

CASE STUDY 1

THE CASE OF THE CANADIAN FILMMAKER

In Canada, cultural industries such as film receive support from Canada's government. It is one of the things that distinguishes Canada's economy from the U.S. economy. This section explores the factors and impacts involved with that economic decision.

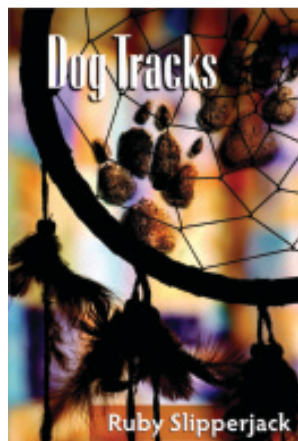
As you read this case study, think about what challenges and opportunities Canadian cultural industries face. To what extent is government support an appropriate way to respond?



What does the information on this page tell you about Canada's commitment to maintaining and building on our identity, both individual and collective?

Create Canadian!

Canada's government encourages the creation of Canadian cultural products with support and funding. Examine the examples below. Why might Canadians have different views and perspectives about government funding for the arts?



Canada's government provides grants to Canadian authors and publishers, such as Fifth House Publishers in Calgary. The grants help publishers and authors cover their expenses.



This is the band Arcade Fire from Montréal. Canada's government promotes the development of the Canadian music industry through the Canada Music Fund.

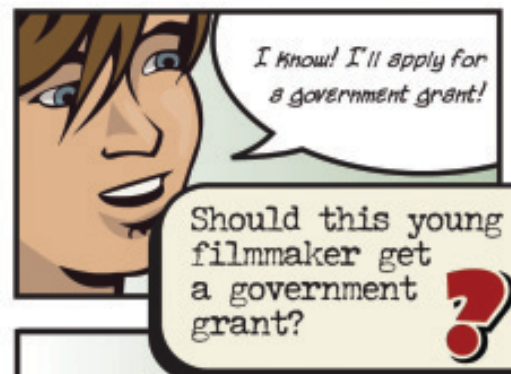
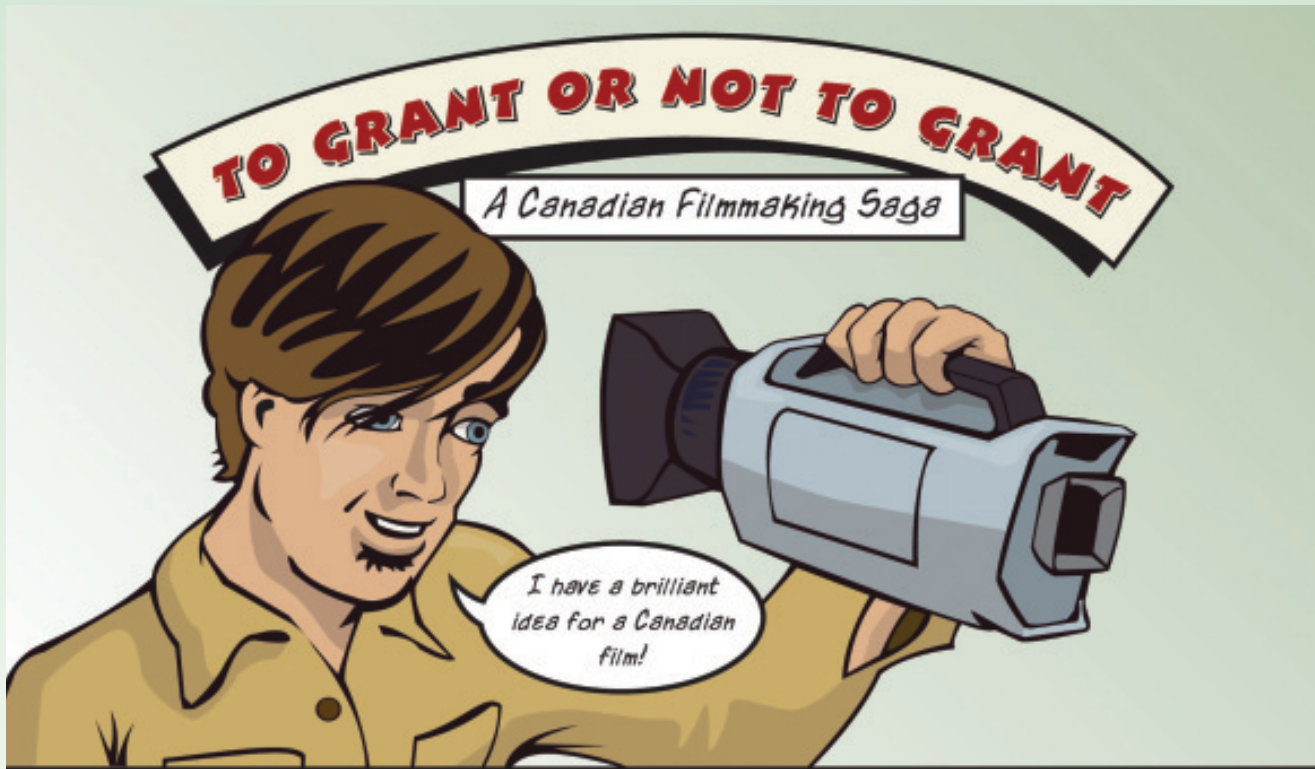


