

**Royal Society Consultation:
Nova Scotia Public Libraries**
Responses to Framing Questions
November 2013

Services:

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

National level

Libraries and Archives Canada (LAC) has the mandate to preserve the documentary heritage of Canada, contribute to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada, facilitate cooperation among communities involved in the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge, and serve as the continuing memory of the government of Canada and its institutions. Its services should flow from these.

LAC has fallen short of this mandate in the past number of years. It does not strive to collect or preserve material of relevance to Canadians in a coherent fashion, nor does it play a leadership role in institutions engaged in library and archival services. Funding appears to be applied to “historical events” rather than a clear direction aimed at satisfying its mandate.

LAC has made the decision to pursue a policy of digitizing materials and making them available through their website. At the same time they have used this rationale to discontinue traditional methods of accessing materials through either direct contact with LAC staff or indirectly through local institutions such as public libraries. This would be a sensible course if proper financial resources were being targeted at digitizing large numbers of LAC materials while at the same time scaling back the services Canadians have expected over the years. It would also require a plan for promotion and orientation for current users. Unfortunately none of these prerequisites are being met. The financial resources have not been made available for digitization, services have been cut completely, and there is no plan to explain these changes.

In summary, based upon their mandate, services provided by Library and Archives Canada to Canadians and partner institutions at the local level are poor and becoming poorer, much to the detriment of citizens who seek to understand what it is to be Canadian in a rapidly globalizing environment.

Local level (specifically public libraries)

Public libraries have, or are in the process, of shifting from a traditional model to a hybrid model of service due to the impact of information technology. Warehouses of paper materials with clerks tending to the maintenance of these collections are changing into vibrant community-centred places with a wide range of materials accessible in a multitude of formats. This is not to say paper is disappearing. On the contrary, the advent of communications technology has spurred the advent of an information hungry public who seek information in many different ways. These could be in book form, electronic form, through programs, interactions in the public spaces, online exchanges and a myriad of other ways. Library staff will need to be flexible, adaptive, and part of an ongoing development path of skills and knowledge.

Recently, public libraries in Nova Scotia have identified their core services.

Mission

Through the Nova Scotia Libraries Act, regional library boards collect, promote and provide access to books, information, and other materials that foster literacy, personal learning, and knowledge, contributing to overall community development and well-being.

Core Services

The core services of a regional library board are to:

- develop diverse and stimulating collections, including digital and multi-format resources, and make these available through publically accessible information and organization systems.
- allocate resources for the collection and dissemination of Nova Scotia information and knowledge.
- provide information technology access, services, and assistance to the community for communication, information, and learning needs.
- offer services and programmes supporting literacy, personal learning, and community development for all ages and backgrounds.
- design, create, and manage physical and virtual spaces that encourage community engagement around literacy and learning.
- provide and maintain regional library board support services in accordance with the Nova Scotia Libraries Act.

For core services to be implemented and maintained in accordance with the Nova Scotia Libraries Act a highly skilled team of expert and knowledgeable staff must be employed by the Regional Library Boards.

However, due to funding constraints and lack of a long term funding plan, public libraries in Nova Scotia fall short of this goal for services. There are inconsistencies from community to community resulting from a variety of factors such as municipal commitment and resources, expertise of staff, urban / rural population densities, fundraising potential, and more. Services to new Canadians are impacted in the same way and many times from the same factors. While there are a few bright spots for public library services to aboriginal communities these are based more on pilot projects rather than ongoing; longstanding services. It would be honest to say aboriginal communities are an underserved part of society in the realm of public library service.

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?

