



**BCLibraries**  
COOPERATIVE

January 31, 2014

**VIA EMAIL**

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Status and Future of Canada's Libraries and Archives  
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Thank you for the invitation to contribute to your consultation process.

The BC Libraries Cooperative is a Canadian, non-profit community enterprise. We are strategically focused on the delivery of shared operational infrastructure and resources for our diverse members – over 100 libraries and library-related institutions across Canada. Simply put, we strive to extend access and reduce costs while improving efficiency and service delivery in libraries.

Cost is increasingly a barrier to access for a significant proportion of our membership, and by extension, library users. Last month, Parliament released a report on income inequality in Canada that confirms the resource-constrained context within which most Canadian individuals and service institutions exist.<sup>1</sup> In this context, the Co-op works with its partners across the library sector, including The Alberta Library, the Manitoba Licensing Consortium, Inc, the Provincial-Territorial Public Library Directors Council, Consortia Canada, BCNet, and CANARIE to secure essential, sustainable access to critical resources and infrastructure for our members. Leveraging this network, we resolve stubborn issues with the development and application of new technologies.

In 2014, we will further diversify our optional, national shared services for Co-op members, targeting digital literacy and essential infrastructure. For the Co-op, our services must have resonant value with our members and our role is likely only assumed by end users. What matters most is that Canadians have access to essential resources through their libraries, as vital, inclusive, and democratic institutions.

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<sup>1</sup>[http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/412/FINA/Reports/RP6380060/412\\_FINA\\_Rpt03\\_PDF/412\\_FINA\\_Rpt03-e.pdf](http://www.parl.gc.ca/Content/HOC/Committee/412/FINA/Reports/RP6380060/412_FINA_Rpt03_PDF/412_FINA_Rpt03-e.pdf)

The future of libraries in Canada must be a future that prioritizes services to rural and metropolitan populations equally. A network of community-based solutions exists to support libraries in achieving their full potential. Adequately funded, and appropriately leveraged by libraries and governments, this network of library service organizations can rise to the challenges ahead, if enabled to do so. Increased utilization of open, distributed, and cooperative approaches are all indicated. Rapid advances in technology will continue to afford new perspectives on old issues, while addressing the demands of digital life.

Perhaps the greatest challenge ahead is that of professional renewal.

Again, thank you for this opportunity.



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