



**What's at stake?**

**intellectual freedom program series  
& marketing campaign**

Toronto Public Library Board Meeting  
September 18, 2023

# series objectives

- To advance TPL's strategic priorities of **Opening up our public spaces** and **Providing the vital ingredients to a democratic society** by:
  - raising awareness and understanding of the current attacks on Intellectual Freedom
  - bridging the gap between our understanding of and taking action to support and defend Intellectual Freedom
  - advocating on behalf of libraries in their critical role in supporting an open and civil society
  - raising TPL's profile and reputation as a defender of intellectual freedom and democratic values.
- To ensure that the program outcomes meet or exceed the expectations of the donor(s) who are funding the series

## What freedoms are at risk when we challenge Intellectual Freedom? What's at stake?

- Individuals and institutions in society are facing increasing intellectual freedom challenges on a wide range of issues, through all forms of media, and from all sides of the political and social spectrum.
- As a result of these challenges, our access to information is slowly being narrowed, affecting so many aspects of our lives: our social networks, work, class structures, education, how we see each other, our civil liberties, democracy!
- **How can we understand these forces and how they are shaping and impacting our lives? How can we defend against these challenges and protect our access to free thought, ideas and information?**

**These are some of the most critical conversations of our time.**

**The library is uniquely positioned to have these conversations.**



# program overview

## fall 2023 program line-up

- First season of a one year (two-season) programming series as part of TPL's flagship ideas series, On Civil Society.
- Launched September 11 and runs into December
- 10 programs + installations and engagements
- Multiple formats:
  - In-person, virtual and hybrid/multi-locations (e.g. international, streaming to other libraries, etc.)
  - On-demand content (YouTube, audio content, repackaged in-person content)
  - Library staff-focused events

# program overview

## fall 2023 program line-up

### Libraries as battlegrounds

Two library leaders discuss the threats libraries are facing as defenders of free thought and access to information.

Tracie Hall, Vickery Bowles



**“... libraries should always be free and open to the public that they were built to serve.”**

**- Tracie D. Hall, President,  
American Library  
Association**

## Free people read freely – if they're allowed to

The impacts of censorship when  
libraries get caught in culture wars.

Tracie Hall, Omar El Akkad



# program overview

## fall 2023 program line-up

civil  
forum



# program overview

## fall 2023 program line-up



**When critical voices are silenced**

What's at stake when voices that challenge dominant narratives go unheard?



**A prisoner's right to information**

What's at stake when officials ban books or limit prisoners' communication with the outside world?



**Opposition denied**

What's at stake when access to information is restricted to achieve national objectives?



**The Warrior Librarians of Ukraine**

What's at stake when a country's cultural heritage and structures are threatened with destruction?

# program overview

## fall 2023 program line-up



### Who is watching Big Tech?

What's at stake when corporations dictate the information we see and don't see?

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Francis Haugen,  
Facebook whistleblower

Corey Doctorow  
Journalist, activist, author



# fall 2023 program line-up

## additional installations and content

### **Banned Book Tower**

Art installation at TRL

### **#LoveABannedBook**

Public engagement video series

### **Book Sanctuary at TIFA**

**ignite minds  
not books**

**protect  
endangered  
stories**

**free people  
read freely**

**freedom to  
read 'em**



# marketing plan



# marketing & communication objectives

- **Awareness, understanding and engagement**
  - **Raise TPL's profile, reputation and brand**
  - **Drive attendance**
-

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- **Awareness, understanding and engagement**
  - **Raise TPL's profile, reputation and brand**
  - **Drive attendance**
- 
- **Equip public service staff with communications tools**
  - **Educate staff**
  - **Actively and effectively manage issues, concerns and conversations**



# marketing & packaging two-tiered approach

1. **An awareness-raising and engagement campaign** that speaks to the “why” of the program series
2. **Program-specific promotion** targeted to audiences that are interested in the particular programs

**Creatively, the two approaches  
connect and align with each other**



**creative concept**

We've lost  
the ability to  
respectfully  
disagree.