The Canada Council for the Arts provides grants to artists, such as world-renowned Fransaskois artist Joe Fafard. Fafard titled this painting *Bird*. The grants often cover living expenses, so artists can work fulltime on their projects.



The Canada Council for the Arts provides support for the performing arts. This photo shows John Fanning and Elizabeth Turnbull in the world premiere of *Frobisher*, an opera by John Estacio and John Murrell, co-commissioned and co-produced by Calgary Opera and The Banff Centre. Without government funding, productions such as *Frobisher* might not be possible.

Photo by Trudie Lee.



YES! The filmmaker gets a grant.

BOOM!	FRANTIC
DIGITAL DREAD	OBSESSED
O CANADA	SOB
SHIVER	VROOM
ODDLY AMUSING	BLOW UP

What do you want to see?

NO! The filmmaker doesn't get a grant.

BOOM!	FRANTIC
DIGITAL DREAD	OBSESSED
LAUGH OUT LOUD	SOB
SHIVER	VROOM
ODDLY AMUSING	BLOW UP

What do you want to see?

What about Vroom?

Seen it.

Frantic might be fun.

Yeah, maybe.

Maybe.

What about Boom?

Didn't we see that already?

No, that was Vroom.

No, no it was Blow Up.

Oh yeah.

What about O Canada? I hear it's good.

Hmm... maybe.

Yeah, maybe.

Okay Boom, then.

Hmm... maybe.

Yeah, maybe.

Do you think the Canadian filmmaker should get a grant? How might the presence or absence of Canadian films in theatres affect Canadian identity?

The Economic Excavator

Price: As cheap as possible, but not less than you're willing to pay.

LETTERS TO THE EDITOR

Editor's Note: *Welcome to The Economic Excavator, a newspaper dedicated to economic decision making. The Case of the Canadian Filmmaker has provoked response from different points on the economic continuum. What's your view? Write in and let us know!*

Canadian filmmakers need grants to tell Canadian stories

Clearly the Canadian filmmaker should get a government grant! It's very important for Canadian arts and entertainment to receive government support.

Without this support, Canadians wouldn't have any Canadian TV shows, books, magazines, music or films. No one would make them, because the Canadian audience is just too small. There is much more money to be made supplying the huge American audience with what it wants to see, read and hear.

But who will tell Canadian stories, if Canadians don't? Canadians need Canadian stories. Canadian films reflect Canadian history and identity. They help Canadians understand who they are.

That's why Canada has Crown corporations that support Canadian identity — because Canadians need the government involved in creating this public good.



— A mixed economist

Let consumers make decisions about what's worth watching

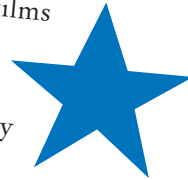
What's the point of making a film without an audience?

Hollywood doesn't make films just for American audiences. Canadians watch Hollywood films, and so do people around the world. That's because the films are worth watching.

Canadians can make films that are worth watching, too — in Canada, the U.S., and all over the globe. That's what Canadians should be striving for.

Government grants do not help the Canadian film industry. They encourage mediocrity. They remove the need for filmmakers to compete for their audiences and respond to what audiences want: excellent films.

And don't forget that government grants come from taxes. Every Canadian pays taxes. Why should their taxes make films they may not want to see? Let Canadians choose their movies themselves, when they buy tickets at the movie theatre.



— A market economist



These letters represent possible views and perspectives. They do not represent the views of everyone in Canada or the U.S. What's your view about the Case of the Canadian Filmmaker?

What support might our filmmaker receive in Canada?

