

REIMAGINE

RETHINK

RENEW

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ANNUAL
REPORT


COURTHOUSE
LIBRARIES | BC



BOARD OF DIRECTORS
(May 2020)

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Mark Virgin
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Margot Spence
Katie (Katharine) M. Armitage

Jeff (Jeffrey) W. Locke
Doug (Douglas) Nelson
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Adam La France

With thanks (outgoing Board members)
Justice Alan Ross and Stacy Kuiack

BACKGROUND

CLBC is a not-for-profit registered charity under the BC Societies Act and is funded primarily through major contributions from the Law Foundation of British Columbia, the Law Society of British Columbia, as well as through its own operational revenue. CLBC also receives project funding from the Notaries Foundation. The Ministry of Attorney General provides physical space for the library in 29 courthouses throughout the Province.

CLBC Values

Accountability	Equity & Inclusion
Excellence	Adaptability
Service	Kindness

CLBC Vision

Everyone in BC has ready access to the legal information & resources they need.

CLBC's mission is to provide the legal community and public with legal resources, Librarian expertise & informed referrals, to help people research and manage their own or client's legal issues.

We strive to meet this by providing the following core services:

- 1. Providing information services:** connecting clients to legal information and services.

- 2. Curating print and digital materials:** developing and maintaining legal information collections that meet our clients' needs.
- 3. Delivering training and outreach programs:** building the capacity of our clients to use legal information and services.

CLBC's strategic plan guides the overall direction of the library by outlining objectives and activities intended to achieve **four goals**:

- 1.** Expertly curate and protect the quality of our legal information & resources.
- 2.** Invest in the acquisition & sharing of staff expertise.
- 3.** Reduce barriers to accessing high quality legal information, resources & referrals.
- 4.** Empower people to effectively research and manage their own or client's legal issues.

Foundation

We continuously improve our business processes & governance to support this work.





REIMAGINE

"We all know the story about the man who sat by the trail too long, and then it grew over, and he could never find his way again. We can never forget what has happened, but we cannot go back. Nor can we just sit beside the trail."

PIHTOKAHANAPIWIYIN (CHIEF POUNDMAKER)



2020 IN FOCUS

2020 was a defining year for Courthouse Libraries BC – we pivoted from widely-used physical spaces with some online programming, to extensively-used digital programming and limited public access to physical spaces due to COVID-19 restrictions. When staff were surveyed at the end of the year about what they were most proud of in terms of our performance, the overwhelming response was our adaptability, flexibility and resilience in the face of change.

Logistical efforts focused on safety for our clients and staff, adding new equipment and procedures, and adapting almost everything we do to a new way of working. But amidst all that activity we saw a significant positive change in an unexpected area, which was a strengthening of the Library’s working relationships. We became closer with court services staff, sheriffs, and other community partners. These enhanced connections have ultimately improved our ability to serve clients with more empathy and coordination than ever before.

CLBC’s online training and services stood out in 2020. The increased need for remote services saw online training participation, remote subscription database usage, and Book-in-a-Box deliveries all make substantial gains and while smoothly meeting demand.

We created a cross-provincial Safe Re-Opening Team that developed our safety plans, outfitted all locations with safety equipment and tested out new models for physical access to our libraries. We invested in online professional development for all staff, and provided peer training and support throughout the organization. And we revisited our Strategic Plan at both the staff and Board level, and made some changes to better reflect the COVID-19 world we are now operating within.

Thanks to the strong support of the Law Foundation of BC, the Law Society of BC and the Ministry of Attorney General, we continue to invest in the people, resources and services required to ‘level the playing field’ and support both access to justice and lawyer competence throughout the province.



2020 Service Stats



Training

A somewhat unexpected effect of COVID-19 restrictions was a significant increase in online training service demand. Almost 10,000 lawyers and community members attended CLBC training sessions in 2020, a 347% increase over 2019.



Remote services

Unsurprisingly, all remote-based services saw an increase in 2020, and remote channels such as email and phone became the primary means of connection with our clients.



Book-in-a-Box

Despite a complete shutdown of this service between mid March and June, Book-in-a-Box managed to finish the year with a net increase in orders over 2019.



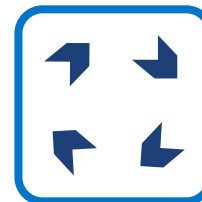
Database subscriptions

Total subscription accounts continued their growth in 2020, but usage from existing accounts almost doubled over the same period; the largest single-year jump on record.



Front-line reference information requests

Year over year growth was up 6.5% heading into March 2020, and after an expected drop mid March, demand has been steadily increasing since September.



