



**COURTHOUSE  
LIBRARIES | BC**

*Annual Report 2010*



## Introduction.

A key to success for libraries in a rapidly changing environment is the ability to develop and support cultures that can readily adapt to change while maintaining the control necessary to manage routine but essential processes. Within this context libraries must be accountable and demonstrate measurable service-oriented results.

After reviewing a number of different models for measuring performance, both within the library community and within the not-for-profit sector, we adopted the “Balanced Scorecard”. This approach connects strategy and operations in a way that is understandable to staff at all levels of the organization. This is critical to the success of a knowledge-based organization such as the library.

In the Balanced Scorecard model, organizations measure their performance from four perspectives — clients, finance, learning and growth, and internal business processes – with a view to balancing financial performance with other key areas. As a service organization emphasis on client service is critical. To that end, we have revised our mission, vision and values, and

developed a new strategic plan for 2011-2013 that includes measurement beyond usage statistics. The new vision reflects the dramatic changes in the role of libraries given the need for the legal profession to access information without coming into the library, and the increasing demand by the public for legal information.

Our new mission is clear: We help lawyers and the community find and use legal information. Our vision is to partner with other organizations to help the legal community and the public find what they need. We have successfully partnered with public-facing organizations to produce Clicklaw, LawMatters and the online HelpMap. Our role is to organize the external content in a way that maximizes access for a broad variety of users and builds community to ensure the sustainability of these collaborative programs. Our goal is also to fill that role within the legal community.



## Client Services.

### Information Requests

Courthouse Libraries BC staff in our seven resource and regional branches handled over 40,000 information requests in 2010. The overall number of requests has risen by five percent over the last four years, and requests from members of the public have risen by 30 percent over that period. 38% of our information requests now come from members of the public.

### Training & Orientations

We provided in-person training for over 150 clients on using legal information tools. The training ranged from hands-on sessions on databases we offer access to in our libraries, such as Westlaw Canada, to training on free tools such as CanLII.

We provided library orientations and tours for over 1,000 clients, introducing them to the range of electronic and print materials in our libraries. For new law clerks, we created a new orientation format that featured a game of legal jeopardy. This interactive format was very successful, with participating clerks reporting a 40% increase in their likelihood of using our website and other resources.

### Online Legal Research Course

We launched our first online training course in late 2010, a video-based course that can be taken for one hour of CPD credit. Our Digital Library team developed the course, “Legal Research Essentials: Finding Cases on Point”, working closely with the Law Society of BC to ensure it met Law Society needs and was effectively integrated into their Online Learning Centre. The course is comprised of eight short videos that demonstrate strategy and techniques for locating cases on point, and includes self-assessment questions for course participants.

Twenty-four practicing lawyers completed the course in 2010 and claimed CPD credit for it. A considerably larger number of people viewed the videos but did not claim credit (the course is open to everyone; more than half of the people who have completed the course are not lawyers). Fifty-seven people completed our online survey after they finished the course. 95% either agree or strongly agree that they feel more confident in their ability to search for case law after taking the course.



As a result of this project, which was funded by a grant from the Law Foundation of BC, Courthouse Libraries BC is now a preapproved CPD provider. This means that we can offer CPD credit for courses we conduct that meet the Law Society's requirements without seeking the Law Society's approval in advance. We value the trust that the Law Society has placed in us.

### **Use of Information Resources & Tools**

During 2010, clients continued to shift to using more electronic tools in our libraries. Across our 30 libraries, clients used databases or applications on the computers over 89,000 times. That figure is up 25% since 2008. Popular applications on the computers include the Westlaw Canada database, CLE Online, our library catalogue, and the word processing software.

In-house use of our print materials was somewhat down, as 72,500 materials were used in our regional and resource libraries, down by 17% as compared to 2009. An additional 20,200 materials were borrowed by clients from those libraries, which was comparable to the previous year.

### **Liaising with the Legal Community**

We reached out to engage with the legal community in 2010 through delivering presentations to various CBABC sub-sections, to lawyers who act as family duty counsel, and to lawyers doing pro bono work. Our presentation to the CBABC Research Lawyers section focused on using tools to organize information on their desktop, touching on a theme that will become more pronounced under our 2011-13 strategic plan: to reach clients where they are to enhance access to and effective use of legal information and tools.

