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*Digital Uses by Canadian Courts: A Case Study**

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ABSTRACT This article explores the adoption of social media by judicial institutions, focusing on Quebec courts and the Supreme Court of Canada. While digital platforms offer opportunities to enhance transparency, disseminate reliable information, and build public trust, their use by courts remains limited. An empirical study (2018–2021) reveals that all courts maintain websites, but only six of eleven use Twitter, and two are active on Facebook. These platforms primarily serve legal professionals and litigants, with little content aimed at the general public. The courts' cautious approach stems from resource constraints and tensions between judicial independence and the interactive nature of social media. Rather than fostering engagement, courts predominantly use these platforms for unidirectional communication. The study underscores the need for more participatory strategies to align with social media's potential. Future research should examine audience demographics, communication goals, and how digital strategies impact public engagement and trust in the judiciary.

KEYWORDS: Judicial institutions – Social media – Digital communication – Public trust – Judicial independence

1. *Introduction*

The advent of the social Web at the end of the 2000s is reflected in the popularity and plurality of its uses by both the private and public sectors.[1] A growing number of government organizations are now using social media[2] to communicate with both *their* various publics and *the* public.[3] The health crisis since March 2020 has obviously marked a turning point in the widespread provision of online services,[4] including in courthouses.[5] Appropriated by public institutions, these uses often serve a desire to demonstrate an effort at transparency through the public dissemination

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[1] The social Web refers to Internet use that goes beyond content consultation to include new ways of creating and sharing information through social networking: F. Millerand, S. Proulx and J. Rueff (eds.), *Web social: Mutation de la communication*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2010.

[2] Social media are "software-based media supports that enable users to maintain a presence, communicate and interact online. On the one hand, as "media", these devices support and encourage interactive exchanges, as well as interpersonal and group communication. [...] On the other hand, these devices are "social" in the sense that they call on as many people as possible to play the role of producer-user (produser) of media content [...]" : S. Proulx, M. Millette and L. Heaton (eds.), *Médias sociaux: Enjeux pour la communication*, Québec, Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2012, 2 (our translation).

[3] P. D. Schulz and A. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet? Finding on Facebook? Social Media Innovation or Degradation? The Future and Challenge of Change for Courts*, in *International Journal for Court Administration*, vol. 7, issue 1, 2013; J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice: A Comparison of Courts and Police Use of Contemporary Media*, in *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 7.

[4] E. Beaunoyer, S. Dupéré and M. J. Guitton, *COVID-19 and digital inequalities: Reciprocal impacts and mitigation strategies*, in *Computers in Human Behavior*, vol. 111, issue 106424, 1; K. Gentelet and A. Bahary-Dionne, *Les angles morts des réponses technologiques à la Covid-19: des populations marginalisées invisibles*, in *Éthique publique*, vol. 14, issue 1.

[5] J. Boulanger-Bonelly, *Public Access to Online Hearing*, in *Dalhousie Law Journal*, vol. 45, issue 2, 2022.

of information about their activities.[6] In some cases, they are used to "brand" political organizations, using the same marketing strategies as the private sector.[7] As a result, these uses by the public sector raise an inevitable tension between transparency and message control.

This increasingly contagious boom begs the question: what about the institutions of justice? In 2011, the Utah Courts Committee criticized the courts for lagging behind not only the private sector, but also the legislative and executive branches of government, in embracing social media as a tool to reach out and connect with the public,[8] an aspiration increasingly present in the context of a growing loss of confidence in the justice system.[9] In the early 2010s, most courts had no systematic presence on social media.[10] However, as early as 2012, researchers observed a timid but emerging use, despite a slower and later adoption compared to other sectors, such as the police.[11] In the years that followed, the use of social media became increasingly widespread, with more and more courts setting up social media accounts, notably in Australia, New Zealand[12] and the United States.[13] In Australia, this use is mobilizing a veritable community of practice made up of communication and information professionals.[14]

The situation in the province of Quebec and that of the Supreme Court of Canada, which will be the subject of this article, follows this same trend of slow and hesitant adoption. For example, the Supreme Court has had a presence on Facebook since 2011, but it wasn't until 2017 that it began publishing content there.[15] This late adoption partly explains the lack of knowledge about the courts' use of social media, even though the same observation was made about their relations with the press two decades earlier,[16] and about media practices more generally.[17] A better understanding of the phenomenon would, however, enable us to understand the particular aspirations and disincentives of courts to engage directly with the public without going through media gatekeepers.

In this article, we distinguish between the use of social media *in relation to* the courts - usually approached from the angle of the legal constraints this use implies for journalists and the public[18] - and the use of social media *by* the courts.[19] This article focuses on the second aspect. Although the latter is little discussed, we shall see that it raises crucial issues in relation to the social mutations that justice institutions are undergoing. A second distinction is in order: we will be dealing with the use of social media by the judicial institution, and not by judges in their personal capacity.[20] Of course, both raise similar issues, notably judicial independence.

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[6] The digitization of government information is sometimes explicitly linked to its transparency, for example when referring to the notion of "eGoverment": J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*, in *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 7, issue 2, 2016, 6.

[7] A. Marland, *Brand Command, Canadian Politics and Democracy in the Age of Message Control*, Vancouver, UBC Press, 2016.

[8] Utah State Courts, *Report and recommendation of the Social Media Subcommittee of the Judicial Outreach Committee*, Salt Lake City, 2011, quoted in J. Johnston, *Courts' Use of Social Media: A Community of Practice Model*, in *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 11, 2017, 671.

[9] Canadian Bar Association, *Reaching Equal Justice Report: An Invitation to Envision and Act*, Ottawa, 2013, 16-18.

[10] J. Johnston, *Courts new visibility 2.0*, in *The Courts and the Media: Challenges in the Era of Digital and Social Media*, P. Keyzer, J. Johnston and M. Pearson (eds.), Sydney, Halstead Press, 2012, 41.

[11] J. Johnston, *Courts new visibility 2.0*, 41.

[12] J. Johnston, *Courts' Use of Social Media*; J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*, in *International Journal for Court Administration*, vol. 7, issue 2, 2016.

[13] C. Flango, C. Smith, C. Campbell and N. Kauder (eds.), Trends in state courts, Williamsburg, VA, National Center for State Courts, 2016; N. Meyer, *Social media and the courts: Innovative tools or dangerous fad? A practical guide for courts administrators*, in *International Journal of Communication*, vol. 6, issue 1, 2014.

[14] J. Johnston, *Courts' Use of Social Media*.

[15] With the exception of a photo of its building published in 2011.

[16] J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice*, 1670.

[17] J. Johnston, *Courts' Use of Social Media*, 670.

[18] In particular, when journalists cover a trial on Twitter or video, the publicity of the trial is guaranteed.

[19] J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice*, 1677. For example, the literature on the links between social media and the courts has focused on the way in which the courts have regulated their use by journalists and lawyers, particularly the use of Twitter during hearings. They have also looked at the ways in which social media have affected jurors' behavior: J. Johnston, *Courts' Use of Social Media*, 670.

[20] The independence and impartiality of the institution must be distinguished from the independence and impartiality of individual judges, for example, in the context of a particular case: *Moreau-Bérubé v. New Brunswick (Conseil de la magistrature)*, 2002 SCC 11, [2002] 1 SCR 249, para 56. This last point raises questions of judicial ethics that it is beyond the scope of this article to address.

The Canadian Judicial Council points out that judicial independence "is the shield that safeguards and protects the fundamental values guaranteed by the Constitution" and even "an emblem of Canadian democracy".[21] It is "both [an] instrument of coercion and [a] countervailing power designed to temper, in accordance with the theory of the separation of powers, the executive and the legislature".[22] It is this dual specificity that is at the root of the judicial institution's distinctive culture and identity.[23] This distinct culture is inevitably reflected in the traditional conception of the role of the courts "that it is not providing business, or even government, services, but explaining and dispensing justice".[24] Yet the literature in communication and media studies that has documented some of these uses has not specifically addressed this particularism[25] while the literature in legal science, if it does apprehend this particularism, does not present empirical data or a systematic survey and aims instead to propose norms of use.[26]

This article proposes to fill this gap by examining the specific issues raised by the use of the Web and social media by legal institutions, and by analyzing the concrete users of some of them. To do so, we first need to explain this boom by examining the communication objectives pursued by the courts, as well as the main challenges associated with the use of social media (1), which we will do with the help of a review of the literature, institutional documentation and the discourse of the judiciary. Then, having identified these objectives and challenges, we will examine the extent to which they are reflected in practice, in the concrete and current uses of the courts (2). We will do this on the basis of the results of an empirical survey we carried out on the digital presence of Quebec courts and the Supreme Court of Canada on the Internet (website) and on social media (Facebook and Twitter - now renamed X).[27] Finally, we will discuss the uses observed in the light of the objectives and challenges identified in the literature (3). Ultimately, the aim is to suggest avenues for reflection on the potential evolution of the role of the courts and the ways in which they interact with their audiences.

2. *The objectives and challenges of social media use by the courts*

What are the opportunities, concerns and challenges reflected in the courts' communication objectives in relation to their uses of the web and social media, and who are their target audiences (professionals, media, litigants or the general public)?

Taking the case of Australia, Blackham and Williams note that courts have generally approached social media with great caution. Until very recently, their scope of intervention was essentially limited to regulating the use of social media by other actors - notably journalists using Twitter to cover a live trial - rather than reflecting on how they themselves use social media or could do so better.[28] However, these authors point to emerging uses such as sharing news about court activities, informing the public about court operations, attempting to reach litigants more directly, or encouraging public participation. What's more, judges and court administrators see significant communication potential. In Canada, Chief Justice Richard Wagner emphasized the desire to increase the Supreme Court's media presence, as evidenced by the growing use of the court's Twitter account.[29]

[21] Canadian Judicial Council, *Why is judicial independance important to you?*, 3, available at: https://cjc-ccm.ca/sites/default/files/documents/2019/Why%20is%20Judicial%20Independence%20Important%20to%20You_1.pdf.

