

Preface

Elizabeth Dubois and Florian Martin-Bariteau

In 2017, we brought together academics, policy-makers, and technologists for the Connected Canada conference at the University of Ottawa. We wanted to generate discussion and build a network of people interested in mobilizing research about what it means to be a citizen in a connected Canada and how we, as researchers, policy-makers, and members of civil society, can overcome gaps in data that limit our understandings of the impacts of digital tools on civic life.

In 2018, we published *Canadians in a Digital Context: A Research Agenda for a Connected Canada*, a knowledge synthesis report presenting the perspectives of participants in order to facilitate discussion and collaboration, and to propose a collaborative research agenda. In the next days, we reached out to some of Canada's pre-eminent leading and emergent voices with the idea of an edited collection expanding on some of the noted issues through short policy papers, informed by evidence-based research.

In this collection you will find a range of policy-oriented pieces that tackle some of the most pressing research and policy gaps we identified over the past few years of work on the Connected Canada Initiative. This collection has been made possible thanks to the support of many—from academia, government, and civil society—as well as the University of Ottawa Press. This multi-year project will continue beyond this book, and we wish to thank several people

and organizations without whom none of these efforts would have been possible.

*

The Connected Canada conversations, from the conference to the report and this edited collection, were possible thanks to a Canada 150 Connection grant from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada (SSHRC). We also received additional financial support for the conference from the University of Ottawa—namely the Office of the Vice-President, Research; and the Office of the Vice-Dean, Research, at the Faculty of Arts—as well as from Elections Canada, the Public Policy Forum, Fulbright Canada, and the National NewsMedia Council of Canada. The Black Arcs, Home of the Creative Minds, and iVote-jeVote were also key supporters of the event. The publication of the edited collection has been made possible in part thanks to the Fund for Law, Risks and the Internet at the University of Ottawa Centre for Law, Technology and Society.

This collection would not have been possible without the involvement of many collaborators, and we wish to express our sincere gratitude to them. First and foremost, our profound thanks go to Ellie Marshall. Ellie and Elizabeth first hatched the idea for Connected Canada over a conversation in a coffee shop. They were frustrated by a lack of publicly available data about how Canadians use the Internet. Ellie and Elizabeth observed and participated in conversations about how to develop policy related to the Internet that were based on limited data or data from studies in the United States or the United Kingdom. They knew the response to these challenges would require a range of stakeholders and decided a conference bringing a diverse array of people together was the ideal first step. For their help in that crucial first step, we wish to offer a special thanks to Megan Beretta, Céleste Côté, Sara Minaeian, and Caitlin Myles, who all joined the crazy adventure at its inception, as well as Jon Penney, Alfred Hermida, Amanda Clarke, and Kent Aitken who led some of the initial breakout sessions at the conference. We are also indebted to the Ottawa Civic Tech community. Many of our conference planning sessions happened at Tuesday night meet-ups which shaped how we thought about which problems were most crucial to tackle, and who we most needed in the room. We would like to thank the many other colleagues, collaborators, members of

civil society, and policy-makers who got involved and supported the creation of this conversation. We would like to thank the participants, experts, and volunteers who took part in the Connected Canada conference. We are also grateful to Catherine Ouellette and Chris Casimiro for their research assistance in the preparation of this collection. Thanks also to Jasmine Law, Eryn Heidel, and Véronique Poulin who provided assistance for the copy editing of this collection. Crucially, we are extremely grateful to Guillermo Renna who was immensely supportive in the final stages of the collection, notably through research and copy editing. Thanks are due to the authors of the chapters included in this edited collection, as well as the numerous anonymous peer reviewers, each of whom spent part of their summer to assess, comment on, and improve these chapters. We also thank the two anonymous experts who reviewed the collection itself. Finally, we wish to thank the team at the University of Ottawa Press who agreed to consider this unusual book for publication in their collection under an open access licence, and for the work of their editorial team on the manuscript.

Page left blank intentionally