



ACTRA

ACTRA Report to the
FIA North America/English-speaking Group

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1. OVERVIEW

2016/2017 has been a busy year for ACTRA. On the bargaining front, we made many important gains including the successful renegotiation of the videogame agreement with the French multinational giant Ubisoft in December 2016. In June 2017, ACTRA began renegotiations of the National Commercial Agreement, our third-largest agreement covering commercial production in Canada and accounting for approximately 11 per cent of all member earnings. Negotiations with advertiser and agency (Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) and the Institute of Communications Agencies (ICA)) parties to this Agreement were successfully completed in July and the new Agreement was ratified by ACTRA members in August 2017 with 78 per cent of eligible voters voting in favour of its ratification.

As well, ACTRA continues to work with the ACA & ICA to simplify the Agreement, and work cooperatively to confront the challenge of rising non-union commercial production.

Upon taking office in November 2015, Canada’s new government wasted no time in launching a review in the spring of 2016 into our country’s cultural and creative economy in the digital age with our Minister of Canadian Heritage, Mélanie Joly, stating that “everything is on the table,” including Canada’s regulatory bodies and policies, taxation, copyright and foreign investment.

ACTRA’s National President Ferne Downey put it best in the summer 2016 edition of ACTRA Magazine:



“Intelligent, strategic decisions will need to be made in this Canadian Heritage consultation and we [ACTRA] will need to have a strong, clear voice. The government has a leading role to play to ensure our Canadian industry continues to thrive and CanCon is respected. Culture has grown into a major economic driver and is a beacon for young, creative people trying to make a living. We are in it to stay. Canadian content rules, balanced regulation and government support have helped to ensure our industry continues to thrive...We need this balanced approach to continue in the Digital Age.”

ACTRA members took an active role in the consultation process with a number of members attending meetings that took place in cities across the country. Additionally, ACTRA member Katie Boland provided a view for our industry as a member of the consultation advisory board. ACTRA submitted its proposal in November 2016 and is awaiting the Minister’s “Vision,” which is expected to be released in September 2017.

ACTRA also had a big change this year amongst our union’s three officers. After eight years of leadership, dedication and passion as our National President, Ferne Downey stepped down from her role in May 2016. David Sparrow was elected to serve a two-year term as National President by our National Council in May. David has been an ACTRA member for 27 years, and has served his union as ACTRA Toronto President (2013-2016) and on National Council since 2007. He has also been a member of many of our negotiating committees through several rounds of bargaining, and has

played an active role in improving the terms and conditions for ACTRA members working under the National Commercial Agreement, the Independent Production Agreement and the agreement with videogame developer Ubisoft.



2. Organizing / Industry Relations

The National Industry Relations (IR) team, working in collaboration with all ACTRA Branches, is currently comprised of three staffers – one each in Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. During the past 10 months, the team has been developing outreach objectives as identified in the “Advancing the ACTRA Advantage” project.

For ACTRA Members, the ACTRA Advantage includes: better pay; retirement benefits; health benefits; work opportunities; intervention when there’s trouble; and fighting for Canadian culture.

For the industry, the goal of the project is to decrease the amount of non-union work and thereby increase the number of new work opportunities for Members. To do this, the ACTRA Advantage project reinforces how easy it is to work with ACTRA Members – everything from an easier and more accurate budgeting process to professional performers who know their craft and can help a producer achieve maximum screen impact in the minimum time.

In 2015, the ACTRA Toronto Branch also launched “ACTRAgram.com,” a digital, social and experiential campaign targeting Engagers to demonstrate to the ad industry that ACTRA performers can deliver a message better than anyone else. ACTRA Toronto created 10 tongue-in-cheek messages delivered by ACTRA performers in a series of pre-filmed vignettes that could be downloaded and sent to ad industry types. A user has to simply select their preferred ACTRAgram(s) then with one click can share the message with the industry and thereby showcase just how talented ACTRA Members are.

2.1. **Commercials:**

Outreach continues to be an integral part of the potential Engager strategy to educate them on the value of working with ACTRA Members. ACTRA leadership and senior staff continue to meet regularly with advertising agencies in formal and informal town halls as well as hold regular meetings with talent agents and the ACA/ICA to get a sense of the challenges and changes within the advertising sector, and how ACTRA can best address these challenges.

Tackling the growth of non-union commercial production in North America has been the subject of a series of high-level meetings between the leadership of ACTRA and SAG-AFTRA. In September and November 2016, ACTRA leaders and senior staff met with our SAG-AFTRA counterparts in Toronto and Vancouver, respectively. After meeting in Los Angeles following ACTRA Day in L.A. in January 2017, the leaderships issued a [joint news release](#) announcing the #workingtogether partnership between the two unions to promote production under union contracts.



These ongoing discussions with SAG-AFTRA on joint organizing have also been a source of useful insights into changes affecting the North American and global advertising industry. Stakeholders have different perspectives but consistently convey:

- Internet advertising is changing the industry;
- It has led to downward pressure on all advertising budgets;
- There is more advertising content being created now – but much of it is extremely low-budget and non-union;
- ACTRA performers have held their own in terms of compensation in this climate;
- The current NCA is seen by potential engagers as intimidating and cumbersome.

One of the obstacles identified as a reason why an Engager uses non-union performers is that the National Commercial Agreement (NCA) is too complicated. Industry Relations staff is assisting in the creation of promotional material, which will be used to support the simplified NCA in the strategic outreach to agencies and advertisers currently not producing with ACTRA.

A new digital NCA Engager contract in PDF form has also replaced the old, expensive, triplicate carbon contracts. This is the result of months of meetings and consultation with Engagers and payroll companies. The PDF contract represents a significant step in the goal of taking ACTRA online. A draft of the new, re-organized online version of the NCA has been completed. The process of vetting and seeking approval from all three parties to the NCA has begun.

ACTRA National has engaged a full-time Director of Research, Cathia Badiere, who is well-qualified and has already proven her value in providing excellent research to support NCA negotiations. Cathia refined and implemented a modelling tool that will have several applications: for use as an online “estimator” to be used with ACTRAOnline; and to determine the potential impact on ACTRA performers from any changes to the NCA.

2.2. Videogames:

One of the main challenges we face in organizing videogame production is addressing the variety of needs from videogame Producers, regardless of whether it’s a large developer/publisher or a small-scale service provider, in an industry that does not have the generational experience of negotiating collective agreements or representation by a Producers’ association.

We are working on a catalogue of videogame companies in Canada to identify new employers, and are collecting data on their location, size, and the number and types of games they develop. Once this catalogue is complete, the goal will be to create tools and strategies to target these companies based on their size and needs using our National videogame agreements with Ubisoft and Game On Audio as templates.