Print circulation, Public Access Computers, WIFI

These services saw an expected drop off in use when all physical locations closed on March 17, but have begun a gradual recovery as locations have re-opened.



RETHINK

"Remember that, my child. Remember you are half water. If you can't go through an obstacle, go around it. Water does."

MARGARET ATWOOD



REIMAGINING SERVICE DELIVERY

The shift in priorities forced by COVID-19 restrictions last year enabled accelerated progress of our Reference Excellence team's business process review work. This year saw CLBC improve its overall service delivery model and ability to adapt to the changing needs of our clients.

Historically, the distribution in demand between lawyers and the public has been roughly 50/50, and the first three months of 2020 were no different. Once branches closed in March however, lawyers immediately became the majority client of CLBC.

Information services

Mid March, staff pivoted quickly to work from home and we continued providing information services remotely. Most client requests came in through phone and email, rather than in person.

The LawMatters program aligned to the new requirements of public libraries across the province as they re-engineered their activities. We shifted from a collection development focus, to collection pruning, which saw out of date publications make space for a renewed development and grants program in 2021.

Early 2020 saw development of a long-term IT strategic plan, and completion of network stabilization work which allowed our staff to easily pivot (from an IT perspective) to working from home. New public access computers (PACs) and printers were purchased and deployed across all locations, which will provide much needed improvements in service performance and capabilities.

The IT team also made improvements to CLBC's network security and server infrastructure, and began work on the network upgrade project which involves negotiations and coordination with several of our external network service partners.

In person

In-person access to libraries for the legal community and notaries went largely uninterrupted, by following local "after hours" security protocols once the provincial shutdown occurred.

In April and May, our Safe Re-Opening Team was established and focused on developing the CLBC safety plan and implementing it across all of our locations.

At the end of June, a small number of front line services staff returned to work in the Vancouver library to support the staff who deliver legal information services via phone and email. In September, Vancouver partnered with the Vancouver registry to provide limited in-person services to the public, in particular helping self-represented litigants filing family court forms.

Other locations consulted with local stakeholders in preparation for increased in person services in early 2021.

Online

CLBC provides a variety of information services and repositories online, hosted across several web properties. Many services saw an initial decrease in usage as the early stages of the COVID-19 shutdown took effect, but began steady recoveries in the second half of the year.

Much of 2020 focused on improving delivery of online services. Consolidation of LawMatters online presence into the Courthouse Libraries main site, improvements to our online search and analytics, and additional accessibility capabilities all resulted in a better online client experience.

In addition to the main website, CLBC curates and manages:

Clicklaw Wikibooks

Clicklaw Wikibooks, CLBC’s highest traffic online site, is a web-based publishing platform that makes available public legal education to BC residents. The platform’s 27 publication titles saw a general decline during 2020, but several titles including employment insurance and employment dismissal saw a significant increase that reflected the situations of many affected by COVID-19.

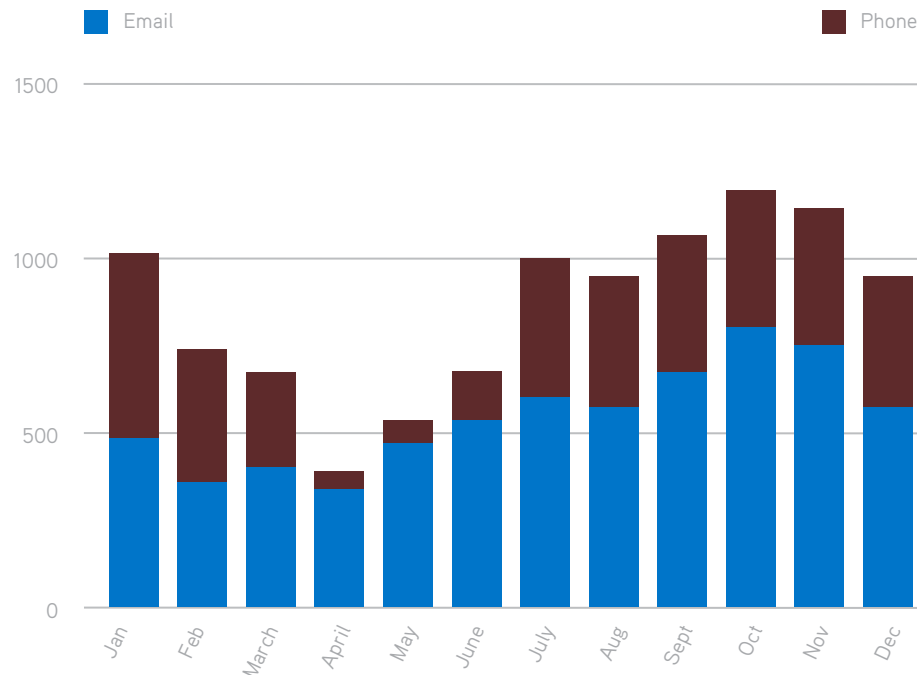


Figure 1: Service demand via phone and email dropped at the beginning of the COVID-19 shutdown, and in recovery email has surpassed its previous levels of demand.

