UP THE NUMBERS

2021 REPORT

30 YEARS

WCT | FCT
Women in Communications and Technology
Les femmes en communications et technologie

WE'VE BEEN
AT THIS A WHILE.

This year marks the 30th anniversary of WCT (formerly Canadian Women in Communications). Our association was created to increase the numbers of women employed in and leading organizations in the digital industries we serve — media, telecommunications and technology.

From the start, our strategy has been collaborative – to continuously ask and act upon what works best for the inclusion and advancement of women. For our members, WCT has provided professional development programs to inspire leadership ambitions among women and to equip them with the skills and confidence they need to advance in their careers. We also work with their employers to showcase best practices in diversity, equity and inclusion and promote their wider adoption.

More recently, driven by the murder of George Floyd, the discovery of unmarked residential school graves and other forces, WCT has recognized the need to do a better job of serving our racialized and otherwise under-represented members. In 2020, WCT became a founding partner in the Government of Canada's 50-30 initiative. The goal of this initiative is to encourage Canadian leaders to take action on diversity, equity and inclusion by seeking gender parity in their boards of directors and senior leadership and by establishing a minimum of 30% representation of other under-represented groups in governance and leadership. Additionally, we created the Diversity, Equity and Inclusion Committee of our board of directors to ensure that WCT programs and advocacy fully meet the needs of all our members. These and other measures indicate that WCT understands that the equitability we seek for women embraces all women and celebrates the intersectional qualities of their identities.

THE BUSINESS CARE FOR DIVERSITY

Virtually all our discussions about DE&I best practices have begun with a restatement of the business case for diversity. This has become a WCT mantra:

Diversity increases access to talent in highly competitive job markets by admitting under-represented demographics groups (women and others) into the workforce.

Diversity measurably improves performance. A large and still growing body of research from major business schools and the leading management consulting firms supports this.

Diversity increases an organization's capacity for innovation by bringing a greater range of experiences and expertise into the ideation and problem solving processes.

Diversity, as an effective antidote to "groupthink" improves the quality of organizational governance.

A diverse, equitable and inclusive corporate culture is a must have in the war for top talent — particularly for talent born in the past three decades.

We believe this business case is compelling. But, as one CEO participating in a recent WCT national town hall meeting on diversity, equity and inclusion instructed "…beyond the business case, diversity is **the right thing to do**."
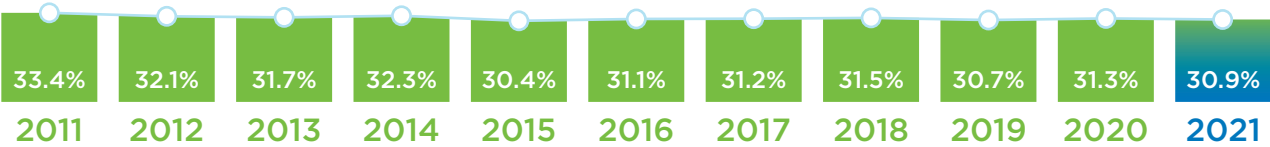
THE 2021 NUMBERS

This is the fifth annual Up the Numbers report. WCT has collaborated with the Information and Communication Technology Council (ICTC) to review Canadian Labour Force Survey data and report on where women are and are not in the information technology industry.

If there were a category in the Guinness Book of Records for the world's most boring research reports, Up the Numbers would certainly qualify. The rate of change it records is generally at the decimal level and regular fluctuations tend to erase any previous year's gains and losses. Essentially this is a report on what appears to be immutable stasis.

By 2021, the stasis had endured through two years of global pandemic. It has endured through the clamour of organizations promising to do a better job at diversity and inclusion following the murder of George Floyd and the discovery of residential school graves. In spite of the increased public discourse on diversity, equity and inclusion, the gender ratios in technology persist. No one expects dramatic change from year to year but we now have a decade's worth of data at hand and that provides no comfort either. In many cases, the numbers are smaller.

