



Communication

Canada



Towards Action

**Issues and Challenges of Communicating
with Canadians with Low
Literacy Skills**

Final Report
Communication Canada
April 2003

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Introduction

The following report provides an in-depth look at the information needs and preferences of Canadians with low literacy skills and the impact this has on Government of Canada communications. It stems from Statistics Canada's research showing that 48 per cent of Canadians have low literacy skills. That study is what initially led Communication Canada to enquire into the effects of low literacy on government communications.

In 2000, Communication Canada undertook the first study of its kind focusing on the issues and challenges inherent in communicating with less literate Canadians. In 2002, Communication Canada decided to probe more deeply the effects that low literacy has on the perceptions of information received from the Government of Canada. The results of both these studies are part of Communication Canada's continuing efforts to promote the use of accessible and inclusive communications strategies in government communications.

These initiatives have led to a more profound understanding of the need to simplify and clarify government communications. This is the reason that this most recent research served as the impetus for developing a groundbreaking toolkit entitled, *Successful Communication: Literacy and You*, a practical resource being distributed in May 2003 to government communicators across the country.

This report reminds us of the importance of three basic principles of communicating successfully: being relevant, being understood and being persuasive. Applying these principles ensures that all segments of Canadian society are included in government communications initiatives advising Canadians about our policies, programs, and services.

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Executive Summary

People with low literacy skills are ambivalent about government actions and initiatives. This is not surprising considering that Communication Canada's recent study, *Towards Action Issues and Challenges of Communicating with Canadians with Low Literacy Skills*, has shown that two-thirds of this group feel that they don't have enough information on Government programs and services to be clear about, let alone understand what the government is doing. Furthermore, research shows that almost as many people with low literacy skills find the information they do receive unreliable.

The results from this study also show that people with low literacy skills are more likely to be concerned about social issues yet they believe that the Government of Canada's is not paying enough attention to these issues. Like other Canadians, they want to be better informed but they communicate with the Government less frequently and they find it hard to understand and recall the information that is sent to them. Perhaps surprisingly, they prefer written communications despite difficulties with comprehension. Written materials allow them to assimilate the information at their own pace and refer to it later. The research also shows that when they do take the initiative to communicate with the Government, they do so mainly by telephone or in person. In fact more than half know of the 1 800 O-Canada line and over a third actually use it.

When seen in light of Statistics Canada's reports that half of Canadians have low literacy skills, Communication Canada's research begins to take on even more significance for communicators in the public service. These new results also revealed what Canadians are looking for in Government communication pieces, whether verbal, written, televised and/or Web based. They are looking for easy to understand, step-by-step explanations of what to do and why it is important to them. They want concrete solutions to their problems provided in clear and simple terms.

This study demonstrates the need for a change in the way communicators perceive their craft and the way in which messages to the Canadians public are developed. It calls to mind the challenges of communicating successfully:

- To be relevant: taking into account the priority and the perspective of Canadians;
- To be understood: writing and organizing information in a clear and simple manner;
- To be persuasive: basing information on concrete results and actions.

This study shows conclusively that the challenges inherent in communicating with Canadians with low literacy skills have yet to be overcome. In raising awareness about these findings, this study can be seen as a constructive step in that process.

Literacy and Communication

Literacy and Communication

**Ability to read,
write and
calculate**

**Written texts
Written logic**

Locate

Understand

Use

To accomplish everyday tasks

- Literacy is defined and measured as an individual's ability to read, write and calculate sufficiently well as to meet the daily needs of modern life.
- The most recent data, published in 1996 by Statistics Canada as part of the International Adult Literacy Survey, show that 22% of Canadians have very serious difficulty reading, while 26% have serious difficulty.
- These data suggest that nearly one out of two Canadians, at one time or another, find it very difficult not only to find pertinent information, but also to understand information and use it in accomplishing their daily tasks.
- In terms of communication, the challenges posed by a low level of literacy are considerable not only because the written word is omnipresent (in flyers, forms, Internet sites, newspapers), but also because visual and verbal communication is often based on written logic.

Literacy in Canada

(% at levels 1 and 2 on a scale of 5)

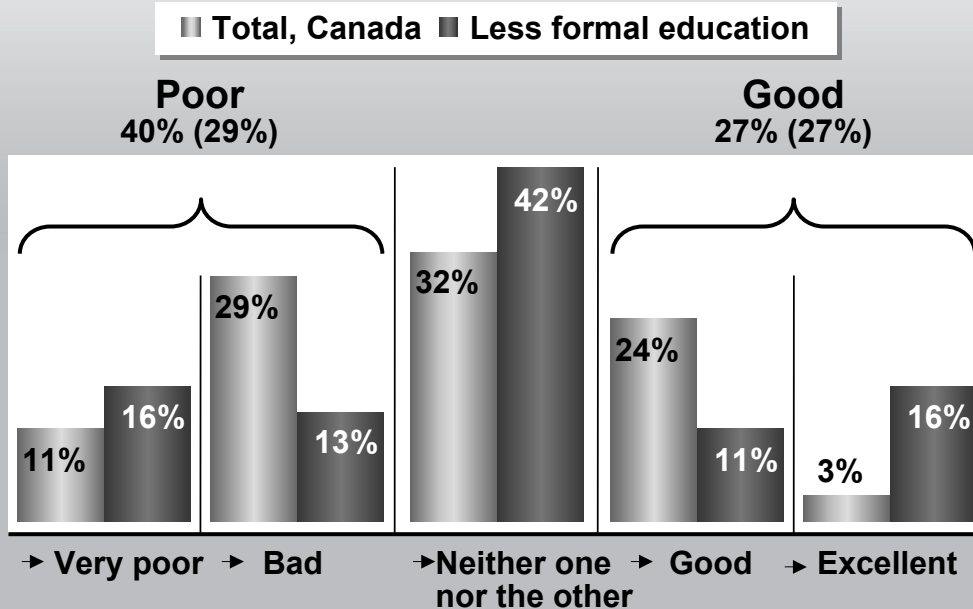
Less than Grade 8 →	98%
Completed Grade 8 →	88%
Over 65 years old →	80%
56 to 65 years old →	64%
Partial high-school education →	61%
Immigrants →	56%
\$8,000 - \$18,000 →	54%
Total for Canada →	48%
26 to 35 years old →	41%
16 to 25 years old →	37%

Statistics Canada – 1996

- According to Statistics Canada, literacy problems are most prevalent among:
 - persons with less formal education;
 - older people;
 - immigrants;
 - persons with low income.
- This problem may persist for some time. Even today, more than one person out of three under the age of 35 has difficulty reading and/or writing at the present time.