[22] T. Delpech, L. Dumoulin and C. de Galembert, *Sociologie du droit et de la justice*, Paris, Armand Colin, 2014, 191.

[23] T. Delpech, L. Dumoulin and C. de Galembert, *Sociologie du droit et de la justice*, 191.

[24] J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*, 3.

[25] See for example J. Johnston, *Courts' Use of Social Media*; J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice*; L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice: YouTube and the UK Supreme Court*, in *Annual Review of Interdisciplinary Justice Research*, vol. 5, 2016.

[26] See for example P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet?*; J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*.

[27] We'll refer to Twitter rather than X, since that was the name used at the time of the survey. We had initially included YouTube in our analysis, but the only court content selected was three videos on the Court of Québec account, two on the role of the judge in the Small Claims Division (one in French and one in English), in which a judge provides explanations in the courtroom. The other video is a documentary by the Institut du Nouveau Monde, a non-partisan organization whose mission is to increase citizen participation in Quebec's democratic life.

[28] A. Blackham and G. Williams, *Australian Courts and Social Media*, in *Alternative Law Journal*, vol. 38, issue 3, 2013, 170.

[29] Maxime Huard, Journal de Montréal, *Cour suprême : les médias sociaux menacent la confiance des Canadiens, selon le juge en chef*, available at: www.journaldemontreal.com/2018/02/05/cour-supreme-

We have identified the main objectives and challenges associated with the use of social media by the courts based on a review of existing literature, supplemented by institutional documentation and the discourse of the judiciary;[30] we present them here in the order of importance in which they are mentioned.[31] These objectives can be grouped into four categories: a) disseminating information to the public; b) ensuring the validity and reliability of information concerning the courts; c) increasing the transparency of the institution and d) increasing public confidence in it.

2.1. *Disseminating information to the public*

Informing the public is the primary objective of the courts' use of the web and social media. This information objective should be seen in the context where, as de Jersey summarizes, "the work of the court is [...] the least understood operation of government".[32] Depending on the situation, the public in question may refer as much to those likely to be involved in a dispute as to the general public. To this end, Schutz and Canon believe that courts should employ media specialists to develop communication strategies that include both educational content for the general public and informative content for litigants.[33]

In Canada, Justice Wagner points out that the Supreme Court has begun to share plain-language summaries of its judgments, known as Cases in brief, in order to make their subtleties easier to understand, and thus facilitate the task of the traditional media.[34] The 2018-2019 *Corporate Plan of the Office of the Registrar of the Supreme Court of Canada* announces continued efforts to increase the Court's presence on social media in a context where access to information is to be facilitated: "As the public's interest in the Court's cases increases and as a result of the growing visibility of the SCC judges in Canada and abroad, the Office must support the Court by ensuring effective communication strategies [...]".[35] The Office's 2017-2018 *Departmental Results Report* testified to progress in this direction including "increased activity on Facebook and the launch of 'Cases in Brief' […]".[36]

Elsewhere, it's more often the litigants involved in the legal process who are explicitly targeted. American courts, for example, have begun to use social media to share news about their activities, but also to reach and inform self-represented litigants. According to Bladow and Raby, this role of the courts is intrinsically linked to the problems of access to justice in a context of dwindling resources:

"Given budget cuts and the increase in self-represented litigants, courts are looking for cost-effective ways to reach the public and educate them about the legal system. The courts want to prevent litigants from becoming mired in the process, which wastes resources and frustrates litigants. Because of their potential reach and the minimal investment needed to start projects, social media can help courts serve their customers."[37]

Legal information on social media seems to be an extension of the legal information already available on the web: it would be a tool of choice for institutions, as it would be less costly than other measures aimed at facilitating access to justice.[38] The idea would

les-medias-sociaux-menacent-la-confiance-des-canadiens-selon-le-juge-en-chef.

[30] To do this, we entered the keywords "tribunals" and "social media" (in French and English) in the main social science and Canadian law databases, as well as the institutional documentation available on the websites of the tribunals analyzed.

[31] It would be wrong to assert that the order of importance of the objectives and challenges as established following the literature review corresponds to the expectations of the stakeholders. However, the salience of certain concerns provides a good indication of which issues are considered major.

[32] P. de Jersey, *Courts and the Media in the Digital Era*, in *The Courts and the Media: Challenges in the Era of Digital and Social Media*, P. Keyzer, J. Johnston and M. Pearson (eds.), Sydney, Halstead Press, 2012, 35.

[33] P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet?*, 7.

[34] Supreme Court of Canada, Winnipeg 2019, *Message from the Chief Justice of Canada, Richard Wagner*, available at https://www.scc-csc.ca/court-cour/events-evenements/winnipeg/message-eng.aspx.

[35] Supreme Court of Canada, *Departmental Plan 2018-19*, 6, available at: www.scc-csc.ca/about-apropos/rep-rap/rpp/2018-2019/report-rapport-eng.aspx.

[36] Supreme Court of Canada, *Departmental Results Report 2017-2018*, 21, available at: www.scc-csc.ca/about-apropos/rep-rap/dpr-rmr/2017-2018/report-rapport-eng.aspx.

[37] K. Bladow and J. Raby, *Using Social Media to Support Self-Represented Litigants And Increase Access to Justice*, coll. Future Trends in State Courts 2011, National Center for State Courts, 2011, 34, available at: https://ncsc.contentdm.oclc.org/digital/collection/ctmedia/id/29/.

[38] M. Barendrecht, Legal Aid, *Accessible Courts or Legal Information? Three Access to Justice Strategies Compared*, in *Global Jurist,* vol. 11, issue 1, 2011.

be to capitalize on the high penetration of social media in the population, their user-friendliness and the fact that they are already used elsewhere. As a result, information would be more easily visible and accessible than on traditional websites. On this last point, the multimedia aspect of these platforms is a distinctive asset, since they enable content to be shared that is not just textual, but also audio and video; types of content that may suit a wider range of people. For example, back in 2008, the Indiana Supreme Court was one of the first to publish videos on family law and mediation for litigants not represented on YouTube. These short videos, lasting six minutes or less, inform litigants about what to expect when filling out paperwork at the clerk's office or appearing in court.[39]

Finally, information-sharing strategies on social media do not necessarily imply confining content to these spaces, but rather using them as leverage to bring Internet users to other platforms used by courts. Schutz and Cannon give the example of tweets: if their format cannot do justice to the nuances and complexity of a legal case, courts can mobilize a "push strategy" consisting of attaching links to tweets to more complete information on their website.[40]

2.2. *Ensuring the validity and reliability of information*

A second objective is to ensure the validity and reliability of judicial information, in particular in relation to that which emanates from the traditional media or elsewhere online, especially on social media. This objective is aimed at the general public, litigants and journalists alike. Justice Wagner, for example, raised the idea that, with traditional media occupying less space in the media ecosystem than before, the courts should now tighten up on information to ensure its reliability and veracity.[41] Some of his concerns also seem to relate to the drastic reduction in the number of specialized reporters in court newsrooms, to make way for generalists who are assigned to very different subjects in the course of a single day: "They simply don't have the time to read 60-page decisions and understand all their nuances before their deadline".[42] As Schulz and Canon point out, "[l]ongstanding unease about the adequacy of media court reporting has also played a part".[43] In this context, the Chief Justice suggests that while social media may threaten public confidence in the justice system,[44] they could also be an opportunity to connect with Canadian citizens.[45] In the United States, Davey and his co-authors also associate this boom with a desire, indeed a duty, to "connect with the public and fulfill their obligation to be open, transparent, and understandable institution".[46]

In Australia, the appointment by the courts of public information officers to deal with social media, among other things, responds precisely to a need to ensure the reliability of information reported by the media, with the expertise of these people resting on their ability to interpret and adapt legal logic and language for the general public.[47] Yet the challenges associated with this communication work are exacerbated by the rapid evolution of media formats. Moreover, while all public and private sectors are forced to deal with evolving technological and communication practices, judicial - and more broadly legal - institutions "must work within unique frameworks and boundaries", which implies specific skills for communication officers, namely an understanding of legal and media practices unique to this environment.[48]

2.3. *Improving transparency*

A third related objective is to improve the

[39] YouTube, *Indiana Courts*, available at: www.youtube.com/user/incourts/playlists.
[40] P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet?*, 5.
[41] Educaloi, *Actes du colloque Clarity 2018, Plain Language in Modern Times*, T. H. Richard Wagner's Interview, 22, available at: https://educaloi.qc.ca/wp-content/uploads/actes_clarity2018.pdf.
[42] Huard, *Cour supreme* (our translation).
[43] P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Public Opinion, Media, Judges and the Discourse of Time*, in *Journal of Judicial Administration*, vol. 21, issue 1, 2011.
[44] Huard, *Cour suprême*: "We know that the information on social media sites is not presented with complete neutrality [...] You are presented with the news you want to hear" (our translation).
[45] Huard, *Cour suprême.*
[46] C. J. Davey, C. Taylor, S. Beougher, D. Trevas, N. Sydow, J. Ruthledge and T. Hodson, *CCPIO New Media Survey: A report on the Conference of Court Public Information Officers*, Las Vegas, Nevada, 2014, 2.
[47] J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice*, 1677 quoting the following study: J. Johnston, *Communicating Courts: A decade of practice in the third arm of goverment*, in *Australian Journal of Communication*, vol. 32, issue 3, 2005.
[48] J. Johnston, *Courts' Use of Social Media*, 679. Such as contempt law and journalists'court reporting requirements.

