

Canadian Effort to Promote Cultural Diversity in Television

There are glaring gaps in the presence of visible minorities on Canadian television screens and widespread dissatisfaction with such under-representation, says the report of TV industry task force. A research study entitled Reflecting Canadians: Best Practices for Cultural Diversity in Private Television was commissioned by the Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications Commission.

These were among the findings: major advancement is needed in the area of cultural diversity on Canadian TV, with Canadians and Asian and Southeast Asian descent particularly under-represented. Focus groups participants found persistent stereotyping, negative portrayals and a virtual absence of aboriginal representation outside of APTN, the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network specialty channel. Few experts or guests from culturally diverse background are used in English TV news, and few onscreen roles, such as anchor or reporter, are filled by visible minorities on French-language news. Visible minorities fill few primary roles in English-language drama.

The Canadian broadcasting industry learned a startling truth about itself when a study was performed and found very little diversity among the major channels being broadcasted. Diversity comes with its many advantages, some challenges and very few disadvantages.

The Canadian broadcasting companies have noticed the lack of minorities and have moved to recognize the fault and change it.

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