Perceptions of the Government of Canada

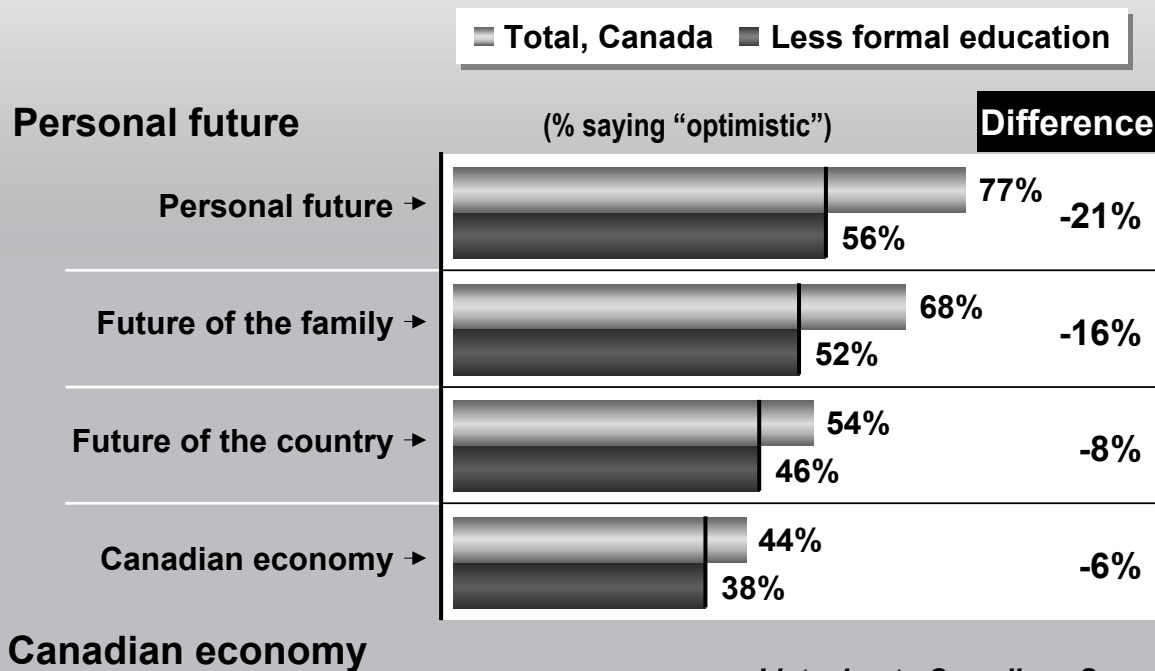
Overall Performance Evaluation



Listening to Canadians – Spring 2002

- As shown in the chart, Canadians with less formal education are more ambivalent about the the overall performance of the Government of Canada.
- In fact, 42% believe that the overall performance of the Government of Canada is neither poor nor good, compared to 32% of the overall population.
- According to the results from various Communication Canada surveys on government communication, this continues to be the case.

Optimism about the Future



Listening to Canadians Surveys

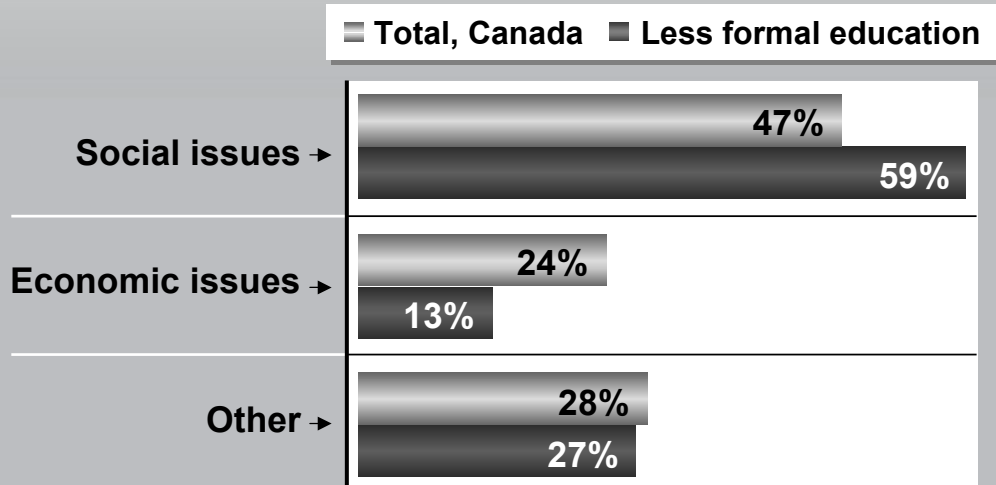
- As shown in the chart, less educated people are not as optimistic about their personal future than other Canadians.
- According to studies by Crop¹ at the 2000 forum on communications and literacy, people with low literacy skills are generally more intuitive, are more accepting of situations and have a strong aversion to risk.
- They are firmly entrenched in their family and circle of friends. They share a set of beliefs or attitudes which draw on their feelings rather than on their knowledge.

¹ Crop, *Communications and Literacy: Challenges and Opportunities*, participants' workbook, National forum on communications and literacy, November 2000.

Top-of-Mind Issues

“Thinking of the issues facing Canada today, which one would you say the Government of Canada should focus on most?”

(% who responded “should focus on”)



Listening to Canadians – Fall 2002

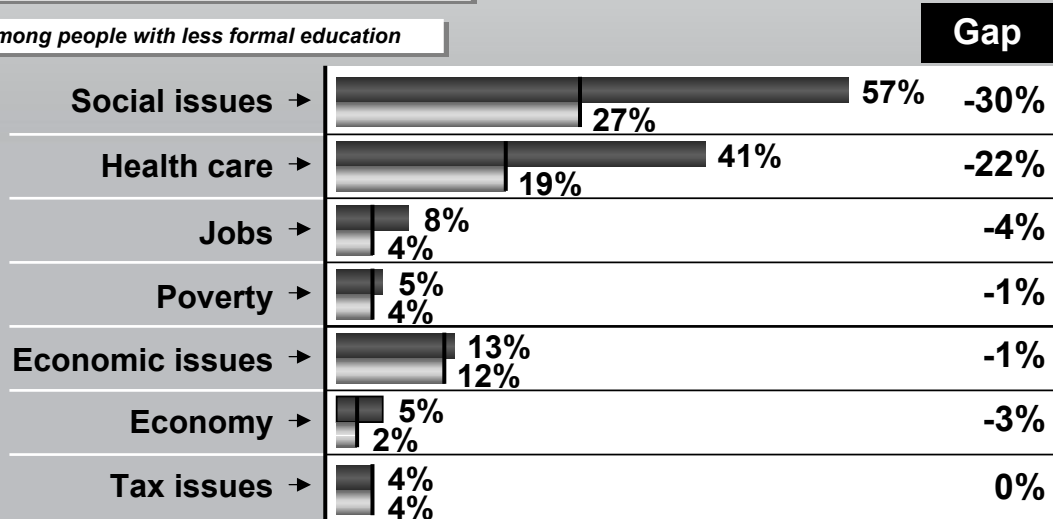
- People with low literacy skills are more concerned than other Canadians about social issues.

Government Action and Priorities: Perceptions

34% do not know what the Government of Canada will give priority to

Should give priority to ■
Will give priority to ■

% among people with less formal education

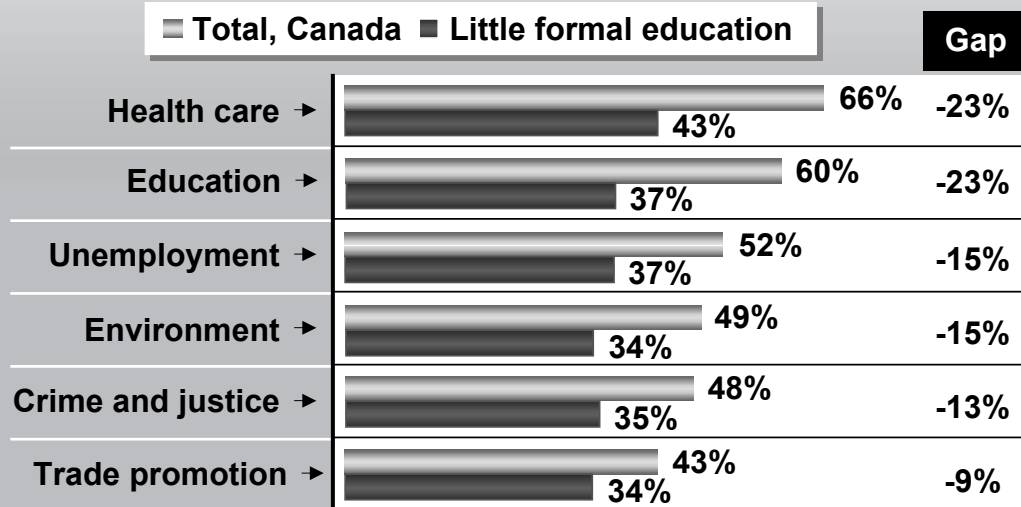


Listening to Canadians – Fall 2002

- However, they are of the opinion that the Government of Canada does not share their concerns about social issues, especially health care.
- More important still, over one third (34%) do not know what the Government of Canada's priorities are.

