



The Apathy is Boring Project - 2007 Annual Report
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Annual Report 2007

1.0 Introduction

Apathy is Boring has furthered its mandate to use art & technology to engage youth in democracy. We will celebrate our four year anniversary this coming January. Over the past year we have moved from being a “start up” organization to recognizing the challenges and realities of growing into a young but established organization. It has not been an easy road, but we are proud to be moving forward, building our capacity, improving our effectiveness, and adding to our list of accomplishments.

Highlights from this past year included:

- Growth in users and content on www.apathyisboring.com.
- Media sponsors MuchMusic Television and Dose.ca joined the cause.
- Continued development and success of our workshops and concerts.
- Development of a 2008 – 2011 Strategic Plan.

Throughout this year we have continued to develop evaluation tools that allow us to monitor our successes, and have begun to build our own body of evidence, proving the effectiveness of our approach. As we end this year there is a momentum building, we now have the tools and capacity to look beyond our current accomplishments and towards the full realization of what was only an idea four years ago.

2.0 Youth in Democracy Goals

Our ‘Youth in Democracy’ Goals are:

- Increase youth voting rates in federal elections
- Increase in youth engagement
- Build sustainable dialogue between politicians and youth
- Increase consideration of youth issues by governments
- Increase the percentage of youth MPs to match the percentage of the youth population.

Over the past year we have continued working to benchmark our Youth in Democracy goals through surveys, workshop evaluations, and polling on our website. As the number of users grows, so does our capacity to collect relevant and useful information.

Part of our work in this area during 2007 involved contributing as a peer evaluator to the Canadian Policy Research Network Report *Lost in Translation: (Mis)Understanding Youth Engagement*. This research consistently supported Apathy is Boring’s methods and programming and has helped us more clearly outline why we do what we do, and to explain why our methods work. This report, along with other relevant research by the CPRN, and other reports, such as Henry Milner’s report released by the Institute for Research on Public Policy have

contributed significantly to our baseline information on youth engagement beyond what we ourselves have the capacity to gather.

3.0 Program Areas

3.1 Website

The Apathy is Boring website was a main focus of our energy and work in 2007. Following our informal launch in October 2006, we had a formal launch of the website on February 17th 2007 with a concert at Club Soda in Montreal. This event garnered media attention, featured well known artists such as Moka Only, and attracted politicians from a wide spectrum of political parties. Since our official launch, the number of users on the website has been increasing each month. Our current challenge is to ensure that users keep coming back to the website and that the overall web traffic continues to grow.

Number of Unique Visitors to apathyisboring.com (January – November):
38 271

Online polls votes (2007): 1167

Active list serve members: 3732*

*This number is lower than what was listed in our 2006 report as last year we were counting all emails gathered since 2004. Over the last year we have implemented a new database and user management system that has allowed us to ensure that all members of our list serve are active (i.e. eliminating emails that bounce back or are no longer active). We are working to grow this number, and are excited that current list serve membership numbers are a reflection of active participation in the website.

Some of our most popular poll questions included:

- What Environmental Issue concerns you most?
 - o Most Responses: Emission Control / Kyoto
- What do you wish politicians would focus on more often?
 - o Most Responses: Environmental Issues
- Do you think Canada's position on the world stage has changed since our involvement in Afghanistan?
 - o Most Responses: Yes – we have lost respect in the global community
- Who is your favorite socially-conscious artist?
 - o Most Responses: Raine Maida

Funding for the website has been an ongoing challenge over the past year. We have struggled both to develop the site and to ensure that content and ongoing maintenance costs are also covered. It has become clear that ongoing technical development, as well as website maintenance and content development, will be costs that will remain higher than anticipated in the long term. As such we are working toward making the website financially sustainable through revenue streams directly related to the website and related technology. This, however, will

not be a goal that can be realized in the short term without significant upfront investment. Therefore funding will continue to be a struggle for the foreseeable future as we will continue to rely on project grants to fund the site.

Rachel Dhawan continues her great work as website coordinator. She was also joined this past summer by content development intern Patrick Burkhard. He was an intern from the School of Community and Public Affairs who did an absolutely amazing job of adding content to the website in an accessible, clear, and youth friendly style. Plank Design continues the technical development of the website, although progress has been slowed considerably in the summer / fall of 2007 as a result of funding constraints. Translation of the website has continued to be a priority; we received a small translation grant from Canadian Heritage in fall 2007, and have also had some amazing volunteer translators helping us keep our website up to date in both languages.