As a demonstration of solidarity with SAG-AFTRA’s strike against signatory U.S. videogame makers/publishers, ACTRA issued a statement of support and a [news release](#), and have also advised ACTRA members to refuse any “struck work” until a settlement is reached between SAG-AFTRA and the videogame makers. ACTRA also created a [dedicated webpage](#) on actra.ca with further information for ACTRA members.

3. BARGAINING AND RESEARCH

3.1. National Commercial Agreement (NCA):

Arising from the last round of NCA bargaining, ACTRA and the ACA & ICA agreed to form a residual use study group to examine possibilities to restructure the complex residual system to make it more user-friendly. The parties also agreed to streamline the Agreement to make it easier to read and understand. Ultimately, it is hoped a simpler, streamlined Agreement will help stop the rising tide of non-union commercial production in Canada.

In advance of NCA bargaining, ACTRA leadership and staff reached out and co-ordinated with different industry stakeholders identifying issues to be addressed in bargaining. Additionally, a survey was sent to a sample of members who had worked under the 2014-2017 agreement to gain further insight.

Following up on a commitment to discuss issues in anticipation of negotiations, the ACTRA-ICA/ACA Joint Working Group participants met in April 2017 and covered a range of topics including: all-inclusive fees; simplification; low-cost productions; alternate versions; categories; opting in and out; and double shoots. The participants agreed at the outset that the discussions were off-the-record and without prejudice; and ended the meeting with a better understanding of the interests of the parties heading into these critical negotiations.

ACTRA Research staff also worked to update and clean up the NCA signatory engagers list prior to commencement of NCA negotiations.

ACTRA commenced negotiations on the NCA with the Association of Canadian Advertisers (ACA) and the Institute of Communication Agencies (ICA) on June 7, 2017, in Toronto. After 11 days of negotiations, which included a long day & night of mediation, ACTRA and the ACA/ICA reached an agreement at 2:00 a.m. on July 16, 2017.

Both sides started with a total of over 50 proposals and, in the end, a historic deal was achieved:

- An increase of 178% in the made-for Digital Media Use rate – from \$450 to \$1,250 for one year's Use;
- Creation of an ACTRAonline Opportunity Pilot Project to combat the growth of the non-union sector. This side-letter to the NCA will allow our signatory engagers to compete for lower budget digital work they are currently losing to smaller, non-union agencies and offer that work, currently going to non-union performers, to ACTRA members. This project will allow members to put themselves forward for lower budget digital media work posted to agents and ACTRAonline by our signatory engagers. This project will be tracked and reviewed at quarterly meetings and will expire with the term of the new Agreement;
- In all other areas of the Agreement, an increase of 6% over three years – commencing with an immediate 2% increase upon ratification;
- Increased opportunities for voice-over performers on commercials using Stock Footage;
- The term New Media has been replaced with Digital Media throughout the Agreement; and
- The new deal for Group Background means more work for ACTRA members. We've known for some time that more and more large-cast commercials were going to foreign locations to avoid paying the NCA Group Background rate. What we agreed to with respect to Group Background will help bring those commercials back to Canada to shoot, and will engage ACTRA members. The first 30 Group Background Performers engaged per commercial per day will be ACTRA members, and those over 30 will also be ACTRA members and are protected by the National Commercial Agreement. It's important to note that fewer than 1% of commercials produced

under the NCA in 2016 employed more than 30 people in Group Background. The goal of this change is to create work opportunities: by bringing work that has been shooting abroad back to Canada, and by ensuring that more work is shot under a union contract.

The Memorandum of Settlement was sent electronically to all members who were eligible to vote on the ratification of the NCA. Voting was open from Wednesday, July 19 to Friday, August 4, 2017, and the results – 78% in favour with 25.2% of eligible members voting – were announced August 4. The new Agreement was implemented on August 5, 2017.

3.2. Broadcaster Agreements

Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC)



An agreement was reached on March 23, 2016, to extend the Radio and Television Agreements to June 30, 2017. The settlement provided a 1.5% increase across all rates (retroactive to July 1, 2015). The settlement was submitted to the membership for ratification and the results were 98.2% in favour of ratifying the Agreements.

CTV



ACTRA and Bell Media/CTV have resumed talks aimed at the renegotiation of our collective agreement, and have executed an interim extension agreement that increases all minimum fees by 14% and provides for New Media Use.

Videogames



ACTRA and Game On Audio quickly reached Terms of Settlement that included a three-year deal featuring a 6% increase in compensation and, as mentioned above, established a Use period limitation. The principle of performers' intellectual property rights, and compensation for and limitation of Use of product have long been a cornerstone of ACTRA's agreements in film, television, commercials, audio recordings and digital media in Canada. As the videogame world continues to grow in this country, we look forward to securing and improving performers' Use rights and compensation in videogames.



ACTRA and Ubisoft reached a tentative settlement of our videogame agreement after two days of intensive bargaining on November 28 & 29, 2016 (the last Agreement expired December 31, 2016). The Terms of Settlement were approved by 83.9% of voting members and took effect retroactively on January 1, 2017.

The new Agreement provides Members with:

- 3% increase in minimum fees in each year of the three-year Agreement;
- 50% increase in minimum fees for Stunt Performers;
- 35% increase in minimum fees for Stunt Coordinators;
- Formal definition of and a minimum rate for Cyberscanning of Performers – the first time Cyberscanning has been included in any collective agreement in the world;
- Vocally-stressful work is formally recognized, and will be performed only during the final two hours of a session;
- Performance Capture Performers may request rest periods during which they will not be required to perform any physical action;
- ACTRA and Ubisoft will collaborate and jointly develop a generic Non-Disclosure Agreement (NDA) to ensure consistency of terms of NDAs;
- The ACTRA logo will be included in the end credits of each videogame;
- The existing Use limitations and Prepayment fees were maintained.

Key changes obtained by Ubisoft included:

- The number of roles that can be performed by Voice Performers has increased and the types of roles have been redefined;
- A new category of, and rate for Group Motion Capture in crowd scenes has been included;
- A Voice Performer can be recalled for an additional one-hour session for the purpose of correcting or replacing their original performance;
- Ubisoft can reuse Barks, Onos, Walla, and non-cinematic motion capture in different Productions and franchises for a maximum of five years. There is no retrospective application of this provision. Further, Ubisoft commits that there will not be a reduction in overall employment of ACTRA Members as a result of these changes;
- If a two-hour Voice session runs over, the fee for the next 30 minutes is payable at 50% of the Voice Overtime hourly fee.

