This book is about three overlapping crises: the crisis that has enveloped the CBC, the crisis of news, and the crisis of democracy. They are all the result, to some degree, of the vast changes that have overtaken and consumed the media world in the last 10 to 15 years. The emergence of platforms such as Google, Facebook, Twitter, and Netflix; the hyper-targeting of individual users through data analytics; the development of narrow, online-identity communities; and the blast of an attention economy that makes it more and more difficult for any but the most powerful media organizations to be noticed have changed the media landscape in dramatic ways. The effects on the CBC and on other Canadian media organizations have been shattering. To put it bluntly, news and journalism are in a deep crisis, for reasons that we will explain in considerable detail in the book.

Our argument is that the CBC, Canada’s public broadcaster, has reached a crossroads. Years of budgetary uncertainty, a lack of policy vision by governments and by the CBC itself, and the brutality of the attention economy have taken a toll. For the CBC, the choices are stark. The public broadcaster will either be reimagined and reinvented or die a slow death on the outskirts of the media world. We suggest a way of going forward that would transform much of news and, as a consequence, public affairs in Canada.

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THE END OF THE CBC?