Features launched on www.apathyisboring.com:

- User generated petitions and action alerts
- User Profiles, friends, and messaging
- Email Newsletters (monthly)
- Celebrity Interviews (Amanda Lang, Devon Soltendieck, Hannah Sung, John Raulston Saul, Hannah Simone, MuchMusic VJ)
- RSS Feeds
- Additional artist profiles along with songs you can listen to through the site.
- Elections Content
- Make it Happen Content (including action alerts, links, petition software and other action related tools and resources).
- Weekly Blogs on topics related to current events.
- Daily News Items
- Revised Political Glossary

The most popular pages other than the home page continue to be “The Facts” and “Art & Music”.

Marketing has been a key part of our work in 2007. Avigail Aronoff was hired as a marketing / sales coordinator through a grant from YES Montreal from February until August 2007. We would have liked to maintain this position, but were unable to do so due to funding constraints. Some of what Avigail accomplished, with the support of our project assistant Adrienne Smith, was:

Apathy is Boring profiles on external websites:

- | | |
|--------------------------|-----------------|
| - MySpace (328 friends) | - Del.icio.us |
| - Facebook (198 members) | - Youtube.com |
| - Taking It Global | - Wikipedia.org |
| - Second Life | - Flickr.com |
| - Digg.com | - Trig.com |

- www.dosomething.org

We also have launched three Facebook applications with the help of volunteer Rommil Santiago. These applications have been a great viral marketing tool.

Apathy is Boring linked on or banner ads on these websites:

Media

- www.muchmusic.com
- www.dose.ca
- projectopus.com
- www.panpot.ca
- www.ckcufm.com
- www.cbc.ca
- www.shoutmag.ca

Blogs

- Stevey.com

Corporate

- Transform.tv

Artists sites

- www.rainemaida.net
- www.joshmartinez.ca
- www.districtsixmusic.com

NGO sites

- CharityVillage.com
- HabitatJam.com
- PowerCampNational.ca
- atwaterlibrary.ca
- 8Goals.ca
- generationscanada.ca
- umac.ca
- ousa.ca
- www.mobilejamfest.com
- homelessnation.ca
- www.yipcanada.org
- dawn.thot.net
- www.gnn.tv
- www.warchild.ca
- www.prendstaplace.qc.ca
- www.mealexchange.com
- www.Alternatives.ca
- www.cfc-fcc.ca/
- orgs.takingitglobal.org
- www.indyish.com
- beta.citizen.nfb.ca

Contests have also been a great outreach tool that has generated significant traffic (over 316 users voted in the Wallpaper Contest). These contests have all been focused on encouraging participants to develop creative content and art around the issue of active citizenry. In 2007 we held the following contests on the website:

- Video Contest (May 2007)
- Osheaga Ticket Contest (September 2007)
- Wallpaper Contest in partnership with Crawler.com & Dose.ca (October 2007)
- Raine Maida Blog Contest (November 2007)
- Coheed & Cambria Contest in partnership with Sony / BMG (November 2007)

In 2008 we will be holding monthly contests, along with repeating the Video & Wallpaper contests. We are also very excited to be partnering with French for the Future and Ottawa University in a national French language essay contest. The

prizes for the contest are several \$20 000 scholarships to Ottawa University. Apathy is Boring is a key marketing, content & design partner on this contest, where French second language students from across Canada will be invited to write a maximum 1000 word essay, in French, that deals with the subject of Canadian youth voter apathy.

3.2 Youth Friendly Guide and Workshop

In 2007 Apathy is Boring sold over 200 Youth Friendly Guides both online and at workshops. The primary activity in this program area has been presenting workshops throughout Canada to over 200 participants, most recently in Ottawa, Whitehorse, St. John's, & Montreal. A highlight of our workshops this year was a sold out workshop in Whitehorse to over 40 community leaders including the RCMP, government, and NGOs hosted by the Yukon Volunteer Bureau. This year the number of paid workshops has increased significantly, making this program area a viable revenue stream for Apathy is Boring.