One of the key goals under this theme in our 2011-13 strategic plan is to shape our offerings to meet the diversity of needs in the legal communities we serve, with a particular emphasis on the needs of lawyers in smaller firms, smaller communities, and newer calls. To aid in shaping our offerings to meet client needs, we created two new Legal Community Liaison positions. We hired two lawyers with small firm backgrounds into these positions, one to focus on the needs of lawyers in smaller firms and sole practice, and the other to focus on the needs of new lawyers and articulated students. We are very excited by this new approach to become truly client-centred in our service offerings.

# Digital Library.

## Website

After launching our redeveloped Courthouse Libraries BC website in November 2009, 2010 was a year to focus on developing content in strategically important areas and to continue evolving technically to meet client expectations for the website's functionality and look. We created more content in practice areas of interest to most BC lawyers (civil litigation, family, wills & estates, personal injury, practice management and technology) and de-emphasized material aimed at the small community of advanced legal researchers, such as historical legislative research and other specialty topics.

Some of the technical updates to the website in 2010 include an automated password reminder service, search enhancements, additional blog features, improved workflow efficiency for website content creators, and automation of some website administration tasks. Our last quarterly release to the website for 2010 included a homepage update that incorporated many suggestions from clients. We increased the size and prominence of the search feature for greater ease of use for mobile users,

retired our launch marketing banners, and highlighted more key website content such as our new series of videos on finding cases.

### Website unique visitors: 85,309

- This is a decrease in numbers of unique visitors compared to 2009, our new website launch year, when we hit an all-time high of 129,412 unique visitors. However, the total page views for 2010 and 2009 are similar: 541,977 compared to 577,791. We attribute some of the reduced number of visitors to the increased use of Clicklaw, which focuses on connecting the public with the best of the web for BC legal information. It's a much better fit for the members of the public than CLBC's website, which is now aimed specifically at the legal community rather than trying to serve the needs of both the general public and the legal community.

### Ratio of new to returning visitors: .74

- Our current ratio is considered a healthy mix for an information and education website (it should be between .25 and 2.00 according to Website Analytics Demystified by Eric Peterson, p. 118).



## Peer endorsement and blog comments

- For the second year in a row, our blog The Stream won a “runner up” award for a Clawbie (the Canadian Law Blog Awards). While the Clawbie judges don’t want the Clawbies (or any other blog awards) to be taken too seriously, this peer endorsement award places us in illustrious company and demonstrates that we’re on the national radar as innovators in the online legal community.

The Stream has attracted comments from both the legal community and the general public. The Stream post that attracted the largest number of comments was Questions About the New Supreme Court Rules which generated eight comments. We are delighted that our clients are taking up our invitation to comment and ask questions publicly on our website. Not only do blog comments indicate that we’ve achieved a healthy level of engagement with clients, the impact of staff publicly answering a question on our blog is wider than the impact of answering the same question one-on-one with an individual client at our information desk.

## Online Subscription Products

In 2010 we acquired some new products and are continuing to negotiate access to additional products to fill some gaps in our online collection identified by our clients. We did not see any substantial price increases for our online product subscriptions in 2010.

HeinOnline is now available at all our libraries. This means that all our libraries now provide online access to a comprehensive collection of Canadian annual statutes from pre-confederation to now, as well as a large collection of law journals, legal classics, treaties and other

material of interest. As HeinOnline is indexed by Google, HeinOnline content is also accessible in our libraries via Google Scholar, which many newer lawyers in particular find a useful tool for accessing legal research material online.

We’ve negotiated access to CCH Legislative Pulse and Quickscribe Online for staff. These products will equip a larger staff group to answer our clients’ legislative questions and to update our website’s practice portals with news of legislative developments. Additionally, Digital Library staff are working closely with Quickscribe as they develop new features and functionality for Quickscribe Online that are aimed at filling the need for a legislative tracking tool that opened up when we discontinued our print-based legislative publications.

We started negotiation with LexisNexis to subscribe to Quicklaw for our larger courthouse libraries. This would allow us to offer our clients access to several new quantum services, tribunal decisions and solicitors’ forms online. While contract negotiation was not complete by the end of the year, we expect to roll out QL in selected courthouse libraries in February 2011. We’re also negotiating licensing an online criminal product for some courthouse libraries in 2011.

# Community Outreach.

## Clicklaw

For Clicklaw, the website we operate that consolidates plain language legal information and options for legal assistance, highlights for 2010 included making a series of enhancements to the website to make it easier to use, rolling out a promotional campaign that showcases Clicklaw as part of an integrated package for the public, and providing training to intermediaries on showing the public how to use Clicklaw.

