



Consultations with Stakeholders on Directions for Library and Archives Canada

Overview Report of Findings *January 2005*

Introduction

In 2004, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) carried out a broad consultation with its stakeholders about the strategic directions proposed for the new institution. A consultation paper, “Creating a New Kind of Knowledge Institution: New Directions for Library and Archives Canada,” was prepared that provided an overview of the proposed directions for the new institution and posed questions to stakeholders. This document was made available on the LAC Web site in June 2004, and approximately 150 groups were invited specifically to comment on it via a Web form, email, letter or telephone.

With some stakeholder communities, there were additional, specific issues upon which LAC wished to consult. In these cases, we adopted a layered consultation approach, whereby the opportunity to provide written response about the strategic directions was supplemented by consultation sessions, focus groups or interviews. For example, interviews with representatives of the publishing community were conducted that focused primarily on proposed changes to the legal deposit regulations. Likewise, sessions were held in every province and territory with representatives of the archival community. These sessions with archives representatives allowed targeted discussion about the renewal of the existing grants and contributions program for that community, as well as more general discussion of the strategic directions for the new institution.

Feedback from these community-specific consultations has been summarized and is included in this report when appropriate.

LAC’s effort to consult with stakeholders is being complemented by a broad study of users and usage that is currently underway. LAC recognizes, however, that the effort to better know and understand users’ needs will be an ongoing one as LAC pursues its strategic goal to have a clear and constant focus on the client.

Responses Received and Sessions Held

LAC received 55 written responses. Largely, these responses were from associations that represent the library, archival, conservation, records management, or other stakeholder communities. Several thoughtful written responses were also received from interested individuals. A list of respondents is found in Appendix 1.

In addition, LAC has held twenty interactive consultation sessions with different associations or groups of community representatives since May 2004. A list is found in Appendix 2. Further, it conducted over 30 telephone interviews with publishers and with information professionals serving cultural communities across Canada.

General Feedback

Shorter, general written responses were received from a variety of groups, and these tended to be congratulatory about the establishment of the new institution and supportive of the mandate and new directions that were outlined.

One of the general feedback questions we asked in the paper was “Will the five key directions provide Canada with the kind of knowledge institution it will need in the future?” Response was extremely positive. The new directions were cited as well-targeted, ambitious, commendable, vital and timely. They were thought to provide a broad enough framework for the future and, taken together, to constitute a strategic approach toward LAC fulfilling its mandate.

“The creation of a new institution with combined responsibilities is a bold and innovative step, which will have important benefits. LAC will enhance access to the “documentary heritage” for all Canadians and open doors to interesting new partnership opportunities.”
Toronto Public Library

One respondent added that “There are many powerful and positive statements in the last segment (‘Approaches that will guide us’) and we are encouraged with your efforts in carrying these forward.”

A few respondents suggested that LAC’s success in implementing its new directions would be contingent on certain conditions being met. These conditions included the following: that sufficient funding is available to support the new mandate; that the directions are given sustained effort and focus; that they are pursued collaboratively with a range of partners; that adequate attention be focused on preservation and regional access; and that LAC acts strategically in carrying its new directions forward.

“The keys to achieving your vision lie in the complementary strategies of collaboration and focus.”
Canadian Library Association

Most respondents applauded the increased focus on making the documentary heritage more known—accessible, used, understood, appreciated—by Canadians. This emphasis clearly resonated with the library community, which expressed many forms of willingness to assist LAC in reaching Canadians through their network of service points. While the archival community also endorsed the new emphasis on access and use, some archival respondents advised us that collecting, organizing and preserving Canada’s documentary heritage is a condition precedent to providing access.

Commentary on “A new kind of knowledge institution”

Having described in the consultation paper the opportunities we saw for the new institution, we asked stakeholders what they viewed as our most important opportunities. Responses confirmed some of the key opportunities as follows:

- Through meaningful integration, to become a seamless information institution for Canada;
- To combine the strengths of the archival and library professions in the common cause of collection building, preservation and dissemination;
- To become a recognized voice and leader for information access in Canada, and through this to strengthen the profile of libraries, archives and other cultural resources and institutions; and
- To provide leadership and coordination in the preservation of Canada’s documentary heritage, and in particular of digital information, as its long-term accessibility is not currently assured.

When asked what long-standing programs still fit within “a new kind of knowledge institution,” numerous programs and services were mentioned. The library community cited AMICUS, which is the national union catalogue of library materials, the LAC library catalogue, and a source of cataloguing copy, as invaluable to them. They commended LAC for providing it free of charge, and urged us to continue to do so. Likewise, the archival community urged LAC to support Archives Canada as a national access tool to archival collections. A few respondents commented that merging access to the archival and library systems would likely be beneficial to users; while one cautioned that such combined access may confuse searchers.

