian content. Older viewers are also watching a lot of Canadian content, though the percentage is lower (up to 50%). Nonetheless, our analysis showed that young Canadians do prefer watching these programs; we may wonder if they would have viewed more Canadian programs if more Canadian content would have been available.

Conclusions

This report provides an overall look at children's programming, what its strengths are, and what new paths could be considered. Specifically, the purpose of our study is to present the media landscape of children's programming for 2-12 year olds for both English- and French-speaking children across Canada. In addition to the content measures this study looks at audience reception data to further understand Canadian children's viewing preferences.

First, our analysis shows that both educational and specialty broadcasters account for more than 90% of children's programming in Canada (41% and 49%, respectively), while only 9% is provided by public generalists and a mere 1% by private generalist broadcasters. This imbalance raises many questions on what role should be assumed by public and private generalist broadcasters in the area of children's programming. Another finding showed differences in what audience different broadcasters cater to. Educational broadcasters were found to predominately broadcast programs for preschoolers, whereas specialty broadcasters focused more on the older audiences (6-12 year olds).

Second, when it comes to program genre, animation is overall the most dominant genre in children's programming. It especially predominates in preschool programming, with two out off three programs being animation. In terms of variety of program genres, comedy and drama seemed to be especially marginalized for all age groups. Animation tends to portray a lesser amount of certain types of content than live-action programs. For example, animation presented fewer visible minorities and/or Canadian Aboriginals and did not convey as many positive program issues and human social values as live-action programs. One positive note is that informal education is fairly prevalent in all genres of children's programming.

When looking at main characters' racial profile, a large majority of human-type characters were identified as European white. In terms of portrayal of minority groups, Canadian children's productions did not differ much from the Canada Census data, showing a relatively similar representation of Blacks, Latinos and, to a lesser extent, Asians. However, seniors and disabled people were quite underrepresented onscreen. This raises questions as to whether children's television content should not better represent these groups.

The findings related to gender representation are even more striking. Male characters were much more prevalent than female ones (nearly two to one) on children's television. Gender and age representation differences were also found for human-type characters: more adult males are shown than females and more teenage females portrayed than males. This being said, no gender differences were found in terms of physical appearance (e.g., average weight and height), race, behaviors that could be deemed violent, problem-solving styles, interracial interaction, and cultural consumption. Overall, all main characters in children's programming exhibited relatively strong positive feelings and a sense of well-being.

Our findings also explored how Canadian productions distinguished themselves from those of other countries. Accordingly, Canadian productions had the highest percentage of live-action programs, which provided more opportunities to present more positive program issues. Canadian co-ventures with the U.S. and co-productions with other countries also presented these issues, but in a more limited way given that animation dominated these types of productions. Canadian productions also provide a better balance in genres that allows better representation of cultural minorities.

Through a special analysis of BBM data, we linked each broadcast program with viewing results for that same week. The analysis also included the aggregated viewing that was repeated during the sampled week. This allowed us to determine whether children really watch children's programs or if they are more attracted to adult programs. The top 100 most popular programs analyzed showed that children ages 2-11 are overwhelmingly watching children's programming. Considering the top 10 favorite children programs, 2-6 year-old French- and English-speaking children largely preferred majority Canadian content. Although these preferences for Canadian productions are also present for 7-11 year-old French- and English-speaking children, they decline as children grow older. Proportionally, young Canadians preferred more Canadian content than what was actually available. This leads us to believe that a greater investment in Canadian productions might increase the overall diversity of genres, positive program messages and social issues that are valued in Canada. Surprisingly however when we looked at whether Canadian productions were scheduled in children's prime time only a few broadcasters did so.

This report is the first of a two-part study intended to understand what is currently offered on children's television using a nationally representative sample. These findings are useful to direct our follow-up study, which is to explore how children perceive children's programs and the role of television and other media in today's environment. This research will further explore the meanings children give to media during daily social interactions with family and friends. We will consequently be able to better understand the perceived impact of television programming on Canadian children and youth in terms of their values and identity.

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Content Measures

Two types of measures were developed for this content analysis: those pertaining to the programs features and those pertaining to the main characters. These types of measures were developed especially for this study, which allowed us to investigate the key aspects of Canadian television programming for children.

