Library and Archives Canada
2016–2019 Three-Year Plan

MESSAGE FROM DR. GUY BERTHIAUME, LIBRARIAN AND ARCHIVIST OF CANADA

As its 150th birthday approaches, Canada finds itself at a significant juncture in its history. The concept of only two "founding" peoples that held sway at the time of the country's 100th birthday has been considerably enhanced over the years. The First Nations, the Métis and the Inuit are finally acknowledged as essential parts of the Canadian identity. Moreover, the arrival in large numbers of new Canadians from all walks and conditions of life calls for a fundamental redefinition of Canadian identity, the hallmark of which has become inclusion and diversity.

In this context, our institution finds itself endowed with renewed relevance. As the custodian of our distant past and of our recent history, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is a key resource for all Canadians who wish to gain a better understanding of who they are, individually and collectively. Indeed, in a survey conducted to help us draw up this three-year plan, our users determined that LAC's number one priority should be to ensure access to its collections.[1]

As it embraces the future and strives to fulfill its mandate as a national institution while serving the best interests of all its clients, LAC must now make choices that are both informed and pragmatic. Why informed? Because the consequences of the digital revolution will only become apparent as the technology develops and users adapt to it. Why pragmatic? Because it is impossible to embrace every conceivable development simultaneously with the resources available, while the number of stakeholders engaged in the world of information makes sharing resources and expertise a necessity.

With this in mind, LAC developed this three-year plan as a roadmap for its activities until 2019. The plan is based on consultations with clients, partners and employees. From June to December 2015 we obtained feedback from our most active clients during a consultation meeting and four focus groups; we held five employee consultation sessions; we conducted a survey of website users; and we held a formal consultation session with our Stakeholders Forum—the 12 Canadian professional associations with which we have close relationships. Furthermore, our plan is based on a careful examination of the major current trends resulting from the rapid changes that are occurring in our environment. Finally, the three-year plan sets out what LAC will accomplish in the coming years to meet the expectations of Canadians as effectively and inclusively as possible.

---

[1] *Priorities and Strategic Planning Survey*, Nanos, December 2015. When asked to prioritize LAC's activities, 54% of respondents said "provide access to collections," compared with 24% who opted for preservation and 18% for acquisition.

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OUR MANDATE

The Canadian Parliament gave Library and Archives Canada a very broad mandate, which includes acquiring, processing, preserving and providing access to Canada's documentary heritage. Specifically, our institution is responsible for serving as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions.

Library and Archives Canada's enabling legislation requires that, in addition to fulfilling these core functions, the institution will play a social, cultural and economic role and act in the best interests of the communities working within its sphere of activity. More than just a natural partner, Library and Archives Canada must be a catalyst and a key player in the management of documentary heritage.

Preservation Centre in Gatineau

OUR PRIORITIES

To manage service delivery and enhance our public profile, we have established priorities focused on high-quality services provided by expert, professional staff and supported by networking partnerships:

1. Library and Archives Canada is an institution fully dedicated to serving all its clients: government institutions, donors, academics, researchers, archivists, librarians, students, genealogists and the general public.

2. Library and Archives Canada is an institution which, drawing on the strength of all its staff, is at the leading edge of archival and library science and new technologies.

3. Library and Archives Canada is an institution proactively engaged with national and international networks in an open and inclusive way.

4. Library and Archives Canada is an institution with prominent public visibility that highlights the value of its collection and services.

MAJOR CURRENT TRENDS

That the digital revolution is under way is beyond question. One of its most fascinating aspects is that while only visionaries were talking about it less than a generation ago, documentary communities have now completely embraced it. As we move forward, it is up to us to decide how to leverage the benefits of the digital world in the medium or even in the long term. The preface of a recent report by the Council of Canadian Academies on this issue clearly summarizes this dilemma: "As an exercise, identifying the best opportunities for memory institutions at a time of rapid technological and social change is inevitably fraught with uncertainty. What is possible and promising now could be completely undermined by unforeseen developments in the near future."[2]

Despite this atmosphere of uncertainty, informed decision making is possible by studying major trends in our environment. This exercise reveals that key trends have indeed emerged, that some approaches consistently show great potential for success and, even more importantly, that our mandate is more relevant today than ever.