Shut up.

**What's at stake when  
we can't disagree civilly?**

Join us this fall for critical conversations that  
explore what's at risk when our intellectual  
freedom is threatened.

We've lost our  
ability to listen.

Huh?

**What's at stake when we  
don't listen to one another?**

Join us this fall for critical conversations that  
explore what's at risk when our intellectual  
freedom is threatened.

**theme:** extremes, polarization

**left**

We've  
lost  
our  
in-between.

**right**

**What's at stake when we think in extremes?**


Join us this fall for critical conversations that explore what's at risk when our intellectual freedom is threatened.

**tpl:** toronto public library

[tpl.ca/AtStake](http://tpl.ca/AtStake)

**theme:** being okay with being uncomfortable, having uncomfortable conversations

Let's get  
**comfortable**  
with being  
**uncomfortable.**



**What's at stake when we avoid difficult conversations?**

Join us this fall for critical discussions that explore what's at risk when our intellectual freedom is threatened.

**tpl:** toronto public library

[tpl.ca/AtStake](http://tpl.ca/AtStake)



theme: book bans/censorship

I'm all for free  
speech, but [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED] and [REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]  
[REDACTED]

**What's at stake when we lose  
access to information and ideas?**

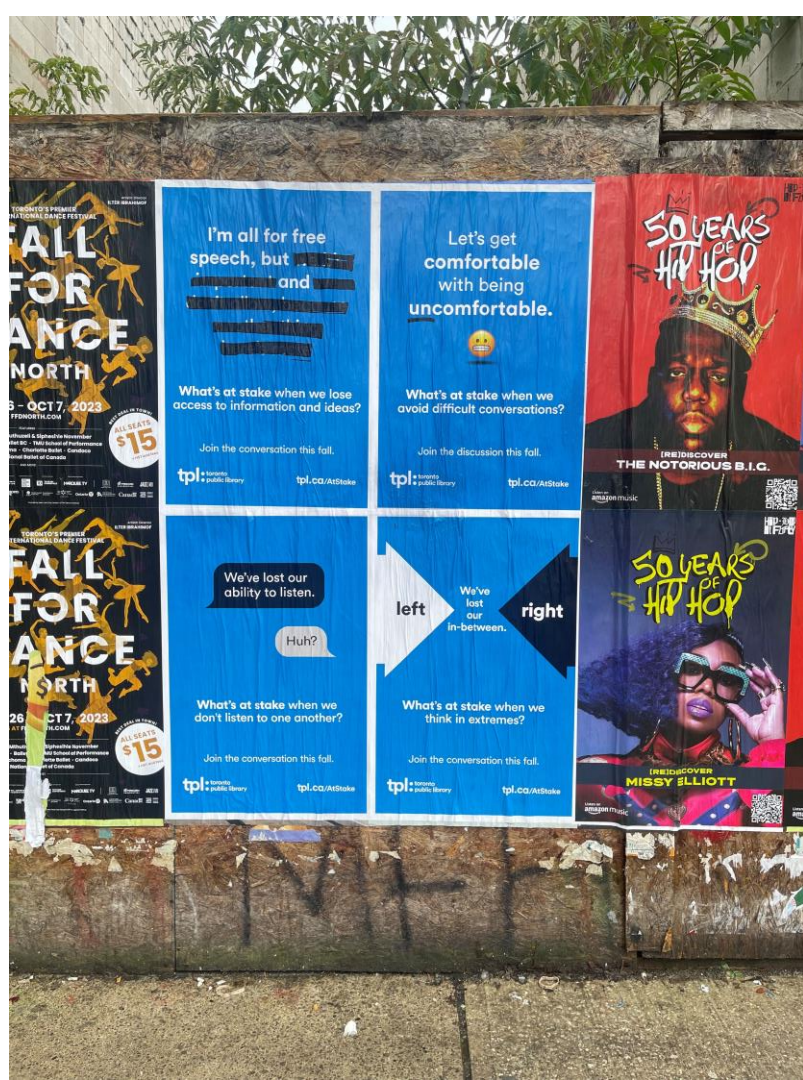
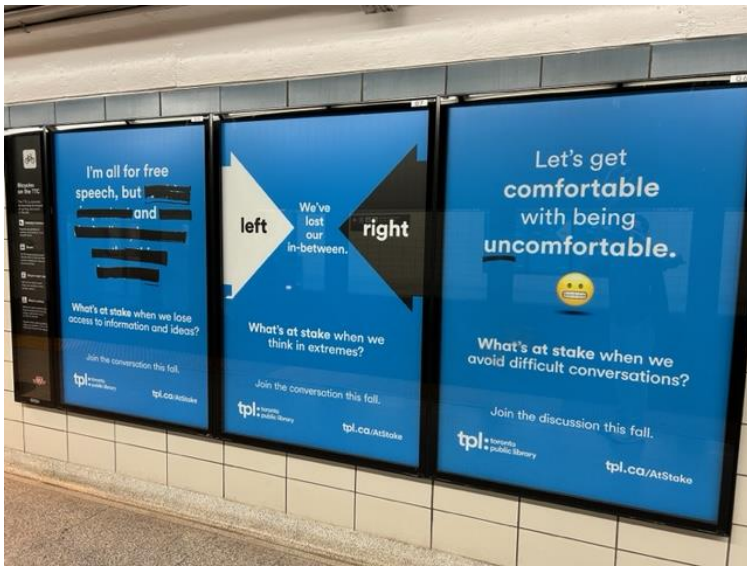
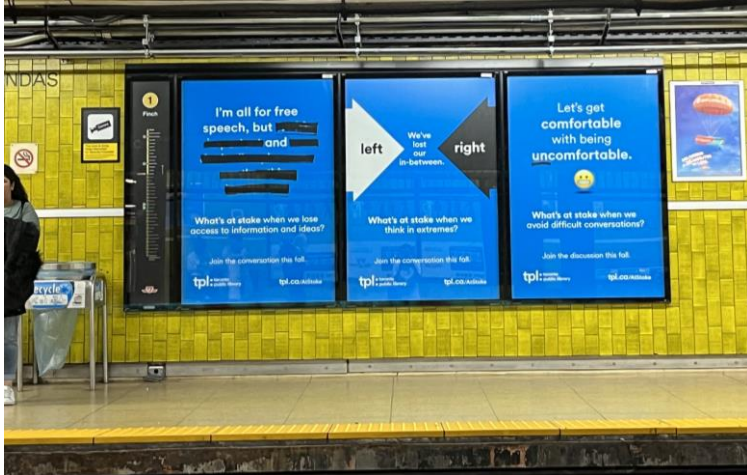