Lawbster.net

New users spiked considerably in 2020, with a 186% increase over 2019. Work focused on building out the Family Law Organizer (FLO) community, and the steering committee approved several new working groups under FLO, including one for collaborative divorce professionals, a forum exclusive to paralegals, and a broader forum for family law and procedure issues.

Clicklaw.bc.ca

Clicklaw’s role as an important online resource for legal information increased considerably during 2020. Demand for help reflected the life disruption experienced by British Columbians; with questions on welfare, Employment Insurance (EI), unpaid salaries and probate leading the top page views for the year.

Curating print and digital materials

2020 was all about reaching our clients while they dealt with being hindered by shutdowns across the province. Several existing CLBC print and digital services filled the need, and smoothly scaled up under the increased demand.

Book-in-a-Box continued its steady year-over-year growth, and extended its primary model of servicing remote communities into servicing all lawyers unable to come into the branches.

Remote subscription accounts kept lawyers connected with the information and networks they depend on to run their practices. While there was modest growth in absolute accounts, 2020’s usage almost doubled over 2019.

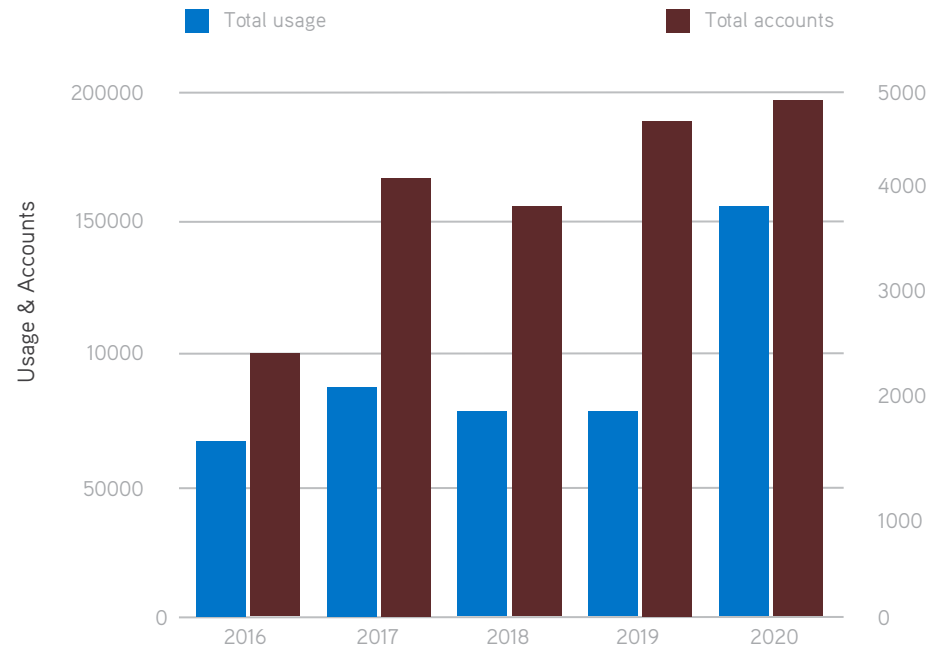


Figure 2: Remote subscription accounts and usage both increased in 2020, with overall usage showing the greatest gains.

Delivering training and outreach programs

CLBC provides training on the use of legal information tools and practice management skills, and works in partnership with subject matter experts to deliver training on substantive and procedural law. Training is aimed at the legal community, including lawyers, judges, law students, paralegals, as well as frontline intermediaries including legal advocates, community workers and public librarians.

2020's disruptive events put an emphasis on the importance of many of our training and outreach efforts. Working with 19 organizational partners and 95 subject-matter experts, we delivered 55 training sessions for the legal

community, including 42 for CPD credit, and eight as part of the LawMatters program.

We had 9,905 live viewers across our training sessions, which represented an incredible 347% increase over last year's attendance. Each training session averaged 180 live attendees.