The coding procedures required that all research assistants viewed each program to assess a set of the variables—they could replay segments as often as needed to inform their judgments—and they were asked to identify main characters in each program. The most important variables the coders assessed are described in detail below.

Program Variables

Target Audience

Assessing a program's primary target audience was based upon consideration of a number of elements of the program, such as the nature of the content, the pacing, and the primary characters. Programs were classified as primarily targeting preschoolers (2-5 years old), children 6-12 years old, other (aged 13 and older), or "unable to determine."

Program Theme

The program theme was defined to examine what explicit and distinctive message was presented in the given program. Coders were asked to determine these central messages or themes after viewing each program. The program themes included:

• Environmentalism: themes on natural resources, conservation, global warming, etc.;
• Fighting/violence: themes on conflict, competition, violence, aggression, etc.;
• Social relationships: themes on friendships, moral values, etc.;
• Play/games: themes on playful events and/or activities;
• Adventure: themes on wondrous, adventurous events and/or activities;
• Religion/spirituality: themes on various religions or spirituality; and
• Learning: themes on learning particular curriculum (literature, mathematics, science, etc.) or other specific knowledge.

Country of Origin

As a variable, "country of origin" indicates the country where a children's program was produced or co-produced. First, programs were assessed in terms of their country of origin by considering all the production elements of the program, including the country, the production company, or the nationality of the director, screenwriter and/or illustrator during the entire course of production. In this way, more than 34 countries of origin were found, including programs produced by a single country (e.g., Canada, the U.S., the UK, France), co-ventures between Canada and the U.S., and co-productions including or excluding Canada. Next, specific codes were developed for each kind of production and entered separately by a senior researcher. Hence, coders were not aware of the program's country of origin while they viewed them, which ensured that their judgments would not be biased.

Dominance of Positive Program Issues

The current study sought to examine the quality of children's programs using a new approach. By examining the quality of children's programs, we assessed whether or not the program conveyed explicit positive messages and/or made reference to specific social values; these positive program issues were defined as a sustained theme or topic within a program that explicitly conveyed one or more of the following messages:

• the program demonstrates understanding of the world we live in;
• the program demonstrates understanding of Canada;
• the program promotes religious, cultural, national, racial, occupational, and/or gender diversity;
• the program encourages positive social values; and
• the program stimulates reflection and critical thinking, creativity, and/or interactivity in the viewer.

Although this kind of evaluation was qualitative in nature, we developed scales to quantify the assessment (i.e., 0 = absence; 1 = somewhat dominant; 2 = very dominant). Hence, coders recorded the explicit presence or absence of each of these messages within each program they viewed.
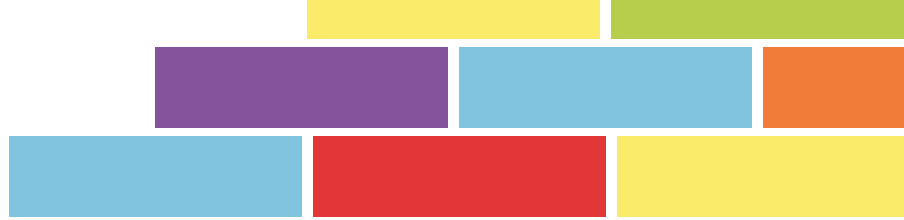
Program Reference to Human Social Values

In addition to the evaluation of positive program issues, programs that explicitly referred to human social values were also analyzed in the same fashion (i.e., 0 = no reference at all; 1= some reference; 2 = a lot of reference). Five human social values were analyzed:

• open-mindedness toward other cultures;
• equal treatment of men and women;
• friendship with people from other cultures;
• respect for the elderly; and
• respect for the environment/nature.

Character Variables

After defining some of the key program variables, this section focused on character variables. Not all characters that appeared in the programs were recorded; instead, coders were required to identify the main characters (as the unit of analysis) in each program, using the following definition:

"The main character is an individual personality or character who (1) is central to the plot; (2) is a participant in a conversation (speaks and/or listens); (3) performs action important to the story; (4) is the subject of a significant amount of conversation."

Context of First Appearance

Coders were required to indicate where the main character is located when he, she, or it first appeared in the program. Character appearance during the opening scene/song/titles that marked the beginning of a program was excluded. Various places of character's first appearance included home, school, work, public space, natural space, outer-space, motorized transportation, or other.

