




**COURTHOUSE
LIBRARIES | BC**

Annual Report 2013

INTRODUCTION

Our 2011-2013 Strategic Plan was the product of reflection about our role in a swiftly changing world for knowledge organizations. We set forward a vision of being the legal profession's trusted partner in practice and knowledge, of connecting the dots for the public and the profession, and of being able to look back and see evidence of our successful mission to help lawyers and the community find and use legal information.

These past three years our strategic objectives have focused on lawyers' changing legal information needs, the public's ever increasing demand for our services, and our own drive to deliver high quality services and collections at optimal capacity with static resources. With 2013 we see how closely we now embody the vision in our ambitious plan. Courthouse Libraries BC reports another successful year from four key perspectives—clients, finance, learning and growth, and internal business process.



Success from Multiple Perspectives



CLIENT SERVICE

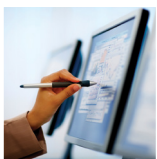
We trained more lawyers, answered more legal information questions, embarked upon more inter-organization collaborations and reached more people with our digital collection than ever before. CPD-accredited skills training for lawyers, in particular, nearly doubled over 2012, while our public-focused legal information wiki, the *Clicklaw Wikibooks* platform, experienced nearly ten-fold growth in traffic with the addition of *JP Boyd on Family Law*.

Information requests increased modestly overall in 2013, and a

key story continues to be how central Courthouse Libraries BC has become among public users. Questions from the public are up 85% over the last seven years.

Outside of BC's larger urban centres, Courthouse Libraries BC's network of nearly two dozen local branches have all been refurbished as part of the now-complete local branch revitalization initiative. For lawyers who cannot make it to a branch, we began offering a *Book in a Box* service, which features free shipping of books from our collection to lawyers anywhere in the province.

Our collection continues to become more digital, where we see much higher usage rates per title than in print. 2013 was the second full year since we introduced the Lawyers' Reading Room, a secure area of our Library website for BC lawyers and articulated students to have anytime, anywhere access to licensed digital tools. The Lawyers' Reading Room subscriber base doubled in 2013, growing to 15% of the legal profession in BC.



FINANCIAL

Funding from the Law Society of BC increased slightly for 2013 while core funding from the Law Foundation of BC remained the same. Income from marketable securities declined due to a

change in fixed income rates, and operating revenues declined somewhat compared to 2012.

Courthouse Libraries BC invested in several significant projects in 2013, including

the local branch revitalization initiative, further development of the Library website, and a new integrated library system for collection management.

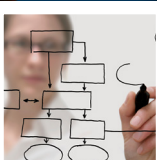


PEOPLE: LEARNING & GROWTH

Our annual staff engagement survey indicated high engagement across the organization, and an improvement over the already high scores from our first staff engagement survey in 2012. 2013

focused on more staff training especially for staff outside major urban centres. An innovative new staff communication tool called *The Loop* was implemented using the social intranet technology

ThoughtFarmer from local company OpenRoad. This tool replaces the older intranet for staff, and focuses more on its uses as a team communication, knowledge management and learning tool.



INTERNAL PRACTICE & PROCESS

Organization-wide improvements to Courthouse Libraries BC's internal processes for 2013 spanned a variety of departments. A new integrated library system (ILS) using the technology platform *Soutron* was

implemented, the benefits of which include better reporting about how our collection materials are used and an easier process for clients to check out and renew materials without staff assistance. Efficient in-house

accounting practices saved costs. IT has also made the leap from tape backups to a cloud-based backup system for Courthouse Libraries BC's server systems.



“

I was really positively impressed with the development of the Library website and the research capacity that is now available. It is a quantum leap forward for small firms and sole practitioners.”

“

I love the Lawyers' Reading Room and now the 'Book in a Box' initiative.”

“

Courthouse librarians all throughout the province are the angels of the justice system.”

CLIENT SERVICES

Our 2011-2013 Strategic Plan set clear objectives. It also emphasized measuring results. 2013 was a culmination of success in various lawyer-focused and public initiatives, and we have this insight because for the past three years we've made measurement a priority. We now know more than ever about trends in legal information and about how Courthouse Libraries BC is perceived by clients.

