



**ANNUAL REPORT 2006**

  
BRITISH COLUMBIA  
COURTHOUSE LIBRARY SOCIETY



**Discover it.**

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## From Our Users

“ The topic of access to legal information is often discussed at provincial and national law society meetings. Invariably, the BC Courthouse Library system is viewed as the standard to try to meet.

I use my link to the BCCLS website many times a day, probably at least once every hour I am at the office. The website [www.bccls.bc.ca](http://www.bccls.bc.ca) links to virtually every website I use in my practice. I consider it an invaluable research tool, at a cost of less than I spend on my daily morning coffee. ”

**Robert McDiarmid QC, Past President, Law Society of British Columbia**  
**Morelli Chertkow, Kamloops**

“ As a research lawyer, I couldn't practice without the BC Courthouse Library. Sometimes, online research from my office isn't enough and I just have to hit the books. More than that, I've learned more about online research resources from the Courthouse Library than from anywhere else, and library staff members are always helpful and resourceful, whether I ask them a question at the library or contact them by phone. ”

**Eleanor Gregory**  
**Gregory & Gregory, Vancouver**



“ The Prince George Courthouse Library is an indispensable resource for democracy and is valued highly by the judiciary, counsel, and the public alike. Julie, our librarian, is highly skilled and provides essential services by ensuring the library remains relevant and accessible to all. ”

**Ben Levine**  
**Coller Levine, Prince George**

“ I’ve had several occasions to observe the library staff assisting a lay person with legal research. There is no doubt in my mind that even those people without legal representation have complete accessibility to all of the same resources and, importantly, they also have professional and knowledgeable assistance available to them at all times. ”

**Lorianna Bennett**  
**Paul & Company, Kamloops**

A knowledgeable guide can make all the difference.

“ My law firm is a medium sized corporate, commercial and litigation firm in downtown Vancouver. Given the broad nature of our practice, we rely heavily upon the library resources of the BC Courthouse Library Society to augment the limited library resources that we maintain ourselves. I regard the Courthouse Library as an essential component of an effective legal practice.

We also regularly rely on the staff of the Courthouse Library to assist us with specialist expertise. The staff at the Courthouse Library are consistently responsive and helpful. ”

**Frits Verhoeven**  
**President, Canadian Bar Association, B.C. Branch**  
**Edwards, Kenny and Bray LLP, Vancouver**

“ The library at the courthouse in Prince George is a vital part of my practice as a barrister, both in terms of locating resources to assist me in tackling specific legal problems and keeping up with the state of the law generally.

The recommendations of the staff at the Courthouse Library are always helpful and save me a great deal of time and effort. ”

**Charles D. Jago**  
**Heather Sadler Jenkins LLP, Prince George**

“ Since I left a large firm, I have used the Vancouver Courthouse Library extensively. When I wrote my book, *A Commercial Tenancy Handbook*, I did most of my research in the library. I continue to use it to prepare the annual updates. In my practice I also rely on the library to do my research. The staff have been extremely helpful when I have needed help, and particularly so when I have been looking for alternate cites or sources for obscure cases or legislation. ”

**Richard Olson, Associate Counsel**  
**McKechnie & Company, Vancouver**

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# Message from the Chair

Much of 2006 was devoted to the development of strategic directions for the Society and a revised statement of the Society's mission and values. This restatement of goals both reflects the Society's long-standing commitment to fulfilling the legal needs of the community and anticipates the need for enhanced service through technology, innovation and collaboration. The end product is the result of a cooperative endeavour involving the Board of Directors, library staff, members of the legal community, law librarians and organizations providing legal information and services to the public.

Throughout the year, enhanced service figured prominently in a number of initiatives. Projects included improvements to the Library's technology platform, the creation of a blog with an RSS feed, automation of book circulation in the Victoria library and the development of a core collection for libraries outside the Lower Mainland.

The year closed with the receipt of a million dollar grant from the Law Foundation of BC to create basic legal collections for the public in partnership with public libraries throughout the province. This project is unique in Canada. It is the product of significant effort amongst various organizations to share ideas and create new working models for improved access to legal information for all British Columbians.

None of these initiatives would have been possible without the continued support of our funders: the Law Foundation of BC, the Law Society of BC through member contributions and the Ministry of the Attorney General through the provision of facilities and maintenance support.

I would like as well to acknowledge the invaluable contributions of BC Courthouse Library staff and the Board of Directors. The Society's greatest asset is the people who work for and with it. We are fortunate to have an exceptional group whose commitment extends beyond day to day operations and whose considerable abilities provide vision and direction as the Society maps its future.