Familiarity with Government of Canada Initiatives

(% of those with “high” familiarity)

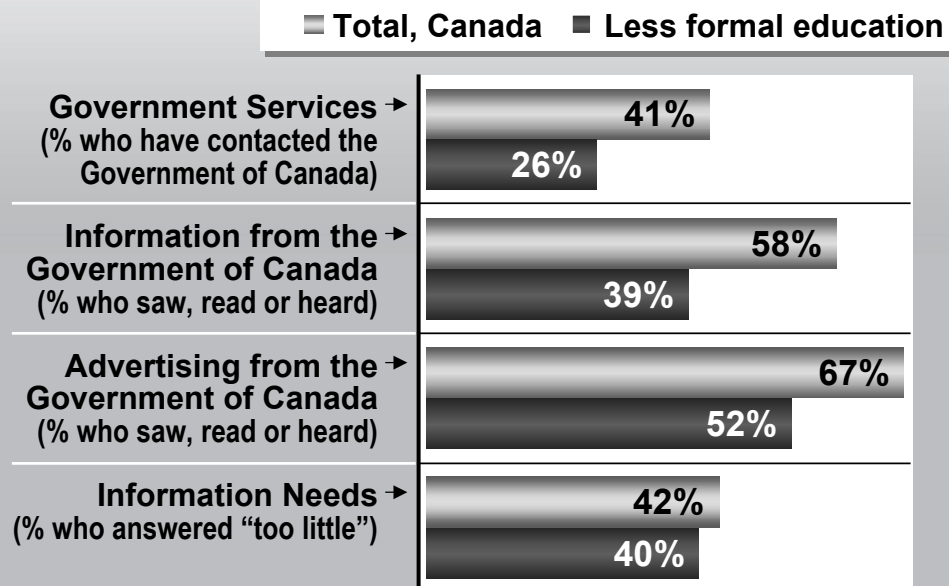


*Issues and Challenges in Communicating with
Less Literate Canadians – September 2000*

- And they are less familiar than other Canadians with the initiatives taken by the Government of Canada, particularly on issues that they consider important, such as:
 - health care;
 - education;
 - unemployment;
 - environment.

**Government of Canada
Communications**

Contacts with the Government of Canada

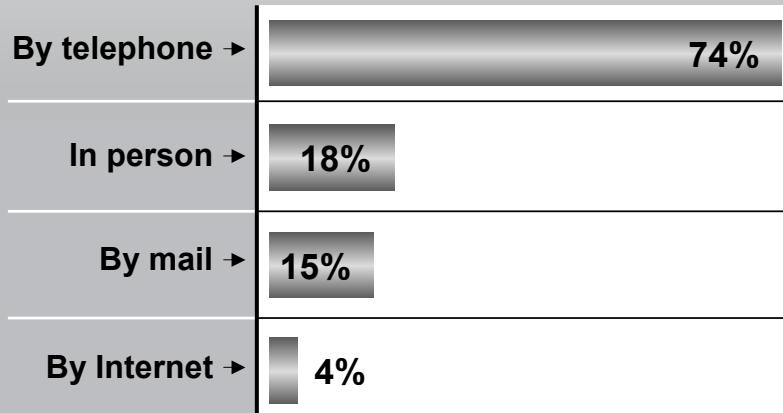


Listening to Canadians – Fall 2000 / Spring 2002

- Those with less formal education communicate less with the Government of Canada.
- However, as with other Canadians, they want to be better informed.

Means of Communicating with the Government of Canada

26% of those with less formal education contacted the Government of Canada in the three months prior to the survey.

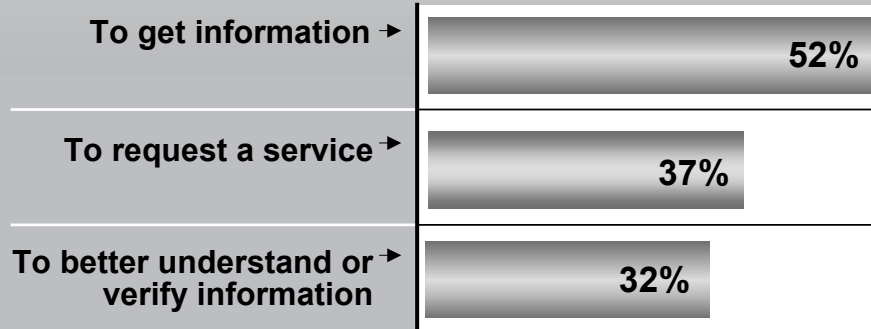


Listening to Canadians – Spring 2002

- When they communicate with the Government, people with low literacy skills prefer direct contact, by telephone or in person, preferably with the same agent.
- They look for a single, reliable and understanding contact.

Objectives of Contact with the Government of Canada

*“The last time you contacted the Government of Canada, why did you do so?
Was it...?”*

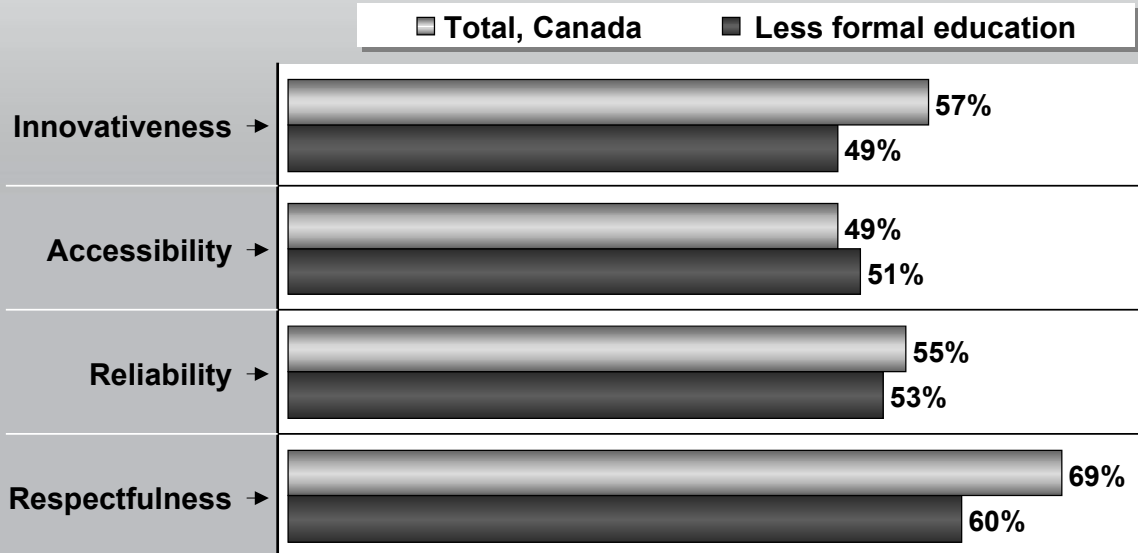


Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- People who contacted the Government during the three months preceding the 2002 literacy survey did so to get information (52%), to request a government service (37%), or to better understand or verify information provided (32%).

