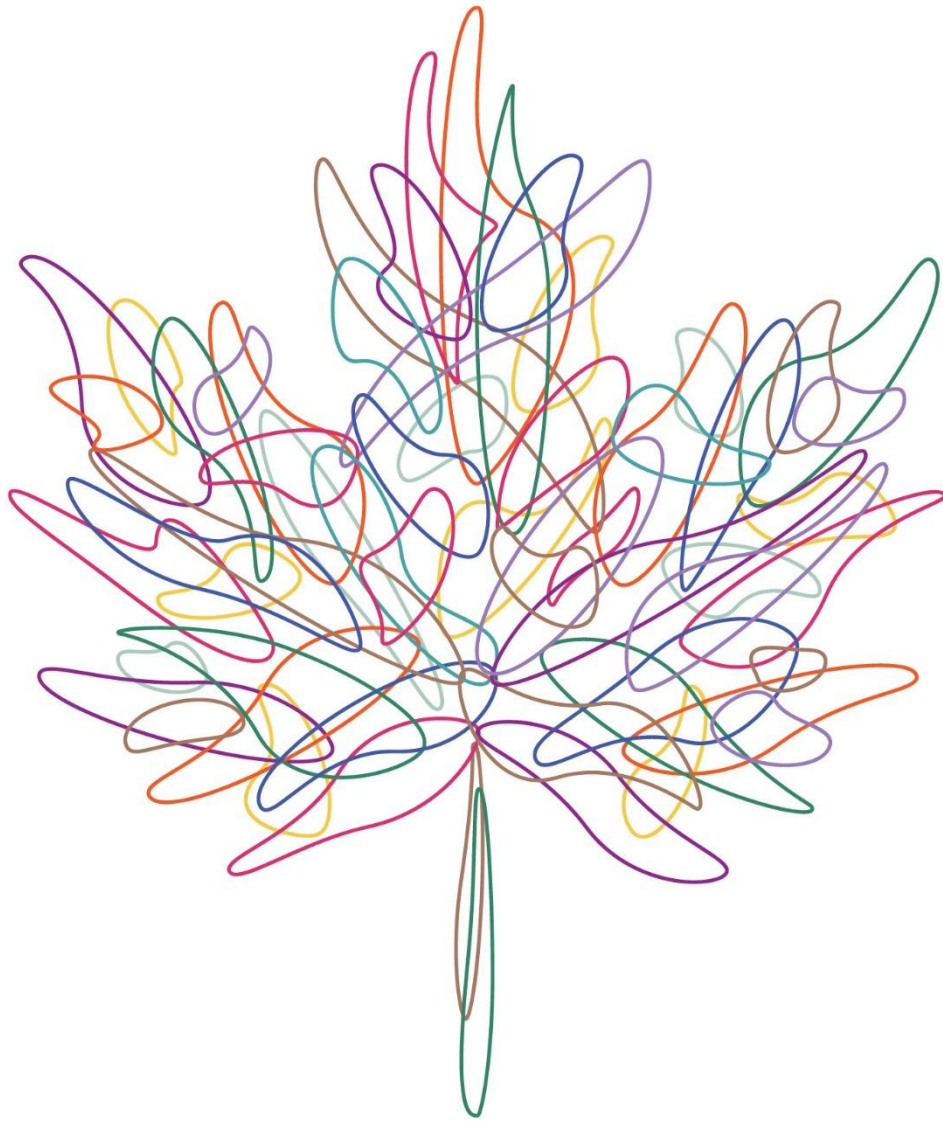




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What We Heard at The National Summit on Artificial Intelligence and Culture

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Section 1: Introduction

Artificial intelligence is transforming how art and cultural expressions are created, distributed, discovered, and experienced. As creators, cultural organizations, and businesses increasingly adopt AI tools or experience the impacts of AI on their work and livelihoods, questions related to copyright, transparency, labour, creative expression, and cultural sovereignty have become central to the national public policy conversation.

To move the national conversation on AI and culture from dialogue toward action, the Government of Canada, in partnership with the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, convened Canada's first National Summit on Artificial Intelligence and Culture in Banff, Alberta, in March 2026. Co-hosted by the Honourable Marc Miller, Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture, and the Honourable Evan Solomon, Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation, the three-day Summit advanced the Government of Canada's commitment to build, protect, and empower Canadian culture, creativity, and innovation in the age of AI. Ministerial participation was a defining feature of the Summit, with Ministers and Parliamentary Secretaries participating throughout the program, engaging directly with participants in formal sessions, roundtables, and bilateral discussions. These discussions provided opportunities for dialogue on issues such as Indigenous leadership, journalism, digital media, and the evolving relationship between culture and AI, while helping connect on-the-ground experiences with federal policy development.