Organizations to which we presented workshops include:

- Development and Peace
- Yukon Volunteer Bureau
- Volunteer Bureau of Montreal
- University of Ottawa
- Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador
- University of Montreal
- Shared Vision (youth organization)
- Blueprints for Change (Sustainable Concordia)
- Arriba las Mujeres! conference (Social Justice Committee)
- Millennium Scholarship Foundation
- Taking It Global
- 3rd Annual Inland Career Fair, Waswanipi, Quebec
- Youth Scape

Potential clients with whom we are currently in discussions to offer workshops include, but not limited to: the RCMP (National Security Youth Council), Scouts Canada, Perth District Health Unit, Tr'ondek Hwech'in First Nations, and Katimavik.

We have also worked to develop PowerPoint presentations, workshop outlines, and facilitators' guides for our workshops, in addition to creating new workshops where clients have expressed a need. New workshops we are currently offering include:

- Civic Participation Workshop (aimed at youth 18 – 35).
- Youth Engagement for Youth Workshop (helping over engaged youth reach their under engaged peers).
- How to be on a University Committee (student engagement)

Quotes from Workshop Participants:

“Absolutely fabulous! I love the dialogue and the resources are great.”
Community Services Council of Newfoundland and Labrador
St. Johns, February 2007

“Very information and accessible”
Social Justice Committee Conference
Montreal, September 2007

“I have learned many new tools. It got my wheels turning....”
Whitehorse, September 2007

“Made me think ‘outside the box’ as well as reminded me of what I already know but had temporarily forgotten!”
Whitehorse, September 2007

Also we have been excited to be asked to be a part of various consultations on youth engagement with the J.W. McConnell Family Foundation, the Standing Committee of Procedure and House Affairs, as well as with Elections Canada, and the Minister of Democratic Reform.

3.3 Concerts & Events

Over the course of 2007 Apathy is Boring held four concerts in Montreal & Ottawa with attendance of over 1000 people. Our main work in 2007 was solidifying the framework of our concerts, ensuring that each show was an opportunity for young people to enjoy the music, fill out a survey on youth engagement, meet a politician, and meet local NGOs. The development of this format will allow us to better measure the success of our events, as well as to more successfully engage youth who attend.

Apathy is Boring 2007 Concerts:

Website Launch Event

Date: February 17th 2007

Artists: Moka Only, Zaki Ibrahim, and Chinatown

Host: Hannah Simone, MuchMusic VJ

Politicians: Elizabeth May, leader of the Green Party, Massimo Pacetti Liberal MP from Saint-Léonard—Saint-Michel, Peggy Nash NDP MP from Parkdale-High Park, Scott McKay, Leader of the Green Party of Quebec, Tracy Parsons, Leader of the Progressive Canadian Party, and Connie Fogal, Leader of the Canadian Action Party

Venue: Club Soda, Montreal

Ottawa U – Rock the Vote Concert

Date: September 6th 2007

Artists: The Unsettlers, Adam Chaki

Host: Cub Carson, 106.9 FM The Bear
Politicians: Will Murray, Ontario NDP, Frank De Jong, Ontario Green Party, Hon. Marie Bountrogianni, Ontario Liberal Party
Venue: Ottawa University, Outside, Ottawa

Pop Montreal

Date: October 5th, 2007
Artist: From Jamaica to Toronto
Venue: Club Lambi, Montreal
In collaboration with Pop Montreal

Journees de la Culture

Date: September 28th, 2007
Artist: Ben Brandes (The Unsettlers)
Venue: Apathy is Boring Loft, Montreal
In collaboration with Journée de la Culture

Throughout the year we also held information tables at Concerts & Festivals to outreach to a broad range of unengaged youth. During the last year we had a presence at: Rogers Picnic Toronto, Frosh Week Ottawa U, Osheaga Music Festival Montreal, Pop Montreal, Indyish Street Festival, and Blueprints for Change Concordia University. Through these events we:

- Added over 261 names to our list serve
- Added 74 people to volunteer list
- Collected 161 surveys
- Gave out hundreds of flyers
- Sold Apathy is Boring gear

We are excited to be developing partnerships with production companies such as REMG in Toronto, and record labels such as Arts & Crafts Records, Sony/BMG, Network, and Last Gang Records to allow us to broaden our reach both in terms of number of events we attend and geographic range of these events.

Another exciting aspect of this program is the addition of new artists who have signed on to the cause and filled out a profile for our website. This year the following artists came on board to support Apathy is Boring: Brockway Biggs, Panurge, Joel Plaskett, DNA6, DJ Static, Chinatown, Adam Chaki, The Unsettlers, The Dry Heeves, Chris Velan, and From Jamaica to Toronto.

