

  
**COURTHOUSE  
LIBRARIES | BC**

*Annual Report 2011*



## Introduction.

# 2011

**2011 was a significant year for Courthouse Libraries, as it was the first full year of operation following our transition towards a balanced scorecard approach to measuring our performance.**

The results of these efforts have been varied and have affected many aspects of the Courthouse Libraries BC's operations from our interactions with clients to our revitalization of local Courthouse Libraries BC branches.

### **Online Resources**

Our movement towards the creation and maintenance of online resources continued throughout 2011, with the development of more electronic products and Clicklaw widgets, enhanced website content, a commitment to free wireless in all branches, and the hosting of the national “Just a

Click Away” conference on technology and public legal education and information. We also began to experiment with publicizing our services through social media — an effort that has been greeted with praise from various bodies including the courts.

Throughout 2011, we committed ourselves to a client-focused approach . We revised service fees to better meet the needs of our clients, worked to renew local branches that were suffering from a dearth of training and technology, and developed CPD credit-worthy training programs that have already been utilized by over 300 lawyers.





### **Client Focused**

Our paramount goal remains the enhancement of access to legal information and tools and the skills to use them effectively. We continue to strive to better shape our digital offerings, collections, and physical infrastructure to meet the diverse needs of the legal communities that we serve. In particular, we have recognized the importance of focusing on the needs of smaller firms, smaller communities and newer calls. After consulting with lawyers in pilot communities, we found that many were still unaware of the scope of our resources. This is an issue that we hope to combat in the coming years.

### **Greater Access**

It is similarly important that we continue to focus on cultivating Courthouse Libraries' online presence. Many of the clients that engage with our services do so without ever setting foot in one of our physical locations. By recognizing that the website is the library to many of our clients, we will be better equipped in the coming year to reorient our services to allow for the broad access of a variety of users.

## Client Services.

### Online Legal Information

As digital technology has evolved, users increasingly expect websites to offer services and content at their convenience. In an effort to move towards 24-7 web access, we have developed the “Lawyers’ Reading Room” – an online library for lawyers that can be accessed remotely. When the Reading Room is launched in January 2012, for the first time, lawyers will be able to view parts of the Courthouse Libraries BC’s licensed digital collections from their home or office. By enabling access to key tools via the desktop, we are reaching clients where they are, extending the library beyond our walls.

“I cannot begin to tell you how thankful I am for all your help over this past year. You have answered several questions of mine, run around the library helping me find sources, and copied documents or found articles in no time!

– Vancouver lawyer Heather Mathison

In addition to the creation of the Reading Room, the Courthouse Libraries BC has also started to offer training sessions by webinar. This initiative has great promise to extend our ability to reach clients in remote locations as well as clients who feel that they are too busy to leave their office. In 2011, we delivered 10 training webinars to groups of lawyers, public librarians, and public legal information practitioners. The sessions were very well received, setting the stage for us to expand our webinar offerings in the years ahead.

### Lower Fees

In a client survey, it was expressed that our fee-based services were meeting client needs but were too costly. To address this issue, we decided to streamline and reduce our fees.







## Information Requests

In 2011, the Courthouse Libraries BC witnessed an 18% increase in the number of information requests made by clients. In Vancouver, information requests were up 11%, while our regional branches recorded an increase of 23%. It is important to note that 2011 also marked an increase in the number of questions that the Courthouse Libraries BC received from the public. In 2011, 41% of our information requests came from the public, as compared to 38% in 2010. In our regional branches the difference was even greater with the public generating 48% of all information requests, as compared to 42% in 2010.

We saw an **18% increase** in the number of **questions** clients asked in our libraries, as compared to 2010. The total number of **information requests** in 2011 was **47,500**.

## Community Outreach.

Our paramount goal for 2011 was to promote the effective use of and enhance access to legal information and tools. We developed training programs for various groups of lawyers (as well as paralegals, and public librarians) that focused on the use of online legal information tools. After consulting with lawyers in various pilot communities, we learned that many legal practitioners were unaware of the scope of the Courthouse Libraries BC's resources and services. To combat this shortcoming, our training also expanded lawyers' awareness of the full range of Courthouse Libraries BC services.

