

2012 Report on Canadian Screenwriters

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1. Introduction

Although not a highly visible creative occupation to the public, screenwriting provides a vital input in the production of most films and many television programs.¹ Canada's growing accomplishments in screen media depend directly on the quality and creativity of Canadian screenwriting talent and the stories they tell.

Yet little is known about the screenwriting occupation in Canada. To remedy this gap in knowledge, we conducted a survey of the members of the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC), which represents professional Canadian English-language screenwriters. In undertaking this research, we were inspired by the regular surveys of members undertaken by the Writers Guild of America, West (WGAW), which has published eight reports on Hollywood screenwriters since 1987, the most recent in 2011. These reports provide an overview of the socio-demographic and economic characteristics of the screenwriting profession in the United States. Ours is the first similar survey of screenwriters undertaken in Canada.

Our motivation is scientific and educational. As researchers, we wanted to investigate the characteristics and dynamics of a key creative occupation in Canada, knowing that the Canadian screenwriting profession differs in some important respects from that in the United States. Cultural production incentives, Canadian content regulations and the nearby presence of the much larger media industry in the United States are some of the country-specific characteristics that have implications for Canadian screenwriters and their careers (Kaye and Davis, 2011). Canadian cultural policy has a substantial impact on the screenwriting occupation and the kinds of products that are written for Canadian screens: in Canada, the film and television industry receives greater public financial support, and is more highly regulated, than in the United States. As well, in Canada, writing for television provides relatively greater economic opportunities and economic stability than writing for feature films, which is much more prevalent in the United States. Further, television is more closely linked to digital and interactive media than cinema is, providing novel bridges between the worlds of broadcasting and new media in Canada. These country-specific characteristics of the Canadian screen industry have important implications for Canadian screenwriters and their careers.

¹ The quality of the screenplay is a recognized critical success factor of feature films (Simonton, 2002).

Another set of reasons that led us to study the screenwriting profession in Canada involves questions of access and diversity. Our media students at Ryerson University reflect the diversity of the Greater Toronto region, and since screen media are an extremely influential and pervasive cultural force, one might expect a great deal of social diversity within the screenwriting profession. But it is well known, thanks in part to the WGAW reports, that the screenwriting profession poorly reflects the diversity of society. In Canada as well as in the U.S., the screenwriting profession is much more hospitable to white middle-aged males than to females, racialized minorities, and seniors. Why is this occupation so exclusionary, what are the consequences for Canadian cultural expression, and what are some possible remedies? As providers of educational services to generations of Canadian media professionals, we are stakeholders in, and care deeply about, their experiences in the labour market.

The WGC facilitated the survey by sending invitations to all of its members and by issuing several reminders. We also sent follow-up invitations to WGC members. Ultimately, 266 English-speaking Canadian screenwriters responded to our request to participate in the survey. This report therefore encompasses screenwriters who are members of the Writers Guild of Canada and who responded to our survey; it does not include screenwriters who are not members of the WGC.²

We have no means to independently assess the degree to which the group of respondents represents the membership of the WGC, or of the larger population of screenwriters in English-speaking Canada.³ We know, however, that WGC members responded to the survey more or less in proportion to their geographical distribution. In the report that follows, we characterize participants as "English-speaking Canadian screenwriters who responded to our survey" but as shorthand we refer to them as Canadian screenwriters. We present here the results of the first-ever survey of Canadian English-language screenwriters, with many thanks to the screenwriters who participated in the survey, and also to the Writers Guild of Canada.⁴

² We did not survey French-speaking Canadian screenwriters, who are generally members of the Société des Auteurs de Radio, Télévision et Cinéma (SARTEC).

³ At the time of the survey in spring-summer of 2010, the WGC represented more than 1800 screenwriters.

⁴ The views expressed in this report are those of the authors only, and should not be attributed to the Writers Guild of Canada, Ryerson University, or any other institution.

2. A snapshot of English-speaking Canadian screenwriters

Years of experience as a screenwriter, and writing credits. Nearly two-thirds (63%) of respondents have more than ten years of experience as a screenwriter. Only 14% have five or fewer years of experience. Most (56%) have 25 screen credits or less. However, 46 writers (17% of the total) have more than one hundred credits.

Kinds of screenwriting jobs, and genres. Writing for television is the mainstay of Canadian screenwriting: 91.7% of respondents write for TV. Films are the second major type of screenwriting for Canadian screenwriters: 61.3% write film screenplays. The most important genre for English-language Canadian screenwriters is drama (43.6% of respondents report writing drama), followed by comedy (24.4%), animation (14.7%), and documentary (9.8%). Canadian screenwriters work primarily on TV episode scripts (for 23.3% of respondents, the most important type of work), followed by feature screenplays (18.4%), showrunning (14.3%), and story editing (13.5%).

Income. Most Canadian English-language screenwriters do not earn a living entirely from screenwriting, and this is true of screenwriters in every age group. Our survey shows that 22% of respondents earn \$0 – 10K annually from screenwriting, and more than half (53.6%) earn less than \$40K from screenwriting. Screenwriting provides income of more than \$60,000/year for around 36% of respondents, representing 94 individuals. About 10% of respondents report income above \$150K from screenwriting. We discuss income from screenwriting further in Section 3.

Country of birth. Nearly three-quarters of Canadian screenwriters were born in Canada. Most immigrant screenwriters in Canada come from the United States (15.6% of all respondents) and the United Kingdom (5%). Twelve other countries account for a further 14 (5.3%) of respondents. See Section 4 for further exploration of the geography of screenwriting in English-speaking Canada.

Country and city of residence. Most Canadian screenwriters (84.6%) reside in Canada. However, a significant portion (13.2%) reside in the United States, mainly in California. A few respondents reside in both countries or in other countries. Nearly half of all screenwriters surveyed live in the GTA. The other major cities of Canadian screenwriter residence are Vancouver (15%), Los Angeles (10%), and Montreal (8%). We discuss the geographical patterns of residency and work among English-language Canadian screenwriters in Section 4.

Languages. The vast majority of English-language Canadian screenwriters (96.2%) speak English as a first language. Other mother tongues are French (1.5%), German (1.1%), Chinese (.8%), and Russian (.4%). French is the second most prevalent language among respondents: 26.3% are proficient in French to some degree, and 15.8% claim to speak it well. The third most prevalent language is Spanish, which 5.6% can speak to some degree.

Education. Canadian screenwriters are highly educated. 80.4% of respondents have a post-secondary degree. For 10.2% of screenwriters, the highest postsecondary degree is from a college. 47.7% have a university degree, and 22.2% have a graduate degree. A further 14.7% have some college or university education. Education of Canadian English-language screenwriters is further discussed in Section 5.

Gender. Of the 266 respondents to our survey, 34.6% are female. In other words, there are nearly twice as many male screenwriters as females. Gender issues among Canadian screenwriters are discussed in Section 6 of this report.

Ethnic background. Most English-language Canadian screenwriters self-identify as some variant of white. Judging from declared ethnic affiliation, no more than 4.1% of respondents are members of a visible minority. These screenwriters have less industry experience than others, and 36% of them report having experienced occupational discrimination due to their ethnic or racial background. We discuss racialized minority screenwriters in Section 7.

Age. More than three-quarters of Canadian screenwriters are in their 30s, 40s or 50s. Older screenwriters represent only 16% of the population of respondents, and younger screenwriters just 4%. We further discuss age-related issues among Canadian screenwriters in Section 8.

3. Screenwriters' income

Summary. Most Canadian English-language screenwriters do not earn a living entirely from screenwriting, and this is true of respondents in every age group. Our survey shows that 22% of respondents earn less than \$10K annually from screenwriting, and more than half (53.6%) earn less than \$40K from screenwriting. Screenwriting provides income of more than \$60,000/year for around 36% of respondents, representing 94 individuals. 9.6% of respondents report income above \$150K from screenwriting

Income from screenwriting is very unequally distributed among writers. In total, Canadian screenwriters responding to our survey earned around \$13.5 million from screenwriting in 2009. The top 10% of earners received about 28% of this screenwriting income, and the top 20% of earners received about 50% of this income. Furthermore, as Figure 1 shows, screenwriting income is concentrated among screenwriters in their 30s and 40s. Screenwriters in these age groups earned 59% of all screenwriting income in 2009. Because of their relatively lower numbers, screenwriters in their 20s and screenwriters in their 50s and older earn a relatively small portion of total screenwriting income.

