

Library and Archives Canada

Report and Recommendations

of the Consultation on Aboriginal Resources and Services



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Canada

Canada

This report was prepared in August 2003 by Dale Blake, Libby Martin and Deborah Pelletier of Library and Archives Canada. It is hoped that the aspirations, ideas and recommendations voiced during the consultation are reflected here. Biographical content is based on information current at the time of writing.

Aboriginal Resources and Services welcomes comments or suggestions on any or all of the recommendations. Please send them by mail, fax, or e-mail to the following address.

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Catalogue No.: SN3-344/2004
ISBN 0-662-68362-5

Table of Contents

Acknowledgements	1
Participants	2
Background	8
Aboriginal Resources and Services	10
Draft Vision Statement for the New Library and Archives Canada.....	10
Overview of the Consultation	11
Executive Summary	12
Report and Recommendations.....	16
Consultation/Partnerships	16
Funding/Resources	17
Jurisdiction	18
Planning/Administration	19
Universal and Equitable Access	20
Education, Training and Professional Development	23
Advocacy	25
Promotion.....	26
Authenticity of Voice	27
Outreach/Networking	29
Roles of Library and Archives Canada and Regional Representatives	31
Appendix A: Presentation Highlights—National Library of Canada	33
Appendix B: Presentation Highlights—National Archives of Canada.....	35

Access

contribution

Acknowledgements

We gratefully acknowledge the presence and guidance of Elder Irene Lindsay throughout this consultation. We acknowledge, too, the work of the participants, who through their commitment and leadership demonstrate the importance of the Aboriginal voice in establishing and developing equitable working relations and partnerships to meet our shared objectives. We wish also to express our appreciation to the following staff members of Library and Archives Canada for their invaluable contributions: Ingrid Parent, Director-General, Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services, for supporting the initiatives of Aboriginal Resources and Services; Dale Blake, Libby Martin and Deborah Pelletier for organizing, developing and writing this report; Normand Laplante, Director, Social and Cultural Archives, for his comments and suggestions; all other staff who gave presentations or served as facilitators; and Vicky Brazeau, for assuming the role of tour guide for the participants. Lastly, we thank the Canadian Library Association for donating the tote bags.

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2

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* Participants who were unable to attend the consultation but who sent their comments for consideration.



Background

The consultation process that eventually resulted in the March meetings emerged from the initiative of the Working Group on Collection Policies at the National Library of Canada. In November 2000, it was evident to this group that Canadians of Aboriginal ancestry had been “under-targeted” by the National Library of Canada in its collection policy and delivery of services. The Working Group initially reviewed various collection policies, attended conferences and meetings, and discussed projects with staff at the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada, the Aboriginal Canada Portal, and the Indian and Northern Affairs Canada Library. The Interim Report of the Working Group identified Aboriginal resources and services as an area needing attention.

A draft proposal document, *National Library of Canada Initiative on Aboriginal Resources*, prepared for the National Librarian in December 2000, proposed strategies and activities based on the perceived needs and the actions required. Three main areas for activity were identified: enrichment, expansion and coordination of collections; Web resources; and digitization of Aboriginal materials. The proposal was sent out as a consultation document to solicit ideas and comments from Aboriginal communities.

Individuals were contacted and libraries and cultural centres were visited. Over 75 people from resource centres, libraries, organizations and institutions across the country were consulted. From the findings of the Working Group’s research and these consultations, a report and recommendations entitled *All Our Relations* was produced in November 2001.

Among the key recommendations of the report were that an external advisory group be established, made up of members who are active in Aboriginal libraries and information centres and who are experts on Aboriginal issues, and that an Aboriginal person be hired to serve as a central contact for both external and internal activities and initiatives. This coordinator position was to be supported by the work of an already established internal committee, the Committee on Aboriginal Resources and Services. That committee, in collaboration with the newly appointed coordinator, identified holding a consultation as one of its priorities. The coordinator and the committee then began to organize a consultation with Aboriginal peoples across Canada that would include both Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal representatives working in the area of library services.



One purpose of this consultation was to identify potential members of an external advisory group, and to characterize their roles. Another purpose was to bring together representatives from different regions across Canada and from different types of libraries and resource centres to identify universal issues, to discuss those issues, to formulate and prioritize objectives, and to offer solutions on how these objectives might be achieved, in partnership or collaboration, or by other means, as appropriate.

The consultation developed into a joint initiative, owing to the transformation process uniting the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada to form the new institution, Library and Archives Canada (LAC). The Committee on Aboriginal Resources and Services responded by adding the perspective of archivists and related professionals during the consultation process. The creation of LAC was seen as timely and providing a unique opportunity for a holistic approach to future development of programs and services, in response to the aspirations and needs of Aboriginal communities.

The consultation was held on March 27 and 28, 2003. LAC staff made presentations to the participants on various programs and services from their respective sectors. The presentations were followed by a roundtable and discussion on key issues with the participants. Later, breakout sessions gave the participants opportunities to discuss issues at length within smaller groups, prioritize these issues, and identify the roles of LAC and of regional representatives in improving library services to Aboriginal peoples.

The findings and recommendations that emerged from the consultation process are prefaced in this report by the objectives of the newly created Aboriginal Resources and Services. Most recently, and for additional context, the draft vision statement recommended to LAC by the Aboriginal Heritage and Knowledge internal working group on transformation has been included.

Aboriginal Resources and Services

Throughout the transformation process, LAC's objectives for Aboriginal Resources and Services initiatives have remained the same as those first recommended, established and supported by the internal Committee on Aboriginal Resources and Services.

