Saskatchewan Libraries
Sharing knowledge in a
multitype system

Working Together: Saskatchewan Libraries and other Information Providers

Discussion Paper

By

The Saskatchewan Multitype Library Board

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Executive Summary

Overview

Saskatchewan's library system is one of Saskatchewan's best kept secrets.

The quality of life of Saskatchewan residents is enriched every day by a network of over 1000 libraries, including more than 300 public libraries, over 40 post-secondary and special libraries, and hundreds of school libraries.

The purpose of this discussion paper is to:

- Define the multitype library system.
- Highlight the positive impact of libraries on many sectors of our province.
- Advocate for greater awareness of the value of libraries.
- Demonstrate that a little extra support for libraries and other information providers brings significantly improved services to residents.
- Discuss several issues crucial to libraries and other information providers today.
- Inform target audiences of these issues.

The Multitype Library Board -- a Minister's Advisory Board mandated to build cooperation among libraries in different sectors in Saskatchewan and to report to the Minister of Learning -- has prepared this discussion paper to open a dialogue and generate ideas.

Accomplishments

This discussion paper is an update to the Multitype Library Board's 2002 discussion paper: *Saskatchewan Libraries Working Together*. The discussion paper is addressed to a broad audience, including internal library groups as well as groups outside the library community, such as government departments, school boards, municipal councils, grand councils, and many other groups.

Many of the Multitype Library Board's accomplishments in the past two years have had their basis in the 2002 discussion paper: *Saskatchewan Libraries Working Together*. Such accomplishments include the creation of an account within Saskatchewan Learning to handle fund administration for the Multitype Database Licensing Program (MDLP), thereby ensuring the stability of the program. The library community has continued to provide financial support to the program, thus ensuring the citizens of Saskatchewan have access to over 7000 online, full-text, high-quality and authoritative magazines and a variety of reference material in areas of health, consumer information, etc.

In response to the issue of recruitment and retention of professional librarians in Saskatchewan, the Multitype Library Board partnered with the Saskatchewan Library Association to establish the Saskatchewan Libraries Education Bursary, which offers funding to students enrolled or accepted in a library science program. Upon accepting the bursary, the student agrees to take residence and employment in Saskatchewan for at least two years after completing the degree.

The Board has created the Promotion Steering Committee, which has developed a communication strategy for libraries across Saskatchewan to use in promoting their library services. The campaign, *libraries. online.,* has reached the implementation stage.

The Multitype Library Board worked with Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation to develop highway signs identifying communities with public libraries. The highway signs are appearing across the province.

Since 2002, the Multitype Library Board has also accomplished several first steps towards the development of a Saskatchewan digitization strategy. In 2003, the directors of the six largest Saskatchewan libraries and the Saskatchewan Archives Board requested that the Multitype Library Board advance the concept of a Saskatchewan digitization strategy. They submitted a report and discussion paper to the Board proposing a model for a possible digitization alliance. This fit with the Board's five year strategic plan, developed in 2003, which identified the importance of ensuring that multitype partners have the capacity to digitize information and have enhanced online collections that are utilized by the public.

The Multitype Library Board held two Digitization Forums in the fall of 2004 in which consultations were held with a variety of partners. Partners responded positively to the concept of a digitization alliance.

In summer 2005, the Multitype Library Board commissioned a Digitization Inventory Project. This project surveyed 98 libraries, archives, museums, art galleries, and other community organizations to identify the level of digitization activity in the province, as well as digitization needs and challenges.

The Inventory Project had been identified at the 2004 Digitization Forums as a necessary first step in creating province-wide collaborative digitization activity among diverse institutions with the eventual goal of increasing public access and use of digital collections in Saskatchewan. It helped identify and engage interested partners, developed an inventory of current projects and collections, and also identified needs and issues.

Summary of Discussion Issues and Recommendations

1. **Promoting Our Libraries**
   Getting the word out that Saskatchewan residents have access to a world of information through libraries.

   Our province can boast of having one of Canada's best library systems. We need to promote it. We also need to profile the contributions that libraries make to Saskatchewan's economic, cultural, educational and tourism sectors.

   In September 2005, the Multitype Library Board in partnership with all types of libraries and the Saskatchewan Library Association launched www.mylibrary.sk.ca -- a single access portal to e-library services. A province-wide "libraries. online" promotion campaign was also launched to promote the mylibrary.sk.ca portal. We recommend that this strategy be supplemented with the following steps: Provincial Library work with the Multitype Library Board, the Government of Saskatchewan and Tourism Saskatchewan to place information about libraries on their web sites; and continue to disseminate this discussion paper to initiate further ideas.

2. **Perception that the internet Replaces Libraries**
   Providing the expertise to guide people through the morass of the internet to the information they require.

   There is a perception that the internet replaces libraries. Although the internet is an important tool for locating information on a variety of subjects, it has not, cannot and will not replace libraries.

   Libraries contribute to communities in diverse and far-reaching ways. As learning environments and as value-added service providers, libraries offer services to people that the internet simply cannot provide. The broad value and impact of libraries needs to be acknowledged and supported.

   The importance of libraries has increased in the context of the internet. Public libraries offer internet access, thus ensuring equitable internet access for all residents. In addition, information on the internet changes rapidly and constantly. Libraries have a vital role in helping their users locate and evaluate all types of information, regardless of format. Assisting users in finding and assessing the validity of information found on the web is an important function of libraries.

   Libraries need to help people develop the information literacy skills necessary to make informed decisions about the information they find on the internet. Finally, there is a need to establish financial support for the digitization work and partnerships that are being established in Saskatchewan.

   Funding support for all types of libraries, and other community information providers such as archives, needs to be sustained and increased. There is a need for continued support for Community Net. Since only 50% of public library branches are on Community Net, there is a need to extend it to the remaining half of the province.

3. **Support for School Libraries**
   Providing the means for school libraries to deliver resource-based learning.

   Saskatchewan's school libraries do not have enough teacher-librarians and they are not adequately funded with regard to collections and support personnel. Saskatchewan has an average of 0.24 teacher-librarians per school and 0.44 library technicians per school. $23 per student is spent annually by schools for library materials. This is not enough. Metropolitan areas are more likely to have teacher-librarians and support staff in schools, but there is inconsistency in less populated areas.

   The Multitype Library Board recommends that 1) there be a formal assessment of current conditions in the province's school libraries; 2) there be qualified teacher-librarians in all school divisions with the ultimate goal of a teacher-librarian in every school; and 3) there be library technicians working in partnership with teacher-librarians in all school divisions. Saskatchewan Learning and the new school divisions are encouraged to investigate how accountability measures and processes might address the contribution school libraries make to the outcome of student achievement.

   As part of the Province's support for resource-based learning, the Province is encouraged to support education and training for resource centre staff; support appropriate learning materials, including online learning materials and courses of study; and support resource centre facilities as a component of capital funding programs. The Board encourages the development of better access to teacher-librarian education for Saskatchewan residents. In addition, it may be useful to support Canadian research into the link between school libraries and learner success.

4. **Information Management in Government**
   Partnering with government to develop an information management infrastructure that can support e-government.

   The Government of Saskatchewan is developing citizen-focused e-government services. This includes developing a single internet-based service delivery window that presents government information in a comprehensible manner to the average resident. Achievement of this goal rests on the government's ability to manage its information resources.

   We recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan follow through on the strategies outlined in the Information Management Framework; consult with libraries on how to design and present government information online; partner with libraries to deliver government information to the people of Saskatchewan; provide links to library web sites on the government's central web site; and involve the library community in the development of information management policies for government. Funding that recognizes the role that libraries play in delivering government information may be appropriate.

5. **Hiring Standards for Information Management Professionals**
   Partnering with government to model competency standards for information management professionals.

   We encourage the Government of Saskatchewan to apply educational and competency guidelines when hiring information management professionals. We urge the Public Service Commission to develop a competency profile for librarians to be used in the rest of the

province as well as in government. We specifically recommend that the Public Service Commission advise government departments to use these standards; partner with libraries to provide appropriate training and information about the standards; and employ a professional librarian to provide guidance to departments on the hiring of information management professionals. Through these efforts, the government will set an example that other employers in the province can follow.

6. Recruiting Professional Librarians for Saskatchewan
Facilitating residents to become knowledge-based workers and sustaining professionals in the library sector.