“AMICUS is a valuable tool and NBPLS is especially supportive of strengthening the role of AMICUS in the future. In particular, NBPLS would like to see a stronger partnership role with LAC and other library systems in Canada to provide provincial holdings through AMICUS. In a knowledge-based society, it is important that the library community and the public at large continue to have free access to holdings held across Canada.”
New Brunswick Public Library
Service

Other services that were cited as valuable to library respondents included legal deposit, the cataloguing service, the ISBN and ISSN agencies, interlibrary loan services, Canadian Book Exchange Centre, and national initiatives such as the Core Library Statistics Program. A government agency mentioned the value of archival assessment, low- or no-cost access to archival holdings, exhibitions, and support for literacy. Conservation groups urged us to continue to have strong preventive and conservation treatment capacity. In addition, respondents encouraged LAC to continue both former institutions’ work within international standards development.

If LAC were to consider cutting any such services, stakeholders would like LAC to first consult with the various types of institutions who use them to better understand the likely impacts.

There were several suggestions about where LAC might modernize and where we might innovate. These usually related to the opportunities of digital, for example:

- Enable document delivery to be increasingly digital;
- Put more emphasis on access to e-records;
- Put all available census information online;
- Rethink our preservation approach in light of digital developments (e.g. move from microfilming to digitizing to create access and preservation surrogates);
- Support the online reference initiative but expand its scope to include archives and museums as well;
- Provide more full-text access and look to new ways of Web presentation; and
- Rethink traditional concepts given the possibilities of digital systems. For example, the concept of “holdings” can be entirely redefined.

“We feel that a strong national institution promoting and preserving Canada’s documentary heritage would be beneficial to the protection of the rights of copyright holders, while providing lawful and easy access to the public.”
Access Copyright

In addition, respondents suggested we provide innovative support programs that will empower local activity. For example, we were urged to consider means to assist Aboriginal communities to record and preserve oral histories from community elders.

Commentary on “A truly national institution”

This direction was described in the consultation paper as encompassing goals of national reach, relevance for all Canadians, equitable access, and understanding and effectively playing our national role.

Stakeholders were prolific in offering ideas as to how LAC would best go about strengthening its relevance and usefulness to all regions of Canada. They advised us to continue to strengthen our online presence, as online access was now nearing ubiquity in Canadian communities through schools, public libraries and CAP (Community Access Program) sites, as well as in Canadian households and workplaces.

Some advised us to ensure that public programs such as events and exhibitions were not simply Ottawa-based, and it was clear that libraries and archives across the country would welcome opportunities to host programs or travelling exhibitions showcasing Canada’s documentary heritage.

We were also advised to consult more widely, more often, to ensure that regional perspectives are reflected in our collecting activities and in our services and programs.

“BIFHSGO is concerned with the statement that the presence of LAC in the National Capital is something that needs to be off-set. The location is a strength in meeting the LAC mandate to preserve government records, one that needs to be complemented by deliberate outreach. With current technology, we see this as best done by maximizing the amount of material available online, rather than through LAC- operated physical locations outside the National Capital.”
British Isles Family History Society of
Greater Ottawa

Many respondents told us that to be known across the country, we needed to strengthen our outreach and promotion activities and that, in doing so, we should emphasize themes and content of regional interest. We were also reminded that traditional media-based publicity could be effectively supplemented by promoting LAC through library and archival service points as well as directly targeting the many historical, genealogical, heritage and cultural societies that exist across the country.

“Consider regional displays of resources in local libraries.”
Anonymous response

Some respondents noted that our relevance to all of Canada would be strengthened by providing a range of information resources to support school curricula across the country, and noted how this tied in with LAC becoming a prime learning destination.

It was observed that LAC needs to look beyond its direct clients to those served indirectly (for example, those who read a book or watch a program that draws on LAC material). In this vein, it was suggested LAC consider creators key clients and develop ways of measuring the indirect use and impacts on Canadians that accrue through them.

One respondent also suggested we consider coast-to-coast recruitment for new staff to better reflect the geographic and cultural diversity of Canada within the make-up of LAC staff.

When asked if LAC should establish new partnerships, respondents were enthusiastically affirmative, with many groups offering themselves, and the communities they represent, as possible partners in achieving our common goals.