transparency of the judicial institution, and more specifically of its activities. This is part of a broader trend towards "open justice", which affects various spheres of legal and judicial activity. Inherited from the principle of open trials, this objective has notably motivated the webcasting of certain hearings. The Canadian Judicial Council emphasizes that this principle aims to ensure the transparency of decisions and the accountability of judges, for the benefit of several audiences:

"Print, radio, television and social media journalists, interested parties, and even completely indifferent citizens who have nothing to do with a case should feel welcome in any court in Canada to observe for themselves what is going on, and to draw their own conclusions about whether respect for and confidence in the administration of justice are well-founded. We live in a country where judicial decisions, not the judges who make them, can and should be scrutinized by the public and debated by academics and journalists, in open forums, on the Internet, or in any other media chosen by informed and responsible citizens who have formed an opinion on the subject".[49]

The words of former Supreme Court of Canada Chief Justice Beverly McLachlin sum up these aspirations, noting that the principle of open trials precedes the trend in other branches of government:

We insist on open justice so that citizens may know how justice is being rendered. Courts must be open and reasons for judgment public so that the litigants, the media, legal scholars and ultimately the general public may follow, scrutinize and criticize what is done in the name of justice. It is a point of pride that long before transparency became the buzzword of governance, the courts insisted that their proceedings be open to all.[50]

This principle of openness implies that information shared via social media, and more generally online, is not only available and reliable, but also clear and accessible. It therefore goes beyond the material availability of judicial information. For Schutz and Cannon "[c]ourts should maintain a well formatted webpage that is accessible to all current media to provide good background user information and current materials on judgments and rulings of public interest".[51] These interfaces must therefore offer different options for presenting information to different audiences.[52] Taking the example of the UK Supreme Court's presence on You Tube since 2015, Moran further notes that broadcasting on social media could enable new forms of visibility and, by extension, new types of information about courts that are not usually relayed. She observes that in the media of England and Wales, reports on judicial activity tend to present issues in a dichotomous way, identifying a "good guy" and a "bad guy", a "winner" and a "loser", without dealing with the reasoning behind the decision and the dissent behind the majority opinion.[53]

These observations raise the question of how courts make themselves visible, and what forms this visibility takes in an increasingly diffuse media space. The question of transparency is itself linked to that of public confidence in the institutions of justice.

2.4. *Increasing trust in the judiciary*

A final objective that emerges prominently in the literature is the desire to use social media to increase public confidence in the courts. The use of social media would enhance their reputation in a context of mistrust towards institutions.

A Canadian study reveals that several public surveys portray the system as untrustworthy, arbitrary, difficult to use, reserved for people with money and inaccessible to ordinary people.[54] In addition, some Canadian studies show that many individuals who have already had a civil court experience feel that their experience has contributed to a reduced confidence in the justice system.[55] Similarly, in Quebec, studies

[49] Canadian Judicial Council, *Why is judicial independance important to you?*, 27-28.
[50] B. McLachlin, *Openness and the Rule of Law*, London, Annual International Rule of Law Lecture, 2014, 2, available at: www.barcouncil.org.uk/static/f73b28da-a633-4eb2-b9834a15dea0ec80/jan82014-12ptruleoflaw-annualinternationalruleoflawlecture.pdf.
[51] P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet?*, 7.
[52] P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet?*, 7.
[53] L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice: YouTube and the UK Supreme Court*, in *The Annual Review of Interdisciplinary Justice Research*, vol. 5, 2016.
[54] Canadian Bar Association, *Reaching Equal Justice*, 16-18.
[55] R. Birnbaum, N. Bala and L. Bertrand, *The rise of self representation in Canada's Family Court: The complex picture revealed in survey of judges, lawyers and litigants*, in *Canadian Bar Review*, vol. 91, issue 1; J. Macfarlane, *The National Self-Represented Litigants Project: Identiyfing and Meeting the Needs of Self-Represented Litigants*, Final Report, 2013, available at:

of public confidence in the courts show that it rarely exceeds the 50% mark, and that dissatisfaction with the justice system is also higher among people with judicial experience than those without.[56] For Schutz and Canon, we are in a socio-political context that is highly critical of the "government of judges" and their integrity, which makes the use of social media by the courts all the more essential.[57] Thus, according to Justice Wagner, social media present both a risk and an opportunity for fostering public trust, depending on how the judicial institution uses them.[58] Such aspirations highlight a desire not just to spread a message, but to control the message of the courts and, above all, about the courts. However, they also reveal a strong mistrust of the evolution of journalistic practices linked to the emergence of social media: it's not just traditional media that are singled out, but also citizen journalism. With him, more than ever, "[t]he organizations are at risk of being framed adversely, in an ill-informed discourse of disrespect unless they engage with this new social media." Where there was fear of traditional media coverage, there seems to be even greater fear of the loss of control over the message that the contemporary web media landscape would entail. So, whether it's a question of disseminating information unilaterally or encouraging participation, the use of social media by the courts would constitute a means of ensuring control of their discourse.[59]

For Justice McLachlin, it is precisely social media that can give a voice to the courts, by offering a counterweight to media discourse. She believes that the monopoly of the traditional news media has sometimes had the effect of diminishing confidence in judicial processes, particularly because the courts do not respond to media criticism.[60] For Moran, the different forms of temporality that characterize the news media in relation to the courts are also to blame. The media, in their quest for reliability and objectivity, are constrained by their own temporality of immediacy, which has an effect on the coverage of judgments, notably the "simplification" of certain cases.[61] The question in the first chapter of judicial concerns about changes in communication would then be: "what steps can members of the media or the legal profession take to ensure responsible reporting and its correlative, continued public confidence in the judicial system, in the face of the ever-evolving communications revolution?".[62]

In short, the question of trust in the courts and their greater transparency suggests that the use of social media can serve both informational (to disseminate information) and strategic (to control the message) purposes.[63] For example, disseminating information about little-known activities may also be linked to an objective of controlling the discourse in a context where the courts do not have a monopoly on this discourse. These informational and strategic functions appear to be linked, insofar as legal actors associate greater knowledge of how the courts operate with greater confidence in this institution.

3. *The case of Quebec courts*

Now that the uses envisaged by the courts and the objectives and challenges anticipated have been identified, what uses do they actually make of the web and social media? We have attempted to answer this question by examining the digital uses of Quebec courts and the Supreme Court of Canada. In this section, we first present the survey methodology, before outlining the results by describing how these courts use their websites and the social media platforms Facebook and Twitter.

3.1. *Methodology*

We analyzed the digital uses of ten Quebec judicial and administrative tribunals, as well as the Supreme Court of Canada. These include common law tribunals (Court of Appeal of Quebec, Superior Court of Quebec,

https://representingyourselfcanada.com/wp-content/uploads/2016/09/srlreportfinal.pdf.

[56] P. Noreau, *Accès à la justice et démocratie en panne : constats, analyses et projections*, in *Révolutionner la justice : constats, mutations et perspectives*, P. Noreau (ed.), Montréal, Thémis, 2010, 4.

[57] P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet?*, 2.

[58] Educaloi, T. H. Richard Wagner's Interview, 22.

[59] P. D. Schulz and A. J. Cannon, *Trial by Tweet?*, 3.

[60] B. McLachlin, *The Relationship Between the Court and the News Media*, in *The Courts and the Media: Challenges in the Era of Digital and Social Media,* P. Keyzer, J. Johnston et M. Pearson (eds.), Sydney, Halstead Press, 2012, 28.

[61] L. J. Moran, Visible Justice, 236.

[62] Supreme Court of Canada, B. McLachlin, *The Relationship Between the Court and the News Media*, available at: www.scc-csc.ca/judges-juges/spe-dis/bm-2012-01-31-eng.aspx.

[63] A distinction made by J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice*.

Court of Quebec),[64] specialized tribunals (Human Rights Tribunal, Professions Tribunal), administrative tribunals (Tribunal administratif du Québec, Tribunal administratif du logement and Tribunal administratif du travail)[65] and municipal courts, with a particular focus on Montreal. We observed their websites as well as their Facebook and Twitter[66] accounts during two distinct periods: between June 17, 2018 and June 17, 2019 (period 1, see tables 1 and 2 in the appendix) and between June 17, 2020 and June 17, 2021 (period 2). The aim was to compare changes in usage over time, particularly in terms of frequency of use and types of content published, especially as the COVID-19 pandemic resulted in increased use of digital communications in the justice sector.[67]

In terms of data collection, we proceeded by consulting the Facebook and Twitter accounts and the websites of the aforementioned courts on a weekly basis during periods 1 and 2, taking notes in a logbook as well as screenshots to illustrate our lines of analysis. This approach borrows from qualitative methods[68] applied to Internet studies.[69] With regard to data analysis, given the fact that the subject has been little explored empirically, and in order to identify uses that may not have been anticipated by the literature, we resorted to an inductive approach[70] consisting of describing and categorizing types of use based on the types of content published - and therefore the target audiences. Indeed, the only field study of which we are aware that deals directly with the Canadian context deals only with the case of Twitter, implying that its categories of analysis are not necessarily ready-made.[71]

For our part, we have distinguished 4 categories: content aimed at lawyers (professional content), content aimed at litigants, content aimed at the general public and content aimed at the media. By content aimed at lawyers (or professional content), we mean practical information such as information on jurisdictions and dockets, rules of practice, guidelines and notices on court operations, and recent judgments. Litigant content includes content aimed at those currently involved in litigation, notably unrepresented litigants, such as resources to help people prepare for litigation themselves. Content for the general public, on the other hand, is aimed at the wider population. In some cases, the distinction between content aimed at litigants and that aimed at the general public can be difficult to make, for example when it comes to general legal information resources. In the latter case, we have chosen to consider this content as being aimed at the general public. Finally, media content includes press releases and newsroom information. While the Tribunal administratif du Québec seems to use Facebook to provide information more directly to litigants by promoting its information material, the Supreme Court of Canada seems to focus more on the legal community and the general public. Finally, it should be noted that while all the courts (11) have a website, a minority (2) have a Facebook account and just over half (6) have a Twitter account.