- Budget pressures
 - predictable and sustainable funding is necessary to enable the development of long term plans
 - service expansion in times of fiscal constraint may mean reductions or eliminations in other programs, budget areas, staffing or facilities

- rising costs and limited avenues for new or expanded funds are challenging the ability to provide new services
- Deciding what needs to be reduced to afford providing new services
- Staffing pressures
 - limited number of staff make it difficult to provide new or unproven services
 - retention - inability to provide cost of living adjustments and other incentives affect staff. This can lead to difficulties retaining staff
 - burnout – increases in the number and type of duties (especially without commensurate monetary incentives) can increase the likelihood of individual staff members experiencing stress, anxiety and/or burnout.
 - new services often require training for staff. This can mean time away from other duties and further budget implications
 - in union environments, it can be challenging to have organizational structures that respond quickly to the addition and/or reduction of established services
- Defining and providing access to library resources that are discoverable and available.
 - Working within defined vendor and publishing constructs
 - Reacting to changes to existing business models that often have significant negative impacts on budgets and/or service provision
- Meeting community needs/priorities - ensuring that you are meeting the needs of local citizens, taxpayers and funders.
- Determining when to invest in new technology is a balancing act, especially when budgets are tight. Being an early adopter can be very beneficial, but investing in new and emerging products or services can be risky if the technology is not successful. If left too long, a library can appear to be out of touch.
- As services evolve, ensuring that marketing and outreach extends past traditional library avenues to reach potential new customers/patrons.
- Finding balance and flexibility on the continuum between serving digital natives and those affected by the digital divide.
 - Respecting the skills that individuals have developed and encouraging both library patrons and staff to continually develop trans-literacy skills
- Managing user expectations. We can't be all things to all people. That said, we can ensure that patrons know what services (or type of services) they can expect the library to provide.
- Physical spaces and services
 - ensuring open, well-kept, accessible and valued library places
 - Ensuring that facilities provide access to basic necessities
 - Ensuring electrical and data are installed appropriately and sustainably
- Online spaces and digital services
 - Providing online users with a valuable experience
 - ensuring well-kept, accessible and valued library digital places
 - ensuring content provided is format neutral, or at least accessible off of a variety of devices
 - developing appropriate websites in a time when standards are not well-established

- Ensuring physical and virtual security for all library users and staff

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

Libraries continuously measure their services in a variety of ways including circulation, membership, reference questions answered, computer usage, programs and program attendance. These quantitative statistics are also being used in combination with qualitative and/or testimonials to show how libraries positive impact on the communities they serve.

For example, there have been studies linking participation in preschool storytime programs at the library with school readiness. In Ontario ten library preschool literacy programs were studied to show the support public libraries provide for early literacy and school readiness of three- and four-year-old children as well as their parents' and caregivers' literacy interactions with their children. The full study can be found at <https://journal.lib.uoguelph.ca/index.php/perj/article/view/1961/2623#.UlgphA9iM8>.

Summer Reading Clubs offered annually by public libraries to children and teens provide an opportunity for students to maintain and even improve their reading levels over the summer. Teachers note a difference in students who participate in Summer Reading Clubs and those who do not. A study of the benefits of Summer Reading Club participation and the contribution public libraries make can be found at <http://www.nysl.nysed.gov/libdev/summer/research.htm>. Although this was an American study, the benefits can be extrapolated to Canada.

Some public libraries in Nova Scotia have been working with the Nova Scotia Department of Justice and/or the Adopt a Library crime prevention program offered in conjunction with the RCMP or local police departments. This partnership shows the role libraries can play in preventing and/or minimizing youth crime. For example, the Annapolis Valley Regional Library offers a series of programs for youth during the evening when youth crime was a problem. The idea is to provide youth something fun to do to keep them off the street and out of trouble. This program is in its fourth year and local RCMP have reported improvement in the behavior of many youth due to this program.

There are numerous studies on the economic impacts of literacy and the public library plays a strong role in life-long learning and self-directed learning. Libraries also offer positive social impacts for seniors, new Canadians, and "at risk" groups. An article on the social impact of public libraries can be found at <http://lis.sagepub.com/content/30/3/159.full.pdf+html>.

Public Libraries also play a strong role in cultural development via the promotion of Canadian literature, author readings, and book clubs. The Nova Scotia Department of Communities, Culture and Heritage has recently undertaken a "Cultural Sector Strategy" and are in the process of quantifying cultural contributions to GDP. This strategy will include the contributions of public libraries to the GDP. In addition to this, Sensemaker software is being considered to be used to help capture the community impact public libraries make, by collecting stories of library users, defining common themes, and showing personal and community impacts through evidence based stories.