Respondents also variously suggested that we partner with school, public, academic and law libraries; with provincial, territorial, and major archives; with provincial ministries of education, textbook publishers, and educational media (e.g. TVO); with other sectors of cultural heritage (e.g. museums, galleries, Parks Canada); with historical and genealogical societies; and with writers’ associations. To extend the capture and effective management of government information beyond our own focus and legislated responsibilities at the federal level, it was suggested we partner with provincial and municipal layers of government and with provincial libraries and archives. Canadiana.org (formerly Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions, or CIHM) was suggested as a preservation partner, while OCLC (Online Computer Library Center) and regional consortia were suggested as partners in bibliographic control. Several respondents urged LAC to pursue stronger ties and complementarity with the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI).

We asked several questions related to LAC’s national role: What would have the most impact for certain communities? What specific roles should LAC play? How best could we play our national role?

We mentioned some likely roles for LAC in the consultation paper, and these were generally endorsed by respondents. These roles include policy leadership, national access catalogues, preservation research, standards

“LAC should strive to bridge the cultural gap between the library, archives and museums communities in order to harness their respective expertise. LAC should seek active collaboration with the research library community (amongst others) so that talent and expertise are mobilized on a national scale.”
Canadian Association of Research Libraries

development, international collaboration, and development and coordination of national strategies.

Fostering national approaches and facilitating national collaboration were viewed as very important. Many respondents noted that national strategies must be collaborative to be successful, but did not see the need for collaboration to negate the need for LAC to show leadership in this area. Some respondents were pointed, however, in stating that LAC could not lead from an ivory tower.

A few respondents mentioned the importance of preserving and making available Aboriginal media of expression.

It was suggested that LAC might work strategically within government to help define a rationalized national funding structure so that libraries, archives and museums could work toward a common goal and not be in competition with each other for funding.

“A key priority for 3 million Canadians who cannot access print...is the development of an equitable nationwide network of library services. This is a national issue and requires leadership from a national agency.”
Canadian National Institute
for the Blind

Some respondents urged LAC to play an active role in assuring timely, affordable (or preferably, for several respondents, free), and equitable access to information. Groups representing Canadians with print disabilities urged LAC to show leadership toward equitable information access for all Canadians, and suggested that LAC work to ensure that Canadian publishers make available for their use digital versions of publications, especially academic textbooks.

The Canadian Library Association cautioned LAC not to expand its national role much beyond providing leadership in research and standards, services and funding to libraries and archives, and promoting awareness of the value inherent in libraries and archives across government as well as across Canada. They suggested LAC might best work within government on a peer-to-peer basis, thus complementing the advocacy role that they and other associations currently play in areas such as information policy and copyright reform.

Similarly, some respondents from the archival community clearly felt LAC must not take over national roles that in their view are better played by community networks such as the Canadian Council of Archives.

“CCA is already doing standards and policies which can be adopted by the archival community. ...People trust the CCA... We know people in other institutions and CCA is responsible for this... LAC is the National Archives but CCA is the national body.”
Minutes of the PEI archival community
consultation

Numerous respondents called on LAC to strengthen its dissemination of information management guidance, training, and tools, especially in the realm of digital information and technologies.

Commentary on “Providing Canadians with access to the whole of their documentary heritage by working with others”

This direction was described in the consultation paper as having two aspects: 1) that LAC will develop and manage its own collections of different media and types of material as a single entity, and will optimize access to so that its collection can be searched as a whole; and 2) that LAC will continue to work with other Canadian library, archival and other cultural institutions to give Canadians access to the whole of Canada's documentary heritage, which is held in many institutions in Canada besides LAC.

“There are unprecedented opportunities for linking the emerging provincial library networks (for example, the Alberta Library and similar organizations across Canada) with the objective of achieving a transparent system of library access across the country.”
Canadian Library Trustees Association

There was strong support for the need for LAC to address itself to the national whole rather than focusing exclusively on our own collection. When asked how LAC could best foster approaches for access and preservation of the whole of Canada's documentary heritage, many respondents emphasized the importance of the library and archival network, and how only through partnership within a network of institutions could long-term access and preservation be assured. Many advocated continuation of the type of networked activities that have already delivered provincial and national access catalogues, the Interlibrary Loan protocol-based network, and various partnership-based digitization projects.

« La communauté archivistique québécoise attend de BAC qu'il soutienne Archives Canada dans l'accomplissement de son mandat et qu'il mette tout en œuvre pour faire de ce projet une réussite. »
Quebec Archival Community

LAC was generally urged to show policy leadership by developing, in collaboration with others, national approaches or a national strategy or plan. In addition, many respondents suggested LAC should provide more support to smaller institutions, citing various forms of professional, technical or financial support as possibilities.