The Summit brought together 314 participants from across Canada, including representatives from cultural organizations, technology companies, entrepreneurs, academic institutions, Indigenous organizations, labour organizations, civil society, and federal, provincial, and territorial governments, as well as a supported youth delegation representing universities from across Canada. Designed to foster national dialogue, strengthen collaboration between the cultural and technology sectors, and identify practical approaches for responsible AI development and adoption, the Summit was organized around three thematic pillars: Build, Protect, and Empower. The Build pillar explored the development of AI-powered tools, infrastructure, and partnerships that respond to the needs of creators and cultural industries. The Protect pillar focused on responsible and trustworthy AI, including issues related to copyright, transparency, and the protection of human creativity. The Empower pillar examined AI adoption, literacy and training, and institutional readiness across the cultural sector. Each pillar included a Leadership Talk, a cross-sector Action Panel, and facilitated breakout discussions known as Reflection Zones, which brought together groups of approximately 20 to 35 participants and were led by expert stakeholder representatives referred to as "Bridgebuilders." These Reflection Zones served as a central mechanism for gathering perspectives and ideas throughout the Summit. Discussions were documented by Canadian Heritage using AI-supported transcription and summarization tools and were subsequently reviewed, synthesized, and analyzed to support the development of this report.

This report summarizes what was heard throughout the Summit, including the key themes, perspectives, and proposed actions raised across the three pillars. The "What We Heard" section presents a synthesis of discussions from the Leadership Talks, Action Panels, Reflection Zones, Showcase, and closing discussions, highlighting the major themes and issues raised by participants

in relation to AI and the cultural sector. The Action section organizes the actions identified throughout the Summit under the Build, Protect, and Empower pillars. These actions reflect the broad range of perspectives and ideas shared during the Summit and are intended to support further discussion and consideration across governments, the cultural and technology sectors, civil society, and research organizations.

Section 2: What We Heard

2.1 Opening Remarks and Keynote

The Summit opened on March 15, 2026, at the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity. Mark Wold, Executive Director of Leadership at the Banff Centre, welcomed participants before introducing Chris Lorway, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Banff Centre, who encouraged participants to approach the Summit with openness, empathy, and dialogue. Elder Harley Crowshoe, Honorary Chief of the Piikani Nation, delivered the welcome and land acknowledgement, inviting participants to reflect on how AI can be developed in ways that continue to protect what is important to communities and cultures. Catalina Briceño, Professor at the Media School of the Université du Québec à Montréal, served as the Summit's Emcee throughout the three-day event. Drawing on her expertise at the intersection of culture, media, and innovation, she helped frame discussions, synthesize key themes, and connect ideas emerging across the Summit's sessions and pillars.

Keynote Address by Shani Gwin

The Summit keynote was delivered by Shani Gwin, founder and Chief Executive Officer of the strategic communications firm pipikwan pêhtâkwân and creator of the Indigenous-powered AI initiative wâsikan kisewâtisiwin. The tool, which was also featured in the Summit Showcase, is designed to identify harmful language, unconscious bias, and racism in written materials and protect Indigenous users from the harms they can cause. Drawing on her experience as a sixth-generation Métis entrepreneur, Gwin spoke about the relationship between AI, misinformation, and colonialism, emphasizing the risks of AI systems trained on biased or exclusionary information. She described misinformation as a longstanding tool of colonialism against Indigenous peoples and warned that AI systems can reproduce and amplify these harms when Indigenous perspectives and histories are absent from governance structures.

Gwin emphasized the importance of ensuring that Indigenous communities retain agency in the development and use of AI technologies. She highlighted the need for AI systems grounded in Indigenous cultural values and community needs, including approaches that prioritize care, accountability, and inclusion. Her remarks positioned AI not only as a technological issue, but also as a broader question of power, representation, and cultural sovereignty.

Address by Björn Ulvaeus

Björn Ulvaeus, songwriter, member of ABBA, and President of the International Confederation of Societies of Authors and Composers (CISAC), delivered a video address from Sweden focused on the importance of protecting creators' rights in the age of artificial intelligence. Ulvaeus emphasized that strong copyright protections are necessary to ensure that creators can continue to earn a living from their work and contribute to cultural expression. He cautioned against broad text and data mining exceptions that would allow creative works to be used without permission or compensation, noting that innovation should not depend on the uncompensated use of human creativity.

