



CANADIAN LIBRARY MONTH October 2007

This October, libraries across the country will celebrate their commitment to enhancing the quality of life for all Canadians.

This year's theme of *Libraries: the world at your fingertips* illustrates the variety of programs and services libraries provide. Libraries are key partners in supporting literacy, leaders in providing access to information with many library services now available 24/7, and promoters of history and culture. Libraries provide access to information and expertise to assist all, regardless of age, gender, race, religion, social status, language or location.

Libraries are places to learn, engage, discover and connect. They are hubs of information and communication that have a direct impact on the lives of Canadians each and every day. Look around and you will see neighbours accessing strategic information in special and corporate libraries, children learning literacy skills in school libraries, grandparents attending Internet courses at public libraries, and friends discovering new research through university libraries.

Libraries are where new Canadians study for citizenship tests, parents learn songs and stories, students learn critical thinking and evaluation skills, businesses research the competition, avid readers pick up the latest bestsellers, and children learn to love reading.

There are 57,000 library staff in over 22,000 libraries in Canada¹. They are networked partners with organizations and government, and provide information and services to meet community needs both locally and as gateways to libraries of the world.

It's a big world out there; and it is all at your fingertips at your library.

¹ Canadian Library Association and Statistics Canada. *National Core Library Statistics Program Report 1999, 2002*

Public Libraries

The cornerstone of the community, the public library provides programs and services to people of all ages and backgrounds. Public libraries offer books, DVDs, CDs, magazine and information databases, Internet access, and much more. Programs for all ages are offered to educate, entertain, inform and enlighten.

- 97% all Canadians are in a community served by a public library²
- serving communities of all sizes, there are over 3,600 public libraries with 89 million items to loan and public Internet access services
- 2/3 of Canadians, or 21 million people, carry a library card from a public library
- there were over 127 million visits to public libraries in Canada in 2003
- almost 200 million items a year are loaned out to individuals
- public libraries spend the majority of their funding locally, representing over 591 million dollars benefiting local economies.

School Libraries

The school library is an essential resource for both teachers and students, supporting the curriculum with both print and online resources. Teacher-librarians and library technicians perform a myriad of duties including teaching information literacy skills.

- Numerous studies have pointed to a correlation between student achievement and the presence of professionally trained staff and accessible school libraries.³
- Students who have access to well staffed, well stocked and well funded libraries score higher on standardized tests.
- Reading enjoyment is a significant factor in improving student performance not only in literacy, but in science and math as well.

Academic Libraries

College and university libraries are vital to learners, faculty and researchers. Academic libraries develop, make accessible and preserve research level collections while supporting information needs ranging from leading-edge biomedical research to first-year fine arts, physics, graphic arts or welding. Academic library professionals provide expert reference assistance at point of need, whether in-person or through online chat or other electronic means and work

² *ibid.* and *Libraries: How They Stack Up*, OCLC Canada. 2004

³ Ken Haycock. *The Crisis in Canada's School Libraries: The Case for Reform and Reinvestment*. 2003

cooperatively with faculty to assist students in developing the information literacy skills which are critical to success.

- Over 6,500 academic library employees in Canada contribute to the overall vitality of college and university education in Canada.
- Universities perform more than 1/3 of all research in Canada with the support of extensive library collections of 120,200,000 items to meet research needs. ⁴

Special Libraries

There are many types of special libraries, including corporate, government and non-profit, all of which add immense value to their organizations. Professional staff support the information needs of their employers and the clients served by these organizations by performing a wide range of services such as gathering, organizing and coordinating access to a variety of information sources.

- There are more than 1,100 special libraries in Canada representing every industry and economic sector.
- 85% of the companies ranked in the top 100 on the Fortune 500 list employed information professionals whereas fewer than 50% of the bottom 100 companies employed information professionals. ⁵

Library and Archives Canada

Library and Archives Canada is Canada's national library. Its diverse mandate includes the preservation and dissemination of Canada's documentary heritage and knowledge and its holdings include publications, archival records, sound and audio-visual materials, photos, artwork and electronic sources. Library and Archives Canada contributes to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada and serves as the national memory of the government of Canada and its institutions, working with other archives and libraries to acquire and share materials.

⁴ Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and OCLC Canada, *Libraries: How They Stack Up*. 2004

⁵ Special Library Association