



# Maximising Information for Knowledge, Competitiveness and Innovation

*Canada's Federal Libraries in the 21st Century*

The Council of Federal Libraries' Secretariat and Planning and Priorities Committee have prepared this document on behalf of Canada's federal libraries across the country.

## Strategic Plan 2006-2009

April 2006

## Context for this Document

The Government of Canada is transforming its programs, services and operational infrastructure at several levels. In alignment with these transformations, federal libraries are continuing to evolve to better serve our clients.

At a high level, this Strategic Plan describes the clients of federal libraries. It acknowledges clients' needs for authoritative, trusted and timely information in support of the design and delivery of research, programs and services. It describes how libraries enable clients to achieve their business outcomes by maximizing information services.

This document presents the collective mission, vision, values and strategic priorities of Canada's federal libraries. The strategy provides a framework for the Council of Federal Libraries and federal libraries to use in developing work plans that will collectively advance the role and purpose of federal libraries.

To implement this strategy, the following elements will be developed:

- An action plan, to address operational details
- A communications plan, to ensure that stakeholders and partners are kept informed
- An environmental scan about federal libraries
- A survey to deepen existing knowledge of federal library clients' business needs.

Library and Archives Canada has worked closely with the CFL Secretariat and the Planning and Priorities Committee to craft this document. LAC provided the funding to sustain this work and has a great interest in the outcome of a Federal Library Strategy. LAC will continue to work with the CFL Secretariat to integrate the Federal Library Strategy into the broader LAC strategy for Information Management (IM) services to the government of Canada. To that end, this plan will act as stage one, to be incorporated into the broader strategy that will encompass an environmental scan and other research techniques that will feed into a project plan.

For additional information about this Strategic Plan and next steps, please contact:

**Council of Federal Libraries Secretariat**

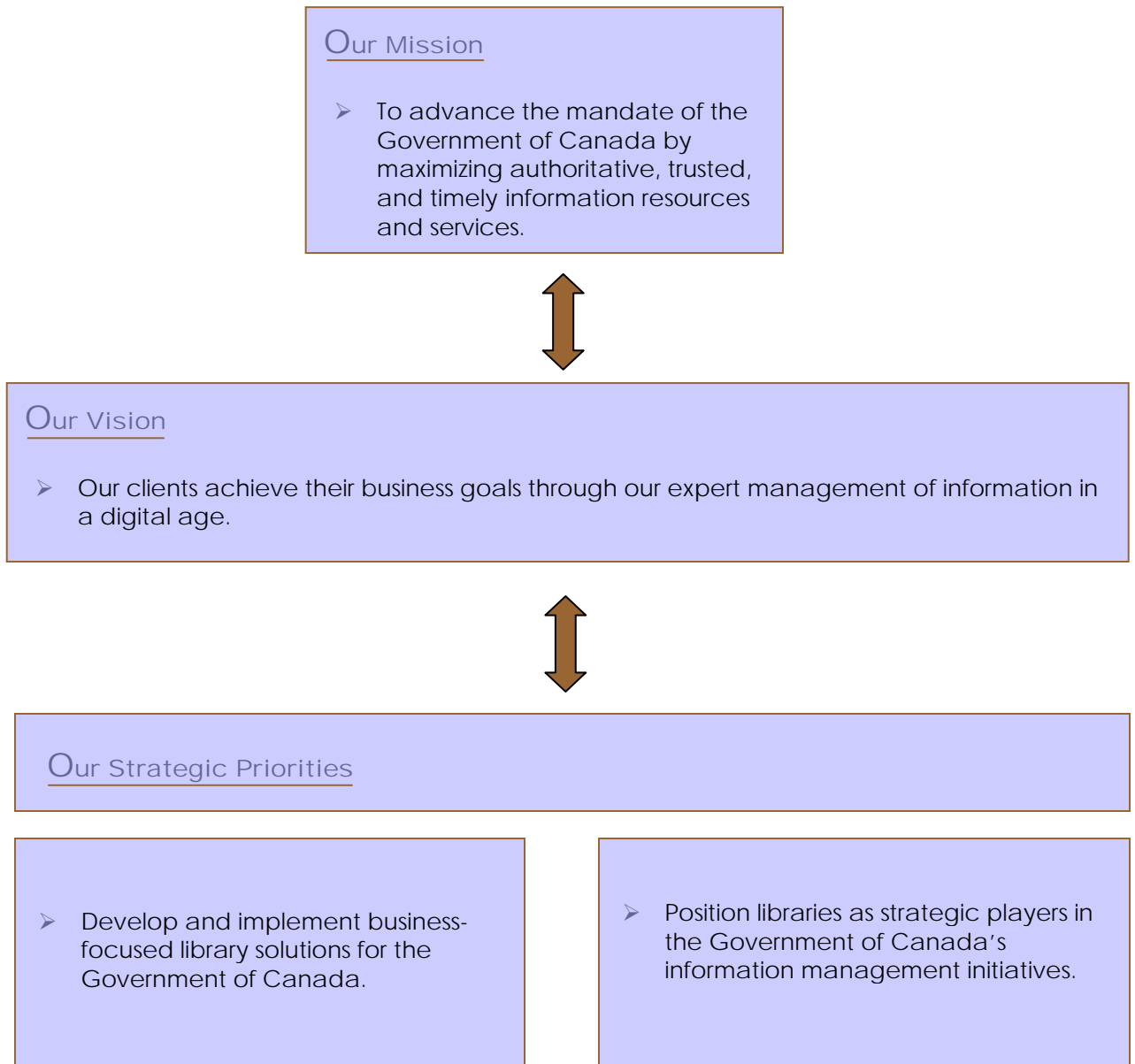
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The Council of Federal Libraries (CFL) was created in 1976 by the National Librarian of Canada as a means of coordinating library services in departments, branches and agencies of the Government of Canada.

