

Royal Society of Canada Expert Panel on Library and Archives

Submission of the University of Regina Library

The following report was prepared by Robert G. Thomas, Michael Shires, Mark Vajcner (University of Regina) and Brendan Edwards (First Nations University of Canada Library) with special assistance from Barbara Nelke, Peter Resch and William Sgrazutti.

January 16, 2014, Regina, Saskatchewan.

To the Expert Panel,

Please accept the following report as reflecting the views of the faculty librarians of the University of Regina Library and of the faculty of First Nations University of Canada Library (a federated college of the University of Regina).

Respectfully yours,

Robert G. Thomas, RSC Submission Committee Chair.

FRAMING QUESTIONS:

SERVICES

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

Considering Aboriginal Canadians specifically, there is room for improvement.

- The services libraries and archives provide would improve and be considered of greater relevancy if there were greater representation of Aboriginal peoples in the library professions. More work is necessary to encourage the library professions as attractive/viable career choices for Aboriginal peoples. One reason for this lies in the fact that many Aboriginal Canadians do not encounter libraries or library professionals in their home communities, so collectively as institutions, libraries and archives can seem “foreign” to Aboriginal Canadians.
- Libraries and archives have work to do in terms of reflecting Aboriginal knowledge systems. While we do well in collecting print resources on Aboriginal topics and by Aboriginal authors, there is room for improvement in terms of offering access to information in other formats - through oral storytelling, audio and video, and as collaboration spaces.
- Libraries and archives must also recognize that there is still a digital divide in many Aboriginal communities - both in terms of access and education. Therefore, increased digitization of materials and more digital resources are not always the solution to reaching out to the Aboriginal and/or remote communities. Libraries need also play a role in promoting digital and information literacy with an Aboriginal audience in mind.

For International Students and New Canadians it is important to provide several services in different ways:

- Targeted outreach programs to ensure that the breadth of library services is accurately understood including differences between countries. For example it has been reported (Liu & Winn, 2009) that in the People’s Republic of China it has been common to provide interlibrary loan services that are both slower and more costly to students. Informing international students about services without noting important differences may be counterproductive.
- ESL friendly and highly contextualized library instruction that is both devoid of unnecessary library jargon and delivered in clearly enunciated and standardized English.
- Basic introductions to services offered in various formats and in English, French and other languages.
- Partnerships with other organizations which can bring library information to these communities including the international office and student societies.

2. Libraries are currently hybrid operations, constantly pulled toward traditional services by many core users and pulled, equally, by a concern for relevancy from other users and potential users. What issues are libraries facing as they try to make the transition to new service models?

There are many challenges associated with balancing traditional and non-traditional services. A primary one is that of money as purchasing multiple formats may not be always possible and in such cases special care must be taken to balance the needs of various user groups. Libraries should also continue working with vendors to ensure that non-traditional formats are easily accessible through a variety of technological formats (tablets, e-book readers and traditional PCs). Beyond this it is important to provide training to staff and users on how these technologies can be best used.

3. How do libraries and archives measure outcomes of their service and community impacts?

Quantitative data from turnstiles, circulation of material, reference transactions, instruction classes, and Counter (Counting Online Usage of Networked Electronic Resources) statistics are common outcomes to measure in many academic libraries. Many post secondary institutions, including the University of Regina collect it for the Canadian Association of Research Libraries' annual Statistical Survey of Canadian University Libraries. However, they don't effectively address outcomes of services to their users.

A more useful method is collecting and analyzing qualitative data. It contains more meaningful data but it can be time-consuming to obtain. Our institution implemented an online user satisfaction survey in fall 2012. A mainstream product was used; however, meaningful data was difficult to obtain due to the survey's clunky platform, complications with data collection, and a low response rate. A platform that has a more intuitive back-end interface to handle a complex array of parameters and is mobile friendly may impact the collection and reporting of measuring outcomes.