Over the course of the last year we concluded that the idea of a Compilation CD - which was originally seen as a great marketing tool - was redundant. This was due to the rapid & momentous changes occurring in the music industry. As such, we determined that releasing a hard copy version should be replaced by the primary release of the CD online. Apathy is Boring has been releasing songs online since January 2007 and will continue to do so over the course of 2008, leading in time to the release of an Apathy is Boring online play list.

Thanks to Adrienne Smith, our project assistant, in December 2007 our “Party Kit: A Guide to Throwing an Apathy is Boring Party” will be launched through our December Ecard and on our website. Modeled on successful party kits used by American youth-led NGOs, Apathy is Boring hopes to spread our word, and help raise funds by encouraging youth to ‘party for a cause’.

3.4 Gear

In 2007 this program area continued to be a difficult one. Sales are slow online, and though we continue to sell gear while tabling at events it is not enough to make this program area viable. We still firmly believe that finding diverse sources of revenue will be critical to the long term success of Apathy is Boring; however, we also recognize that the clothing business is a tough one, and without a substantial investment in marketing and product development this program area will continue to struggle. As such, the board has made the decision to sell off existing stock, and to not reinvest in this program area over the course of 2008.

However, we are excited to be in talks with Bang-On about having the Apathy is Boring logo for sale in their catalogue of heat transfers across Canada. This kind of partnership will help us earn revenue through design without any major costs. We also look forward to featuring unique t-shirt designs by our artists and various design contests on our site over the coming year.

3.5 Election Campaign

So far this year there has been no federal election campaign, although we have been on the edge of our seats with the possibility a few times! However, this program area was not without activity. Apathy is Boring continues to receive requests for media interviews during municipal and provincial elections, even though we don’t actively promote our work at the municipal or provincial levels. This is likely because Apathy is Boring is the ONLY national organization that focuses on engaging youth in the democratic process all year round regardless of the election cycle. This year Apathy is Boring was the subject of interviews with Ontario media during the Ontario provincial election, as well as with Quebec media during the Quebec Election.

We had some basic content on our website about both these elections, including information about how to vote, as well as party platforms during the Ontario Election. We also promoted the Calgary municipal elections, the Nunavut territorial elections, Quebec By-elections, and the Saskatchewan & Newfoundland provincial elections on our website and through our newsletter.

During the Ontario election we partnered with Ottawa University to hold an Apathy is Boring Concert during Frosh week. Through this event we were able to reach over 500 students encouraging them to vote, as well as receive some exposure in the Ottawa media.

Apathy is Boring also continued to prepare our election strategy for the next federal election. We continue to develop tools such as a Candidates Kit and materials aimed at encouraging young people to vote. As mentioned previously, our content intern Patrick Burkhard added 20 articles for youth, students, and politicians to our Elections Section on www.apathyisboring.com.

4.0 Capacity Building

Capacity building highlights from 2007:

Human Resources

- Development of a volunteer manual, contract, and exit questionnaire
- Development of personnel and organization policies (environmental policy, fundraising policy, and content policy)
- Development of website content by Patrick Burkhard, Intern from Concordia's School of Community & Public Affairs
- Held monthly staff training days & community training sessions open to the public.
- Continued establishment of evaluation benchmarks
- Staff Evaluations every 6 months, and Executive Director Self-Evaluation

Fundraising and Financial Stability

- In-kind sponsorship program established, actively seeking sponsors. Current sponsors include: Sony / BMG, McAuslan Brewery, Panpot.ca, Ramos Entertainment Management Group, Crawler.com, Lola Rosa (Restaurant), Pistol Bar, & Beiles & Frank (Chartered Accountants)
- Increase in percentage of revenue coming from earned revenue, particularly Youth Friendly Workshops.
- Active Fundraising Committee established
- Launch of individual donor program (December 2007)
- Application for Charitable Status (July 2007)
- Funding Partners: The J.W. McConnell Foundation, Telefilm Canada, Cultural Human Resources Council, School of Community & Public Affairs, Emploi Quebec, Department of Canadian Heritage, Institute for Co-operative Education - Concordia University.

Office and Infrastructure

- Continued improvement of office space, new donations of furniture and computers.
- Continued revenues from space rentals.