### Use of Clicklaw

- The use of Clicklaw grew dramatically this year. Through 2010, 70,809 visitors made 94,027 visits to Clicklaw. In the second half of 2010, Clicklaw averaged 9,060 visits per month, a 95% increase over the same period in 2009.

### Enhancing and Extending Clicklaw

- In April 2010, we introduced enhancements to Clicklaw, identified through usability testing and feedback from visitors. We added subtopics to the site to improve the experience of browsing for resources, we made improvements to make it easier to find resources that are in languages other than English, and we added more “common questions”, which feature good starting points for information on common legal questions. We also added a “what’s new” feature to the site.

### Social Media

- In 2010, we added a Clicklaw presence on the popular social media platforms Facebook, Twitter, and YouTube. These platforms provide additional ways for us to reach people with the legal information and options for assistance available via Clicklaw. Over 80 people now follow us on Facebook, over 140 on Twitter, and our YouTube channel was viewed 3,197 times.

### Promotion of Clicklaw

- We rolled out a promotional campaign for Courthouse Libraries BC that showcases the Clicklaw site and the Clicklaw HelpMap as part of an integrated package for the public. The campaign, called LawStartBC, also features public libraries and courthouse libraries as options for legal information and assistance. We also developed four short promotional videos for Clicklaw, and unveiled them on our YouTube channel through the fall of 2010.

### Training of Helpers & Intermediaries

- We provided hands-on training for helpers & intermediaries on getting the most out of Clicklaw in assisting clients with legal problems. We trained over 50 participants, including justice access centre staff, public librarians, community workers, and advocates. Participants in the Clicklaw training reported an overall 40% increase in confidence in using the Internet to find legal information or assistance for themselves or their clients. We also presented about Clicklaw at 30 events reaching 760 participants, and had displays at five additional events, reaching 530 participants.

## Key Statistics for Clicklaw, 2010

- *70,809 visitors made 94,027 visits to Clicklaw; new visitors represented 75% of visits*
- *In the second half of 2010, Clicklaw averaged 9,060 visits/month, up 95% over the same period in 2009*
- *Visitors viewed 333,518 pages; top topics included family law, debt, employment, wills & estates, and housing & tenancy*
- *1,204 resources are now available through Clicklaw, as well as 88 services representing over 800 locations on the HelpMap*

## Clicklaw Help Map

During 2010, highlights for the HelpMap project included making a first wave of enhancements to the HelpMap, designing a Courthouse Libraries BC promotional campaign that showcases HelpMap and the rest of the Clicklaw site as part of an integrated package for the public, and providing training to intermediaries on showing the public how to use the HelpMap.

### Enhancing and Extending HelpMap

- HelpMap was launched in December 2009 at [www.clicklaw.bc.ca/helpmap](http://www.clicklaw.bc.ca/helpmap). Through 2010, we continued to work with Clicklaw contributors and Law Foundation-funded advocates to add services to the HelpMap. By the end of 2010, HelpMap had 88 services representing over 800 locations.

In the spring, we made a first wave of enhancements to the HelpMap to improve the experience of browsing to find results. In the summer, we conducted HelpMap usability testing and made further enhancements to HelpMap to provide more meaningful search results for visitors.

### Promotion of Clicklaw and HelpMap

- We designed a promotional campaign for Courthouse Libraries BC that showcases the HelpMap and the rest of the Clicklaw site as part of an integrated package

for the public. The campaign, called LawStartBC, also features public libraries and courthouse libraries as options for legal information and assistance.

We also developed four short promotional videos for Clicklaw & HelpMap, and unveiled them on our YouTube channel through the fall.

### Training

- We developed a video showing how to use the HelpMap, highlighting key ways you can search over the map: by community in BC, by legal topic, and by language. This video was viewed over 350 times. It is interesting to note that the video was viewed 250 times during November to December, during the time our promotional videos were launched.



# Community Outreach.



During 2010, LawMatters transitioned into its first year as a Courthouse Libraries BC program, with the following highlights.

## Grants to Public Libraries

- During 2010, 58 public libraries representing 216 branch locations received LawMatters grants to add legal information titles to their collections. Thirteen libraries took advantage of a new feature this year of an additional grant to purchase the Guide to Civil Litigation – BC Edition 2010, to reflect sweeping changes in the Supreme Court rules.