EMERGING TRENDS AND EFFECTS

At the beginning of the digital revolution, the emphasis was on developing storage and data processing capacity. Today, the greatest driver of development is **connectivity**. In 2014, 24 million Canadians owned cell phones. The trend shows no sign of abating with that number representing an increase of 5% over the previous year. In addition, 80% of cellular devices are smart phones, which are now used less frequently for voice communication, with mobile applications accounting for over three-quarters of all cell phone use.[3]

Downstream of the document production chain, the growth of connectivity and the emergence of high-performing mobile devices are stimulating **supply and demand** for the services of memory institutions. OverDrive, an organization that specializes in the online lending of digital works, has reported a 33% increase in its online transactions throughout the North American library network.[4] The Toronto Public Library alone accounted for more than two million of these loans.[5] Meanwhile, a Quebec

---

[2] Council of Canadian Academies, 2015. *Leading in the Digital World: Opportunities for Canada's Memory Institutions*. Ottawa, Ontario: The Expert Panel on Memory Institutions and the Digital Revolution, Council of Canadian Academies. P. vi.

[3] Comscore, *2015 Canada Digital Future in Focus*, March 27, 2015. Pp. 19, 20, 28.

[4] Gary Price, "OverDrive Releases 2014 Year-End Usage Statistics Including Most Popular eBooks and Audiobooks," *Infodocket*, January 8, 2015.

[5] Nancy K. Herther, "Ebooks in 2015: Trends and Forecasts Part 1," *Information Today, Inc.*, January 13, 2015.

public library consortium developed the *pretnumerique.ca* platform, and in just three years recorded over a million loans.[6]

Further up the document production chain, the systematic **acquisition of media** continues to spread. Since 2007 in Canada, the scope of the *Legal Deposit of Publications Regulations* has been broadened to include digital publications. In 2013, the United Kingdom also revised its legal deposit provisions to include e-books, online newspapers and other types of digital publications. Australia followed suit in January 2016. Similarly, the United States and other countries have been increasing their efforts to capture and publish content from a range of social media platforms.

Among new service delivery approaches and the development of digital collections, the **production of mobile applications** promoting documentary heritage continues to be an important trend, although there are now some concerns in this regard. Statistics published by the Canada Media Fund[7] and Nielsen Canada[8] indicate that, while growth in this area is limited by the number of hours of use, there is no growth in the number of applications that Canadians use. It has also been observed that the technology associated with mobile applications changes quickly, which sometimes results in service channels becoming obsolete faster than expected. In contrast, use of established online services continues to grow. Our website is one of the most popular federal government sites, and our catalogue of published works, which is consulted approximately a million times per month, is one of the most frequently used online services in the country.

Digital magnetic tape library

---
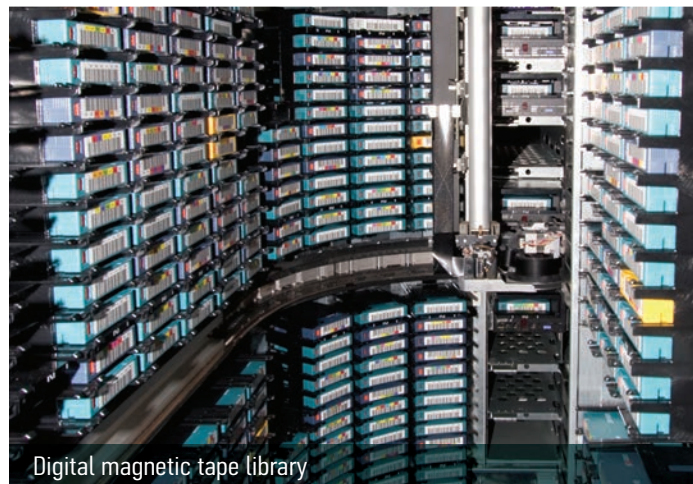
6 Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec, "Livres numériques."
7 Canada Media Fund, *Trends Report: The Big Blur Challenge*, December 2014. P. 8.
8 Nielsen, *So Many Apps, So Much More Time for Entertainment*, November 6, 2015.