Aboriginal Resources and Services' main objective is to develop, promote and facilitate access to Aboriginal resources within Canada, through LAC and in partnership with Aboriginal communities and associations, government departments, educational institutions, language and cultural centres, Native Studies programs, genealogical centres, and other organizations whose interests, substantial collections or services are related to

Aboriginal communities. It also seeks to identify universal issues and concerns of Aboriginal peoples, and to characterize the roles of LAC and of regional representatives in improving services in this area. As well, it wishes to prioritize the interests and needs of Aboriginal communities regarding such issues as networking, communications, advocacy, education and training, outreach services, access, jurisdiction, administration and planning. It seeks to work in partnership with Aboriginal library and archival communities in developing, promoting and facilitating access to library and information and archival services to Aboriginal peoples and in sharing the richness and diversity of these resources with all Canadians.

Draft Vision Statement for the New Library and Archives Canada

In view of the transformation process currently under way, presenting the draft vision statement for the new institution recommended by the Aboriginal Heritage and Knowledge working group on transformation seems timely and appropriate to moving forward collectively.

Library and Archives Canada, in partnership with Aboriginal communities and related organizations, sustains a holistic and integrated approach in the development, preservation, promotion and sharing of Aboriginal heritage and knowledge.

- Our programs and policies reflect a mutual understanding and respect between LAC and Aboriginal communities.
- Our programs and services are known and valued by all Canadians and other indigenous societies around the world.



Overview of the Consultation

On March 27, in the presence of Elder Irene Lindsay, Ingrid Parent, Director-General, Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services, opened the consultation. Ms. Parent welcomed the participants from across Canada, representing different types of libraries, archival and other organizations, public and private. This report offers an overview of the proceedings of March 27-28 and of the contributions of the participants, all of whom are committed to developing, promoting and facilitating access to quality resources by or about Aboriginal peoples and to developing the organizations providing services.

The consultation provided an opportunity for participants and the staff at LAC to meet and greet each other. LAC staff were able to get a glimpse of what was happening in the communities and the participants had a chance to learn more about LAC. The initiative taken by LAC to organize a national consultation was well received and participants expressed encouragement and support for a continued relationship, such as an external advisory board, group or council. Support was also evident for

the recommendations in the report, *All Our Relations*, and for other suggestions put forth. The transformation process uniting the National Library and National Archives to form one institution was seen as an opportunity to strengthen ties with Aboriginal communities, thereby increasing their involvement in future development of policies and programs.

Many of the categories already identified in the *All Our Relations* report emerged throughout the discussions and numerous recommendations. Some of these issues and concerns were consultation/partnerships; funding/resources; jurisdiction; planning/administration; universal and equitable access; education, training and professional development; advocacy; promotion; authenticity of voice; and outreach/networking.

The March consultation forms an integral part of an ongoing process at LAC. Through such collaboration and consultation, LAC will continue to further the vision of partnerships with Aboriginal peoples in the promotion and sharing of Aboriginal heritage and knowledge.



Executive Summary

Two days of consultations in March 2003 resulted in greater understanding between LAC and Aboriginal communities in the following areas of concern, and gave rise to the associated recommendations.

Consultation/Partnerships

The idea of ongoing consultation and the formation of an external advisory group were both well received, and participants expressed positive feelings about offering this kind of support to ensure a continued Aboriginal presence and increased involvement in future policies and programs.

Recommendations 1 - 2

Funding/Resources

Many communities are experiencing difficulties in securing resources to establish a library. Isolation and size as well as a lack of connectivity compound the problems of competing for dollars traditionally available from municipal, provincial and federal sources.

Recommendation 3

Jurisdiction

Several issues arise with jurisdiction at all levels of governance (federal, provincial, territorial, municipal), as each has their funding linked to specific clientele. The extent of such problems must be determined through research that will look at the various structures and barriers that hinder equitable access.

Recommendation 4

Planning/Administration

There seems to be little priority given to libraries or archival centres in communities. Few resources are dedicated to providing library or archival services to Aboriginal communities, and these are the first areas to be cut when budgets are tight.

Recommendations 5 - 6

Universal and Equitable Access

Access to LAC and other national resources and services was seen as an area needing attention. The main concerns were that past and current cataloguing tools and techniques are inadequate in representing the diversity of Aboriginal languages and cultures.

Recommendations 7 - 10

Education, Training and Professional Development

The concerns in this area fall into three main categories: (1) the lack of trained Aboriginal professionals to work in libraries and archival centres; (2) the lack of non-Aboriginal people trained in working with Aboriginal communities; and (3) the lack of training and technical support to use the resources and services available through LAC.

Recommendations 11 - 13

Advocacy

There is a considerable lack of awareness, understanding and knowledge about the role of a national library and archival centre in Canada. Advocacy at all levels was seen as an important step toward improving programming and services.

Recommendations 14 - 16

Promotion

LAC should take a lead role in promoting the value of libraries and archives and their collections, programs and services throughout Canada. Establishing a newsletter is a first step.

Recommendations 17 - 18

Authenticity of Voice

Participants were concerned with the types of materials that have been published or are held by LAC that contain inappropriate information or biased, prejudicial or racist interpretations of content. There was also concern about guides and tools that do not respect the diversity of Aboriginal peoples.

Recommendation 19

Outreach/Networking

Establishing a network of librarians, archivists and other specialists working in the area of Aboriginal resources and services was seen as vital in building relationships with Aboriginal communities and supporting Aboriginal goals toward self-determination.

