

## News and Current Affairs



*Trusted and timely information on the regional, national and international developments affecting Canadians.*

With News teams across Canada and around the world, CBC/Radio-Canada delivers the information and analysis Canadians need to make informed decisions. Our unwavering commitment to complete, balanced and accurate coverage of the stories that matter sets the standard for Canadian journalism excellence. Our capacity to deliver news on multiple Radio and Television programs, as well as through *CBC.ca*, *Radio-Canada.ca* and wireless devices, means Canadians can count on our service – where, when and how they want it.

Canadians trust CBC/Radio-Canada to cover the stories that are important to them, in a way that meets the highest standards of journalistic integrity and excellence. They rely on our English and French news gathering capabilities in every province and territory of Canada. They value our presence both within and outside of major urban centres, in places like Kelowna, Saguenay, Brandon, or Goose Bay. They also appreciate our capacity to serve Canada's northern communities in English, French and eight Aboriginal languages. Canadians expect their national public broadcaster to connect them to happenings in their communities, to bring their stories to national attention and to bring home a Canadian perspective on international events. Again this year, CBC/Radio-Canada delivered.

### ***Across Canada***

In 2003-2004, our Radio, Television and New Media News teams collaborated more than ever to present the year's top stories. We captured the breaking news and local reactions to the devastation of forest fires in British Columbia and Hurricane Juan in Nova Scotia. During the mad cow disease scare in Alberta, we were on the ground soliciting reactions from both alarmed cattle farmers and trade officials in Canada and the United States. Our teams were onsite during the Ontario power outage, looking for its underlying causes and providing timely updates about its expected duration. When SARS hit Toronto, we gathered, verified and presented the facts and offered insightful expert commentary about the immediate and long-term public health implications, economic costs and international ramifications for Toronto and Canada. Our accurate and insightful coverage drew many accolades from audiences and critics alike.

### ***And around the world***

Canadians were well-served by CBC/Radio-Canada's international news coverage. Our foreign correspondents in the Americas, Europe, Asia, Africa, and the Middle East brought home meaningful and relevant Canadian perspectives on the year's top international stories. During the war in Iraq, for example, we boosted our long-standing presence in the region by placing 40 of our own top-notch journalists in Amman, Kuwait City, Qatar, Jerusalem, Tel Aviv, Northern Iraq, Turkey, and Cairo where they



could cover a broader range of stories and provide meaningful context as events unfolded. From pre-empting regular programming in the early days of the war, to covering the dramatic capture of Saddam Hussein months later, we kept Canadians abreast of the unfolding crisis. In special CBC Television programming such as *CBC News: Inquiry – Deadline Iraq: Uncensored Stories of the War* and Télévision de Radio-Canada's *Le Monde sous tension*, we went beyond the headlines to bring Canadians insights they would find nowhere else. In *Afghanistan: Yesterday's Promises/Afghanistan, deux ans après les talibans*, our English and French Radio networks also collaborated on a special week of documentaries and news reports from that war-torn region. Canadians certainly noticed and appreciated our efforts. When asked which network they tuned to for a Canadian perspective on the events occurring in Iraq, twice as many named CBC/Radio-Canada as any other broadcaster.

### ***Through relevant, timely and accessible programs***

Canadians received CBC/Radio-Canada's acclaimed coverage through a broad range of regular and special information programs tailored to their specific interests and needs.

Télévision de Radio-Canada and Réseau de l'information (RDI) offered such weekday News bulletins as *Matin express*, *L'Heure du midi* and *Aujourd'hui*. In addition to daily news highlights, *Le Téléjournal/Le Point* presented such compelling features as *La malbouffe dans les écoles* (shocking facts about food habits in schools), *L'industrie de la charité* (about charities' profits from the sale of used clothing), and *La vie dans les dépotoirs du Mexique* (about how some Mexican families live on the spoils of garbage

dumps). Through weekly current affairs programming such as *Zone libre*, *Enjeux*, *La Facture*, *Découverte*, *L'Épicerie*, *Justice*, *La Semaine verte*, *Second regard*, *Culture-choc*, and *5 sur 5*, the networks examined virtually every aspect of contemporary life. This year, two new programs were added: *Place publique*, which gives audiences the opportunity on television and on the Web to comment on the week's news and current affairs, and *Aujourd'hui*, a News program covering national events as well as regional happenings in Québec and the Ottawa-Gatineau area.