Megan Oakleaf has written extensively on this topic vis-a-vis higher education institutions. She has stated that librarians can establish, assess, and link academic library outcomes to institutional outcomes in the following areas: student enrollment, student retention, and graduation rates, student success, student achievement, student learning, student engagement, faculty research productivity, faculty teaching, service, and overarching institutional quality. A publication titled *New Review of Academic Librarianship* has a special issue (May 2013) focuses exclusively on mapping student journeys and using the library. The SPEC survey on the Library User Experience (2011) contains data from Association of Research Library members. Another option is for libraries to create or adopt systems for assessment management. Some are available for purchase but libraries could adopt a system that is used by an entire institution.

Conducting a longitudinal study is a very time intensive undertaking but it retrieves valuable data on the impact of library services on students. Examples are *A longitudinal study of undergraduates' academic library experience* by Whitmire, 2001 and *Studying students: The undergraduate research project at the University of Rochester* by Foster and Gibbons, 2007.

A similar study in the Canadian context is the Canadian University Survey Consortium (CUSC) survey that tracks experiences and characteristics on three-year cycles for first-year, all undergraduates, and graduate students. The University of Regina has posted survey findings at <http://www.uregina.ca/orp/papers.shtml> and <http://www.uregina.ca/orp/cusc-surveys.shtml>. Unfortunately the library and archives occupy a small component in the survey (e.g. CUSC 2012 Report 3 of 6 Examining the University of Regina Student Experience: Use and satisfaction with university facilities and services)

http://www.uregina.ca/orp/PapersPresentations/CUSC_2012_rpt%203_Student_use_and_satis

[faction_with_university_facilities_and_services.pdf](#). The only library data that is in the survey provides a percentage of students that use the library. It would be advantageous for CUSC to increase the library's component in its survey and perhaps use focus groups or ask more specific questions to better understand students' social and research needs and their information seeking behavior. Our institution has recently started conducting focus groups with graduate students to gather similar data.

COMMUNITY OUTREACH AND AWARENESS

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

As with most libraries the University of Regina Library makes a significant impact in its immediate community. Our resources are used by a variety of patrons from first year students starting their university careers to senior researchers. Although it falls outside our core mandate we also have a number of community members who use our study spaces and research resources including senior citizens, high school students and recent immigrants. Many of our students connect to our virtual resources from off campus including e-journals and e-books. Although it is quite certain the library's work is valued by many in our community it is less certain if the full extent of the effort and costs put into maintaining both the collection and library's services is fully understood by users.

In addition to this we also offer research and teaching support to faculty members for their courses. This can include purchasing or otherwise obtaining books, journals and various multimedia sources. It can also require teaching students how to create Boolean search strings or how to build a multifaceted search strategy.

2. Describe the services provided directly to users within your context, or whether they are consortial in nature; please describe the mechanisms in place to define, refine and measure the impact of the services.

The University of Regina Library provides various services that are standard for students, faculty, and staff in many post-secondary institutions. Unless stated, there are no mechanisms in place to refine and measure impact of the services listed below.

- 1. Interlibrary Loan (ILL) and document delivery** - we follow the policy and procedures of several borrowing conventions and agreements to obtain materials for our users. Some of these include resource sharing agreements from: COPPUL Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries(COPPUL), Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL), Council of Atlantic University Libraries(CAUL)/CBA/CREPUQ, Library and Archives Canada, Interlibrary Loan Code for the United States, and International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA).
- 2. Subscriptions to online resources** - this service is largely supported by consortia such as COPPUL (Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries), CRKN (Canadian Research Knowledge Network), and Saskatchewan's Multitype Database Licensing Program (MDLP). Approximately 60% of databases are purchased and made available through institutional membership discounts in consortia. However, consortial subscriptions cover a much higher percentage of the Library's budget for all databases. The library's Collections and Assessment Team makes decisions on a majority of subscription renewals and purchasing one-off collections and subscribing to new ones.