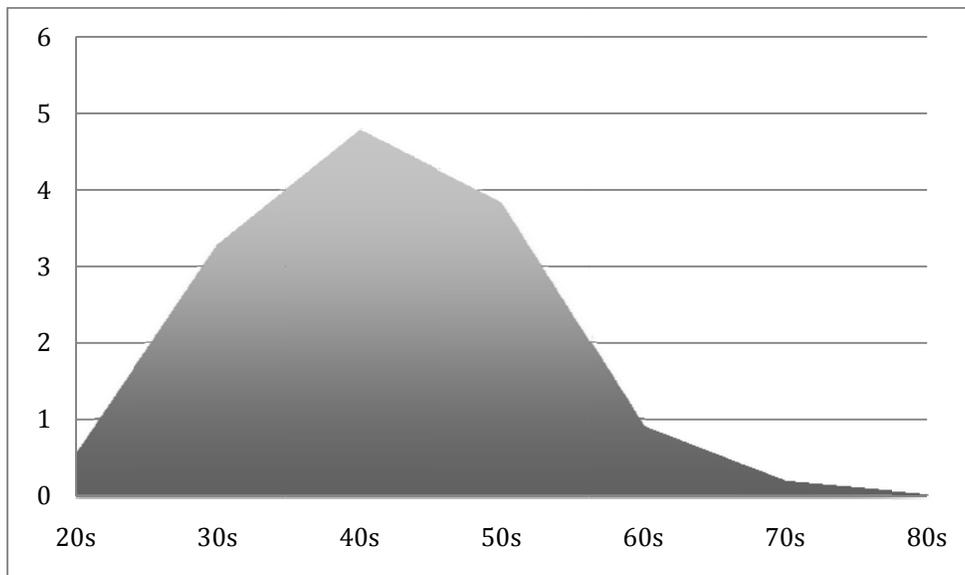


Figure 1: Estimated total income from screenwriting by survey respondents, by age group in millions of dollars (vertical axis), 2009

Because the distribution of screenwriting income among screenwriters is highly skewed, the *average* income from screenwriting is relatively high. As figure 2 shows, the average income from screenwriting is between \$50K and \$60K for screenwriters of all age groups below 60, after which time screenwriting income declines sharply.

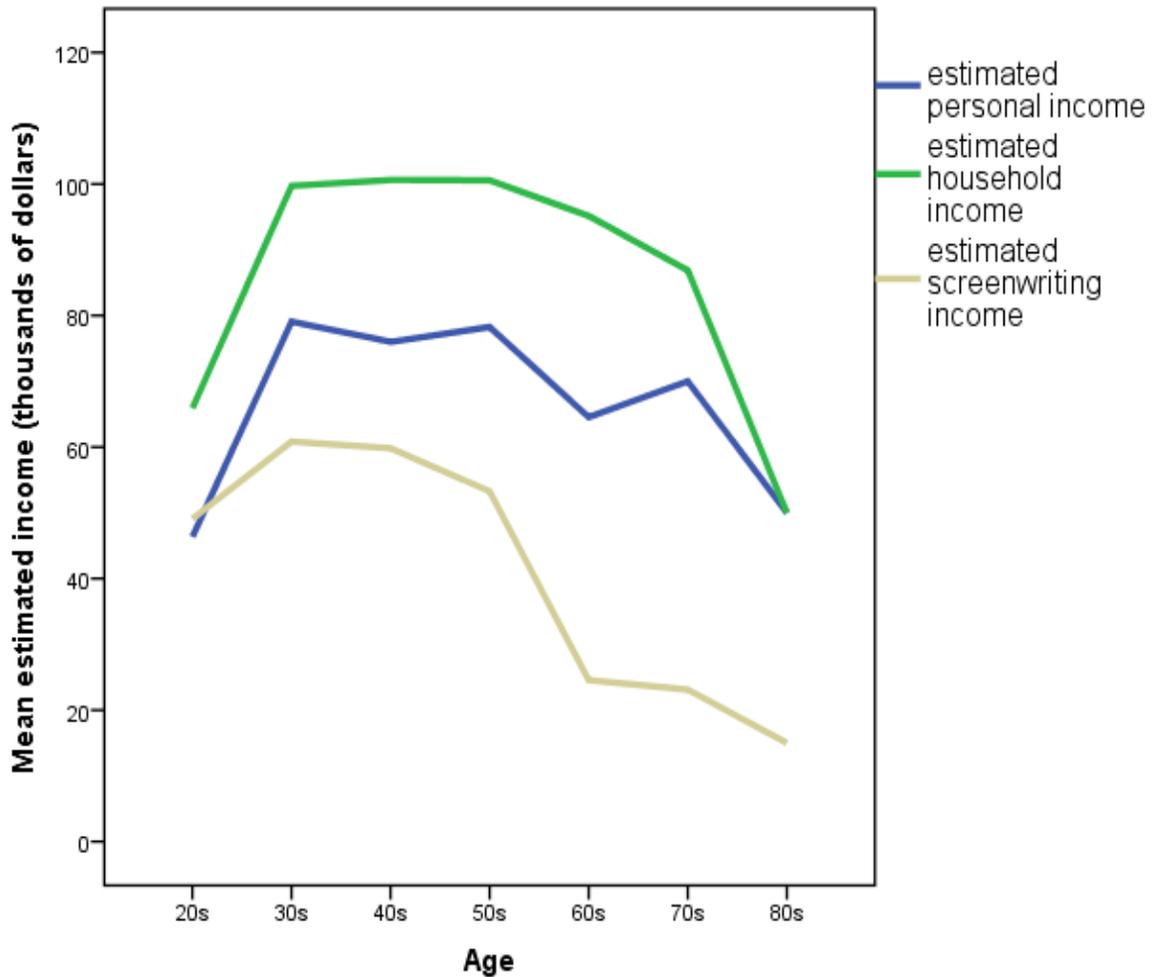


Figure 2: Mean personal, household, and screenwriting income by age group. The vertical axis represents estimated annual income earned from screenwriting in thousands of dollars.

Many writers supplement their income from sources other than screenwriting, and non-screenwriting personal income takes on increasing importance with age. As Figure 2 indicates, non-screenwriting personal income exceeds screenwriting income for all screenwriters except those in their 20s. Respondents report receiving an estimated \$70K to \$80K in personal income beginning in their 30s. Older screenwriters do not report significantly greater personal or household incomes than those in their 30s.

Household income exceeds screenwriting and personal income in all cases, illustrating the importance of spouses and partners in the economics of Canadian screenwriters.⁵

In general, screenwriting income increases with industry experience. Screen credits are an indication of industry experience and the more credits a writer earns, the more employable he or she is, and the higher the income she or he can earn from screenwriting. Thus screenwriting income is correlated with number of screen credits. But there are two exceptions to this general rule. First, screenwriters in their 20s, while having the least overall number of screen credits, have the highest relative proportion of writers who earn \$100K - \$150K from screenwriting. Second, while age is positively correlated with number of screenwriting credits, it is negatively correlated with income from screenwriting.

As mentioned earlier, Canadian English-language screenwriters augment low income levels from screenwriting with income from other sources. However, it appears that writing does not provide significant supplemental income. Although 63% of our survey respondents engage in other forms of writing, 82% of them earn less than \$20,000 from writing other than screenwriting.

We conclude that screenwriting is not a full-time occupation for many screenwriters in English-speaking Canada, since many work at other jobs to supplement their screenwriting income, or have an income-earning spouse or partner. Indeed, 10% of writers who answered our question "What advice would you give to an emerging screenwriter?" recommended to have other sources of income. In their own words:

"Have a backup plan for an alternate way of earning an income because nothing comes quickly in Canada - there's no such thing as an overnight success. It will take years to get to a position where you have a CHANCE at making a stable income."

"Have another skill as a backup to provide income."

"Get a cab licence as I did. ... Live cheap."

⁵ The reported level of household income, between \$90K and \$100K annually, is a low estimate because we asked respondents only to indicate a range of income, with ">\$150K" as the highest level.

4. Geography of Canadian English-language screenwriting

Summary. More than half of all screenwriters surveyed reside in Southern Ontario, primarily in the GTA. The three other most important cities where Canadian English-language screenwriters live are Vancouver, Los Angeles, and Montreal. Writers based in Toronto and Los Angeles report higher incomes from screenwriting than writers in other cities. Toronto provides the major share of high-quality screenwriting employment to writers of TV episode stories and scripts, concept/show bible developers, editors of feature stories and TV stories, and showrunners. But it is not unusual for screenwriters to spend at least part of their time working outside their city of residence.

Origins and languages of Canadian English-language screenwriters

Canadian screenwriting is an occupation that is practiced largely by native-born Canadians. Most (73%) of survey respondents were born in Canada. Most immigrant screenwriters were born in other English-speaking countries: 15% of Canadian screenwriters were born in the U.S., and 5% in the U.K. The remaining 7% were born in eleven other countries.