Recommendations 20 - 24

Recommendations

1. That an external advisory group be formed, made up of members who are active in Aboriginal libraries, archives, research and information centres, or in resource, language and cultural centres, or who are experts on Aboriginal issues.
2. That a community liaison be identified and invited to participate in consultations "as needed" in an advisory role.
3. That support be made available to identify additional funding and resources for libraries and archival centres and that joint efforts be made to advocate and solicit for monies toward their development and maintenance.
4. That jurisdictional problems be identified in each of the provinces and municipalities and that collective efforts be taken toward their resolution.
5. That planning and administrative functions to develop, promote and facilitate access to LAC collections in partnership with Aboriginal communities be given high priority.
6. That two or three national initiatives be undertaken with full support from Aboriginal communities.
7. That a narrative guide be created by LAC to explain the organization of the various agencies that have been responsible for administering Indian Affairs records, with the assistance of Aboriginal storytellers to aid communities in accessing LAC resources.
8. That learner-friendly pamphlets on how to do research in various areas of LAC be created.
9. That access to all Aboriginal materials be improved through the development of tools, guides, pathfinders and other information bulletins in plain language.
10. That the development of appropriate cataloguing and subject guides be considered a priority in the long term to address the deficiencies of the current subject heading guides and cataloguing practices.
11. That additional resources be devoted to the education and training of Aboriginal peoples through LAC, or in partnership with similar organizations.
12. That LAC hold information sessions on ISBN, Copyright and Legal Deposit and conduct other workshops on use of the technology required to access LAC resources and services.

13. That LAC initiate a Library and Archival Technician Trainee program and an Archival Trainee program similar to the LS Trainee Program for Aboriginal peoples.
14. That ideas gathered from the March 2003 consultation be incorporated into a proposal and that the draft be taken to communities for support by the tribal councils and other members.
15. That advocacy work for library and archival services in Aboriginal communities be given high priority.
16. That champions be suggested as role models, particularly for Aboriginal youth.
17. That a newsletter be created to promote the vision and value of libraries and archival resources and to highlight initiatives and programs within Aboriginal communities and at LAC.
18. That promotion of library and archival resources be considered a high priority.
19. That cultural and social issues and authenticity of voice be given renewed emphasis in program initiatives and policy development.
20. That a database be developed at LAC to provide a directory and other information on Aboriginal content and resources within library, archival and other like organizations.
21. That a list of contact names in regions be provided to the LAC internal working group and the external advisory group.
22. That the role of LAC regional offices be clarified.
23. That networking and outreach services be improved.
24. That LAC undertake a survey of Aboriginal library and archival collections and services throughout Canada, followed by a report.

Conclusion

At the close of the consultation process, various participants expressed excitement about what was happening, stating they felt honoured to participate, to have their voices heard and to be a part of something new. Having a voice at LAC and engaging in such consultations indicates the beginnings of partnerships that can help libraries gain exposure and improve programs and services. Participants also agreed it would be wonderful to improve access and sharing of resources and bring our communities together for the benefit of all Canadians.

Report and Recommendations

This section of the report introduces the general categories of concern followed by points or questions raised during the discussions. The recommendations that follow come from a consensus of opinion of Aboriginal community representatives who participated in the consultation.

CONSULTATION/PARTNERSHIPS

The idea of ongoing consultation and the formation of an external advisory group were both well received, and participants expressed positive feelings about offering this kind of support to ensure a continued Aboriginal presence and increased involvement in future developments of policies and programs.

- The Aboriginal voice is essential to program initiatives and policy development in institutions that have typically been Eurocentric; LAC is no exception.

- LAC should take a lead role nationally toward improvements in libraries across Canada and serve as a role model to regional centres.
- Universal concerns, initiatives or programs and services should be monitored, coordinated and documented at a national level. Examples of partnerships can serve as models to regions.

Recommendation no. 1

That an external advisory group be formed, made up of members who are active in Aboriginal libraries, archives, research and information centres, or in resource, language and cultural centres, or who are experts on Aboriginal issues.

Rationale

An external advisory group could provide valuable information about archives, libraries and communities. LAC could benefit from consulting this group of experts and could improve its services to Aboriginal peoples accordingly. By participating in the development of policy and planning initiatives with LAC and its partners, the group would ensure that the diversity of Aboriginal communities is taken into account. It would also help establish guidelines for consultative processes at the national and local levels in communities and associations. LAC's Aboriginal Resources and Services initiative needs the support of such a group to forge a reciprocal relationship.

Recommendation no. 2

That a community liaison be identified and invited to participate in consultations “as needed” in an advisory role.

Rationale

This Aboriginal person could facilitate sharing of information and resources between the Aboriginal communities and LAC. He or she would provide a more immediate and personal contact for any communication. The March 2003 consultations are themselves part of an important liaison with Aboriginal resource specialists, and working with a community liaison would be an extension of this kind of partnership.

FUNDING/RESOURCES

Many communities are experiencing difficulties in identifying, allocating or securing resources to establish a library. Those that have a library, or perhaps a small designated room or space in a tribal council building, school, cultural centre or other area, have difficulty sustaining funds because of the lack of resources. Isolation and size as well as lack of connectivity compound the problems of competing for library and archival dollars traditionally available from municipal, provincial and federal sources.

- Base funding is needed to establish and keep libraries open
- No funding is available to start up new libraries
- Funding is needed for all resources (materials and staffing)
- Lack of staff—cannot make use of resources (e.g., programming and service)
- Too much reliance on volunteers to manage and operate service
- Too much responsibility for the librarian (required to be a “jack of all trades”)
- Separate funding for libraries is required from tribal council budgets
- Many libraries have no budgets for collections
- Libraries require special buildings that conform to library standards for space, facilities and equipment
- Money is a problem for staff attendance at conferences and events
- Money required for operational and administrative services (e.g., reproduction) is inadequate
- What are the opportunities for independent and other libraries on and off reserve to receive federal support dollars?
- Availability of technology varies from community to community—inconsistencies with access and connectivity

- Need basic publishing information (e.g., ISBN)
- Possibility of establishing a high-profile Aboriginal centre at LAC
- Is there a possibility for support from Canadian Heritage for an Aboriginal library program to preserve local histories embedded in languages, in view of the recent initiative announced for a centre for the preservation of language and culture?
- How to start with Virtual Reference Canada (VRC)—are needs answered locally?
- Service providers for VRC in community—central point for disseminating information—financial support?

Recommendation no. 3

That support be made available to identify additional funding and resources for libraries and archival centres and that joint efforts be made to advocate and solicit for monies toward their development and maintenance.