Another respondent noted that a broad, ambitious, collaborative plan for 'complete' collection conversion (i.e. digitization) would allow a more cohesive effort toward national objectives by individual institutions. They argued that the extensive digital collections that would result would provide a basis to satisfy both the serious scholar and the casual browser.

Others advocated that LAC should continue to strengthen the interlending network, adding new media and new means of delivery to the system. One noted that LAC should work to ensure that changes to the Copyright Act will permit reasonable electronic duplication to support user access to digital information.

It was suggested that a key way to foster national access and preservation for federal information would be to persuade government departments to commit funds to the improvement of information management.

A provincial library association placed great emphasis on LAC strengthening its capacity to provide an archive of federal government born-digital publications, and to pursue partnership arrangements with provincial libraries and/or other research institutions who could do the same for provincial documents.

When asked what should be LAC priorities in providing support to different communities, respondents from the library, archival, conservation and records management communities all frequently cited their need for more research and guidance, more easy-to-use tools, more digital content, and more shared initiatives. It was clear that many respondents saw assistance with the challenge of preserving fragile data and documents as a common need, and therefore a key priority for LAC.

Some respondents suggested LAC increase its ability to coordinate and foster the development of multilingual services and collections, especially electronic resources. Some felt that LAC must look broadly for ways to better serve and foster equitable information access in Canada for disadvantaged populations.

“For aboriginal and multicultural communities, work to define significant media of expression, to preserve and to make content accessible.”
Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing

A few in the library community noted that, while a LAC funding program exists toward archives, there is no direct LAC funding directed toward libraries. Others noted that funding was not the only option: “Ideally there would be mutual support—LAC provides expertise, or in-kind support, or technical assistance, etc. and in return receives assistance with its broad, national mandate.” It was suggested that, besides grants, sponsored courses or workshops for the library and archival communities would be helpful, as would other collaborative approaches to support continuing education for these communities.

Lastly, in terms of suggestions for LAC priorities in supporting communities, we were advised to “Be willing to row and let others steer.” We were asked to involve others more in the development of any major national initiative, whether developing description databases, developing facilities for document/data preservation and storage, undertaking research, or developing policy.

We also asked, in the consultation paper, if there were subject areas or types of material for which LAC must change or strengthen its collecting policies.

“LAC would increase its relevance by working with small institutions in promoting archival programs. [These], such as Aboriginal archives and religious archives may have influence in defining a significant portion of Canada’s documentary heritage and be in positions to define access policies governing vital components of our history.”
Association of Canadian Archivists

Respondents noted that LAC must place more emphasis on the capture and long-term access of electronic media. Many advocated for increased digitization, while a voice of caution from the archival community asked if LAC had weighed the costs of this activity against the possible constraints our investment in digitization could place on more traditional activities.

One respondent suggested that LAC implement measures to ensure that specialized collections and rare book collections are not broken up and that they are maintained and preserved appropriately. Others suggested that we work to augment the availability of documents in alternative formats such as large-print or braille.

It was suggested that our internal collection policy, which aims toward comprehensiveness for publications, was too-ambitious a target, especially in the burgeoning electronic publishing field. For records, the same respondents thought that

LAC would need to better define the concept of “national significance” within a context of institutional capacity for physical and electronic storage, preservation and access.

As a final question for this section, we asked if LAC should place more emphasis on acquiring, creating, and assuring the long-term access and preservation of digital media. One respondent reflected the response of many: “Yes, for both retrospective and born-digital materials. While not a substitute for original documents or artifacts, digital resources are the way of the future.”

“Acquisition or creation of digital resources is counterproductive if efforts to ensure their long-term preservation are not pursued seriously. LAC could play a leading role in research related to the long-term stability of digital media and the proper care, storage, and handling of such media.”
Canadian Association for the Conservation of Cultural Property

While endorsing the growing importance of digital information, many respondents noted that this was a vast and rapidly changing arena which would require new approaches, new resources, and new capacity at LAC.

One suggestion was that an archival approach be adopted for born-digital material. Such an approach would be based on selective representation rather than aiming toward comprehensiveness, which was viewed as unattainable and likely unnecessary. Another respondent noted that LAC could play a lead role, in partnership with the scholarly publishing community and academic libraries, in the development of a LOCKSS (Lots of Copies Keep Stuff Safe) system for academic journals.

Some respondents suggested what LAC should digitize: Aboriginal materials (both print and oral), census material, regional material (photos, local histories, local obituary indexes, etc.) and material to cover an ever-broadening range of Canadian subjects.

There were also suggestions with whom we should coordinate and partner in this endeavour, most notably the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information (CISTI) and the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM).