We continue to monitor information requests in our branches. Information requests went up 5% over 2012. Public requests continue to grow, and now account for 45% of questions in our libraries, up from 43% in 2012. Public requests have risen 85% over the last seven years. Over the past two years, the proportion of "complex", "quick reference" and "directional" questions have been consistent at 18%, 62% and 20% respectively.

In late 2012 we implemented a province-wide plan to collect client feedback cards. 2013 was the first full year of data from 13 branch locations in places as diverse as Vancouver, Kamloops, Port Alberni, and Fort St. John. The feedback shows high satisfaction with assistance provided by Library staff and enthusiasm for the Lawyers' Reading Room and digital tools.

A new integrated library system we implemented in 2013 is also helping us better understand our clients' needs. It enables us to report on usage of our collection according to topic, supplementing other ways of understanding collection usage patterns.

It is more clear to us than ever that digital sources rather than print are the future of our collection. In 2013, usage of licensed digital tools on the Library computers was up 30% over 2012. Usage of digital versions compared to the same sources in print is dramatically higher, at least 4 times as

popular. Digital sources are reaching more clients and having a greater impact.

We are also seeing another trend with legal information. Clients appreciate having access to a library collection without having to go to the library. Enthusiasm continues to build for the Lawyers' Reading Room, a secure area of our Library website for BC lawyers and articulated students to have anytime, anywhere access to licensed digital tools. In 2013, it more than doubled subscribers, from 750 to 1618 lawyers, or 15% of the profession. Although digital sources within the Lawyers' Reading Room are also digitally available within our branches, in each case the Lawyers' Reading Room had heavier use than the equivalent source on branch computers did – in some cases nearly 4 times as much.

In 2013 clients were introduced to our new *Book in a Box* service, which is a pilot project that takes advantage of preferential postage rates for libraries. The service lets lawyers anywhere in the province borrow a book through our website. Courthouse Libraries BC covers postage.

“

The Stream was one of the first “library blogs” to incorporate commentary from their user-base: local practitioners! This mix not only makes for interesting reading, but makes The Stream worthy of a (long-overdue) Clawbie.”

“

Hands down, the most useful webinar I’ve ever taken.”

“

Clicklaw, that impressive online effort to improving access to justice, has been developing Clicklaw Wikibooks... To me, what’s most exciting — and impressive — about these books is their collaborative origins.”

“

All lawyers should be required to attend this session every couple of years...”

Courthouse Libraries BC serves a diverse legal community as well as members of the public and public libraries.

A Banner Year for Training

In 2013, Courthouse Libraries BC delivered CPD-accredited training to 1,036 lawyers—more than triple the number in 2011. We increased webinar offerings to better serve lawyers outside Vancouver, created six more tutorial videos and developed two downloadable study kits for lawyers in communities who come together to do their own CPD. In addition to the skills training we produce in-house, we are increasingly collaborative in developing training to meet client needs. We collaborated on two family violence-related courses in 2013, one with Legal Services Society and the other with an independent group of lawyers offering family violence screening training to 67 Vancouver Island lawyers and mediators. For the Law Society of BC's PLTC program we provided the legal research and legal memorandum writing training for 460 students, and assisted the Law Society in migrating their Online Learning Centre's courses to a new platform.

Training builds lawyers' confidence to use an increasingly digital collection. We hosted 14 webinars on how to get the most from the Lawyers' Reading Room, and participants reported an 80% increase in confidence in using the service.

In nine local branches we held 11 half-day training workshops. Participants rated the effectiveness of these sessions at 4.9 out of 5. In addition to supporting clients in developing skills, these sessions contributed to increased use of the licensed digital tools on Library computers.

Blogs and Awareness

Courthouse Libraries BC became a regular contributor to *The Advocate* and *BarTalk* magazines in 2013. Communicating with the legal profession in this way has had a measurable impact on our service offerings. 12% of those who signed up for Lawyers' Reading Room found out about the service through one of our articles. We also reached several milestones with our blog, The Stream, which was awarded a *Clawbie* award for best law library blog, and became the first known law blog cited for its analysis by a Canadian judgment.

Clicklaw and Clicklaw Wikibooks

www.clicklaw.bc.ca, the legal education and information website for members of the public, continued to expand and be refined in 2013. Traffic was up 5% over 2012, and ongoing enhancements were made to the website's search functions.

