

National Day of Action demands affordable internet for everyone in Canada

Advocates, academics, and companies come together to call on federal government and CRTC to deliver lower prices

March 16, 2021 – Today, over two-dozen civil society and social justice groups, policy experts, activists, independent ISPs, and thousands of Canadians are coming together for Canada’s first [Affordable Internet Day of Action](#). One-year into the pandemic, the critical role of the Internet is clear – but for many, remains out of reach or far too expensive.

The Day of Action is a collaborative effort to spotlight the importance of this issue, and highlight potential solutions the federal government could adopt to put an end to Canada’s Internet affordability problem.

Highlights of the Day include:

- A live digital event from 1pm - 4:40 pm ET (register [here](#))
- An [open letter](#) to Prime Minister Trudeau, Minister Champagne and CRTC Chair Scott from select participants
- A selection of advocacy actions from participating groups to support members of the public to directly email and call their MPs to demand action.

Today’s schedule and complete list of participants are available at affordable-internet.ca.

Day of Action for Affordable Live Event Schedule

Time (EDT)	Subject	Speaker(s)
1 p.m.	Introductory Remarks	OpenMedia
1:15	The Human Cost of the Affordability Problem	ACORN Canada, PovNet, 411 Seniors Centre
1:40	The Digital Divide – Not Just for Rural Canada Anymore	Ryerson Leadership Lab
1:55	Keynote Address: Regulatory Capture and Government Inattention	Michael Geist, Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-Commerce Law
2:00	Gaming the System: Why Home Internet Is So Expensive	TekSavvy, Ebox, CNOC
2:30	Why Isn’t Ryan Reynolds Here? Our cell phone bills are too high	Iristel, DotMobile, Distributel
3:00	Keynote Address: Monopolies with No Public Interest	Cory Doctorow, activist, author and journalist
3:15	The Government’s Failing Approach to Rural Connectivity	Eeyou Communications Network Teach For Canada Foundation for Rural Youth Empowerment
3:45	Is Municipal Broadband the Answer?	City of Toronto
4:00	The Actions We Need Right Now	Internet Society Canada Chapter Canadian Media Concentration Research Project

		OpenMedia National Capital Freenet Public Interest Advocacy Centre CIPPIC
4:30	Closing Comments	OpenMedia

Quotes:

“ACORN Canada is joining this national day of action because of the federal government's complete failure to put people over the profits of the big telecommunication companies during this pandemic. A Recent (2019) report from ACORN Canada shows only 80% of low-income people with household incomes under \$30,000, only 80% had home internet. Of the 78 respondents without home internet, 72% identified cost as the main reason. 65% of respondents said they had to sacrifice things like food, medication to afford their home internet.” - **Marva Burnett, National President, ACORN Canada**

“Cloudwifi is passionate in our belief that the Internet should be classified as an essential utility and all Canadians should have equal access to it, regardless of one's income level. No family should have to choose between paying their Internet bill and putting healthy food on the table.” - **Gary Kenning, Co-Founder, Cloudwifi**

“Getting everyone in Canada connected at a price they can afford has never been more important. Yet despite years of promises, our government shows no sign they take the problem seriously. The number of groups participating in this day of action should be the sign that the status quo is not good enough. A comprehensive strategy from our government for securing affordable access for all Canadians to wireless and home connectivity is needed— one that accounts for and avoids the mistakes of past programs.” - **Laura Tribe, Executive Director, OpenMedia**

“Simbi is pleased to support the Day of Action as more than 100,000 learners, 31% of which reside in rural communities, across Canada rely on affordable internet access to improve their reading skills and create global impact using Simbi's online reading platform.” - **Alex Gillis, Co-Founder, Simbi**

“Delays in implementing fair wholesale rates have resulted in consumers subsidizing the huge profits of the largest and most powerful and profitable telecom companies in Canada. The government has stood by and watched this happen at a time when competition and fair pricing for internet is needed more urgently than ever.” – **Andy Kaplan-Myrth, Vice-president of Regulatory and Carrier Affairs, TekSavvy**

“Imagine these pandemic months without internet, or with slow internet, or having to choose between food, and the high-speed internet you need to keep your job, or your child online with school. This is real life for hundreds of thousands, if not millions, of Canadians. When Canada’s major city, Toronto, feels it has to jump into the breach, and build its own network to ensure none of its residents have to suffer in this way, we know we have a failed system. It can be fixed. Let’s fix it now!” – **George Burger, Co-Founder, VMedia Inc.**

Speakers and participants in the Day of Action for Affordable Internet include:

- ACORN Canada
- Brookfield Institute for Innovation + Entrepreneurship
- Canadian Media Concentration Research Project
- Cloudwifi
- Distributel
- Cory Doctorow, author and internet advocate
- Eeyou Communications Network
- First Nations Technology Council
- Michael Geist, Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-Commerce Law
- Competitive Network Operators of Canada (CNOOC)
- Cybera
- dotmobile
- Ebox
- Foundation for Rural Youth Employment
- Internet Society Canada Chapter
- National Capital FreeNet
- New/Mode
- North99
- OpenMedia
- PovNet
- Public Interest Advocacy Centre
- Rally
- Ryerson Leadership Lab
- Samuelson-Glushko Canadian Internet Policy and Public Interest Clinic (CIPPIC)
- Simbi
- TekSavvy Solutions

- 30 -

For more information or media inquiries contact:

Laura Tribe

Executive Director, OpenMedia
laura@openmedia.org
1-888-441-2640 ext. 2

Judy Duncan
Head Organizer, ACORN Canada
canadaacorn@acorncanada.org
416-996-6401

Gary Kenning
Co-Founder, CloudWifi
gary.kenning@cloudwifi.ca
1-855-955-9434 ext. 234

Andy Kaplan-Myrth
Vice-president of Regulatory and Carrier Affairs, TekSavvy
akaplanmyrth@teksavvy.ca
613-222-9626