[64] In the first instance, the Court of Quebec has exclusive jurisdiction for most disputes where the value claimed is less than $75,000, with the exception of most family matters (except in matters of adoption and youth protection) and where there are specialized courts, such as in matters of residential leases. The Superior Court has exclusive jurisdiction when the value of the dispute exceeds $100,000. Between these two amounts, the two courts have concurrent jurisdiction. See the *Code of Civil Procedure*, CQLR c C-25.01, section 34-30. The Court of Appeal has jurisdiction when a judgment of these two courts is appealed, and the Supreme Court has jurisdiction when a judgment of the Court of Appeal is appealed.

[65] Although administrative tribunals are not formally part of the Canadian judicial system, they are an integral part of the dispute resolution system. Moreover, the courts of justice exercise supervisory powers over these tribunals.

[66] We have not noted any significant presence of the courts on other platforms, with the exception of the YouTube videos discussed in note 27.

[67] In this respect, while we obviously didn't anticipate the pandemic context at the start of the project, and so understanding its influence was not part of our initial objectives, it did present an opportunity for diachronic analysis.

[68] N. K. Denzin et Y. S. Lincoln, *Handbook of qualitative research*, Thousand Oaks, California, Sage, 1994.

[69] M. Millette, F. Millerand, D. Myles and G. Latzko-Toth (eds.), *Méthodes de recherche en contexte numérique : une orientation qualitative*, Montréal, Presses de l'Université de Montréal, 2020. For a recent example of content analysis on social media, see A. Bahary-Dionne, *L'accès à la justice au prisme des savoirs profanes : une enquête sur les médias sociaux*, Québec, Presses Universitaire de Laval, 2024.

[70] D. R. Thomas, *A General Inductive Approach for Analyzing Qualitative Evaluation Data*, in *American Journal of Evaluation*, vol. 27, issue 2, 2006.

[71] A. J.A. Mattan, K. Puddister and T. A. Small, *Tweet Justice: The Canadian Court's Use of Social Media*, in *American Review of Canadian Studies*, vol. 50, issue 2, 2020. These include informational uses, institutional uses, interactive uses and responsive uses.

3.2. *Internet presence (website)*

All the tribunals studied have a website with content aimed at both professional and general audiences. However, only the Supreme Court of Canada, the Court of Québec, the Human Rights Tribunal and the Tribunal administratif du logement - 4 out of 11 tribunals - contain content aimed at the general public. 4 offer content aimed specifically at the media.

As for content aimed at professionals, it is fairly homogeneous and common to the different tribunals, and corresponds to the general trends mentioned above. However, the presence and type of content aimed at litigants is much more diverse. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada site contains resources explicitly aimed at self-represented litigants[72] such as guides, forms and references to organizations like Pro Bono Ontario, legal aid and lawyer referral services. Other tribunals do not explicitly mention unrepresented litigants, although some offer resources specifically, if not solely, for this type of audience.[73] For example, the websites of the Court of Appeal, the Court of Quebec, the Tribunal administratif du logement and the Professions Tribunal have FAQs and checklists for litigants. The Court of Québec, the Tribunal administratif du Québec and the Tribunal administratif du travail also have video capsules to help litigants prepare for a hearing. The Human Rights Tribunal also contains a simplified *Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms,*[74] as well as a leaflet explaining the main steps involved in asserting one's rights.[75] The Court of Appeal also refers to complementary resources for litigants, including the Quebec Bar, the Centre de justice de proximité and Pro Bono Québec, which offer free or low-cost legal services, and Éducaloi, an organization that popularizes legal information and legal education.[76] These resources are complemented by legal clinics and community organizations in the case of the Human Rights Tribunal.[77] The three administrative tribunals and the Municipal Court of Montreal also offer online services where you can consult the docket, check the status of your case, file an application, pay a fine or submit documents (see the example of the Tribunal administratif du logement in figure 1). The latter's site also offers the possibility of making an appointment online with an "information officer".[78]

Figure 1. Tribunal administratif du logement online services menu

As far as content for the general public is concerned, all websites clearly explain the specific role of the court concerned, either on the home page or via a link visible on the menu available on the home page. The Supreme Court of Canada contains a section referring to legal education and information

[72] Supreme Court of Canada, *Resources for Self-Represented Litigants*, available at: www.scc-csc.ca/unrep-nonrep/index-eng.aspx.

[73] This is especially true for the Court of Québec's small claims resources, where self-representation is mandatory, as well as for the Tribunal administratif du logement and the Social Affairs Section of the Tribunal administratif du Québec (which represents 80% of this tribunal's cases), where 85% and 50% of people, respectively, are self-represented: Fondation du Barreau du Québec, *La Fondation met à jour son guide Seul devant un tribunal administratif*, available at: www.fondationdubarreau.qc.ca/la-fondation-met-a-jour-son-guide-seul-devant-un-tribunal-administratif.

[74] Tribunal des droits de la personne, *La Charte des droits et libertés de la personne en bref,* available at: https://tribunaldesdroitsdelapersonne.ca/en/actualites-et-publications/la-charte-des-droits-et-libertes-de-la-personne-en-bref.

[75] Human Rights Tribunal, *Pamphlet: The Human Rights Tribunal – How to assert your Rights*, available at: https://tribunaldesdroitsdelapersonne.ca/en/news-and-publications/pamphlet-the-human-rights-tribunal-how-to-assert-your-rights.

[76] Quebec Court of Appeal, *Additional Resources*, available at: https://courdappelduquebec.ca/en/general-information/additional-resources.

[77] Human Rights Tribunal, *Useful Links*, available at: https://tribunaldesdroitsdelapersonne.ca/en/news-and-publications/useful-links. Most of the sites of the other courts contain some of these resources to a lesser extent.

[78] Tribunal administratif du logement, *Prendre rendez-vous avec un préposé aux renseignements*, available at: www.tal.gouv.qc.ca/fr/prendre-un-rendez-vous-avec-un-prepose-aux-renseignements.

organizations for each province and territory.[79] The website also contains information on remote visits to the court, an educational kit, a video on the workings and history of the court, an interactive game and links to "Cases in Brief", which are simplified summaries of judgments. The Court of Quebec website contains historical vignettes and general resources on the workings of the justice system, including a link to the legal education program *Les coulisses du palais*. Finally, the websites of two administrative tribunals also contain a section for submitting complaints.[80]

As far as media content is concerned, only 4 of the 11 tribunals (the Supreme Court of Canada, the Human Rights Tribunal, the Tribunal administratif du logement and the Tribunal administratif du travail) have a section specifically for the media. The Tribunal administratif du Québec is unique in being the only tribunal studied to have a "Social Media" section containing a content moderation policy on its website. Firstly, its "netiquette" explicitly aims to engage Internet users: "The Tribunal's presence in social media aims to create a space for exchange with its clientele and the general public". Then, in the "Participation" section, the Tribunal invites Internet users to be courteous and respectful of copyright and privacy, but also to be relevant: "Be relevant; make sure your comments are related to the content. Repeated posts will not be tolerated". As for the moderation policy itself, it states that:

"All Internet users are responsible for what they post and for checking the accuracy of their statements. If necessary, the Tribunal can correct information posted by an Internet user.

The Tribunal reserves the right to delete any comment if it:

- incites hatred or violence, or constitutes harrassment or threats
- is offensive, disrespectful, or contemptous towards a person or an organization
- violates the laws or regulations of Quebec or Canada
- is repeatedly published
- is propoganda
- is an advertisement or has commercial or promotional purposes
- does not contribute to the good conduct of the discussion, or is unclear or irrelevant
- contains personal information.

Avoid using uppercase letters since they can be preceived as shouting in written messages".[81]

In the "Confidentiality" section, the court specifies that no issues relating to a specific case will be discussed on social media. The "Content Responsibility" section also provides information on how the tribunal approaches its use of social media through the prism of its independence, indicating that it "follows pages it deems relevant to its mission as an independent government organization" without endorsing their content. Finally, in the "Complaints" section, it is stated that questions posted on the Facebook page will be answered, but that complaints will not be dealt with there; instead, those concerned are referred to the appropriate link on the website.

Finally, on the websites, all the tribunals offer an interface adapted to smartphones, except for the Tribunal administratif du Québec and part of the site of the Municipal Court of Montreal (see Table 2). For some courts (Superior Court, Court of Quebec, Municipal Courts, Human Rights Tribunal and Professions Tribunal), this functionality is recent, dating back to a redesign deployed in 2020.

Let's now take a look at how courts use social media in practice.

3.3. *Facebook presence*

Until June 2019 (observation period 1), only the Supreme Court of Canada had an official Facebook page (one English and one French account - Table 2). The Tribunal administratif du Québec has been added since September 11, 2020 (period 2). Thus, 2 out of 11 tribunals have a Facebook account.