Service Delivery Evaluation

(% who responded “good” performance)

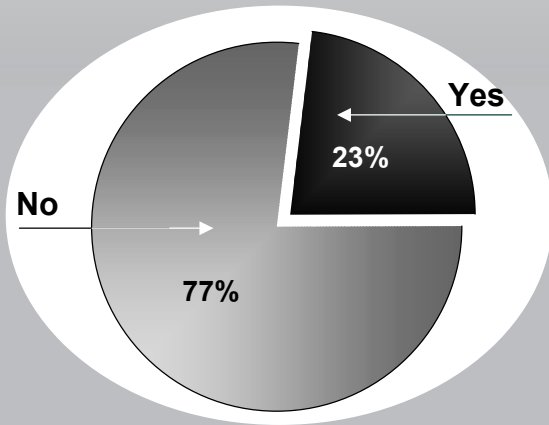


Listening to Canadians – Spring 2002

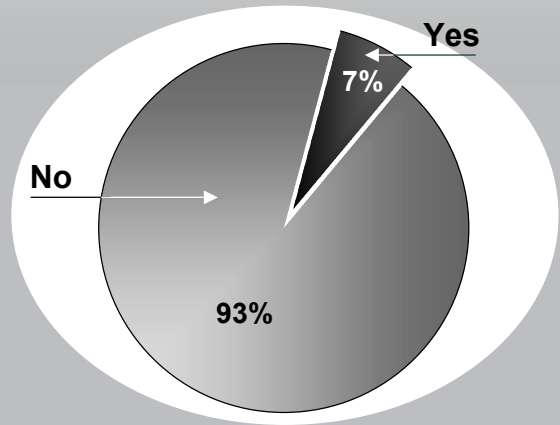
- Overall, those with less formal education evaluate service delivery less favourably.
- According to the results from the various communication surveys undertaken by Communication Canada, a significantly lower percentage of these people evaluate the quality of the service or information received favourably and a higher percentage indicate that they do not get entirely what they were looking for.

Understanding of Government of Canada Information

“Have you asked anyone to explain what the information you received from the Government of Canada meant?”



“If you did not communicate personally with the Government of Canada in the last three months, did someone else do it on your behalf?”



Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- A significant number of less literate individuals count on other people to explain to them information received from the Government of Canada (23%) or simply to contact the Government on their behalf (7%).

Information Channels

23% asked someone else to explain what the information received from the Government of Canada meant.

Family member →	51%
Spouse →	20%
Other family member →	20%
Child →	11%
Friend →	32%

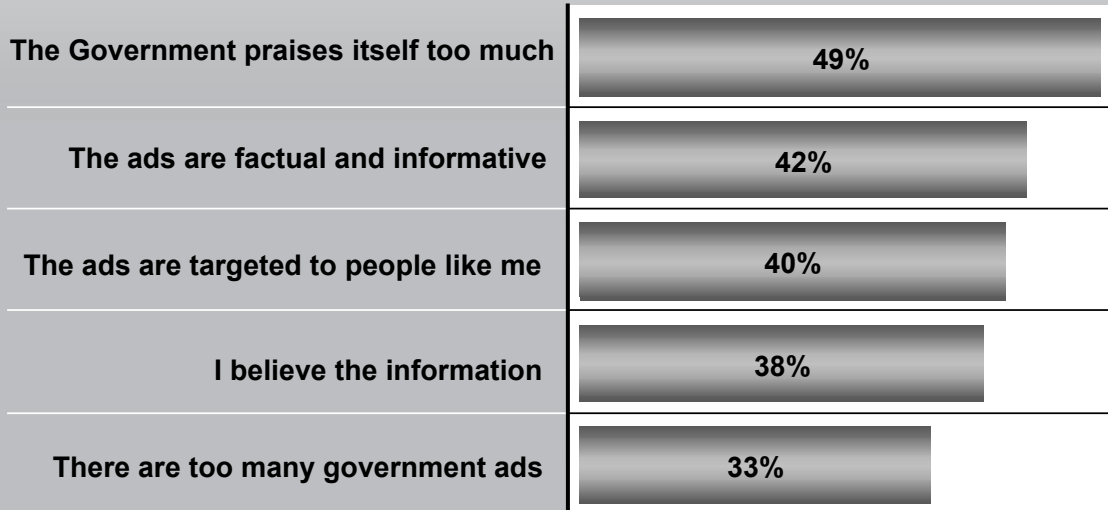
Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- When this is the case, Canadians with low literacy skills first call on their immediate circle of resources, often a member of the family, that is, someone with whom they have already established and tested a level of confidence (a spouse, a child, a close friend).

Views Regarding Government Advertising

“Thinking about Government of Canada ads, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements.”

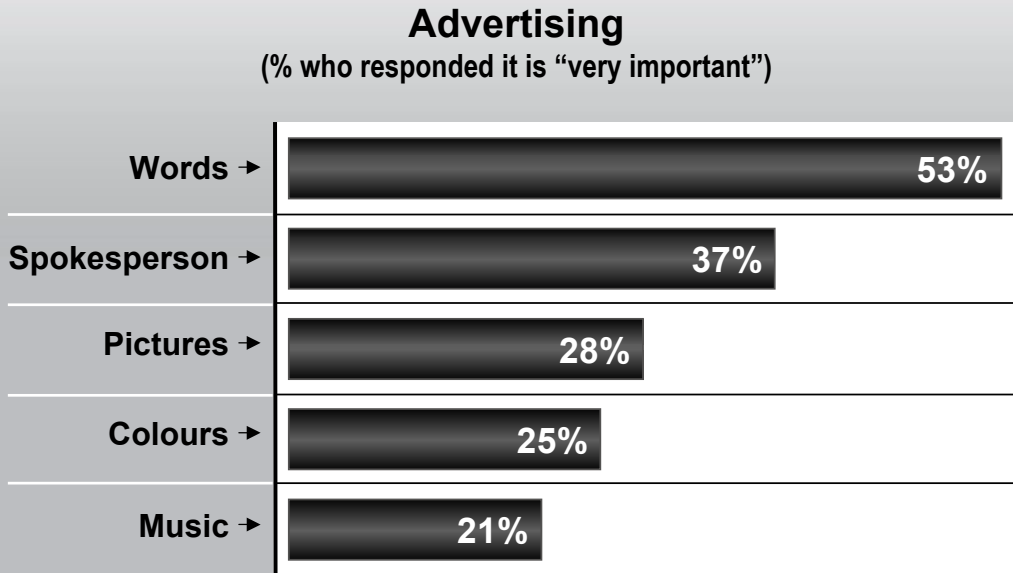
(% who responded “I agree”)



Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- While people with low literacy skills generally believe government advertising to be factual and informative, a strong percentage found it praises itself too much.
- The Literacy Survey also shows that only two out of five people (40%) think that government advertising is targeted to them.

Advertising Preferences

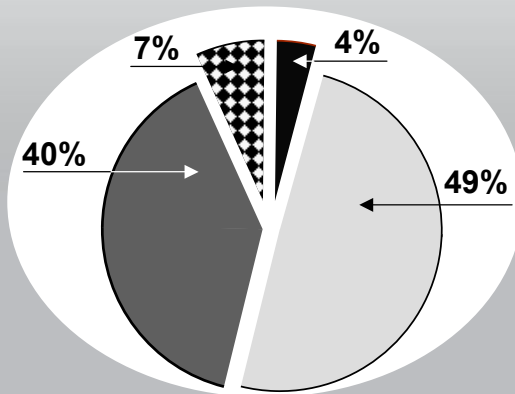


Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- With respect to advertising, Canadians with low literacy skills accord great importance to the choice of words, the spokesperson and, to a lesser extent, to the pictures.
- Recent Créatec studies for the Fédération canadienne pour l’alphabétisation en français have shown that, to facilitate understanding, it is important that all these elements work in harmony with each other in order to retain their attention.
- Furthermore, the results of the Literacy Survey (see Appendix B) suggest that the advertising style must suit the contents of the message.