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

N/A

Community Outreach and Awareness

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

N/A

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.

Nova Scotia Provincial Library (NSPL) and the Council of Regional Librarians (CORL) periodically review and refine Core Services for public libraries in Nova Scotia.

Together, we quantitatively measure library usage (circulation, wireless use, program attendance, membership, computer use) using LibPas. Regions also individually gather statistics and user feedback on local programs and services. We currently do not have systems in place to measure long term impact of our services. Many Regional Librarians received training on Cognitive Edge's SenseMaker software early in 2013 and we expect to be able to use this software to capture data that will give meaning to users' library experiences.

Our libraries provide access to diverse and balanced collections including digital and multi-format resources. We also collect, preserve and provide access to written materials of local relevance. Our eBook and Audiobook downloads are consortial as are most of our subscription databases. Collections are available via our integrated library system and other shared platforms. We also participate in Libraries Nova Scotia's (LNS) *Borrow Anywhere, Return Anywhere* (BARA) to help our patrons access more materials. With BARA, users can borrow from over a hundred public, college and university libraries across the province and materials can be returned to any of the participating libraries.

We provide access to WIFI, high speed Internet, computers and various new technologies. We also offer technology training and troubleshooting to individuals and groups.

Each region provides trained, expert staff that advises and helps information seekers. Regions also make available programming and learning opportunities to people of all ages as well as facilitate education, cultural and recreational sessions that are of interest to the community.

We participate in local, provincial and national programs that promote and support literacy. *One Book Nova Scotia* (1BNS) which was organized under LNS is a great example of a province-wide yearly reading event. During this event, public, university and community college libraries encourage adults in their communities to read, discuss and enjoy the same book.

Lastly, we provide a safe and welcoming physical space for individuals of all ages, abilities and backgrounds to come and visit, learn and engage in their communities.

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

One emerging issue for libraries is that the expense of support that patrons expect libraries to provide is growing larger every day. As new technologies emerge, libraries should embrace them and offer opportunities and training to members of the public.

- e-books

Libraries are, and definitely should be, offering e-books for lending. Libraries should provide patrons with multiple copies of current best sellers and high demand items the same as we do with print items. Libraries should also apply the same values to their e-book collections and strive to provide a varied collection that will appeal to readers of all tastes and ages.

As well as the e-books, libraries should also offer assistance and training for patrons who are new to the technology and/or having trouble with their e-reading device. As library e-book services can often be a bit cumbersome it is necessary for libraries to offer assistance and training in their use. Often the library is one of the only places where patrons feel they can get in-person, helpful assistance in using their devices.

Libraries should also offer patrons a chance to try out e-reading devices through technology 'petting zoos' or e-reader lending programs. This will allow patrons to make their own decisions about the efficacy of new technologies.

- Music and Videos

As music and video consumption moves increasingly into the digital world some libraries are providing downloadable music and video services. While all libraries should offer this service to augment their physical offerings of these genres it is very expensive and often not within the financial capacity of many libraries.

- Magazines

As with e-books, music and videos, magazines are increasingly being offered in a digital version. Libraries should be offering this service to their patrons but as many people still checkout and use the print versions it is increasingly hard for libraries to offer this service. Libraries should be offering digital access to magazines but many can't.

- Internet Access

In spite of the federal governments belief that everyone in Canada has access to the Internet and the accompanying technology and skills necessary to access it—libraries still find it necessary to offer this service. There are still rural areas of Nova Scotia where dial up is the only Internet connection available and the local library is the one service provider for reliable, high-speed Internet connection.

As well, the 'digital divide' continues to increase with citizens who have never learned the skills necessary to access on-line resources and services. This is especially prevalent among seniors and lower income citizens. These are also the people that are not able to afford the technology necessary to use on-line services even if they had the skills necessary. This makes it necessary for libraries to continue to offer courses in basic computer skills and to offer the equipment to make access possible. As more and more government services are only easily available on line (employment insurance applications, Veterans Affairs services and benefits, Canada Pension Plan, Old Age Security, school resources and marks for parents, etc.) public libraries are often the only place where patrons can access the Internet or receive assistance in applying for these benefits.