During its thirty-year existence, the CFL has fulfilled a multi-part mandate that includes providing advice and information on the federal library and librarian community to the National Librarian (now, the Librarian and Archivist of Canada); representing the community in dialogue with central Government of Canada agencies; facilitating communication within the community; and promoting professional development for the federal librarians.

Through its Consortium, the CFL also supports improved use of federal library resources, offering member libraries opportunities to accrue real savings on the purchase of shared services, electronic databases and other library services.

## Strategy at a Glance



## Federal Libraries and Outcomes for Clients

As active participants in federal departments' business and management teams, libraries deliver comprehensive, timely, high quality and authoritative information services to our clients.

**Direct** outcomes of these services for our clients include:

- Increased productivity
- Enhanced quality of decision-making
- Greater efficiency
- Strengthened ability to innovate
- Improved competitiveness.

Clients use libraries as a source for information to plan, implement, deliver and evaluate programs and services for federal government target groups.

**Indirect** outcomes of library services include:

- A prosperous, innovative and knowledge-based economy
- Healthy Canadians and environment
- A vibrant Canadian society, culture and heritage
- Safe and secure communities
- Improving Canada's contribution to global issues.

The following section, "Meeting Clients' Information Needs" describes clients' needs and library services that support these outcomes.

"The Public Service is transforming itself. It is changing the way it serves Canadians and how it accounts to them."

*Clerk of the Privy Council in  
Twelfth Annual Report to the  
Prime Minister on the Public  
Service of Canada, April 2005*



## Meeting Clients' Information Needs

In the age of Google, our clients expect that they will easily find all the information they require from their desktops; and more, that it will be free. They want information to be accessible 24/7, whether they are at work, at home or travelling. They care about content, not necessarily the format of the information. They might use alternative devices and technologies to obtain and secure their information. They work within a modernised public service, which embraces horizontal approaches and accountability to deliver programs and services.

The amount of information on the Internet is proliferating at an astonishing pace. The vehicles through which information is found are increasing as well (e.g. intranet sites, RSS feeds, blogs, etc.). For many clients, information overload is the norm. Within this environment, it is increasingly difficult for clients to determine if information is authoritative.

"Our facility's library no longer receives paper journals, so access to relevant periodicals requires a 45 minute drive to the University of Alberta. Requesting photocopies of journal articles through the library system involves a delay of several days. Thus desktop access to e-journals significantly reduces unnecessary travel and waiting time."

*Researcher at Natural Resources Canada  
who participated on pilot project for  
proposed Federal Science eLibrary*

Even if it is available via the Internet, not all electronic information is free. As publishers and vendors continue to seek more revenues, it becomes more costly to secure access to credible information products such as journals and databases. Some authoritative information is not available electronically or on the Internet at all. It must be housed in a physical space.

Information on the Internet might be available today and gone tomorrow. Who ensures that authoritative information is made perpetually available to future generations? In the print world, libraries have traditionally served as the long-term custodians of information. Many libraries have already adopted, or are poised to adopt, this role in the digital era.

Information appears to be available 24/7. However, some federal employees remain information have-nots. They work outside of Canada, or in remote sites. Some are without basic library services or Internet access. Some do not have reasonable access to information in their specific subject areas because their libraries lack funds to supply coverage on all subjects.