Rationale

There is no funding for libraries in some communities that do not have them; often there are no collection budgets for the different types of libraries that do exist. Money is also a factor for staff attendance at conferences. As well, the problem of not enough staff results in little use of resources. In conjunction with this, there is too much reliance on volunteers, and too much responsibility for the librarian, who must handle all kinds of duties. Certain requirements for library buildings, materials and equipment, as well as certain standards for library facilities, must be met. Libraries lack proper facilities and the proper environment to preserve collections for future generations.

JURISDICTION

Several issues tend to arise with jurisdiction at all levels of governance (federal, provincial, territorial, municipal), as each has their funding linked to specific clientele. To what extent jurisdictional problems exist must be determined through research that will look at the various governance structures, existing agreements, existing policies or the systemic barriers that may be in place that hinder or restrict equitable and universal access.

- Public libraries are funded by municipalities and are accessible to members of municipalities
- Trying to serve all members of Aboriginal community, but not funded to do so
- In British Columbia, municipalities now arrange with First Nations to provide library services—huge barriers and administrative problems exist
- Serving Métis, Non-status or First Nations raises jurisdictional problems

Recommendation no. 4

That jurisdictional problems be identified in each of the provinces and municipalities and that collective efforts be taken toward their resolution.

Rationale

Public libraries are funded by municipalities or provinces and are accessible to members of these communities only. In some cases, libraries cannot serve all members of the Aboriginal community, such as First Nations outside their jurisdiction. Such accessibility issues may contribute to conflicts that impede appropriate provision of services to Aboriginal peoples.

PLANNING/ADMINISTRATION

There seems to be little priority or importance given to libraries or archival centres in communities. Few resources are dedicated to establishing library or archival services or to enhancing or improving existing programs and services to Aboriginal communities. Little or no thought, therefore, is put into planning or development at any level and, as a result, these are the first areas to be cut when budgets are tight.

- Libraries are low in the list of priorities
- Libraries and librarians are undervalued
- Preservation of collection is a problem
- Libraries are the first to be cut in an organization
- Coordination is required in identifying needs and providing services
- Transformation of National Library and National Archives into one institution provides opportunity to strengthen Aboriginal presence
- Recommendations of *All Our Relations* report are being considered by internal committee, to be expanded to include National Archives staff
- Long-term planning is needed
- Tools and guides should be developed to assist with development and planning

Recommendation no. 5

That planning and administrative functions to develop, promote and facilitate access to LAC collections in partnership with Aboriginal communities be given high priority.

Rationale

The prevailing attitude toward libraries and librarians at the community level must change, and planning for the future must include promotion and marketing. Preservation issues must be considered as well. It is necessary to coordinate needs and the provision of services with communities.

Recommendation no. 6

That two or three national initiatives be undertaken with full support from Aboriginal communities.

Rationale

Work could be done in areas where there is definite commitment and consensus on the priorities in the communities. These initiatives could provide valuable learning experiences and ideas from which new projects could be launched. This is in keeping with the finding of the Working Group on Collection Policies: that Aboriginal communities feel that any initiatives must be developed in full partnership with them and over a continued period of time. In the past, programs have been short-lived and initiatives were developed for, not with, Aboriginal communities.

UNIVERSAL AND EQUITABLE ACCESS

Access to LAC and other national resources and services was seen as an area needing attention. The main concerns were that past and current cataloguing tools and techniques are inadequate in representing the diversity of Aboriginal languages and cultures; tools and guides to describe or access resources may be esoteric or just not available. It was evident that the priority for Aboriginal communities is to access content by or about Aboriginal peoples in order to learn more about themselves; however, this often proved to be a challenge for many communities, for many reasons.

- Universal access to library and archive services
- User-friendly Web site
- Cataloguing—subject headings need to be appropriate and more specific in recognizing the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and content
- Categorization needs improvement
- Terminology needs improvement
- Remoteness—connectivity in isolated communities is a problem
- Easier access to resources is required
- Information sharing
- One library card for community?
- One amalgamated catalogue
- Finding aids are needed
- Aboriginal version of AMICUS?
- Development of a more useful, comprehensive database to access RG10
- Much Aboriginal material is still not widely known
- Tracking more obscure Aboriginal content from all sources is a problem
- Structure of LAC guides is a problem
- Descriptive standards for Aboriginal materials at LAC needs improvement—what do Aboriginal communities want to use?
- If Aboriginal communities are to donate photographs to LAC, turnaround time needs to be quicker—LAC policies should be adjusted to make this work
- With Images Canada, contributions could be made without leaving the community; contributions could be framed as a project
- Advice on preservation depends on what kind of access the community wants
- Private records are difficult to access until a guide is finished; more is being done with private records on the Internet
- Aboriginal Resources and Services Web site is now a priority—suggestions invited from participants
- Database of Aboriginal resources and contacts is now being compiled at LAC

Recommendation no. 7

That a narrative guide be created by LAC to explain the organization of the various agencies that have been responsible for administering Indian Affairs records, with the assistance of Aboriginal storytellers to aid communities in accessing LAC resources.

Rationale

The narrative could clarify how government records are created and filed. This would assist communities to understand and gain access to the records. The narrative would provide an introduction, explaining how Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC) is organized and what its history has been, as well as LAC's systems of organization. This could be explained to storytellers, who could be involved with interpretation.

Recommendation no. 8

That learner-friendly pamphlets on how to do research in various areas of LAC be created.

Rationale

Such user-friendly material could be consulted before research is begun. Introductory pamphlets would be important tools and would help make LAC a more welcoming, less intimidating institution.

Recommendation no. 9

That access to all Aboriginal materials be improved through the development of tools, guides, pathfinders and other information bulletins in plain language.