Ulvaeus also underscored the broader cultural implications of these issues, emphasizing that protecting creators is essential not only for individual livelihoods, but also for preserving the diversity and vitality of national cultural expression.

Remarks from Ministers Solomon and Miller

Federal Minister of Artificial Intelligence and Digital Innovation Evan Solomon and Federal Minister of Canadian Identity and Culture Marc Miller delivered opening remarks outlining the Government of Canada's objectives for the Summit and its broader approach to AI and culture. Minister Solomon explained that the Summit's three pillars align with Canada's emerging "AI for All" strategy and emphasized the importance of ensuring that AI serves people, protects Canadian values, and supports creators rather than undermining them. He also stressed the importance of trust, transparency, and broad stakeholder engagement in shaping Canada's AI policies and noted that the Summit was intended to inform the development of the Canada's new National AI Strategy, subsequently released on June 4, 2026.

Minister Miller emphasized the importance of ensuring that AI systems reflect Canada's linguistic, cultural, regional, and Indigenous diversity. He highlighted the role of creators and cultural organizations in safeguarding and expressing that diversity and noted that responsible AI development requires collaboration between creators, technology developers, and policymakers. Both Ministers emphasized the importance of continued dialogue and collaboration between the cultural and technology sectors as Canada develops its approach to artificial intelligence.

2.2 Building AI-powered tools that respond to the needs of creators and cultural industries

The Build pillar focused on how the cultural and tech sectors can work together to drive innovation, strengthen Canada's leadership in cultural and creative AI, and develop practical partnerships in research and development. The Leadership Talk was delivered by Pina D'Agostino, Associate Vice-President of Research at York University. The Action Panel was moderated by Ana Serrano, President and Vice-Chancellor of OCAD University, and featured Cam Linke, Chief Executive Officer of the Alberta Machine Intelligence Institute (AMII); Yves Jacquier, Executive Director at Ubisoft La Forge; Dr. Jackson Leween Two Bears, Co-Director of Abundant Intelligences; and Margaret McGuffin, Executive Director of the Canadian Music Publishers Association. The insights below

reflect key themes raised during the Leadership Talk, Action Panel, and Reflection Zone discussions. They are not exhaustive but represent frequently cited ideas and areas of focus.

Trust as a Precondition for Adoption

Participants consistently identified a lack of trust as a primary barrier to adoption of AI in the cultural sector. This lack of trust relates to concerns about how AI systems are trained and governed, including the use of copyrighted material to train systems without consent, limited transparency around data and large language models, and insufficient accountability for how these systems operate. As one participant noted, “You can’t have a tool that’s based on stolen work.” This concern was widely shared and reflected broader unease about the foundations on which current AI systems are built. Participants also referenced ongoing legal actions in Canada and internationally involving AI developers, news organizations, artists, and creators regarding the alleged unauthorized use of copyrighted works to train AI systems. These cases were cited as evidence that many of the legal and copyright questions surrounding AI remain unresolved. Participants emphasized that adoption is not primarily limited by a lack of interest or awareness, but by unresolved legal and ethical issues. Many noted that addressing these trust concerns is a necessary first step before meaningful progress can be made. Suggested approaches included improving transparency around training data, ensuring proper licensing and compensation for content, and establishing clear distinctions between AI-generated and human-created works.

Collaboration and Co-Creation as a Foundation for Innovation

Participants emphasized that collaboration between the cultural and AI sectors must begin at the earliest stages of development of AI products and tools. There was a strong view that current innovation models are too siloed and driven primarily by technical and fiscal priorities, with cultural stakeholders often consulted only after systems are already built. As noted by one participant, “They’ve been siloed approaches, largely tech driven, without community, without co-creation, without listening.” This siloing in AI research and development was seen as contributing to mistrust and limiting the relevance of AI tools for the cultural sector. Several participants also stressed the importance of creating spaces for dialogue where creators, developers, and researchers can engage with one another’s perspectives from the outset of projects and develop a better understanding of their respective needs and realities. Panelists reinforced the importance of co-design, with one person noting, “We do not create technology for our artists, for our designers, we create that *with* them.” Participants highlighted that when creators are involved early, AI tools are more likely to address real needs, such as automating repetitive tasks or supporting creative workflows. More collaborative approaches were also seen as essential to building trust and ensuring that innovation reflects the realities of cultural production while fostering stronger connections between research, technological development, and artistic creation.