Join us this fall for critical conversations that  
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**tpl:** toronto  
public library

[tpl.ca/AtStake](https://www.tpl.ca/AtStake)

## Multi-channel promotion

- Out of home poster campaign – TTC and hoarding
- Paid + organic + influencer social media
- Email
- [tpl.ca/AtStake](https://tpl.ca/AtStake)
- Branches
- Earned media



← Posts

**tpl:** torontolibrary



👍 🗨️ 📌

Liked by **anama1** and 1,128 others

**torontolibrary** What's at stake when we lose access to information and ideas?... more

View all 32 comments

**legimatetourist** I think one of the most pressing questions for public librarianship is how an institution remains neutral



← Toronto Public Library 37.4K posts 🔍 ⋮

Posts Replies Media Likes

**tpl:** **Toronto Public Library** @toront... · 2d ⋮  
 What's at stake when we think in extremes? This fall, join us for critical conversations that explore what's at risk when intellectual freedom is threatened. Learn more: [tpl.ca/atstake](http://tpl.ca/atstake) #IntellectualFreedom



🗨️ 1 🔄 5 🍷 7 📊 2,384 🗣️

**tpl:** **Toronto Public Library** @toront... · 2d ⋮  
 Didn't get a chance to catch a film at @TIFF\_NET? Read them instead! Viveca Gretton, a senior collections specialist, spoke to @CBCHereandNow about screen adaptations of books in #TIFF23 🎧 . Listen to the segment here:



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### What's at stake when we lose access to information and ideas?