The national origins of Canadian screenwriters are reflected in their linguistic capabilities. 95% of Canadian respondents speak English as a first language. While 42% report speaking or having some qualifications in French, and 20% speak or have some qualifications in one or more of seventeen other language, the language of screenwriting among respondent screenwriters is practically always English. Only 2% of screenwriters do not write in English. Three percent also write screenplays in French.

Screenwriting work and city of residence

The Greater Toronto region (GTA) is the centre of gravity of the Canadian English-language screenwriting world. Figure 3 shows that nearly half (49%) of screenwriters live in the GTA. 15% live in Vancouver, 10% in Los Angeles, 8% in Montreal, 4% in Southern Ontario outside of GTA, and 3% in Halifax. The remaining 11% live in other cities or towns in Canada.

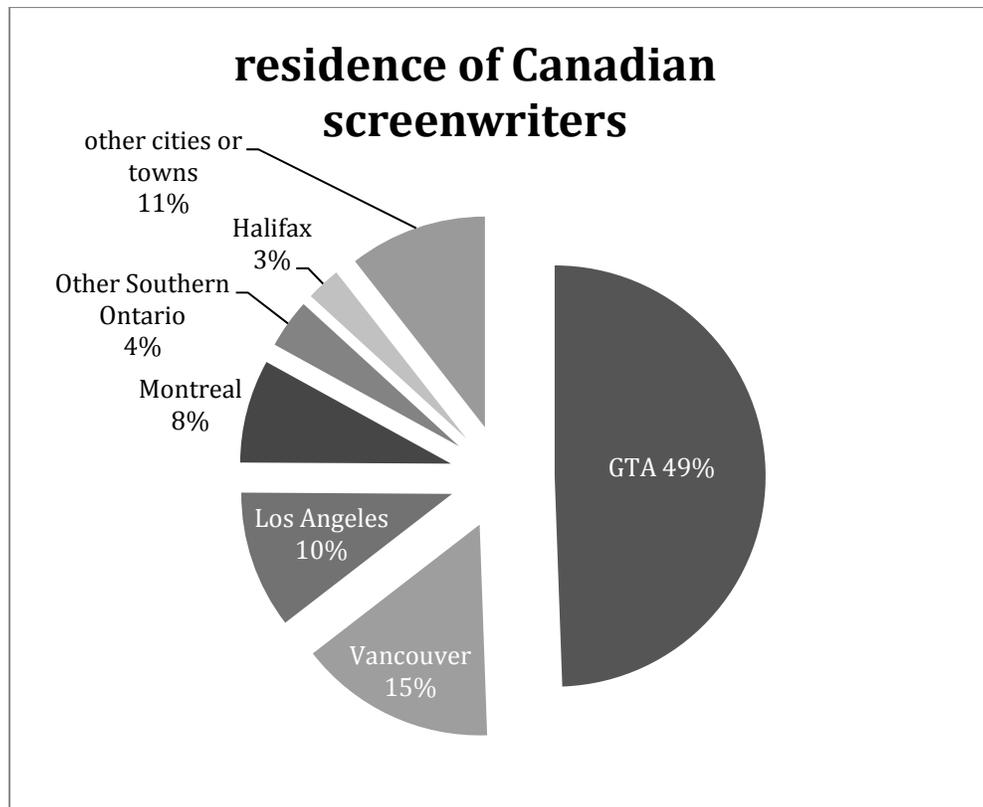


Figure 3: Principal place of residence of English-language Canadian screenwriters

Screenwriters live in GTA primarily because of occupational factors - the screenwriting work that is available in Toronto - although the city's cultural amenities and social and professional environment also play important roles.⁶

As Figure 4 shows, Toronto provides substantially more opportunities to earn a living from screenwriting than elsewhere in English-speaking Canada. GTA-based screenwriters report higher average incomes from screenwriting than screenwriters in other Canadian cities. Overall, 36% of Canadian screenwriters earn \$60,000 or more from screenwriting. In Toronto, the percentage is 45%.

⁶ For a fuller discussion of the role of Toronto in the screenwriting profession in English-speaking Canada, see Davis et al. (2013).

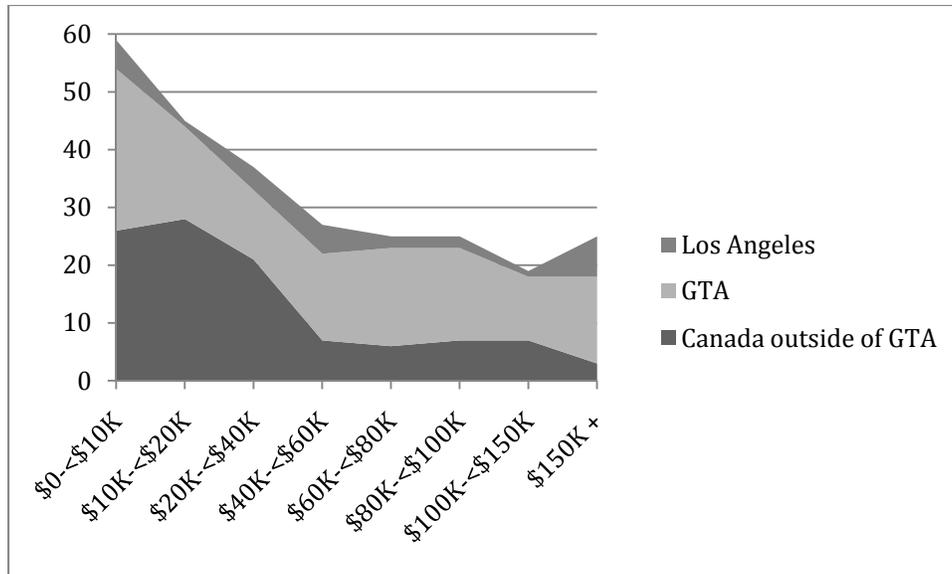


Figure 4: Place of residence and income from screenwriting. The vertical axis represents numbers of screenwriters in each income bracket.

Los Angeles is the only city in which relatively more screenwriters than in the GTA are in the highest income bracket. In the GTA, 11% of respondents earn more than \$150,000 annually from screenwriting. In Los Angeles, the figure is 26%. Only 3% of screenwriters living outside these two screen industry centres exceed \$150,000 in annual earnings from screenwriting.

Screenwriters living in cities and towns outside the GTA earn the lowest share of income from screenwriting. 51% of Canadian writers living in Canada outside the GTA earn less than \$20,000 annually from screenwriting. In the GTA, the figure is 34%. In Los Angeles, it is 22% (see Figure 4).

Screenwriters in the GTA earn higher incomes from screenwriting because the highest-paying screenwriting work in Canada is located there. Screenwriters who live in the GTA have a greater likelihood of working as story editors or writer/producers (showrunners) than Canadian screenwriters living elsewhere. Around 36% of screenwriters living in the GTA reported having had showrunning experience. The other two cities affording relatively high rates of showrunning opportunities are Vancouver and Los Angeles. In LA, 33% of respondents have had showrunning experience and in Vancouver, 26%. Showrunners living in the GTA, Vancouver and Los Angeles account for 88% of all Canadian screenwriters with showrunner experience.

A further advantage of living in Toronto is access to mentors. Mentorships are important social arrangements for entering and progressing in the screenwriting occupation, as discussed in Section 5 of this report. Overall, 44% of respondents have had a mentor. However, only 27% of responding screenwriters in Canada outside of the GTA have had a mentor, while 56% of GTA screenwriters have had a mentor. GTA rates of mentorship are comparable with those of Los Angeles, where the screenwriting occupational culture also values mentoring relationships.

Screenwriters often live in one city and work in other places. 44% of responding Canadian screenwriters report undertaking screenwriting work outside their city of residence. Figure 5 shows screenwriters' patterns of living in and working among different cities. The size of the lines indicates the relative strength of the live-work linkage, and the arrowhead indicates directionality. It can be seen that while a certain amount of movement takes place between Toronto and several Canadian cities, the strongest linkages are those between Toronto and Los Angeles, Toronto and Vancouver, and Toronto and Halifax. Of equal interest is the observation that GTA-based screenwriters engage in a considerable amount of international work (not including work in Los Angeles), while screenwriters in other cities engage in a much lower volume of international work.