3.3. BC Animation Agreement (BCAA)

The BCAA is negotiated with nine BC-based animation companies. Over the renegotiation of the BCAA, UBCP/ACTRA bargained with eight of nine animation companies over a three-day period in November 2016 and reached successful conclusion of Terms of Settlement, which included a 3% increase in minimums in each of the three years of the Agreement effective March 20, 2017. The Terms of Settlement were approved unanimously by members eligible to vote on ratification of the BCAA. Negotiations with the ninth company were successfully concluded on April 24, 2017. The terms of the new Agreement are retroactive to March 20, 2017.

3.4. British Columbia Master Production Agreement

The BCMPA covers film, television and digital media production in British Columbia, and generates the second-largest amount of ACTRA members' earnings (after the Independent Production Agreement, which is applicable in the rest of Canada). The current BCMPA expires on March 30, 2018, and will be renegotiated with the AMPTP and CMPA BC in the late fall of 2017 or early winter of 2018.

3.5. Independent Production Agreement (IPA)

The IPA applies to film, television and digital media produced in Canada outside of British Columbia. The IPA will expire on December 31, 2018, and will be renegotiated following the BCMPA negotiations.

4. PUBLIC POLICY & COMMUNICATIONS

4.1. Defending Canada's Cultural Industries and the Labour Movement

Lobby Day

After concluding a successful Lobby Day in Ottawa in February 2015 with 25 ACTRA Members and staff targeting new government ministers, new MPs and opposition critics, ACTRA continued its advocacy efforts into 2016 with a focus on continuing an open dialogue with key ministers and the Prime Minister's Office as well as mobilizing ACTRA Members to meet with key MPs in their own communities. To prepare for local advocacy, ACTRA held a day-long advocacy training session for its National Councillors in June 2016.

In lieu of ACTRA’s normal fall lobby effort on Parliament Hill in 2016, ACTRA worked with Branches to ensure that MPs were visited in their ridings across the country. The aim had been to target meetings for the week of October 13, 2016, during a “constituency week” when MPs would be in their communities and available to meet with constituents.

Members were given materials and asked to focus their discussion on three key issues:

- Keeping Canadian Stories on our screens – highlighting the CRTC’s changes to Canadian Independent Production Funds (CIPF) and educating MPs on the importance of having “10 out of 10” Canadian production;
- Balanced and sustainable regulation – educating MPs about the importance of production funds, threats to their funding and the need for government to bring Internet broadcasters into the system;
- Overall stability – emphasizing to MPs that the current mix of regulation and financial support is working well: creating jobs, and world-class films and television.



ACTRA's Day of Action was a huge success with over 700 performers signing on to message their politicians at all three levels of government. Over 40 meetings were held, 1,000+ emails sent and 100s of tweets were shared. Many local political leaders became active voices on our behalf through this action. Due to its success, the event will be repeated this October.

ACTRA also provided a Political Action Training Day for ACTRA Maritimes members on the weekend of April 22/23, 2017, and had about 30 Members participate (which accounts for about 5 per cent of the membership).

Federal Budget

The 2017 federal budget was presented by the Liberal government on March 22, which also outlined the next phase of consultations stemming from the Canadian Heritage minister’s Canadian Content in a Digital Age review. This includes:

- A review of the *Broadcasting Act* and the *Telecommunications Act* was announced. Details are pending but based on the description, this review seems likely to overlap (and possibly supersede) the Department of Canadian Heritage’s Canadian Content in a Digital Age consultations: “In this review, the Government will look to examine issues such as telecommunications and content creation in the digital age, net neutrality and cultural diversity, and how to strengthen the future of Canadian media and Canadian content creation. Further details on the review will be announced in the coming months.” (p 106);
- A review of the *Copyright Act* had already been scheduled to commence in 2017; but the budget also announced plans for an “IP strategy:” “Intellectual property rights incentivize creativity and the development of new ideas and technologies by helping companies, academics, and inventors recoup their investment once new products reach the marketplace. Budget 2017 announces the Government will develop a new intellectual property strategy over the coming

year. The strategy will help ensure that Canada’s intellectual property regime is modern and robust, and supports Canadian innovations in the 21st century” (p 87).

ACTRA issued a [news release](#) commenting on the 2017 budget, which emphasized the need for Internet broadcasters, like Netflix, to contribute to sustain Canadian production and for the Canadian government to ratify the Beijing Treaty.

Labour Movement

Canadian Labour Congress (CLC)

Marking what is hoped to mean a new relationship between Canada’s government and the labour movement, Prime Minister Justin Trudeau met with the Canadian Labour Congress (CLC) six days after he was sworn into office in November 2015. This meeting was the first time in more than 50 years a sitting prime minister had spoken to CLC leaders.

ACTRA National Past President Ferne Downey was honoured to have the endorsement of FIA General Secretary Dominick Luquer in her bid for the Secretary-Treasurer position of the Canadian Labour Congress this past May. Ferne ran a strong campaign and garnered an incredible amount of support from union members across Canada – including a proud delegation of ACTRA members – but was disappointingly unsuccessful in her bid.

4.2. Support for Industry

ACTRA is an active participant both at the national- and Branch-levels in efforts to build incentives for production. Our Branches work with industry associations and other unions to lobby governments across the country to increase or preserve tax incentives and implement other industry-friendly initiatives to help us remain competitive in a global market.

4.3 Beijing AV Treaty



Urging the Canadian government to sign, ratify and implement the Beijing AV Treaty continues to be one of ACTRA’s top public policy priorities. ACTRA wasted no time in pointing out to the new federal government that we are simply seeking to extend existing rights enjoyed by audio performers to audiovisual performances through the ratification of the WIPO Audiovisual Performances Treaty.

ACTRA continues to discuss issues regarding the Canadian *Copyright Act* (“the Act”) with MPs and government bureaucrats in advance of the Act’s scheduled legislative review in 2017. The ratification of the Beijing Treaty is one of the issues we hope to have considered during this review. As of this report, the government has yet to begin hearings on possible amendments to the Act. ACTRA will continue to ensure this issue remains top of mind with top government officials and MPs. In addition to strategizing its domestic lobbying activities, ACTRA will be watching its international partners very closely as well to see what, if any, progress is made in their jurisdictions on this file to encourage the Canadian government to follow their lead.

ACTRA actively participates in the International Federation of Actors’ (FIA) “World IP Day” campaign each year on April 26 to promote a call to governments to protect audiovisual performers’ copyright by ratifying the Beijing Treaty. In 2017, ACTRA sent out an e-blast asking our Members to take a selfie while holding the “Let’s Ratify Now” sign and post it to their own Twitter, Facebook, Instagram

or other social media channel. Members were also invited to send the selfie to the National office to be posted to the National social media channels.