### Training on Digital Tools

Throughout 2011, Courthouse Libraries BC coordinated 20 hands-on training sessions for lawyers on the effective use of Westlaw and Quicklaw, which were delivered at our Vancouver, Victoria, Kamloops, and Nanaimo libraries. Over 100 lawyers, each of whom earned one free CPD credit, took part in these sessions. We also featured CanLII tips & tricks in a CBABC training webinar on the "Nuts and Bolts of Legal Research" that reached 80 lawyers across the province.

“Can I just say thank you — for 13 years now I have been a research lawyer and have had nothing but excellent help and friendly assistance from everyone at the courthouse library. Merci!

– Courthouse Libraries' Client

### Key Training Statistics

- Provided CPD accredited training on legal information tools to 307 lawyers
- Over 80 lawyers reached through the “Nuts and Bolts of Legal Research” training webinar
- Delivered training instruction to four PLTC student cohorts reaching 395 students





## A Focused Approach

In addition to training sessions focused on digital legal information tools, our team developed sessions aimed at serving the needs of specific groups of lawyers. We developed a presentation specifically designed for members of the CBABC Small Firm & Solo Section as well as a presentation meant to address the needs of lawyers working as family duty counsel. The Courthouse Libraries BC also developed a one-hour program focused on legislation research that was attended by 40 lawyers and articling students.

In addition to these sessions, the Courthouse Libraries BC hosted two “Lunch & Learn” events at our Kamloops library that featured David Paul, QC discussing “Blackberry Apps for Lawyers” and “File Management for Lawyers”. Our staff also delivered presentations to four PLTC student cohorts in Victoria and Vancouver and provided orientations for over 90 law clerks and articled students.

## LawMatters

As a part of our LawMatters program, which aims to enhance public access to legal information in public libraries, we also delivered nine training sessions to public librarians. The sessions were designed as a mix of in-person workshops, hands-on training sessions, and webinars, featuring legal information tools such as CanLII, Clicklaw and other resources. We also delivered CanLII training to two groups of public librarians and over 50 community advocates at the Law Foundation’s annual Advocates Training Conference.

“The webinars were an excellent way to prepare for the conference in Vancouver. I have a more concise idea and knowledge of the direction many PLE providers have gone, and what to expect from the panelists and participants at the upcoming conference. Thank you for producing them.

– Courthouse Libraries’ Client

## Just a Click Away

In February of 2011, the Courthouse Libraries BC was proud to host the “Just a Click Away” Conference: a two-day event attended by over 100 public legal education practitioners and supporters from across Canada. The conference focused on how technology can be utilized to deliver public legal education and information. In anticipation of the event, we developed a three-part webinar series attended by over 90 participants who described the webinars as engaging, effective and easy to use. In the final quarter of 2011, we began work on Phase 2 of “Just a Click Away”. Phase 2 is conceptualized as a two-year project featuring webinars and online workshops on how to use technology effectively to enhance public legal education.

### Key Training Statistics

- *Over 100 public legal education practitioners and supporters attended the “Just a Click Away” Conference*
- *Participants at Just a Click Away rated the conference a 4.4 out of 5 for its relevancy, success in increasing their understanding, and inspiring new ideas*
- *Training provided through our LawMatters program reached 104 public library staff members*

# Infrastructure and Technology.

## Website Changes

With the awareness that more and more of our clients are accessing our resources online, we spent a great deal of 2011 improving various facets of our website and its related properties. We made changes that focused on improving user experience, we revitalized online content, and we restructured the Library's web offerings to make them more intuitive and accessible. As a result of this focus, the total visits to our website increased by 13%.

In an attempt to showcase the best aspects of Courthouse Libraries BC's website, we reorganized several key landing pages so that information would be readily available and easier to find. We also redesigned our five Practice Portals to better highlight blog content, practice-specific Twitter messages, news feeds, resource lists, and legislation. The results of these changes were profound, as the Practice Portals in 2011 received a combined increase in use of 115%.