Sovereignty in Data, Infrastructure, and Systems

A significant focus was placed on the concept of sovereignty in the development and deployment of AI. Participants highlighted the importance of Canadian control over data, infrastructure, and

systems, including compute capacity, storage, and foundational models. As one participant noted, “We need Canadian owned and controlled systems and companies to be able to do this work and not be dependent on American big tech in the information environment.” Others pointed to the lack of infrastructure available to the cultural sector, noting that “Cultural organizations, institutions, non-profits and artists in this country would really benefit from a national offer on storage and compute.” There was broad interest in developing Canadian-based AI infrastructure, including shared compute resources, safe and sovereign environments for experimentation such as sandboxes and closed-loop systems, and Canadian-trained models. Some participants also noted that sovereignty should not be viewed in isolation and could be strengthened through strategic international partnerships aimed at developing alternatives to dominant global platforms. Participants also emphasized the need to clearly define what constitutes “sovereign AI”.

Role of Government and Enabling Conditions for Growth

Participants identified the role of government as critical in advancing the Build agenda and enabling responsible innovation. There were calls for greater policy clarity, particularly in relation to copyright and data governance to reduce uncertainty and support collaboration. Government was also seen as having an important role in setting standards and providing guidance on ethical and trustworthy AI. Participants also highlighted the potential for government to use procurement and funding mechanisms to support ethical AI practices and incentivize Canadian-built solutions. In addition, participants emphasized the importance of investing in domestic innovation ecosystems, including interdisciplinary partnerships and grassroots organizations working at the intersection of culture and technology, which were seen as key drivers of practical and values-based innovation.

The following actions reflect key ideas raised under the Build pillar through the Reflection Zones, Leadership Talks, and Action Panels. They do not represent formal recommendations or consensus views, but identify areas for further consideration by governments, the cultural and technology sectors, civil society, and research organizations.

- Develop collaboration models that bring creators, rights holders, technologists, and researchers together from the outset of AI R&D and support sustained partnerships beyond pilot projects.
- Improve access to federal, provincial, and territorial funding for cultural-sector AI R&D, including applied research, pilot projects, scale-up initiatives, and partnerships between cultural and technology organizations.
- Invest in Canadian-controlled AI infrastructure, including compute, storage, and foundational models, so the cultural sector can use trusted domestic systems and ensure value created through AI remains in Canada.
- Define a national framework for sovereign AI in the cultural sector, including criteria for data ownership, infrastructure location, governance, and Canadian participation.
- Develop shared data resources and governance frameworks, including metadata standards, interoperability protocols, data trusts, and clear rules for access, consent, and responsible AI use.

- Enable the responsible use of archival collections and sector-generated data to support the development and training of sovereign Canadian AI systems, while ensuring appropriate governance, consent, intellectual property protection, and respect for cultural value.
- Strengthen federal, provincial, and territorial coordination on AI and culture by aligning policies, setting shared priorities, and convening sustained dialogue between the cultural and technology sectors.

2.3 Protecting creativity by taking steps to make artificial intelligence solutions trustworthy and supportive of human creation

The Protect pillar focused on how works of human creation can be protected in the age of artificial intelligence and what trust building between the cultural and artificial intelligence sectors could look like. Andrea Kokonis, Chief Legal Officer and General Counsel at Society of Composers, Authors and Music Publishers of Canada (SOCAN) and Marie-Julie Desrochers, Executive director of the Coalition for the Diversity of Cultural Expression (CDCE) both presented Protect Leadership Talks. Michelle Yeung, Managing Director of Mass Culture, moderated the panel discussion around protection and sovereignty of AI in the cultural sector. Joining her on the stage were: Sean Power, CEO and co-founder of Musical AI; Justine Gauthier, Vice-President and General Counsel at LawZero; Sven Buridans, Director of Innovation and Digital Partnerships at the Fédération culturelle canadienne-française; Stéphanie Hénault, director of legal affairs at the National Association of Book Publishers; and Paul Gagnon, partner and co-head of the Artificial Intelligence Technology group at BCF Business Law. The insights below reflect key themes raised during the Leadership Talk, Action Panel, and Reflection Zone discussions. They are not exhaustive but represent frequently cited ideas and areas of focus.

Balancing Innovation with Protection of Human Creativity

Participants highlighted the tension between the rapid pace of AI development and the need to protect human creativity and cultural expression. There was broad agreement that technological advancement should support and enhance creative work rather than replace it, and many participants emphasized the importance of foregrounding human creation over artificial intelligence-derived cultural products. Human-centred approaches to AI were frequently discussed, including systems in which AI assists creative work while maintaining (not replacing) human creation as the driver.