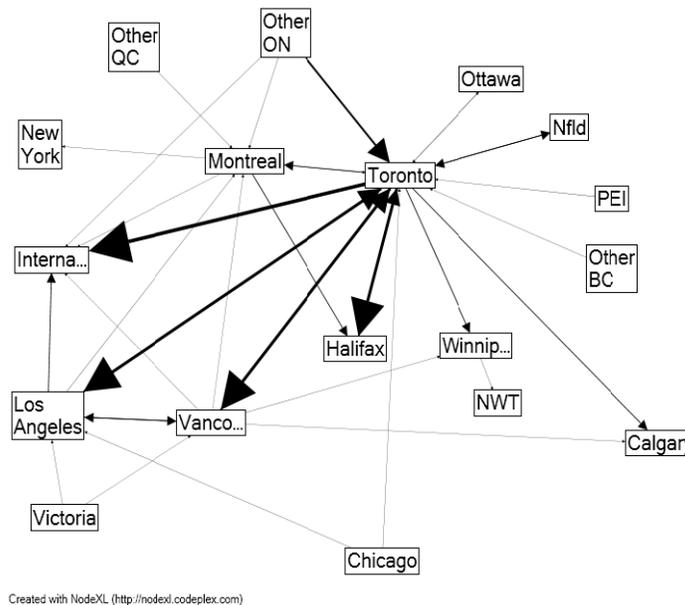


Figure 5: Patterns of inter-city residence and work for English-language Canadian screenwriters. The arrows represent direction of movement and the weight of the line represents the volume of movement.

Location of screenwriting work and production incentives

Regional production incentives play an important role in determining where a screenwriter works. These incentives are offered by government agencies to locate screen production outside of large urban centers such as Toronto, Vancouver and Montreal. Productions that shoot in smaller urban centers or remote areas are given financial incentives with the goal of fostering Canadian stories from all regions of the nation to better reflect our culture on our screens. Many screenwriters feel these initiatives are helpful but many others feel they are another layer of bureaucracy that contributes to the overall problem of trying to make compelling films and television content in Canada.

Nearly a third of screenwriters who responded to our question about the value of regional production incentives believe that these incentives stimulate more production, and that the Canadian industry needs as much economic stimulation as possible. As one writer said:

“Unfortunately there wouldn't be much indigenous production without them. Like many other industries, film relies on various levels of government subsidy to remain competitive.”

Canadian screenwriters were evenly split between believing that the screen industry should be concentrated in one or two large production centres, and that concentrating the industry in large centres is not good for the industry. Arguments in favour of centralization tended to make reference to the American screen industry and the fact that it is concentrated in Los Angeles:

“I agree with tax breaks for productions if they want to shoot in different regions, but demanding that most crew/cast come from that region is a bit onerous and pre-supposes that Canada should have several Hollywoods. The US only has one and it works pretty well for them.”

Many writers specifically mentioned that trying to have numerous regional production centres weakens the industry overall. They write that it is not feasible to sustain a strong, competitive industry if it is scattered across the country:

“Trying to prop up industries in distant regions at the expense of larger areas such as Toronto, Montreal and Vancouver is a big mistake. It drains money away

from the hubs of our cultural industries in order to prop up/create production centres where none can organically survive.”

Screenwriters who responded in favour of regional incentives (de-centralization of production) said that incentives give those who do not live near large production centers the opportunity to tell their stories, and the incentives result in more creative projects:

“Regional production incentives ensure the decentralization of the industry. And I ask, not altogether rhetorically, where the most interesting productions originate in this country? It ain't in Toronto or Vancouver.”

“There is talent across Canada. To give 99% of the funding to Toronto producers is to force regional producers to either quit or move, which would further lose regional expression and representation on TV and so in our culture.”

5. Education, training, and mentorship of Canadian English-language screenwriters

Summary. Canadian English-language screenwriters are highly educated. Most survey respondents have obtained a post-secondary degree and more than one in five has a graduate degree. Most writers engage in additional training of some kind, including industry apprenticeships, government funded internships, professional seminars, workshops, and enrollment in formal training programs across the country. However, the greatest source of training for Canadian screenwriters outside of the postsecondary sector is “on the job”, usually with the guidance of a mentor or senior industry professional. Mentorship involves formal on-the-job apprentice situations as well as informal relationships that provide advice, information, and introductions. Screenwriters find value in mentorship in the early stages of their careers, and nearly half of all survey respondents serve as mentors to emerging screenwriters. But despite high levels of education and training, the screenwriting occupation in Canada does not yield high income for everyone. Over half of all responding screenwriters earn less than \$40,000 a year from screenwriting despite the generally high degree of education, training and specialization required to practice the screenwriting occupation.

Canadian English-language screenwriters are highly educated

Screenwriting demands a high degree of specialization, education and training. 48% of Canadian English-language screenwriters have an undergraduate degree from a university, and 22% have a graduate degree. A further 10% have a college degree. Only 4% of respondents report their level of formal education to be at the high school level or lower. A slightly higher percentage of men (49%) have a university degree compared to women (46%) but more women by proportion have a graduate degree. The proportion of writers with a university degree climbs to 63% for racialized minorities, who (as discussed in Section 7) are severely underrepresented in the screenwriting occupation in Canada.

The overwhelming majority (84%) of Canadian screenwriters receive their education in Canada, but a quarter of respondents report obtaining at least some of their education in the United States. Given Hollywood's significant pull on the Canadian screenwriting industry (see Section 4), it's not surprising that many Canadian screenwriters study or complete their training in the U.S.

Other sources of education and training are important to Canadian screenwriters

Despite the majority of screenwriters having a post-secondary degree, many want or require additional highly specialized training, adding to the evidence that screenwriting demands a high degree of specialization. More than half (55%) of Canadian English-language screenwriters gain additional education and training specific to their occupation through a variety of sources.

Figure 6 shows that 39% of those who report having additional training list on-the-job learning as the primary source of training.

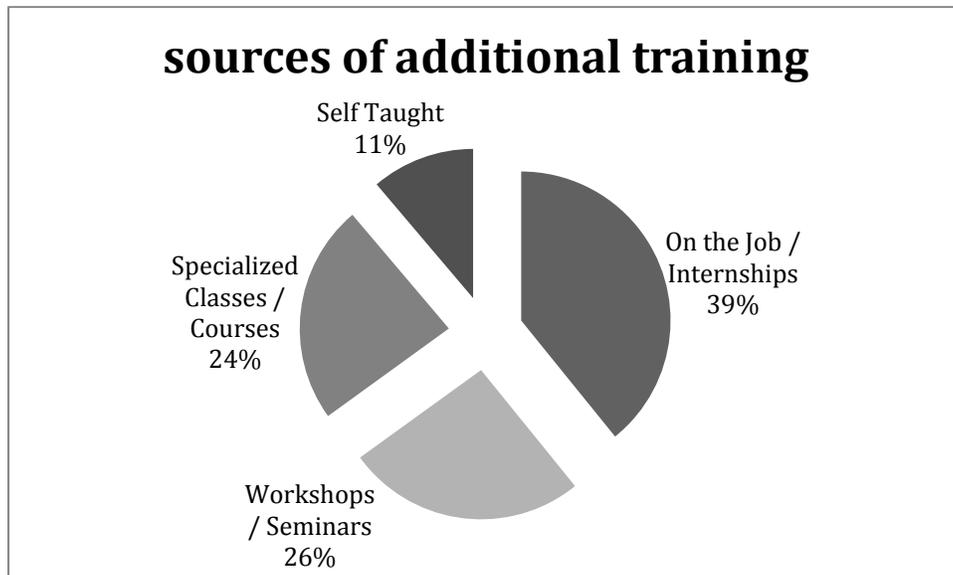


Figure 6: Sources of additional training reported by English-language Canadian screenwriters

Professional seminars and workshops are a close second. More than a quarter (26%) of screenwriters with additional training have participated in this kind of learning. These sources of additional training feature specialized educational classes, lectures and workshops by individuals who have had a high degree of success as screenwriters and/or possess significant industry credentials. Survey participants mention Robert McKee, Syd Field, Linda Seger and John Truby most often as those who have the strongest reputation in this area. The continued popularity of workshops and

professional seminars suggests that screenwriters support a subsidiary industry: that of screenplay or story “gurus”.⁷

24% of screenwriters with additional training report having enrolled in screenwriting courses offered by post-secondary institutions in the form of continuing education, “night school”, one-off courses or part-time studies. Twice as many women as men take specialized courses in screenwriting.

The proportion of screenwriters who report having received additional training drops to 14% for formal industry-led training programs as well as for internship programs. Only 14% of respondents report having received additional training from specialized screen industry organizations such as the Praxis Centre for Screenwriters, the National Screen Institute, the Banff World Media Festival competitions and the National Film Board. These programs accept screenwriters into their internships based on a stringent application process, often requiring the submission of fully developed screenplays and letters of recommendation from reputable industry sources. While access to training through professional seminars and workshops requires only the payment of the registration fee, applicants to formal training programs must demonstrate having already acquired a considerable level of proficiency as well as a degree of industrial support.

Industry and government sponsored internship programs are another highly competitive source of additional training for screenwriters. Organizations such as the Writers Guild of Canada (WGC), Women in Film and Television (WIFT), Second City, the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation, private broadcasters and producers offer apprenticeship programs in which screenwriters compete for the opportunity to work on a project under the guidance of a mentor. However, as with formal training programs, application requirements at the professional internship level result in only 14% of respondents reporting having received training through sponsored apprenticeships.