Figure 1: Percentage of Women in the ICT Sector — All Jobs

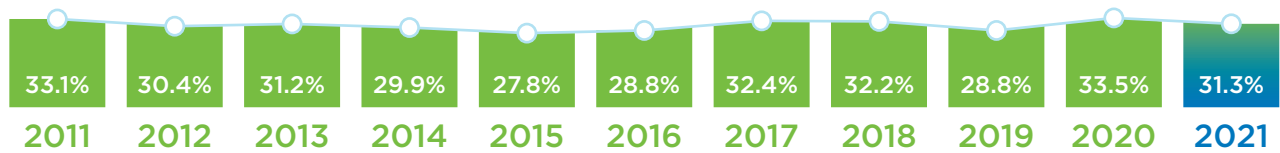| 33.4%	32.1%	31.7%	32.3%	30.4%	31.1%	31.2%	31.5%	30.7%	31.3%	30.9%
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021

This figure shows the participation of women in the Canadian ICT sector in all roles and it charts a slow and steady decline from 33.4% in 2011.

Figure 2: Percentage of Women in ICT Roles in the ICT Sector

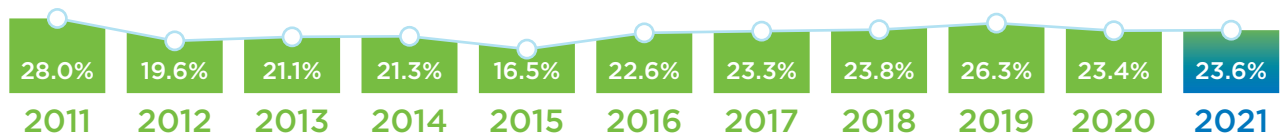| 19.0%	16.7%	18.1%	18.0%	17.8%	18.8%	19.8%	19.8%	19.7%	21.3%	21.3%
2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021

Women in technology roles are an even smaller minority in the Canadian ICT sector. But over the past decade there has been a slight increase in female participation in ICT jobs. Because corporate leadership is frequently drawn from core technology functions, the persistent under-representation of women in these jobs has a negative impact on the advancement of women into senior leadership.

Figure 3: Percentage of Women in the ICT Sector in Management – All jobs

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
33.1%	30.4%	31.2%	29.9%	27.8%	28.8%	32.4%	32.2%	28.8%	33.5%	31.3%

Corporate leadership also emerges from management ranks. Women participate in management in ICT (across all operations) at a rate below the Canadian average of 35.3 per cent.[1] The rate in 2021 was below what it was in 2011.
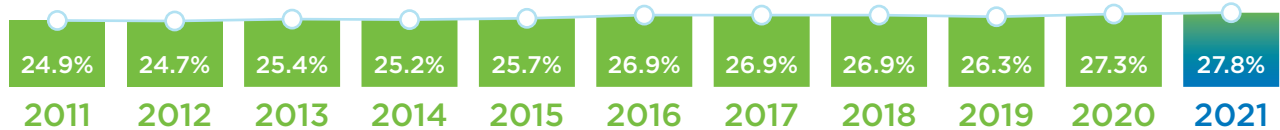
Figure 4: Percentage of Women in Management in ICT Roles in the ICT Sector

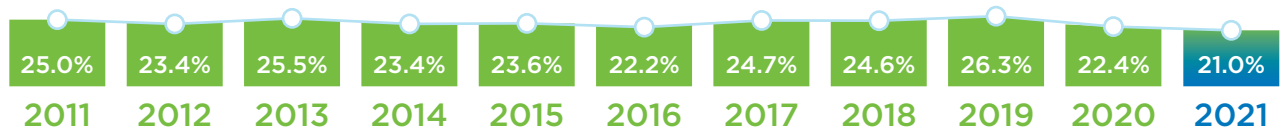| 2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
28.0%	19.6%	21.1%	21.3%	16.5%	22.6%	23.3%	23.8%	26.3%	23.4%	23.6%

While only one fifth of the ICT jobs in tech are held by women, there is a slightly larger proportion of them in technology management roles.

