



Canadian Media Fund
4-50 Wellington Street East
Toronto, ON
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Re: CMF Industry Consultation 2013

Smokebomb Entertainment – Public Response

We would like to acknowledge the Canadian Media Fund for providing an opportunity to feedback via industry consultation. Over the past decade the CMF has allowed Canada to become the global forerunner in interactive media. Further, it has played a significant role in allowing Smokebomb Entertainment (a subsidiary of Shaftesbury Films) to become a market leader in the creation, production and dissemination of digital content and in turn employed hundreds of Canadians through our productions.

We would like to take this opportunity to highlight some of the issues currently being examined via the Industry Consultation and provide our perspective as digital media producers.

Key Points:

1. The importance of the CMF Experimental Stream

The CMF-X is by far the most unique and flexible fund available to interactive producers in Canada – allowing for true experimentation and original content creation. The projects coming out of this fund are defining the digital entertainment on the global landscape. We would strongly recommend that this fund remain a corner stone of the CMF and ideally, that funding increase for it without negatively impacting the convergent television stream. The fact that there were 324 rejected submissions in the last year shows the interest and power of this unique fund.

2. Is the Experimental Stream too focused on games?

Yes – as we see the gaming model as a proven business plan where “experimentation” is not required. We believe in the importance and relevance of narrative and social communication based experimental projects. If the CMF wanted to build the gaming industry, we would see this as a separate fund. This does not mean that interactive “gaming” actions cannot be a part of an experimental project – but stand-alone games should not be the focus.

3. Canadian Digital Productions and the CRTC Terms of License.

As currently structured the CRTC terms of license do not provide an incentive for Canadian Broadcasters to trigger original digital content. We see this a missing cog in building the Canadian digital production industry. Any future CMF initiatives that would allow Canadian broadcasters to trigger digital production



without a traditional broadcast would allow us to demonstrate the strength, relevance and monetization opportunities of digital productions to both the broadcaster and advertisers.

4. The Convergent Digital Media Incentive requires a matching 15% cap on in-house production.

It is important to note that this year 75% of all CDMI funding (in English) went to in-house production teams owned by broadcasters. (\$7.4 million of the \$9.8 million in 2012-2013-link). We believe this was not the intended goal of this fund and limits the opportunities for independent producers to create content related to the CDMI. We would propose that a 15% cap across the entire Convergent Stream - including the CDMI – would immediately alleviate this issue.

5. Has the CMF-X jury process worked well?

We certainly understand the challenge of the jury process and are grateful to those who give their time. One challenge for us has been trying to understand the scoring system on applications that have been rejected. At times we will read language that is very positive and strong but receive a lower scored number than in our minds aligns with the written feedback. As different individuals have different opinions, it would be most helpful if a consolidated message could be compiled at the end, summarizing the overall feedback of the jury in a single, unified voice.

In closing, as I have traveled the globe representing Canada and the projects we have produced with the support of the Canadian Media Fund over the last several years, I am continually reminded of the power and opportunities this initiative represents. The media landscape is drastically morphing at this very moment and globally, digital media and content is rapidly moving to the forefront of consumption and monetization. Traditional models are dying and evolving. Therefore it is more important than ever that funds like the CDMI and the Experimental stream remain vibrant and strong as vital tools in this evolving landscape.

Sincerely,

Jay Bennett
VP Digital / Creative Director
Smokebomb Entertainment