



Annual Report
of the
**British Columbia
Legislative Library**
2010



May 5, 2011

The Honourable Bill Barisoff
Speaker of the Legislative Assembly
Parliament Buildings
Victoria, British Columbia
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Dear Mr. Speaker,

I am pleased to present the Library's Annual Report for the year 2010. The report is submitted pursuant to order 116 of the Standing Orders of the Legislative Assembly, 1987.

In keeping with our efforts to provide more information to the Members of the Legislative Assembly via electronic services, this report will also be made electronically available on the Library's website.

Respectfully submitted,

Peter Gourlay
Acting Director

Organizational Overview

The Legislative Library provides enduring, non-partisan information services to the democratic institution of the Legislative Assembly of British Columbia and its members.

Since 1863, the Legislative Library has provided library services to the Legislative Assembly. The composition and mandate of the library has evolved over time. The BC Provincial Archives and the Public Library Services Branch were both originally part of the library, later developing into independent institutions. In the 1970s the working name of the library was changed from the Provincial Library to the Legislative Library. In 1985 the library was brought under the administrative control of the Speaker of the Legislative Assembly, after spending its existence up to that point as part of a line ministry. Today, the primary purpose of the library is to meet the information needs of MLAs and other Assembly staff.

The library has a rich and varied collection of material, including the most comprehensive collection of BC government publications available anywhere. This collection is the history of the BC government, as expressed through its publications.

The library is established under the *Legislative Library Act*. The Legislative Librarian is responsible to the Speaker. As with the rest of the Assembly, this reporting takes place through the Clerk of the House.

The library is divided into three divisions:

Reference: answering our clients questions, and providing current awareness services

Technical Services: selecting, acquiring, processing and maintaining the library's collections, both print and electronic

Administration and Systems: supporting the work of, and providing overall direction for the library.

The guiding principles of library services are non-partisanship and confidentiality.

The main purpose of the library is to serve what are defined as prime clients. These are MLAs, caucus staff, constituency staff, Assembly staff, the Lieutenant Governor's Office, staff of the Officers of the House, former MLAs, and members of the Press Gallery. As long as there is no conflict with service to these clients, the library is also open to provincial government employees and members of the public.

The library fulfills its mission by providing the following services:

Reference and Research: This is the public service component of the library – answering our clients’ questions. There is no absolute difference between reference and research, but research questions more complex, and require more work on the part of the library’s staff. Prime clients are the heaviest users of the library. The library also answers questions from outside clients, including government employees and members of the public.

Current Awareness: These are library products that are distributed to our clients, helping them to stay on top of current events. Our primary current awareness services are Community News Update and Tables of Contents. Library staff also write background papers and bibliographies on topics of interest to our clients.

Training: The library provides training to prime clients on the use of library resources, and other information topics. This is done through classroom sessions in the Human Resources training lab, group tours, and one-on-one instruction.

Library Collection: The library provides a collection of material to assist our clients and staff in the work they do. This collection is increasingly electronic, but there is still a very substantial historical collection in paper. Almost all of this paper collection has not been digitized. The library purchases subscriptions to large commercial databases, which clients can then access directly. Centralized purchasing of these databases through the library is substantially more cost effective than each area buying their own subscription. The library maintains a good collection of new books, and regularly purchases books that clients have requested.

Legislative Library Act, section 1:

The books, papers, furniture, stationary and other articles in possession of the Legislative Assembly on April 11, 1894, and all additions to that collection, belong to Her Majesty for the use of the Legislative Assembly, and are known as the Legislative Library of British Columbia.

Staffing

2010 saw the retirement of another long-serving staff member, Judi Bennett. Over her 34 years in the library, Judi oversaw our collection of BC government publications. She also wrote or co-wrote several reference publications, including *British Columbia Executive Council Appointments 1871-1986*, and *Royal Commissions and Commissions of Inquiry 1981-2005*. Chelsea Parkinson, an auxiliary library clerk, left the library in 2010 to continue with her education.

Reference

There was a 3% increase in reference questions from 2009. This increase came in questions that take a longer amount of time to answer. Quick answer questions declined by 5.7%. The number of questions asked by MLAs and legislative staff increased in 2010 by 12%, following a long-term trend of an increasing number of questions from these clients.



Consultation Room

In March the library set up a consultation room, where prime clients can talk to a librarian in private. While most clients continue to use the reference desk to answer their questions, the consultation room is available for clients who need an increased level of confidentiality.

Circulation

There was a small increase in circulation of 1.5% from the previous year. Despite the increase in electronic information, use of print material continues to be strong. In 2011 the library expects to carefully increase its offerings of e-books, following increased availability of e-book readers.

Training Sessions

Library staff continued to offer a variety of formal training sessions in 2010. There were 12 workshops in 2010, in addition to informal orientations for individual staff. Workshop topics included QP Legaleze Online Statistics Sources, Fact-Checking, Legal Databases, BC Online, and a general overview of library resources. Librarians also presented special orientations to staff of the Information and Privacy Commissioner, Ombudsperson, and Representative for Children and Youth.

Electronic Resources

Two new databases were offered in 2010.

Mango offers online conversational language training. The product includes more than 20 languages, including French, Spanish, Chinese, Tamil, Vietnamese, and Korean. In addition to MLAs and staff working in Victoria, this product has been made accessible to constituency office staff.

Quickscribe is a locally operated BC legislative database product. This was mostly purchased to assist reference librarians with their work, but its point in time features have been popular with clients as well.

Usage of Proquest, the library's primary subscription database, declined by 18% in 2010, but this came after a 61% increase in the previous year. This usage is measured by the number of unique searches.

Table of Contents

There was a jump of 113% in the number of articles requested in our Table of Contents service. This product allows our clients to easily request articles from a selection of popular and relevant magazines. This service is particularly popular amongst caucus staff.



Cooperation

The library has become involved in several cooperative ventures with other libraries. The library is an active member in two major digitization projects. Other partners in these projects are the major university libraries, the BC Provincial Archives, and the largest public libraries. The library is contributing both staff expertise, and items from our rich collection of historical material. During 2010 these projects were at the planning stages, but both should move into actual digitization during 2011. The library also joined the new BC Library Cooperative. In April the library hosted a University of Alberta practicum student, and in October the library hosted an information session for BC government library staff. From June to December a library researcher was on loan to the Office of the Clerk of Committees.

Community News

Community News is a weekly review of selected articles from community newspapers across BC. This product has been available for many years. Starting 2009 the library offered clients the ability to customize it. Rather than receiving the entire package, clients can now receive only articles that match certain subjects, names, or papers. In 2010 the library enhanced this product further by offering a paperless version. Approximately half the Community News subscribers now receive the product via email. These changes have allowed the library to produce the product much more efficiently as well.

Web Site

The library's website has become a vital and heavily used resource, an outcome that was not expected when the collection of electronic BC government publications was started in 2000. Page views in 2010 were over 3.6 million (excluding use by library staff). This is an increase of 42% from 2009, and over 900% from 2007. The large size and use of the library's web site means that results from search engines frequently place the library at or near the top of the search results list. Usage in 2011 is expected to be reduced, perhaps dramatically, as the implementation of a content management system will most likely place much of the collection out of the view of search engines. However, this is a vital step as the collection is becoming too difficult to manage in any other way.