4.4 Regulatory Affairs

Federal government

Canadian Content in the Digital World Consultations



On April 25, 2016, Minister of Canadian Heritage Mélanie Joly launched the first phase of a sweeping consultation into Canada’s cultural and creative economy in the digital age. The minister indicated that “everything is on the table” in this review. In media interviews, the minister noted the review will address issues that

have been raised by stakeholders like ACTRA. A wide range of legislation and regulation was up for review, including:

- The *Broadcasting Act*, which ensures Canada’s broadcasting system is owned and controlled by Canadians, and enhances Canada’s national identity;
- The *Copyright Act*, which protects the creations of artists and aims to ensure they are paid when their work is used;
- The *Income Tax Act*, which allows producers to offset some of their costs and could be amended to allow for income averaging for artists;
- The *Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission Act*, which lays out the mandate for Canada’s telecom regulator, the CRTC;
- Foreign investment policies that protect the book, magazine and film distribution industries;
- Rules that regulate Canadian content on television and radio.

The Minister later said what was not on the table was Netflix.

The first phase of the consultation was in the form of an online survey open to all members of the public. Through the ACTRA’s own internal tracking, we can confirm that over 1,500 ACTRA Members clicked through to the online survey from ACTRA’s “action page.” Assuming all Members who clicked the link completed the survey, as much as 15 per cent of the 10,000 submitted surveys were completed by ACTRA Members.

On June 28, 2016, the Minister unveiled an “expert advisory group” of 12 individuals, which included ACTRA Member Katie Boland. Katie was the only creator on the panel providing the Minister with advice on policy ideas.

Ferne Downey, Stephen Waddell, Elliott Anderson and Chris Cornish met with senior Canadian Heritage staff in Ottawa on July 25, 2016, to discuss further details. Three key issues were highlighted:

- Acknowledging the government’s restored and enhanced funding to the CBC, NFB and Telefilm; and asking that stakeholders, like ACTRA, be included in the “accountability process” to ensure that funding goes to new production;
- Calling for action to address the disruptive nature of Over-the-Top (OTT) Internet broadcasters, like Netflix. ACTRA maintains that OTT Internet broadcasters should be held to the same standards as traditional broadcasters and contribute to the Canada Media Fund to help sustain Canadian programming; and,
- Pushing for reform of the *Copyright Act* to extend the existing rights of audio performers to audiovisual performers (i.e. ratify the WIPO Audiovisual Performers Treaty, a.k.a. the Beijing Treaty).

Discussion focussed overwhelmingly on OTT Internet broadcasting – with the Canadian Heritage staff making it clear there is no intention to address this issue in the consultation. Staff did commit to expanding the panel to include more performer voices (which did not happen). Canadian Heritage staff also clarified the scheduled review of the *Copyright Act* will be held in 2017 (however, at the time of writing this report, nothing has been announced).

Canadian Heritage staff committed to stay in contact with ACTRA throughout the process and follow-up conversations have occurred via phone and email.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage launched the second phase of the consultations on September 13, 2016, with a request to Canadians across the country to participate.

ACTRA launched its own “Take Action” campaign on September 22, 2016, and sent a series of emails urging Members to make their voices heard by participating in the consultation. A dedicated webpage was created outlining all the ways in which Members could participate in the #DigiCanCon consultations.

On Friday, September 30, 2016, Stephen Waddell and Elliott Anderson met with Graham Flack, Canadian Heritage Deputy Minister, and Guylaine Roy, Assistant Deputy Minister, in Ottawa for productive discussions on the Canadian Content in the Digital World (#DigiCanCon) consultation process and ACTRA’s other key public policy issues.

ACTRA also promoted interaction with the government’s Facebook Live streaming of the consultations. ACTRA sent e-blasts in advance of Facebook Live events on October 12, October 28 and November 7 to advise Members of how to participate and some messaging they could use on ACTRA’s key issues. ACTRA Members engaged with considerable success – with the minister being asked questions posed by ACTRA performers engaging online.

These Facebook Live events coincided with invitation-only, in-person stakeholder meetings as part of the consultations. The first consultation meeting was in Vancouver on September 26, 2016, (unfortunately at the same time as the FIA Congress in Sao Paulo) with subsequent meetings in Halifax, Toronto, Edmonton and Nunavut. UBCP/ACTRA Executive Board Member Jackson Davies attended the Vancouver consultation. ACTRA National President (and ACTRA Toronto Member) Ferne Downey attended as ACTRA’s representative at the stakeholder meeting in Toronto on October 12, 2016. ACTRA Montreal Member and ACTRA National Councillor Simon Peacock attended the October 28, 2016, meeting in Montreal, and ACTRA Alberta Member and ACTRA National Councillor Kristen Welker attended the November 7, 2016, meeting in Edmonton.

During the second phase of the consultation, ACTRA President Ferne Downey was also invited to a series of public policy panels to discuss issues related to the review. In June 2016, she joined spokespeople from the CD Howe Institute and the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives for a

Public Policy Forum event. In November 2016, she joined Professor Michael Geist, journalist Kate Taylor and Richard Stursberg for a public discussion at the University of Ottawa.

The consultation officially ended November 25, 2016. ACTRA staff, leadership and hundreds of performers engaged in the consultation process. ACTRA National’s [final written submission is available online](#).

Key ACTRA recommendations included:

- Maintaining core policies and putting creators at the heart of the process. The key principles of the *Broadcasting Act* should remain and provide a sound foundation for government audiovisual policymaking, including in the digital world. While the digital age poses new challenges, the solution is not to use less Canadian creative talent – but the opposite. We should celebrate and support Canadian creative talent, and give them the tools to succeed;
- Bringing Internet broadcasters, like Netflix, into the system so they play by the same rules as traditional broadcasters and make the same contributions to sustaining Canadian production. As viewing habits change, the government must take steps to adapt our successful system to new technologies and ensure the corporations profiting from the digital shift make fair contributions to Canadian content production; and
- Embracing our diversity as a competitive advantage in the digital world. Canada is one of the most diverse countries in the world. We should embrace this diversity. Canada’s screen-based industries are far better positioned to tackle inequality in the recorded media industries than any other country in the world.

While Canadian Heritage was reviewing submissions, in a potentially positive sign, the national Canadian newspaper, The Globe and Mail, reported in December 2016 that Joly, speaking at UNESCO meetings, “wants to create an international coalition that will give governments new powers to force Internet and multimedia giants to fund and showcase the creation of domestic content on their digital platforms.”



A summary report – “What we heard across Canada: Canadian Culture in a Digital World” – was released on February 21, 2017, and covered the issues raised during the consultation. While there were no recommendations in the report, key issues that were a focus for ACTRA did cut through: the need to protect existing programs that work; the need to ensure fair compensation for creators; the need for IP policy to reflect rights and compensation for creators; and the need for a “level playing field” that ensures Internet broadcasters make the same contributions to sustain content creation as traditional broadcasters. However, other views were reflected as well: concerns that a Netflix contribution could lead to higher consumer costs; and the need for a more “flexible” definition of Canadian Content. [Click here](#) to read the full summary report.