**Ross Tunnicliffe**  
**Chair, Board of Directors**

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## Board of Directors

**Ross Tunnicliffe**

**Gene Jamieson**

The Honourable Madam Justice

**Pamela Kirkpatrick**

The Honourable Madam Justice

**Carol Ross**

**Jeffrey Hayes**

**Lisa A. Peters**

**Erin Shaw**

(to June 2006)

**David Merner**

(from September 2006)

**John Simpson**

**Joost Blom, QC**

**Alex Sweezey**

**Michael Roman**

**Michael Burriss**



Exploring  
new legal territory.



## Strategic Directions

Recognizing and meeting the needs of clients is essential to the successful operation of any organization. This is particularly important for law libraries, given the rapid pace of change in the legal profession and increased public demand for access to information. In 2006, the BC Courthouse Library Society (BCCLS) undertook an analysis of its services with the aim of identifying key areas where service could be enhanced.

A steering committee of Board and staff members met with focus groups representative of BCCLS users, including lawyers from small firms, research lawyers, young lawyers, government and public interest groups and law librarians. The information obtained from these meetings formed the basis for a new strategic plan: *Strategic Directions 2007-2010*. The plan provides a road map for the Society to follow as it strives to meet the needs of both the legal community and the general public. The plan emphasizes the importance of ongoing dialogue with library users to keep pace with the changing practice needs of the legal community and to

optimize access and services for users throughout the province. It encourages partnerships with other legal and library organizations to improve access to legal information. It proposes a revised service model with increased use of technology system-wide. Finally, it addresses organizational sustainability with strategies for stability and efficiency.

These strategic goals are embraced by a revised statement of the Society's mission and values.

### **Mission:**

**We will improve access to legal information for the legal community and the public. We will shape our collections and services to reflect the diversity of needs in the communities we serve.**

### **Values:**

- **Accessibility:** We will optimize user access to our services throughout British Columbia.
- **Innovation:** We will be creative and employ technology where appropriate to better serve our diverse communities.
- **Collaboration:** We will develop partnerships with related organizations to enhance our products and services.

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## Client Services

Progressive use of technology is fundamental to the effective delivery of information services today. To remain relevant, the Library must respond to the online environment of the modern day workplace, keeping pace with preferred methods of gathering and receiving information.

To that end, in 2006 the BC Courthouse Library converted its current awareness service (“What’s New”) from a web page to an interactive blog with an RSS feed. This move was well received by the legal research community, attracted national attention and resulted in increased awareness of BCCLS services.

As well, a student from the UBC Library School Co-op Program was hired to assess and make recommendations for the best method and format for conversion of an in-house reference file to a searchable online knowledgebase. The file contains over 400 records providing handy references and a mix of research tips and legal information. Originally an in-house resource created and maintained by the BC Courthouse Library Society to help staff answer users’ questions, completion of this project will provide our users with quick and easy access to this content-rich resource.

Technological efficiencies within the library system have also benefited our users. Implementation of an automated book loan program in all our branches continued. This year we automated the Victoria branch, enabling those users to determine the availability and status of library materials from the convenience of their homes or offices. An online renewal feature was also implemented, allowing borrowers to check due dates and renew their own books.

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## Partnerships

Partnerships with like-minded organizations devoted to addressing the information needs of both the legal community and the public continued in 2006. As a member of the Public Legal Education and Information (PLEI) Working Group, the Society continued to work towards the development of a shared web portal to facilitate public access to legal information. As well, the Society continued its support of the BC Supreme Court Self-Help Information Centre by providing assistance to self-represented litigants and members of the public referred to the library by Centre staff.

In April 2006, the BC Courthouse Library Society, the Legal Services Society and the Public Library Services Branch of the Ministry of Education signed a Memorandum of Understanding to work together to provide better access to legal information in public libraries. As part of this agreement, the BC Courthouse Library Society assumed responsibility for the Electronic Law Library (ELL), a web resource previously maintained by the Legal Services Society and heavily used by community advocates and public librarians. BCCLS staff have updated all the links on the site and anticipate incorporating the ELL in some form into the PLEI portal currently in development. The Memorandum lays the groundwork for a productive partnership. For example, the Society has undertaken a special project to create basic legal collections in public libraries throughout the province. As well, the Society is providing advisory assistance in the ongoing development of AskAway, the public library’s virtual reference service, and will continue to participate in public legal information initiatives.