The Board is well aware that there is an urgent and growing need in the library sector for professionals within the province of Saskatchewan with Masters Degrees in Library Science. The library community as individuals and organizations needs to financially support the Saskatchewan Libraries Education Bursary to encourage recruitment and retention.

7. Tax Exemptions for Libraries' Electronic Subscriptions
Treating print and electronic information resources the same for taxation purposes.

Libraries are seeking the same tax exemptions for library magazines, journals, newspapers and other information resources they purchase in electronic form as they enjoy on the material they purchase in print form. The Board believes that the application of the Provincial Sales Tax to libraries' electronic subscriptions limits the quality and amount of electronic information available to the residents of Saskatchewan.

We recommend that the Department of Finance exempt library and school subscriptions to online electronic indexes, full text electronic resources, e-books, and e-journals from the Provincial Sales Tax. Savings could fund training initiatives, hiring and other support materials.

Multitype Library System

Mandate and role of the Multitype Library Board

The Multitype Library Board was established by *The Libraries Co-operation Act* in 1996. Its mandate is to coordinate Saskatchewan libraries and other information providers to work together cooperatively. Representatives from public, school, post-secondary education, special libraries, Aboriginal libraries and other information providers (e.g. archives, museums, etc.) comprise the Board.

The role of board members is to consult with their sectors, identify situations in which working together would improve services and contain costs, and develop structures and working relationships to facilitate these initiatives.

The Board is also mandated to advise the Minister responsible for libraries on ways to develop the multitype library system in Saskatchewan. One method to do this is to participate in developing the Learning Sector Strategic Plan.

Definition of "multitype library system"

A multitype library system is a network of working relationships, between any combination of autonomous libraries and information providers, established to share services and resources for mutual benefit.

There are over 1000 libraries, including more than 300 public libraries, hundreds of school libraries, and more than 40 post-secondary and special libraries in Saskatchewan. There are more than 40 archives and many other information providers in Saskatchewan. Each of these types of information providers is autonomous and mandated to provide a clearly defined client group with a set of information services.

In a multitype library system, the jurisdictional boundaries and separate administrative structures of libraries remain intact, but cooperative initiatives and working relationships enable libraries to collectively acquire information products and develop services that they could not achieve independently.

The constant challenge and role of the Multitype Library Board is to find needs that overlap and allow these areas of mutual need to be the basis for the development of cooperative policies and programs.

All Saskatchewan libraries and other information providers benefit from the contained costs and improved services that result from cooperation, and are therefore committed to the multitype library system as the single best option to address the challenges of today's environment.

Vision, mission, strategic directions, and goals of the multitype library system

VISION
Access to information is a democratic right of all people in Saskatchewan.

MISSION
Libraries in Saskatchewan will work together to maintain and enhance a cooperative interdependent information network which will ensure a consistent and high quality information service through a multitype library system.

STRATEGIC DIRECTIONS

➢ Develop the multitype system.
➢ Implement the multitype system.
➢ Connect libraries of all types to provide equitable access to and delivery of information.
➢ Promote participation in the multitype library system.

GOALS

➢ Actively involve communities of interest and educate members on multitype values and participation standards.

➢ Research and document emerging issues facing the partners and develop strategies to address.

➢ Develop strategies that enable partners to expand their collections and become central players in publicly accessible high quality information.

➢ Expand multitype projects to encompass archives, Aboriginal libraries, museums and other service providers.

➢ Work with the library community to develop policy that clearly articulates the intent and implications of one stop access.

➢ Develop, implement and evaluate a province-wide strategy to aggressively promote the multitype system, libraries and other information providers.

Outcomes of the multitype library system

The establishment of multitype cooperation has fostered the development of several joint library initiatives. These initiatives are significantly improving the capacity of all libraries and other information providers to deliver information resources and services to Saskatchewan citizens.

The **Multitype Database Licensing Program** is an ongoing cooperative initiative in which all types of libraries and information providers cost-share the purchase of electronic newspaper, journal, and other information databases. Database licensing has added 7000 full text periodical titles from high-quality and safe databases to the collections of every participating library and information provider no matter how small or remote.

The impact has been tremendous. For example:

➢ Tawowikamik Public Library on the Peter Ballantyne reserve in Pelican Narrows subscribed to an average of 48 magazines annually between 1992 - 2000. Now, Tawowikamik Public Library offers 7000 full text magazines and journals via desktop computer by participating in the Database Licensing Program.
➢ A teacher-librarian has stated: "The best things about the databases for students are how easy they are to search and how trustworthy the results are. I always remind students that unlike the internet, someone was paid to write this and a magazine has put their reputation on the line by printing it."

The **Multitype Public Relations Project** is an initiative in which all types of libraries are developing a joint strategy to promote the value of libraries in Saskatchewan and address issues relating to the recruitment and retention of library staff in the province. This initiative will give many libraries a prominent voice and presence that would not have been possible otherwise. One outcome of this project was the creation of the Promotion Steering Committee. A second outcome was the establishment of the **Saskatchewan Libraries Education bursary** intended to promote the continued growth of professional librarianship in the province of Saskatchewan.

The **Digitization Forums** provided an opportunity for all types of libraries and other information providers to discuss potential areas of collaboration leading to a province-wide digitization strategy.

Ongoing activities of the Multitype Library Board focus on building the capacity of all libraries in many incremental ways.

Working together has created greater efficiencies for libraries and other information providers and enhanced information services for Saskatchewan residents. Direct benefits of multitype initiatives are:

➢ Improved access to high quality information resources in all types of libraries for all citizens;
➢ Improved public access to quality electronic information through library web sites and databases;
➢ Increased sharing of expertise among libraries; and
➢ Increased cooperative planning among libraries.

Impact of Information Services on Saskatchewan Quality of Life

Ecology of Libraries in Saskatchewan

This section is intended to describe the relationship between libraries and their environment and the province.

Our Library Tradition

Saskatchewan's early visionaries understood that libraries play an essential role in community development.

Our first library was created to inform our most important public institution -- the legislature. In 1876, when Lieutenant Governor David Laird traveled to Northwest Canada to establish the Territorial government, he brought with him a collection of indispensable books consisting of public documents and law texts. This collection later developed into the Saskatchewan Legislative Library, now the third largest research collection in Saskatchewan.

Libraries have a long history in Saskatchewan. As early as 1906 -- only one year after Saskatchewan became a province -- Saskatchewan's leaders recognized the importance of public libraries to meet the information needs of all residents. This resulted in the Public Library Act, which was passed by the Legislature. Although the first University Librarian at the University of Saskatchewan was appointed in 1914, the first withdrawal from the collection occurred in October 1909.

Libraries are a Rich Provincial Resource

Saskatchewan now has more than 1000 libraries including more than 300 public library locations, hundreds of school libraries, and more than 40 post-secondary and special libraries.

Investment in Saskatchewan libraries over the last century has resulted in highly developed collections of print and electronic materials. In addition, libraries have established participation in a sophisticated worldwide network of libraries that enables them to access library resources around the globe.

Our library collections, expertise, and services are a valuable investment, much of which has been made with public funds. It is a provincial resource to be valued, preserved, enhanced, and used.

Library Interdependence

The story of library development in Saskatchewan is one of hard work, adventure, and collaboration. Early on, libraries depended on one another for development assistance. Later on, libraries engaged in activities that would complement one another; for example, establishing systems for loaning materials to one another when needed. As a result, while libraries today belong to autonomous institutions and library systems, they regularly participate in joint policy and program development. Inevitably, changes in one library sector have a significant effect on other library sectors. Generally, when one sector fails, pressures increase on other sectors to fill the service gap. Libraries have begun to realize that there is a need to consider the interrelationships between libraries and other information providers, such as archives.

The Multitype Library Board has evolved from this increased cooperation among the library sectors and other information providers. In fact, the Board has been recognized by Dr. Ken Haycock in his report *The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Re-investment* with his recommendation "that Ministries of Education provide leadership for connected learning communities similar to Saskatchewan's multitype library (academic, public, school) system, enabling citizens of all ages and geographic areas to access information in all formats"[1].

Impact on Saskatchewan Life

Libraries permeate the fabric of Saskatchewan life. The role of a library is to meet the information needs of individuals and service communities. People have many information needs. In an average lifetime, an individual uses any number and types of libraries to find information for personal development, lifelong learning, recreation and hobbies, formal education, research and innovation, career searching, health or business-related research in any field of work. On a community-wide and provincial scale, libraries intersect with many aspects of our educational, cultural, social and economic development.