Rationale

Libraries should be user-friendly, but municipal libraries are not always accessible because of the terminology used in all areas. LAC must be aware of the remoteness of communities and the difficulties of connectivity. Librarians are looking for partners to improve their services and build capacity for information gathering in their communities. LAC can play an important role here and in the area of access and jurisdiction; it must make the collections known through outreach and collaboration. An Aboriginal version of AMICUS could be considered, as well as one amalgamated catalogue and a single library card for one community. Special interest areas of LAC, such as treaty and land claims, governance, and genealogy as it relates to band membership should be identified. Tools such as guides to collections should be developed. People want to know about Aboriginal materials and how to access them.

Recommendation no. 10

That the development of appropriate cataloguing and subject guides be considered a priority in the long term to address the deficiencies of the current subject heading guides and cataloguing practices.

Rationale

There is a need to re-teach the “experts,” such as cataloguers, about the terms used to describe Aboriginal peoples. Issues of racism and ignorance are raised by present cataloguing standards and terminology. Some argue that geographic classification should not be used and that pre-contact naming practices should be followed. In some cases, though, geographic references provide an effective point of access. Developing a thesaurus or other guide could alleviate some of the difficulties with access and organization.

EDUCATION, TRAINING AND PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

The concerns in this area fall into three main categories: (1) the lack of trained Aboriginal professionals and Aboriginal people in related occupations to work in libraries and archival centres, and lack of access to professional development opportunities; (2) the lack of non-Aboriginal people trained in working with Aboriginal communities and well informed about Aboriginal knowledge and perspective; and (3) the lack of training and ongoing technical support for new programs or software and adequate tools or guides to fully use the rich abundance of resources and services available through LAC.

- Need for bibliographic instruction
- Need for IT training and ongoing support
- Need for staff training (on the job and community-based)
- Need to train Aboriginal librarians and archivists
- Mentorship programs are required
- Work exchange programs are required
- Expose co-op students to the professions
- Re-teach the experts—two-way communication is required in working in Aboriginal communities
- Information on and access to professional development opportunities
- Awareness and information about programs and services is lacking. How is information being distributed and to whom?
- Support communities by making them aware of the professional skills required to maintain a library or an archival centre, as there is a lack of trained professionals
- Lack of respect for the skills and competencies required in the development and maintenance of libraries and archives in communities
- Literacy level in some communities is a concern as is the library not knowing how to respond to Aboriginal people or develop suitable programs for them

Recommendation no. 11

That additional resources be devoted to education and training of Aboriginal peoples through LAC, or in partnership with similar organizations.

Rationale

There is a pressing need in Aboriginal communities for bibliographic instruction and training with respect to methods of preservation and organization. Aboriginal librarians and archivists should be trained. Mentorship and work exchange programs should be employed, and co-op students should be exposed to the profession. Information must be disseminated, and there must be access to professional development, education and training initiatives.

Recommendation no. 12

That LAC hold information sessions on ISBN, Copyright and Legal Deposit and conduct other workshops on use of the technology required to access LAC resources and services.

Rationale

Many Aboriginal people feel that legal deposit obligations are non-applicable or irrelevant to them and many communities wish to remain their own knowledge keepers. Such information sessions, then, would be very useful to librarians in Aboriginal communities; they could deal sensitively with the issue of collection of Aboriginal materials and, through personal contact, stress the advantages of contributing copies of Aboriginal works to LAC. Contribution could be dealt with through partnership agreements. In this way, the collection of Aboriginal materials could be built up and promoted nationwide. At present, there is also no IT training nor ongoing support for the technology required to access resources and services at LAC.

Recommendation no. 13

That LAC initiate a Library and Archival Technician Trainee Program and an Archival Trainee Program similar to the LS Trainee Program for Aboriginal peoples.

Rationale

For some Aboriginal students, it is more relevant to pursue careers in archives or technician programs than in a master's program in library studies. The additional trainee programs would offer other options and might facilitate a return to the community to work.

ADVOCACY

It was generally agreed that there is a considerable lack of awareness, understanding and knowledge among Aboriginal library and archival communities about the role of a national library and archival centre in Canada. This perception may be attributed to Canada's history and relationship with Aboriginal peoples as well as many other factors. Advocacy at all levels in all communities was seen as an important step toward improving programming and services and in gathering and preserving Aboriginal heritage and knowledge.

- Advocacy for funding and an awareness of the role of LAC
- Lack of consistent support by elected officials
- Advocacy program could provide stability and allow for long-term planning
- Need for community support for advocacy

Recommendation no. 14

That ideas gathered from the March 2003 consultation be incorporated into a proposal and that the draft be taken to communities for support by the tribal councils and other members.

Rationale

Through the circulation of the draft, crucial support from communities and tribal councils can be gathered. Such backing in the form of letters and suggestions will aid in obtaining further support and in finalizing the report on the consultation. It is also more likely that the recommendations listed in this report will be followed and acted upon.

Recommendation no. 15

That advocacy work for library and archival services in Aboriginal communities be given high priority.

Rationale

It seems that no one is advocating for the Aboriginal communities, and there is little understanding by institutions of the needs of Aboriginal peoples. There are no sustaining resources to protect and preserve collections. Advocacy work is very important to libraries, which often have to exist from grant to grant, with no stability and no long-term planning options. Advocacy is needed to build funding and to develop awareness. In the past, there has been a lack of consistent support from elected officials. LAC should take an advocacy "lead" nationally. Important advocacy issues to be emphasized are funding, investment in infrastructure, promotion by champions, and the opportunity to work with the growing population of Aboriginal youth.

Recommendation no. 16

That champions be suggested as role models, particularly for Aboriginal youth.

Rationale

With the support of such champions, the importance of libraries and library services for youth could be emphasized. The following names were suggested at the consultation: Verna Kirkness, Gordon Tootoosis, Tomson Highway, Maria Campbell, Ovide Mercredi, Roberta Jamieson, Ethel Blondin-Andrew, Thelma Shellerton, Buffy Sainte-Marie, Thomas King, Shania Twain. Aboriginal Achievement Award winners, such as the Honourable James K. Bartleman, were recommended as well.