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Working collaboratively  
to serve you better.


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## Collections

Increased funding in 2006 provided the Society with the opportunity to redress areas of the library collection hardest hit by past budget cuts. Due to the high cost of loose-leaf subscriptions, many texts had not been updated for several years. In 2006, we updated 44 titles, often acquiring multiple copies for placement in our branch libraries. The collection was further augmented by the purchase of 246 new titles (again, multiple copies of which were placed in branch locations).

The collection needs of our local libraries were further addressed by a review of their holdings and formulation of a guide to establishing a core collection of materials. This guide pinpoints essential areas of the collection, identifies prime materials and sets priorities. It will be of great benefit for future collection development, providing consistency and clear direction for maintaining useful and practical collections of materials and resources for lawyers in smaller communities.

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Providing the  
resources you  
need to reach  
your goal.





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## Infrastructure & IT

Various components of the Society's IT system were upgraded in 2006, paving the way for future technological advancement and achieving greater efficiency for both staff and client applications. New servers have reduced power consumption and simplified back-end networking requirements. They are much more stable and take up much less space. Further efficiencies will be realized with the use of "virtual machine" technology whereby current and future hardware costs are reduced by layering two or three virtual servers onto one physical server system.

The implementation of a Microsoft Exchange server in October 2006 was a major undertaking that affected every aspect of BCCLS operations. Conversion to this server has allowed the organization's email system to be managed in-house, thus eliminating outside hosting costs. Email communications are faster and spam has been effectively controlled. Collaborative features such as public folders, shared calendars, surveying

tools and distribution lists have streamlined communications and increased staff efficiency.

The transition to new server systems led to a fundamental reorganization of the Society's electronic file system, including the formalization of data security procedures and access control rights and the purging of historical material to off-site tape archives. It also prompted a review of print and electronic file management practices. A business analyst was retained to assess all work processes with the goal of reducing duplication and optimizing the use of technology. Recommendations will be implemented in 2007 and 2008.

The Society also conducted a review of all library computers and related equipment. As a result, a planned "refresh" policy was developed to ensure a consistent and standardized systems platform for the future.

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## Facts & Figures

### Services Provided

18,617	Questions answered in Vancouver
20,779	Questions answered in Regional Branches
4,555	Library cardholders

### Collections

253,388	Volumes in collection
7,184	Books borrowed from Vancouver
14,732	Books borrowed from Regional Branches
3,300	Books used in the Vancouver library per month

### Online Services

73,574	First visits to the website
152,547	Total visits to the website
545,861	Website page views
104,945	Library catalogue searches

# Financial Highlights 2006

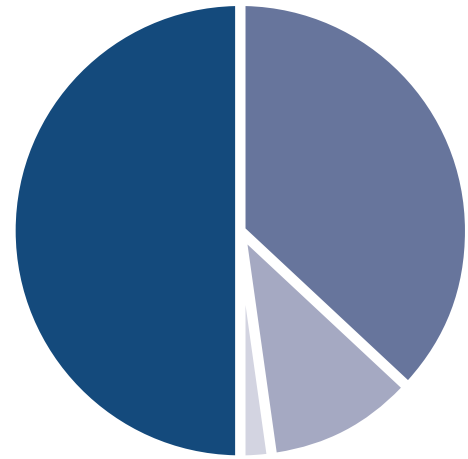
The complete audited financial statements for 2006 are available on the BCCLS web site: [www.bccls.bc.ca](http://www.bccls.bc.ca). BCCLS is funded by the Law Foundation of BC, the Law Society of BC through its members and the Ministry of the Attorney General for British Columbia through the provision of facilities and maintenance support.



## Funding Sources

● Law Foundation of BC (55%)	\$2,409,220
● Law Society of BC (35%)	\$1,546,407
● Operating Revenue (10%)	\$462,428

**Total** \$4,418,055



## Expenditures

● Staff (50%)	\$2,101,946
● Information Sources (37%)	\$1,551,018
● Operations (11%)	\$461,811
● Amortization of Capital Assets (2%)	\$87,367

**Total** \$4,202,142



### Information Sources Expenditures

● Print Subscriptions (60%)	\$934,178
● New Information Materials (20%)	\$316,777
● Electronic Subscriptions (16%)	\$242,132
● Other Expenditures (4%)	\$57,931

**Total** \$1,551,018





**British Columbia Courthouse Library Society**  
**Executive Director: Johanne Blenkin**

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