EXPLORING FUTURES W/ CREATIVE COMMONS CANADA

In the last month of the last decade, we joined Creative Commons Canada (CCC) to collectively consider their future. We explored new perspectives, sourced exciting ideas, and had fun imagining collaboratively!

In December 2019, we got together with about a dozen members of CCC for an hour-long video chat to hear everyone's thoughts on the future of CCC. Our structured process was grounded in two methodologies:

APPRECIATIVE INQUIRY A philosophy of organizational change and social innovation that focuses on how the future can be built based on the best parts of the past & present.

FORESIGHT Encompasses a whole range of processes that allow us to explore possible and preferable futures in order to strategically orient the ways we work and live in the present.

This is snapshot of a quick and messy brainstorm session. The messiness of this document is meant to help signal that all of these ideas are evolving—they are part of an ongoing conversation. This report is intended as a way to invite more people into that conversation and to launch further, future dialogue.

SIGNALS OF CHANGE

What is an emerging change that you have been thinking about and that you think Creative Commons Canada should be thinking about too?

We wanted to understand how possible futures are manifesting in the present by looking at some signals of change. Signals of change are the things that are already happening, right now, that can give us a clue about what the future might look like. Some changes might be strong and really obvious; some might be weak, just slight possibilities that could evolve into something big.

WHY THIS IS USEFUL
We see signs of how the world is changing all the time. Sourcing signals of change allows us to intentionally, explicitly pause and notice these changes and how they might influence the world we live in and the work that we do. Being more conscious of change allows us to see how we might need to evolve or adapt the work we do and the ways we do it to respond to emerging possibilities, opportunities, and concerns.

NOTES ON OUR METHODS

We used the **STEEPV** framework to source and organize signals. The following descriptors were adapted from Proskuryakova, Saritas & Kyzyngasheva (2015).

SOCIETY e.g., ways of living, demographics, social inclusion and cohesion.

TECHNOLOGY e.g., technological innovation, problems and risks associated with technologies, diffusion of technology.

ECONOMY e.g., economic growth, competition and competitiveness, markets, financial issues.

ENVIRONMENT e.g., sustainability, climate change, pollution, resource depletion, biodiversity, wildlife.

POLITICS e.g., dominant political viewpoints and parties, political stability, regulatory roles and actions of governments, political action and lobbying by non-state actors.

VALUES e.g., attitudes about working life, preferences for leisure, culture, social relations.
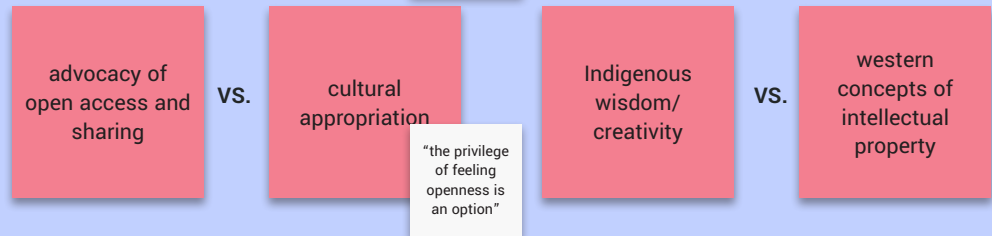
SOCIAL SIGNALS

- Increased awareness for cultural protection and social justice within the Open movements
- Openness is increasingly seen as not always good—greater recognition of boundaries
- Increased human migration—opportunity for Open movements to play a role in facilitating migrant transitions
- Changing conceptions of property
- Proliferation of alternative ways of living and decentralization of culture

DEFINING PUBLIC DOMAIN

| public domain/ openly licensed | vs. | publicly available | | free beer | vs. | free speech |

"it's online so I can use it"

CULTURAL PROTECTION

| advocacy of open access and sharing | vs. | cultural appropriation | | Indigenous wisdom/ creativity | vs. | western concepts of intellectual property |

"the privilege of feeling openness is an option"