The Minister of Canadian Heritage travelled to California in April 2017 to meet with “tech giants” and discuss Canadian culture. Toronto Star newspaper coverage of the event [referenced ACTRA’s concerns](#).

The details of the next phase of the consultation process are forthcoming. In June, the Minister announced she would be unveiling a “vision” for Canadian Content in the Digital Age in September 2017.

Heritage Committee Recommendations

On June 15, 2017, the Canadian Heritage Committee of the House of Commons released 20 recommendations after a year studying Canada's media industry. One of its central decision was to call for a [five per cent levy on broadband Internet](#) as a means of supporting Canada's media industry in the midst of rapid technological shifts and changing consumer behaviours. The levy would contribute hundreds of millions of dollars to the Canadian Media Fund, which supports the development and production of Canadian screen-based content, including hit television shows, video games, web series and innovative new content.

However, Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly and Prime Minister Justin Trudeau quickly rejected the committee's suggestion, stating the government is committed to decreasing Canadians' taxes, not increasing them. Canadian Heritage Committee Chair [Hedy Fry](#) later suggested that Prime Minister Justin Trudeau didn't fully understand what the committee was recommending when he shot down the idea of new taxes on broadband distribution, stating that she "was surprised, because I hadn't even tabled the report in the House, so nobody had read it with the exception of the people who leaked their version of it."

Fry stated the justification for the ISP levy was to "level the playing field" because the committee had "noticed that a lot of broadcast media are not just using the broadcast channels, they're also using streaming, so the gist of our recommendation was if you're going to assess a five per cent [levy] on revenues, can you make sure that it goes towards broadband devices like streaming? And that's it."

The Trudeau government, however, did say it would consider the other 19 of the Committee's 20 recommendations concerning Canada's media industry before making any decisions.

ACTRA issued a [news release](#) following to the committee's initial recommendation and the Prime Minister's response.

Temporary Foreign Worker Exemptions

On January 10, 2017, the Prime Minister appointed Patty Hadju as the new Minister of Employment, Workforce & Labour, and Ahmed Hussen as the new Minister of Immigration. Both new Ministers have met with ACTRA members in the past.

National Executive Director Stephen Waddell wrote to the new Ministers to congratulate them on their new roles and to request a meeting to discuss restoring Labour Market Impact Assessments for commercial productions making use of the Temporary Foreign Worker program. Both Ministers have replied. Elliott Anderson and Federal Outreach Coordinator Chris Cornish met with senior staff to Immigration Minister Ahmed Hussen and Roger Cuzner, the Parliamentary Assistant to the Minister of Labour, in Ottawa. The meetings were positive and informative for the government members who were largely unaware of the issue. Cuzner agreed with ACTRA's assertion that making such changes without consulting ACTRA was a mistake, and they endeavoured to look into the issue in the hopes of resolving it.

While the meeting was positive, ACTRA did not get a concrete commitment to undoing the change. Chris Cornish has been following up routinely with both Ministers' offices for updates and progress. Following successful passage of an ACTRA-sponsored resolution at the Canadian Labour Congress convention, CLC President Hassan Yussef has also written to both ministers echoing ACTRA's concerns. ACTRA is also working with other stakeholders in the sector – IATSE, the DGC and the

CMPA – in the hopes of getting their support for closing this loophole. Outreach is also planned to ACTRA’s commercial production industry partners, the ACA and ICA.

Trade Policy

In January, Stephen Waddell and National President Ferne Downey wrote to Prime Minister Justin Trudeau to re-iterate ACTRA’s serious concerns with the potential negative consequences of renegotiating the North American Free Trade Agreement (NAFTA), which U.S. President Donald Trump had signalled he wanted to do. The letter asked the Prime Minister to confirm that arts and culture would be fully exempted from any new or re-negotiated NAFTA or TPP agreements.

The Prime Minister’s Office acknowledged receipt of the letter. At a subsequent briefing for executive officers of the Canadian Labour Congress attended by ACTRA National President Ferne Downey. Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland confirmed the government had heard the message about protecting NAFTA’s existing cultural exemption “loud and clear.” Ferne provided further briefing materials to Freeland, her Chief of Staff Jeremy Broadhurst, and Tim Sargent, who will serve as Chief Negotiator when NAFTA is re-negotiated.

ACTRA also met with other stakeholders to co-ordinate strategy around NAFTA via a number of associations, including the Trade and Investment Research Project (TIRP) and the Coalition for Cultural Diversity (CCD). The CCD is planning a conference in Montreal this fall on the risks of NAFTA.

[Click here](#) to read ACTRA’s NAFTA proposal, which was submitted on July 18.

Foreign Affairs Minister Chrystia Freeland announced Canada’s [top priorities for NAFTA negotiations](#), which commenced in Washington, DC, on August 16, 2017. ACTRA was pleased to learn that protecting Canada’s cultural exemption was included on this list.

In advance of Global Affairs Canada’s Canada-China Trade Consultations, ACTRA [submitted its proposal regarding the Canada-China Free Trade Agreement](#) and how this agreement can present opportunities to promote Canadian culture.

CRTC

The Canadian Radio-Television and Telecommunications Commission (CRTC) announced a major policy review in 2012 on how it approaches the regulation of the Canadian broadcast sector. The Commission finally released its new regulatory policies in March 2015 resulting from the review, which was dubbed “Let’s Talk TV.” The first policy, “Creating Compelling and Diverse Canadian Programming,” touched on many aspects of Canadian content delivery. The industry expressed a deep concern about the negative effects that could result from the changes to Canadian content delivery as outlined by the CRTC, specifically the reduction in Canadian content requirements and the elimination of genre protections.



Pick and Pay

The most talked about change was the new policy that mandated the creation of a skinny basic cable package by March 2016, which now must include mandatory carriage [9(1)(h)] services, local and regional television stations, provincial educational channels and provincial legislative channels. Additionally, all licensed Broadcast Distribution Undertaking (i.e. vertically-integrated media companies) was also required to offer discretionary services on both a “pick and pay” basis and as part of small, reasonably-priced packages by that same deadline. The implementation of the “pick and pay” policy immediately proved ACTRA’s argument that the requirement was unnecessary as consumers have not found it an attractive option. What is increasingly becoming an option for consumers is “cord-cutting” from traditional broadcasters and instead relying on Internet broadcasting to access content.