## Relevant and Timely Content

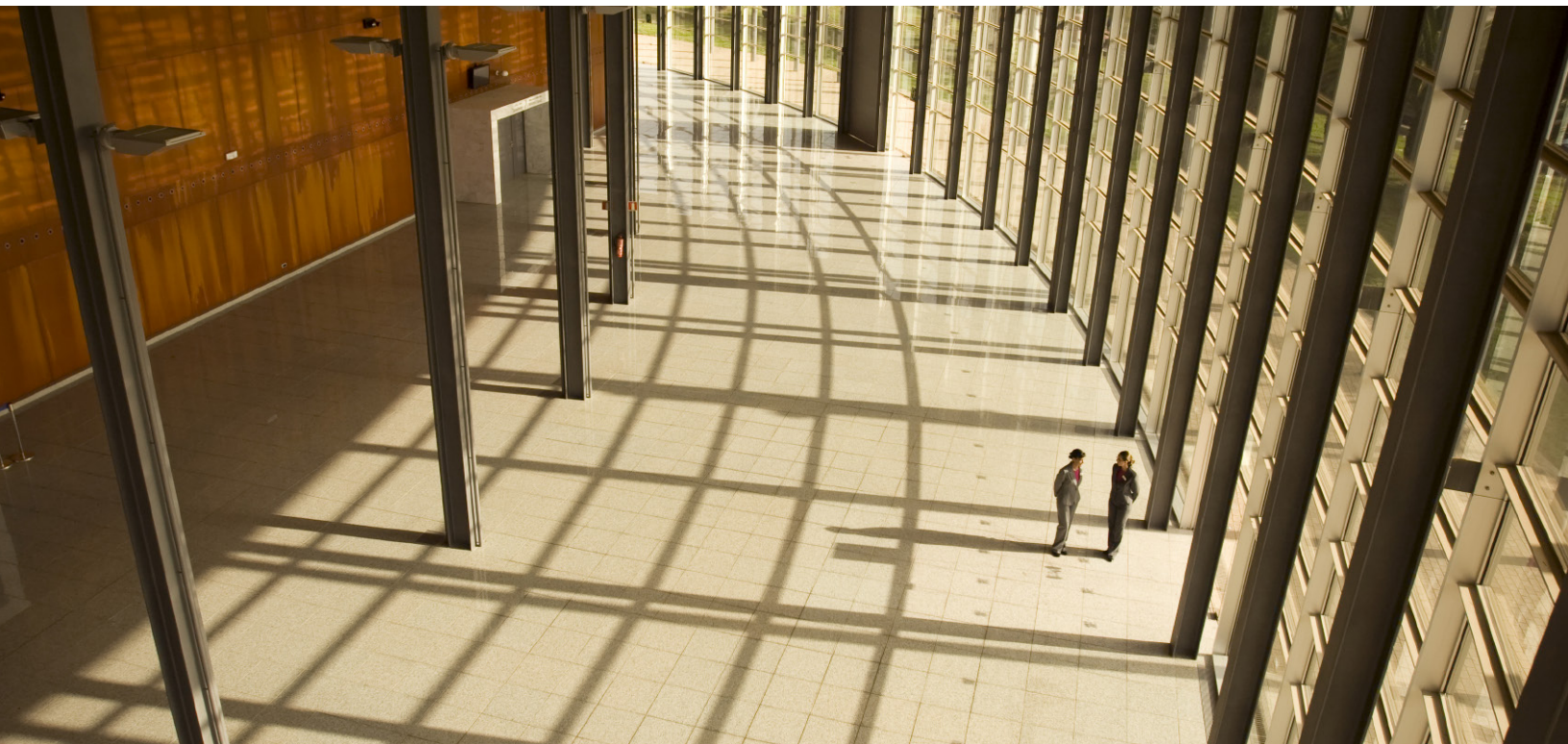
In order to make our online material more relevant to Courthouse Libraries BC users, we developed accessible content written specifically for the web. We also began to publish blog posts written by lawyers and redesigned our links page so that it would be more user friendly. To make our content more timely and responsive we utilized our blog, The Stream, to highlight

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**Traffic on our blog was up by over 50%** between October and December 2011 over the same period in 2010, and **traffic on the Practice Portals was up by 65%** compared to the same period last year.

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legislative changes relevant to lawyers working in various practice areas. We also utilized Twitter to distribute and curate specialized legal information and connect legal practitioners across the province.





## Clicklaw Enhancements

Clicklaw is the public legal education and information portal which aggregates and presents resources from contributing legal groups and organizations.

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In 2011, there were **99,400 visits** to Clicklaw, a **6% increase** over 2010 levels.