MIGRATION

increased migration → importance of OE, OER, and open government to help migrants transition
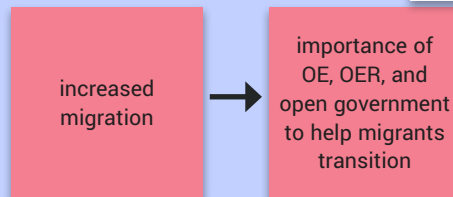
DEFINITIONS OF PROPERTY

a change in the concept of property → a change in its application

ALTERNATIVE WAYS OF LIVING

the wide sharing of opinions and alternative ways of living → increasing 'decentralization' of culture
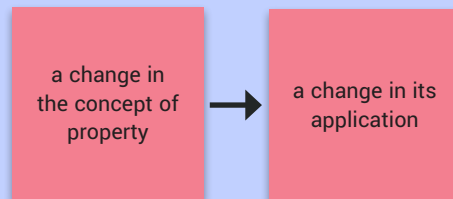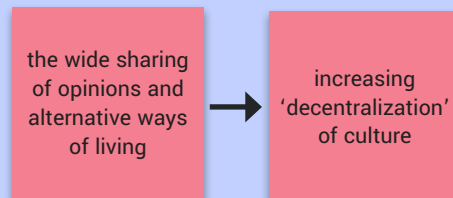
How might CCC help facilitate alternative ways of living?
How might CCC navigate the complexities of different cultures?

TECHNOLOGICAL SIGNALS

- Increasing critical awareness of artificial intelligence
- Growing concerns around the ethics and transparency of how personal data is gathered and used
- Investment worldwide in tools for sustainable open scholarship
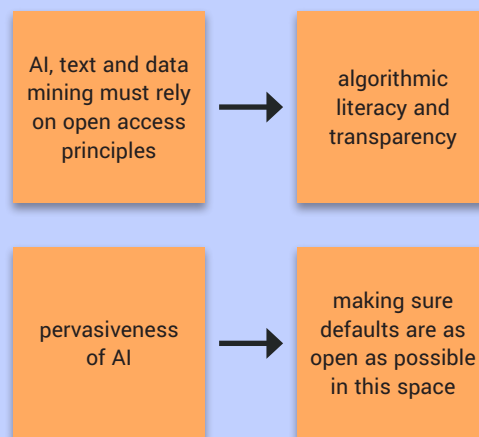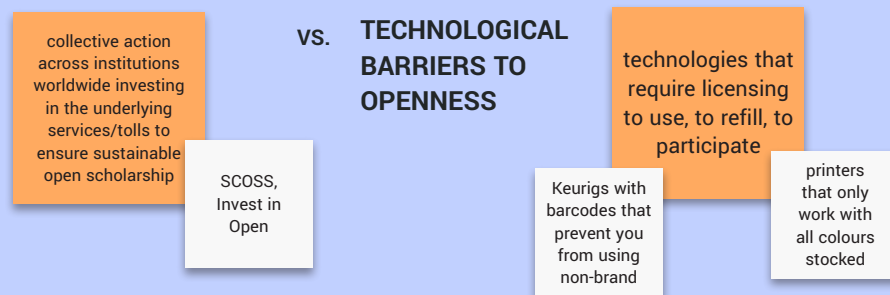- Public consciousness about data surveillance and privacy
- Products and services intentionally designed to limit openness through proprietary technologies

ARTIFICIAL INTELLIGENCE

AI, text and data mining must rely on open access principles → algorithmic literacy and transparency

pervasiveness of AI → making sure defaults are as open as possible in this space

INVESTMENT IN OPEN SCHOLARSHIP TECHNOLOGIES

collective action across institutions worldwide investing in the underlying services/tolls to ensure sustainable open scholarship

SCOSS, Invest in Open

VS.