CBC Television and CBC Newsworld offered a wide range of regular News programming, including such leading programs as *CBC News: The National* and *CBC News: Canada Now* (with its unique combination of national, international and regional news), as well as *Absolutely Canadian* (CBC Newsworld's window on happenings in every region of the country). Among the networks' top current affairs programs were *the fifth estate* (in its 29th season), *counterSpin*, *Marketplace*, and *Country Canada* (one of the longest-running programs on Canadian television). Again this year, *CBC News: Big Picture* presented day-long examinations of topical issues of concern to Canadians through stories on multiple programs and services. Titles included *Gambling: Risky Business*, *Going to Pot*, *Insurance ... at a Premium*, and *Stopping SARS*. In one of the year's finest examples of cross-media collaboration and News integration, CBC News presented *Faint Warning – Adverse Drug Reactions*, a groundbreaking investigative report on Canada's adverse drug reaction warning system that uncovered an alarming trend among Canadian children prescribed drugs not approved for their use. CBC Radio and CBC Television focused on personal stories that illuminated the larger public





policy theme, while *CBC.ca* exploited the strengths of online interactivity and presentation of hard data. Over 10,000 Canadians viewed the Health Canada drug database within 24 hours of its posting on *CBC.ca*.

For radio listeners, the Première Chaîne de Radio-Canada and the Chaîne culturelle de Radio-Canada offered daily News, as well as top-quality current affairs programs like *Maisonnette en direct*, *Désautels*, *Sans frontières*, *Les Affaires et la Vie*, and *Dimanche magazine*. Among the networks' special presentations were *Toute la vérité* (a behind-the-scenes look at a court case). In an outstanding example of cross-media cooperation, the Première Chaîne de Radio-Canada and CBC Radio One also presented a special week-long series called *Haiti: A Country Never Dies/Un pays ne meurt jamais : Haïti* that went beyond the headlines of Haiti's most recent political unrest.

CBC Radio One and CBC Radio Two together delivered 36 hours of News programming each week, on such programs as *World Report* and *The World at Six*. Our Radio networks also presented over 100 hours of leading-edge current affairs programming like *The House*, *The Current* (in its second season, offering a fresh perspective on national and international issues) and *As It Happens* (celebrating 35 years of presenting the issues, voices and stories that Canadians want to hear). As well, *Sounds Like Canada* took listeners on a visit every weekday to the communities and people who make this country so diverse, complex and exciting.

Recognising the importance of the Internet as a source of on-demand News and information for increasing numbers of Canadians, *CBC.ca* and *Radio-Canada.ca* worked very closely with our

French and English News teams to enrich and build upon our broadcast coverage, and to offer Canadians a platform for sharing their diverse views about our programming and the issues and stories we cover. The websites offered Radio and Television broadcast material, wireless News and information, discussion fora, access to digital archives material, and much more. Canadians' reactions have been overwhelmingly positive. With an average of nearly six million visits per month, *Radio-Canada.ca* remained the number one Francophone media site in Canada. *CBC.ca* more than doubled its audience and emerged as the number one English-language media website in Canada.

#### ***And award-winning documentaries***

Canadians have long valued CBC/Radio-Canada for fascinating and provocative documentaries that challenge, inspire and keep us thinking about important topics and issues. Again, CBC/Radio-Canada delivered. CBC Television and Télévision de Radio-Canada, for example, worked together on a wide range of special documentaries, including *The Investigation of Swissair 111/Swissair : l'enquête*, and *Blessed Teresa of Calcutta: The Making of a Saint/ Bienheureuse Teresa de Calcutta; La voie vers la sainteté*. RDI's *Grands Reportages* presented original Canadian documentaries, including *Sexe de rue* (the life of sex trade workers), and *Pour l'amour de Dieu* (about a religious cult). CBC Newsworld presented creative and provocative documentaries through *The Passionate Eye*, and showcased documentaries from Canada's experienced and emerging independent producers on *Rough Cuts*. In the decade since *Rough Cuts'* launch, CBC Newsworld has commissioned and broadcast more than 200 original Canadian documentaries. To mark the program's





10th anniversary, CBC Newsworld launched a special documentary festival called *Cinema REAL*. CBC Worldwide produced a number of outstanding documentaries, including *Robbing the Cradle of Civilization* (about the looting of Iraq's National Museum), *Sex, Drugs and Middle Age* (the medical realities of aging) and *Asteroid! The Doomsday Rock* (profiling the work of asteroid scientists as they track prospective threats to our planet).