PROMOTION

Among the concerns within the category of advocacy and promotion, several suggestions were made as to how LAC might take a lead in promoting the value of libraries and archives and their collections, programs and services throughout Canada. Establishing a newsletter would be a first step toward advocating, promoting and disseminating information in all areas of concern.

- Recognition of the importance of the library resource is lacking
- Promote library services in Aboriginal communities and at large
- Promote librarianship, archives work and records management as career choices in Aboriginal communities
- Promote the value of libraries to administrators such as tribal councils, INAC
- Champions are needed for the library cause in Aboriginal communities
- LAC to host a symposium or forum with INAC, tribal councils and other potential partners
- Lobby the government (before an election)
- Need for personal interaction and direct communication with communities—inform communities about programs and services
- Promotion within LAC—Aboriginal people at LAC to continue to speak up and influence developments

Recommendation no. 17

That a newsletter be created to promote the vision and value of libraries and archival resources and to highlight initiatives and programs within Aboriginal communities and at LAC.

Rationale

A newsletter could be part of a public relations drive to promote library services to Aboriginal peoples. Such promotion would raise public awareness and more support could be offered to the advisory group and to LAC. As well, the newsletter could provide a forum for new ideas.

Recommendation no. 18

That promotion of library and archival resources be considered a high priority.

Rationale

There is little recognition of the importance of the library resource in Aboriginal communities. Library and information services may not take precedence over more pressing issues such as housing and health care. Librarianship, archival work and records management should be promoted as careers, and the value of libraries to Aboriginal bands and communities should also be promoted. LAC should provide a national overview of its resources and services. Champions for the library cause are needed in Aboriginal communities. They should lobby federal and provincial governments, particularly before an election, in an effort to bring attention to the disparity that exists in this area among communities. The Aboriginal media and press could also be used to increase the visibility of LAC resources and services.

AUTHENTICITY OF VOICE

Participants were concerned about the types of materials that have been published or are held by LAC that contain inappropriate information; biased, prejudicial or racist interpretations of content; or presentation of content out of context. Also, there was a concern with respect to guides or tools developed for accessibility to information. Often these tools or guides have been produced without respect for the diversity of Aboriginal peoples and leave out essential information.

- Need for trust, ease and comfort in voicing concerns about inappropriateness
- Ignorance of the needs of Aboriginal peoples
- Racism
- Need for greater understanding of Aboriginal peoples—beyond “history”
- Non-traditional paths to information might be more “accessible”

- Ease of approach/welcome lacking—people come to libraries with the perception they will not be welcomed or helped
- Community levels—programs could be directed to specific groups within the community
- Learning options for Elders
- Connectivity and public access to IT provide level of privacy
- Proper pre-contact names should be used in cataloguing
- Issues in dealing with sacred materials—what can or cannot be displayed
- For future publications, survey to be done on usefulness of *Forthcoming Books* and *Quill and Quire*—better to go electronic?
- Differences in language (e.g., reference specialist vs. user)
- Would 30 short interviews on residential school be the kind of history wanted? It depends on the nature of the project; the true history is the oral version, as the transcript may be edited and raises copyright concerns
- What mechanisms do we need to consider when protecting these stories?
- One suggestion—it is not possible for a non-Aboriginal person to interview an Aboriginal person, as he or she can only understand the “surface” of the interview
- The Canadian Oral History Association has many discussions about such issues
- Will the sessions be by us and for us, or about us?
- An advisory board will give everyone a voice
- Knowledge should go in both directions

Recommendation no. 19

That cultural and social issues and authenticity of voice be given renewed emphasis in program initiatives and policy development.

Rationale

Issues of trust, ease and comfort are important in the library setting. Non-traditional paths to information (such as story-telling) may be more “accessible.” Programs could be directed to specific groups within the community, and there could be alternative learning options for Elders. Connectivity and public access to IT could provide a level of privacy.

OUTREACH/NETWORKING

Establishing a network of librarians, archivists and other specialists working in the area of Aboriginal resources and services was seen as vital to building relationships with Aboriginal communities and establishing partnerships, consultation or other forms of collaborative projects. An Aboriginal network would also assist in linking communities to share common resources and services at all levels in all territories, supporting Aboriginal goals toward self-determination.

- Networking with library organizations is important
- Outreach from central agency—LAC needs to do more
- Sense of sharing among local libraries needs to be fostered
- LAC needs to establish a presence, set up a network among Aboriginal communities and build relationships

Recommendation no. 20

That a database be developed at LAC to provide a directory and other information on Aboriginal content and resources within library, archival and other like organizations.

Rationale

A database is an important way to obtain information about people and their resources. Contact information on Aboriginal authors, publishers and specialists (such as librarians and researchers working with Aboriginal materials) could be included, as well as names of groups and organizations that have an Aboriginal focus. This would help to link communities, possibly saving duplication of collections and services. Additional useful information to include in the database might be biographical and critical data on Aboriginal creators of significant literary or historical content.

Recommendation no. 21

That a list of contact names in regions be provided to the LAC internal working group and the external advisory group.

Rationale

Contact names for various regions and for library and archival fields providing various services would be invaluable in grouping information and assisting with community needs. This information could be included in a database that would be searchable online on the LAC Web site.

Recommendation no. 22

That the role of LAC regional offices be clarified.

Rationale

The clarification of roles could benefit both archivists and regional representatives, and would enable better sharing of information and facilities.

Recommendation no. 23

That networking and outreach services be improved.