It is not surprising that relatively few screenwriters report these sources of additional training, given the competitive nature of the selection process. Still, these programs represent a key aspect of the Canadian screenwriter training infrastructure by providing a learning opportunity that combines hands-on experience with mentorship and advanced training.

⁷ On how-to screenwriter manuals see Conor (2012).

Notwithstanding the variety of additional training opportunities available to Canadian English-language screenwriters, some screenwriters are self-taught. 11% of respondents state that their main or only source of learning was by reading books, observing other screenwriters while working in a related field, reading screenplays, and/or that they “learn by doing it”. This type of learning requires a great deal of individual patience, perseverance, and tenacity, virtues that are well suited for pursuing a career in this occupation.

Canadian English-language screenwriters find value in education and additional training

Our survey respondents report that they use their skills, training and education to a high degree. Almost half of all screenwriters report that they utilize their skills, training and education “a great deal”.

When the degree of skills utilization is examined by types of training and education, screenwriters report the highest levels of utilization from specialized classes or courses (56%) and from graduate programs (54%). Screenwriters report the least amount of skill utilization when they are self-taught (12.5%) or when they received their writing training and education at the secondary school level (12.5%).

Respondents who received some or all of their formal education in the United States report higher levels of skill utilization (65%) than those who were educated in Canada (48%), raising the question of why a US education is apparently more beneficial to Canadian screenwriters.

An institution that stands out in terms of the large impact of its education and training programs is the Canadian Film Centre (CFC). 67% of screenwriters who have attended training programs offered by the CFC report using their skills “a great deal” – more than any other training provider, including formal educational institutions and additional or specialized training sources. No CFC attendees reported skill utilization at the lower end of the scale. The CFC maintains a very selective admissions process for all of its programs, yet 12.4% of respondents have attended the CFC. The Canadian Film Centre

appears to play a particularly important career acceleration role among Canadian screenwriters.⁸

Mentorship is important to Canadian English-language screenwriters

Along with formal education and additional training, mentorship is an important factor in the Canadian screenwriting occupation. Overall, nearly half of all screenwriters report having had a mentor.

Mentorship of younger screenwriters who are at the start of their careers by older screenwriters is a clear trend. Our data shows that rates of having a mentor decrease with age: while 55% of respondents in their 20s have had a mentor, 26% of screenwriters in their 60s or 70s have had a mentor (see Figure 7). Conversely, the rates of screenwriters who have been a mentor increases with age from 9% in their 20s to 50% in their 60s and 70s. Mentorship in the screenwriting industry in Canada is prevalent and valuable to screenwriters at the beginning of their careers and, as screenwriters get older, they mentor their younger counterparts (or “give back”).

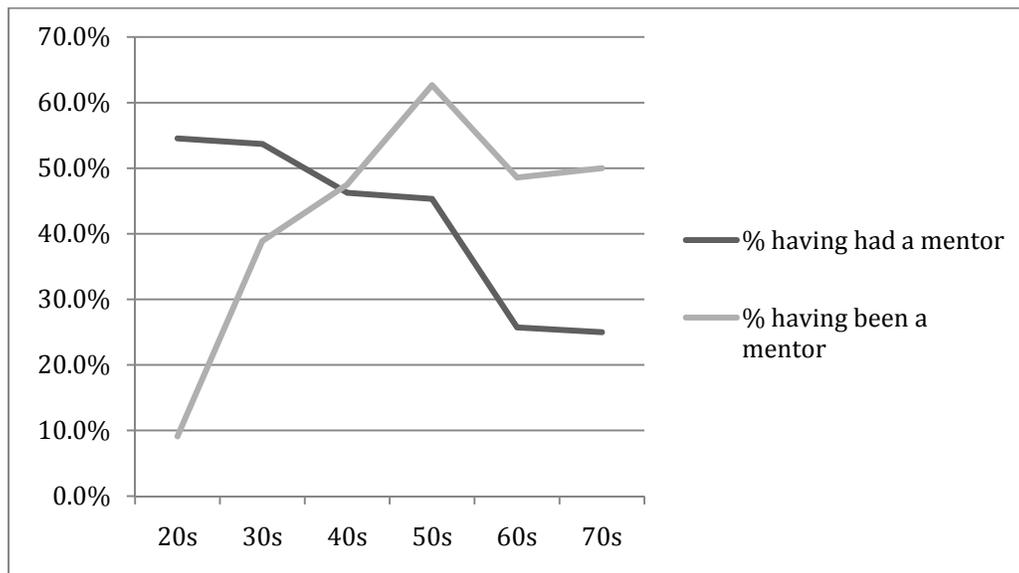


Figure 7: Percentage of screenwriters having had a mentor, and having been a mentor, by age group

⁸ See also Davis et al. (2013) and Nordicity's *Study of the Economic Impacts of the Canadian Film Centre* (2013).

Our study reveals that women have had a mentor (53%) and have been a mentor (53%) more often than men (41% and 47% respectively). Notably, women report valuing mentorship more than men: 52% vs. 40%.

Screenwriters who have attended the CFC benefit from enhanced mentorship opportunities. 76% of CFC attendees reporting having had a mentor as compared to the overall average of 44%. Also, 73% of screenwriters who have attended the CFC found the mentorship they received to be valuable compared to the overall average of 44%.

6. Canadian screenwriters and gender

Summary. Our survey reveals that there are nearly twice as many men as women writers in the Canadian screenwriting profession. The survey also reveals that women do not occupy the top writing jobs nearly as frequently as men, and that women receive lower overall remuneration for their screenwriting work than their male counterparts.

Women Writers and Employment

With the ratio of men to women screenwriters at nearly 2 to 1, it is clear that men dominate the occupation of writing screen stories in Canada. In addition to the underrepresentation of women, results of our survey indicate that men most often occupy the highest-paying and most powerful writing positions. The writers with the most creative and professional influence and the highest rates of pay are showrunners and writer/producers on a television series. Writers in these positions are responsible for the creative direction of the show, as well as for performing many producer-like responsibilities such as liaison between the production and the broadcaster, supervision of casting, and the hiring of staff writers (Writers Guild of Canada and The Cultural Human Resources Council, 2010). This type of employment has a great deal of creative and professional leverage in the industry. Overall, women represent just under 30% of showrunners and only 21% of writer/producers.⁹ 32.4% of all male screenwriters who responded to our survey have had experience as showrunners, compared to 22.2% of women, and males work as writer/producers almost twice as frequently as women (18.4% and 9.3% respectively).

Women are employed most often to write episodic scripts for TV series (10.5% of all writers; 32.6% of female writers). Episodic script writers are individuals who are hired as staff writers for a series or on freelance contracts to write one or more episodes on an as-needed basis. By contrast, men identified showrunner as the most frequently occupied screenwriting role (21% of all writers; 32.5% of male writers) and TV episodic script as their second most frequent screenwriting role (14% of all writers; 20.2% of male writers). These facts illustrate the existence of certain occupational barriers for

⁹ Women are also underrepresented among writers for pilots for a TV series. Less than 1% of all writers surveyed are women who have been employed to write a pilot. For men, the number is more than double at 2.6%.

female screenwriters. Women are employed to generate much of the creative content of a TV series but they reach the most influential positions of showrunner or writer/producer relatively less frequently than men.

Another high-profile and sought-after position in the screenwriting profession is the feature film screenwriter. A great deal of prestige is attached to authoring a screenplay for a film, the main reason being the perception that film has greater artistic and cultural value than television. We find that women are underrepresented among feature film screenwriters. Only 14% of female screenwriters write screenplays for feature films, compared to 22.1% of male screenwriters.

The only area of employment in which women outnumber men is story editor. The story editor role is defined as a person whose tasks include writing, rewrites, script polishes, and often script consultation services for a television series or feature film screenplay. In television, story editors may also take on the additional role of participating in group sessions in which they assist in developing storylines for television episodes on a series that has already been created (Writers Independent Production Agreement, 2010). The story editor is less influential than a showrunner but still enjoys more creative influence than the staff or freelance writer on a TV series. 7.2% of female screenwriters have worked as story editors, compared to 6.5% of male writers.

In the aggregate, men have an advantage in attaining positions that allow for control over the overall creative and production aspects of screen-based writing in Canada. Female writers attain a lower degree of creative control than that enjoyed by their male counterparts.

Specializations, formats, and genres of writing

Types of screenwriting done in Canada include *Formats* (Television, Film, Online, Gaming); *Specializations* (Fiction, Animation – Fiction and non-fiction, Documentary/Non-fiction); and *Genres* (Drama, Comedy, Animation, Documentary, Lifestyle, Reality, Variety).