3. **Serials Solutions 360 Counter** - this electronic resources management system provides data that is used to assist with collection development (e.g. providing cost/use ratios for online journals). This could be considered a mechanism for measuring the use of library resources
4. **Circulation/borrowing/reserves/study rooms** - our institution completed significant building renovations in 2013 and added additional study space, hardware and software for student use. This was based, in part, upon anecdotal comments from students and faculty, and following trends in other academic libraries. Additional renovations to have a one service point will take place in 2014. This was done based upon a comprehensive LEAN study to provide a more fulfilling experience for patrons and library staff.
5. **Reference assistance** - includes SANDS (spatial and numeric data services). The Library recently conducted a comprehensive LEAN program and it will be implementing a one service desk model by amalgamating the Circulation and Information desks into one. It will be co-jointly staffed by support staff from the Circulation and Reference Services units. All staff will have offices in the same area on the main floor for close proximity to patrons.
6. **UREAD** (University of Regina Education at a Distance) is a service that uses components of ILL, reference assistance, and in-depth research referrals to subject liaison librarians. Staff time and resources have been scaled back over the last few years due to a drop in use of UREAD.
7. **Library Liaison program** - includes instruction, research referrals, and collections work.
8. **Donations** - our institution accepts donations that are relevant to supporting the teaching and research needs of the University or are rare and valuable materials. The University will cover costs for an appraisal and issue a tax receipt if a donation is valued by Librarians at an amount of at least \$5,000. This policy cuts down on the amount of time spent by the Collections Librarian in processing donations.

3. In the digital era, what support for patrons do/should libraries provide?

At the moment there is a wide variety of information sources available either for free or through subscription. Research libraries must not only provide access to essential subscription services but it is also incumbent on them to provide training on how to properly access and use them. Research has shown that patrons are more likely to use services that they perceive to be easy to manage and intuitive, even if these resources are not as high quality, than to use resources that are high quality but perceived to be difficult to navigate (Griffiths and Brophy, 2005). For this reason we have implemented the Summon discovery service which provides patrons with a Google-like single keyword search box as a gateway to nearly everything we have access to.

We also provide a number of instructional sessions for our patrons on using our databases. In 2011 this included 247 sessions attended by over 4300 students. Through these sessions students come to a greater understanding of the breadth of databases available to them including subject specific ones. They learn about how to obtain statistical data, newspapers, professional documents, government information and journal articles.

4. What in your opinion are the specific roles of libraries and/or archives and/or museums and other heritage institutions in community building and memory building?

There is an infrastructure of community based archives and museums across Canada. These institutions are supported by various provincial and national organizations. One of these supports is funding programs. It was particularly disappointing when the National Archival Development Program (NADP) was cancelled in 2012. This funding program was generally recognized as a successful tool in community and memory building.

Libraries and archives play a strong role in both community and memory building. The work of various provincial and national organizations, consortia, and individual institutions has been essential. Examples in Saskatchewan include:

Saskatchewan Council for Archives and Archivists

- Highly successful Archives Week offerings
- Outreach Archivist and Conservation Service program
- Institutional Grants Program
- Saskatchewan Archival Information Network (as part of Archives Canada portal)

Saskatchewan Library Association\

- Saskatchewan Libraries Conference allows libraries to share strategies and best practices
- TD Summer Reading Club, Saskatchewan Library Week and Freedom to Read Week grants support a variety of community based programming much of it in smaller centres across the province.

Multitype Library Board

- Saskatchewan Digital Alliance and Saskatchewan History Online
- Multitype Database Licencing Program

NEW DIRECTIONS

Digitization

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

The fundamental challenge of born-digital materials will be their long-term curation. This includes preservation and access. Libraries and archives will need to focus greater attention on migrating their digital materials to new systems and formats as they arise. Such migrations must ensure that the digital materials are not compromised either technically or intellectually.

We believe that these challenges will require leadership and partnerships. Canada's national institutions should be encouraged to follow the examples being set in other jurisdictions.

2. What role should libraries and archives take in the digitization, the dissemination and the long-term preservation of Canadian heritage (print publications and archives)?