Digital Media Exemption Order



The CRTC continues to avoid a key issue raised by a broad range of industry members during the hearings. The CRTC’s anachronistic Digital Media Exemption Order (DMEO) amounts to a completely unregulated Over-The-Top (OTT) broadcast platform. ACTRA made it clear that the emergence of OTT broadcast giants like Netflix and other Internet providers under the DMEO not only allows these providers to avoid Canadian content exhibition requirements but also frees them from any and all obligations to contribute to local production funding. Additionally, any OTT broadcaster that does not have an office in Canada, such as Netflix, is currently exempt from paying sales tax. This must be addressed. The status quo is broken and until OTT is brought under the CRTC’s jurisdiction, ACTRA and others will continue to demand reform.

Group License Renewals

On June 15, 2016, the CRTC released a Broadcasting Notice of Consultation relating to the licence renewal applications of Canada’s largest television broadcast groups, including Bell Media Inc.; Corus Entertainment Inc.; and Rogers Media Inc. In collaboration with the DGC, the WGC and the CMPA, ACTRA secured the services of a media analyst to produce an analysis of the broadcaster proposals – and the impact of these proposals on Canadian television production. In his analysis, the analyst found that proposals by Bell and Corus, if approved, would result in a significant reduction in overall spending on Canadian programming and “Programs of National Interest” (PNI) in the broadcasting system over the next licence term. This would be over and above the already large decrease in spending on PNI experienced over the current licence term. ACTRA submitted an intervention, along with the report, to the Commission. The intervention calls on the CRTC to uphold content requirements and not agree with the broadcasters’ requests for further decreases in their Canadian programming commitments.

On November 30, 2016, ACTRA National Executive Director Stephen Waddell joined ACTRA performers Yannick Bisson, Paul Sun-Hyung Lee and Jean Yoon at CRTC hearings on the renewals in Gatineau, Quebec. The presentation focussed on the role of regulation in ensuring Canadian stories can be seen on television screens and the need for the CRTC to insist on robust Canadian content requirements as a condition of licence.



A final submission following up on issues raised at the hearings was submitted on December 16, and a joint petition submitted by ACTRA, the Directors Guild of Canada (DGC) and the Canadian Media Producers Association (CMPA) was also filed on June 28, 2017. All submissions can be seen at actra.ca/advocacy/crtc.

These petitions were backed by efforts to mobilize support for a review. ACTRA launched a new campaign on June 6 asking its members to write their Member of Parliament to let them know what’s happening at the CRTC, and that these changes are undermining the film and television industry and Canadian culture. Members were also urged to share messages via their own social media channels directed at Canadian Heritage Minister Mélanie Joly. ACTRA provided a sample tweet: «Calling on @melaniejoly to overturn disastrous #CRTC decision. Our stories matter! #cdntv #cdnpoli #digicancon»

Working with the Directors Guild of Canada, the Writers Guild of Canada and the Canadian Media Producers Association, ACTRA also developed a parliamentary petition, sponsored by Liberal MP Julie Dabrusin, asking the government to reverse the CRTC’s devastating broadcast license renewal decision and fill vacancies at the CRTC with diverse candidates including women and men with direct experience working in film and television production. To date (August 11), over 11,000 Canadians have signed.

On August 14, the federal cabinet announced it would be referring the CRTC’s broadcast renewal decisions back to the CRTC for further consideration highlighting concerns with reductions in PNI requirements and French-language programming. ACTRA, the DGC and the CMPA immediately issued a joint [news release](#) commending the Canadian Heritage minister on the rejection of the CRTC’s decision.

The government’s decision was in response to a series of formal petitions laying out arguments against the decision – including the one submitted jointly by the Directors Guild, ACTRA and the CMPA.

Member participation at the November 2016 hearing resulted in the cover of the [winter 2017 issue](#) of ACTRA Magazine, which included stories on many of the regulation issues for which ACTRA advocates, including the role of the CRTC and the #DigiCanCon consultation.



Certified Independent Production Funds

On August 25, 2016, the CRTC released conclusions from its review of Certified Independent Production Funds (CIPF) as part of the Let's Talk TV review. Amongst the decisions was a new policy that would drop the minimum CAVCO point requirements from eight to six to fund a Canadian independent production.

ACTRA, along with other organizations within Canada's creative community, voiced its alarm with this decision via a [news release](#). ACTRA also urged members to address their concerns about the decision to their local Member of Parliament.



CRTC Chair Jean-Pierre Blais was not happy with this release and wasted no time in responding via a [letter](#) addressed to National President Ferne Downey sent by email and made public via [Twitter](#) highlighting that ACTRA had chosen not to take part in the review process in fall 2015. ACTRA immediately responded with a [letter](#) advising that ACTRA had actively participated in the Let's Talk TV hearings but was unable to make a submission in the paper-only process since ACTRA had been in the midst of re-negotiating the IPA.

The CRTC's decision has continued to generate serious concern throughout the industry and the broader public. MPs of various stripes have voiced their opposition to the decision. At an October meeting of Parliament's Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage, several MPs took the opportunity to address their concerns directly with Jean-Pierre Blais. "This is a decision I've been hearing about almost daily since its release," said Toronto-Danforth MP Julie Dabrusin. St John's MP Seamus O' Regan noted the homegrown success of *Republic of Doyle* was due, in part, to Canadian content rules; "I fail to see how lowering it is better. Six out 10 was a D when I went to St. Bon's school in St. John's. It was barely a pass."

Simultaneous Substitution



On December 21, 2016, ACTRA sent a [news release](#) announcing its joint effort with the NFL, the Canadian advertising industry and other advocacy groups to garner public and industry support to try to reverse the CRTC's simultaneous substitution (simsub), which was scheduled to take effect at the Super Bowl broadcast on February 5, 2017. ACTRA promoted a website, supportcreators.ca, to educate the public and MPs as well as encouraged its members to take action against this dangerous decision.

Bell Media and the NFL launched a legal appeal of the CRTC decision to ban simultaneous substitution on the 2017 Super Bowl (and subsequent telecasts) with the Federal Appeal Court. ACTRA and the Association of Canadian Advertisers filed for intervenor status to get standing at the trial. Tom Curry, a partner at Lenczner Slaght who specializes in litigation, agreed to work with ACTRA and ACA on a pro bono basis. Stephen Waddell submitted an affidavit petitioning for intervenor standing on behalf of ACTRA, which ACTRA and the Association of Canadian Advertisers were granted at the trial.

On June 9, ACTRA's federal outreach coordinator Chris Cornish joined representatives from the NFL, Bell, Unifor and the ACA in meetings with senior staff in the Departments of Canadian Heritage and Finance. Staff at both federal departments did not commit to reviewing or changing the policy but did not rule it out – and said they were watching the court proceedings closely.

Ultimately, Bell Media and the NFL's initial appeal to reverse the CRTC's ban on simultaneous substitution of the 2017 Super Bowl was unsuccessful and the simsub ban took effect.