As in previous years, ICTC's analysis of the Labour Force survey also gives us a view of the gender ratios in ICT jobs across the whole economy.

Figure 5: Percentage of Women in ICT Roles in the Digital Economy

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
24.9%	24.7%	25.4%	25.2%	25.7%	26.9%	26.9%	26.9%	26.3%	27.3%	27.8%

Figure 6: Percentage of Women in Management ICT Roles in the Digital Economy

2011	2012	2013	2014	2015	2016	2017	2018	2019	2020	2021
25.0%	23.4%	25.5%	23.4%	23.6%	22.2%	24.7%	24.6%	26.3%	22.4%	21.0%

While there has been steady growth in the percentage of women doing ICT jobs in the wider economy, there are fewer women ICT managers in jobs outside the ICT sector than there were a decade ago.

1 Statistics Canada https://www150.statcan.gc.ca/t1/tbl1/en/tv.action?pid=1410033503

WOMEN IN LEADERSHIP IN CANADIAN ICT

In many ways, this series of Up the Numbers Reports provides not so much a glimpse of where women are in Canadian ICT but rather a reminder of where they are not. Women are particularly scarce in the highest ranks of organizational leadership. This is bad news for the women who do work in ICT. Many build their careers and foster their ambitions in spite of the dearth of role models and trail blazers. But it is also bad news for Canadian ICT companies who are foregoing the benefits of diversity (to recap – better performance, stronger capacity for innovation and better governance).

Last year we provided an estimate of the ratio of women in senior leadership in ICT. We determined that women constitute only about 15% of the senior leadership cadre and 4% of CEOs in ICT. Clearly, women are not in C-suites and corner offices in significant numbers.

New Pathways to the C-suite

There is no publicly available data on women in senior leadership in Canada. In the absence of this, to conduct our count, we visited the websites of the top 100 ICT firms in Canada and did a manual count of the women in senior leadership roles. In the process, it became clear to us that C-suite roles are changing. Twenty-first century enterprises are more complex than twentieth century organizations and executive titles reflect this. A team of Deloitte analysts have noted this as well. In a recent study they wrote:

> Today's C-suite not only includes traditional roles but typically a host of new designations that were virtually unheard of before 2010. Chief executive, chief financial, and chief operating officers are now often joined by chief diversity and inclusion, chief sustainability, chief data, and chief privacy officers in the executive suite.[2]

WCT's own count revealed a growing number of chief transformation officers as well. The Deloitte study observed that these emerging roles offered new pathways into leadership for women, noting that women held about one third of the emerging executive roles versus 21% of the traditional roles. It also noted that the new executive titles often come without critical responsibilities – such as profit and loss accountability – considered indispensable for ascension to CEO. It will be interesting to see if the additional new pathways into the C-suite will produce an increase in the ranks of female CEOs.

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2   **Women in the C-Suite**, Alison Rogish, Stacy Sandler, and Neda Shemluck. Deloitte Insights, 2020.

Getting Women on Boards

Women are also vastly outnumbered in the highest levels of corporate governance – boards of directors. Since 2015, publicly traded companies in Canada have been required by their securities regulators to disclose data on the number of women on their boards of directors. These measures were introduced in order to coax companies on the path toward gender equity. In addition to the gender data, companies are also required to report if they have gender equity programs and/or targets in place.