We find that in terms of Formats of writing for the screen, women and men generally write in the various formats in equal proportions (though not in equal numbers). The only format in which the proportion of men is significantly greater is 'Gaming' with 3.5% of total male writers engaged in this format compared to only 1.1% of total female writers.

The only area of screenwriting (by Specialization and Genre) in which women predominate is in Animation. 16.5% of female screenwriters indicated writing in the Animation Genre compared to 13.4% of men, and 3.3% of female writers indicated writing for non-fiction Animation compared to 1.7% of male writers.

Interestingly, in their responses to our questions, male screenwriters generated their own labels for Genres more readily than women by including such sub-genres as Action, Horror/Comedy, Horror/Sci Fi/Fantasy, and Thriller in the “Other” category to describe the genres they write.

Female screenwriters and their experience in the profession

Female writers have on average fewer screen credits than male writers. One of the most important factors in a screenwriter’s employability and financial compensation is the number and quality of screen credits he or she has obtained. Screen credits for writers are a reliable indicator of industry and professional recognition in the screenwriting occupation. Most screenwriters in Canada, regardless of gender, report having between 1 – 5 screen credits with 30.8% of all women and 25% of all men falling into this range. Across the lower ranges of screen credits, women report having fewer screen credits than men. 63.8% of women have 0-25 screen credits, compared to 52.2% of men. As the number of screen credits increases, women writers fall further behind. 47.6% of men report having between 26 and “more than 100” screen credits as compared to 36.3% of women.

Female screenwriters also have less overall experience in the industry. We estimate that the 266 screenwriters who responded to our survey have accumulated a total of 4369 years of experience as screenwriters. Figure 8 shows the predominance of years of experience among male screenwriters in their 40s and 50s. These screenwriters account for 43.5% of the accumulated years of screenwriting experience among respondent screenwriters, compared to 18.5% among females in the same age groups. A reason for some optimism is the better gender balance among screenwriters in their 30s. Of the 395 years of screenwriting experience represented by writers in their 30s, around 40% has been accumulated by women.

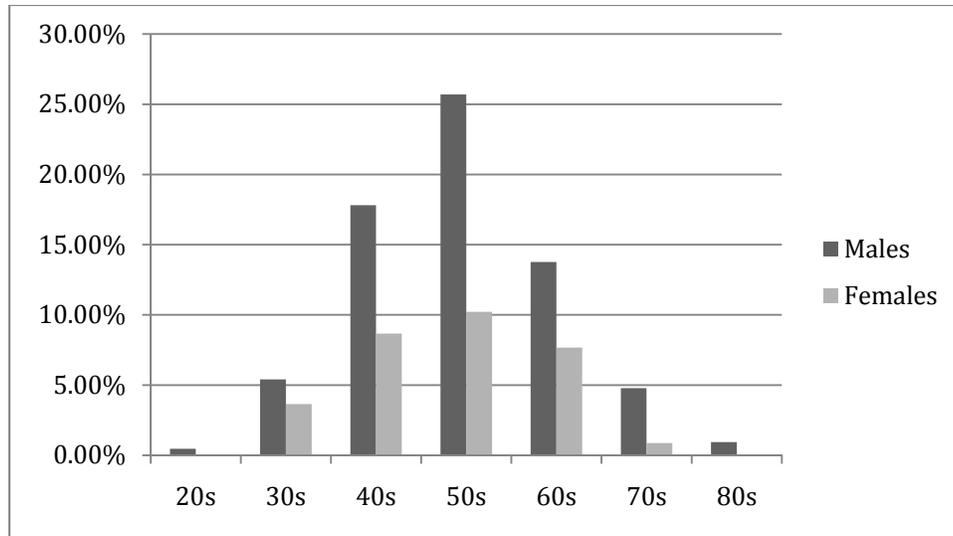


Figure 8: Percentage by gender of total number of years of experience in the screenwriting industry (N=4369 years).

Women Writers and Income

Women earn less for screenwriting work than men. Our data show that women are over-represented in the very lowest income ranges for screenwriting and men consistently earn more from screenwriting than their female counterparts. At the top end of the industry, men win the most lucrative contracts over women at a ratio of 3 to 1.

As discussed in Section 3, most of the screenwriters in our survey report earning very little in terms of annual income from screenwriting alone. The \$0 – \$10K income range is the largest income bracket for both men and women screenwriters with 27.5% of women and 19.2% of men reporting annual earnings from screenwriting of \$10K or less. Women also predominate in the \$20K - \$40K screenwriting income bracket. Approximately 50% (48.8%) of male screenwriters and 61.6% of female screenwriters make \$40K or less from screenwriting.

Female screenwriters never catch up. 30.9% of men and 25.3% of women earn between \$40 and \$100K annually from screenwriting and the gap remains consistent with 28% of men and 22% of women earning between \$60K - \$100K. In the \$100K plus range, the gap widens with 19.8% of men and 11% of women earning income from screenwriting at this level. At the top end of the earning scale, in the \$150K+ income bracket, we find the greatest gap between men and women. Of the 25 writers who reported an annual income from screenwriting of \$150K or more, only four were

women. Among the most highly-paid screenwriters, men outnumber women by a ratio of four to one.

Women writers and discrimination

We asked Canadian English-language screenwriters if they had experienced occupation-related discrimination in the areas of gender, age, ethnicity, sexuality, disability and economic class. Virtually the same proportion of men and women reported discrimination in all categories except for gender and age. Over one-third (35.2%) of women reported discrimination based on gender. By comparison, 13.4% of men reported gender discrimination. Women also reported slightly higher instances of age discrimination at 28.6% compared to men at 24.4%. Several female respondents (3.3%) reported two categories of discrimination specific to their gender - motherhood and physical appearance.

Given our findings regarding the underrepresentation of women in the screenwriting occupation, the lower rates of income women earn from screenwriting and the underrepresentation of women in the upper-level screenwriting positions, it is not surprising that women report such discrimination. As noted earlier, our survey results show that it is most often men who make the decisions about who is hired to write TV series episodes, what the creative direction of the series will be and even which stories and characters will be approved. The talent and expertise of female screenwriters is utilized, but under the supervision of their male counterparts.

When asked to elaborate on gender discrimination in screenwriting, some writers noted the systemic nature of the problem. As one writer put it:

“The kinds of stories women are interested in writing are often not the kinds of stories [that broadcasters want], and the characters that populate them are not considered commercial. Even with all the crap floating around about female driven stories, male screen writers still get hired to write them more frequently than female screenwriters. Film and television are male dominated industries even if there are more women producers and executives [than before]. Those women tend to hire men more often than women and they tend to choose projects that go along with the male dominated ideas of what is commercial.”

7. Racialized minority Canadian screenwriters

Summary. Our survey indicates that for every 25 screenwriters in Canada, only 1 is a person of colour; 96% of Canadian screenwriters are white. Only eleven screenwriters among our respondents identified themselves as being part of a racialized minority group. Representation of persons of colour in the screenwriting industry in Canada is less than one-quarter of the representation of racialized minorities in the population.¹⁰ Our survey also shows that persons of colour are employed in the top writing jobs at a far lesser rate than white writers. We see that persons of colour have fewer years of experience than white screenwriters, and fewer screen credits. Over a third of racialized minority screenwriters have experienced occupation-related discrimination of a racial or ethnic nature.

Racialized minority writers are under-represented in the most influential screenwriting occupations

As noted earlier in this report, screenwriters with the most creative and professional influence and the highest rates of pay are showrunners and writer/producers on a television series. However, racialized minority writers represent less than 0.5% of all showrunners. Our survey identified no writer/producers who are persons of colour. When examined by proportion, racialized minority screenwriters are employed in high positions five times less frequently than white screenwriters: while 29% of white Canadian screenwriters have been showrunners, only 9% of racialized minority screenwriters have been showrunners. (This represents, in fact, only one Canadian screenwriter of colour who has been a showrunner).

Most Canadian screenwriters, white and coloured, write for television in similar proportions (92% and 82% respectively). Racialized minority screenwriters are mostly employed to write episodic scripts for television series. 36% of racialized minority screenwriters are so employed. This amounts to only 1.5% of all Canadian English-language screenwriters, however. By proportion, more racialized minority writers are employed in the high-profile and sought after position of feature film writers. 27% of racialized minority writers identify Feature Screenplays as their second highest type of employment, compared to 19% of white writers.

¹⁰ According to the 2006 Canadian Census, 16.3% of Canadians are identified as a member of a "visible minority" group.