Board and Advisory Board

- Development of an active Board of Directors (2 new members)
- Continued development of our Advisory Board (2 new members)

5.0 Media Coverage 2007

- Metro Newspaper, February 14th 2007
- The Montreal Mirror, February 15th 2007
- Notes from Canada's Young Activists (book released March 2007)
- CBC Radio, DayBreak, March 2007
- Canadian Dimension's Magazine March / April 2007
- Montreal Gazette, May 15th 2007
- The Suburban, May 17th 2007
- CBC Radio, September 17th 2007
- The Yukon News, September 28th 2007
- CTV.ca, October 2nd 2007
- National Post, November 9th 2007 (Interview with Artist Raine Maida)
- Dose.ca, November 9th 2007 (Interview with Artist Raine Maida)
- The Hill Times November 28th 2007

6.0 Lessons Learned

In 2007 we learned that starting an organization and running an organization are two very different things. Now that Apathy is Boring is four years old, we must work towards sustainability of our current programming, rather than the constant hustle that comes in the initial years of intense growth. We learned that marketing and growing our website will require ongoing commitment and support, more than we had initially imagined. We have also learned which of our program areas are working and which aren't, and that to ensure sustainability we need to focus on the development and maintenance of program areas that have more promise. We learned the importance of evaluation, and the incredible benefit self-reflection can have for an organization.

This past year has seen youth-led organizations face significant challenges as a whole; Canada 25 closed its doors, the Youth Environmental Network was reduced to no paid staff, Volunteer Canada faced significant funding cuts, and many of our other colleagues faced heightened funding challenges. Given this reality, we have also learned that creativity and innovation will be the key to our longevity, and that partnership building will also be a critical factor in our ongoing success.

7.0 Looking Forward

As we enter the beginning of our fifth year, we look forward to increasing our reach, and to ensuring that Apathy is Boring becomes increasingly known in a variety of circles; amongst artists, youth, political leaders, and the business community. We also hope to build our capacity so that our workshops, concerts, and interactive web content can become more accessible to youth across Canada and therefore help us increase youth engagement and volunteerism. A federal election will happen no later than fall 2009, and as such we will continue to build towards that eventuality. We are currently in the process of approving our next three year plan that will take us through to 2011, and we are confident that

we have a solid team and the momentum to reach the goals we have laid out for the next three years.

Apathy is Boring continues to do the important work of reaching under engaged youth who are not being reached by the work of traditional NGOs and institutions and encouraging them to become active citizens. We are the only National organization that encourages youth 18-35 to be involved in the democratic process year-around. We look forward to continuing this important work in 2008.

8.0 Our Team

Board of Directors:

- Hannah Wizman, Student
- Jean-Philippe Deschamps-Laporte, Student
- Michael Lenczner, Co-founder Ile Sans Fils
- David Prodan, Executive Director – Whitehorse Boys & Girls Club
- Jonathan F Lebensold, Co – Founder Velvetpanda
- Ligia Pena, Fundraising Consultant

Advisory Board:

- Stephen Toope, President of UBC
- Alexandre Trudeau, Filmmaker
- Victor Shiffman, Music Producer
- Cynthia Gervais, Rights & Democracy Geneva Office

Full Time Staff:

- Ilona Dougherty, Executive Director (January 2004 – present)
- Mackenzie Duncan, Creative Director (January 2004 – present)
- Adrienne Smith, Project Assistant (April 2007 – present)
- Avigail Aronoff, Marketing (February 2007 – August 2007)

Part Time, Contract Staff & Interns:

- Rachel Dhawan, Website & Fundraising Coordinator (July 2006 – present)
- Tim White, Bookkeeper (September 2006 – present)
- Amelia Clarke, Evaluation Consultant (May 2006 – present)
- Debbie Carman, Marketing Intern (May 2007 – August 2007)
- Patrick Burkhard, Content Development Intern (May 2007 – July 2007)

Our Star Volunteers:

Corrine Leon, Julie Houle, Rommil Santiago, Pamela Daoust, Natalie Deschamps, Estelle Hjertaas, Greta Chiu, Marj Alvarez, Stephanie Lee, Matthew McRae, Sarah Mangialardo, Valerie Buddle, Matt Boczkowski, Cloelle Vernon, Erica Smith, Amelia Lee, Anca Margineanu, Amy Siegel, Stephen Kent, Emilee Jones, Phillipe-Daniel Markarian, Gavroche Nesciorek, Tasman Lacroix, Danny Van Gelder, Junior Ayotte, Milena Todaro, & Liam Dougherty.