Clicklaw Wikibooks launched *JP Boyd on Family Law*, adding around 30 lawyers and judges as editors, and attracting People's Law School as a content collaborator. Traffic grew over 900% to 15,000 visits per month by December 2013. Visitors can export legal information in many formats, including print-on-demand, ebook (EPUB) and PDF. Public libraries were shipped 243 copies of *JP Boyd on Family Law* via the LawMatters program.

LawMatters

Our LawMatters program continued to support public libraries in BC with legal information and training. Our annual grant program supported 227 public libraries in purchasing legal materials for their collections, guided by our list of recommended titles. We conducted seven training workshops and webinars for 199 public librarians, including sessions on the new family law legislation, and how to make effective legal referrals.



“

It had everything I needed:
books, a fast computer, wi-fi, and a great space to work in.”

Staff Engagement

As staff engagement is key to positioning an organization for high levels of performance and resilience to change, it is important to measure. Our 2013 staff engagement survey indicated high engagement among staff across the organization, and an improvement over the already very high engagement scores from our first survey in 2012. The 2013 survey results indicated that core values and behaviours of our 2011–2013 Strategic Plan are embraced by staff: there was a 95% agreement rate that we approach our work with enthusiasm and energy, and 97% agreement that we are passionate about trends that impact our clients and us.

As well as measuring staff engagement, the staff survey helped us identify some ways to achieve our People: Learning and Growth goals. Our decision to create a new intranet to support team communication and sharing knowledge was a response to the high priority staff placed on improving internal communication and sharing job skills training across all our libraries.

New Technology Systems

We implemented several technology projects in 2013, including a new integrated library system (ILS) and a new staff intranet tool.

Soutron, the new ILS, was implemented in 2013 to meet our collection management needs and replace our older *Horizon* ILS, which was no longer a good fit for our organization's needs. *Soutron* stores catalog information, vendor data, and a variety of other data, and supports easier reporting plus streamlined self-service features that save staff time, including self-checkout using touch screens and web-based loan renewals. Prior to migration to *Soutron*, a sizeable percentage of client self checkout transactions required staff

assistance, and now hardly any do. *Soutron's* implementation was a major project involving staff from technical services, client services, digital services and IT.

A new “social intranet” known as *The Loop* was also launched in 2013, and this involved licensing software called *ThoughtFarmer*, which offers an innovative variation on traditional intranet software. After software installation and content migration were complete, *The Loop* was launched in December for staff use. It combines traditional intranet tools with social networking features, and offers a better chance for staff, many of whom work by themselves in local branches, to feel connected and in communication with each other.

Revitalization

Our major facilities initiative for local branches concluded in 2013 bringing free printing, free wi-fi and upgraded computer equipment to our 22 local branches.

Streamlined Accounting Procedures

Many paper-based processes were phased out in 2013 and electronic templates substituted. This along with some other improvements, such as a limit on small orders placed on account and the elimination of inefficient processes that had little benefit but took significant time, has improved the efficiency of Courthouse Libraries BC's administration. 2013 also saw an updated HR policy, a revised handbook for employees, and the return of payroll as an in-house process to save costs.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2013

Funding from the Law Society of BC increased slightly for 2013 while core funding from the Law Foundation of BC remained the same. Income from marketable securities declined due to a change in fixed income rates, and operating revenues declined somewhat compared to 2012.

The Library invested in several significant projects in 2013, including the local branch revitalization initiative, further development

of the Library website, and a new integrated library system for collection management. These planned investments enabled us to utilize our unrestricted net assets to achieve key goals in our 2011–2013 Strategic Plan.

	Operations	Projects	Total
Funding Sources			
Law Foundation of BC	2,737,750	—	2,737,750
Law Society of BC	2,023,152	—	2,023,152
Operating Revenue	190,373	—	190,373
Project Funding Grants	—	241,871	241,871
Total	4,951,276	241,871	5,193,147
Expenditures			
Staff	2,547,520	102,316	2,649,836
Information sources	1,868,457	82,885	1,951,342
Operations	807,825	9,348	817,173
Amortization of capital assets	145,229	—	145,229
Total	5,369,031	194,549	5,563,580
Information sources expenditures			
Print resources	1,099,535	82,885	1,182,420
Digital resources	656,853	—	656,853
Other expenditures	112,069	—	112,069
Total	1,868,457	82,885	1,951,342

**British Columbia
Courthouse Library Society**

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