The federal government is developing new approaches to managing and delivering programs and services and to ensure accountability for government resources. Information has been acknowledged as a key resource in accomplishing this transformation.

Within this framework, federal libraries face multiple challenges. Currently, federal librarians use their expertise to select, analyse and package the best information available, assisting our clients to combat information overload and aid their decision-making. We identify, obtain, organise and provide access to fee-based information products and sources in various formats. We preserve and maintain specialised subject collections and ensure they remain accessible to our clients. We develop customised solutions in order to provide equitable access and service across the federal government. We develop new services to meet the needs of technology-savvy clients. We work to ensure that our clients' business needs are met, now and in the future, and we implement horizontal approaches that yield the most cost-effective and efficient service.

## About Federal Libraries

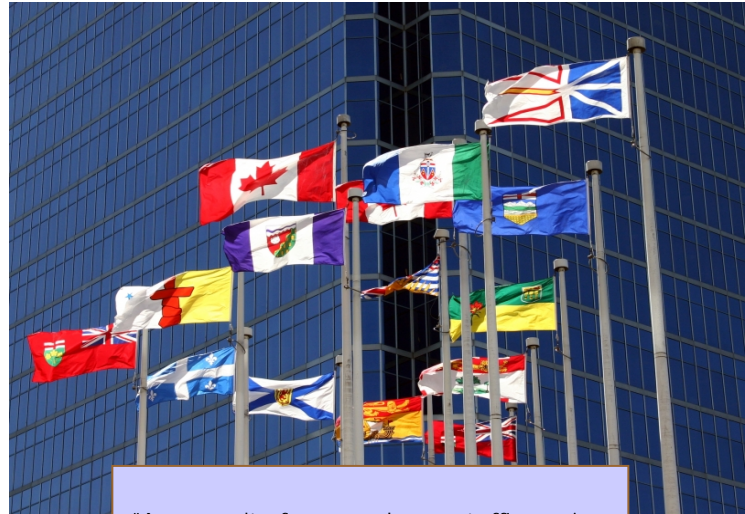
In a digital era where information services are increasingly time and space independent, Canada's federal libraries provide trusted resources, research, training and expertise to our clients.

The 300 libraries that serve the Government of Canada are diverse. Today, our clients are federal employees from departments, agencies and Crown corporations. They include scientists, engineers, psychologists, doctors, nurses, accountants, teachers, politicians, policy makers, lawyers, managers, economists, business analysts, communicators, human resources specialists and many others. We also serve the Canadian public who may be individuals, companies, universities, hospitals and provincial and municipal governments. Our clients have a vast range of information needs and levels of information literacy.

Our collections, ranging from art to law to medicine to statistics, are as diverse as the programs and services offered by the Government of Canada. Our print and electronic information resources include fee-based published information, rare or difficult to locate literature, data, artefacts and business intelligence. Within a long-standing tradition of networking, information and resource-sharing, our competent community of professionals and para-professionals deploys expertise that is critical to managing and leveraging these resources as a valued asset.

Service models range from single sites with one employee to distributed regional networks of information centres across Canada. Although federal libraries are diverse, federal librarians are committed to contributing to the national economy, to building knowledge and innovation and to the social and cultural enrichment of Canada and its citizens.

Federal library services have evolved with the needs of our clients and we are poised to continue this evolution to ensure clients' information needs are met, both today and in the future.



"As a result of you and your staff's service to me in providing assistance to me with my audit, the examination will result in an income adjustment of \$14,500,000 under Part I and \$1,450,000 under Part XIII of the Income Tax Act. I very much appreciate and thank you and your staff for the professional assistance."

*Auditor at Canada  
Revenue Agency*

## Values of Federal Government's Librarians

Librarians of the Federal Government of Canada are guided in our work and our professional conduct by a balanced framework of business, people, ethical and democratic values.

**Business Values:** *Ensuring information is valued as an asset to the business of the Government of Canada.*

**People Values:** *Demonstrating respect, fairness and courtesy in our dealings with both citizens and fellow public servants.*

**Ethical Values:** *Acting at all times in such a way as to uphold the public trust.*

**Democratic Values:** *Helping Ministers and public servants, under law, to serve the public interest of Canadians.*

## Our Mission in Detail

*To advance the mandate of the Government of Canada by maximising authoritative, trusted and timely information resources and services.*

- Federal librarians are committed to making a major contribution to the national economy, to enhancing decision-making, to building knowledge and innovation and to the social and cultural enrichment of Canada and its citizens.
- We have a key role to play in setting the agenda for the future of Canada's knowledge, innovation and competitiveness.
- Our task is to enable information to be used now and to archive and preserve it in perpetuity for future use by government institutions and Canadians.
- We bring direct benefits to those who use our collections and client-tailored services because we help them advance their own knowledge, and therefore the universe of knowledge, through expert research and analysis.
- We enrich the lives of Canadians and the programs of government institutions through the fruits of the work we have enabled.