Libraries work across sector boundaries to bring information of value to people. For example, students receive homework help from their public library, special libraries sponsor information for local school science fairs, and university libraries help public servants to find historical statistics. This cross sector service is enabled by libraries working together behind-the-scenes.

Libraries also contribute to key institutions and sectors. A system of health libraries informs our health care sector. Academic and specialized libraries focusing on agriculture, science, technology, and industry inform our economic sector. Government libraries inform our public officials and civil servants in their day-to-day decision making.

In sum, libraries increase productivity in every sector by empowering individuals with the information they need to make decisions and enrich their lives.

Saskatchewan Libraries in the 21st Century

In the 21st century, libraries are important public centres of information, learning, and development in Saskatchewan. They use their legacy collections built over the last 100 years, as well as new electronic information sources. They continue services that build quality of life, and partner in new initiatives to help develop business and industry.

In April 2002, public libraries were moved from the former department of Municipal Affairs and Housing to the new, larger department of Saskatchewan Learning, which now includes the former departments of Saskatchewan Education, Post-secondary Education and Training, Early Childhood Development and Provincial Library. This has been beneficial, because the Board now has representation on the Learning Sector Strategic Planning Committee. The sectors encompassed within Saskatchewan Learning are similar to the sectors in the multitype system: school sector, post-secondary education sector, and public libraries. However, it is important to remember that other Board representatives from special libraries, archives and other information providers do not fall within the purview of Saskatchewan Learning.

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[1] Ken Haycock, *The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Reinvestment.* Toronto: Association of Canadian Publishers, 2003, p. 38.

Relationship between Libraries and Other Information Providers

Saskatchewan's information community consists of not just libraries but also other significant information providers such as archives, museums, historical societies, galleries, etc. These organizations play a vital role in the preservation and communication of Saskatchewan information. They have a long history of working with libraries in areas of mutual interest. Representatives from these types of organizations are part of the Multitype Library Board and, currently, a joint initiative is underway in the area of digitization strategies.

Conclusion

The Multitype Library Board has the unique privilege of viewing the broad impact of all types of libraries and information providers in Saskatchewan, and helping these institutions to grow. The purpose of this discussion paper is to boost library strength in the 21st century by raising the profile of libraries and other information providers, addressing some key issues, and developing partnerships.

The Multitype Library Board wishes to open a conversation with numerous sectors to raise awareness of the opportunities that exist through libraries and other information providers. To this end, this discussion paper highlights the roles libraries play in multiple sectors of Saskatchewan life and the opportunities they see for continuing this contribution.

Saskatchewan has an information infrastructure to which the Multitype Library Board contributes in order to meet the broad information needs of the province's residents. The work of the Board is based on the principle that through discussion and cooperation, communities of interest can come together to create a brighter future for Saskatchewan. The Board hopes that opening a discussion about libraries and other information providers will generate enthusiasm for the power of information to change our world.

Communities

How do public libraries contribute to communities?

Public libraries strengthen communities by ensuring that people of all socio-economic statures and ethnic backgrounds in Saskatchewan have equitable access to information.

People need information to make informed personal decisions and to enhance their work and life skills. Public libraries link people to information on government services, health, jobs, pensions, housing, business opportunities, and education opportunities. As well, they provide recreational reading and access to cultural resources such as archives, art galleries, film and video, cultural events, and author readings.

Strengthening communities by offering residents:

- Information on any topic
- Access to the internet through the Community Access Program and other programs, such as CommunityNet
- Recreational reading material
- Early childhood development programs
- Reading and writing programs
- Information literacy programs
- Assistance from expert library staff in-house and online
- Meeting rooms for community groups
- Delivery of materials for the homebound

- Reading materials and equipment for people with disabilities
- Support for home schooling
- Resources for personal, business, or job research
- Geomatics strategies
- Government online
- Online magazines and journals provided by library systems through participation in the multitype system
- Literacy support for newcomers

Keys to success
- ✓ Citizen-centered library services and collections.
- ✓ Awareness of library services by residents.
- ✓ A strong public library system supported by *The Public Libraries Act,* provincial and municipal funding, and province-wide library cooperation.
- ✓ Public libraries ensure that there is equitable access to information on the internet.

Quick Facts

Yorkton Public Library and the RCMP are partners in the Adopt-a-Library Literacy Program. Any public or school library can sign up for the program. The primary goal is to promote literacy. The library and the RCMP work together to raise funds to purchase material through Scholastic and Brodart at a considerable discount.

In a recent poll done by Saskatchewan Learning, 61.5% of respondents stated that they have borrowed material from their local library and 21.4% stated that they have borrowed from a library outside their community. (Saskatchewan Learning Report, 2005)

In a recent survey of Saskatoon residents, almost 75% of respondents visited the library at least once in the last year. (Saskatoon Public Library Needs Assessment Survey Report, 2004)

One out of every six people in the world is a registered library user. (Libraries: How they Stack Up, 2003)

Communities

Public libraries strengthening communities, one individual at a time

Case study from southeast Saskatchewan

"One of my patrons was a waitress (minimum wage); her husband was a laborer (again minimum wage). They have two children. She wanted to take a computer course to get a better job and approached social services and unemployment insurance and was told she didn't qualify for funding and to take out a loan if she wanted to take the course. Of course, being so low income, they didn't qualify for a loan either.
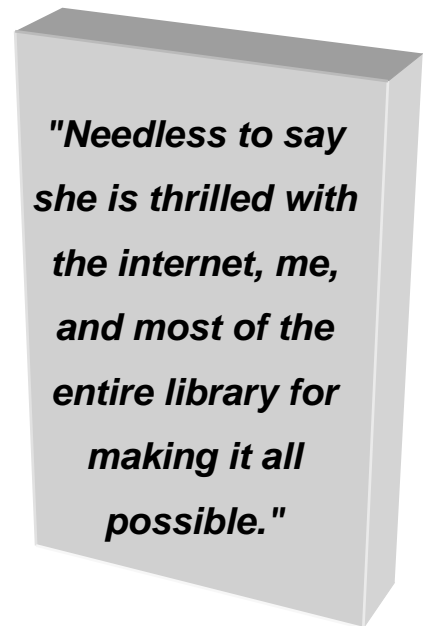
One day while in the library asking about a plant book, I suggested she go on the internet and get information about some specific plants. I showed her how to connect and search and helped her a couple of times and she found what she wanted.

She came back three more times and started going to some government sites. She found information on funding for low-income families to upgrade themselves, printed the information and took it to someone in Weyburn.

She is now taking her computer course (she is about half done), has passed each section so far with honors (over 90%), and after speaking to someone about doing her two weeks practice in an office at Radville, was told that if she was any good she could have a permanent job [sic].

Needless to say she is thrilled with the internet, me, and most of the entire library for making it all possible [sic]. Her husband is now studying to get his GED (studying a book he got through the library) so the whole family has benefited from *'Every Library Connected'*."

-- Testimonial collected from evaluation of the Every Library Connected Project.
This project put computers for internet access in every public library in Saskatchewan in 1999-2000. It was a joint project of municipal, provincial and federal governments.
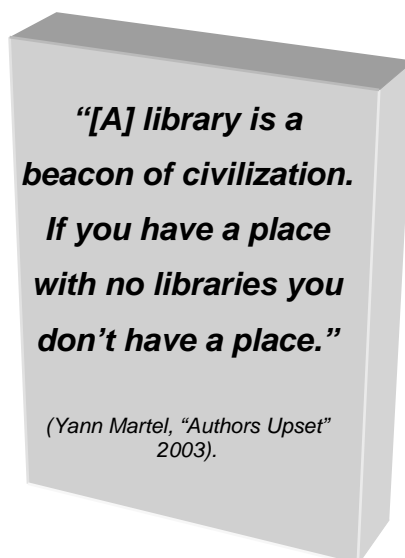
> *"Needless to say she is thrilled with the internet, me, and most of the entire library for making it all possible."*

Culture and Recreation

How do libraries contribute?

Libraries directly support Saskatchewan's **cultural industries** and **cultural workers**. Libraries purchase, promote and distribute products of the book publishing, film and video, and fine and performing arts industries.