Participants rated their confidence in their knowledge about the presentation topic at the beginning and end of the presentation, increasing from an average of 2.86 to 3.83 (on a 5 point scale), or a 25% improvement.

Online and video training were the notable 'MVPs' of 2020, providing a province of isolated professionals and public with valuable ways to spend their time while sheltering in place.

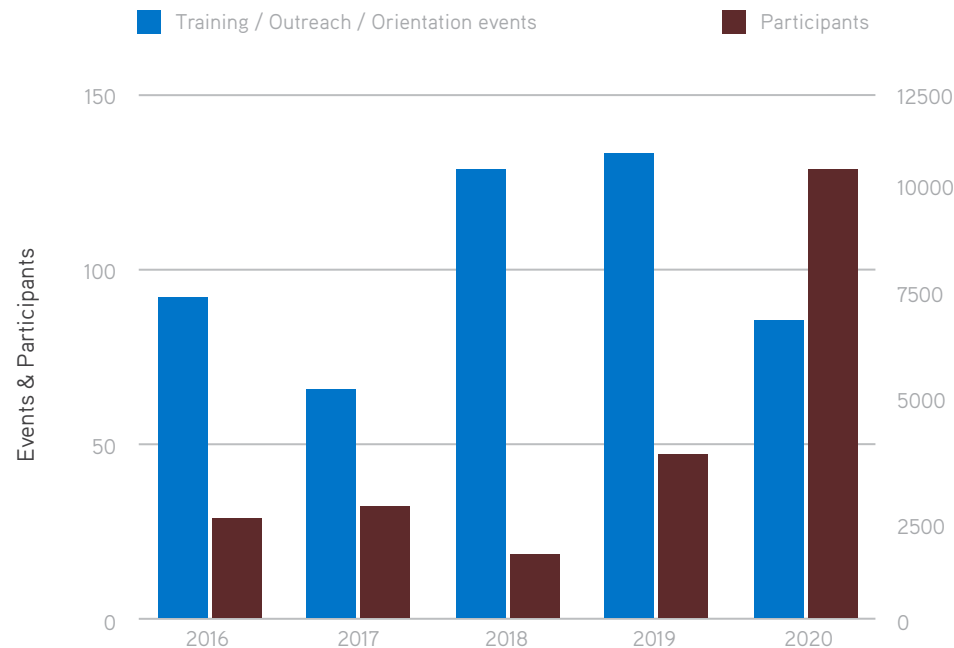


Figure 3: Training participation increased significantly in 2020, with the number of events declining due to in-person limitations



RENEW

"Tomorrow belongs to those of us who conceive of it as belonging to everyone; who lend the best of ourselves to it, and with joy."

AUDRE LORDE

2020 FINANCIALS

Highlights for the year ended
December 31, 2020

*does not include purchase of
books considered capital assets,
which was \$446,299 in 2020

Complete Financial
Statements and Independent
Auditors Report available
upon request.

	OPERATIONS	PROJECTS	TOTAL
FUNDING SOURCES			
Law Foundation of BC	2,245,954	88,716	2,334,670
Law Society of BC	2,390,954	-	2,390,954
Amortization of deferred capital contributions	350,027	-	350,027
Recognition of revenue from deferred contributions unspent	34,637	-	34,637
Client revenue, interest, and government assistance	88,498	-	88,498
Project Funding Grants	-	3,034	3,034
Total	5,110,070	91,750	5,201,820
EXPENDITURES			
Staff	3,096,724	43,295	3,140,019
Information Sources	728,196	2,907	731,103
Operations	905,318	45,548	950,866
Amortization of Capital Assets	453,744	-	453,744
Total	5,183,982	91,750	5,275,732
INFORMATION SOURCES EXPENDITURES			
Print Resources*	69,165	2,907	72,072
Digital Resources	659,031	-	659,031
Total	728,196	2,907	731,103



British Columbia Courthouse Library Society

800 Smithe Street, Vancouver, BC V6Z 2E1

604.660.2910

www.courthouselibrary.ca

CLBC has branches across the lands now known as British Columbia. These lands are the ancestral home of a diverse population of Indigenous peoples. We acknowledge and respect the continued connection between the past, present and future in our ongoing relationships with Indigenous peoples within our local communities. We are thankful to live and work on these lands. This report was authored on the traditional and unceded territories of the Coast Salish Peoples, including the territories of the x^mməθkwəyəm (Musqueam), Skwxwú7mesh (Squamish), and Səlílwətaʔ/Selilwitulh (Tsleil-Waututh) Nations.