Join the conversation and explore what's at risk when intellectual freedom is threatened.

[Learn more](#)

I'm all for free speech, but [redacted] and [redacted]

## Featured



Booklist

#### From Books to the Big Screen

TIFF 2023 boasts a long list of films based on or inspired by books. Browse all 21 titles.



Program

#### Futures Studies Workshops

Improve your skills in identifying signals of change and understanding trends with Innovator in Residence



Booklist

#### Campus Novels

Books about dorms, exams and professors - no admissions test required!



Announcement

#### City Librarian's Reflections

Read why libraries are ready to engage their communities in difficult discussions around issues that

Events and civil forums are part of our [On Civil Society](#) programming and generously funded in part by the [Toronto Public Library Foundation](#).

## Events and civil forums

Hear from thought-provoking guests — from global activists to warrior librarians and big tech whistleblowers to human rights leaders — who are defending intellectual freedom in the face of war, legal harassment, misinformation and censorship.

Want to delve deeper into the conversation? Participate in a civil forum. Held before select events, these moderated gatherings provide a space to ask questions, share opinions and experiences, and hear and learn from others.



### Opposition Denied

Mon Oct 02, 2023 | 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Location: [Toronto Reference Library](#)

What's at stake when access to information is restricted to achieve national objectives? How does suspending civil liberties impact social movement organizing? What do citizens lose when they're unable to voice opposition to...



### A Prisoner's Right to Information

Wed Nov 01, 2023 | 7:00 pm - 8:00 pm

Location: [Toronto Reference Library](#)