The law firm Osler has tracked the progress of these measures annually since 2016. It's latest report on 2021 data indicates that women now hold approximately 23% of seats among TSX companies disclosing their gender data. Among the technology companies in this group, 19% of directors are women.[3]

Canada's "disclose or explain" approach to gender diversity on boards is not as rigorous as the methods used in other countries. Among OECD states, for example, quotas are in place in addition to the reporting requirements. In most countries, the quotas are soft-targets without consequences for failure to achieve them. But among the countries that have come closest to achieving parity, the quotas are enforced with penalties for non-compliance.[4]

One might hope that younger companies created in a cultural context of greater awareness of diversity, equity and inclusion would build equity into its DNA. But a recent study conducted by Women Get on Boards and irlabs looked at board diversity among newly listed companies on the TSX and TSXV and found that only 16% of board seats in this group were occupied by women.[5] Among technology companies, the percentage was 17.

Perhaps the most alarming revelation of all is the tenacious persistence into the 21st century of the gender-homogenous board of directors. The latest Osler report noted that 15.7% of reporting companies on the TSX have no women on their boards. There is some comfort in the fact that this is a 2.6% smaller group than reported in 2021, but any hopes that fact may generate are quickly dashed by the study of newly listed companies that shows the all-male-board cohort in that group is 38%. As Women Get on Boards founder and CEO Deborah Rosati noted in a recent blog, "I have yet to see significant, meaningful movement towards board diversity across corporate Canada… True diversity on boards requires more than tiny, incremental changes. All business leaders must step up and recognize the positive impacts of and the necessity of developing a culture of diversity in the boardroom."

And so, the work to persuade business leaders of the positive impacts of diversity is still a work in progress. WCT is proud to add its voice to this call for speedier and more meaningful change. We will continue to release reports like this one as a reminder of our rate of progress to date.

3 **Diversity Disclosure Practices: Diversity and Leadership at Canada's Public Companies**, by Andrew MacDougall, John Valley and Jennifer Jeffrey. Osler 2021.

4 **All on Board: Comparisons around the World for Women's Leadership**, by Maria Giammario and Nimi Pukalakatt. Conference Board of Canada. 2020

5 "Only 16% of Board Seats for Newly Listed Companies on the TSX and TSXV are Occupied by Women". News release February 10 2022. Women Get on Boards and irlabs.

APPENDICES: DIGITAL ECONOMY LABOUR FORCE

ICTC's labour market research captures critical economic and labour market indicators, helping to inform competitive business planning, as well as strong human resource strategies and decision-making related to the ICT sector. Combined, this research forms the foundation for driving the development of a more prosperous Canadian ICT sector, and a highly-skilled workforce able to compete in the global digital economy.

The sum total of workers (workers that are employed in these occupations, as well as workers that are currently unemployed, but actively seeking employment) in these occupations and all other (non-ICT) occupations in the ICT sector (ICTC's framework of Canada's ICT sector is explained below) represent the total digital economy labour force in Canada.

The table below summarizes the core ICT occupations:

Index	National Occupation Classification (NOC)	Occupation Title
1	0015	Senior managers – trade, broadcasting and other services, n.e.c.
2	211	Engineering managers
3	213	Computer and information systems managers
4	601	Corporate sales managers
5	1123	Professional occupations in advertising, marketing, and public relations
6	1253	Records management technicians
7	2133	Electrical and electronics engineers
8	2147	Computer engineers (except software engineers and designers)
9	2148	Other professional engineers, n.e.c.
10	2161	Mathematicians, statisticians and actuaries
11	2171	Information systems analysts and consultants
12	2172	Database analysts and data administrators
13	2173	Software engineers and designers
14	2174	Computer programmers and interactive media developers
15	2175	Web designers and developers
16	2241	Electrical and electronics engineering technologists and technicians
17	2281	Computer Network Technicians
18	2282	User support technicians
19	2283	Information systems testing technicians
20	4163	Business development officers and marketing
21	5223	Graphic arts technicians
22	5224	Broadcast technicians
23	5241	Graphic designers and illustrators
24	7241	Electricians (except industrial and power system)
25	7242	Industrial electricians
26	7243	Power system electricians
27	7244	Electrical power line and cable workers
28	7245	Telecommunications line and cable workers
29	7246	Telecommunications installations and repair workers
30	7247	Cable television service and maintenance technicians

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