Some respondents advocated establishing regional digitization centres to foster high-quality, standardized and cost-effective digitization and indexing of provincial, regional and local material. To provide national access to such material, several areas of endeavour were suggested including format-based national meta-search services (Images Canada was cited as an example of this), portals to federate searching across these services, and the development of tools to support digitization and metadata creation.

“Due to the exponential increase in born digital materials, efforts by LAC need to be complemented by others who are involved in the same work. Again, this needs to be part of a national plan. LAC cannot carry out its mandate without fellow stakeholders. Distributed responsibilities (“networks” and “partnerships”) are a sensible and financially realistic response.”
Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (now Canadiana.org)

Commentary on “A prime learning destination”

When asked how LAC would best promote the use and understanding of Canada’s documentary heritage by young Canadians, respondents suggested a number of approaches. Many said that providing Web-based resources was imperative, and primary sources, interpretive material, teaching resources, learning tools and a portal were all

“Simplify the search process so kids can find homework material more easily.”
Alberta Family Histories Society

mentioned as types of online resource that would be useful. One respondent cautioned that providing and guiding learners in the use of “raw materials” (i.e. primary source material) should be favoured over interpreting that content for them.

It was suggested that we provide tangible as well as virtual primary sources and exhibitions, in order to put real or facsimile artifacts in learners’ hands. Respondents noted that for a young audience we must make the content interesting and simple to find for homework purposes. They suggested we package and deliver content in other ways too, such as through partnerships with educational media (e.g. TVO) or with textbook publishers. Many respondents urged us to work collaboratively with provincial ministries of education.

Several respondents encouraged LAC to support the role of school libraries and teacher-librarians in fostering literacy, reading habits, and information literacy in young people. The Canadian School Library Association urged LAC to become a more active, working partner than it has been in recent years.

Another question addressed LAC roles that would support higher education. Here many respondents called for more content to be online, and for improved search tools and more online finding aids. The need for speed in document delivery was noted, and while many cited the desirability of digital document delivery, there was also endorsement for a continued strong interlibrary-loan system for traditional formats of material.

Respondents also suggested we need to be more active in reaching this very large, but largely unaware, potential user base.

One respondent suggested that selected university libraries could be designated as sites to which LAC records in tangible formats could be shipped, so that they become more accessible to graduate and post-graduate students across Canada.

A third question asked how LAC might most effectively support literacy, reading and lifelong learning in Canada.

Again, respondents suggested the key roles that are played, and could be fostered, by school libraries and public libraries. They urged LAC to continue to support literacy as part of lifelong learning, but to partner with libraries to develop and share literacy programs. One provincial library association noted that Read Up On It is a useful tool in promoting literacy and reading.

Some respondents noted that exhibitions of material from LAC collections were useful in this role. One respondent suggested LAC could learn from the Virtual Museum of Canada in terms of its partnerships and how it reaches the public.

Commentary on “A lead institution in Knowledge and Information Management”

This direction focuses on government information management, and entails taking strategic approaches to deliver on our legislated roles related to government information, and increasing our capacity to lead and advise in key areas of information management such as metadata, long-term preservation and access, and records management.

We asked stakeholders to advise us how we might improve access to information for both the public service and the Canadian public, and what would be the most useful role for LAC to play to help the federal government achieve effective knowledge and information management.

Many respondents, only one of which was a government department, agreed that government information management was an important priority, and one noted that “LAC could drive such productivity improvements within the federal government that the modest investments made by the Canadian taxpayer would pale in comparison.” The archival community noted the important evidentiary role archives play, ensuring that citizens’ rights are protected and that politicians and governments are accountable.

Respondents from the library community emphasized how important government information was to their clients, and how important libraries were as an equitable access and distribution channel for government documents. They endorsed all efforts to make publications more easily accessible over the Internet, suggesting, for example, that we encourage limiting the number of Web portals within government. They also advocated that the Depository Services Program continue, whether by LAC taking it over or by LAC working with Public Works and Government Services Canada to reform and expand the program.

Other respondents urged us to press for uniform minimum cataloguing or metadata standards.

That LAC intended to place increased emphasis on e-records was viewed as encouraging by most respondents. One noted that advice on strategic electronic records issues needs to be available and knowledgeable, adding that “Standards for e-records and e-publications solutions for the GoC need to be worked out quickly so we stop the loss of records and the build-up of huge backlogs.” Another respondent pointed out that persistent URLs will be necessary for any online government information that is intended for long-term access. And another noted that in a highly networked environment, a MARC record in a catalogue with a persistent URL embedded in the 856 field could link to the electronic document held in a secure repository anywhere—not necessarily at LAC.