Rationale

Networking with other library services must be ongoing. One important role of LAC is to initiate outreach and build relationships beyond the central agency, so that Aboriginal peoples know about its relevant resources and services. Steps are under way to review and explore the collections, programs, services and activities at LAC; these are important because they will ensure that an Aboriginal perspective is represented. As well, a LAC presence should be ensured at conferences and meetings of Aboriginal peoples to establish a network, build relationships, and share information and services. Long-term, planned outreach projects including training programs will greatly benefit Aboriginal communities.

Recommendation no. 24

That LAC undertake a survey of Aboriginal library and archival collections and services throughout Canada, followed by a report.

Rationale

Data on the state of Aboriginal libraries and archives are needed. Once such data are collected, specific needs can be identified and attempts can be made to solve problems and improve services, resulting in more equitable access, collection development and programming. Having such data would also help raise awareness among Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal organizations, support funding proposals and encourage partnerships.

Roles of Library and Archives Canada and Regional Representatives

During one of the last breakout sessions, participants were divided into three groups and asked to identify potential roles that LAC and regional representatives can play in building collaborative relationships with Aboriginal communities.

Group One talked about LAC roles and suggested that national, provincial and local centres all maintain their own collections and be given funding support. Mentoring, job secondments and international collaboration were also seen as important. Clients were seen as universal; partners included government departments and programs, umbrella organizations, professional associations, corporations and municipal libraries.

Group Two saw LAC's roles as coordinating research, and identifying and bringing together partners. Among clients listed were young Aboriginal students, Aboriginal scholars, and international organizations and researchers. Partners could be casinos, sports organizations, private corporations and publishing companies.

Group Three said that LAC should "lend everything," and act as advocates, with regional representatives as fundamental partners. It was suggested that training should be of different lengths and on different topics, and there ought to be information sessions on ISBN, Copyright and Legal Deposit. Standards should be set for libraries. Clients would include international clients, tourists and future clients (seventh generation, future historians). Partners would be the same as those named by Group Two.

The groups noted the following suggestions and comments:

Roles of LAC

- Promotion, outreach
- Facilitation of networking
- Mentoring and job secondments
- Advocacy “lead” taken nationally
- National overview of resources and services
- “Total archive”—network of national and provincial archives, local and corporate archives
- Survey of First Nations library services and follow-up
- Promotion for and coordination of media coverage for events such as “First Nations Public Library Week”
- Collections—lending of everything
- Information sessions on ISBN, Copyright, Legal Deposit
- Setting of standards for libraries
- Coordination of research and development
- Development of a Library Technician Trainee Program and an Archival Trainee Program for Aboriginal people
- One-stop shopping
- Involvement by LAC in procedures now in place by INAC for band records

Regional Representative Roles

- Sharing ideas, projects that worked
- Transfer what has been done, where applicable, to national level

Existing and Future Clients and Partners

- Decision makers
- Staff
- Researchers
- Young Aboriginal students
- Aboriginal scholars
- International clients
- Tourists
- Tribal councils
- Lawyers
- Artists/producers/filmmakers
- Government departments and programs
- Donors
- Journalists
- Speech writers
- Authors
- Schools
- Universities and other academic institutions
- Children and youth
- Seventh generation
- Future researchers and historians
- Aboriginal peoples
- National Métis organizations
- Aboriginal organizations
- Casinos
- Sports organizations
- Private corporations
- Publishing companies
- Umbrella organizations
- Municipalities—community libraries
- NAC and AFN libraries
- Friendship centres
- Aboriginal peoples’ associations

Appendix A

Presentation Highlights—National Library of Canada

Donna-Lyn Kent

Collections Librarian, Selection and Searching Section,
Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services

- Since 1991, the National Library of Canada has had an Aboriginal Collections librarian on staff to ensure the most comprehensive collection of Canadian Aboriginal-related materials in the world.
- Publishers provide two copies of their works to LAC, one for preservation and one for public use.
- LAC collects materials in all types of formats and on all subjects.
- LAC also acquires federal and provincial government publications, as well as over 50 Canadian Aboriginal newspapers, music and non-music audio, and publications from school divisions, cultural associations and other small organizations.
- The LAC collection includes non-Canadiana, such as material by and about Aboriginal peoples of Australia.

Emilie Lowenberg

Chief, Union Catalogue Division, Acquisitions and
Bibliographic Services

- The Union Catalogue (UC) was established in 1950 and has been online since 1980.
- Aboriginal materials are contained in all types of libraries listed in the UC.
- There is an inclusive principle behind the UC, but its single limitation is that it cannot handle material in non-Roman script, such as syllabics.

- There is a need for Aboriginal sources, for an infrastructure to help handle material from across the country; the UC Division is also aware of the deficiency of subject headings.
- Aboriginal communities are encouraged to contact, work with, and express their needs to LAC.

Nina Milner

Reference Librarian, Reference and Information Services

- Reference and Information Services (RIS) of LAC operates a Web site and provides reference services to on-site and off-site clients.
- RIS responds to questions received by e-mail, fax, telephone, letter, or in person.
- A demonstration on how to access the Guide to Services for Researchers on the Web was presented and a related handout was provided.
- Advanced registration procedures, Index of Library Listings and searching on AMICUS were explained.
- Some major reference sources, genealogy sources, Aboriginal newspapers, and Web sites were mentioned, all related to Aboriginal Studies (illustrated with a handout by Reference Librarian Deborah Lee).
- A note was also made with respect to the Savoir Faire series of public programs held at LAC, which included a talk on Aboriginal poetry on April 16, 2003, by Armand Garnet Ruffo, Aboriginal writer and poet.

Franceen Gaudet

Senior Project Officer, Government Online Task Force,
Virtual Reference Canada

- Virtual Reference Canada (VRC) is a bilingual, uniquely Canadian service that comprises an electronic network of libraries, information centres and research organizations.
- It provides knowledge and information services through a national digital network of information providers in cultural and learning institutions.
- Libraries, archives, museums, consortiums and information centres can become members and can receive free, bilingual, quality service.
- An explanation of how VRC works was given, and contact information and the Web site address were provided.
- VRC uses a question-and-answer system and minimal equipment; the software picks out the topic and finds the institution that can best respond.
- VRC meets the needs of all types of communities because of the flexible nature of its design.
- Members can be individuals who have in-depth knowledge in a particular field or unique resources that they wish to share.

