



Annual Report 2015

VISION

Everyone in BC has the legal information they need and the ability to use it

MISSION

We manage knowledge for justice in BC in collaboration with others

SERVICES

We deliver our services in the legal community and the public through a blend of human touch, physical space and technology

INFORMATION SERVICES

CURATING PRINT AND
DIGITAL MATERIALS

TRAINING AND
OUTREACH PROGRAMS

INNOVATION INCUBATOR



STRATEGIC GOALS

1

EXPERTISE
DEVELOPER

We continually develop expertise on the needs of those seeking legal material and information.

2

LEAD
CURATOR

We are a lead curator of legal information in BC.

3

HUB &
CONNECTOR

We are at the centre of a network that connects the public and the legal community to the legal resources they need.

4

COMMUNITY
CAPACITY
BUILDER

We are a leader in building the capacity of Communities across BC to use legal information.

5

INNOVATION
INCUBATOR

We operate an innovative stream internally and externally that creates new products, services and approaches to curating, sharing and connecting legal information.

INTRODUCTION

Whereas 2014 was for reflection and deliberation, 2015 was about moving forward with decisiveness. Courthouse Libraries BC completed its planning phase from the year before and began to lay the groundwork for our future as the pivotal legal information and knowledge management platform for BC's justice sector.

We unveiled our 2015-2019 Strategic Plan, dedicated ourselves to the Access to Justice BC initiative, filled key positions, strengthened organizational structure and evaluative processes, and focused on core IT infrastructure—all while sustaining our commitment to our core three services offerings: *Information Services*, *Curating Print and Digital Materials*, and *Training and Outreach*.

2015–2019 STRATEGIC PLAN: A FRESH VANTAGE POINT

Our new Strategic Plan, published in October 2015, came out of extensive consultation with our Board, staff and stakeholders.

Courthouse Libraries BC's vision and mission statements have changed, our core service descriptions have evolved, and our newly minted strategic goals—five in total—give us the confidence to steer our programs well into 2020.

We established an Innovation Stream to explore services and programs that capitalize on our strong traditions and reputation for expertise. We can anticipate and meet the evolving needs of both lawyers and the public through a blend of human touch, physical presence, and technology in branches throughout the province and online.

As we serve British Columbians in our role as a legal information and knowledge management platform, we recognize that this is a time of great change within the legal profession, not to mention a time of considerable challenges in access to justice.

We place considerable emphasis on access to justice in our new plan, and we are one of the 26 member organizations of Access to Justice BC whose mandate it is to foster coordination and collaboration from a more user focused perspective.



OUR REPORT FOR 2015

The new Strategic Plan has a strong influence on this year's annual report, both in the sense of its structure and how we describe our work and measure success. It is the companion piece to this report, representing as it does our beacon—the point of our focus going forward.

This year's report is structured according to the central themes of our five new strategic goals:

1. Knowing what people need when they seek legal material and information—and updating this understanding as those needs evolve.
2. Being a lead curator of legal information in BC.
3. Being a central hub that connects the public and the legal community to legal resources.
4. Building capacity in others to use legal information—from experienced lawyers to members of the public without legal training.
5. Operating an innovative stream for new products, services and approaches to dealing in legal information, whether as a sole driver or in partnership with others.

Our organization has increasingly been seen as the bridge between the worlds of traditional knowledge and technology-driven information trends, and our work benefits from our commitments to innovation, partnership, transparency, measuring success and service with a human touch. Here is a recap of Courthouse Libraries BC work in 2015.



STRATEGIC GOAL

We continually develop expertise on the needs of those seeking legal material and information

UNDERSTANDING CLIENTS AND ADDRESSING NEEDS

Evidence-based decisions about the materials, information and services we provide to our clients requires rigorous evaluative processes. This was a focus in 2015 since clients' needs evolve and their demographics change. Our strategic goals impose an enhanced duty for us to measure the reach, effectiveness and efficiency of our various services and offerings—and also to monitor and respond to changing needs.

In 2015 we conducted numerous evaluations (surveys, interviews, etc.) regarding our services. We continued to formalize our standards for analytics and success metrics, and we saw that well executed evaluation programs bring benefits on several fronts. Of course it helps our clients and us to measure and report where our services are most successful (or where we need to make improvements)—but rigorous evaluative processes also allows us to share this insight with the broader justice community, even to an international scale.