At the opening of the Summit, *7 Doigts de la Main* presented an AI-assisted acrobatic dance performance that combined live human performance with AI-generated visual and interactive elements. The performance was referenced throughout the discussions as an example of how AI can support and enhance artistic expression without displacing the role of human creators. One participant hypothesized that the reason the performance was so well received was because it remained fundamentally human centred: “The AI components supplemented, created, interacted, but it was human centric.” Participants pointed to the performance as an illustration of how AI can be integrated into creative practice in ways that preserve the central role of artists and performers.

Participants also emphasized the importance of clearly distinguishing between human-created and AI-generated content. Discussions referenced emerging certifications for human-created works, as well as the potential role of watermarks, citation systems, attribution mechanisms, and transparency requirements for AI-generated content. Participants further noted the importance of ensuring that creators share in the value generated by AI systems and that the development of AI in the cultural sector does not undermine creative livelihoods or cultural production. Participants also raised concerns about voice cloning, digital replicas, and synthetic performances created or distributed without performers' knowledge or consent, highlighting the need for appropriate safeguards and remedies.

Some participants noted that existing legal and regulatory frameworks may not fully address the unauthorized replication of performers' voices, likenesses, or performances through AI systems, highlighting the need for further consideration of these issues.

Copyright and Licensing as a Foundational Issue

Participants consistently identified copyright, licensing, and the use of protected works in AI training as foundational issues for the responsible development of AI in the cultural sector. There was strong concern that current AI systems rely on copyrighted material without authorization, transparency, or compensation, and many emphasized that Canada's leadership on responsible AI development depends on clear rules around consent, remuneration, and disclosure even as questions were raised about the lack of consensus on fundamental concepts such as use. Participants expressed a strong desire for a functional licensing market based on transparency around both training data and AI-generated outputs. One participant noted: "Without transparency, you just can't have trust and... without trust, you can't have adoption [and] you can't have a market." Another participant described intellectual property as a strategic resource that must be safeguarded: "It is not a question of protecting the vested interests of a particular sector.... It is simply a matter of applying a basic principle of resource management. When someone wants to use your assets, you need to make sure that the value created stays in your economy."

Collective licensing agreements were frequently identified as a practical pathway to support trust, efficiency, and lawful access to creative works. As one participant explained: "Trust is built on consent. Nobody gave their consent for this material to even be used... at the very least content creators and owners of IP need to be asked, and if that's through a collective licensing agreement, awesome, because that makes it a lot more efficient."

Responsible AI Development in a Rapidly Evolving Environment

Participants highlighted the tension between the rapid pace of AI development and the need to ensure that systems are developed safely and responsibly. The challenge of balancing innovation with safeguards was frequently discussed, particularly in relation to the competitive pressure facing AI companies and the significant levels of U.S. capital being invested in the sector, which some participants linked to broader concerns about Canadian cultural and technological sovereignty. Many noted that the urgency to scale and commercialize AI technologies can create incentives to

prioritize speed over safety, accountability, and cultural considerations. This was often framed as a broader challenge of how to advance innovation without compromising public trust or creator rights.

Discussions also explored actions that could help support more responsible AI development, including establishing standards and certification systems for responsible AI, strengthening transparency and disclosure requirements for AI systems, and using public funding and procurement as policy levers to encourage responsible AI practices. Participants noted that governments could require companies receiving public funding, contracts, or procurement opportunities to meet standards related to transparency, copyright compliance, accountability, and ethical AI development.

Transparency as a Foundation for Trust, Protection, and a Functioning AI Market

Participants consistently identified transparency as a foundational requirement for building trust in AI systems, protecting creators and cultural works, and enabling a functioning and responsible AI market. Concerns centred on limited visibility into how AI systems are trained and governed, including the use of copyrighted material without consent, insufficient disclosure around training data and large language models, and limited accountability for how systems operate and generate outputs. These issues were widely viewed as undermining confidence in AI systems and limiting the ability to establish effective protections for creators and rights holders.

Greater transparency was seen as essential to supporting licensing frameworks, consent-based systems, and more sustainable market relationships between AI developers and the cultural sector. Participants noted that without clearer information about training data, model inputs, and outputs, it is difficult to establish fair compensation models, enable lawful use of creative works, or allow creators to understand how their content is being used. Transparency was also viewed as necessary to support attribution and compensation mechanisms.