TECHNOLOGICAL BARRIERS TO OPENNESS

technologies that require licensing to use, to refill, to participate

Keurigs with barcodes that prevent you from using non-brand

printers that only work with all colours stocked

POLICY AND SURVEILLANCE

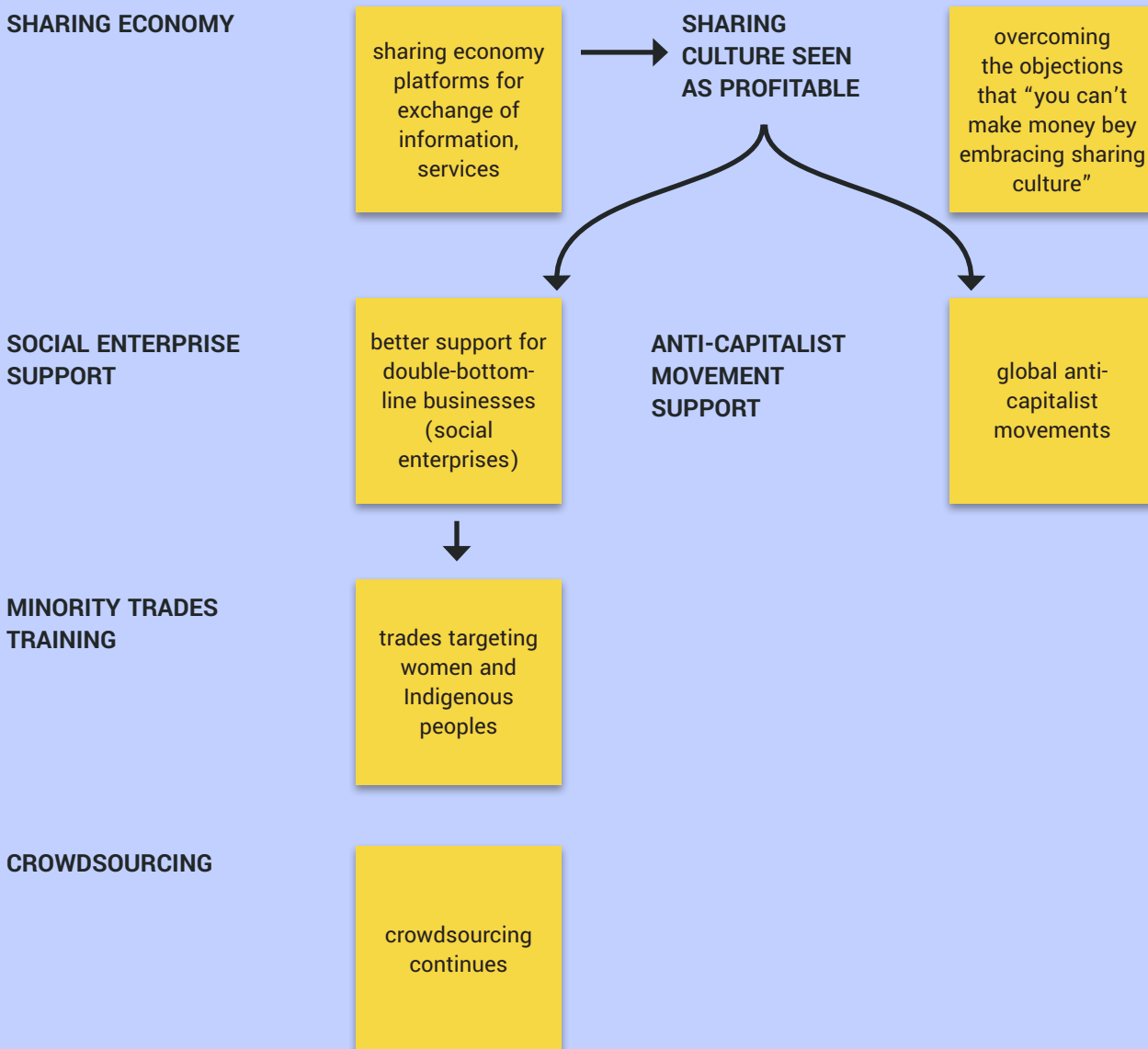surveillance, analytics, big data and privacy/ security

How might CCC serve as a model for ethical practices and safeguards around data privacy? AI? Surveillance?
How might CCC incentivize and encourage openness in technology?

4

ECONOMIC SIGNALS

- Shift to sharing economies accompanied by new platforms to facilitate them; cultural recognition that profit can exist within sharing culture
- Support for social enterprises that recognize goals beyond profit
- Rise of global anti-capitalist movements
- Trades training focusing on women, Indigenous peoples, and minorities
- Crowdsourcing remains a viable financing model

SHARING ECONOMY

sharing economy platforms for exchange of information, services

→

SHARING CULTURE SEEN AS PROFITABLE

overcoming the objections that "you can't make money bey embracing sharing culture"

SOCIAL ENTERPRISE SUPPORT

better support for double-bottom-line businesses (social enterprises)

