

Walmart Canada and Interac® announce original digital series, *Upstairs Amy*, produced by Shaftesbury, in collaboration with APEX PR

From the producers of global phenomenon *Carmilla*, *Upstairs Amy* is a scripted comedy that will also feature real-life digital influencers

TORONTO, October 11, 2017 — Walmart Canada, ranked one of Canada's Top 10 Most Influential brands, is entering the realm of scripted entertainment with original digital series *Upstairs Amy* (20 x 5) to be produced by **Shaftesbury** (*Murdoch Mysteries*, *Frankie Drake Mysteries*, *Carmilla*) and in association with **Interac Association/Acxsys Corporation** ("Interac"), which together operate a world-class debit system and have been ranked as the eighth most trusted brand in Canada. The scripted dramedy follows the lives of three modern women, including an accountant-turned-YouTuber. Curated by **APEX PR**, the series will feature dozens of high profile, real-life social media influencers, whose participation in-show will extend to their own channels and beyond. **Ruckus Digital** will lead the development on media buying and social content for the series.

The series is scheduled to launch in Fall 2017 on a dedicated *Upstairs Amy* YouTube channel and will be play listed on both Walmart and Interac respective YouTube channels.

"As recent hits like *Carmilla* demonstrate, we are leaders in creating content that truly speaks to the millennial viewer. To build and maintain a genuinely engaged and loyal fan base, you need more than just a one-off special; you need solid storytelling and relatable characters," said **Christina Jennings, Chairman and CEO, Shaftesbury**. "We are excited to be working with our innovative partners at Walmart and Interac, as well as an incredible group of social media influencers, on a series that will take branded entertainment to the next level."

“Walmart’s core value to save money and live better needs to be relevant to a changing family dynamic. Today, families are crunched for time and money, some living in 700 square feet,” said **Heather Loosemore, Senior Director, Marketing Communications, Walmart Canada**. “The story of *Upstairs Amy* – and the many influencers we have engaged with for this program – reflects these core values in an authentic and entertaining way.”

“We are so excited to engage with this audience – a digitally savvy generation who has grown up with us, and truly embraces technology,” said **Andrea Danovitch, AVP, Marketing and Brand, Interac**. “The prospect of coming together with another iconic brand like Walmart to offer up relevant content in an authentic manner is a welcome opportunity.”

“This is an extraordinary content model that brings Walmart, Interac, and a roster of digital influencers together using an ongoing scripted story as its foundation. The series was built on the Walmart and Interac brand values and attributes from the ground up; it is exciting to infuse their respective brand values into an original series, as well as support the series with blogs, vlogs, and social content created by real-life influencers, extending the series’ themes and storylines into the real world. We are so thrilled to work with our partners at Walmart, Interac and APEX in bringing *Upstairs Amy* to life,” said **Kaaren Whitney-Vernon, SVP Branded Entertainment, Shaftesbury**.

Hamilton Beach has also come on board as the official small kitchen appliance partner for the series. As part of the partnership, the brand will be featured throughout the episodes with additional influencer call-outs enabling the consumer to access all their products through direct links to purchase on Walmart.ca.

Upstairs Amy is a modern comedy about millennial parents and the gap between who they are and who they want to be. Amy Zhang’s life is upended when the condo she shares with her husband Dean and their toddler is flooded, so they move several floors up in the same building – and meet their glamorous-but-mysterious new neighbour, Kaavya, who has all the confidence and ‘spark’ Amy wants for herself. Amy enlists her best friend Veronica to help her sleuth out Kaavya’s story, and chronicles it all in YouTube videos about their adventures – interspersed with her comedic takes on love, career, and parenting. In this

irreverent, quirky series, Amy uncovers the mystery of Kaavya – and finds out if she can become the true ‘Upstairs Amy’.

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About Shaftesbury

Shaftesbury is an award-winning creator and producer of original content for television, film, digital, and brands. Shaftesbury’s current slate includes 11 seasons of *Murdoch Mysteries* for CBC, UKTV, and ITV STUDIOS Global Entertainment, detective drama *Frankie Drake Mysteries* for CBC and UKTV, and two seasons of critically acclaimed thriller series *Slasher* for Netflix.

Shaftesbury’s digital arm produces original digital, convergent, and branded entertainment projects including the global phenomenon *Carmilla*, mystery series *V Morgan Is Dead*, supernatural drama *Inhuman Condition*, and the *Slasher VR* app for iOS, Android, and Oculus Rift. Shaftesbury’s branded entertainment division drives profitable engagement with millennials using scripted series, turning brands into executive producers. Recent brand partners include Walmart, Interac, U by Kotex®, and RBC.

About Walmart Canada

Walmart Canada operates a growing chain of 410 stores nationwide serving more than 1.2 million customers each day. Walmart Canada’s flagship online store, walmart.ca, is visited by 600,000 customers daily. With more than 90,000 associates, Walmart Canada is one of Canada’s largest employers and is ranked one of the country’s top 10 most influential brands. Walmart Canada’s extensive philanthropy program is focused on supporting Canadian families in need, and since 1994 Walmart has raised and donated \$275 million to Canadian charities. Additional information can be found at walmartcanada.ca, facebook.com/walmartcanada and at twitter.com/walmartcanada.

About Interac Association and Acxsys Corporation

Together, Interac Association and Acxsys Corporation operate an economical, world-class debit payments system with broad-based acceptance, 24/7/365 reliability, security, and efficiency. The organization is Canada’s leading payments brand and is chosen an average of 16 million times daily to pay and exchange money. For more than 30 years, it has facilitated secure financial transactions through the development of innovative and convenient digital debit and money transfer solutions. A leader in the prevention and detection of fraud,

the organization has one of the lowest rates of fraud globally. Visit interac.ca or follow us [@INTERAC](https://twitter.com/INTERAC).

About APEX Public Relations

APEX is a diversified group of experienced, clever and creative communicators. Our unmatched track record of award-winning campaigns, client retention and client satisfaction are a testament to our ability to get it right, over and over again. Our work extends to all sectors, with a concentration on consumer brands, corporate and financial communications, and technology. The key to our success is a fusion of senior level strategists, creative ideas, a passion for our work, client collaboration and a disciplined focus on achieving results that impact our clients' bottom line. Select clients include Walmart Canada, Planet Fitness, Levi's®, New Balance, RSA Canada and Canadian Red Cross. For more information visit www.apexpr.com/www.ruckusdigital.ca

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