Additionally, in tough economic times, Internet access is a 'luxury' item that many households must cut in order to purchase basic necessities.

- New technologies

Libraries are the perfect place to introduce new technologies to the public and this is a service that they should be offering. Often this may be the only place where the general public can see a live demonstration of 3-D printing, or lego robotics or try out the newest tablet or e-reader. This is a service that many libraries do provide but it remains difficult to do so with limited funding for equipment and for staff training.

- Digitization

Digitization of local history documents and collections is a service that libraries should be offering to local organizations and on behalf of patrons. Local organizations and historical societies often do not have the technical knowledge, skills, or staff to create digital collections of historical documents that may be lost.

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?

Libraries, museums and archives are essential to our communities and our Country, in that they support learning, literacy, and community memory building. They have an essential role in preserving, making available information, and strengthening our communities and Country, through:

- the provision of a structured, secure, retrievable management system for print, digital, audiovisual, artifacts, and other items of cultural value.
- enhancing communities and the country by contributing to the pursuit of knowledge through facilitated and open access to information, thus supporting a well-informed and democratic society.
- actively collecting, developing and preserving a diverse collection of resources (in various formats) of long term national, regional and local interest and value, and ensuring they are held and are available to present and future generations.
- welcoming residents and visitors as they seek to understand, explore and interpret our culture and heritage, through reading, viewing and listening.
- supporting and encouraging family literacy and personal learning through free access to a wide range of literature and programmes for all ages.
- making connections within and between communities through partnerships that build upon and support culture, heritage, and learning.
- access to and information about current and new technologies that allows all community members, regardless of their individual economic situation, to participate in online learning, sharing of information, and connecting with others.
- designing, creating and managing physical and virtual spaces that encourage community engagement around literacy and learning.
- establishing preservation and collection standards, protocols and processes that ensure future generations will be able to access Canada's collective local and national cultural resources
- working with communities to provide professional advice and encouragement regarding preservation and retention of local materials

To fulfill this important role in memory and community building, Libraries, archives and museums must have resources that allow for collections to be developed, housed, professionally managed and brought to local, regional and national attention. Lack of resources will result in diminished ability to undertake

this most important role, and the results of this will have significant negative impact on Canada's future ability to access important and valuable information, artifacts, and opportunities for learning.

Libraries, museums and archives must be clearly recognized as Canada's 'memory-keepers', and be provided with the necessary resources to allow them to properly fulfill this role. So that these valuable institutions can effect continued positive change and development in their respective communities, they must be supported at national, provincial and local government levels. Long-term social development requires ongoing investment. This includes recognizing and supporting the community and national resources that nurture an understanding of our past, and provide access to materials, information and services that foster learning and an informed society. Canada clearly has an opportunity to be a world leader in supporting the institutions that preserve heritage, learning, culture, and community building. This support will have significant future economic spinoff and will strengthen our Country. It is CORL's recommendation to build upon existing strengths, and promote the preservation of and opportunities for culture, heritage and learning in our communities from coast to coast.

New Directions

Digitization:

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

Materials created in a digital-only format or available in digital-only format pose issues in making them available to borrowers, as the format can differ as well as the sources.

E-books, at the outset, were predominantly an alternative format of existing titles, and have been dealt with as other alternative formats - audio books, books on tape, etc. In addition, e-books were predominantly available from mainstream publishers and the service was integrated into library collections via third party companies.

As digital materials became more prevalent, self-published content as well as content from smaller, web-based publishers has grown exponentially. It is this type of digital content that poses challenges to public libraries. This type of content does not use traditional publishers, is largely self-marketed, and so the traditional discovery and acquisition processes do not apply. It therefore becomes more difficult to determine the potential popularity for borrowers.