As one example, Clicklaw Wikibooks shall be featured at the American Bar Association's Equal Justice Conference in Chicago in 2016—largely as a result a formal evaluation report showing the wiki model's effectiveness.

HOW LIBRARY RESOURCES ARE BEING USED

For in-branch clients we used a larger variety of evaluation tools in 2015: client intercept surveys, tracking sheets, client feedback forms and staff interviews. We engaged an expert to prepare our *On-on-One Service Review* report using Vancouver branch data. (A review of our regional branches will follow in 2016.) The 2015 results revealed:

- Out of 40,500 information requests in our fully staffed branches, 51% were from members of the public.

- Most lawyers visiting in-branch (41%) were sole practitioners, and only 15% were at firms of 16 or more lawyers.
- When it comes to in-person service, we tend to see junior and senior lawyers: 46% of in-branch lawyer clients from the intercept survey were 5 or fewer years of call; 40% were called for more than 15 years; only 14% were called between 6-15.

Our 2015 evaluations led to unique insights around how time and resources were used. Although total information requests dropped by 4% from 2014, complex questions (requiring an average of 13 minutes to answer) actually increased. Low value questions (assisting with directions, photocopying, etc. which require a few minutes or less) were what declined most.

Based on this information, the staff spent the vast majority of their time on providing the kinds of services their expertise demands: answering complex questions and answering quick reference questions (67% of their time).

LAWYER TRAINING NEEDS

Our online survey of 113 lawyers showed practitioners value free training on research tools and substantive legal issues. We offered CPD-accredited training to over 1,300 people in 2015 and received evaluations from approximately 400 of them. Around 50% of those we reached were outside the Lower Mainland. The vast majority were in small firms or solo practice.



CLICKLAW AND CLICKLAW WIKIBOOKS EVALUATIONS

Our Clicklaw portal (www.clicklaw.bc.ca) user survey captured 501 respondents and revealed that almost 60% of visitors come with their own legal question. A quarter sought someone to help them with a legal problem. A second follow up survey is being continued in 2016 to reveal ways the site might be improved.

Clicklaw Wikibooks (wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca) carried out parallel surveys—one in partnership with the Canadian Research Institute on Law and the Family focusing on *JP Boyd on Family Law*, which accounts for approximately half of traffic to the website. The other survey polled users of other Clicklaw Wikibooks content.

Combined, the surveys captured over 700 responses and yielded insights on Clicklaw Wikibooks users as well as broader recommendations. The evaluation demonstrated the effectiveness of the wiki model in providing legal information to both the public and legal professionals, and yielded evidence to support its adoption in other jurisdictions.



2
STRATEGIC GOAL

We are a lead curator of legal information in BC

OUR ROLE AS CURATORS

Courthouse Libraries BC continues to evolve to meet our clients' needs. We curate more than the traditional borrowing collection. Our digital subscriptions and research tools for in-branch use, as well as digital assets available online outside the branches— notably Clicklaw, Clicklaw Wikibooks and the Reading Room—are curated with third party resources, plus some in-house content developed by us. Through our LawMatters program, we also curate an authoritative list of legal titles recommended for purchase by public libraries. Public libraries are still the first place many people look when seeking legal information.

Trends in 2015 show clients want curated information resources provided free from the confines of physical space.

PRINT COLLECTIONS

The digital shift continued as expected in 2015. We saw a 9% decline in the number of physical books borrowed, renewed and used compared to the previous year.

We re-evaluated our expenditures on print resources, including the hidden costs of managing print subscriptions. Loose-leaf subscriptions were discontinued based on the increasing costs imposed by publishers, the time-intensiveness of managing loose-leaf titles in multiple branches, their overall decrease in use, and the availability of digital alternatives.

Our new approach to collection is based on usage statistics and title currency, and emphasizes client needs.

We continued to loan and mail print materials to clients through the Book in a Box service which includes a postage-paid box for returns. While only a fraction of loans are through this free service, it ranked very high in a mail out survey

of users (over 95% satisfaction) and ensures that all lawyers have the same access to a deeper print collection.

DIGITAL ASSETS

Reading Room

While print use declined, we saw a corresponding 32% increase in subscribers to the Reading Room, which offers anytime, anywhere access to select texts and journals via our website.