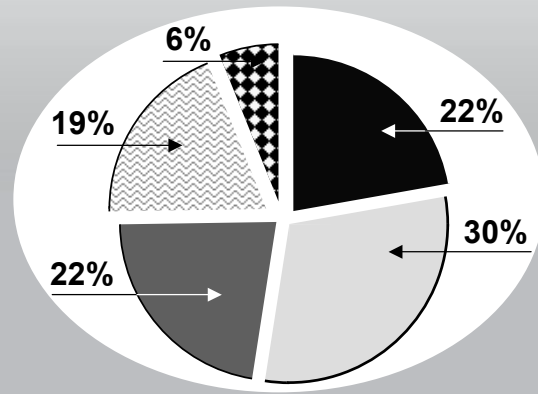
Information Needs

Information provided by the Government of Canada



■ Too much
□ The right amount
■ Too little
▨ Don't know/refused

Need for information

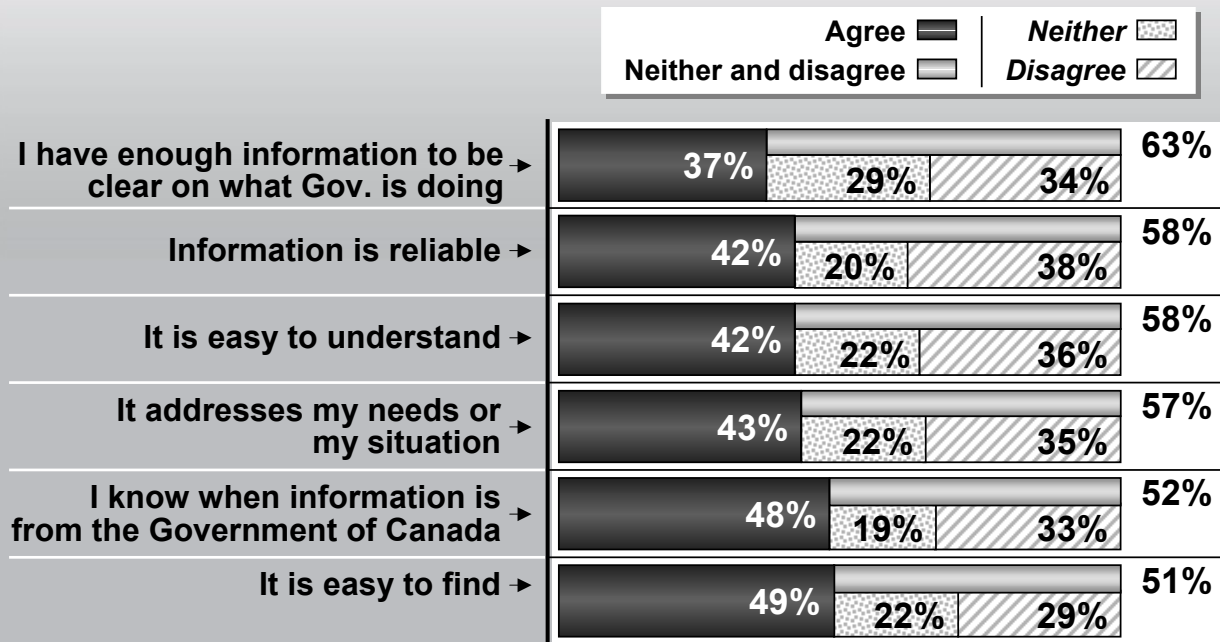


■ Strongly
□ Enough
■ A little
▨ Not at all
▨ Don't know/refused

Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- Four out of ten respondents (40%) believe the Government of Canada provides too little information on programs and services from the Government and more than one out of two say they strongly (22%) or somewhat (30%) feel the need to inform themselves.

Government Information



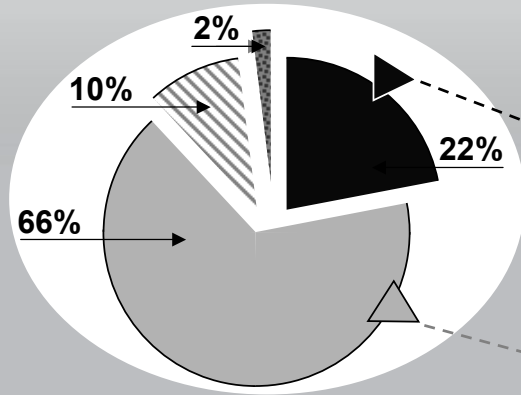
Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- Close to two thirds of the respondents (63%) of the Literacy Survey indicated that they did not have enough information to be clear on what the Government of Canada is doing.
- When information is available, many of them find that it is not very reliable or find it difficult to understand, while others believe that the information does not meet their needs.
- Fewer than one out of two respondents say they can tell when information is sponsored by the Government of Canada or are confident they could find information from the Government of Canada.

Communication Preferences

Preferred Means of Receiving Government of Canada Information

"Do you prefer to receive written or spoken information from the Government of Canada?"



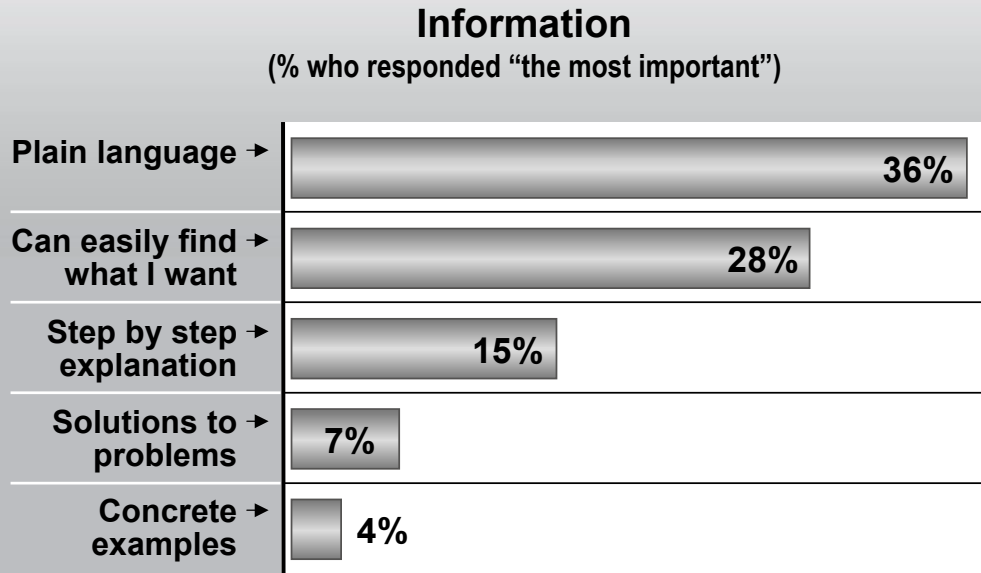
■ Spoken
 ■ Written
 ▨ Either
 ▩ Don't know/refused

Easier to understand	40%
Reading difficulties	9%
Can ask questions	8%
More time to read	41%
Easier to understand	27%
Written proof	10%

Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- Canadians with low literacy skills indicated a clear preference for written information.
- Written information allows them to take in the information at their own pace and to keep the information for future reference.

Information Preferences

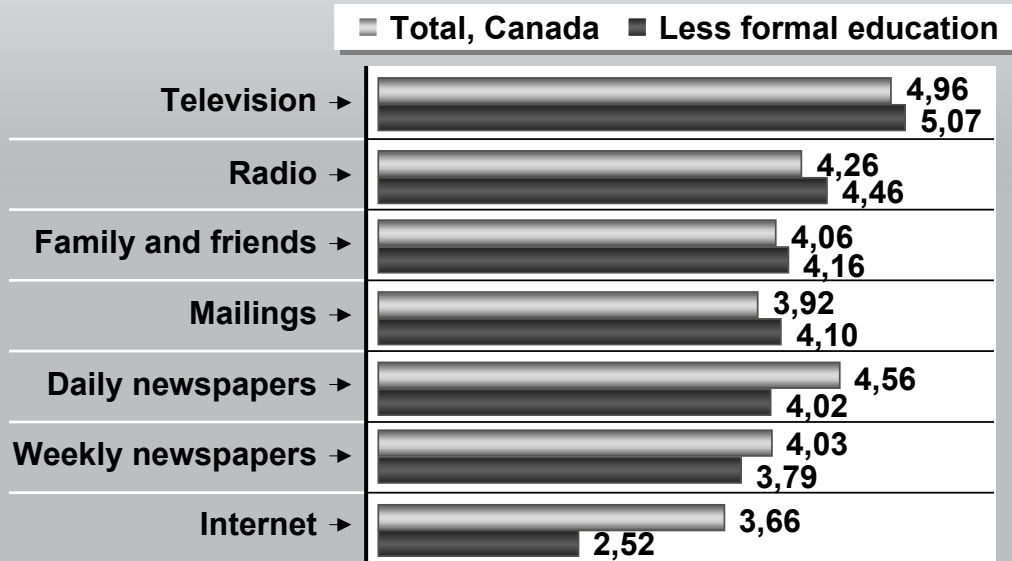


Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- People with low literacy skills also want to receive information that is in plain language, organized so that it is easy to find what they want.
- While it is less of a priority, they want to be shown, step by step, how to access government services. They are seeking information on how government services can solve their problems, using concrete examples.