If it is decided that a self-published title is to be purchased, further questions must be answered: if not available through usual channels, what is the format and how can it be made available? Does a library store it locally or link to outside sources that may not have the longevity of traditional digital format providers? Do separate circulation agreements need to be developed with each provider to ensure that the content can be distributed legally? Is it cost-effective? Is it the best use of collection dollars?

These issues will need to be addressed as more and more content is available in digital formats only.

Despite these challenges, the prospect of enhancing public library collections with born-digital content is a positive one and one which will also be demanded by library customers. At the same time, there is excitement in public libraries as they embrace a role of creating content or facilitating the creation of local born-digital content and providing access to the results.

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

A paperless future for libraries? Doubtful. The adoption of Espresso Book Machines shows the desire for having a tangible object. Libraries can easily control and share print resources which is a main role of libraries. Electronic resources for libraries, however, are susceptible to corporate and technocratic control as witnessed by the escalating cost of ebooks and restrictions by copyright and licences. A concern is that libraries may be forced into purchasing more ebooks as the availability of print declines.

Despite these concerns, what would be the function of a library building in a paperless future? The function of a brick and mortar library in a paperless future will be to be a space to work, think and connect. This is the aim of Amsterdam's Central Library which opened in 2007 (Bridle, 2013). This library has both print and electronic resources.

Everyone has experienced the trials of online conferencing, teleconferences, and Skype meetings. In-person meetings achieve more and people connect together. The physical library provides a safe space and electronic resources to support this connection e.g. comfortable seating, meeting rooms, program rooms, smart boards, and 3D printers. A physical library provides a place to house hardware and train patrons on their use. Electronic resources restricted to library use only, are available here.

The function of a library is to attempt to provide access to all. The demise of many bookstores has diminished the sources of resources for citizens. The loaning of e-readers by libraries may assist those without computer access. These would be housed in a physical building. An attempt at a bookless library branch in Arizona in 2002, however, resulted in the provision of print materials at the citizens' request due to their lack of computer access (Gonzalez, 2013).

In early September 2013 an e-book only public library system was set up in Bexar County, Texas. See <http://bexarbibliotech.org/> Serving a population of 1.7 million, the library collection provides access to:

- Consortial collections of TexShare Databases
- Subscription databases e.g. Zinio (magazines), 3M Cloud Library (e-books), OneClick Digital (audio books), and Mango (language training).
- Links to free e-book sources e.g. Project Gutenberg (classics), LibriVox (audio), and the Digital Public Library of America (digital content from museums, archives and libraries)
- 10,000 ebooks

Despite being designed specifically for only electronic resources, a building is in place. Here patrons can use computer stations, study rooms, and participate in programs e.g. toddler reading hour, homework assistance, "Tell Your Story", an ebook club, and a San Anto Cultural Arts Journalism Program. This library is providing interesting insight into the use of physical buildings in an electronic age.

Bridle, J. (2013, February 17). It's not what a library stocks, it's what it shares. *The Observer*. Retrieved Oct 15, 2013 from <http://www.theguardian.com/books/2013/feb/17/digital-library-san-antonio-texas>

Gonzalez, J.W. (2013, January 13). *Bexar set to turn the page on idea of books in libraries*. Retrieved Oct 15, 2013 from http://www.mysanantonio.com/news/local_news/article/Bexar-set-to-turn-the-page-on-idea-of-books-in-4184940.php#photo-4014808

Education:

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

Outside of the courses that address core library activities, there are several other topics that should be addressed:

Courses related to digital citizens and digital citizenship to address topics related to ethics in a digital environment, copyright and the information habits of digital natives.

Library administration should be a required course. It would include budgeting, reading financial reports, reading legal documents, staff scheduling, software components e.g. MS Excel, etc. Legal issues such as contracts and copyright should also be covered.

Library security should be included. This includes safety of staff, materials, and patrons. Disaster planning e.g. dealing with SARS or floods would be covered. The impact of these points on the financial viability of the library would be emphasized. Information on Occupational Health and Safety and other legislated safety requirements should also be covered.