Racialized minority writers are younger, have less industry experience, and fewer screen credits than non-minority writers

As we saw earlier, screen credits for writers are correlated with professional recognition and employability in the screenwriter occupation. Our survey finds that Canadian screenwriters who are a member of a racialized minority have on average fewer screen credits than white screenwriters - 31 vs. 39. Over half of all racialized minority writers (54%) report 10 screen credits or less compared to 40% of all writers. But at the higher end of the scale, we see a slightly greater proportion of minority writers with 50+ screen credits (36%) compared to all writers (29%). Also, screenwriters of colour are more highly educated than white screenwriters - 90% of coloured screenwriters have a university degree, compared to 69% of white writers.

Another indicator of employment is the number of years a writer has been working in the profession. On average, racialized minority screenwriters have fewer years of experience in the profession than white writers - 11.8 compared to 16.9. No Canadian writers of colour reported having been in the screenwriting industry for 25 years or more compared to 22% of white writers, suggesting that that minority writers in the Canadian English-language screenwriting profession have only recently begun to be employed in the screenwriting field. This conclusion is also suggested by the fact that there are no racialized minority screenwriters aged 50 years or more whereas nearly half (46%) of white writers fall into this age range.

In this report we have highlighted the career benefits for screenwriters who have attended the Canadian Film Centre, which acts as a career accelerator for screenwriters. A greater proportion of racialized minority writers have attended the CFC (27% of writers of colour compared to 12% of white writers). Racialized minority writers who attend the CFC have less industry experience than comparable white writers and earn less upon graduation, but overall racialized minority writers earn a slightly higher average income from screenwriting than white writers - \$57,000 vs. \$52,000.

Screenwriters of colour experience racial and gender discrimination more frequently than white screenwriters. When asked if they had experienced various forms of discrimination, minority writers reported Race/Ethnicity and Gender most often. 36% of writers of colour indicated Race/Ethnicity discrimination compared to 5% of white writers, and 36% of writers of colour experienced gender discrimination compared to 20% of white writers.

When asked to elaborate on discrimination, one racialized minority screenwriter made reference to being “pigeon-holed because of my gender or ethnicity and deemed not appropriate for certain ... jobs.” Another minority screenwriter noted “Many shows have a token woman on staff – and I have also been told that ‘women aren’t funny,’ either directly or indirectly.” Another minority screenwriter commented that “I think gender and ethnicity has only helped me get jobs. I think gender can play a role once you’re in a [staff writer’s] room and I think there are a lot more barriers to overcome once you’re on the job ...”.

8. Age and Canadian screenwriters

Summary. Well over half of English-language Canadian screenwriters are in their 40s and 50s, while relatively few are in their 20s. This seems to fly in the face of the adage that screenwriting is a young person's occupation. In fact, middle-aged Canadian English-language screenwriters have the most influence and power in the Canadian screenwriting industry as they occupy most of the showrunner and writer/producer positions. Once Canadian screenwriters reach their 50s, fewer and fewer are employed in these high level occupations. Income from screenwriting peaks when screenwriters are in their 40s, then declines with age. Older writers report high rates of age discrimination.

Older Writers and Employment

Middle-aged writers have the most influence and power in the Canadian English-language screenwriting occupation. As described in Section 6, the screenwriting positions with the most influence, pay and creative control are showrunners and writer/producers. Our survey reveals that writers in their 40s and 50s dominate these positions at a combined 64.8%.

Showrunner and writer/producer positions are acquired only after screenwriters have spent years paying their dues. Of the writers who reported being showrunners, 64% were in their 40s and 50s compared to 20% in their 30s. Of the writers who reported being writer/producers, 64.8% were in their 40s and 50s compared to 21% in their 30s. No writers in their 20s reported being showrunners or writer/producers.

But once screenwriters reach their 50s, fewer and fewer are employed as showrunners and writer/producers. As screenwriters reach their 60s and beyond, the rate at which they are employed in the most powerful positions in the screenwriting industry drops sharply. Writers in their 60s occupy only 12% of showrunner positions and 13.2% of writer/producer positions. Screenwriters in their 70s and 80s amount to 2.7% and 1.3% (respectively) of showrunners. No writers in these age groups are writer/producers. This trend is indicative of an overall decline in employment for older screenwriters. As screenwriters age beyond their 50s, the number of those employed in screenwriting occupations decreases dramatically. The percent of total writers in their 60s is 13.2%, down from 28.2% in their 50s, 30.1% in their 40s and 20.3% in their 30s. Writers in their 70s represent only 3% of all screenwriters.

The causes of this decline in employment of older writers are unknown, but in a craft in which the accumulation of life experience is an asset to high-quality storytelling, it would seem that as writers age, their employability would increase. Writers who have been in the occupation longer and have more life experience would seem to bring added value to the storytelling industry, but this does not seem to be the case. In fact, it seems that as writers age, the screen industry rejects them more and more.

The one area in which age is not a negative factor seems to be in writing feature film screenplays. The overall proportion of writers who write films increases with age (Table 1). That a writer's age is not a negative factor for writing feature film screenplays may be because feature films in Canada tend to employ only one writer at a time, take longer to develop as compared to other formats, and are geared toward niche rather than broad audiences. With the pressures of time, larger writing staffs and big box office success being less important factors, perhaps there is more flexibility in the hiring of older writers for feature film screenplays.

Younger writers tend to be more frequently employed in two specific formats: Online and Animation. More than half of all screenwriters (54.5%) writing for Online are in their 20s. In addition, screenwriters in their 20s are employed to write Animation at a greater rate than writers in all other age groups. The proportion of those writing Online and Animation decreases steadily with age (see Table 1). The Online and Animation formats may be a way for younger writers to break into the industry, with producers tending to look to younger writers to deliver content in these formats.

Also, as shown in Table 1, older writers write more drama and younger writers write more comedy. But writers in their 20s demonstrate the greatest degree of versatility in terms of their craft. Approximately one third of all writers in their 20s are writing in the genres of Drama (36.4%), Comedy (36.4%) and Animation (27.3%). This may indicate that younger writers must be able to write across a variety of genres at the beginning of their careers in order to break into the industry. It also suggests that the degree of genre specialization (or pigeon-holing) among screenwriters increases with age and industry experience.

Over one quarter (26%) of those writers who responded to our survey have earned between one and five screen credits (see Table 2). Indeed, the 1-5 credit range is where the majority of writers in every age group fall except for writers in their 40s. As writers age, stratification develops in screenwriter employment between writers who do not break out of the lower ranges of screen credits and those who consistently accumulate screen credits as their careers grow. This may indicate a preference among

content developers (i.e. producers, networks, etc.) to consistently employ a select group of writers with a demonstrable track record and previous experience. This stratification also suggests how the careers of many Canadian English-language screenwriters are curtailed. It is not only difficult to break into the screenwriting occupation, but also difficult to maintain consistent employment, regardless of age.

Older Writers and Discrimination

As writers age through their 40s and 50s, they experience age discrimination at an increasing rate. 9.3% of writers in their 30s report age discrimination. That number climbs to 13.8% in their 40s and jumps to nearly half (49.3%) of writers in their 50s. One third of writers in their 60s (34.3%) report age discrimination as do one-quarter of those in their 70s. Interestingly, on the other end of the scale, nearly one in every five (18.2%) writers in their 20s claims to have experienced occupational discrimination based on age.

Our findings clearly show that the older a screenwriter gets, the less likely he or she will find employment as a screenwriter. In particular, as they age beyond their 50s, there is a significant drop in the rate by which screenwriters occupy the most powerful screenwriting positions. When asked to elaborate on this form of discrimination, many writers noted the industry perception that only younger writers can attract audiences. As these writers said:

“I believe that age discrimination is increasingly prevalent. Unfortunately there seems to be an overwhelming belief that only a young writer can deliver a young audience.”

“The entertainment industry is very youth oriented. Being middle-aged, I have had times when I felt that others, younger producers - even other writers - seemed to think I was irrelevant or out of touch.”

9. Canadian screenwriters: versatile, passionate and supportive

In our survey, we asked Canadian screenwriters to respond to a number of open-ended questions, including what are their favourite films and television shows, what are their views on cultural policy, and what advice they would give to a young person seeking to become a screenwriter in English-speaking Canada. Their responses provide some insight in understanding the screenwriter occupation and those who write screenplays for a living in this country. The responses indicate an industry that is populated by individuals who are versatile, passionate and supportive.

Canadian English-language screenwriters report that they write in a wide variety of genres on a number of themes. The most prevalent subjects that our screenwriters write about are family life, coming of age, relationships, kids and youth, and science fiction/fantasy. Most writers write on more than one subject or theme, indicating that Canadian screenwriters are versatile and able to write a wide variety of subject matter in their stories. Several writers clearly said that what they write depends entirely on what they are hired to do:

"Whatever I'm hired to write"

"I'm a gun for hire. I have a certain love for historical subjects but have written a lot of mysteries. Little guy vs big guy stories seem to have an appeal."

