

[jilmacqueen@gmail.com](mailto:jilmacqueen@gmail.com)

SERVICES :

1. How would you describe the services Canadians, including Aboriginal Canadians and new Canadians, are currently receiving from libraries and archives in Canada?

What I notice as a library patron

- Discovery of new authors and books is harder than it was – almost no browse function, only new books regularly moving between libraries are requested items and bestsellers which are often one and the same. So unless you know what you are looking for, the accidental discovery of a wonderful book to read is a more difficult process.
- Use of self check out reduces staff, which means getting help when you need it is harder.
- Archival materials are still almost as hard to find as they always were. Because there is very little aggregation of data, you must still search out the archive itself in order to search it. Also, smaller archives can't afford to have everything online.
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What I notice from my high school level patrons :

- Ease of access chosen over value of resource = unless access to library information becomes easier the resources are not used unless forced (ie required use of at least 2 different types of resources)
- Even with training on evaluating digital media, : while most students after training will avoid bad sites for research, many patrons are often unable to distinguish poor from excellent resources due to lack of broad knowledge of an area, leading to overvaluation of possibly poor sources . This training is still important and has been a library taught skill for a long time. Evaluation of print resources is a skill that also translates into evaluation of web resources or vice versa
- Digital Divide is a HUGE problem in Canada :
  - o Many students at my (inner city) high school still have no access to the internet at home; I myself – living in a rural area 10 minutes outside a major city, just got access to “rural” high speed 1 year ago. It’s closer than you think.
  - o Many of the students at my high school still have no access to a computer at home
  - o Unofficial survey taken by a grade 12 mathematics high school teacher at my school in 2012, only 6 out of 14 students in her class had a cell phone at all, only 2 of those 6 had a smart phone.
- Students don’t know how to use most digital technologies until they are taught them (Surprise – the myth of the digital native is just that – a myth).
- Library/research skills coming in to high school are negligible because most students don’t have library (research) training in elementary school due to the lack of library staff in elementary schools due to funding models

All of these factors lead to intensive training in basic skills at the library when it is allowed. I say allowed because there is no requirement for library/research training at the high school

level. Students are only brought into a library for skills training if a teacher chooses to. It is hard to progress to advanced research skills with this model - universities and colleges notice the lack of training in new students

What I've noticed from my university undergraduate level patrons :

- Many are looking for scholarly papers to support a thesis as opposed to reading scholarly materials to determine a thesis OR as I put it : the Google algorithm (give only the results the person wants) strikes again
- browse as a verb is mostly gone in libraries – this makes me wonder if accidental correlations of knowledge leading to discoveries may be gone as well
- Study to the test mentality which generally doesn't lead to "trying technology" or programs or databases. This has been documented over and over again at the university level. I think that this has always been around at some level for all schools
- Students are trending towards an Answers not Questions philosophy of life. "I must get THE correct answer" – everything else tends to fall by the wayside. I think that this is a major educational problem – not just a library research problem. Does not bode well for critical thinking skills – again a problem noted at the university level in several studies. Probably good for engineering, political science and accounting though.
- Students don't use digital technologies unless they are required to (see above notes on study to the test mentality) , fun, or they are very, very heavily promoted
- Using self check out is the preferred method after a student has been introduced to it and instructed on the use of it
- Many students coming in to university have never been in a library, know what is available from a library, or know how to do university level research. There are no library/research required courses. Since many students hit high school without ever getting this training at an elementary level (see notes from high school) – this can lead to students getting to university without ever using resources other than Wikipedia and Google.
- Some students going through university never come into, or know what is available through their library until 4<sup>th</sup> year - REALLY. Much of their work is lab work and does not require library research skills.

4. Are libraries the appropriate institutions to catalog, store, and provide access to research data? If not, which institutions should provide these services?

Think about it : catalog, store, and provide access to research materials – hmm, I think it's a rose. It doesn't matter what you call it : these are the functions of a library whether it be print or digital files.

#### Community Outreach and Awareness

1. Would Canadians know of, or understand, the contribution you make to library/archival service in Canada?

No. Most Canadians that I have talked to believe in the Shush Librarian model of libraries. Skills required in the current library world such as website maintenance; video program operation; media hardware and computer troubleshooting; basic level IT help; software skills with programs such as Microsoft office; creating and giving presentations; chat-site reference; database searching & building; marketing, legal, patent, standard, and business researching; archival projects; etc have always come as a surprise to those I talk to. And these skills listed are from the Library Assistant level (staff – not librarian).

Libraries need to market their wares. They have been innovating and reinventing themselves, but what is available is generally not widely known. They don't have a single message and mission as they had throughout much of the 20<sup>th</sup> century – you went to the library to find knowledge. We need that equivalent.

## NEW DIRECTIONS

### Digitization

#### 1. What are the main challenges of born-digital material for your institution?

At the high school level, 4 main problems.

- A. getting access as a library – many licenses prohibit loaning of materials, especially journals and magazines which, while you can have a print subscription as a library, you can't have a digital subscription. Often this is prohibited because they have contracts with aggregating databases whose main customers are libraries.
- B. Reasonable pricing : this is getting better, but when one ebook is \$360 to be purchased at the board level, even if all you want is 1 access at a time – this is unreasonable. This happens because at elementary & high school levels, vendors are still figuring things out and don't always have a single or restricted access model available. Academic vendors are better- mostly because of academic librarian feedback and pushback, but at the elementary and high school level, vendors are still figuring things out. Unfortunately, librarians at those levels seem less likely to work with vendors in order to get what they need, probably because they are busy in the schools. This leaves them with no representation in the question and vendors without a customer feedback voice leading to dissatisfaction at all levels.
- C. Access : every vendor has a password and user name. Not all vendors accept a proxy service. This is hard for patrons. How many passwords can you remember?
- D. Getting students to actually use the resources. At the high school level, reading ebooks are provided as well as online research books and databases. Digital materials

are often not used unless students are taught about them. Very few reading e-books are used. At the high school – well we're part of the digital divide (see notes above)

At the university level :

The primary problem that I have noted as a front line staff are :

A. Interlibrary loan can't be done due to licensing restrictions on ebooks and often on articles. This is actually a huge fail in my books in terms of restriction of knowledge. But how do you loan an ebook to another institution? **Interlibrary Loan** Service at **Library and Archives Canada** (LAC) ended on December 11, 2012. How does this support Freedom of Information?

#### Additional Opinions

At one point in time, research and library skills were taught as knowledge worth having. At the current time, there seems to be a feeling that – it just comes naturally. Study after study has proven that it doesn't. People value what they are taught to value. Right now, libraries aren't valued because the general consensus is that information is free. What most people don't consider is that even something like internet access to get their "free" information generally costs around \$40-70 per month for someone in Southern Ontario

<http://www.crtc.gc.ca/eng/publications/reports/rp130422.htm#a29> This is hugely expensive to people living in poverty.

I personally think we have gone backwards as a society, towards a restriction of knowledge to a selective few. Originally, libraries were only for those who could afford to create them. A later development was the subscription library where only those who could afford to pay to go to them were allowed access. Most of us older people were privileged to grow up in a time where knowledge was basically accessible for all. Now we are back to subscription services and restrictions on access. I only foresee it getting worse unless legal actions are taken to provide for the right to access to information for all.