Influence of Information Sources

"I would like you to tell me to what degree each of the following factors has affected your overall impression of the Government of Canada."



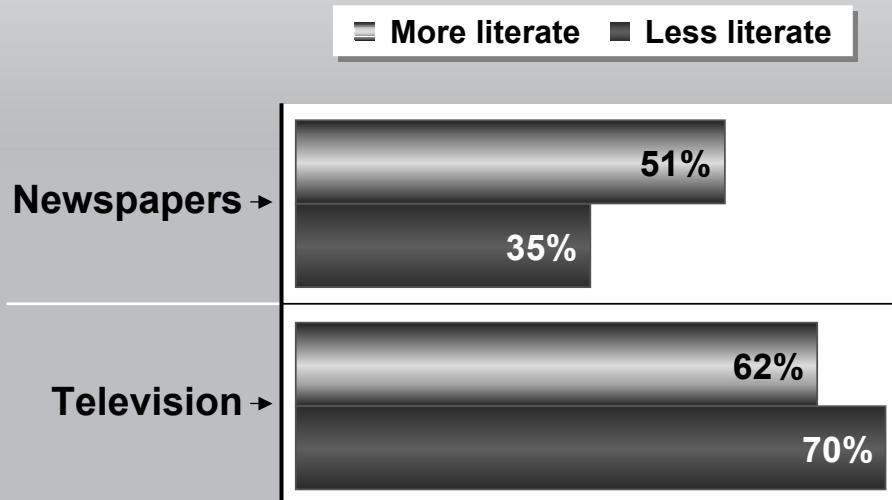
Average calculated on a scale from 1 to 7

Listening to Canadians – Fall 2001

- Nonetheless, it is important not to underestimate how other means of communication affect their views of the Government of Canada.
- Television and radio play a decisive role.
- In keeping with previous observations, family, friends and mailings also have a considerable influence.

Major Sources of Information

“Do you get a lot of information from...?”

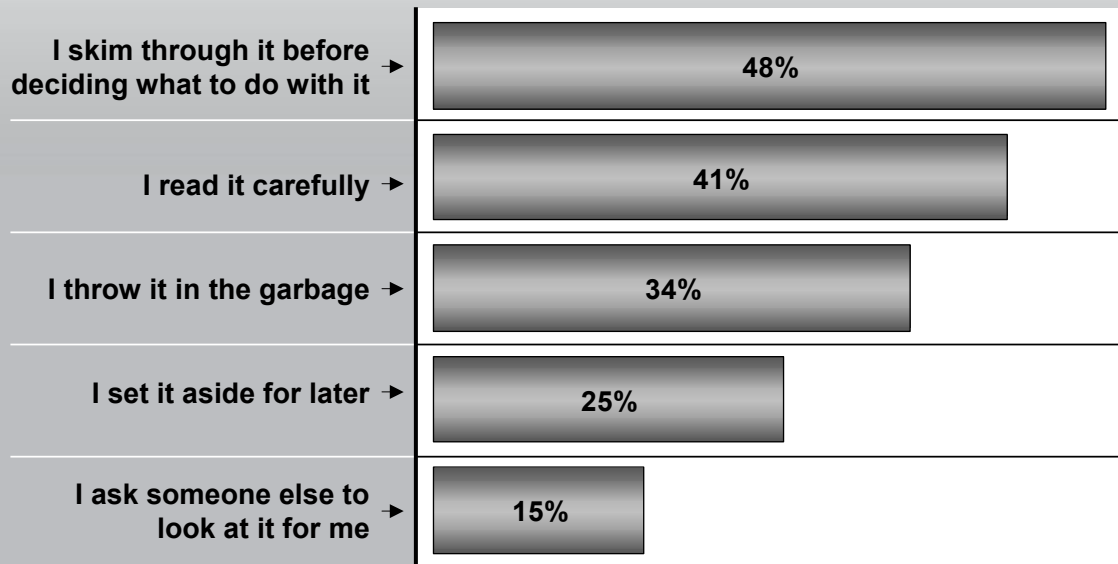


Statistics Canada – 1996

- As Statistics Canada studies show, television remains a preferred method for conveying information.

Information Received by Mail

“In general, when you receive information from the Government in the mail, what do you do with it?”



Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- When receiving information through the mail, close to half (48%) of less literate people say they skim through it before deciding what to do with it, while 41% say they read it carefully.
- These are similar to results of other surveys conducted with the overall population.

Knowledge of Access Points

1 800 O-Canada Telephone number

Knowledge →

55%

Use →

29%

canada.gc.ca Web site

Knowledge →

34%

Use →

10%

Literacy Survey – Spring 2002

- In terms of common access points to the Government of Canada, more than one out of two respondents in the Literacy Survey said they knew that the Government of Canada had a toll-free telephone number, 1 800 O-Canada, while close to one third said they were aware of the Web site.

Communication Issues

What they think

- Complex words, administrative jargon, acronyms
- Large amount of information in the space available
 - Quantity instead of quality
 - Information that is general, not relevant

What they expect

Plain language

Information organized in a way that makes it easy to find required information

Literacy Surveys – Spring 2000 and 2002

- On the left side of the chart, we see what people think of government communications and on the right is what they expect.
- They have the impression that the information is too complicated, technical and irrelevant.
- They want information that is clear, simple and logically organized.

Communication Issues

What they think

- Intent, explanations and rationale
- Launching of new initiatives without concrete results
- General information

What they expect

Show how to access government services, step by step

Explain how services provide solutions to problems

Inform using concrete examples

Literacy Surveys – Spring 2000 and 2002

- They are not interested in vague promises and rationale.
- Instead, they want to find out how to access programs and services, step by step.
- They think we place too much emphasis on the announcement of new initiatives.
- They also think that the information is too general.
- They want us to explain, using concrete examples, how to solve their problems.

The East Coast Reader: Promoting Clear and Simple Language

**Choose relevant information,
avoid complex structures**

BEFORE:

(38 words)➤

The Celebrate Canada Committee for Nova Scotia, today announced that Stephanie Currie, 15, a student at Prince Arthur Junior High School in Dartmouth, has been chosen as the Nova Scotia finalist in the Canada Day Poster Challenge 2001.

AFTER:

(20 words)➤

Canada Day was extra special this year for Stephanie Currie, Nova Scotia's finalist in the Canada Day Poster Challenge 2001.

(21 words)➤

The 15-year-old student at Prince Arthur Junior High School in Dartmouth was the guest of the Celebrate Canada Committee.

- These examples are taken from a special edition of the *East Coast Reader*. This newspaper is written in plain language, published by a Nova Scotia non-profit organization.
- The excerpt submitted was edited by the *East Coast Reader*.
- As you can see, communicating clearly and simply presupposes having a clear idea of what one wants to say and what will interest people with a low literacy level.
- The text submitted which had a complex structure and 38 words in a single sentence, has been reduced to two main ideas that emphasize the story, that is, a student from the region.

The East Coast Reader: Promoting Clear and Simple Language

Adopt a direct tone and stick to the facts

BEFORE:

The Coastal-Airport Watch Program has two goals:

- To teach **people** what to look for and
- To help them effectively transmit any information to the **appropriate law enforcement agency**

AFTER:

The Coastal-Airport Watch Program has two goals:

- To teach **you** what to look for and
- To help you send your information to the **police**

- In communicating, it is important to consider the point of view of people with low literacy levels, to use a direct tone and to stick to the facts.
- In the example, reference to “people” has been replaced with the personal form “you” and “appropriate law enforcement agency” with “police.”
- These changes may seem minor, but they make all the difference in understanding the message.

