“Media frames” best seemed to capture, among other things, the cultural sea change in Canadian politics since the last issue, as we moved from a highly secretive regime to one committed to pluralism, openness, and transparency. And so we open this issue with Elyse Amend and Darin Barney’s postscripted article “Getting It Right: Canadian Conservatives and the ‘War on Science,’” initially published online in the closing days of the October election campaign. There, the tumult of public opinion had grown into a widespread conviction that the outgoing government had, in its 10-year monopoly on the power of information control, waged a systematic “war” on science, scientific research, and dissemination. As the authors remark, in their postscript for the print version of their article, “Our worry is that labelling this a ‘war on science’ misdirects our attention from what was really at stake in the Harper government, and prepares us poorly to evaluate what might come next, especially from the perspective of a more critical approach to the politics of science.” In a word, the framing of an issue is everything, or almost.

Attempting to change media frames in the context of neoliberal hegemony is the focus of Gaëtan Tremblay’s courageous reimagining of public service media in the age of digital networks. Tremblay initially reviews the “calculated suffocation” of public service media since the rise of the neoliberal paradigm in the 1980s. Next he returns to the theory of public service media in Canada, France, and the UK, grounded in both the commons and the public good. Thirdly, he shows how public service media, despite constant budget cuts, has nonetheless managed to innovate dramatically in new media offerings across a range of categories. Tremblay recognizes that the tasks he is calling on public service media to take on are “titanic,” yet he remains optimistic that, with the support of a re-galvanized public of citizens and intellectuals, these tasks can be met. “Public Service Media in the Age of Digital Networks” is an English translation of Tremblay’s keynote address at the June 2015 Canadian Communication Association conference.

Understanding the rhetorics of journalistic media frames is the major analytic task undertaken by Ivor Shapiro, Colette Brin, Philippa Spoel, and Lee Marshall’s article “Images of Essence: Journalists’ Discourse on the Professional ‘Discipline of Verification.’” Terming journalism a “science of factual accuracy,” the authors examine its contradictory composition of key rhetorical clusters made up of ambiguities and especially storytelling. Journalistic media frames, they find, remain essentially narrative ones—fictions in tension with the discipline of verification.
Sebastián Valenzuela and Gennadiy Chernov move the discussion to the heart of framing theory with their article “Explicating the Values-Issue Consistency Hypothesis through Need for Orientation.” The values-issues consistency hypothesis posits that when issues covered in the news resonate with people’s values, the power of the news media in setting the public agenda is stronger. But what has eluded researchers is how values influence agenda-setting. The authors argue that the “need for orientation” (NFO) is the key psychological determinant of the relationship between values and issue-salience. To test this hypothesis, they report on two studies they conducted, one an experiment to determine the causal relationship between values, NFO, and issue salience; and the second, a data analysis to test the generalizability of the experiment’s results. One of the implications of their Canadian-based work is to increase the Canadian contribution to agenda-setting research, which remains relatively rare, especially in contrast to the status of such research in the United States, Europe, Asia, and Latin America.

Catherine Lemarier-Saulnier, faced with the polysemic uncertainty confounding the many definitions of media framing, provides a most relevant literature review of some 88 publications dealing with “framing” and its cognates. In her commentary, “Cadrer les définitions du cadrage : une recension multidisciplinaire des approches du cadrage médiatique,” Lemarier-Saulnier classifies the literature into three groups: sociological approaches, psychological approaches, and theoretical or meta-approaches, and evaluates the strengths and limits of each approach. Thus sociological approaches to framing are limited by lack of information on users’ awareness of framing. This lack is compensated for by psychological approaches that emphasize the cognitive aspects of framing, but in turn are limited by a lack of long-term perspectives. Finally, theoretical approaches reinforce the multidisciplinary relevance of aligning a definition of framing with its epistemological orientation.

Christopher Dornan’s meditation on the framing of terrorism focuses on the 1970 October Crisis paintings of the late Dennis Tourbin. Dornan’s paean to Tourbin’s memory, “Painting Terrorism: The October Crisis Canvases of Dennis Tourbin and the Lessons of Art for Political Expression under Watchful Conditions,” recalls the shock for Tourbin of the events of October 1970, and especially the death of Pierre Laporte, his corpse in the trunk of a car captured by news photographers. The FLQ were one of the first terrorist groups to have a media strategy, the reading of their manifesto over the airwaves of Radio-Canada. Today, Dornan remarks, “[n]ow that images of beheadings are an internet recruitment tool for extremists,” what kind of art could capture the hydra head of threat and surveillance we all live under? Tourbin’s canvases, he argues, pointed a way.