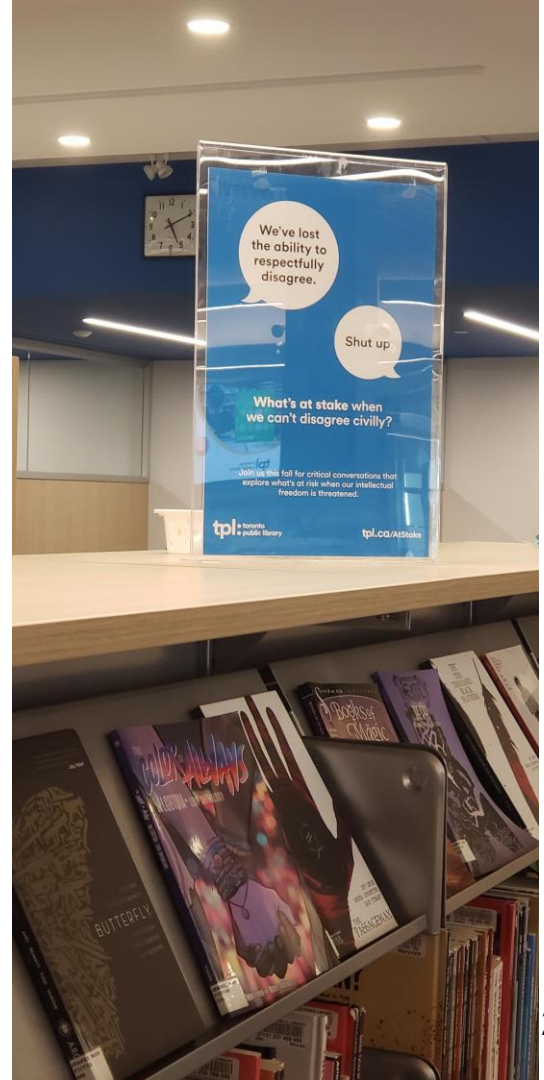
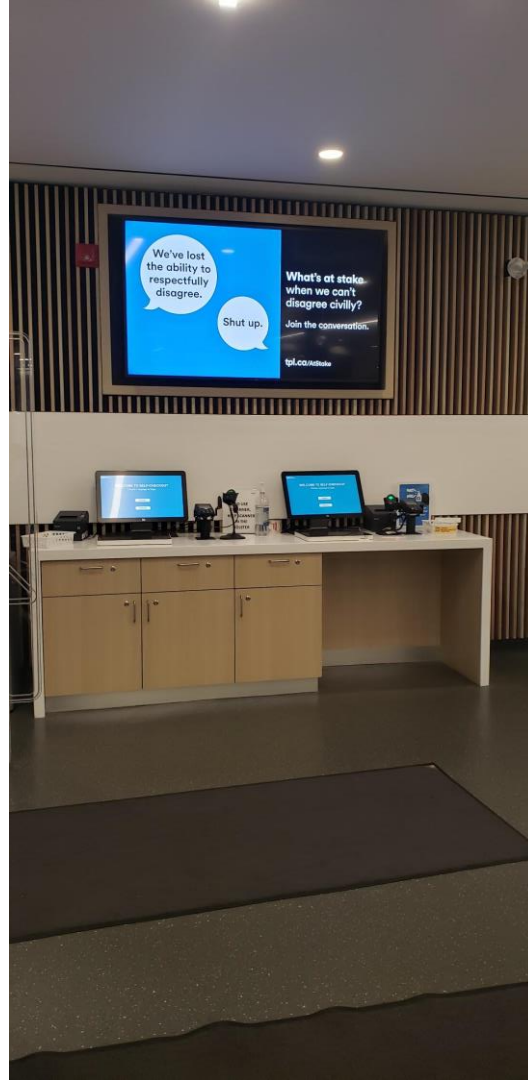
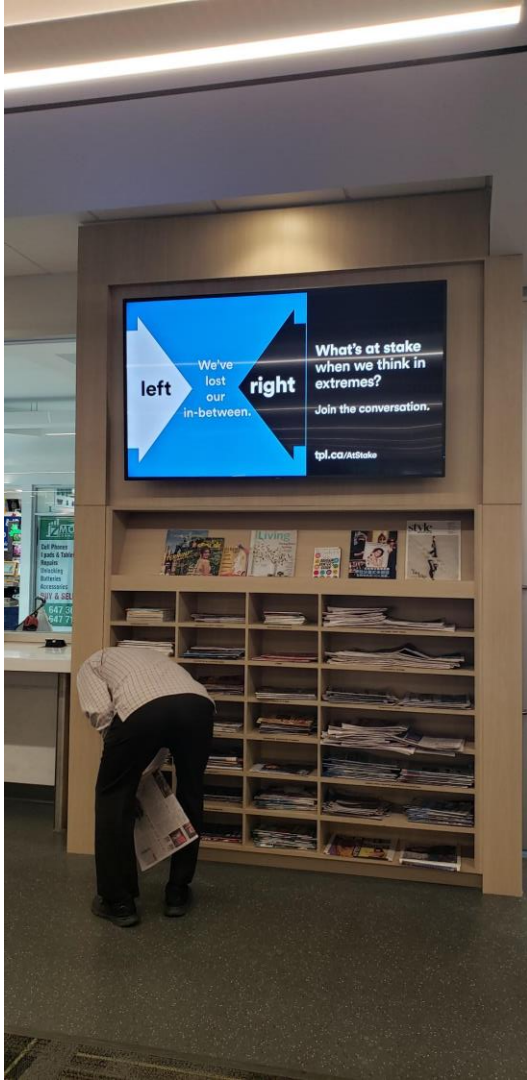
What's at stake when states, provinces or even prison officials ban books or limit prisoners' communication with the outside world? Is it morally right to prevent prisoners from accessing certain information and prevent them...



### The Warrior Librarians of Ukraine

Mon Nov 06, 2023 | 12:00 pm - 1:00 pm

Location: Online





**thank you**