"One client wanted confirmation as to whether a case had been settled in the U.S. Supreme Court. The Google search she had performed on the subject had retrieved inaccurate information. Information Centre staff searched SEC filings and wrote up a report that included an accurate case status along with recommendations. Not only was the client saved embarrassment, but also we were able to hedge our risk with the company in question. The information we provided and the speed of our response impressed the client."

*Information Centre at Export Development Canada*

## Our Vision in Detail

*Our clients achieve their business goals through our expert management of information in a digital age.*

- We evaluate the needs of our clients and provide services that reflect a movement towards shared approaches in a changing digital and virtual world of information.
- To meet the research, policy development and decision-making needs of federal employees and the Canadian public, we leverage information from global sources.
- We sustain a workforce of motivated and competent staff who deliver on this vision and contribute to federal library activities at large.
- We facilitate access to and maximise use of the federal government's collections (print, digital and other media) through an integrated national and global network.
- We champion the preservation of government information and resources, providing strategies and standards to ensure access for future generations of Canadians.
- We are trusted partners connecting with the expertise of others in the information environment across the public and private sectors to develop enterprise solutions, content and tools for government institutions.
- As recognised experts, we provide value-added analysis and have a unique set of abilities to organise and manage volumes of information.



"You win cases in the library, not in the court room."

*The Honourable  
Mr. Justice Marshall Rothstein,  
Supreme Court of Canada*



## Our Strategic Priorities in Detail

### *Develop and implement business-focused library solutions for the government of Canada.*

Government-wide solutions provide efficient approaches to service delivery, freeing individual libraries to respond to the unique business needs of their organisations.



#### Key Area

Leverage existing services and initiatives.

#### Actions and Benefits

- Build on existing consortial licensing/buying models to develop and deliver standard information suites for functional communities across the Government of Canada (e.g. lawyers, auditors, researchers). This will ensure consistent client access on a 24/7 basis to required information independent of the client's federal department or agency.
- Develop a shared solution for storage and use of less-used materials to achieve cost and space efficiencies.

Determine a sustainable approach to delivering enterprise-wide solutions.

- Define the costs and requirements of an infrastructure and governance structure capable of initiating and overseeing shared services and projects.
- Identify priority areas for shared service so that the scope of potential projects is understood.
- Investigate partnerships with other enterprise initiatives such as Common Administrative Shared Services or Common Desktop Tools project to pilot the approaches. This will assist in achieving a more effective implementation.

Establish performance measurement standards.

- Identify a methodology to quantify the value of federal libraries. This will provide key benchmarks to assess performance.
- Align library services' outputs to clear business outcomes.
- Develop an appropriate methodology for reporting, thereby supporting more meaningful library evaluations.

## Our Strategic Priorities in Detail

### *Position libraries as strategic players in the Government of Canada's information management (IM) initiatives.*

As a knowledge-based organisation, the Government of Canada requires 24/7 access to the right information. The participation of libraries in information management initiatives ensures that both internal information and externally sourced information are well managed to support the legislative, policy, research, communications, program and operational sectors.



#### Key Area

Articulate the distinctive role of federal libraries within the broader IM framework.

#### Actions and Benefits

- Embed the role of federal libraries within the upcoming revision of the Management of Government Information (MGI) policy. This will help strengthen the role of federal libraries within the Government of Canada's policy and governance structure and the ability of federal libraries to deliver quality information services to their clients.
  - Ensure library-based initiatives are eligible for funding available through the IM agenda. Access to funding will encourage libraries to develop innovative client services.
  - Support the Librarian and Archivist of Canada as champion of government libraries to enable greater contribution to a more comprehensive IM agenda.
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- Clarify Library and Archives Canada's legislated role in coordinating federal libraries to enable improved strategic and functional relationships.
  - Define a strategic role for libraries within federal departments and agencies and identify core elements that make library contributions unique.
  - Establish the position of federal libraries within government-wide IM committees so that library issues are incorporated into IM discussions and the competencies of the library community are leveraged to optimise IM initiatives.

Strengthen strategic partnerships and relationships.