It is important to note that several tribunals have an unofficial page on Facebook. These include the Court of Appeal, the Superior

[79] Supreme Court of Canada, *Source of Legal Information Available to the General Public*, available at: www.scc-csc.ca/unrep-nonrep/plie-opij-eng.aspx.

[80] Tribunal administratif du logement, À propos, *Plainte à l'égard de nos services*, available at: www.tal.gouv.qc.ca/fr/a-propos/bureau-des-plaintes-a-l-%C3%A9gard-de-la-regie-du-logement; Tribunal administratif du travail, *Plaintes concernant la qualité de nos services*, available at: www.tat.gouv.qc.ca/menu-utilitaire/nous-joindre/plaintes-concernant-la-qualite-de-nos-services; Tribunal administratif du Québec, *Nous joindre*, available at: www.taq.gouv.qc.ca/fr/nous-joindre. For the latter court, this section is not visible in the home menu, and instead the "Social Media" section provides the link to submit complaints.

[81] Tribunal administratif du Québec, *Social medias*, available at: www.taq.gouv.qc.ca/en/social-medias.

Court, the Municipal Court of Montreal and the Tribunal administratif du logement. An unofficial page can be created either directly by a social media member, or indirectly when someone "identifies" the court as a place they've been to, giving rise to the creation of a page if it doesn't yet exist. Most of the publications on these official pages feature posts by people waiting for a hearing, photographs of events and self-portraits taken on the premises, as well as comments - often very negative - on the experience in court or with counter services, as evidenced in particular by the "Notices" section of these pages.

In this regard, authors Bladow and Raby argue that, in addition to damaging the reputation of the court, these unofficial pages can hinder access to justice by circulating erroneous information, thereby misleading the public.[82] In their view, since it is not possible to prevent the creation of unofficial pages as long as they respect Facebook's conditions, the solution for legal institutions is to set up an official page.[83] Avoiding the sharing of erroneous information and preserving a reputation could therefore explain the passive presence of certain courts on social media, as in the case of the Supreme Court of Canada, whose Facebook account remained inactive for six years after its creation.

As far as the Supreme Court of Canada's Facebook presence is concerned, almost all the posts shared on the page are informational: a link to Cases in Brief with a one-sentence summary (example in Figure 2), online events, information about the Court's judges and staff, and pandemic adaptation. This content seems to be aimed primarily at the media and the general public.

Figure 2. Example of a Case in Brief shared on Facebook[84]

On its page, the Tribunal administratif du Québec publishes mainly informational content as well, with a specific tendency towards practical information: opening hours, job offers, promotion of events and information services for litigants (see example in Figure 3), services available online, information on adapting hearings to the pandemic, a link to contact the tribunal, etc.

Figure 3. Example of promotion of services for litigants

When it comes to forms of interactivity on the pages (reactions, comments and shares), the Supreme Court of Canada publications that generate the most feedback from Internet users are Cases in Brief. An example of a particularly popular publication is the sharing of the summary of the reference on the subject of the carbon tax, which generated almost 90 comments (Figure 4):

Figure 4. Publication on carbon tax reference

[82] K. Bladow et J. Raby, *Using Social Media to Support Self-Represented Litigants*, 37.
[83] K. Bladow et J. Raby, *Using Social Media to Support Self-Represented Litigants*, 37.
[84] All identifying information on the screenshots has been crossed out with a black line.

In French, this same publication attracted even more comments (427 comments, 36 shares and 28 reactions). By comparison, the publications of the Tribunal adminisitratif du Québec elicit far less feedback. It should be pointed out, however, that in the case of the Supreme Court of Canada, it is very often the same Internet users who post an abundance of comments, a practice a priori prohibited by the moderation policy of the Tribunal administratif du Québec. Besides, it is questionable whether the low number of comments under the publications of the latter tribunal is attributable to this moderation policy. In addition, when someone asks a question in the form of a comment under a publication on the page, the page manager doesn't reply directly, referring instead to the court's website (see Figure 5).

Figure 5. Interaction on the Tribunal administrative du Quebec's Facebook page

For both the Supreme Court of Canada and the Tribunal administratif du Québec, the number of publications aimed directly at eliciting interaction or dialogue rather than simply disseminating information remains very low. Exceptions include holiday greetings to the public (see figure 6), the sharing of court-related anecdotes (see figure 7), and questions posed to Internet users in "Quiz" format (see figure 8).

Figure 6. Example of greetings shared by the Supreme Court of Canada

Figure 7. Exemple of sharing an anectode about the Tribunal administratif du Québec

Figure 8. Example of a « Quiz » sent to Internet users by the Tribunal administratif du Québec

It should be pointed out that these types of publication do not generate more interaction than the others. As shown in figure 8, for example, there is no response to the question directly addressed to the public. Having said that, we did find that Internet users sometimes directly congratulate the Supreme Court of Canada on its social media practices (Figure 9):

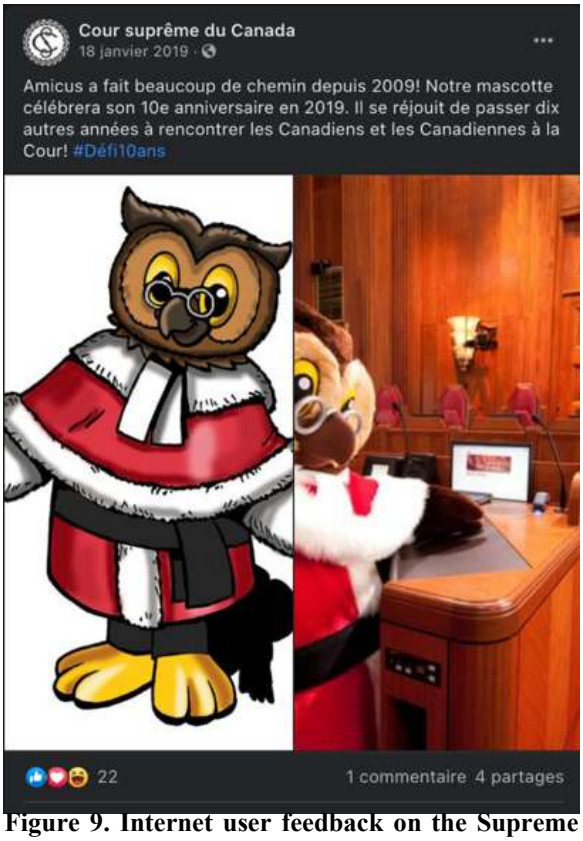

Figure 9. Internet user feedback on the Supreme Court of Canada's use of social media

3.4. *Presence on X (Twitter)*

More tribunals have a presence on Twitter than on Facebook, since just over half of them (6 out of 11) have a Twitter account. This presence is more recent in the case of administrative tribunals: 2019 for the Tribunal administratif du travail and 2020 for the Tribunal administratif du logement, compared with 2012 for the Court of Québec, 2014 for the Court of Appeal and the Superior Court, and 2015 for the Supreme Court of Canada. It should be noted that the frequency of publications is generally more pronounced in the second period than the first, particularly at the start of the COVID-19 pandemic and in the case of the Supreme Court of Canada.

For period 2, the most active courts were, in descending order, the English version of the Supreme Court of Canada (7138 retweets), the French version of the Supreme Court of Canada (476 retweets), the Court of Quebec (209 retweets), the Tribunal administratif du travail (73 retweets), the Court of Appeal (70 retweets), the Superior Court (5 retweets) and the Tribunal administratif du logement (2 retweets) (see Table 1). For the same period, the most "followed" courts were, again in descending order, the English version of the Supreme Court of Canada (12,534 likes), the French version of the Supreme Court of Canada (592 likes), the Court of Quebec (216 likes), the Tribunal administratif du travail (98 likes), the Court of Appeal (52 likes), the Superior Court (4 likes) and the Tribunal administratif du logement (1 like) (see Table 1).

In the case of the Supreme Court of Canada, the content published on its Twitter account is very similar to that published on Facebook; however, there is also more specialized content aimed at professionals, such as procedural bulletins.

Courts such as the Quebec Court of Appeal and the Superior Court, which do not have Facebook accounts, essentially publish content aimed at a professional audience: links to recent judgments, news published on the website, logistical information about hearings (see example in figure 10). These publications are mainly text-based, and generally do not contain any visual content.

Figure 10. Court of Appeal link to a recent judgment

The exception is the Court of Quebec, which also publishes links to other information resources, such as JuridiQC, a Quebec government legal information platform, and retweets of events and other resources for litigants, with more visual content (see two examples in figure 11). Retweeted content generally comes from government agencies such as Justice Québec,

or from organizations offering legal information and court preparation services.

Figure 11. Retweets of Court of Quebec resources for litigants

In this respect, we observed much more visual content and content aimed at litigants on the Court of Quebec's Twitter account from June 2020 (second observation period) compared with the previous year (first period: June 2018-June 2019), when the content seemed to be aimed more at professionals. As an example, a publication from March 2021 directly appeals to the public to attend online hearings via a retweet (Figure 12). Furthermore, some of its tweets are sponsored, implying that a certain sum has been paid to increase their visibility.

Figure 12. Retweet promoting virtual audiences

In the case of the Tribunal administratif du travail, the content published on its Twitter account is mainly aimed at sharing resources for litigants, including video capsules. Given the low number of posts (2), we will not deal with the Tribunal administratif du logement.[85]

In terms of publication frequency, there was an overall increase in the number of tweets in the second period compared with the first.

4. *Discussion: an emerging online presence, but with variable geometry*

In this third section, we propose to discuss the results of our empirical study on the digital uses of Canadian courts from the angle of the gap between these and the prescriptive uses documented in the first section, in the light of the limits and constraints specific to social media.