On August 1, ACTRA along with Bell, ACA, Unifor, CMDC and the NFL, [renewed their appeal](#) (announced via [news release](#)) to the CRTC to rescind its Super Bowl simsub ban. The appeal included [new, independent research](#) that confirms the broader impact on creators, broadcasters and Canadian businesses after just a single year of the CRTC's Super Bowl simsub ban. Conducted by Communic@tions Management Inc., the research reveals the ban has cost the overall Canadian economy approximately \$158 million. It found that Canadian businesses have been driven to spend their advertising dollars with U.S. border television stations to reach Canadian viewers, transferring that revenue from Canada to the U.S. economy while at the same time undermining longstanding government tax policy. Based on revenue impacts, the Canadian creative community has been deprived of \$3.3 million in direct funding and \$4 million in promotional time for homegrown content.

CRTC Chair Appointment

In advance of CRTC Chair Jean-Pierre Blais's term ending on June 17, 2017, ACTRA National Executive Director Stephen Waddell released the following statement on behalf of the union's 23,000 members:

"We wish Mr. Blais well in his future endeavours, and agree it is time for change and a new direction at the CRTC. The Commission was envisioned to regulate broadcast and telecommunications under their respective Acts as well as to protect Canadian culture. Under Blais's leadership, the CRTC embraced an approach that undermined Canadian storytellers instead of protecting them. We look forward to the appointment of a new Chair and new Commissioners who understand the challenges of the film and television sector, and the need to see Canadian stories on our screens."

On July 18, 2017, the federal cabinet announced that Ian Scott will be the new chairman of the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission. Caroline Simard was also appointed vice-chair of broadcasting. ACTRA issued a [news release](#) expressing its hope that Mr. Scott and Ms. Simard will "bring a new direction to the Commission," specifically "one that respects and fosters the contributions of Canadian creative talent."

In preparation for a new chair, ACTRA also signed a [joint letter to the minister](#), along with the Canadian Media Producers Association and other creative sector guilds, emphasizing the need for greater diversity of appointments to the Commission, and the need to have a chair or vice-chairs with experience in film and television production – something that's been historically lacking. A follow-up letter is planned and will focus on the need for the Minister of Canadian Heritage to provide a new, more balanced mandate for Mr. Scott.

4.5 Member Outreach

ACTRA works hard to keep its Members engaged and aware of their union's activities. Email newsletters are sent out regularly to ACTRA's 23,000 Members, and two issues of *ACTRA Magazine* are published each year. The 2017 summer issue of ACTRA's award-winning magazine can be found [here](#).

ACTRA National also continues to host an annual event for its Los Angeles-based Members. For the fifth year in a row, "ACTRA Day in L.A." was held in January at the Beverly Hilton Hotel with conference panels featuring casting directors, agents, managers, performers, accountants and lawyers, who all provided excellent advice and informed discussions for ACTRA Members. The

evening reception was well attended and featured the National Award of Excellence presentation to Canadian actor and ACTRA member Kim Coates.



5. EQUALITY

Increasing work opportunities for women and physically/ethno culturally-diverse performers has been a priority for ACTRA, and a major focus of the efforts of the National Women’s and Diversity Committees. ACTRA has also included anti-harassment and equality language in its collective agreement negotiation proposals.

5.1. Women’s Committee



Following the successful release of the Canadian Unions for Equality on Screen (CUES) “Focus on Women 2013” report, ACTRA and its sister unions embarked on the next phase of research with Dr. Amanda Coles. Our second CUES report, “What’s Wrong With This Picture? Directors and Gender Inequality in the Canadian Screen-based Industry,” was launched September 7, 2016, via [news release](#) and social media messaging. CUES also released an overview document of the report emphasizing recommendations to accompany the official report launch, and re-vamped the CUES website. Both the 2013 and 2016 CUES reports can be found online at cueonscreen.ca.

A number of media outlets in Canada and the U.S., including the Globe & Mail, Slate and Deadline Hollywood, touched specifically on the report’s release and/or as part of a broader story on the gender inequalities that exist in the screen-based industry. A complete list of all press coverage can be found at cueonscreen.ca. Additionally, as a result of Amanda’s October visit to Toronto, the National office pitched an interview to The Canadian Press, which resulted in a [news story](#) that was picked up by 27 outlets across the country.

Simultaneously, the National office has been working on the development of a production checklist with funding assistance from Status of Women Canada. Some European unions as well as the UBCP/ACTRA Branch have already introduced variations on such a checklist and the National office hopes to build on their global experience to create a practical tool kit that will raise industry awareness about the benefits of greater inclusion for under-represented performers both on screen and behind the camera.



The Women’s Committee has completed production on *Reel Women Seen*, a short film that asks the question, “What would it be like if women, who represent 50 per cent of Canada’s population, were equally represented in all aspects of screen-based media?” *Reel Women Seen* was directed by award-winning actor and seasoned director Amanda Tapping. It takes a comedic look at how women are under-represented in all areas of screen-based media, most notably as protagonists; behind the scenes in creative, writing and directorial roles; and in key technical roles. While telling the stories of realities faced by women in the film and television industry, the film also shows solutions for change.

The completed film premiered on April 26, 2017, in Vancouver at UBCP/ACTRA office and on May 25, 2017, at the Buddies in Bad Times Theatre in Toronto. For more information about production, including the cast and production team, please visit actra.ca/reelwomenseen.

5.2. Diversity Committee

ACTRA’s Diversity Committee released the winning videos from the second iteration of its successful Short Film Script Competition. This Diversity Committee initiative invited ACTRA Members to draw from their personal experiences with the goal of identifying and articulating contemporary diversity challenges that exist in the industry and for Canadians at large.

ACTRA Members from across Canada were asked to submit a script that answered the question, “How are diverse Canadian stories important for our screens and our society?” The successful candidates were provided with funding to create a film based on their winning script. The three winning videos were officially released in January 2016 and can be viewed [here](#).



For the coming year, the Diversity Committee has identified areas for action that would include increasing the number of work opportunities available to ACTRA’s diverse membership, whether through the creation of or search for these opportunities. Another priority is to enable casting decision-makers, specifically agents, casting directors and producers, to more easily access and



cast ACTRA Members who are physically and/or ethno-culturally diverse. These decision-makers can now access these Members through ACTRA’s newly launched talent website, diversity.actraonline.ca. The Committee is also encouraging Members to keep their profiles up-to-date to ensure the site is as effective as possible. Finally, the Committee is preparing training for Members to ensure more physical and/or ethno-cultural diversity in areas where it’s lacking (the stunt community in particular).