ANTI-CAPITALIST MOVEMENT SUPPORT

global anti-capitalist movements

MINORITY TRADES TRAINING

trades targeting women and Indigenous peoples
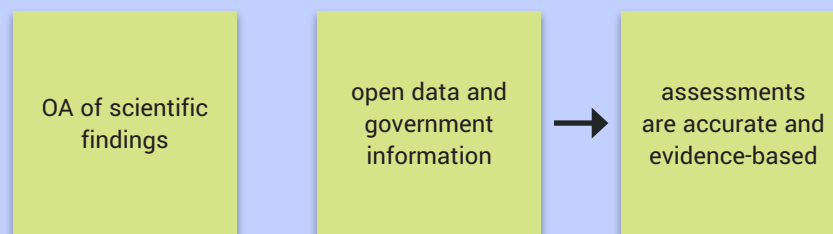
CROWDSOURCING

crowdsourcing continues

What role might CCC play in emerging alternative economies? In anti-capitalist movements? In social enterprises?

What responsibilities does supporting and enabling these movements entail?
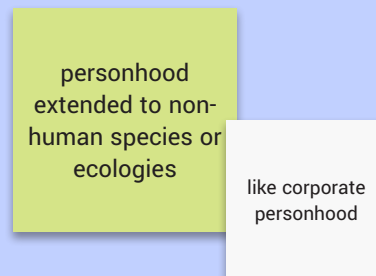
ENVIRONMENTAL SIGNALS

- Open access to scientific and government information allows for more accurate assessments
- Legal personhood extended beyond people to non-human species and ecosystems
- Climate change presents an urgent need for multi-sectoral change

OPEN RESEARCH/DATA

OA of scientific findings	open data and government information	→ assessments are accurate and evidence-based

PERSONHOOD EXTENDED

personhood extended to non-human species or ecologies

like corporate personhood

CLIMATE CHANGE CHANGES US

recognition of human effect on environment → climate crisis & need for changing the way we operate in many sectors in order to respond
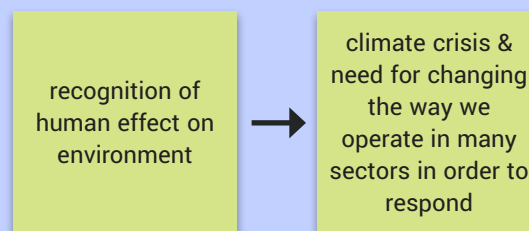
How might CCC play a role in the climate crisis? What are CCC's responsibilities?

What might truly open scientific data and publications do for our future?

What are the implications of extending personhood for CCC?

POLITICAL SIGNALS

- Discrepancy between open commitments of governments and government actions; loss of face in democracy
- Changing Canadian governments create windows of willingness for policy changes
- Governments are being asked for transparency in their decision-making process
- Policies for copyright and public access are changing

DEMOCRACY IN TENSION

| more open government commitments | vs. | increasing democratic deficit on the ground |

POLICY WINDOWS

policy window to push for an OE/OER national policy and funding mechanism

GOVERNMENT TRANSPARENCY

governments "show they work": how they reached a conclusion, why, who's at fault/to praise

COPYRIGHT POLICY CHANGE

a more sensible approach towards Crown copyright is needed

user rights must be protected within copyright law if the legislation is to serve the public interest

As evidenced by submissions to:

the Supreme Court of Canada (Keatley v. Teranet)

parliament (Copyright Act review report)

What role does CCC play in democracy?

What implications would a transparent government have on CCC?

How might CCC strategically work toward its goals regardless of changes in government?

VALUES SIGNALS

- Growing cultural consciousness of the importance of diversity, inclusion, and equity
- Working toward reconciliation with Indigenous peoples requires finding ways to recognize, protect, and incorporate Indigenous knowledges
- Recognition of the time and effort required to produce open work
- Harm is often done in the digital world despite best intentions

EQUITY

awareness of issues surrounding diversity, inclusion, equity

INDIGENOUS RECONCILIATION

reconciliation with Indigenous peoples → find ways to protect Indigenous knowledge → the recognition and incorporation of Indigenous knowledges

RESPECT FOR OPEN WORK

new respect for people's time/work with openness

INDIVIDUAL VALUE

an individual can always contribute in some way (even in words only) → an individual should always have access

BEST INTENTIONS STILL HARM

criticality (e.g., ensuring that we don't do harm with the best of intentions)

disregarding data privacy

forgetting about digital redlining

ignoring accessibility

How might CCC work with Indigenous communities on its initiatives and strategies?

How could diverse groups be involved in deciding the future of CCC?

How can CCC model its own support of transparency in the ways it approaches its own practices?