4.1. *Emerging uses and content aimed at professional audiences*

A first general observation confirms the emerging nature of social media uses by courts. In period 1 (2018-2019), courts were virtually absent from social media. Not only were there many more publications in period 2 (2020-2021), and in particular from the COVID-19 pandemic onwards, but even during this period, many courts had no account on each social media channel, or published on an extremely ad hoc basis.

More frequent use is observed in the case of the Supreme Court of Canada and certain administrative tribunals, such as the Tribunal administratif du Québec, whose Facebook account seems to be heavily used to disseminate information to litigants. In the case of tribunals such as the Tribunal administratif du Québec, these higher usage rates could be explained by the fact that many litigants represent themselves there; this is in fact the case for 85% of litigants at the Tribunal administratif du logement, and between 35 and 40% at the Health and Security Division of the Tribunal administratif du travail.[86] That said, litigants also represent

[85] It should be noted that the Tribunal administratif du logement account is difficult to find: it is not displayed if you type "Tribunal administratif du logement" or its acronym "TAL" in the Twitter search engine. Twitter, *Tribunal administratif du logement*, available at: https://perma.cc/Z3TZ-BDKB.

[86] Fondation du Barreau du Québec, *La Fondation met à*

themselves at the Court of Quebec, where they cannot be represented by a lawyer in the Small Claims Division (i.e. for cases where the amount in dispute does not exceed $15,000), and to some extent at the Superior Court. For the 2014-2015 period, nearly 38% of litigants in family matters were unrepresented; and this is the case for around 55% in the other main civil jurisdictions.[87] Thus, the courts' communication strategies do not seem to be deployed according to the type of audience they are aimed at, with the exception of the Court of Quebec's Twitter account, some of whose content is explicitly aimed at litigants.

This timid presence of judicial institutions on social media resonates with the study by Johnston and McGovern, who note a more or less active use (in terms of frequency) of Twitter by American and Australian courts, and on a rather limited scale in 2013. For example, no Australian court had an official Facebook page at that date. As they point out: "[t]he courts, by their nature, are a conservative institution, and their communication practices follow this approach".[88] In their view, the differences observed with the police institution, whose uses are much more pronounced and diversified, are attributable to the communicative objectives at stake (the police wish to engage Internet users), but also to resources.

Indeed, a regular presence on social media requires time and resources, and these would be less available to them than to other branches of government. Given that Quebec's justice system is chronically underfunded, representing a tiny portion of the provincial budget,[89] it's certainly possible that such resources are not a priority when compared to those needed to make up for the lack of judicial personnel responsible for long delays in court proceedings.[90] Furthermore, while the Supreme Court of Canada has a Communications Department responsible for managing and producing content for all its social media accounts,[91] this does not seem to be the case for the other courts, at least in light of the information on their websites.

A second observation lies in the nature of online content and the choice of social media used. A great deal of content aimed at the public is available on websites. In fact, the courts' websites are widely accessible, including via smartphones (except for two of them). However, not all offer the same quality of content or the same ease of access. In this respect, there are major disparities between courts. Here again, the Supreme Court of Canada stands out for the nature of its content. By contrast, the other sites surveyed seem to be aimed almost exclusively at legal professionals, with interfaces that are generally less user-friendly. Furthermore, while courts are much more present on Twitter, we might deduce that their online presence is aimed more at a professional audience, whether journalists or lawyers. These findings call into question the relevance of social media, and even their desirability for the courts, which are keen to ensure the independence of the judiciary.

4.2. *Tension between judicial independence and public participation*

Beyond the question of the resources required to develop and maintain their online presence, another element that would explain the relative reluctance of courts lies in the tension that judicial independence conjures up when it comes to appropriating a form of public and informal communication.[92] Many judges and court administrators question the desirability of such use. As Ericson, Barnak and Chan put it before the Web 2.0 era, courts have a "limited requirement for publicity"[93]

jour son guide.

[87] Ministère de la Justice du Québec, *Plan stratégique 2015-2020*, Bibliothèques et Archives nationales du Québec, 2016, 14, available at: https://www.justice.gouv.qc.ca/fileadmin/user_upload/contenu/documents/Fr__francais_/centredoc/publications/ministere/plans-strategiques/plan-strat1520.pdf [MJQ, Plan stratégique 2015-2020].

[88] J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice*, 1680.

[89] S. Chaffai-Parent, La Presse, *Justice: le portefeuille n'est pas à la hauteur des défis à relever*, available at: www.lapresse.ca/debats/opinions/2023-03-24/budget-du-quebec/justice-le-portefeuille-n-est-pas-a-la-hauteur-des-defis-a-relever.php#:~:text=Budget%20du%20Qu%C3%A9bec%20Justice%20%3A%20le,hauteur%20des%20d%C3%A9fis%20%C3%A0%20relever&text=R%C3%A9cemment%2C%20La%20Presse%20a%20rapport%C3%A9,3%2C1%20%25%20%C2%BB1.

[90] L. Perron, *La justice près du point de rupture*, in *La Presse*, available at: www.lapresse.ca/actualites/justice-et-faits-divers/2022-11-23/explosion-de-delais/la-justice-pres-du-point-de-rupture.php.

[91] Supreme Court of Canada, *Terms and Conditions*, available at: www.scc-csc.ca/terms-avis/notice-enonce-eng.aspx.

[92] R. Ericson, P. Baranek and J. Chan, *Representing Order: Crime, law, and justice in the news media*, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1989, 54.

[93] R. Ericson, P. Baranek and J. Chan, *Representing*

and therefore have no need per se to increase their visibility. However, as we saw in the previous section, this does not imply that institutions are completely uninterested in the possibilities offered by social media.

In light of the literature on the subject, but also of the negative comments made about the presence of certain courts online, a related reticence lies in the desire to preserve the undirectionality of the message. Many speak of a tension between social media as a means of disseminating information as part of a communications strategy, on the one hand, and as a means of getting closer to the public, on the other. At present, social media are clearly used as simple communication tools. For example, the Supreme Court of Canada website explains that the increased use of social media is "another method by which we can disseminate judgments".[94]

However, it is possible to use social media to shape one's public image, as we have seen in the case of the Australian courts.[95] Indeed, social media are intrinsically linked to a participatory culture based on engagement with the public.[96] As Gibson points out, "When courts set up a Twitter/Facebook feed to publish judgments and announcements, they are participating in an interactive form of communication, where the public will be able to respond - by personal message, "like" button, emoji or some other public response. This will indeed be a "new world" of interactive communication".[97]

This interactive communication would represent a profound departure from the traditional model of exercising power, since courts would now have to ensure, through their engagement with new media, "that their role as bastions of independent principled appliers of a rule of law is understood and appreciated in the broad community".[98] That said - and this is perhaps the crux of the matter - these changes are far from being solely attributable to a new way of publishing judgments and information. In fact, online participation offers the public an unprecedented opportunity to express their views on the administration of justice, for example.[99] As a result, the main challenge for courts may not lie in the adoption of social media technology per se, but rather in what social media suggest in terms of interactive communication with the public. For courts may find themselves forced to respond to these communicational mutations against their will: "It is a new paradigm for older generation judges and administrators accustomed to a long tradition of largely one-way communication from court to litigant".[100]

And yet, like the government apparatus in general, the courts' presence on social media could foster citizen participation,[101] public engagement in judicial processes[102] and transparency:[103] "In a democratic society, it is widely recognized that a court system should operate fairly, be open to all, and function efficiently and effectively. Recognizing this, courts and tribunals seek to improve the ways in which they interact with the broader community". For Blackham and Williams, unlike other government bodies, the collaborative and participatory aspect of the social web may be at odds with traditional court processes, which are much more suited to transmitting information to a passive audience.[104] For example, engaging directly with litigants could have an impact on the reputation and "authority" of the institution. In our empirical study, we found that courts did not respond to public comments.

One example illustrates this vision of a rather passive public. On its website, the Supreme Court of Canada indicates how to "interact with us on social media".[105] This leads to a series of prescriptions. The site specifies not to post on the court's social media accounts to request information of a

Order: Crime, law, and justice in the news media, Toronto, University of Toronto Press, 1989, 54.

[94] Supreme Court of Canada, *Terms and conditions*.

[95] J. Johnston and A. McGovern, *Communicating Justice*.

[96] H. Jenkins, *Convergence Culture: Where Old and New Media Collide*, New York, New York University Press, 2006.

[97] J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*, 4.

[98] J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*, 4.

[99] J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*, 2.

[100] J. Gibson, *Social Media and the Electronic "New World" of Judges*, 9.

[101] J. C. Bertot, P. T. Jaeger, s. Munson and T. Glaisyer, *Engaging the public in open government: The policy and government application of social media technology for government transparency*, in *IEEE Computer*, vol. 43, issue 11.

[102] A. Blackham and G. Williams, *Australian Courts and Social Media*, 171.

[103] A. Blackham and G. Williams, *Australian Courts and Social Media*, 171.

[104] A. Blackham and G. Williams, *Australian Courts and Social Media*, 171.

[105] Supreme Court of Canada, *Terms and Conditions*.

legal nature "or for any other reason requiring a response from us".[106] There are also a number of rules of interaction regarding public comments: it is stated that comments are read and that we reserve the right to delete those that contravene certain standards, totalling 13 different reasons (including the presence of personal information, failure to respect the principles of the *Canadian Charter of Human Rights and Freedoms*, the presence of comments likely to violate Canadian law or that are racist, hateful, sexist, aggressive, etc., but also comments that are unintelligible, repetitive or irrelevant).[107] We also explain that moderators cannot comment on partisan political issues.