This exclusive service for lawyers continues to impress upon us the importance of making a collection available outside of a library's walls. The Reading Room continued to grow its user base, adding a further 680 lawyers for a total of 2,800 subscribers.

Clicklaw

Clicklaw continued to grow as the platform for partnership within the public legal education and information community. We reviewed, updated and added to the Clicklaw Common Questions in 2015. New contributors and resources in the areas of refugee law, housing law, disability law and Provincial Court information were identified for inclusion.

Clicklaw Wikibooks

Clicklaw Wikibooks (wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca) continued to add content, finishing 2015 with a major new title, the Canadian Bar Association BC Branch's assortment of *Dial-A-Law* materials, as well as an agreement to convert the Law Students Legal Advice Program's LSLAP Manual into a wikibook between 2015 and 2016. Our LawMatters coordinator led the development of a new wikibook, the *Beginner's Guide to Finding Legal Information*.

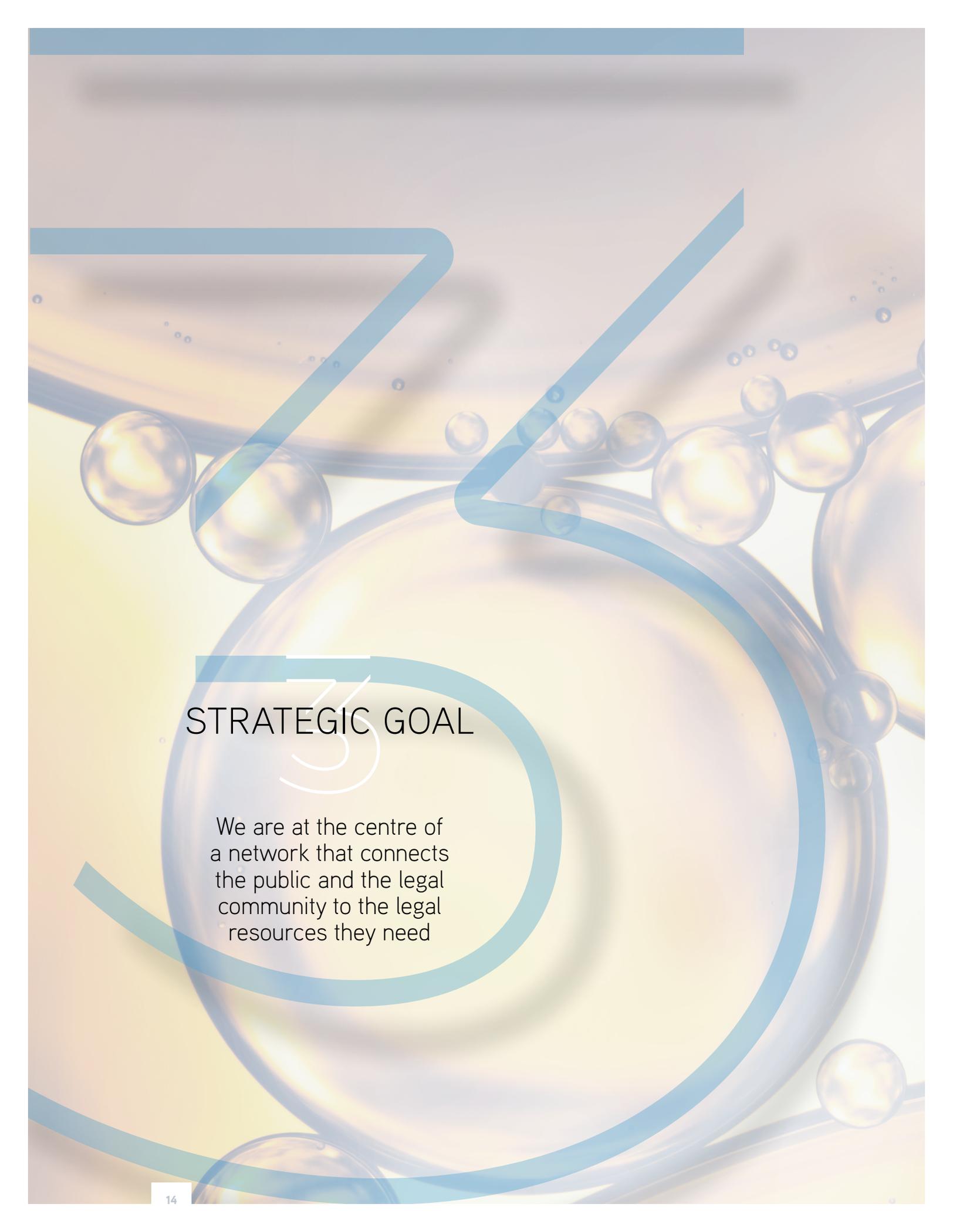




The wiki model's success led to an agreement between Courthouse Libraries BC and the Law Society of BC in 2015 to produce a practice management e-book on a stand alone wiki platform for 2016.

LAWMATTERS

One of the key components of the LawMatters program is a vetted list of recommended materials for small, medium and large size public libraries. In 2015 we approved new titles and updated recommendations for over 260 titles included in our *Law Books for Libraries* list.



3 STRATEGIC GOAL

We are at the centre of a network that connects the public and the legal community to the legal resources they need

CONNECTING PEOPLE AND RESOURCES WITH TECHNOLOGY

FRONT LINE SERVICES

Our new service statement emphasizes delivering services to the legal community and the public through a blend of human touch, physical space and technology. Courthouse Libraries BC's client-facing staff and 29 branches throughout BC exemplify the first two parts of this service delivery model:

- Clients consistently rate our staff services very highly. Our score for meeting client information needs overall in 2015 was 4.7, on a 1–5 scale.
- Our locations are used by members of the legal community to learn and build connections. Lawyers, judges, First Nations court elders, articulated students, paralegals, CBA sections, and various legal and PLEI committees benefit from our spaces.

TECHNOLOGY UPGRADES

Our overall IT infrastructure, while operational, was nearing its life's end in 2015. As technology continues to transform the world of legal information—and the justice sector at large—it was critical that we focused carefully on technology in 2015, and we did.

Through a procurement process we hired Scalar Solutions and began to plan our IT roadmap, which will cover staff and public computer environments, core business applications, network equipment and any other future innovative service offerings. We also added a key management position, the Director of Knowledge Management, and hired Mark Knauf-Nakamura who has an extensive background in knowledge management and change management.