George Murray

Library Network Specialist, Digital Library of Canada Task Force

- The Digital Library of Canada Task Force (DLTF) is now in its fourth year.
- The DLTF has had some projects of interest to Aboriginal peoples. The projects are based on collections, are collaborative, and emerge from multiple sources.
- The Aboriginal Resources and Services Web site was presented, which pulls together resources from the LAC Web site; archival resources are also included and, in the future, no distinction will be made between the two sources. ArchiviaNet will be equivalent to AMICUS.
- Resources include Indian Affairs Annual Reports, Jesuit Relations, Images Canada and Métis scrip records.
- Future projects include Métis Broadsides and a Naskapi Lexicon, using Unicode.

Appendix B

Presentation Highlights—National Archives of Canada

Normand Laplante is the Director of Social and Cultural Archives at LAC. He stated that the National Archives has worked with Aboriginal communities, and the strategy for 2003 is to improve its collection practices and develop its tools. He added that the National Archives was missing an integrated cross-functional approach and that LAC is working to fill this gap. He then introduced five presentations by staff of LAC.

Caroline Forcier Holloway Archivist, Audio-Visual Archives

- The definition of oral history, according to the Canadian Oral History Association (COHA), was provided: “recorded interviews with individuals about the past, or first-person reminiscences.”
 - Three main categories of oral history were further identified: interviews, narratives and storytelling.
 - At present, in the context of LAC and the COHA, the creators and users of oral history include historians, educators, archivists and journalists, among many others.
 - LAC has more than 325 collections of oral history and over 7,500 interviews dating from 1940 to 1991 in its archival holdings. However, oral histories relating to Aboriginal people and issues are under-represented. The lack of funding and resources for translation is an issue.
 - Responsibilities of the audio-visual archivist include acquisition and description of moving image and sound documents for governmental departments and agencies, private broadcasting collections, amateur film, and French-language social/cultural fonds. The archivist also acts as a liaison representative of the federal government and as an oral history archival advisor.
- LAC is looking into the possibility of scanning the *Guide to Oral History Collections in Canada* (COHA, 1993), which provides an overview of the participating archival repositories in Canada that hold oral history collections, including provincial institutions that have such holdings relating to Aboriginal peoples and issues. Preservation of oral history has been discussed with Algonquin Elders.
 - LAC needs to develop an oral history program to encourage Aboriginal communities to donate their stories so they can be preserved, with copies of originals returned to the communities. Future activities would include improving visibility of the Aboriginal community, to help foster beneficial relationships.

JoAnne Stober

Photo Archivist

- The role of the photo archivist is to work with government archivists and other archival institutions, to see if the best place for a particular archives is within a community.
- The strategy is to focus on the 1960s and move forward.
- There is a move to focus on outreach to keep from losing touch with communities.
- The focus is not only on professionals but all those who document a community and show the archivist items they have found.
- It is difficult to gain access to relevant photos.
- The turnaround time to get back a copy of originals could be two years.
- If the process is well organized, it is quicker.

Jennifer Devine

Art Archivist

- The role of the art archivist is to obtain the unique record, catalogue and describe it, and put it online.
- Records include 200,000 prints, as well as portraits and medals.
- Reference inquiries on records relating to Aboriginal peoples are the most popular.
- LAC rarely receives transfers of large collections, but the Winkworth Collection has records of Aboriginal peoples.
- If a record goes to a gallery or museum, it has to document life in Canada, not just aesthetics.
- LAC does not collect three-dimensional objects.
- LAC does not have exhibition space in Gatineau, but materials are loaned all over the world.
- Because of space and time constraints, no exhibition of Aboriginal material is planned except for that in the Winkworth Collection.
- Aboriginal pieces are not all indexed in the same way.
- If people want to know about a particular image, they must send in a reference question or search the Web site.
- LAC does not duplicate oral histories; these stay in their communities. There may be a general description in ArchiviaNet.
- One copy of each video documentary is submitted to LAC.

Sean Darcy

Archivist, Government Archives

- Aspects of the archivist's role include identification of the records that are most relevant to the way decisions were made, and awareness that litigation drives much of what is being used.
- INAC has a mandate to transfer records to LAC from government departments to document decision making.
- Records are well organized, finding aids can go down to a file level, and can be very specific. Regional records stay in regions.
- Many proper finding aids are not automated.
- A geographically based arrangement tree gives agencies and successor agencies.
- There are responsibility codes, such as one for residential schools.
- Departments can take back records that have not been made permanent or have not been accessioned.

Art Grenke

Archivist, Social and Cultural Archives

- The Canadian Archives Branch (CAB) strategy relating to records on Aboriginal Canadians focuses on three areas: disseminating information on their holdings relating to Aboriginal peoples; expanding contacts; and acquiring such records.
- A major priority is to prepare a guide listing references to Aboriginal peoples in the different collections held by CAB.
- An important objective is to identify institutions that hold archival material relating to Aboriginal peoples and to link them to facilitate sharing of resources.
- When expanding contacts, CAB would also prepare a list of people who are working in the area of archives or museums, to guide their acquisitions strategy and to help identify people in the Aboriginal community who could be encouraged in their training.
- Currently, CAB considers starting acquisitions work with national organizations in the Aboriginal community to help them organize their records and to prepare finding aids, as well as to give them the opportunity to place their records in LAC's collections. CAB is interested in contacting some 40 organizations, and would also actively identify other nationally significant Aboriginal Canadian organizations and individuals to help preserve their voices. It would also contact territorially based Aboriginal archives to help assure that their holdings will be preserved for and accessible to future generations.