In our view, this tension is an issue that goes beyond the use of social media itself, the latter exemplifying the tensions brought about by a judicial context that is said to be in the throes of change.[108] The question, then, is to understand the extent to which what some call the shift from "imposed law" to "negotiated law" is taking shape.[109] This discourse manifests itself in various initiatives, such as alternative dispute resolution (ADR)[110] which seeks to break away from the monopoly of the judiciary in the settlement of disputes, or in the desire for transparency and public involvement in the administration of justice through various media and non-media tools.[111]

Indirectly, the uses of social media, at least according to the discourse attributed to them, resonate with certain waves of the access to justice movement, notably the demystification of law and the desire to increase public participation in the processes of creating and administering law. For example, the integration of Twitter into the public relations strategy of the Tribunal administratif du Québec is explicitly "in line with its organizational vision of accessibility to justice".[112] In practice, however, the uses observed suggest that the message remains unidirectional, opting for demystification rather than participation.

The question of how courts engage with their audiences begs the question of who exactly constitutes their audience - or at least the audience they seek to constitute. Blackham and Williams point out that the Supreme Court of Victoria, Australia, which is particularly active on Twitter and innovative in its content and interactions, is followed overwhelmingly by lawyers, journalists and university students. It publishes short judgment summaries, links to oral judgments and to their streaming, retweets of relevant journalistic articles and publicity about its events. The authors note that these uses seem to have contributed to making the Court more accessible to its specialized audience rather than to the general public. While Quebec's social media still seem a long way from this Australian example, one wonders who constitutes the audience that really benefits from the Supreme Court of Canada's publications, and to a lesser extent the Court of Appeal's tweets. As far as the Supreme Court of Canada is concerned, a video on its site explains, for example, the importance of the court's activities being accessible, in order to explain the trend towards televising or webcasting certain hearings. In line with these aspirations, it is hoped that it will be possible to follow these activities on Twitter and Facebook, with a view to "keeping in touch

[106] Instead, they provide their contact information for this type of communication. It is also indicated that information provided to the Court via the platforms may be used for statistical evaluations.

[107] "We reserve the right to edit or delete comments that: Contain personal information; Are contrary to the principles of the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms*; Express racist, hateful, sexist, homophobic, slanderous, insulting or life-threatening messages; Could be in violation of Canadian law; Put forward serious, unproven or inaccurate accusations against individuals or organizations; Are aggressive, coarse, violent, obscene or pornographic; Are offensive, rude or abusive to an individual or an organization; Are not sent by the author or are put forward for advertising purposes; Encourage illegal activity; Contain announcements from labour or political organizations; Are written in a language other than English or French; Are unintelligible or irrelevant; and Are repetitive or spam".

[108] P. Noreau, *Révolutionner la justice*.

[109] P. Gérard, F. Ost and M. Van De Kerchove (eds.), *Droit négocié, droit imposé?,* Bruxelles, Facultés universitaires Saint-Louis, 1996.

[110] J. Bonafe-Schmitt, *La médiation: du droit imposé au droit négocié?,* in *Droit négocié, droit imposé ?*, P. Gérard, F. Ost and M. Van De Kerchove (eds.).

[111] For jurists such as Roderick A. Macdonald, who chaired the Law Reform Commission of Canada between 1997 and 2000, the participation of a plurality of individuals in the creation and administration of law is in itself a form of access to justice: R. A. Macdonald*, Theses on Access to Justice, in Canadian Law & Society Journal*, vol. 7, 1992; R. A. Macdonald*, Access to Justice and Law Reform, in Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice, vol. 10, 1990;* R. A. Macdonald, *Access to Justice and Law Reform (Part 2)*, in *Windsor Yearbook of Access to Justice*, vol. 19, 2001.

[112] Tribunal administratif du travail, Actualités, *Le TAT maintenant surr Twitter!,* available at: https://www.tat.gouv.qc.ca/menu-utilitaire/actualites/le-tat-maintenant-sur-twitter/ (our translation).

with the Court".[113]

This questioning should be put into perspective with Leslie Moran's case study of the UK Supreme Court's YouTube videos, who notes that videos can constitute new practices for making the judiciary visible,[114] while at the same time expressing an explicit desire to make the work of the courts more accessible. She observes, however, that in the case of the UK Supreme Court, the first videos published had failed to engage the public and thus build a wider audience.[115] "This might suggest that this initiative to make the Court more open and more transparent is for an audience that already exists and is already engaged. There is less evidence of an attempt to use these videos to widen the audiences, and more specifically to engage the public as an audience and invite them to scrutinize the work of this court and its "judge".[116]

Moran's analysis leads us to question the link between visibility and transparency: does making court activities visible imply that they are transparent? Despite the growing popularity of the notion of transparency, there seems to be little consensus on what this entails.[117] While the Internet allows the public direct access to the courts, and thus "to fulfill the role of being the eyes and ears of the otherwise absent public",[118] studies of the content they publish online reveal rather that what is visible is "what representations of the Court's judgments that purports to be free of journalistic inaccuracies, errors and extraneous preoccupations might look like".[119] Thus, broadcasting one's activities via webcasting - and, arguably, on social media - does not necessarily imply sharing content that has not been edited beforehand. Moran's study illustrates the paradox between visibility and transparency:

"In part the way that technology is used seeks to convince the viewer that the camera facilitates seeing as nothing more than "pure vision." Yet the experience of watching the video communicates to the viewer an experience of the camera as a mediating and manipulated technology; anything but "pure vision".[120]

There is a risk of confusing the fact of making an activity visible on the web or social media with the fact of demonstrating transparency as an institution. Indeed, the use of social media by the courts could be linked to an objective of transparency in the sense of a process of unveiling the judicial institution in order to make it better known. According to the Chief Justice of the State of Victoria in Australia: "Technology and social media present an exhilarating opportunity for the Courts to tell the public we serve who we are, what we do, how we do it and why the rule of law matters".[121]

5. *Conclusion*

As with other public institutions, the adoption of digital technology by legal bodies raises many expectations and challenges. The main ones, as identified in the literature, include: better dissemination of information to the public, concerns about the validity and reliability of online information, a quest for transparency on the part of the institution and the development of public confidence in the institution. While these issues are relatively well documented, little is known about the adoption and use of social media by the courts. This article proposes to fill this gap in part by examining the actual use of the Internet and social media by judicial institutions in Quebec.

The empirical study carried out surveyed and analyzed the websites and social media accounts of 10 Quebec courts and the Supreme Court of Canada, at two distinct periods, between June 2018 and June 2019 and between June 2020 and June 2021. The

[113] Supreme Court of Canada, *Message from the Chief Justice of Canada*. In the video, however, the judge argues that the experience of attending a hearing in person is irreducible, and that it is in the interests of access to justice that the court has temporarily moved from Ottawa to Winnipeg, following the example of countries such as Great Britain that have temporarily moved their hearings.

[114] L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice*.

[115] L. J. Moran, *Studying the judiciary after the cultural turn*, in *Social Research After the Cultural Turn* S. Roseneil and S. Frosh (eds.), Houndmills, UK, Palgrave.

[116] L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice*, 256.

[117] H. K. Hansen, L. T. Christensen and M. Flyerbom, *Introduction: Logics of transparency in late modernity: Paradoxes, mediation and governance*, in *European Journal of Social Theory*, vol. 18, issue 2, 118 cited in L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice*, 233.

[118] L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice*, 238. And therefore potentially as a bulwark against traditional media coverage.

[119] L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice*, 238.

[120] L. J. Moran, *Visible Justice*, 254.

[121] 9News, *Justice system opens up to new media*, available at: www.9news.com.au/national/justice-system-opens-up-to-new-media/006f6fe6-9790-402a-8963-b3ce79fad0f2.

aim was to compare changes in usage over time, particularly in terms of frequency of use and types of content published. The results show that all courts have a website and that their content is aimed at two types of audience: legal professionals and litigants; few sites (4 out of 11) offer content aimed at the general public. As far as social media are concerned, half the courts are present on Twitter (6 out of 11), while only two are on Facebook. The digital uses of Quebec courts therefore appear to be still emerging, with content geared more towards professional audiences or those already in contact with the judicial institution.

Among the explanations for this apparent delay, at least if we compare the judicial institution with others that have embraced digital technology to a greater extent, the question of the resources required to develop and maintain an online presence is certainly an obstacle in a context of chronic underfunding. However, the relative reluctance of courts to engage with social media seems to stem above all from the tension between the principle of judicial independence and the new opportunities for public participation offered by digital technology. When they are used, social media are seen essentially as a means of disseminating information, with a desire to preserve the undirectionality of the message, and not really as a means of forging closer ties with the public. The main challenge for the judiciary lies in its ability to adopt the interactive communication logic of social media. Indeed, social media are decentralized and multidirectional, whereas courts are institutional and largely unidirectional; social media summon up personal and intimate aspects, whereas courts "are separate, even cloistered, and, by definition independent"; and, finally, these new media are multimedia and capitalize on images, audio and video content in addition to text, whereas courts remain heavily textual.[122]

The legal community seems to view social media almost solely as tools for disseminating information, when in fact they are "conversation media"[123] that could enable it to better understand its audiences[124] and thus improve its relations with them. In fact, the Canadian Bar Association recommends that justice system stakeholders work with others to gather more feedback from people who have had experience with the justice system, "including online discussion forums".[125]

In conclusion, our research has certain limitations that will need to be addressed by future research. First, we need to better document who is interacting with the courts on social media. Are they lawyers or members of the public? Interviews with court communications staff could also help to better target their specific communications intentions. Finally, detailed case studies of how courts use their websites and social media accounts, including the types of content shared, would enable us to compare target audiences with those who are actually reached, and thus better adjust communication strategies to actual usage.