PROJECTS

What is an ongoing/upcoming/aspirational project you are or would be excited to work on and that you think Creative Commons Canada should be involved with?

We took stock of the projects Creative Commons Canada members were interested in working on. This was a way for the community to update each other on what they are interested in and find potential support or collaboration.

WHY THIS IS USEFUL
Understanding and publicly declaring projects that would be aspirational and exciting to work on helps to ensure that the CCC community is working proactively toward the types of futures they want, rather than working only reactively in response to changes or public needs. Working collaboratively on an aspirational agenda also allows everyone to find opportunities to support each other in making these projects realities.

PROJECTS

- **OPENNESS** Strengthening open access to science, education, and resources
- **COMMITMENTS** Advocating for official commitments and policies nationally and at the federal government level
- **PARTNERSHIPS** Finding new partnerships with universities, libraries, cultural heritage organizations, and content creators
- **FLEXIBILITY** Pushing for federal legislative reform on Crown copyright
- **EVOLUTION** Evolving Creative Commons Canada into a platform for sharing achievements, a community of practice, and a common resource and license for content creators
- **LEARNING** Looking to current examples of best practice

STRENGTHENING OPEN DOMAINS

open access	open science	open education (OE) and open educational resources (OER)

COMMITMENTS/POLICY

sign Berlin Declaration	required open Tri-Council results	joint national OER advocacy and lobby funding

PARTNERS

university commitments	library and archives organizations discuss Crown copyright with gov	content creators	cultural heritage organizations

CANADIAN GOVERNMENT

Crown copyright reform	open license waiver (CC0) of government works by default

CCC EVOLVES

collaborative community of practice	platform to share achievements	more common adoption of CC Open Licenses by content creators

EXAMPLES OF THE FUTURE IN THE PRESENT

Quebec digital strategy document: ambition to open up data to citizens	Quebec Digital Action Plan for Education and Higher Education	Copyright the Card Game	CC primer for Canadian cultural heritage organizations

VISIONS

What would extreme success look like for Creative Commons Canada in 2050, 30 years into the future?

Questions you might want to think about:
- What has CC Canada achieved in the last 30 years?
- What do CC Canada activities look like in 2050?
- What does the public think about CC Canada?
- What does your daily life look like?

Visioning is often used to build out scenarios of desirable futures. Visions aren't meant to predict the future or imagine a probable future, but a future you want. As an initial visioning sprint, we had some fun working through first thoughts about what a positive future scenario could look like in the CCC world.

WHY THIS IS USEFUL
Imagining a desirable future makes it easier to build commitment for it and strategically work towards it. Visioning exercises prompt us to think about different aspects of the future explicitly, from aspects of daily life to what whole domains, systems, and geographies might look like. By working through these prompts, we can begin to deepen and perhaps generate entirely new ideas for what a desirable future for ourselves and our work could look like.

NOTES ON OUR METHODS

HORIZON 30 years. We chose this horizon because it is far enough in the future that the world will likely look drastically different, but not so far in the future that it is difficult to imagine specific scenarios in a limited visioning session.
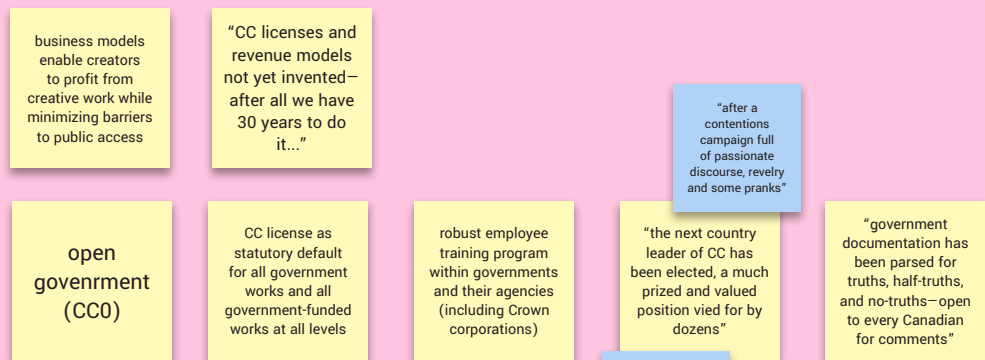
BACKCASTING A tool that begins with an aspect of a future scenario and asks us to imagine the events that might have made it possible. More traditional "forecasting" begins in the present and projects forward. This might lead to simply extrapolating the present rather than imagining new possibilities for the future. Backcasting prompts us to think through the conditions that make our desirable futures possible.