Libraries foster **multiculturalism** by collecting and lending information resources and offering public programs that give expression to Saskatchewan's diverse cultures, including books in many languages.

Libraries support **recreation** by offering travel, sports, game and leisure information to patrons. They also offer recreational activities for youth, children, and adults.

> *"[A] library is a beacon of civilization. If you have a place with no libraries you don't have a place."*
>
> *(Yann Martel, "Authors Upset" 2003).*

Boosting culture, recreation, and opportunities by:

- Collecting and preserving Saskatchewan's cultural history
- Lending books, music, film, and art
- Offering recreational activities, such as craft classes, book clubs and storytelling

- Purchasing from Saskatchewan producers
- Distributing travel and recreational information
- Offering seminars about various sports and activities, such as mountaineering

Keys to success
- ✓ Awareness of library services by residents.
- ✓ Funding for multicultural library collections.

Quick Facts

Canadians spend an average 4.4 hours a week reading for pleasure. (Dividends: the value of public libraries in Canada, 1998)

Five times more people visit U.S. public libraries each year than attend U.S. professional and college football, basketball, baseball and hockey games combined. (Libraries: How they Stack Up, 2003)

Cultural library collections in Saskatchewan include:
- Aboriginal collection of the Mistasinihk Resource Collection, PNLS, La Ronge.
- Books in 29 languages at the Provincial Library.
- Agricultural and prairie history collection of the George Shepherd Library, Saskatoon.
- Ukrainian collection of the Mohyla Institute Archives, Saskatoon.

Youth

How do libraries contribute?

School and post-secondary education libraries contribute to the education of Saskatchewan youth. Public libraries offer a variety of programs for children and youth that foster reading, comprehension, information literacy skills, and help with school assignments. Public libraries also provide support for youth being home-schooled.

La Ronge Public Library offers homework help outside library hours outside the library.

The provincial government has a well-established youth strategy to strengthen Saskatchewan and to improve the quality of life for the province. As part of the youth strategy, it is essential for there to be education and career opportunities for all youth in the province. Libraries and other information providers play a role in ensuring youth have access to the tools and information about education, career development, recreation, sport and culture.

Through programs such as youth advisory committees, libraries engage youth in the democratic process. This citizenship development creates a connection between the youth and Saskatchewan, which will help keep youth in the province.

Boosting culture, recreation, education and opportunities for youth by:

- Connecting youth to the world of information
- Providing citizenship development through youth advisory committees

- Providing homework help for young adults
- Providing information on education and career opportunities
- Offering teen writing workshops

Keys to success:
- ✓ Strong public, school, special and post-secondary education libraries.
- ✓ Youth-centred library services and programs
- ✓ Public support for library services, activities and programs

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Quick Facts

Countries with the highest reading and comprehension levels provide their youth with greater access to books at home, school, public libraries, and bookstores. (Dividends: the value of public libraries in Canada, 1998)

According to the recent Saskatoon Needs Assessment, youth between the ages of 19-24 are less likely than average to: have a library card, have visited a library in the past year, have used the library website, and be aware of or have participated in library programs. (Saskatoon Public Library Needs Assessment Survey Report, 2004)

Virtual exhibits, created by archives in Saskatchewan, offer online learning experiences for youth (http://scaa.usask.ca/scaa/sain/).

Kindergarten to Grade 12

What is Resource-Based Learning?

A pillar of education in Saskatchewan is resource-based learning provided through school libraries.

Resource-based learning is the planning of educational programs that actively involve students in the meaningful use of a wide range of appropriate print, non-print, and human resources. (Learning Resource Centres in Saskatchewan, 1988)

School libraries with both a teacher-librarian and library technician are best able to provide resource-based learning. The digitization of learning objects also contributes to resource-based learning.

> *"An effective teacher-librarian is an integral part of the school's instruction goals."*
>
> Karen Walliser, Saskatchewan School Libraries Association

Boosting Learning by:

- Formulating questions
- Locating information
- Exploring online resources
- Judging information quality
- Handling conflicting information

- Organizing information
- Reading and thinking
- Synthesizing information
- Building creative presentations
- Evaluating personal success

Keys to Success

- ✓ Both a teacher-librarian and library technician in the school library.
- ✓ Information-rich and technology-rich school libraries.
- ✓ Support for home schooling.
- ✓ Collaborative planning between teacher-librarians and teachers.
- ✓ Strong school and library focus on building information literacy skills.

Quick Facts

Student scores increase by 10-20% in schools that have strong library media centres. (*Powering Achievement: School Library Media Programs Make a Difference: The Evidence, 2001)*

Saskatchewan has an average of 0.24 teacher-librarians per school and 0.44 library technicians per school. Saskatchewan spends an average of $23 per student annually on school library collections. (*Canadian School Libraries and Teacher Librarians*, 2005)

Library support staff are the key difference between strong and weak library media programs because they allow professional teacher-librarians to focus on their work with teachers and students rather than tending to warehousing duties.

All Saskatchewan K-12 schools and First Nation schools have access to high speed Internet service via CommunityNet, an essential infrastructure in support of resource-based learning.

*In 1978, there were 550 teacher-librarians in Alberta. There were 252 in 1998 and 106 in 2000.
Over the past six years, the number of elementary schools with teacher-librarians in Ontario has decreased from 80% to 59%. In 2003, only 10% of schools had a teacher-librarian compared to 46% in 1976.

*Between 1994 and 2000, 311 summer training courses were offered to teachers in Saskatchewan. None were offered for teacher-librarians between 1994 and 1999 and only two were offered in 2000.
*(*The Crisis In Canada's School Libraries: The Case for Reform and* Reinvestment, 2003)

Post-Secondary Education

How do libraries contribute?

University and college libraries provide information and services that support the information needs of students, faculty, and staff of post-secondary education institutions.

Historical and research collections, built over time, are valuable to researchers, businesses, government, and Saskatchewan residents. Anyone in Saskatchewan can access these resources through cooperative interlibrary lending arrangements.
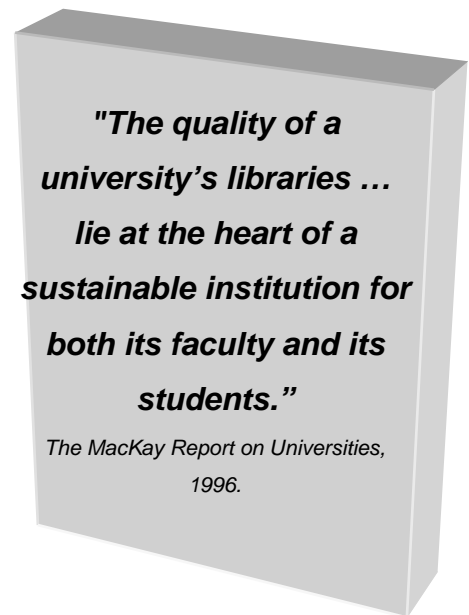
Academic libraries also partner with high-tech industries in cutting edge research and development.

> *"The quality of a university's libraries … lie at the heart of a sustainable institution for both its faculty and its students."*
>
> *The MacKay Report on Universities, 1996.*

Boosting the academic sector by:

- Developing in-depth collections
- Supporting student life-long learning
- Informing faculty research
- Supporting the delivery of distance education

- Preserving cultural materials
- Teaching information literacy skills
- Partnering with high-tech industries
- Attracting researchers to the province

Keys to success
- ✓ Maintaining the legacy and research collections built over time.
- ✓ Using technology to expand access to learning resources.
- ✓ Developing electronic information resources to support technology enhanced learning and distance education initiatives.

Quick Facts

SIAST librarians have provided research support for a large number of SIAST's Online Virtual Campus Courses, including the Nursing Education Program of Saskatchewan's online courses.

64 Canadian academic libraries, including the University of Regina Library, University of Saskatchewan Library, and First Nations University of Canada, recently created the first Canada-wide project to collectively purchase access to electronic research materials. Totaling $50 million and funded by the Canadian Foundation for Innovation, Saskatchewan Learning and the universities, the project developed a world class information infrastructure for researchers in Canada.

Health

How do libraries contribute?

Libraries provide quality health information to help people make informed health decisions. A partnership between the Multitype Database Licensing Program and the Health Quality Council ensures that all Saskatchewan residents have access to the Cochrane Library a database of evidence-based information, which is accessible to the public within their local library or through home access. The Cochrane Library is the best single source of reliable evidence about the effects of healthcare.