These changes will enable Courthouse Libraries BC to become a technologically strong organization, and equip us to fulfill

the technology and knowledge management portion of our service mandate.

ONLINE CLIENT SERVICES

Certain digital assets have a life of their own outside our core IT infrastructure. These include:

- Courthouse Libraries BC's website (www.courthouselibrary.ca)
- Clicklaw (www.clicklaw.bc.ca), and
- Clicklaw Wikibooks (wiki.clicklaw.bc.ca)

All three websites are now hosted with a local hosting provider, offering more data sovereignty for our digital offerings. The new host provides high quality performance and reliable support for all our websites.

Clicklaw and Clicklaw Wikibooks continued to reach new milestones in 2015:

- Clicklaw's traffic increased 20% to 207,972 sessions.
- Clicklaw Wikibooks website saw an impressive 73% increase to 437,252 sessions, representing over 1/3 million individual visitors.
- Both websites made mobile-friendly upgrades as Google changed its search algorithm to favor mobile-friendly websites.
- By the end of 2015, 35% of Clicklaw Wikibooks sessions and 26% of Clicklaw sessions were from mobile devices.
- Clicklaw's platform was upgraded to facilitate future changes and the ability to coordinate with the Civil Resolution Tribunal and MyLawBC when these launch.

Updates to the Courthouse Libraries BC website (www.courthouselibrary.ca) are in the plans for 2016



STRATEGIC GOAL

We are a leader in building the capacity of communities across BC to use legal information

COMMUNITY TRAINING AND CAPACITY BUILDING

We continued our work building capacities among communities across the justice sector: lawyers, judges, advocates, librarians, law students, paralegals, and self-represented litigants. What made 2015 more remarkable was the number of partnerships we formed to offer training with, including:

- Nidus,
- PovNet,
- Community Legal Assistance Society,
- Disabilities Alliance BC, and
- Legal Services Society

LEGAL COMMUNITY TRAINING

We participated in 113 legal community events in 2015 and reached nearly 3,000 members of the legal community. CPD-accredited events emphasized specific law-related skills or developing substantive legal knowledge, including new topics on:

- The intersection of immigration and criminal law
- The intersection of prison and criminal law
- Personal planning
- Wills
- Standard of review

A total of 1,328 lawyers—approximately the same as in 2014—attended our 20 webinars and 10 in-person CPD sessions and reported a 57% increase in confidence of subject matter, and 45% increase in confidence on using legal information tools. The remainder of events were non-CPD, but included 15 events for law clerks, PLTC students and law students (847 people total). Staff also taught two sessions on legal research for 27 paralegals.