The common sentiment among these respondents is that by allowing Canadian networks to simply license and rebroadcast American shows, there is little incentive to fund and produce home grown television.

Canadian English-language screenwriters are eager to share their advice with emerging screenwriters - 92% of our survey respondents wrote answers to the question of what advice would you give to young Canadian screenwriters. One in five said that the key to succeeding in the screenwriting industry is to continually develop and improve their craft. Answers such as "write a lot", "write every day", and "write, write, write" were common. As some of the writers put it:

“Work hard. Simple? Nope... but keep writing. Write every day. Write a script about anything. On days when I'm not working I'll write a script about what happened to me that day. The more you write the better you'll be.”

“Write, write and write some more. Learn your craft, strive to elevate your work at all times ...”

Established screenwriters were very encouraging to new screenwriters in their responses to this question, reflecting the high levels of mentorship in the industry. Other top recommendations were for new writers to persistently network and make contacts in the industry and also to live life and absorb as much as possible. One writer summed up several of the top pieces of advice succinctly:

“Meet as many screenwriters as you can, watch as much TV/film as you can, write as much as you can BUT don't forget to live your life too (you've got to have stuff to write about.)”

As noted earlier in this report, many English-speaking Canadian screenwriters supplement their screenwriting income with other sources of income. Also noted earlier is the degree of difficulty screenwriters have in maintaining consistent levels of employment. In light of these challenging occupational dynamics, it is interesting to note that around 15% of those who answered the question about what advice they would give to emerging screenwriters said simply, don't pursue a career in screenwriting.

The written responses of those who completed our survey inform us that the occupation takes a great deal of self-discipline (write, write, write and be persistent), self-promotion (networking), self-education and self-awareness (read, watch and live). The occupation can be so frustrating that it leads some of our respondents to warn young writers to forget it altogether. However, the majority of the responses reveal that Canadian English-language screenwriters are a vibrant group whose passion and commitment overrides frustration and cynicism.

10. Conclusions

This first-ever survey of Canadian English-language screenwriters illuminates the complex web of occupational dynamics that writers must navigate in pursuing a career in writing for the screen. Screenwriting is a mainly freelance occupation in which writers vie for employment contracts such as the phase by phase development of a feature film screenplay, commissioned episodic television scripts, or showrunner positions on a television series. Even when a script makes it to the screen or a series runs for many years, these contracts represent limited-term employment.

In such a competitive occupation, Canadian screenwriters take advantage of numerous educational and training opportunities to enhance their skills. Canadian English-language screenwriters are generally highly educated and, given that they report a high degree of utilization of post-secondary education and training, it appears that these pursuits are advantageous.

The volatile effects of a freelance environment and short-term contracts on the screenwriting occupation reflect the competition for work. As noted in our report, more than half of English-language Canadian screenwriters have fewer than 25 screen credits but nearly two-thirds have 10 or more years experience. As confirmed by many answers to our open-ended question asking what are the challenges facing screenwriters in Canada, the “[b]iggest challenge is just finding work.”

The need for advanced education, specialized training and networking in finding screenwriting work may be why many writers turn to the Canadian Film Centre as a career accelerator. According to our survey respondents, those screenwriters who have attended the CFC report the greatest degree of educational satisfaction and occupational value. The CFC is very well connected to the film and television industry and helps screenwriters network and find mentors.

It is no coincidence that an institution like the CFC is located in Toronto. Much of the film and television production industry is concentrated in and around the GTA and Toronto provides substantially more opportunities to earn a living from screenwriting than anywhere else in the country. If Canadian screenwriters want to have the greatest chance of pursuing a career, they need to locate in or near a major production centre like Toronto, Vancouver, or Los Angeles. However, nearly half of all screenwriters report being employed outside their city of residence. Therefore another occupational dynamic for screenwriters is that they be prepared to respond to the gravitational pull of centres

like Toronto and Vancouver, and also move around the country to seek out short-term employment.

Not only must screenwriters in Canada go to where the work is, but they must also be able to write for a variety of genres and formats in order to make a living from screenwriting. This shows us another occupational reality for Canadian screenwriters: the necessity to be nimble and versatile in their craft as opposed to concentrating on one specialty.

Even though screenwriters are mainly highly educated as well as versatile, connected to occupational networks, and experienced in the screen industry, most do not make a living from screenwriting alone. With half of screenwriters earning less than \$40,000 annually from screenwriting, many supplement their incomes with other forms of employment and are dependent on household income earned by others.

We have emphasized the importance of networking and mentoring in the screenwriting profession. In a freelance labour market, an individual's reputation and connections are maintained through a series of informal networks. Employability requires "the accumulation of social capital" (Antcliff, Saundry, and Stuart, 2007); it is often "who you know" that leads to a job.¹¹ The high degree of formal and informal mentorships in the screenwriting industry is evidence of the importance of networking and the forging of professional relationships in an unstructured work environment.

Despite the emphasis of Canadian cultural policy on the development and telling of screen stories that reflect all Canadians, the screenwriting occupation in this country is dominated by middle-age white men. Similar observations have been made in the U.S. by Bielby and Bielby (1992, 1996), by Antcliff, Saundry and Stuart (2007) in the UK, and by others. Some government and private sector initiatives, such as the Bell Diverse Screenwriters Program and the Canada Media Fund's Diverse Languages Program, have been recently put in place to stimulate access for screenwriters from diverse backgrounds to develop screen stories. In the United States, WGAW report findings have led to the creation of that guild's Diversity Department. This initiative "works with producers, studio and network executives, and writers to increase employment

¹¹ For a recent study of social capital and exclusionary networks in film and television see Grugulis and Stoyanova (2012).

opportunities and the availability of writing assignments for writers who are Asian/Pacific Islander, American Indian, African-American, Latino, women, over 40, gay, lesbian, or disabled” (WGAW Department of Diversity page, para. 2, n.d.). The most recent WGAW reports show that much remains to be done, despite growing awareness of the issue, and with the major US television networks supporting initiatives for diverse writers.¹²

The screenwriters who participated in our survey are very passionate and thoughtful about the screen industry dynamics in Canada. As noted earlier in this report, the Canadian film and television industry is a regulated industry that depends on a variety of agencies that fund productions and support projects that focus on Canadian stories, characters, settings and themes. These requirements and regulations for funding have a significant impact on the kinds of work that screenwriters do, the ability to have their scripts produced, and the ways that the finished products are distributed. An important area of consensus among respondents has to do with commitment to Canadian screen content. The most common response to our question “How could Canadian cultural policy be improved?” was that Canadian broadcasters should be required to air a greater amount of Canadian content in their prime time schedules instead of re-broadcasting American shows. As one writer put it:

“The television industry needs to be committed to Can Con. I simply don't understand why the Canadian networks get government protection from U.S. networks when their prime time schedules are 90 percent American.”

We hope that our survey sheds useful light on the screenwriting occupation in Canada, and we look forward to seeing how our results may create discussion among the content producers, guilds, funding agencies and distributors on the various issues we have raised.

¹² Exclusionary networks affect not just the screenwriter occupation but also other occupations in the Canadian screen production industry. Some proposed remedies may be found in the recent *Report and Action Plan* of the Roundtable on Cultural Diversity in the Toronto Screen Media Production Industry (Davis, Shtern and de Silva, 2012).

Age	80s	70s	60s	50s	40s	30s	20s
Format							
Television	0.0%	53.3%	53.4%	51.5%	53.6%	58.8%	55.0%
Film	100.0%	46.7%	36.2%	41.7%	35.0%	30.6%	15.0%
Online	0.0%	0.0%	3.4%	4.5%	6.4%	7.1%	30.0%
Gaming	0.0%	0.0%	0.0%	1.5%	2.1%	2.4%	0.0%
other	0.0%	0.0%	6.9%	0.8%	2.9%	1.2%	0.0%
Genre							
Drama	100.0%	75.0%	42.9%	54.7%	33.8%	38.9%	36.4%
Comedy	0.0%	0.0%	14.3%	21.3%	32.5%	25.9%	36.4%
Animation	0.0%	0.0%	11.4%	9.3%	17.5%	20.4%	27.3%
Documentary	0.0%	25.0%	25.7%	10.7%	6.3%	3.7%	0.0%
other	0.0%	0.0%	2.9%	3.9%	6.4%	7.6%	0.0%

Table 1: Specialization by format, genre and age

		5-Jan	10-Jun	25-Nov	26-50	51-100	More than 100
Age	20s	6	3	2	0	0	0
	30s	17	11	9	6	5	5
	40s	18	11	13	9	8	20
	50s	17	4	12	13	14	14
	60s	8	5	3	7	5	6
	70s	4	1	0	1	1	1
	80s	0	0	0	1	0	0
Total		70	35	39	37	33	46

Table 2: Number of screen credits by age group

11. Acknowledgements

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