PROVEN APPROACHES

In a report on memory institutions, Canada's Public Policy Forum indicated that, "when considering options to reduce costs and remain sustainable, archivists and librarians may need to explore new methods and **partnerships** outside of their traditional approaches and disciplines."[9] Building on that idea, the Council of Canadian Academies took the analysis one step further, stating that "through collaboration, memory institutions can access the breadth of knowledge, skills, and technical infrastructure that underpin [their] services," adding however, that they "must decide how they are going to manage the input that they are seeking from non-professionals without losing their status as trusted repositories."[10]

Regardless of whether they are multipartite, interdisciplinary or evolving, partnerships are becoming the most commonly used and most promising approach for memory institutions in the digital world. **National digitization strategies**, in particular, make it possible to coordinate the efforts of several partners, which translates into large-scale achievements in short periods of time. For example, by 2018, the Koninklijke

Source: Library and Archives Canada, e010974068

Project Naming enables First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities to use social media to identify photographs from our collections

Bibliotheek in the Netherlands and its public and private partners plan to digitize approximately 90% of the country's monographs published before 1940.[11] Similarly, the National Library of Norway will provide Norwegian Internet users with access to 250,000 domestically published books that are still under copyright.[12] Lastly, allowing private companies to **charge for online consultation of public collections** is another example of an effective partnership, as it brings together the considerable resources of the private sector with the expertise of public institutions, and substantially increases the quality and quantity of services available to users.

---

[9] Canada's Public Policy Forum, *Preserving Canada's Memory: Developing a strategic approach to digital preservation*, (Final Report), September 2013. P. 4.

[10] Council of Canadian Academies, *Leading in the Digital World: Opportunities for Canada's Memory Institutions*. Pp. xiv and 78.

[11] National Library of the Netherlands, *The Power of Our Network: Strategic Plan 2015–2018*. P. 13.

[12] National Library of Norway, *Collaboration Projects*.

As with all other facets of collective memory management, partnerships are evolving and progressing beyond the traditional institutional framework. Memory institutions are increasingly expected to **collaborate in a network**, as this type of collaboration knows no borders and can accommodate a large number of contributors. The proliferation of crowdfunding and collaborative initiatives is a good example of this phenomenon. The balance between institutions and collaborative networks sometimes even tips in favour of networks. A case in point is Wikipedia in that, although this community encyclopedia used content from memory institutions in the beginning, these institutions now see it as an indispensable tool for disseminating information.

Using **linked open data** is another way of collaborating in a network. It involves bringing together data from various sources, thus facilitating research. Datasets posted on the Web are available to everyone, allowing users to do global searches. Linked open data will facilitate unprecedented access to content offered by an almost limitless number of partners, who can reuse and add value to data. With its volume increasing all the time, this data is now seen as a way of ensuring that documentary heritage achieves its full social and economic potential.

A MISSION THAT REMAINS ESSENTIAL

The **physical premises** of memory institutions support the preservation and consultation of records, thereby becoming centres of creativity, encounters and sharing. These premises house the infrastructure needed to design, create and preserve virtual spaces. Physical and virtual spaces do not simply co-exist; in reality, the physical spaces make the virtual spaces possible. Physical premises are still of central importance to memory institutions as demonstrated by the construction of many public and university libraries in recent years. Moreover, the more permanent physical premises counterbalance the temporary nature of digital records. Today, structures built in previous centuries can be seen as the best reminders of past eras.

"Hockey Marching as to War" exhibition—a collaborative effort between the Hockey Hall of Fame and LAC

The explosion in documentary production in a digital world poses challenges that all memory institutions must face. First, **long-term digital preservation** at an affordable cost is a major challenge that must not be underestimated. The solution to this significant issue will be the cornerstone upon which all digital access will be built in the future.

The development of a large capacity for digital preservation, combined with the growth of digital content, inevitably raises the issue of **selecting documentary heritage**. Should we take advantage of this storage and processing capacity to preserve as much as possible, using digital tools to classify information and provide researchers with what they need? Or, on the other hand, should we discard an increasingly large proportion of records and keep only a fraction of them to be consulted without using automated processing tools or any form of artificial intelligence? Big data brings a unique perspective to this debate. On what basis should we decide the heritage value and retention period for these huge datasets, which may seem perfectly heterogeneous at first but could later be cross-referenced and used to draw conclusions that were not anticipated when the data was initially collected and classified? Memory institutions and their professional staff are best suited to answer these questions and to make choices that will contribute to the development of scientific research, artistic productions and quests for identity by present and future generations.