Sovereignty, Representation, and Cultural Diversity

Participants emphasized the importance of ensuring that AI systems reflect Canadian values, including official languages, cultural diversity, and inclusion. Concerns were raised about bias in AI systems and the risk of underrepresentation of certain communities in datasets and AI-generated outputs. Participants noted the importance of ensuring that AI systems incorporate a broad range of perspectives, including Indigenous, racialized, and other historically underrepresented communities. Discussions also highlighted strong interest in developing Canadian-controlled AI infrastructure, data frameworks, and sovereign AI systems in order to strengthen cultural sovereignty and reduce reliance on dominant foreign platforms. Participants noted that Canadian-based compute, data stewardship models, and community-driven AI approaches could help ensure that the economic and cultural benefits of AI remain within Canada.

The following actions reflect key ideas raised under the Protect pillar through the Reflection Zones, Leadership Talks, and Action Panels. They do not represent formal recommendations or consensus

views, but identify areas for further consideration by governments, the cultural and technology sectors, civil society, and research organizations.

- Require transparency, labelling, and disclosure for AI systems, including clear identification of AI-generated content and information on how systems are trained and operate, including data sources and how outputs are generated.
- Strengthen copyright enforcement and accountability mechanisms to ensure creative works are not used in AI training or outputs without appropriate authorization. This could include stronger enforcement measures, audit or disclosure requirements for AI training data, attribution technologies and mechanisms, and tracking measures.
- Explore scalable licensing frameworks for AI use of creative works, including collective licensing platforms that support consent, compensation, and lawful engagement between AI developers and the cultural sector.
- Establish attribution and compensation mechanisms so creators are credited and compensated when their works are used in AI training or outputs, including tracking systems, attribution standards, and revenue-sharing approaches.
- Develop standards and certification for responsible AI in the cultural sector, including requirements for transparency, respect for copyright, bias mitigation, and third-party validation.
- Use federal, provincial, and territorial funding and procurement to require publicly supported AI systems to meet responsible AI standards, including transparency and copyright compliance.
- Address power imbalances between creators, cultural workers and AI developers, which may include support for collective representation and collective bargaining, improved transparency around data use, and measures to prevent a small number of dominant AI companies from controlling access to creative content, AI infrastructure, distribution platforms, or licensing markets in ways that disadvantage creators and cultural organizations.
- Advance data sovereignty, including Indigenous data sovereignty, by strengthening Canadian and Indigenous control over how data is accessed, governed, stored, licensed, and used in AI systems.
- Promote inclusive, representative, and culturally relevant AI systems that reflect Canada's linguistic duality, cultural diversity, and inclusive values, including French-language applications and improved representation in training data.
- Address the environmental impact of AI systems used in the cultural sector by encouraging efficient infrastructure, responsible use of compute resources, and consideration of environmental impacts in system design and deployment.

2.4 Empowering the cultural sector through artificial intelligence adoption, talent and training

The Empower pillar focused on how the cultural sector is adopting and using AI, including gaps in AI literacy, institutional readiness, integration into workflows, and broader sector capacity. The

Leadership Talk was delivered by Pascale Landry, Director General at Compétence Culture, who presented findings from a study conducted among 500 people in Quebec’s cultural sector on AI skills development needs. The Action Panel was moderated by Chris Lorway, President and Chief Executive Officer of the Banff Centre for Arts and Creativity, and explored how creators and cultural organizations can adopt AI in ways that strengthen the sector’s long-term capacity and resilience. Panelists included Dr. Natasha Ita MacDonald, Vice-President of Heritage Lab; Lesley Klassen, Senior Manager of AI Initiatives and Services at New Media Manitoba; Avery Swartz of Camp Tech and co-lead of the AI Skills Lab Canada; Owais Lightwala, Director of Chrysalis at the Creative School at Toronto Metropolitan University; and Samuel Bischoff, Director of Policy at the Directors Guild of Canada. The insights below reflect key themes raised during the Leadership Talk, Action Panel, and Reflection Zone discussions. They are not exhaustive but represent frequently cited ideas and areas of focus.

Capacity, Literacy, and Readiness for AI Adoption

Participants consistently emphasized that AI adoption in the cultural sector is neither uniform nor straightforward, but nuanced, diverse, and highly dependent on context. While AI tools are increasingly being used by individual creators and cultural workers, participants noted that many organizations continue to lag behind in developing institutional AI policies, governance approaches, and internal capacity. Discussions also highlighted the distinction between AI adoption and AI integration, with participants emphasizing that AI tools are most effective when embedded into existing workflows and day-to-day practices rather than introduced through stand-alone training initiatives. As one participant noted, “Our most successful adoption of AI has been instances in which the AI is integrated into the tools that they use for daily work.”