It is our view that libraries and archives have important roles to play in the digitization of print publications and archival materials. Digitization is more than the scanning and mounting of materials on the internet. It involves the provision of context that makes it possible for researchers to effectively understand and use the materials. In addition to reference services, libraries and archives, should collect and present the necessary metadata with digitized items and collections.

As more and more access is provided digitally, how will researchers know that the digital item is an accurate representation of the original? Without access to the original it is difficult to determine if all the pages of an item were scanned, or if the colour reproduction of an art work is correct. Without ready access to the original the researcher must rely on trust. To safeguard the value of Canadian heritage in the digital world, libraries and archives cannot simply digitize materials. Materials will need to be subject to careful selection, to a quality digital reproduction process, and our institutions will need to provide a high level of contextual and metadata information. If we value online access to research-quality heritage collections we must build trusted digital repositories.

3. What will be the function and future of a brick-and-mortar library or archive in a paperless future?

We do not believe that the future will indeed be paperless. For some time to come, the future will be a place in which libraries and archives will be hybrid institutions -- operating in both the digital and brick-and-mortar worlds.

Space is a premium on many university and college campuses and libraries commonly occupy large buildings. Physical collections of journals and magazines continue to shrink substantially and the number of book acquisitions is arguably slowing with electronic versions being available for access to a larger audience. In libraries, weeding, consolidation of physical collections (e.g. paper, microform) with nearby institutions, and relocating targeted sections of collections to high density repositories (on or off campus) are growing trends. Due to these cost saving measures, the reduction of hard copy materials is freeing up space. Many libraries have re-purposed floor space to accommodate more group study rooms, computer labs, maker spaces, learning commons, and lounges.

Archives and Special Collections acquire materials that possess intrinsic value. This value would be lost if materials were discarded in favour of digital copy. We believe that archives will always remain hybrid institutions, collecting, preserving, and providing access to both traditional and digital materials.

Future functions will reflect this hybrid duality. Libraries and archives digitize materials to increase access to unique materials they hold. People come to libraries and archives for trusted information and evidential records. Evaluating information is more important than ever in the digital world and librarians and archivists are well positioned to build this part of digital literacy. Libraries and archives are also making strategic partnerships with other academic and administrative units on campus such as information technology, learning, training, and engagement centres for students and faculty. Our facilities are increasingly social centres for learning and discovery.

Education

1. What changes, in your judgment, are necessary in the professional education and training of librarians/archivists in the 21st century?

Library science education has traditionally been strong in acculturating students into the values of the profession. This education has not been primarily vocational but rather has been focused on giving new professionals a broader understanding of the theory and governing principals of librarianship. Although this type of preparation is valuable more should be done. In particular there has been a move toward encouraging formal and informal mentorship programs. Bringing seasoned professionals together with those at the beginning of their careers will allow better skill transfer and give those just starting out a firmer foothold in their careers. In addition, encouraging further skills development on an on-going basis through webinars, conference presentations and colloquia can lead to shared expertise and a better understanding of best practices across the profession.

An important move in the direction of further education is the new program Continuing Education Certificate Program (<http://cec.laa.ca/>) which creates a more structured program for maintaining and obtaining library competencies.

Resources

3. What percentage increase to your current budget would permit you to realize the aspirations of your users? If you received an increased budget and consistent adequate resources, describe your library/archives in 2017.

In specific reference to the University Archives:

We believe that an adequately resourced archives in 2017 would be a hybrid institution that would both maintain core traditional functions and provide strong digital services. Additional resources would in all likelihood be directed toward gaining a greater handle on born-digital materials (acquisition, access, preservation) and increasing the level of quality digitization activities. Traditional functions like arrangement, description, and reference would continue to evolve to integrate the digital aspects of these functions into a seamless provision of service.

Being the 150th anniversary of Confederation, 2017 would also see our collections and services as an integral part of year's activities highlighting the significance of libraries and archives in society.