Many people are seeking health information on the internet. Most often, people begin their search with a search engine and not with a reliable medical website. Very few information health seekers verify the source and timeliness of information on a website that they have found. Libraries assist people in developing information literacy skills to help make sense of the information they find on the internet or receive from their doctors. Librarians help people select quality and credible health information.

> *"Libraries play a vital role in disseminating consumer health information and they are one of the first places people go to find information on their health."*
>
> Canadian Health Network

Enhancing health services for the people of Saskatchewan by:

- Providing access to reliable health information and databases
- Providing quality and reliable information to physicians
- Judging information quality

- Teaching information literacy skills
- Offering programs on health issues
- Collaboration with the Health Quality Council and among health libraries.
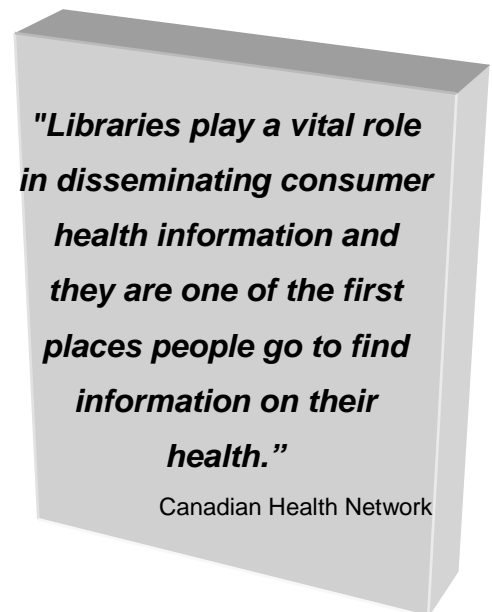
Keys to success
- ✓ Promoting quality health resources.
- ✓ Strong focus on building information literacy skills.
- ✓ Continued subscriptions to quality health databases.

Quick Facts

Libraries in Saskatchewan give all residents access to the Cochrane Library, a collection of evidence-based medicine databases. Funding from the Health Quality Council to the Saskatchewan Multitype Database Licensing Program made this possible.

Half of American adults have searched online for health information. Many want access to more information, but can't always find what is already available online. (*Internet Health Resources*, 2003)

Women are the primary consumers of online health information. (*Internet Health Resources*, 2003)

Knowledge Based Economy and Society

Libraries foster leading-edge innovation

Special and academic libraries directly support research and innovation in industry and business by providing research collections, as well as services. For example, the Saskatchewan Research Council's libraries in Regina and Saskatoon specialize in mining, biotechnology, energy, petroleum, manufacturing, and forestry information.

Prairie Agricultural Machinery Institute (PAMI) Library in Humboldt disseminates research information for PAMI initiatives. Their work contributes to the manufacturing sector and has spurred technological advances in all areas of farming practices.

Libraries specializing in agronomy, dryland farming, irrigation, seeds, land conservation, molecular plant biotechnology, soil science and fertilizers, include:

Leading-edge scientific and industrial research at our universities would be impossible without library collections in areas such as chemistry, biotechnology, medicine, physics, and engineering.

- Semiarid Prairie Agricultural Research Centre Library, Swift Current
- Prairie Farm Rehabilitation Administration Information Centre, Regina
- Potash Corporation of Saskatchewan Library, Saskatoon
- Indian Head Research Farm, Indian Head
- Agriculture and Agri-Food Canada Saskatoon Research Centre Library, Saskatoon
- National Research Council Information Centre, Saskatoon

Fostering business success

The Canada-Saskatchewan Business Service Centre Library in Saskatoon helps entrepreneurs to find the facts they need to start businesses including:

- developing a business plan
- financing a business
- trade and export requirements
- marketing strategies
- locating suppliers
- business taxation

The corporate sector also relies on libraries to supply up-to-date business information.

Keys to Success
- ✓ Recognition and support from libraries' parent institutions.
- ✓ Partnering with the broader library system to share resources and services.
- ✓ Continued development of library collections.

Knowledge Based Economy and Society (continued)

Libraries contribute to local economy

Libraries **provide jobs** to over 1250 people in Saskatchewan, ranging from entry-level positions to highly skilled knowledge-based professionals.

The **buying power of libraries** injects **vitality into cultural industries**. A poet may sell his/her first book to the local library or present it in an author reading, and popularity takes off from there. Library buying power also **supports numerous business sectors** such as computer hardware/software, local publishers, multimedia producers, office equipment and consulting.

Libraries **improve the market value of communities**. They are an attractive feature for new residents and businesses. Libraries promote their communities to the world. In Estevan, the public library initiated the city's web page.

Libraries **equip people for the new economy** and support the aims of the province's *Partnership for Prosperity* initiative. *Digital Training* through public libraries is teaching all citizens, particularly low income and Aboriginal people, to use computers and to search the internet. This helps residents identify educational and e-commerce opportunities and provides citizens with the information they need to help themselves develop.

Libraries **create jobs for knowledge-based workers**, helping the new economy to flourish in Saskatchewan.

Fostering economic prosperity by:

- Equipping people for the new economy
- Supporting cultural industries
- Supporting the business sector
- Helping citizens harness the internet
- Promoting local communities
- Attracting new businesses & residents
- Fostering economic activity
- Delivering literacy training (family literacy)

Keys to success
✓ Awareness of library services by residents, businesses and government
✓ Strong libraries with buying power.
✓ Continued development of library collections and services.
✓ Strong libraries employing qualified knowledge-based workers.
✓ Funding for internet literacy training programs.

> **Over 300 public libraries employ more than 1250 people in Saskatchewan.**

Quick Facts

Over 75% of library patrons polled in B.C. regularly purchased goods and services from retail stores while on a trip to the library. This economic activity ranges from $5.7 million - $20 million annually.

Studies show that libraries increase property values if they are maintained and well administered.

Quality of life -- including good schools and cultural and recreational facilities -- is the number one factor in business site selection.

Businesses recognize the strategic value of information. Many businesses house their own library collections and many other businesses use the services of the public library.
(Dividends: the value of public libraries in Canada, 1998)

Rural Life

How do libraries contribute to rural communities?

Libraries have always played an important role connecting rural areas with information. Many rural residents remember the days when they eagerly awaited boxes of books from the library.

Libraries foster quality of life and economic development in rural Saskatchewan.

Today, with more than 300 public library locations throughout our province, rural residents have more immediate access to library collections. Over 160 public libraries have access to high-speed internet because of CommunityNet. Library web sites, online question and answer services, and electronic collections, give rural residents quality information at their fingertips, from their local library or a home computer. Summer reading programs -- delivered throughout rural areas -- keep rural children inspired and connected with the world of literature and ideas and help to maintain reading skills.

All of these library services benefit quality of life in rural communities. An investment in public libraries has a positive impact on over 300 rural and remote communities across Saskatchewan.

How do libraries contribute to rural life?

Libraries are information providers -- acting as a bridge linking people with the information that they need to build a better world. They inform our scientists, business leaders and community leaders. They contribute to innovation and development in our agricultural and industrial sectors.

Libraries are educators -- helping people to learn about new opportunities as well as teaching them information literacy skills. School and academic libraries play a formal education role by ensuring that students have information. Many academic libraries offer distance education services -- a particular benefit for rural areas.

Libraries represent a vibrant sector of the information economy, providing jobs and attracting skilled information professionals to our province.

Keys to success
- ✓ Awareness of library services by residents.
- ✓ Continued support to all types of libraries.
- ✓ New partnerships that leverage the services of libraries to develop rural areas.
- ✓ Equitable and affordable access to electronic resources.
- ✓ Ensure that people in rural communities have access to library services.

Quick Facts

The 1999-2000 *Every Library Connected* program provided a computer to every public library in the province for the purposes of internet access -- a significant investment in over 300 communities.

162 public libraries out of 320 have Community Net.

More than 32,000 interlibrary loan requests were processed in Saskatchewan in 2004, which ensures equal access to information and materials not in people's communities.

First Nations and Métis People

How do libraries contribute?

Libraries contribute to the quality of life of First Nations and Métis people in Saskatchewan.

The Albert Library in Regina has taken a lead role in developing community-based library services, including homework help programs and pre-school story time sessions, designed for First Nations and Métis people. They also teach oral history interviewing and collection techniques to youths and adults.

