

## **Canadian Youth Connection Forum Activity 22 Summary Report**

### **Introduction**

In March 2005, the Youth Information Products and Services Promotions team and the Canadian Youth Connection launched the “Get the Vibe on Youth Life” photo contest. The contest featured four different categories:

- Sports, recreation and leisure.
- Canada’s youth at school (high school, university or college).
- Arts and Culture.
- Environment/Outdoors/Wildlife

One photo from each category was chosen by CYC members to be made into official Youth.gc.ca e-cards to be featured on a new section of the site. The overall winning photograph was selected by Youth.gc.ca site users who voted for their favourite on the site’s homepage. The winner received an iPod mini (a digital music player).

In sponsoring this contest, the Promotions team and CYC hoped to achieve two goals:

- 1) Engage youth by challenging CYC members to express their creativity, originality, and imagination through photographs.
- 2) Promote both the Youth.gc.ca site and CYC forum to youth and recruit new members to the CYC at a low cost.

For Activity 22, CYC members were asked to provide feedback about the photo contest by completing and submitting an evaluation form containing 5 questions about the contest. Thirty-one members participated in Activity 22. This report summarizes their responses.

### **Question One**

*Do you think a photo contest is a good way to engage youth and increase visibility to the web site?*

All 31 respondents said that the photo contest was an excellent way to engage youth. Several felt that the photo contest might lead youth to develop a new interest in photography. Others liked that the contest allowed youth to showcase their creativity.

Many respondents also appreciated the fact that the contest was simple and based on an activity that most everyone could take part in, since most people own a camera of some kind.

Most respondents also thought that the contest was an effective way to increase visibility of the web site. One mentioned that several of his friends had gone to the Youth.gc.ca website in order to find out more information about the contest. However, other respondents believed that in order to truly have a positive impact on site visibility, such contests need to be more widely advertised (for example, on popular youth-oriented websites and at HRCC-S offices). The suggestion was also made that to further promote the Youth.gc.ca website, the photo contest e-cards should be made into paper post cards for distribution to schools and student employment centres.

## **Question Two**

*Did you participate in this contest? Why or why not?*

Seven of the 31 respondents indicated that they had taken part in the photo contest. When asked what encouraged them to participate, respondents cited the following factors:

- 'Ease' of the contest,
- Interest in photography,
- Competitive nature of the contest,
- Desire to show other members what they are interested in,
- Excellent prizes.

Twenty-four respondents indicated that they had not take part in the photo contest:

- Six respondents were not members of the CYC forum at the time of the contest,
- Four did not have access to a camera,
- Three said that they had not known about the contest, or that it was 'too late' by the time they found out about it,
- Three others said that they were not interested in photography.

Other respondents said they had not participate because they had been too busy, were not satisfied with the photos they had taken, or, as Government of Canada, employees were unsure whether they were eligible to participate.

## **Question Three**

*Would you change anything about the contest? Explain.*

Thirteen respondents (42%) said that they would not change anything about the photo contest.

Seventeen respondents (55%) made suggestions to improve future photo contests. Most of the suggestions dealt with the contest categories. Several respondents said that there should be more categories. Others felt that the categories were too vague and needed to be more clearly explained. One respondent commented that it seemed to her that some of

the photos had been placed in the wrong category, and that more care should be taken to avoid this.

Suggestions were made to include additional categories for Canadian cities, black and white photos, and digitally enhanced photos. In contrast, two respondents thought that there should be no categories at all and that youth should be able to submit any photo, provided that they included an explanation of why they choose to enter that particular photo.

Two respondents commented on the unequal distribution of entries among the different categories. In particular, the Environment/Outdoors/Wildlife category had more many more entries than the other three categories (Canada's youth at school (high school, university or college); Sports/recreation / leisure; and Arts and culture) because it was “easier to photograph.” As a result, the votes in the Environment/Outdoors/Wildlife category were spread out over a greater number of photos, making it much more difficult for someone who had entered a photo in this category to win.

To make the competition more equal, one respondent suggested that in the future, the contest administrators should select the five best photos from each category and present them to youth for voting. This would increase fairness and ensure that the winning photos actually have photographic merit.

Other suggestions included the following:

- Have a downloadable entry form that can be edited in Word or WordPerfect to make submitting an entry easier
- Ask participants to include a caption and explanation for their photos
- Allow Canadian youth who are not members of the CYC to vote at all stages of the contest
- Promote the contest with schools or youth centres to increase youth awareness
- For the second round of voting, allow voters to choose their two favourite photos
- Create traditional paper post cards from the winning photos in addition to e-cards
- Increase the number of prizes

#### **Question Four**

*What other types of prizes do you think would motivate youth to participate in future contests?*

The survey participants were full of ideas for prizes for future photo contests, ranging in price from very affordable to very expensive. They included the following:

- Gift certificates for movie theatres, music stores, clothing stores, etc.
- Concert tickets

- A framed copy of their winning photo made into a postcard
- Prizes that relate to photography, such as high-quality digital cameras (Canon Digital Rebels were specifically mentioned)
- Scholarships or bursaries
- Laptops
- DVD players or CD players
- Webcams
- Computer games
- PlayStation 2 or, when it is released, the new PlayStation 3
- Good quality computer speakers
- “Everyday” items, such as jackets, watches, clocks, agendas or caps with the Youth.gc.ca logo
- Cell phone packages
- Cash
- A ‘small’ trip
- Palmpilots or Blackberries

Not surprisingly, high-tech prizes were among the most popular suggestions. As one participant said, “Just follow the trends and the youth will come.”

Several participants suggested awarding “participation prizes” to all contest entrants. Others said that having significant prizes for the runners up would encourage them to get involved.

A few participants voiced the idea of allowing the grand prize winner to choose between the grand prize or a gift certificate of equal value at the store of their choice.

### **Question Five**

*What other types of contests would you like to see on Youth.gc.ca?*

Participants also showed enthusiasm in offering their ideas about the other types of contests they would like to see on the website.

Writing contests were a very popular suggestion. Sixteen participants (52%) suggested having a writing contest of some kind. A poetry contest was the most popular suggestion, followed by a short story contest, and an article writing contest.

Ten participants (32%) would like to see a drawing and/or painting contest.

Five thought that a song writing or ‘battle of the bands’ type competition would be a good idea. They suggested that participants could send us a recording of their performance to be posted on the forum so that members could vote.

Several members suggested online gaming competitions. Scavenger hunts and quiz-based activities based on random trivia or on information dealing with youth issues were also mentioned.

### **Question Six**

*Any additional comments.*

Most participants used this space to say that they had really liked the photo contest and they hoped to see other such activities on the CYC. One participant said that she really appreciated the clarity of the instructions and the application forms. Several members said they would have liked to submit more than one photo, and repeated that they would like the categories to be broader next time.

Finally, a couple of members spoke out on unrelated issues. One strongly suggested opening the forum up to members who do not want to commit to taking part in the bi-weekly Activities. Another suggested that we advertise the CYC at Career Resource Centres.