The East Coast Reader: Promoting Clear and Simple Language

Write short sentences, link ideas and ensure consistency in word choice

BEFORE:

- Founded in 1981, the company employs approximately 100 permanent workers and provides over 1,000 seasonal jobs.

AFTER:

- The company employs 100 full-time workers.
- It also employs many seasonal workers.
- The company was founded (started) in 1981.

- In this example, the text submitted uses two different nouns (“workers” and “jobs”) and two different verbs (“employs” and “provides”) to describe the same reality in a single sentence.
- The edited text kept a single word, “workers,” and a single verb, “employs.” The three ideas presented in the initial text were explained in three short sentences.
- These simple ways encourage clear and simple communication.

Guide to Government of Canada Services for Seniors and their Families

Information organized in a way that makes it easy to find required information

- Information on over one hundred programs and services in a single document
- Information grouped together according to subject
- Brief introduction and user guide
- Use of bold print to emphasize key ideas and important information



- In terms of organizing information, let us take the example of the *Services for Seniors* guide.
- The guide has information on over 100 programs and services. Less literate people appreciate this kind of tool; it helps them find relevant information.
- In order to make it easier for the reader, the guide has a short introduction followed by an explanation on how to use the guide.
- The information is grouped according to specific subjects and based on concrete results.
- Bold print is used throughout the publication to highlight key ideas and important information, making it easier for the reader to look for information.

Acknowledgements

Acknowledgements

This study on government communications with less literate Canadians was initiated and directed by Communication Canada as part of its mandate to improve communications between the Government of Canada and Canadians. For this purpose, Communication Canada works with other government departments and agencies to inform Canadians about the government services available to them. In conducting projects such as this one, it endeavours to promote sustained improvement in government communications, and to support and advise government communicators by making available the results of citizen-based research.

However, this study would not have been made possible without the invaluable co-operation of those Canadians who responded to the survey and participated in the interviews. We wish to thank them. We would also like to stress the exceptional contribution of several government departments, agencies and public opinion research firms. We would like to thank everyone who, in one way or another, was involved in this project, especially: Ms. Heidi Liepold and Ms. Lianne Vardey, of the National Literacy Secretariat; Mr. Michel Gauthier and Mr. Yves St-Onge, of Human Resources Development Canada; Mr. Jean Pignal, of Statistics Canada; and Ms. Denyse Dufresne, of Industry Canada. Special thanks to Mr. Duncan McKie of Pollara, as well as to his colleagues, who worked on the quantitative study.

We would also like to acknowledge the collaborative efforts of Ms. Wendy Desbrisay, of the Movement for Canadian Literacy, and those of Ms. Luce Lapierre, of the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français, as well as the members of their respective organizations.

Appendix A

Methodology

Surveys

Special Surveys

- Two surveys conducted by Pollara:
 - January 7 to February 2, 2000, with 1,003 respondents (margin of error of +/- 3.1%)
 - March 15 to April 22, 2000, with 1,002 respondents (margin of error of +/- 3.1%)
- Both surveys were conducted among Canadians who had completed Grade 8 education or less.
 - The results are an indicator of persons with low literacy skills.
 - According to Statistics Canada, at least 88% of Canadians with a Grade 8 education or less have low literacy skills.
- Both surveys dealt with the views of less literate Canadians on Government of Canada communications.

Interviews and Focus Groups

- In May 2000, COGEM performed 46 individual interviews with less literate Canadians for Communication Canada.
- In May and in June 2002, Créatec and the Fédération canadienne pour l'alphabétisation en français jointly performed 54 interviews, including five focus groups.
- All of these interviews were held with Canadians registered in a literacy program (level 2 of Statistics Canada's five levels).
- Participants were invited to give their opinion on written and televised Government of Canada advertisements.

Regular Surveys – *Listening to Canadians*

- On average, 200 respondents per survey indicated having completed Grade 8 or less (margin of error of +/- 6.9%).
- Only recurring results and results that differed greatly from the national average were retained.

Appendix B

Main Survey Results* Literacy Survey Spring 2002

*** For more details on this survey, see: “A Study of Perceptions and Attitudes of Less Literate Canadians,” Pollara, June 2002.**

INFORMATION

The following questions deal with government information in general.

1. Thinking about information provided to you by the Government of Canada about its policies, programs and services, would you say you receive too much, too little or about the right amount of information?

Too much	4%
Too little	40%
About the right amount	49%
Don't know/refused	7%

2. Do you feel a lot, somewhat, a little or not at all, the need to inform yourself more about policies, programs and services from the Government of Canada?

A lot	22%
Somewhat	30%
A little	22%
Not at all	19%
Don't know/refused	6%

Tell me if you agree or disagree with the following statements using a scale of 1 to 7 where 1 means you completely disagree and 7 means you completely agree, and 4, neither one nor the other. [REPEAT SCALE AS NECESSARY]

3. I believe I am provided with enough information from the Government of Canada to be clear on what it is doing.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	34%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	29%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	37%

4. I'm confident I could find information from the Government of Canada about programs and services.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	29%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	22%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	49%

5. I think information from the Government of Canada is easy to understand.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	36%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	22%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	42%

6. I think the information I get from the Government of Canada is reliable.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	38%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	20%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	42%

7. I find that information from the Government of Canada addresses my needs or situation.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	35%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	22%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	43%

8. I can tell when information is sponsored by the Government of Canada.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	33%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	19%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	48%

9. I am now going to read you a few statements about ways the Government of Canada might communicate with you. Please tell me which one is the most important to you.

Informs me using concrete examples	4%
Explains how the Government's services can solve my problems	7%
Shows me, step by step, how I can access government services	15%
Uses clear and simple language that I can understand	36%
Organizes information in a way that I can easily find what I want	28%
Don't know/no answer	9%

10. Please tell me, of the four methods you did not choose, which is the most important to you? [READ THE FOUR METHODS NOT CHOSEN]

Informs me using concrete examples	6%
Explains how the Government's services can solve my problems	10%
Shows me, step by step, how I can access government services	17%
Uses clear and simple language that I can understand	20%
Organizes information in a way that I can easily find what I want	20%
Don't know/no answer	27%

11. Please tell me, of the three methods you did not choose, which is the least important to you? [READ THE THREE METHODS NOT CHOSEN]

Informs me using concrete examples	28%
Explains how the Government's services can solve my problems	17%
Shows me, step by step, how I can access government services	19%
Uses clear and simple language that I can understand	11%
Organizes information in a way that I can easily find what I want	13%
Don't know/no answer	12%

12A. In the past three months, can you recall seeing, hearing or reading any information from the Government of Canada?

Yes	55%
No	42%
Don't know/no answer	3%

12B. Have you asked anyone to explain what the information you received from the Government of Canada meant?