Other respondents stressed the need to strengthen records management standards for both print and electronic records. One response noted that “LAC cannot afford to neglect the paper-based collection because of added responsibilities with regard to digital media.” Some mentioned the

“Advice on strategic electronic records issues needs to be available and knowledgeable. Standards for e-records and e-publication solutions for GOC need to be worked out quickly so we stop the loss of records and the build-up of huge backlogs.”
Veterans Affairs Canada

importance of up-to-date Records Disposition Authorities, and one respondent called for accelerating support to defining core functional filing systems beyond corporate services.

A couple of respondents noted that people were ultimately the key to better information management. LAC was urged to invest in ensuring knowledgeable, communicative and cooperative staff who could in turn furnish better advice, training and guidance to other people in other parts of government.

Stakeholder communities' priorities

Library community

Of written responses, more than one-half were representations from the library community. Library feedback was generally positive, containing a wealth of constructive suggestions for areas in which LAC could make a difference to them and to the lives of their users. In general, their priorities reflected the client needs of their type of library.

Public libraries, for example, urged LAC to partner with them to extend our reach to more Canadians in the communities in which they live and work. They emphasized the need for LAC to promote itself on a national basis. They suggested we use their facilities as venues for exhibitions and events, and their staff as a distribution channel for information about LAC and its services. Public libraries indicated that their own role in fostering reading and literacy could be strengthened if LAC were to work on a complementary basis at the national, policy level toward the same goals.

Academic libraries emphasized the needs of research: more and better Web-based access tools, more digital content, continued networks to foster document delivery, and a balanced copyright regime.

Libraries urged LAC to sustain its current services that are aimed at them, mentioning specifically free AMICUS, the Library Book Rate, Interlibrary Loan, ISBN/ISSN/ISMN, and the Core Library Statistics Program. Many emphasized the value to their users of local access to federal publications, and urged LAC to take all or a part of the Depository Services Program.

Libraries asked LAC to show more leadership in areas of common concern such as meeting the challenges of digital information and how to balance traditional collections and roles with new opportunities presented by the digital information environment.

Lastly, libraries suggested that LAC could play a key role as champion of the role of libraries and archives within the Government of Canada.

Archival community

The archival community consistently expressed concern that LAC would withdraw or fundamentally alter the funding program (a \$1.74 million grants and contributions program) that has long provided support to Canadian archives' development. Associated with this concern was a firm expression of support for the role played by the Canadian Council of Archives, which has administered the fund on behalf of LAC. The CCA was repeatedly cited as a community-driven and effective national body that is pivotal to archival development in Canada. A pervasive sentiment seemed to be that LAC, whether by attitude or position within government, was not as able to be close to the community and responsive to its needs or as willing to lead through collaborative endeavour.

The archival community also urged LAC to support Archives Canada, the national gateway to archival resources, citing it as the core of a national archival access network. Some encouraged LAC to continue to put archival holdings online, while others cautioned that the move to digital must not cause us to neglect basic archival responsibilities of collecting, organizing and preserving the record. A similar fear was expressed by some in the community about how the emphasis in the *Directions* consultation paper on service and use of the documentary heritage might impinge on the preservation of the authentic record for the future.

The archival community expressed an interest in having more guidance available to them and more access to LAC's archival expertise. Consultation sessions in the North and many provinces expressed concern that currently the oral traditions of Canada's indigenous peoples are not being adequately captured and preserved, despite the opportunities of digital technologies. One of the clear needs was for assistance with audio preservation of the oral histories that have already been recorded.

The community also called for LAC to help raise the profile of archives to Canadians and within the Government of Canada in order to foster understanding of the role, importance and impact of archives within our society.

Conservation community

The conservation community strongly advocated for LAC to provide national leadership in the preservation of both traditional and digital media. They suggested we focus on certain areas—policy, standards, training, guidance, and research. There were several mentions of the benefits of training programs both in the field and through internships at LAC. A recurrent message from this community was that LAC must continue, indeed strengthen, its commitment to share its expertise on a proactive and national basis.

Information management, Records management and Government respondents

Of paramount importance to these communities is the ongoing collaborative effort required to more efficiently and more comprehensively capture, preserve and provide access to federal government information. The particular challenge of digital information management was noted repeatedly. LAC was urged to work more closely with departments as they create and manage records, as they publish, and as they develop

metadata and finding aids. We were advised to engage with departments in projects that can be shared and reused with other departments. And LAC was urged to provide improved and more timely access to its holdings of government information. (More detailed information is found in the section “Commentary on ‘A lead institution in Knowledge and Information Management’”).

Publishing community

Much of the consultation with the publishing community was focused on the draft legal deposit regulations.