Albert Library in Regina is an international model for library services to Aboriginal people.

The Pahkisimon Nuye?áh Library System in northern Saskatchewan delivers library services to remote northern communities through band schools.

The Library Services for Saskatchewan Aboriginal Peoples (LSSAP), established in 1991, was organized for information sharing on issues relating to library services for Aboriginal peoples in Saskatchewan. In 2004, they established the annual province-wide Aboriginal Storytelling Week. In 2005, they co-hosted the Fourth International Indigenous Librarians Forum in Regina.

In summer 2001, the Minister's Advisory Committee on Library Services for Aboriginal peoples examined ways to ensure Aboriginal people have access to information in the new millennium.

In 2003, as a result of the work of the Minister's Advisory Committee and their report *Information is for Everyone*, First Nations people are now eligible to receive a public library card, free-of-charge from their public library, regardless of residence. The Committee also affirmed that First Nations have ownership of, and primary responsibility for, on-reserve public libraries and public library services.

Enhancing library services to First Nation and Métis people by:

- Developing resources in the five indigenous languages of Saskatchewan
- Providing internet access and training
- Preserving First Nations information
- Setting up libraries in band schools
- Integrating oral storytelling into collections, programs, and services
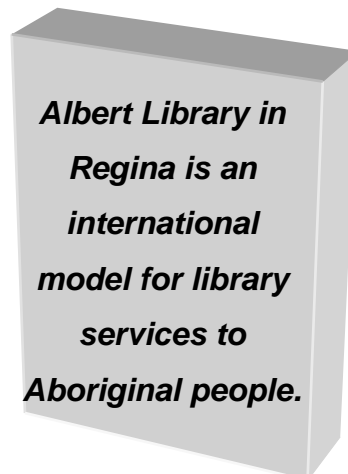- Offering early childhood development programs

Keys to success
- ✓ Partnerships with local communities to design user-centred library services.
- ✓ Integration of First Nations traditions and languages into library services.
- ✓ Funding for internet literacy training programs.

Quick Facts

Numerous special, academic, and public libraries are noted for their Aboriginal materials and services. Saskatchewan Indian Cultural Centre has developed online resources for Aboriginal peoples. (http://www.sicc.sk.ca/)

18 Communities participated in the first Aboriginal Storytelling Week in 2004 with 2,813 people participating in the various activities.

Northern Saskatchewan
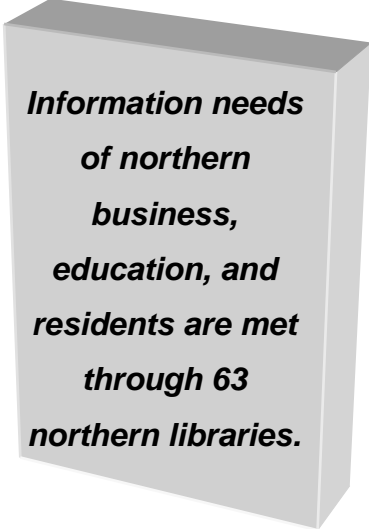
How do libraries contribute?

Pahkisimon Nuye₂áh Library System (PNLS) coordinates all types of library services in northern Saskatchewan, including public, school, special, and college libraries. These library services contribute to literacy, education, economic development, business, and tourism. In addition, with 63 library locations, northern libraries are a significant employment sector for residents.

Information needs of northern business, education, and residents are met through 63 northern libraries.

Boosting the North by:

- Providing information materials to colleges and schools.
- Obtaining data for local businesses.
- Promoting literacy programs to all ages.
- Preserving northern historical artifacts and documents.
- Bridging the digital divide by offering computer literacy training in Cree and Dene.
- Translating information sources into Cree and Dene, as well as offering children's story hours in these languages.
- Offering bursaries to library employees for skills training.
- Providing sites for online education.

Keys to Success
- ✓ Professional librarians, teacher-librarians, and library technicians.
- ✓ Information and technology-rich libraries that have northern and Aboriginal materials.
- ✓ Partnerships.

Quick Facts

In 2005, northern residents, in the 32 community organizations participating, accumulated 7,759,703 points in the Northern Reading Program. Each point represents 15 minutes of reading.

100% of public libraries and libraries in northern schools and colleges have internet connections. There have been improvements in capacity for northern residents to participate in distance education.

La Ronge Public Library helps northern businesses, such as wild rice producers, find the information they need for daily business.

Libraries in the north employ 3 professional librarians, 5 library technicians, 2 teacher-librarians, 7 library staff members who have completed the Rural Library Certificate and 3 in-training for library technician diploma and 1 in-training as a teacher-librarian.

The collection of PNLS and 11 public libraries are searchable on the internet through the union catalogue maintained by the Provincial Library.

PNLS's member institutions: 20 Prince Albert Grand Council schools; 5 Meadow Lake Tribal Council schools; 24 Northern Lights School Division schools; 3 post-secondary institutions; 11 public libraries; Creighton School Division; and Ile-à-la-Crosse School Division.

Libraries: A Strategic Investment

What is the impact of funding libraries?

Libraries are one of the most cost-effective investments in the future of Saskatchewan.

Libraries lever funding from many sources. For instance, since 1998, public libraries have levered about $5 million from the federal government to fund internet access at Community Access Program (CAP) locations. Post-secondary libraries receive funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation, which was created in 1997 by the Government of Canada to fund research infrastructure in Canadian Universities.

Investment in libraries is a sound investment because services reach local communities throughout the entire province. In addition, the investment generates further economic activity in the province through library buying power.

Libraries have undergone strain due to budget cuts. This context gave birth to the multitype system, as libraries have sought creative ways to deliver better services within constrained fiscal environments.

> **Support for libraries is a cost-effective investment in all Saskatchewan people.**

Libraries are a strategic investment because they:

- Generate spin-off economic activity;
- Deliver tangible services in rural and remote areas;
- Marshal scarce resources and make their dollars stretch
- Are consistently rated as valued public services;
- Are available to every citizen; and
- Are necessary for post-secondary accreditation programs,

Keys to success
- ✓ Continuing cooperative library purchases and programs through the multitype system.
- ✓ Promoting the library initiatives supported by government funding.
- ✓ Sustained government funding.

Quick Facts

In a 2003 study, Canadians scored the quality of public library services as 79 out of 100. Public libraries ranked third after the fire department and ambulance services in municipal and provincial/territorial service quality. (Citizens First3, 2003)

The Multitype Database Licensing Program cost $540,000 for the year 2005/06. These dollars make over 7000 full text periodicals available to over 1000 library locations province-wide and to the homes of any Saskatchewan resident with internet access.

Cooperative bulk purchasing through multitype is the primary way libraries have enhanced collections and services over the last decade.

More than 50% of Saskatchewan residents have a library card.

Discussion Issues & Recommendations

Promoting Our Libraries

Issue

Our province can boast of having one of Canada's best library systems. We need to promote it. We also need to profile the contributions that libraries make to Saskatchewan's economic, cultural, educational and tourism sectors.

Background

Saskatchewan's libraries have built strong collections over time that are valuable resources for Saskatchewan people, representing their collective history as well as offering access to the world of information. Libraries today deliver innovative services, contributing to the community and making Saskatchewan an attractive place to live.

Traditional and well-loved public library services such as story time and summer recreational activities for children continue to thrive. At the same time, online library services are opening new and easy ways to access information. For example, the *Saskatchewan Libraries: Ask Us!* service prompts Saskatchewan residents to "Ask us a question!" and residents are responding by e-mailing questions such as "What schooling do I need to develop a career in aesthetics?"

Libraries contribute to economic growth, providing jobs, serving the business community, and spurring economic activity. Academic and specialized libraries keep our post-secondary educational institutions and research and development sectors competitive and innovative. Libraries attract job seekers, homebuyers, businesses, and tourists. They also advertise Saskatchewan to the world. Libraries are partners for growth in the new economy by offering internet, e-commerce, and digital divide training, particularly for remote and disadvantaged populations.

The Multitype Library Board has worked with Saskatchewan Highways and Transportation to develop highway signs promoting libraries. The Multitype Library Board Public Relations Committee has produced a report that continues to inform the work of the Board.