Yes	23%
No	77%

12C. [IF YES] Who did you ask to help you? [ACCEPT UP TO THREE ANSWERS]

Friend	32%
Spouse	20%
Other member of the family	20%
Child	11%
Accountant/tax rep	11%
Government/politician/mayor/MP	10%
Parent	5%
Others	15%

13. In general, when you receive information from the Government of Canada in the mail, what do you do with it? [READ AND ACCEPT ALL ANSWERS]

Skim through it before deciding what to do with it	48%
Read it carefully from cover to cover	41%
Throw it in the garbage	34%
Set it aside for later	25%
Ask someone else to look at it for you	15%
Other	2%
Don't know/no answer/no opinion	1%

14. Do you prefer to receive written or spoken information from the Government of Canada?

Written	66%
Spoken	22%
No preference	10%
Don't know/no answer	2%

- 15A. And why [WRITTEN]? [ACCEPT UP TO THREE ANSWERS]

Can reread/more time to read/think	41%
Easier to understand/get more information	27%
You have proof/written proof	10%
Poor memory/would remember it better	8%
I like to read it myself	5%
Can ask questions/someone can read it to me	3%
Easier/more convenient	3%
They won't phone/no time to speak to me	2%
No time to listen/don't talk on phone	2%
Don't have access to spoken information	2%
Have hearing problems	1%
Other	10%

15B. And why [SPOKEN]? [ACCEPT UP TO THREE ANSWERS]

Understand better/easier to understand	40%
Have problems reading	9%
I can ask questions if I don't understand	8%
I can have it explained to me	6%
Limited vision/blind	5%
Better to talk to someone/one-on-one	5%
Can tell if lying	4%
Easier/less effort	4%
See it on TV/on the news	3%
Don't understand big words used	3%
Respond immediately/discuss on the spot	3%
Better than written/listening is better	3%
I don't have to listen/can ignore	2%
Too busy/no time to read/faster	2%
Other	10%

ADVERTISING

The next few questions are about advertising in general.

16A. In the past year, which are the televised ads that impressed you most? [ACCEPT UP TO THREE MENTIONS]

Tobacco	15%
Other government ads/budget/elections	8%
None of them/no favourites	7%
Personal safety	6%
Health care	6%
Food and drink	6%
Phone companies	5%
War/terrorism/Armed Forces	5%
Children/relationship between children and parents	5%
Cars	4%
Beer	3%
Sports	3%
Household items	3%
Comical/funny commercials (non-specific)	2%
News/newspaper	2%
Government of Canada vignette	2%
RRSP/retirement/pensions	2%
Other	23%
Don't know/no answer	12%

16B. And why is that? Was it mainly the way in which the advertising was presented or was it the message being conveyed?

The way advertising was presented	29%
The message being conveyed	29%
Both	23%
Other	6%
Don't know/no answer	13%

[ASK ALL] Think of the ads that got your attention in the last year and tell me how important each of the following aspects was in getting your attention, answering for each aspect – very important, somewhat important, not very important or not at all important? [REPEAT FOR THE LIST]

17. The pictures

Very important	28%
Somewhat important	36%
Not very important	18%
Not at all important	11%
Don't know/no answer	7%

18. The colours

Very important	25%
Somewhat important	35%
Not very important	17%
Not at all important	13%
Don't know/no answer	9%

19. The music

Very important	21%
Somewhat important	33%
Not very important	21%
Not at all important	18%
Don't know/no answer	7%

20. The choice of spokesperson

Very important	37%
Somewhat important	35%
Not very important	12%
Not at all important	9%
Don't know/no answer	8%

21. Choice of words and language

Very important	53%
Somewhat important	27%
Not very important	9%
Not at all important	5%
Don't know/no answer	6%

Tell me if each of the following kinds of advertisements are well suited to informing you about Government of Canada services. On a scale of 1 to 7, 1 means that they are not at all appropriate, 7 means they are very appropriate, and 4 means neither one nor the other. [REPEAT SCALE]

22. Ads with humour.

Not appropriate (1, 2, 3)	20%
Neither one nor the other (4)	26%
Appropriate (5, 6, 7)	50%
Don't know/no answer	5%

23. Ads that include people telling you about their life experiences.

Not appropriate (1, 2, 3)	20%
Neither one nor the other (4)	19%
Appropriate (5, 6, 7)	56%
Don't know/no answer	5%

24. Surprising situations that you wouldn't have thought of.

Not appropriate (1, 2, 3)	18%
Neither one nor the other (4)	24%
Appropriate (5, 6, 7)	48%
Don't know/no answer	10%

25. Ads that tell you what you have to do.

Not appropriate (1, 2, 3)	26%
Neither one nor the other (4)	20%
Appropriate (5, 6, 7)	48%
Don't know/no answer	6%

26. Ads that include dramatic events.

Not appropriate (1, 2, 3)	26%
Neither one nor the other (4)	23%
Appropriate (5, 6, 7)	44%
Don't know/no answer	7%

GOVERNMENT OF CANADA ADVERTISEMENTS

27. In the past three months, do you remember seeing, hearing or reading any advertising from the Government of Canada?

Yes	41%
No	48%
Maybe	5%
Don't know/refused	7%

28. Do you generally pay a lot of, some, a little or no attention to advertising by the Government of Canada?

A lot	17%
Some	32%
A little	35%
Not at all	15%
Don't know/no answer	1%

Thinking about Government of Canada ads, please tell me whether you agree or disagree with the following statements using a scale of 1 to 7, where 1 means you completely disagree and 7 means you completely agree. Four means neither one nor the other.

29. I think Government of Canada ads are factual and informative.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	24%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	30%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	42%
Don't know/no answer	4%

30. I believe the information in Government of Canada ads.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	31%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	27%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	38%
Don't know/no answer	4%

31. There are too many Government of Canada ads.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	33%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	27%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	33%
Don't know/no answer	7%

32. I think the Government of Canada praises itself too much in its ads.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	25%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	21%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	49%
Don't know/no answer	5%

33. The ads from the Government of Canada are targeted to people like me.

Disagree (1, 2, 3)	27%
Neither agree nor disagree (4)	25%
Agree (5, 6, 7)	40%
Don't know/no answer	8%

SERVICE DELIVERY

Now let us move on to Government of Canada services.

34A. In the past three months, approximately how many times have you contacted the Government of Canada for services?

Never	73%
At least once	14%
Twice	6%
Three times	3%
Four times or more	3%
Don't know/no answer	1%

34B. [IF NEVER/DON'T KNOW] If you did not communicate personally with the Government of Canada in the last three months, did someone else do it on your behalf?

Yes	7%
No	93%

34C. [IF YES] Who contacted the Government of Canada on your behalf?

Spouse	13%
Parent	2%
Child	22%
Other member of the family	13%
Friend	15%
Other	36%

FOR THOSE WHO CONTACTED THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA [Q42A.=2, 3, 4, or 5]

35. Thinking about your most recent experience, how did you contact the Government of Canada? Did you contact the Government of Canada... [READ AND ACCEPT MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE] [ROTATION]

By telephone	47%
By using a toll-free, 1 800 number	40%
By mail	17%
In person	17%
By Internet	3%

36. The last time you contacted the Government of Canada, why did you do so? Was it... [READ AND ACCEPT MORE THAN ONE RESPONSE]

To get information	52%
To request a service	37%
To verify information	17%
To better understand information	15%
To express an opinion	7%
To exchange/give them information	2%
Don't know/no answer	2%

37. Did you get what you were looking for?

Yes (all)	63%
Yes (in part)	18%
No	17%
Don't know/refused	1%

38. How would you rate the overall quality of the service or information you received from the Government of Canada? Please use a 7-point scale where 1 means very poor, 7 means very good and 4 means neither good nor poor.

Does poorly (1, 2, 3)	14%
Neither well nor poor (4)	17%
Does well (5, 6, 7)	69%
Don't know/no answer	<1%

FOR THOSE WHO DID NOT CONTACT THE GOVERNMENT OF CANADA
[Q42A.=1 or 6]

39. If you had to contact the Government of Canada tomorrow, how would you do so?
Would you do so by... [READ]

Telephone	46%
A toll-free, 1 800 number	36%
Mail	7%
In person	5%
Internet	2%
Don't know/no answer	4%

ASK ALL:

40. Are you aware of the Government of Canada's toll-free number, 1 800 O-Canada?

Yes	55%
No	42%
Maybe	1%
Don't know/refused	1%

41. [IF YES] Have you ever called 1 800 O-Canada?

Yes	29%
No	70%
Don't know/refused	2%

42. Are you aware of the Government of Canada's Web site, www.canada.gc.ca?

Yes	34%
No	63%
Maybe	2%
Don't know/refused	1%

43. [IF YES] Have you ever visited the Government of Canada Web site?

Yes	10%
No	90%
Don't know/refused	<1%