Canada has government-supported organizations to assist the Canadian film industry. This is different than the United States, where government does not directly support film companies. **In what way do government decisions about whether to fund films reflect a difference in the economic systems of Canada and the U.S.?**



Canada's government also provides grants to athletes training for competitions such as the Olympics. Why might Canadians have different views and perspectives on sports funding?

What's Telefilm Canada/Téléfilm Canada?

Telefilm Canada/Téléfilm Canada is a federal Crown corporation that promotes the development and promotion of the Canadian audiovisual industry. It provides Canadian film and television companies, and new media, with funds and other support.

Its role is to "foster the production of films, television programs and cultural products that reflect Canadian society, with its linguistic duality and cultural diversity" and to ensure audiences see these products at home and abroad.

I try to reflect my Francophone identity in every one of my productions. It's important for the government to invest in our cultural identity, because it enriches our country as a whole. Western Canada has a voice — both in English and en français — and the rest of the country needs to see and hear it.

Jean Patenaude is a Francophone filmmaker from Edmonton. He made the film *Karibuni* in 2007 with support from Telefilm Canada.



Karibuni is a documentary about immigrants from French-speaking Africa, and the choice they face to live in French or in English when they settle in western Canada. The word *karibuni* means "welcome" in Swahili. The film also explores the daily struggle of Francophones in western Canada to maintain their language and identity.



Moccasin Flats brings us voices that have never been heard before. Aboriginal people are integral to Canada’s identity. When we tell our own stories to the entire country, it enriches Canada’s culture as a whole, and strengthens our perceptions of ourselves. To maintain a strong country, the federal government must support Canadian creators and artists. Without art, we would be robots.

Jennifer Podemski is an Aboriginal actress and producer with Saulteaux roots. She lives in Toronto.



What benefits does Jennifer Podemski see in the government’s support for Canadian filmmakers? How does it affect her identity and quality of life? How does she believe it affects yours?



This photo shows actors Landon Montour and Candace Fox in a scene from *Moccasin Flats*. The series explores the opportunities and challenges faced by young Aboriginal people in Regina’s inner city.



Canada’s victory at Passchendaele is an astounding story of determination, commitment and triumph. Sadly, with each passing year, the story of our nation’s valour is fading. With the filming of *Passchendaele*, we are determined to rectify this.

In the fall of 2007, actor/ filmmaker Paul Gross shot the \$20 million film *Passchendaele* near Calgary. The movie received \$3.5 million in federal funding through Telefilm Canada, as well as \$5.5 million from Alberta’s provincial government.

The movie is about a World War I battle in Belgium, in which Canada was victorious, but where more than 15 000 Canadian troops died. Some historians consider the battle important to the development of Canada’s identity as a nation.



How does the work of filmmakers such as Paul Gross contribute to Canadian identity?

HOW TO MAKE DECISIONS IN A GROUP

Use the issue of government funding for cultural products to practise the skills of making decisions in a group. These skills are important to citizenship: they help us become active citizens and to build a society that includes everybody — individually and collectively.

Start by considering the information on pages 220 to 224, which provides examples, views and perspectives about government funding for films and other cultural products. Then, in small groups, make a decision about this question:

Should Canada's government provide grants to support Canadian cultural products?

You can help lead the discussion and decision making with the steps below:

- As a group, brainstorm a list of group goals for effective discussions. For example: listen effectively, become aware of other views, and become more informed about the topic.
- Invite group members to take turns sharing their ideas on the topic for decision. Remind everyone that the goal is to hear each person's position before making a comment or interrupting.
- Allow time for each person to respond, ask questions and compare their ideas. As leader, ensure that each person has sufficient time to respond and participate. Keep the group focused on the topic.
- As a group, discuss how to make the decision — for example, by voting or by consensus. Consider the advantages and disadvantages of each method, and how each could shape the decision of the group.
- When your group reaches a decision, consider the possible consequences of the decision, who it will affect and why.
- Conclude by inviting each person to summarize a key idea from the discussion that they felt was significant or helped them reach a decision.

When I lead a group discussion, I like to get everyone to sit in a circle. That way, people are talking to each other, and not just to me as the group leader. Leading a group is about helping people to say what they mean, and to listen to what others have to say.



Evaluate what went well, and what could have gone better, in your group decision-making process. *Refer to pages 349 to 351 in the Skills Centre for more information on how to make decisions in a group.* Use your experience and the information to outline a step-by-step plan for the next time you participate in group decision making.