Recommendation

In September 2005, the Multitype Library Board in partnership with all types of libraries and the Saskatchewan Library Association launched www.mylibrary.sk.ca -- a single access portal to e-library services. A province-wide "libraries. online" promotion campaign was also launched to promote the mylibrary,sk.ca portal. We recommend that this strategy be supplemented with the following steps: Provincial Library work with the Multitype Library Board, the Government of Saskatchewan and Tourism Saskatchewan to place information about libraries on their web sites; and continue to disseminate this discussion paper to initiate further ideas.

Perception that the internet Replaces Libraries

Issue

There is a concern that people view the internet as a replacement for the library. Although the internet is an important tool for locating information on a variety of subjects, it has not, cannot and will not replace libraries.

Libraries contribute to communities in diverse and far-reaching ways. As learning environments, libraries offer services to people that the internet simply cannot provide. The broad value and impact of libraries needs to be acknowledged and supported.

The importance of libraries has increased in the context of the internet. Public libraries offer internet access, thus ensuring equitable internet access for all residents. In addition, information on the internet changes rapidly and constantly. Libraries have a vital role in helping their users locate and evaluate all types of information, regardless of format.

Background

There is a concern that people view the internet as a replacement for the library. The internet provides access to a vast amount of freely available information and is an essential delivery mechanism for the many electronic publications which libraries purchase to satisfy the information needs of their users. Libraries embrace the benefits of this technology for its convenience and for its ability to enhance access to library resources to users located outside the walls of the physical library.

The idea that libraries are somehow in opposition or competition with the internet is false. In fact, librarians are able to teach people how to conduct efficient internet searches, how to analyze the results and how to select quality and authoritative information. This is made more essential when one realizes that 44% of Canadian youth turn to the internet for homework help as opposed to only 19% who turn to library resources. Students tend to have complete faith in the information they retrieve from the internet, despite the fact that they see no difference in the reliability of information between ad-sponsored sites and ad-free sites.

Our libraries are a tremendous resource in the knowledge-based society. In their 100-year history, Saskatchewan libraries have built rich collections, expertise, and a network of working relationships with libraries worldwide. This foundation is enhanced by e-library services -- internet, e-journals, e-books, digitized local resources, and online services -- resulting in an information-rich environment in which citizens, business, and public institutions can acquire information on any published subject. Libraries try to meet the need for instant information with the use of the databases.

Libraries provide residents with free and equitable access to the internet and computer use training.

Saskatchewan libraries are raising the profile of Saskatchewan by their presence online. Libraries provide:

- Single access to all Saskatchewan libraries online via www.mylibrary.sk.ca

- Digital content from their own collections. Examples include: *Saskatoon: The Early Years* by Saskatoon Public Library and City of Saskatoon Archives; *Southeast Saskatchewan Heritage Information Project* by Southeast Regional Library; the *Northern Research Portal* by the University of Saskatchewan Archives.
- Access to legislation;
- Government online;
- Tools for today, a computer literacy software;
- Student training;
- Equal access for all residents; and
- Access to electronic information.

Libraries and archives across Canada are moving quickly towards greater digitization of their collections. Saskatchewan libraries and archives are working together to build capacity to achieve greater digitization as well and they do not want to be left behind. Recent Multitype Library Board initiatives such as the Digitization Inventory Project and the Digitization Forums focus on building capacity for sustainable digitization programs.

Libraries offer value-added services that the internet simply cannot provide. Books for babies and children, youth programs, literacy initiatives, ESL training, and outreach services are just a few examples of services provided by public libraries. In school libraries, teacher-librarians working with students to teach them how to evaluate, analyze and synthesize information.

The internet may offer information to people, but the programs in public and school libraries enable people to read. With declining literacy rates in our communities, investing in libraries, as community learning spaces that promote basic literacy, is essential.

Saskatchewan people value their libraries. In a recent telephone survey in Saskatoon, 72 per cent of those surveyed had a Saskatoon Public Library card; 95 per cent of age 12 to 15 year olds had a card. Over 70 per cent of Saskatoon residents have visited Saskatoon Public Library in the past year.[2]

Libraries also produce significant return on investment. International studies have shown an average $4 return on every $1 invested in public libraries.[3]

Recommendation

Funding support for all types of libraries, and other community information providers such as archives, needs to be sustained and increased. There is a significant need to invest in libraries as physical community spaces and to acknowledge their function as gathering places for learning.

There is a need for continued support for Community Net. Since only 50% of public library branches are on Community Net, there is a need to extend it to the remaining half of the province.

Libraries need to be supported in their work to help people develop the information literacy skills necessary to make informed decisions about the information they find on the internet.

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[2] Fast Consulting. *Saskatoon Public Library: Needs Assessment Report Summary.* Saskatoon: Fast Consulting, April 2004, p. 1-2, 1-3.
[3] See next page.

Finally, there is a need for municipal, provincial, and national funding for the digitization work and partnerships that are being established in Saskatchewan which will make the rich collections of Saskatchewan libraries and archives accessible online to Saskatchewan citizens.

[3] Holt, Glen E., and Donald Elliott. "Proving Your Library's Worth: A Test Case." *Library Journal* Vol. 123 No. 18 (November 1, 1998): 42-44. And, Jose-Marie Griffiths, Donald W. King, Christinger Tomer, Thomas Lynch, and Julie Harrington. *Taxpayer Return on Investment in Florida Public Libraries: Summary Report.* State Library and Archives of Florida: 2004. http://webjunction.org:980/wj/documents/8495.pdf (viewed April 5, 2005).

British Library. *Measuring Our Value*. British Library: 2004. www.bl.uk/pdf/measuring.pdf (viewed October 7, 2005).

Support for School Libraries

Issue

Saskatchewan's school libraries do not have enough teacher-librarians and they are not adequately funded with regard to collections and support personnel. Saskatchewan has an average of 0.24 teacher-librarians per school and 0.44 library technicians per school. $23 per student is spent annually by schools for library materials. This is not enough. Metropolitan areas are more likely to have teacher-librarians and support staff in schools, but there is inconsistency in less populated areas.

Background

Dr. Ken Haycock's report *The Crisis in School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Re-Investment*, 2003, identifies a stunning collapse in school library infrastructure and staff support across Canada. In his words: "Through neglect, too many school libraries are now little more than storage rooms." [2]

Haycock examines the findings of numerous studies that focus on linkages between professionally staffed and well-funded school libraries and student achievement. These show that overall student achievement increases by 10 to 20 per cent when schools have effective school libraries; i.e. libraries that are staffed by professional teacher-librarians, who work with teachers to integrate information literacy into the curriculum, and library technicians to assist with the day to day maintenance of the library.

In fact, the following school library factors have been found to be key predictors of student academic success: teacher-librarians and support staff ; level of expenditures on school libraries; strong collections (print, electronic, etc.); information literacy integrated into curriculum; teacher/teacher-librarian collaboration; flexible library hours and more open hours; and use of technology to extend library into school labs and student homes.

Haycock points out:
> There's a sad irony about this state of affairs: the neglect of Canadian school libraries comes precisely at a time when many countries around the world are aggressively investing or reinvesting in these very facilities. The World Bank, East Asia Bank, International Development Agency and European Union are all increasing support for school libraries and teacher-librarians to promote economic development, while philanthropic foundations are funding school libraries and teacher-librarians to further cultural development. In 2002, even the U.S. Congress weighed in with US $250 million of dedicated funding for school library materials to get its school libraries back on track. The reason: Because policy-makers have been heeding a mounting body of research evidence showing a strong and compelling link between student achievement and the presence of well-stocked, properly funded and professional-developed school library programs and services. [4]

Saskatchewan is currently undergoing a restructuring of school divisions. An accountability framework is being developed to ensure the success of the restructuring. This provides an opportunity for Saskatchewan Learning and the new school divisions

[4] Ken Haycock. *The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Reinvestment.* Toronto: Association of Canadian Publishers, 2003, p. 9. [3] Ibid.

to investigate how accountability measures and processes might address the contribution school libraries make to the outcome of student achievement. It is the hope of the Board that this increases support for the role of school libraries and resource centres.

Resource-based learning is the planning of educational programs that actively involve students in the meaningful use of appropriate print, non-print, and human resources. It teaches students to locate, organize, and synthesize information as part of the learning process and help our children to become resourceful, adaptable, and creative.