EVERYDAY LIFE Prompts that ask us to imagine everyday life in the future call our attention to how our worlds are made up of many common practices. While the change of whole systems or domains are often difficult to imagine vividly or without falling into tropes, imagining differences in daily life helps us to make the future concrete, visceral, and descriptive.
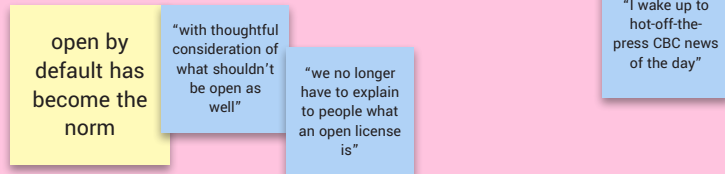
VISIONS

- **NEW ECONOMIC MODELS** Creative Commons revenue models and licenses enable creators to profit from their creative work while minimizing barriers to public access
- **OPEN GOVERNMENT** A truly open government operates with Creative Commons as the default
    - Robust Creative Commons training programs educate all employees within governments and their agencies
    - Government aims for complete decision-making transparency to all Canadians
- **OPENNESS NORMAL** Thoughtful openness has become the norm
- **OPEN EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES** Educational resources are open, free, and publicly-funded at all levels
- **OPEN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH** Scientific research is responsibly open from its practice to its outputs, policies, and guidelines
- **CANADIAN CONTENT** Creative Commons licensing by default increases visibility and impact of Canadian content and makes reliable, perpetual access possible
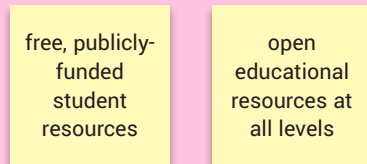
ECONOMIC MODELS FOR BOTH PUBLIC AND CREATORS

- business models enable creators to profit from creative work while minimizing barriers to public access
- "CC licenses and revenue models not yet invented—after all we have 30 years to do it..."

THE RISE OF A TRULY OPEN GOVERNMENT

- open govenrment (CC0)
- CC license as statutory default for all government works and all government-funded works at all levels
- robust employee training program within governments and their agencies (including Crown corporations)
- "after a contentions campaign full of passionate discourse, revelry and some pranks"
- "the next country leader of CC has been elected, a much prized and valued position vied for by dozens"
- "government documentation has been parsed for truths, half-truths, and no-truths—open to every Canadian for comments"

OPEN IS THE NEW NORMAL

- open by default has become the norm
- "with thoughtful consideration of what shouldn't be open as well"
- "we no longer have to explain to people what an open license is"
- "I wake up to hot-off-the-press CBC news of the day"

EDUCATIONAL RESOURCES ARE OPEN AND FREE

- free, publicly-funded student resources
- open educational resources at all levels

OPEN SCIENTIFIC RESEARCH

- students learn open science practices
- most outputs are openly licensed
- health regions in Canada openly license policies, procedures, and guidelines

CANADIAN CONTENT IS DISCOVERABLE

- CC-licensed Canadian content is discoverable
- broadcasting archives available under CC licenses
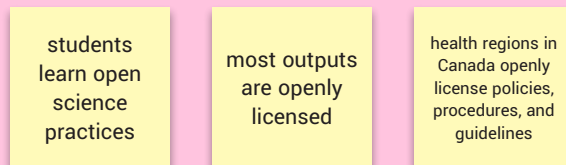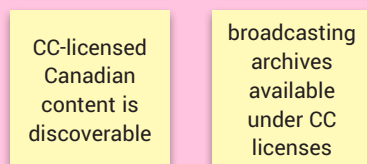
MOVING FORWARD

Future discussions and initiatives are needed to:

- Undertake further visioning to develop a clear articulation of a successful future

- Develop strategies for how Creative Commons Canada members could orient their collective efforts toward a desirable future

- Strengthen and build alliances and partnerships with organizations working toward shared objectives

- Look to best practices in other countries, organizations, and models

- Invite more conversations with people from all contexts and backgrounds to source even more insights, inspiration, and imaginings

- Incorporate your feedback into this living document

Let's open more conversations. Let's open more possible futures.

To a more open future!

Superorganism