



Canadian Library Month October 2009

This October, libraries across the country will celebrate Canadian Library Month. This year's theme of *Your Library: Your World* supports the important role that libraries play in our lives.

There are approximately 23,000 librarians and library clerks working in over 22,000 libraries in Canada^[1]. Libraries are key partners in supporting literacy and are leaders in providing access to information to all users regardless of age, gender, race, religion, social status, language or location.

Libraries are centres for life-long learning and directly impact the lives of Canadians each and every day. They are information and community centres where people learn, engage, discover and connect. Libraries are where new Canadians study for citizenship tests, parents and children learn songs and stories, students learn critical thinking and literacy skills, businesses research the marketplace, readers pick up the latest bestsellers, and children are supported in their love of reading.

Now more than ever, libraries are helping people find their way in a large and increasingly complex world by connecting them with employment resources, providing them with access to an affordable means of entertainment, and assisting them in acquiring skills that will allow them to compete in the current economy.

Public Libraries

Public libraries play different roles depending on the needs of their communities. Public libraries foster a culture of learning by providing programs and services to people of all ages. Their books, DVDs, CDs, magazines, information databases and Internet access are readily available to support learning, recreation and information needs.

- 97% of all Canadians reside in a community served by a public library.
- 2/3 of Canadians or 21 million people have a public library card.^[2]

School Libraries

School libraries in Canada promote the literacy skills needed for students to become lifelong learners. School library programs support curriculum with both print and online resources and play an important role for both teachers and students in assisting them in their research and knowledge.

- Research has shown there is a correlation between student achievement, information literacy and the presence of trained staff and accessible school libraries

^[1] Census Data -2006

^[2] Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada and OCLC Canada, *Libraries: How They Stack Up*. 2004

- Students who have access to well staffed, well stocked and well funded libraries score higher on standardized tests.^[3]

Academic Libraries

College and university libraries are vital to learners, faculty and researchers. Academic library professionals provide expert reference assistance at point of need, whether in-person, through online chat or other electronic means and work cooperatively with faculty to assist students in developing the information literacy skills 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 million 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 value to their organizations. Professional staff supports the information needs of their employers and the clients served by these organizations by providing a wide range of services including 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 did so.^[5]

Library and Archives Canada

Library and Archives Canada is Canada's national library. Library and Archives Canada collects and preserves Canada's documentary heritage and provides access to all Canadians.

- Canada's documentary heritage includes publications, archival records, sound and audio-visual materials, photographs, artworks, and electronic documents.
- Library and Archives Canada works closely with other archives and libraries to acquire and share these materials as widely as possible.

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

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

^[5] Special Library Association