## Core Recommended List & Support Resources

- The Core List of Recommended Materials (Law Books for Libraries) was updated in March and again in August. The list is a key element of the LawMatters program, providing recommendations of legal books and materials for small and medium-size public libraries.

Other support resources were also updated, including Legal Information Reading Guides, which highlight titles from the core list, and a legal information toolkit for separation and divorce.

A series of updates were sent to libraries about new online resources for Supreme Court rules and forms, and to recommend titles to withdraw and replace due to rule changes.

## Training of Public Librarians

- We conducted eight workshops and webinars, providing training on taking legal reference questions and using tools to access legal information, such as QP LegalEze and Clicklaw. We also held an online legal reference eight week course. In total, 70 public library staff received training. Participants reported

an increase of 40% in their confidence in using legal information resources.

## Community Legal Information Forums

- We coordinated two community forums on legal information, in Nanaimo and Courtenay. The forums were hosted by the local public libraries, and were attended by representatives from 23 community groups. The forums bring together legal information providers in the community and coordinate an information sharing and networking workshop held at the local public library.

## Evaluation

- Focus Consultants produced the LawMatters Public Library Legal Resources Project: Final Training and Legal Reference Survey Findings, April 2010 (64 pp, available on the LawMatters website). Essential findings from this report were analyzed and will be published in early 2011 as a report for public librarians. Among the findings in the report was that there are 35,000-40,000 legal reference questions asked in public libraries every year. (This does not include questions that patrons research without the assistance of library staff.) Another finding was that the training LawMatters provided significantly raised the confidence of public librarians to handle legal questions (effectively doubling their confidence), and that confidence increase didn't fade, even 1-2 years after the training was provided.

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## Promotion

- LawMatters was featured in a promotional campaign, LawStartBC. The campaign presents an integrated package for the public, including public libraries, the Clicklaw website, and courthouse libraries as options for legal information and assistance.

### Key Statistics for LawMatters, 2010

- *58 public libraries representing 216 branch locations received LawMatters grants to add legal information titles*
- *9 training events for public librarians with 70 participants representing 42 library branches*
- *2 community forums of local legal information providers were held with representatives from 23 community groups*

## Administration.

Major initiatives benefiting both clients and staff included:

- ❖ Renovations to the New Westminster branch to maximize use of the smaller space and enhance access to resources. The library was closed for six months during courthouse renovations.
- ❖ IT worked closely with external web developers to enhance Clicklaw and our website as well as continuing to develop our Intranet
- ❖ A stewardship review of the staff pension plan streamlined the fund line-up offered to plan members. On the recommendation of the plan administrator, a number of underperforming funds were discontinued.
- ❖ The budget process was revised to better reflect the internal reorganization.



## Finance.

At the time our 2010 budget was approved we did not anticipate staff lay-offs. They were a direct outcome of the strategic planning process which illustrated the need to shift our focus given escalating costs.

In addition, our revenue forecasts changed with the cancellation of our two publications mid-year and the refund of subscriptions to subscribers. Those publications could not be maintained with the reduced staff component. Moreover, the steadily declining number of subscribers to our publications given alternative online products did not justify their continuance. With tight spending controls we did not draw on our reserves to the extent we originally anticipated.



# Financial Highlights 2010.

	Operations	Projects	Total
<b>Funding Sources</b>			
Law Foundation of BC	2,737,750	286,941	3,024,691
Law Society of BC	1,719,679	—	1,719,679
Law Foundation of Ontario	—	29,976	29,976
Ministry of the Attorney General	—	7,114	7,114
Operating Revenue	328,191	—	328,191
Amortization of deferred contributions related to capital assets	60,551	4,755	65,306
<b>Total</b>	<b>4,846,171</b>	<b>328,786</b>	<b>5,174,957</b>
<b>Expenditures</b>			
Staff	2,854,103	—	2,854,103
Information sources	1,514,587	75,704	1,590,291
Operations	533,012	248,327	781,339
Amortization of capital assets	138,493	4,755	143,248
<b>Total</b>	<b>5,040,195</b>	<b>328,786</b>	<b>5,368,981</b>
<b>Information Sources Expenditures</b>			
Print subscriptions	1,033,568	—	1,033,568
New information materials	174,504	75,704	250,208
Electronic subscriptions	256,928	—	256,928
Other expenditures	49,587	—	49,587
<b>Total</b>	<b>1,514,587</b>	<b>75,704</b>	<b>1,590,291</b>

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