Participants also emphasized the importance of building practical AI literacy across the cultural sector, including understanding how AI tools work, their limitations, and appropriate use cases within creative and operational contexts. There was significant discussion around the need to distinguish between assistive AI and generative AI, with some participants describing assistive AI as supporting productivity and job evolution, while generative AI was more often associated with concerns around job displacement and creative replacement. Participants also noted that AI use in the cultural sector is often highly specific and task-oriented, including applications related to image generation, production workflows, and motion capture. Many highlighted the importance of integrating AI into formal education, sector training programs, and continuous professional development across all career stages. Discussions reinforced the importance of engaging emerging creators, students, and future cultural sector leaders in conversations about AI, noting that educational and training institutions have an important role to play in shaping the sector’s long-term capacity, leadership, and approach to technological change. Some participants also stressed the importance of developing hybrid talent with both artistic and technological expertise, capable of critically assessing AI tools and their role within creative processes. Participants further emphasized that cultural organizations require additional support to build leadership capacity, governance structures, and long-term strategies for responsible AI adoption and integration.

Indigenous-Led and Sovereign Approaches to AI

A recurring theme throughout the Summit, and particularly within the Empower pillar, was the importance of Indigenous-led and sovereign approaches to AI development. Participants emphasized that AI systems can provide Indigenous communities with greater autonomy and control when they are developed using community-owned data, governance models, and cultural protocols. One participant described how the AI system being developed in her community operates within a closed data environment fully controlled by the community: “We prefer it that way because then we can develop our guardrails the way that best reflects our community... And so for us to appropriate the technology now for our benefit, for our needs, is a big deal.”

These discussions resonated strongly across the broader cultural sector, including among non-Indigenous participants. Many pointed to Indigenous-led AI initiatives as important models for responsible AI development grounded in consent, community governance, and data sovereignty. As one participant noted, “I hope that any sort of national AI strategy looks to some of the projects that are coming out of the Indigenous communities and the AI systems that they are creating.” Broader discussions around data sovereignty also emerged throughout the Summit, including interest in more localized and community-controlled infrastructure and governance models.

Participants also stressed that AI adoption in the cultural sector should be inclusive, accessible, and grounded in community values. Discussions highlighted the importance of equitable access across regions and communities, including accessibility for persons with disabilities and participation from underrepresented groups. Indigenous-led and community-based AI approaches were widely viewed as important examples of responsible AI development and governance that reflect community priorities, cultural protocols, and local needs.

Access to Tools, Infrastructure, and a Canadian AI Ecosystem

Participants highlighted the importance of improving access to the infrastructure, tools, and funding needed to support AI adoption across the cultural sector. Discussions focused on the need for shared infrastructure, accessible platforms, and affordable tools that could support experimentation, implementation, and scaling. Participants also emphasized the importance of developing Canadian and open-source AI solutions tailored to the realities of the cultural sector, reducing reliance on dominant foreign platforms and strengthening domestic capacity. Shared data resources, data trusts, and governance frameworks were also identified as important enabling conditions for AI adoption, particularly where they support collaboration, consent-based use, and responsible stewardship of data. In addition, participants noted the value of trusted directories, networks, and advisory supports to help organizations identify ethical AI tools, partners, and expertise in a rapidly evolving landscape.

Trust, Guidance, and Responsible Adoption

Participants emphasized that trust remains a central condition for broader adoption of AI in the cultural sector. Concerns related to copyright, transparency, data use, and bias were frequently

raised as barriers to adoption and confidence. Many participants identified the need for clear government guidance, policies, and frameworks to support responsible AI use and reduce uncertainty for cultural organizations and creators. Governments were also seen as having an important role in using policy, funding, procurement, and other levers to encourage ethical and trustworthy AI practices. Participants further noted that legal and contractual barriers continue to limit adoption in some parts of the sector, including uncertainty around liability for AI-generated outputs, institutional policies, insurance considerations, and restrictive contractual arrangements.

The following actions reflect key ideas raised under the Empower pillar through the Reflection Zones, Leadership Talks, and Action Panels. They do not represent formal recommendations or consensus views, but identify areas for further consideration by governments, the cultural and technology sectors, civil society, and research organizations.