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During Law Week, we launched a package of enhancements to Clicklaw that made keyword searching more flexible, HelpMap listings easier to find, and allowed for the use of languages other than English. In September, we additionally released Clicklaw widgets that enabled Clicklaw content to be embedded on other websites. By the end of 2011, 75% of Clicklaw contributor organizations had placed these widgets on their sites. The results of these various efforts were manifested in the 99,400 visits that Clicklaw received in 2011 — a 6% increase over the total number of visits received in 2010.

## Courthouse Libraries BC Goes Wireless

One of the most significant IT offerings in 2011 was the rollout of free wireless service across all branch locations. Courthouse Libraries BC responded to a request from the Vancouver Criminal Bar to install wireless service for the legal community and was able to achieve this end by making use of the Barristers Lounge at the 222 Main St. Courthouse.

## Brick and Mortar

Some notable improvements were made to Courthouse Libraries BC branch libraries, including the completion of a lengthy renovation to the New Westminster Library. The library was reopened to the public on April 12th, 2011 and an open house to celebrate the official re-opening of the branch was held on May 11th.

In three communities (Quesnel, Cranbrook and Courtenay) we piloted a program to revitalize our local library branches by adding additional computers and wireless connectivity, refreshing the space, and removing old materials from the print collection. Library usage has increased as a direct result of these improvements. The revitalization will also feature providing training to lawyers in those communities on using digital legal information tools.

Vancouver Client Services Staff worked diligently through many disruptions this year when two departments were merged into one single service client area.

## Digital Infrastructure Improvements

IT undertook a comprehensive re-examination of the server room and staff/client-facing infrastructure with a view to expand network bandwidth to accommodate wireless service, upgrade servers, and replace antiquated client PCs. As a result:

- New servers were acquired and installed in December.
- IT purchased nearly 80 Wyse “thin client” terminals to replace aging PC terminals in Courthouse Libraries BC branches.
- We upgraded the Integrated Library System (ILS) to the most recent version. Benefits of the new system include the use of a handheld circulation-scanning device in Vancouver for in-house use book statistics.
- Plans for an IT department re-organization began in late 2011 that culminated in the departure of the Network Administrator in early January 2012. The IT Manager will outsource higher-skilled and more complex IT needs to third parties on an as-required basis to reduce staffing costs and better serve the rapidly expanding needs of the business.

## Collections.

### **Declining Popularity of Print Materials**

Although the use of print material was up in some branches — including Victoria, Prince George, and Nanaimo — the in-house use of print collections fell 15% in 2011. Book loans also decreased by 3%. This decline in print usage is, however, more than offset by expanded use of our library website and digital subscription products as lawyers are increasingly meeting their information needs with electronic resources. In addition, it is important to note that the decline in usage also results from the fact that PLTC students did not conduct research assignments in the Vancouver Courthouse Library as they have in previous years. In the past, the weeks that PLTC students worked on their assignments were the heaviest of the year in regard to the number of books reshelfed.

### **Streamline Collection Development Process**

In order to streamline our collection development process, we created an internal online approval tracking method and established a team that will monitor and purchase materials for both the resource and regional libraries.





# Financial Highlights 2011.

The Courthouse Libraries BC's new client-centered focus has led to significant cost reductions and the creation of a contingency fund that will be used to further enhance our IT platform and local branches.

We have focused our efforts on creating a long-term funding model with our

major funders and to shifting our focus from print to digital resources.

We plan on utilizing a portion of the contingency funds to pay for capital and facility upgrades in 2012 and 2013.

	Operations	Projects	Total
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
Law Foundation of BC	2,918,106	—	2,918,106
Law Society of BC	1,896,155	—	1,896,155
Project Funding Grants	—	368,583	368,583
Operating Revenue	301,751	8,200	309,951
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	53,133	—	53,133
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,169,145</b>	<b>368,583</b>	<b>5,537,728</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Staff	2,313,348	—	2,313,348
Information sources	1,611,534	86,115	1,697,649
Operations	508,607	282,468	791,075
Amortization of capital assets	157,790	—	157,790
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,591,279</b>	<b>368,583</b>	<b>4,959,862</b>
<b>Information Sources Expenditures</b>			
Print subscriptions	1,324,120	—	1,324,120
New information materials	221,474	86,115	307,589
Other expenditures	65,940	—	65,940
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,611,534</b>	<b>86,115</b>	<b>1,697,649</b>



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