[122] C. Davey et al., *New Media and the Courts: The Current Status and a Look at the Future*, Conference of Court Public Information Officers 19th annual meeting, Atlanta, Georgia cited in J. Johnston, *Three phases of courts' publicity: reconfiguring Bentham's open justice in the twenty-first century*, in *International Journal of Law in Context*, vol. 14, special issue 4, 2018, 531.

[123] D. Cardon, *Confiner le clair-obscur. Réflexions sur la protection de la vie personnelle sur le Web 2.0*, in F. Millerand, S. Proulx and J. Rueff (eds.), *Web social: Mutation de la communication*, Québec, Les Presses de l'Université du Québec, 2010, 316.

[124] A. Bahary-Dionne, *L'accès à la justice au prisme des savoirs profanes*.

[125] Canadian Bar Association, *Reaching Equal Justice*, 132.

Table 1. Content and target audience of Quebec online courts

	Website					Facebook account		Twitter account	
	Content for legal professionals	Media content	Content aimed at the public		Types of content for litigants	Content types	Interactivity	Types of information content	Interactivity
			Targets	Grand public					
Supreme Court of Canada	X	X	X	X	-Information for JNR -Resources for JNR -Remote visits -Forms, notices and procedures -Link to legal education organizations -Educational kit -Court video -Explaining its role -Simplified summaries of judgments -Interactive game -Webcasting audiences	Links to Causes in brief with one-sentence summaries -Online event broadcasting -Information on judges and staff -Information on events involving the Court -Information on pandemic adaptation -Sharing backyard anecdotes -Holiday greetings	Period 1[1] Reactions : 4393 Shares: 1549 Comments : 453 Period 2[2] Reactions: 3791 Shares: 1326 Comments : 1615	- Links to Causes in brief and one-sentence summaries - Procedure bulletins - Notice that a judgment will be rendered on a certain date -Online event broadcasting -Judges' information -Information on pandemic adaptation	Period 1 Likes: N/A Retweets: N/A Comments : N/A Period 2 Likes: 12,534 Retweets: 7138 Comments : 1106
Supreme Court of Canada	IDEM	IDEM	IDEM	IDEM	IDEM	IDEM	Period 1 Reactions: 796 Shares: 240 Comments : 26	IDEM	Period 1 Likes: 1 Retweet : 0 Comments : 0 Period 2 Likes: 592

[1] Period between June 17, 2018 and June 17, 2019.
[2] Period between June 17, 2020 and June 17, 2021.

							<u>Period 2</u> Reactions: 1273 Shares: 271 Comments : 1235		Retweets: 476 Comments : 22
Quebec Court of Appeal	X		X		-Explaining its role -FAQs and checklists -Lexicon -Forms, notices and procedures -Resources for JNR -Links to online hearings -Link to digital transplant	N/A	N/A	-Link to recent judgments -Link to news published on the site (e.g. directive) -No visual content	<u>Period 1</u> Likes: 39 Retweets: 123 Comments : 4 <u>Period 2</u> Likes: 52 Retweets: 70 Comments : 0
Superior Court	X		X		-Explaining its role -Links to online hearings -Link to digital transplant -Forms	N/A	N/A	-Links to judgments -Link to guidelines -Appointment of judges -Logistics information -Links to press releases -No visual content	<u>Period 1</u> Likes: 4 Retweets: 8 Comments : 1 <u>Period 2</u> Likes: 4 Retweets: 5 Comments : 0
Quebec Court	X		X	X	-Explaining its role -Historical capsules -Video vignettes on small claims	N/A	N/A	-Appointment of judges -Links to directives -Links to press releases	<u>Period 1</u> Likes: 193 Retweets: 191 Comments : 21 <u>Period 2</u>

					-Small claims checklists and guides -Link to information on small claims with drafting assistance -PRD forms -Information about PRD -Links to information on PRD -Resources for litigants -More general resources on justice			-Links or retweets of events and resources for litigants -Information about the court or judges -Information on the possibility of viewing virtual audiences -A little visual content (especially via retweets)	Likes: 216 Retweets: 209 Comments : 15
Quebec Municipal Courts	X		X		-Welcome address presenting available resources -Explaining its role -Link to JNR resources	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montreal Municipal Court	X		X		-Explaining its role -Online services -Information for JNR -Forms	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Human Rights Tribunal	X	X	X	X	-Explaining its role -Procedure templates	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

					-Press release section -Simplified information -Resources for litigants				
Professions Tribunal	X		X		-Explaining its role -Forms and templates -FAQs and checklists -Information about PRD	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Administrative Tribunal of Quebec	X		X		-Online services -Forms -Video capsules for JNR -Explaining its role -Information for JNR -Conciliation information -Complaints, comments and suggestions section -Resources for JNR -Lexicon -Social Media section with guidelines and moderation policy	-Opening hours -Job offers -Information events for the public -Event promotion -Legal news -Online services -Information on adapting audiences to the pandemic -A quiz question for the audience -Promotion of its information material -Holiday greetings -Anectode in "Did you know?" format -Link to the court	<u>Period 1</u> Reactions: N/A Shares : N/A Comments : N/A <u>Period 2</u> Reactions: 220 Shares: 100 Comments : 5	N/A	N/A

Housing Administrative Tribunal	X	X	X	X	-Online services (including docketing) -Information for JNR -Online information sessions -Forms, templates and notices -Complaints section -FAQ -Explaining its role -Make an appointment for information in person	N/A	N/A	-Links to informative videos on the new rules	<u>Period 1</u> Likes: N/A Retweets: N/A Comments : N/A <u>Period 2</u> Likes: 1 Retweets: 2 Comments : 2
Administrative Labor Tribunal	X	X	X		-Online services -Video capsules for litigants -Information on conciliation and hearings -Forms -Explaining its role -Resources for litigants - Complaints section	N/A	N/A	Links to decisions with one-sentence summaries -Links to notices and press releases Link to information or resources for litigants (including video capsules), sometimes with one-sentence summaries -Job offers	<u>Period 1</u> Likes: 2 Retweets: 2 Comments : 2 <u>Period 2</u> Likes: 98 Retweets: 73 Comments : 6

Table 2. Descriptive portrait of the online presence of Quebec courts

	Website			Facebook account				Twitter account				
	URL	Suitable for smartphones	No. of recasts	URL	Creation date	Mentions j'aime	Frequency of publications	URL	Creation date	Number of subscribers	Number of tweets	Frequency of publications
Supreme Court of Canada	https://www.scc-csc.ca/home-accueil/index-eng.aspx	X		https://www.facebook.com/supremecourtofcanada/	February 2, 2011	August 2019: 4386 July 2021: 8662	Period 1: 59 Period 2: 64	https://twitter.com/SCC_eng	July 2015	July 2019: €24,900 July 2021: 37,100	July 2019: 1204 July 2021: 2116	Period 1: 29 Period 2: 389
Supreme Court of Canada	https://www.scc-csc.ca/home-accueil/index-fra.aspx	X		https://www.facebook.com/coursupremecanada	February 2, 2011	August 2019: 1770 July 2021: 1809	Ditto	https://twitter.com/CSC_fra	July 2015	July 2019: 2495 July 2021: 3824	July 2019: 1203 July 2021: 2114	Period 1: 29 Period 2: 388
Quebec Court of Appeal	https://courdappelduquebec.ca/	X		None**.	N/A	N/A	N/A	https://twitter.com/cour_d_appel	August 2014	July 2019: 2027 July 2021: 3257	July 2019: 520 July 2021: 941	Period 1: 138 Period 2: 184

Superior Court	https://coursuperioreduquebec.ca/	X*		None**.	N/A	N/A	N/A	https://twitter.com/Cour_superieure	January 2014	July 2019: 1,200 July 2021: 1,649	July 2019: 55 July 2021: 74	Period 1: 1 Period 2: 4
Quebec Court	https://courduquebec.ca/	X*		No	N/A	N/A	N/A	https://twitter.com/cour_du_quebec	October 2012	July 2019: 2068 July 2021: 3,000	July 2019: 805 July 2021: 962	Period 1: 118 Period 2: 109
Quebec Municipal Courts	https://courmunicipales.ca/	X*		No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Montreal Municipal Court	https://montreal.ca/sujets/cour-municipale	In part		None**.	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Human Rights Tribunal (TDP)	https://tribunaldesdroitsdelapersonne.ca/	X*		No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Professions Tribunal	https://tribunaldesprof	X*		No	N/A	N/A	N/A	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

	essions.ca/											
Administrative Tribunal of Quebec (TAQ)	https://www.taq.gouv.qc.ca/			https://www.facebook.com/TribunaladministratifQuebec	September 11, 2020	August 2019 : N/A July 2021: 427	Period 1: N/A Period 2: 33	No	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Housing Administrative Tribunal (TAL)	https://www.tal.gouv.qc.ca/	X		None**.	N/A	N/A	N/A	https://twitter.com/TAL_GouvQc	February 2020	July 2019 : N/A July 2021: 52	July 2019 : N/A July 2021: 2	Period 1: N/A Period 2: 2
Administrative Labor Tribunal (TAT)	https://www.tat.gouv.qc.ca/	X		No	N/A	N/A	N/A	https://twitter.com/TAT_GouvQc	May 2019	July 2019: x July 2021: 443	July 2019: 17 July 2021: 207	Period 1: 6 Period 2: 89

***Since** the redesign of the site in 2020

**There is, however, an unofficial page created by Internet users.