- Improve AI literacy across the cultural sector by helping people understand how AI tools work, their limitations, and how they can be used responsibly. This could be supported through education, training, and professional development for creators, cultural workers, organizations, emerging creators, and future cultural sector leaders.
- Enable AI adoption through access to shared infrastructure, platforms, tools, funding, and a Canadian AI ecosystem. This includes aligning federal, provincial, and territorial funding to support AI experimentation, implementation, and scaling.
- Strengthen organizational capacity and leadership for AI adoption by supporting cultural organizations in developing AI strategies, digital capacity, governance approaches, change management practices, and long-term plans for integrating AI into operations and creative processes.
- Provide clear guidance and address trust barriers for AI adoption by establishing policies and frameworks for responsible AI use, while addressing concerns related to copyright, transparency, data use, and bias to support informed decision-making.
- Provide access to trusted tools, partners, and advisory support. This can include creating centralized directories, networks, or platforms that help cultural organizations identify reliable AI tools, service providers, expertise, and adoption supports.
- Promote inclusive and accessible AI adoption by improving equitable access across regions and communities, including accessibility for persons with disabilities and participation of underrepresented groups in the cultural sector.
- Support Indigenous-led and community-based AI approaches grounded in consent, cultural values, and data sovereignty, including Indigenous governance models and AI development that aligns with community priorities and protocols.
- Address legal and contractual barriers to AI adoption by clarifying liability for AI-generated outputs and addressing contractual, insurance, and institutional constraints that limit responsible use of AI tools by cultural organizations.

2.5 What we learned from the AI Adoption Showcase

The AI Showcase was a dedicated interactive component of the Summit designed to give participants direct, hands-on exposure to artificial intelligence tools and applications relevant to the

cultural sector. Running alongside the Summit programming, the Showcase brought together organizations, developers, and innovators from across Canada to demonstrate how AI is already being used in creative and cultural contexts.

The Showcase provided a practical demonstration of how AI is already being applied across Canada's cultural sector, moving the discussion from theory to real-world use. Through live demonstrations, interactive kiosks, and direct engagement with innovators, participants were able to see, test, and better understand AI tools in action.

Overall, the Showcase demonstrated that AI could support and enhance human creativity when designed in collaboration with the sector, and it provided participants with clearer entry points for adoption within their own organizations. Strong post-Summit engagement, including follow-up discussions and partnership exploration, further highlighted the value of hands-on, applied learning environments in advancing AI adoption across the cultural sector.

2.6 Announcement of the AI and Culture Advisory Council

The Summit concluded with a fireside conversation between Minister Marc Miller and Minister Evan Solomon, moderated by Emcee Catalina Briceño. The discussion focused on the importance of continued collaboration between governments, the cultural sector, and the technology sector as Canada develops its approach to artificial intelligence and culture.

During the discussion, Minister Miller emphasized the value of bringing stakeholders together in person and hearing directly from creators, cultural workers, and organizations affected by AI. He noted that the perspectives shared throughout the Summit would help inform ongoing policy development and he underscored the importance of continued dialogue between government and the sector. Minister Miller also acknowledged that governments do not yet have all the answers regarding AI and culture, emphasizing that the Summit represented part of an ongoing process of listening, reflection, and policy development.

Building on this theme, Minister Solomon highlighted the importance of creating sustained mechanisms for collaboration that extend beyond the Summit itself. He noted that one of the key lessons emerging from the Summit was the need to avoid siloed approaches between the cultural and technology sectors and to establish ongoing structures for dialogue and coordination.

To support this objective, Minister Solomon and Minister Miller announced the creation of the AI and Culture Advisory Council. The Council will serve as an ongoing forum for collaboration and advice at the intersection of artificial intelligence and culture and will report to both Ministers. Several participants welcomed the announcement, highlighting the importance of ensuring diverse representation across regions, disciplines, and communities, including Francophone and Indigenous perspectives. According to Minister Solomon, the Council is intended to provide a mechanism to support continued collaboration between government and stakeholders and to help address emerging issues related to AI and culture over time.

Author's Note

This report was prepared by the organizers of the National Summit on Artificial Intelligence and Culture with input and drafting support from Anne Shibata Casselman. It is based on direct participation in the Summit, including notes and observations from sessions, as well as documented inputs from the Reflection Zones, incorporating both participant contributions and AI-supported summaries. The report is intended to reflect the discussions, perspectives, and ideas shared throughout the Summit; however, given the participation of more than 300 attendees, it represents a synthesis and is not exhaustive. Prior to publication, the report was also shared with a select group of participants for review and validation.