Successful implementation of resource-based learning has long relied on school libraries. Professional teacher-librarians work with teachers to integrate the resources into the curriculum. With the help of library technicians, they also identify, acquire, and organize the resources. Saskatchewan schools will be greatly challenged to deliver resource-based learning if funding for school materials, as well as support for the teacher-librarian/library technician partnership continues to dwindle.

Multitype library initiatives, such as the Multitype Database Licensing Program, have significantly enhanced the materials available for resource-based learning in schools, but more is needed. Effective resource-based learning cannot happen without appropriately staffed and funded school libraries.

Nelson Mandela said "Education is the most powerful weapon which you can use to change the world." Investing in the education of Saskatchewan children is critical and support for school libraries is an essential part of this.

Recommendations

The Multitype Library Board recommends that 1) there be a formal assessment of current conditions in the province's school libraries; 2) there be qualified teacher-librarians in all school divisions with the ultimate goal of a teacher-librarian in every school; and 3) there be library technicians working in partnership with teacher-librarians in all school divisions. Saskatchewan Learning and the new school divisions are encouraged to investigate how accountability measures and processes might address the contribution school libraries make to the outcome of student achievement.

As part of the Province's support for resource-based learning, the Province is encouraged to support education and training for resource centre staff; support appropriate learning materials, including online learning materials and courses of study; and support resource centre facilities as a component of capital funding programs. The Board encourages the development of better access to teacher-librarian education for Saskatchewan residents. In addition, it may be useful to support Canadian research into the link between school libraries and learner success.

Information Management in Government

Issue

The Government of Saskatchewan is developing citizen-focused e-government services. This includes developing a single internet-based service delivery window that presents government information in a comprehensible manner to the average resident. Achievement of this goal rests on the government's ability to manage its information resources.

Background

Librarians and other information providers understand the practical accessibility of government information. Libraries regularly acquire and lend print-based government publications, search for government information online, and track down government contacts. People visit libraries every day looking for government information, so librarians observe how citizens seek this information and the challenges finding it.

In the move from the traditional model of government to a new networked model, libraries and other information providers have observed problems finding government information. While the usability of the government's central web site has improved over time, it still does not provide a single window to departmental services and information. There is also inconsistency between publications distributed in print and electronic form. Phone assistance has declined with the abandonment of a central telephone inquiry line.

Citizen-focused online services offer user-friendly ways to find information, such as a subject directory, an interactive "Ask a Question" service, consistent practices for distributing publications, and predictable ways of finding publications. These services are built upon good internal information management processes.

The Multitype Library Board commends the government for establishing the Information Technology Office and hiring four librarians to work on information management. The Information Management Framework, developed by the ITO, sets in place a well-constructed information management infrastructure for government.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Government of Saskatchewan follow through on the strategies outlined in the Information Management Framework; consult with libraries on how to design and present government information online; partner with libraries to deliver government information to the people of Saskatchewan; provide links to library web sites on the government's central web site; and involve the library community in the development of information management policies for government. Funding that recognizes the role that libraries play in delivering government information may be appropriate.

Hiring Standards for Information Management Professionals

Issue

Libraries and other information professionals encourage the Government of Saskatchewan, as well as other employers in Saskatchewan, to use educational and competency guidelines when hiring information management professionals.

Background

Educational requirements and competency standards for information management professionals such as librarians, archivists, library technicians, and records managers have been in place for many years. Major libraries and archives in Saskatchewan apply these requirements to their hiring practices.

Employers that are not part of the information sector are frequently unaware of the educational requirements and competency standards required of information professionals. As a result, information management roles are frequently shortchanged because employers do not understand the skill set that is required.

In the past, it was not imperative that agencies other than libraries and archives have a broad understanding of the skill set of information management professionals; however, this is changing in the information-based economy.

Qualified information management professionals are trained to identify, collect, organize and deliver information of value to their organization. They are trained to collate and present large amounts of complex information in user-friendly ways.

Government is one example of a sector where the demand for information professionals is increasing. In Saskatchewan, the Province's e-government strategy is driving a need for better management of government information. The Information Technology Office has already identified the need for qualified information management professionals to support citizen-centred e-government services. The Public Service Commission has competency profiles for Archivists and Records Managers.

Recommendation

We encourage the Government of Saskatchewan to apply educational and competency guidelines when hiring information management professionals. We urge the Public Service Commission to develop a competency profile for librarians to be of use in the rest of the province as well as in government. We specifically recommend that the Public Service Commission advise government departments to use these standards; partner with libraries to provide appropriate training and information about the standards; and employ a professional librarian to provide guidance to departments on the hiring of information management professionals. Through these efforts, the government will set an example that other employers in the province can follow.

Recruiting Professional Librarians for Saskatchewan

Issue

The Board is well aware that there is an urgent and growing need in the library sector for professionals within the province of Saskatchewan qualified with Masters Degrees in Library Science.

Background

Saskatchewan libraries will experience a significant number of retirements between 2005 - 2011. Professional librarians must be trained and recruited to replace the retiring work force. The Multitype Library Board knows that it is difficult to recruit professional librarians in all library sectors, particularly in rural areas, but even in the university libraries located in Regina and Saskatoon.

There is a demand for librarians all across Canada. It is difficult for Saskatchewan to draw candidates because, among other problems, salaries and benefits are not competitive. There is no library science degree offered in Saskatchewan, so residents must take the masters program in another province. When people leave the province, they may not return.

A national study of human resources related to professional librarians, found that in all of Canada, Saskatchewan has the highest percentage of librarians over the age of 55. In addition, Saskatchewan and Manitoba are identified as the two provinces with the greatest difficulty recruiting interested and qualified librarians. They are seen by library professionals as the least desirable provinces in which to be employed. Recruitment opportunity is limited by the lack of a library science degree program in either province. There is a problem with satisfaction with remuneration, particularly for senior level librarians.[5]

The Multitype Library Board partnered with the Saskatchewan Library Association to establish the Saskatchewan Libraries bursary program, which encourages Saskatchewan residents to obtain a Masters of Library Science upon condition that they take employment in Saskatchewan upon completion of the degree. Saskatchewan Learning via the Provincial Library has committed $50,000 to the bursary program since its inception in 2002. The bursary was won by Christina Petrisor from Regina in 2002, . to Lorraine Salt from Saskatoon in 2003 and to David Bindle in 2004. This bursary program encourages Saskatchewan residents to return to the province and could be promoted to many Saskatchewan residents including Aboriginal youth.

Recommendation

The library community, as individuals, and organizations, needs to financially support the Saskatchewan Libraries Education Bursary to encourage recruitment and retention.

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[5] 8Rs Research Team. *The Future of Human Resources in Canadian Libraries (8Rs Canadian Library Human Resources Study).* Edmonton: University of Alberta, 2005.

Tax Exemptions for Libraries' Electronic Subscriptions

Issue

Libraries are seeking the same tax exemptions for library magazines, journals, newspapers and other information resources they purchase in electronic form as they enjoy on the material they purchase in print form. The Board believes that the application of the Provincial Sales Tax to libraries' electronic subscriptions limits the quality and amount of electronic information available to the residents of Saskatchewan.

Background

Through policy, philosophy and legislative action the Government of Saskatchewan has exempted books and magazines from taxation.

The development of the internet has allowed publishers and libraries to electronically deliver reference books, indexes, full text journals and newspapers, and general reading materials in all subject areas and at all reading levels to libraries and their patrons. The publishing and library communities see this electronic delivery (in both content and function) to be the equivalent of printed books and magazines. The library and education communities also see this electronic delivery as a way to offer a greatly expanded collection of books and journals to the patrons of library branches that could not otherwise afford to do so, due to cost or space limitations.

The Department of Finance currently applies the Provincial Sales Tax to these electronic publications because it considers them software. This perception is not accurate. In fact, libraries purchase a license to have access to this material, but they are not buying software.

The application of this tax to these subscriptions represents a significant cost for libraries and schools throughout the province. The money for these subscriptions comes directly from book and magazine buying budgets within libraries. If libraries and schools were exempted from this application of the Provincial Sales Tax they could increase book and magazine purchases for their patrons.

As an example, the total yearly value of the Provincial Sales Tax on the province wide licenses administered by the Multitype Database Licensing Program alone is more than $35,000 in 2005/06.

Recommendation

We recommend that the Department of Finance exempt library and school subscriptions to online electronic indexes, full text electronic resources, e-books, and e-journals from the Provincial Sales Tax. Savings could fund training initiatives, hiring and other support materials.

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