6. ACTRA PERFORMERS’ RIGHTS SOCIETY (PRS) AND ACTRA RECORDING ARTISTS’ COLLECTING SOCIETY (RACS)

As a division of ACTRA, ACTRA PRS operates as a collective management organization (CMO) with mandates to represent the rights and interests of artists who perform in audiovisual productions and on sound recordings.

ACTRA PRS collects and distributes: residuals, royalties and any other form of compensation or remuneration to which performers appearing in audiovisual productions produced under ACTRA’s

jurisdiction are entitled; and neighbouring rights and private copying royalties owed to performers for the broadcast and public performance of sound recordings within Canada and around the world.

With respect to residuals for film and television, ACTRA PRS staff proactively engages with producers and distributors to secure sales reports and payments for the exploitation of productions produced under the terms of ACTRA's collective agreements. ACTRA PRS uses its extensive database of productions and performers to claim, collect and distribute royalties from foreign territories where we have unilateral audiovisual agreements.

For the 2016/2017 fiscal year, the ACTRA PRS team collected and distributed over \$12.7 million to performers appearing in film, television and digital productions. Since 2009, the ACTRA PRS claims team has distributed over \$90 million to audiovisual performers.

The division of ACTRA PRS known as ACTRA RACS (Recording Artists' Collecting Society) is responsible for the distribution of royalties to which artists are entitled under the Canadian Copyright Act for the broadcast, public performance and private copying of sound recordings. Bilateral agreements with international partners allow ACTRA RACS to collect royalties for artists for the use of their work in foreign territories, and distribute money to foreign CMOs for the use of their artists' work within Canada.

For the same fiscal year noted above, ACTRA RACS distributed over \$9 million to artists performing on sound recordings. Over the past 10 years, ACTRA RACS has distributed over \$80 million to artists.

ACTRA PRS is working with the ACTRA National Public Policy & Communications department to continue to lobby for the ratification and implementation of the Beijing Treaty in Canada. Through its international work, ACTRA PRS closely monitors activity on the Beijing Treaty with Canada's trading partners worldwide.

As reported in 2014, Canada finally ratified the World Intellectual Property Organization (WIPO) Copyright Treaty and the WIPO Performances and Phonograms Treaty (WPPT), which are often collectively referred to as the WIPO Internet Treaties. The ratification of these Treaties is of great interest to ACTRA PRS and ACTRA RACS because it will put more money in the pockets of the artists we represent. We continue to see progress in the implementation of the WPPT, which has resulted in greater revenue to sound recording artists. This trend will continue and we will see the effects of ratification as the Canadian Copyright Board renews or approves tariffs in the area of neighbouring rights.

On the international front, ACTRA RACS has executed 39 agreements with CMOs around the world to facilitate the exchange of payments for performers on sound recordings. On the audiovisual side, ACTRA PRS has executed four unilateral agreements and is pursuing opportunities in additional territories.



ACTRA PRS Director, Laurie McAllister, was elected to the Board for the Societies Council for the Collective Management to Performers' Rights (SCAPR) in May 2016 for a three-year term. SCAPR develops best practices for CMOs representing both audio and audiovisual performers, and facilitates the cross-border exchange of monies under reciprocal agreements negotiated between countries. The tools developed by SCAPR include databases including VRDB. VRDB is now providing a global, centralized system to efficiently and accurately identify recordings and works, exchange data between CMOs necessary to run distributions, and maximize the flow of royalties exchanged between SCAPR member societies.

7. INFORMATION SERVICES

7.1. Privacy and Security

In the new Information Age, security threats such as the Heart Bleed bug, compromised networks targeted by foreign governments and criminal organization security have become all too common. We at ACTRA are very conscious of this threat and the associated repercussions of a compromised network system, such as having the personal information of ACTRA Members made public. To bring things closer to home, one of ACTRA's Canadian sister union's networks was compromised in early 2014 when personal information about its members was published and, of course, the famous Sony and HBO hacks have made headlines around the world with sensitive materials having been made public.

Even before news of these security breaches became known, ACTRA made and continues to make large investments in protecting its Members' personal information. Examples of this investment in the past year include ensuring that only services that need to be available on the Internet are available on the Internet. Additionally, investment in the art firewalls of all ACTRA Branches, intrusion detection and other security protocols have also been implemented.

ACTRA has also invested heavily in its network infrastructure to ensure the latest hardware and software are running, and has installed a state-of-the-art disk-to-disk backup solution. Recognizing that technology is only part of the solution in keeping Members' data secure, ACTRA has also added user education on security matters and updated its policies to ensure any electronic data leaving ACTRA is encrypted.

As privacy legislation and case law is rapidly evolving, the Finance and Administration department monitors the government privacy website for announcements and case decisions to ensure that ACTRA is in compliance with privacy legislation. Privacy policies are updated and distributed to National and Branch staff to ensure staff is aware of ACTRA's obligations. ACTRA reviews its Cyber Liability insurance policy on a regular basis to ensure appropriate coverage (as this is a new area, there are updates and changes to available coverage).

7.2. Efficiencies

ACTRA had several systems that did not share data with its National membership system, including a residual payment database and revenue remittance database, even though they contain similar information. Last year, the ACTRA Information Services (IS) Department integrated these three systems into one. In addition, ACTRA had two membership systems, MFTS (used by the UBCP/ACTRA Branch) and AMS (used by all other Branches and the National office), that were used by ACTRA staff to serve Members. Earlier this year, the IS Department migrated these two membership systems into one National membership system to better serve Members and improve efficiencies. The IS Department is also working on standardizing and moving processes to a digital format. For example, the IS team is currently working to standardize all forms to ensure they are available and can be completed electronically.

ACTRA is continually striving to improve its procedures and processes, such as automating and streamlining systems, to operate in a more efficient and cost-effective manner. For example, each year more vendor payments are paid by EFT rather than cheques, which saves both money and time.

7.3. Serving our Members

The IS department will play a major role as ACTRA moves forward with new initiatives to better serve its Members. The IS Department has assisted in creating new National talent websites for diverse, stunt, voice and background Members to increase work opportunities and exposure of these communities to partner agencies, and casting producers and directors.

In June 2015, the IS Department assisted in the re-creation of ACTRA’s online catalogue (originally named CastingACTRA.ca), which replaced ACTRA’s old National casting website, Face to Face. Other online catalogues promoting diversity, stunts, voice, and background performers were also launched. Finally, the ACTRA IS Department has embarked on its most ambitious project yet – ACTRAonline.ca – which will make ACTRA an online union within two years.



The Finance and Administration department is working with IS to convert paper documents and manual processes such as issuing tax receipts and dues invoices to automated online processes. ACTRA has improved its services to Members by implementing online voting for the ratification of collective agreements. This has made the voting process more efficient and has reduced costs.