Representatives were unanimous in expressing how pleased they were to have been asked for their feedback. They were generally satisfied with the wording or interpretation of the regulations as written, although they noted that they had needed to read the accompanying background document to fully understand the legislation. A few publishers were concerned that the requirement to provide available metadata, as well as the accessibility provisions, might be an added burden on them. Some questioned the requirement to provide every format or version of a publication, wondering why LAC would want duplication of content considering the overall volume of material to collect.

The main preoccupation of almost every publisher consulted was the level of public access LAC would allow to electronic publications. There was a generalized unease with the lack of control over the publication once it was delivered to LAC. The common issues expressed were the need to protect the security, authenticity, and integrity of the publication as submitted and the commitment of LAC to honour the rights of creators, trade secrets, and the conditions of license agreements under which publishers might operate.

Nevertheless, the publishing community representatives interviewed recognized the importance of LAC as a national institution and expressed support for the heritage role it carries out. They would like their role in the creation, preservation, and promotion of the published heritage of Canada equally recognized by LAC. They suggested that LAC concentrate on activities that do not pose a commercial threat to the industry, and keep in mind how vulnerable the publishing industry is to free access to publications.

A more general question was posed as to what LAC could do for or with publishers. Many individuals cited heightened communication efforts and more consultation on relevant issues as things they would like to see. As one individual interviewed stated, “Having the conversation is important.” A big part of this “conversation” in the near future will be discussions around public access to digital publications, but publishers also saw a need to increase knowledge in the publishing community in general of the purpose and mandate of LAC and the “why” of legal deposit.

Many publishers were genuinely interested in and positive about the future direction of the LAC. Their greatest hope was that LAC would be successful in its response to the huge challenge it faces in the collection and preservation of publications produced online, and that it would have the resources necessary for the task. On a personal level, several

also hoped for a national institution that was relevant and vital to them as individuals, as parents, and as citizens, and that reached out to become significant in the lives of the young people of the country.

Cultural communities

Cultural communities across Canada as well as librarians and archivists serving diverse populations were consulted regarding LAC's new directions as well as general attitudes towards archives and libraries.

The preliminary responses from cultural communities indicate that libraries are highly valued and well used. The public library system is often seen as a point of first contact for recent immigrants in a new community as a place to seek out not just traditional materials, but also, information on settlement and employment and access to Internet resources.

Cultural communities, especially ones more recent to Canada, do not have a strong connection to archives. However, many expressed the need for a nationally-led initiative to ensure that their archival materials are also included in LAC's collection and they felt very strongly that their archives are of "national significance".

In terms of Library and Archives Canada, we are barely on their radar and communities told us that we have a significant amount of work to do to develop relationships, build collections and services and promote ourselves.

Librarians and archivists providing services to diverse communities expressed the need for support and resources from LAC. Libraries asked for leadership in areas such as cataloguing non-English and non-French materials and finding reliable vendors of foreign language materials. Archivists wanted assistance in areas such as preservation, advocacy and promotion.

In general, however, most cultural communities and service providers consulted felt that the creation of Library and Archives Canada was a positive step and hoped that it would result in improved services for cultural communities and those serving diverse populations.

Historical research stakeholders

Feedback from historical and genealogical societies, as well as from a number of individual researchers, focused on the importance of LAC holdings to them and stressed their desire to see continued growth in the amount of information, both source material and findings aids, that is available online. They also cited the need for service improvements, particularly in the timeliness of responses to archival reference and ATIP requests. The Canadian Historical Association called for increased access to specialist

archivists, improved access to government information (and that more of it be declassified), and a modernized approach and reduced costs in reprographic services. They also cited a need to immediate action to create a national policy on preserving digital knowledge “so that future scholars will be able to write the history of the information age in Canada.”

Consultation Process Evaluation

Several respondents thanked or commended the LAC for consulting externally, or indicated that they had enjoyed reading and thinking about LAC’s mandate and future.

In order to assess whether our consultation process was effective, respondents who used the Web form were offered four evaluation questions at the end of the form. While only twelve respondents replied to these questions, most of these found the consultation useful or very useful. While some were neutral on some questions, no respondent cited that it had not been useful. Details are in Appendix 3.

Conclusion

The wide-ranging and extensive feedback that Library and Archives of Canada received from a variety of stakeholder communities was, and remains, at once gratifying and a challenge to us.

We are gratified by the expressions of support to the new institution, and amount of interest in our future illustrated by the lengthy and thoughtful responses. And we were gratified by the clear endorsement to the broad directions that we have set out for our future.