Turning to related themes, Mike Zajko’s article “Telecom Responsibilization: Internet Governance, Surveillance, and New Roles for Intermediaries” makes the case that in the new universe of increased surveillance, ISPs and OSPs should be compelled by the state to take on greater national-security functions in the name of internet responsibilization. Zajko distinguishes three forms of responsibilization: “unfolding” of state priorities onto intermediaries, the “enfolding” of non-state actors into responsibilization; and a third, private form that operates without state involvement.
If the fragility of internet architecture is what motives Zajko's intervention, the stupidity of the Twitterverse animates Terry L. Newman's commentary, “The Internet and Canadian Politics: Journey into the Absurd.” Social media, Newman argues, have not led to a new seriousness in Canadian politics; on the contrary, sites such as Shit Harper Did or video images of Rob Ford banging his head into a news camera remind us that social media are first of all emotional as opposed to informational. “Our ability to tell crucial information from amusing distractions is weakened, just as that crucial information, in the unending quest for advertising dollars, gets communicated to us more and more in the form of an amusing distraction,” Newman writes.

In “‘Missed Opportunity’: The Oversight of Canadian Children’s Media,” Natalie Coulter asks why the considerable accomplishments of Canadian children's and youth media production have not received the attention they deserve. Coulter calls for the recognition of what she terms “the children’s cultural industries” and their integration into the study of the Canadian mediascape.

Youth and educational issues are also central to Jonathan Turcotte-Summers’ commentary “‘Recess is Over, Students’: The Suburban’s Framing of Educational Issues and the 2012 Printemps Erable.” The Suburban newspaper has for decades occupied a strange and cantankerous position among Montréal Anglophone media, as Turcotte-Summers’ review of its Maple Spring coverage shows.

In “Can Media and Technology Help Make ‘Another World Possible’? Reflections from the Media@McGill Research Delegation to the 2015 World Social Forum in Tunisia,” a research in brief, Stéphane Couture, Gretchen King, Sophie Toupin, and Becky Lenz report on one of the major sites of alterglobalization that emerged in the early 2000s as an alternative to the dominance of neoliberalism. The McGill delegation found many commonalities between Canadian concerns and those of global south civil society representatives meeting in Tunis.

Kathleen Raso and Robert J. Neubauer in “Managing Dissent: Energy Pipelines and ‘New Right Politics’ in Canada” analyze the political discourse surrounding the Northern Gateway bitumen pipeline debate from a left environmental perspective. In their article, they deploy the analytical concept of Elite Policy Information Infrastructures (EPIIs) to explain how corporate capital converts cultural capital into the journalistic expertise that supports an always already “official” version of the story.

In a superb piece of historiographical revision, Dominique Trudel revisits the Dewey-Lippmann debate, but not the one usually associated with media, politics, and public opinion of the middle 1920s. In “‘The Outlawry of War’ ou l’autre débat Dewey-Lippmann,” Trudel argues that Dewey and Lippmann first clashed at a slightly earlier period following the publication of Dewey’s Morals and the Conduct of States (1918) and the formation of the American Committee for the Outlawry of War in 1918 to 1923. Trudel reviews the two authors’ positions on the causes of the outbreak of the First World War and the role of public opinion therein, finding that “an epistemological and political trench separated Dewey’s and Lippmann’s [positions] throughout the 1920s,” with Lippmann emerging far more in favour of a depoliticization of democracy. Trudel's article contributes significantly to the on-going conversation on the orientations of American pragmatism.
Peter Zhang and Eric McLuhan’s article on “The Interological Turn in Media Ecology” examines the terminological and philosophical changes that are transforming media ecology into media interology, or the relations between media. In a forthcoming issue, Zhang will demonstrate the extent to which the interological move is indebted to contemporary Chinese scholarship, among other influences.

Michael Dorland, Carleton University
Thank You

The quality of articles in the Canadian Journal of Communication stands out due to the dedicated work of our peer-reviewers, who take time out of their own busy careers to provide high quality peer review, ensuring that articles meet CJC’s standards. We would like to take this opportunity to thank our peer-reviewers of 2015:

Romayne Smith Fullerton
Tamara Shepherd
Rachad Antonius
Tara Brookfield
Christelle Pare
Nathan Young
Joëlle Zask
Penelope Ironstone
Peter Malachy Ryan
Chris Parsons
Graham Knight
Simon Corneau
Alex Marland
Ghadah Alrasheed
Greig de Peuter
Tamara H. Vukov
Alex Marland
Sandra Smeltzer
Dwayne Winseck
Kim Sawchuk
François Yelle

Ross Allan Eaman
Melissa Stoneham
Martin Lussier
Colette Brin
Joanna Redden
Ghislain Thibault
Rowland Lorimer
Mike Gasher
Augie Fleras
Jean Charron
Brian Gorman
Rodney Benson
Sarah Sangster
John Shiga
John Michael Bonnett
Stuart J. Murray
Jeremy Hunsinger
Bethany Berard
Ira M. Wagman
Terry Neiman
Subir Rana