Research methods, normally a required course, should require non-subscription, i.e. free, sources. Statistics should also be required. Libraries collect a lot of data and librarians need to understand the implications. Ad hoc surveys should not be created unless the people involved really know what is being asked and understand the variables that can impact the results. This could be cross-listed with another university department e.g. mathematics.

Customer service skills should be required especially for staff dealing with public on daily basis. Library image is build based on the service and impression that employee leaves when serving patrons. Patrons' expectations are increasing in new customer-oriented world. Libraries are becoming service organization and as such customer service is integral part of the new business model. Goal is not just to meet, but to exceed customer's expectations and needs.

Marketing training is needed. Promotional material can be created by designers in large libraries but their designs still have to be approved by librarians. Librarians need to know the language of design, marketing and advocacy to be able to understand what is presented to them. In small library systems librarians have to do the marketing themselves; a daunting task.

Information technology training/skills are must in today's age of constant developing and changing technology.

People skills – know how to work and deal with colleagues and build healthy and respectful workplace. Librarians are managers and leaders, too. So this is very important skill for every level in organizational structure.

What conversations do you think need to take place with library, archival, and information studies programs about professional competency requirements, and have they begun?

N/A

Resources:

Public Libraries are primarily funded by local municipalities, with little funding from any other level of government. Many towns and rural communities are too small to support needed technology. How do we encourage the creation of library systems (or consortia) that can meet the increasingly sophisticated technology driven needs of libraries whether urban or rural?

In Nova Scotia, eight of the nine regional library boards receive up to 70% of their operating funding from the province of Nova Scotia. In Halifax, the province provides up to 25% of operating to the Halifax Regional Library board. In addition, the province pays for the base internet connectivity for all regional library boards.

Provincial and territorial funding tends to be strong in rural and remote Canada, and I hope that this study will get at that data and not perpetuate solely urban-centric assumptions.

In Nova Scotia, with a population of less than one million, we were the first province in the country to provide internet access in every public library branch. This was under the leadership of the Provincial Library in the mid- 90's, harnessing Industry Canada internet funding assistance. Today, wireless internet access is available in all public library branches, rural and urban. It is interesting to note that in this province, rural branches provided this service before the urban library system in Halifax.

From the NS perspective, there is no need to encourage the creation of library systems/consortia to meet increasingly sophisticated tech-driven needs. The will pre-exists. Sometimes, in some areas, the provision of powerful library services, technical or otherwise, is connected to a perceived or real lack of resources or capacity. There may even be broadband issues still remaining, despite efforts of various levels of governments and service providers.

Typically, greatest success in the provision of these services, particularly for under-resourced library systems, comes with the participation in networks or purchasing consortia. Shared digital media collections, the emerging National Network for Equitable Library Services, shared ILS's, these are all examples of libraries using technology to improve service delivery and access for library users.

Encouraging successful consortial or collaborative approaches demands a leadership commitment from multiple agencies and a will to work through more complex agreements either with vendors or each other. Once leadership is committed, they must communicate this through their organization, committing expert staff to work out the details that make consortia work. High level policy, backed up with strong service agreements and the provision of opportunities to experiment, take risk and create something anew, will lead to sustainable shared solutions.

Assuming academic host institutions have financial resource constraints, and assuming academic libraries are equally constrained, how might these libraries attract funding adequate to meet the expectations of their users?

N/A

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.

A 20% increase to our budget would be required to repair some of the damage done to our libraries during the last four years of chronic underfunding.

For example, In the case of Eastern Counties Regional Library (ECRL), if we were to have sufficient resources and stable funding this would allow ECRL to:

- Once again provide management support and supervise library branches
- Offer once a month programming at all locations
- Increase reference/information services
- Fill the vacant management position (ECRL currently have 2 managers for 3 counties of Nova Scotia and 36,000 people)

Basically, if ECRL were to see increased and stable funding this would essentially return the system to its previous levels of service as well as provide key innovations by 2017.

Two key innovations NS Libraries would like to see by 2017 are:

- The development of the Library as a self-publishing centre (e-books, podcasts, films, and physical books) to support the creative and business communities.
- The implementation of STEM related programming for children to help develop the technical and transliteracy of children.