Type of Character

The type of each character was determined based on his, her or its natural form. Note that the notion of anthropomorphized characters was also included when evaluating the type of character (see Wilson et al., 2002). Hence, this variable included human, animal/insect, supernatural creature, plant/object, machine, and their anthropomorphized forms (except for human). "Other" was used for any additional type of character that was observed.

Race of Human Character

After identifying the character's type, the race or ethnic background of human characters was assessed based on the shape of their eyes, skin color, identifiable ethnic attire, accent, and/or any cultural references made in the storyline. Other types of characters coded as "not applicable" in this regard. Thus, the list of human characters' races included European white, Middle Eastern, Black, Aboriginal, Asian, and Hispanic/Latino. Human characters' races that were not included in this list, such as multiracial, mixed, or interracial, were coded as "other."

Interracial/Intercultural Interaction between Human Characters

Each human character was evaluated in terms of his or her social interaction during the program in terms of racial/cultural equality/difference program. Coders were required to indicate whether the people with whom the human character interacted were from the same race/culture or from (a) different race(s)/culture(s). Human characters who interacted with people from multiple races/cultures including their own were coded as "both." For other types of characters, this variable was again coded as "not applicable."

Character's Ecological Practices

One of the main objectives of this research was to find out whether children's programs are focusing on showing awareness of or concern for the environment. Hence, coders were asked to recognize any specific ecological practices (behaviors) in which the character(s) in each program engaged. Recycling, conserving water and/or power, taking public transportation, bicycling (rather than car), or refraining from using plastic bags, were some of the examples coded in this variable.

Character's Cultural Activities: Production/Creation and Consumption

Another main focus of this study was to see the kinds of cultural activities in which the characters in children's programs engage. Coders were required to indicate what kinds of cultural activities the characters produced or created, or what kinds of activities were consumed by them for the purpose of cultural appreciation. Examples of cultural production included painting/drawing, handicraft, writing, using the computer/Internet to produce/create culture, or performance (i.e., dancing, singing, acting, playing instrument). Examples of cultural consumption included reading, visiting an exhibition, museum or zoo, attending a performance (music, theatre), going to the movies, watching TV, or using the computer/Internet (to consume culture).

Character's Emotional Well-Being

This innovative way of looking at main characters in children's programming was based on Diener's (1994) subjective well-being (SWB) scale, which includes 16 different items that are measured on a 5-point scale (1 = very rarely or never; 5 = very often or always). Among these items, some were related to pleasant feelings (i.e., positive, good, pleasant, contented, interested, happy, loving, and joyful), others to unpleasant feelings (i.e., negative, bad, stressed, unpleasant, sad, angry, afraid, and depressed). Coders rated each primary character according to the SWB scale by evaluating his/her/its mental state, emotional reactions, and social interactions with others in the program. Finally, the summative scores of the SWB were used to assess the character's overall positive and negative affect on a seven-point scale (1 = extremely low; 7 = extremely high).

Coding Procedures and Reliability

A team of ten researchers and research assistants at the Université de Montréal were recruited for this study. In particular, six undergraduate and graduate students were selected as coders and worked as teams. Each team consisted of two coders (one male and one female) who were trained over a three-week period to master a detailed codebook. The actual data coding (after training) took approximately five weeks to complete.

The initial codebook contained over 90 variables. Most of the variables were developed based on empirical research on children's programming (see Callister, Robinson, & Clark, 2007; Gotz et al., 2008; Wilson et al., 2002) as well as seminal television content analysis research (see Gerbner et al., 1999; Neuendorf, 2000). After various revisions, the final codebook contained 85 variables; 39 of the variables measured program features and 46 assessed character attributes. At the end of the training, reliability tests verified that all coders applied the measures in the same way.

To assess the reliability, a total of 16 randomly selected programs (5% of the sample) were independently coded by all coders. Inter-coder reliability was assessed using percentage of agreement (see Frey, Botan, & Kreps, 2000; Holsti, 1969) and Cohen's Kappa (see Banerjee et al., 1999; Riffe et al., 2005) for nominal judgments. The overall percentage of agreement was 80%, which showed consistent judgment among independent coders.

12/07/10

Credits :

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Editorial Assistance: André H. Caron, Jennie M. Hwang

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