But we are also challenged: to digest and analyze the feedback we received; to think about it; to internalize it and learn from it; and to consider it carefully and work out how to act on its basis. We have asked, we have listened; the challenge now is to hear.

And there were key messages to be heard. LAC must work collaboratively to achieve its mandate and goals. It must be more strategic in its programs and its national role. And it must be more proactive in preserving Canada’s documentary heritage, and more creative in delivering it back to Canadians.

This report was prepared by
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with additional input from Elizabeth Martin (re Publishers consultation), Mijin Kim (re Cultural
communities consultation) and Marianne McLean (re Archival community consultation)
December 2004

Appendix 1: List of Respondents

Access Copyright

Association des archivistes du Québec, le Groupe d'archivistes de la région de Montréal, le Regroupement des services d'archives de la région de Québec, le Regroupement des services d'archives privées agréés du Québec, et le Réseau des services d'archives du Québec (réponse d'ensemble).

Association of Canadian Archivists

Algonquin College-Library Technician Program

Alberta Family Histories Society

Assembly of First Nations

Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada

British Isles Family History Society of Greater Ottawa

Canadian Association for Graduate Studies

Canadian Association for the Conservation of Cultural Property

Canadian Association of Disability Service Providers in Post-Secondary Education

Canadian Association of Law Libraries

Canadian Association of Music Libraries

Canadian Association of Professional Conservators

Canadian Association of Public Libraries

Canadian Association of Research Libraries

Canadian Association for School Libraries

Canadian Association of Special Libraries and Information Services

Canadian Association of University Teachers

Canadian Centre for Studies in Publishing

Canadian Health Libraries Association

Canadian Historical Association

Canadian Initiative on Digital Libraries

Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions

Canadian Library Association

Canadian Library Trustees Association

Canadian National Institute for the Blind

Canadian Research Knowledge Network

Cold Lake Public Library

Council of Administrators of Large Urban Public Libraries

Council of Federal Libraries

École de bibliothéconomie et des sciences de l'information, Université de Montréal

Ex Libris Association

King Township Public Library

Library Association of Alberta

Library of Parliament

McGill University Health Sciences Library – McGill Aboriginal Health Portal

New Brunswick Public Library Service

Newfoundland & Labrador Library Association

Nova Scotia Library Association

Ontario Legislative Library

Pemmican Press
Provincial and Territorial Library Directors Council
Public Library InterLINK
Records Management Institute
Regina Public Library
Saskatchewan Library Association
Toronto Public Library
Veterans Affairs Canada
The Writers' Union of Canada

Anonymous or signed responses were also received from several individuals.

Appendix 2: Consultation sessions held

(All were in 2004.)

Consultations with library community representatives:

- Council of Federal Libraries (May 26, Ottawa)
- Canadian Association of Research Libraries (June 15, Victoria)
- Provincial and Territorial Library Directors Council (June 15, Victoria)
- Executive Council, Canadian Library Association (June 16, Victoria)
- Council of Large Urban Public Libraries (June 19, Victoria)

Consultations with archival community representatives:

- Northwest Territories (Yellowknife, August 10)
- Nunavut (Cambridge Bay, August 11 and 12)
- Newfoundland and Labrador (September 7, St. John's)
- Yukon (September 28, Whitehorse)
- British Columbia (October 1, Vancouver)
- Alberta (October 4, Calgary)
- Saskatchewan (October 6, Saskatoon)
- Manitoba (October 7, Winnipeg)
- Ontario (October 13, Toronto)
- New Brunswick (October 15, Moncton)
- Prince Edward Island (October 18, Charlottetown)
- Nova Scotia (October 20, Halifax)
- Quebec (October 22, Montreal)

Consultations with cultural community representatives:

- Chinese community (October 25, Vancouver, BC)
- South-Asian community (October 22, Surrey, BC)
- (More consultations are planned for Montreal and Ottawa in January 2005)

Appendix 3: Evaluation - Summary

The following summarizes the twelve responses to the final evaluation questions on the Web submission form.

1. In terms of informing you about the plans of Library and Archives Canada to meet its new mandate, did you find this exercise:

Not at all useful	Not useful	Neutral	Useful	Very useful
		3	7	2

2. How useful has this consultation been in allowing you or your community to adequately provide your perspective to Library and Archives Canada?

Not at all useful	Not useful	Neutral	Useful	Very useful
		2	8	2

3. Has this consultation been useful in affirming the value of a relationship with Library and Archives Canada?

Not at all useful	Not useful	Neutral	Useful	Very useful
		4	6	2

4. Generally, do you consider this opportunity to provide feedback to have been:

Not at all useful	Not useful	Neutral	Useful	Very useful
		3	7	2