Conferences

Our outreach and training activities began to attract the attention of conference organizers in the legal sector:

- Nathaniel Russell, Liaison Lawyer, sat on the advisory committee and appeared on two panels for the 2015 Pacific Legal Technology Conference.
- Audrey Jun, Clicklaw Program Coordinator, was awarded a scholarship to attend the Court Users Technology Conference in Minneapolis to present on Clicklaw.
- Brenda Rose, Director of Community Engagement, presented at the Innovation in Access to Justice Conference in Montreal.

Provincial Court Judges Support

The Provincial Court approached us to provide support as they moved from print to digital research resources. We conducted a needs assessment and delivered training by webinar and in-person sessions to 57 judges, with programs on:

- Legal research basics,
- Criminal law research tools, and
- Family law research tools.

Members of the judiciary reported an increase in their confidence following this training.



TRAINING FOR INTERMEDIARIES AND THE PUBLIC

238 Law Foundation advocates, community workers and public librarians also received training from staff on legal reference, research and referral skills. Our LawMatters program coordinator led the development of a wikibook for public librarians and self-represented litigants to introduce legal research concepts. The *Beginner's Guide to Finding Legal Information* was introduced at the Beyond Hope library conference in Prince George.

In 2015, we hosted and partnered in outreach events that reached over 1,000 members of the public. Many of these were held in connection with Law Week, organized by the Canadian Bar Association.

The background features a close-up photograph of numerous water droplets of various sizes, some in sharp focus and others blurred, creating a sense of depth and movement. Overlaid on this is a large, stylized number '5' in a light blue color. The '5' is composed of thick, rounded lines and has a white outline. The text 'STRATEGIC GOAL' is positioned to the left of the top part of the '5'.

STRATEGIC GOAL

We operate an innovative stream internally and externally that creates new products, services and approaches to curating, sharing and connecting legal information

INNOVATIVE STREAM

Other stakeholders in the justice sector view Courthouse Libraries as the holder of important knowledge assets, but also as an innovator willing to embrace technology with appropriate caution. Our strategic planning process led us to recognize the importance of implementing an *innovative stream* that will help us manage knowledge assets for BC's justice sector in a collaborative, efficient, and creative manner.

Our innovative stream will allow us to test new ways of offering value as a knowledge management and legal information organization.

In anticipation of this future work, we nonetheless collaborated on a few experiments within the justice sector, including:

- Provincial Court Pilot — at the request of a Provincial Court Judge, our Clicklaw Program Coordinator developed new Common Questions for judges to give self-represented litigants. They were handed out in Surrey and Penticton courthouses, and if successful will be released in other courthouses in 2016.
- Family Innovation Lab — we partnered with Mediate BC to secure three year funding from the Vancouver Foundation to look at new ways to address family law issues. We bring our expertise in knowledge management to this multidisciplinary approach.



FINANCIAL HIGHLIGHTS 2015

	OPERATIONS	PROJECTS	TOTAL
FUNDING SOURCES			
Law Foundation of BC	2,245,000	—	2,245,000
Law Society of BC	2,224,205	—	2,224,205
Operating Revenue	142,498	—	142,498
Project Funding Grants	—	71,312	71,312
Total	4,611,703	71,312	4,683,015
EXPENDITURES			
Staff	2,267,273	—	2,267,273
Information sources	1,017,946	45,421	1,063,367
Operations	860,299	25,891	886,190
Amortization of Capital Assets	38,302	—	38,302
Total	4,183,820	71,312	4,255,132
INFORMATION SOURCES EXPENDITURES			
Print resources	446,454	45,421	491,875
Digital resources	543,302	—	543,302
Other expenditures	28,190	—	28,190
Total	1,017,946	45,421	1,063,367




**COURTHOUSE
LIBRARIES | BC**

**British Columbia
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