The major trends we have outlined here serve as a compass for the activities, initiatives and measures that will bring our 2016–2019 three-year plan to fruition.

Vault housing the portrait collection

OUR COMMITMENTS AND THE EXPECTED RESULTS

♪ Since the Beatles have provided the world's soundtrack for the past 50 years, we are using their song titles as markers along our proposed way forward.

All song titles: G. Harrison, J. Lennon and P. McCartney. 1963—1967. EMI Records and subsidiaries.

DEDICATED TO SERVING ALL OUR CLIENTS

IMPROVED ACCESS
"I Want to Tell You " ♫

To better meet the expectations of our clients, we will implement a **client-based service strategy** that will provide researchers with services that are more attuned to their needs.

We will continue to post as much content as possible on **social media** such as Facebook, Flickr, Twitter, YouTube and Pinterest, and we will release more podcasts so that Canadians here and abroad can discover the contents of our vast collection.

We will invest in the **digitization** of our collection and put a greater number of our holdings online.

We will ensure that our content is available through **mobile interfaces**.

We will **process archives** more quickly to make them **discoverable** for users and to facilitate their transfer to the future preservation facility.

We will make practical and strong contributions to the government-wide **open government** initiative by making more holdings available to the public more rapidly.

◢ EXPECTED RESULTS

- ► Digitize 40 million pages in three years, including the 650,000 files of the Canadian Expeditionary Force that will be available online

- ► Reach 100 million downloads annually from LAC's website

- ► Make one million pages of government records available each year by the block review process

- ► Assess and process 10 additional kilometres of archives so that they are discoverable for users

EFFECTIVE TOOLS
"Getting Better All the Time" ♫

LAC's website is widely used by Canadians. We will make it more user-friendly and attractive to users. We will continue to optimize search tools and metadata to allow discovery of our holdings.

AMICUS, our national catalogue of bibliographic records for published heritage, is obsolete. We will adopt a **new integrated library management system** that will meet our objectives for modernization and efficiency. We will also be investigating a single search mechanism for all archival material.

Conservation laboratory

▰▰ EXPECTED RESULTS

- ▶ Ensure that LAC's website continues to be one of the top ten most visited federal government sites

- ▶ Optimize our tools so that 95% of traffic to our website results from a referral by a major search engine such as Google

- ▶ Implement a new integrated library management system for published documents

Restored daguerreotype

Source: Library and Archives Canada, e011154390

AT THE LEADING EDGE OF ARCHIVAL AND LIBRARY SCIENCE AND NEW TECHNOLOGIES

ENHANCED SKILLS AND EXPERTISE
"Do You Want to Know a Secret?" ♫

As part of our employees' commitment and contribution to the government-wide **Destination 2020** initiative, we will redefine our work methods so that they are more responsive and more efficient.

We will **review our processes** to simplify them and reduce red tape using technology to streamline our administrative functions.

We will encourage our professionals to participate in **national and international exchanges** to promote the sharing of expertise in the areas of archival, library and information sciences, and history.

EXPECTED RESULTS

► Implement the Destination 2020 action plan

► Review 10 key operational procedures per year

► Hold four annual conferences with external experts

STATE-OF-THE-ART INFRASTRUCTURE
"Tell Me What You See" ♫

We will implement our **Long-Term Infrastructure Strategy**, with a view to building a new **state-of-the-art** facility for preserving and providing access to our textual records.

We will make **395 Wellington Street in Ottawa** the destination of choice for those wishing to combine knowledge, expertise and experience.

To prepare LAC's digital future, we will implement our **Digital Strategy**, which is based on three pillars: digital preservation, discovery and performance.

EXPECTED RESULTS

► Start to build the new preservation facility

► Receive 22,000 visitors annually at 395 Wellington Street in Ottawa

► Preserve 100% of our digital acquisitions using a digital curation platform

PROACTIVELY ENGAGED IN NATIONAL AND INTERNATIONAL NETWORKS

INNOVATIVE PARTNERSHIPS
"With a Little Help from My Friends" ♫

Through the Stakeholders Forum, which brings together our key partners, we will develop a **National Digitization Strategy** to digitize and make available online the content that Canadians most frequently request and to preserve the documentary heritage that is most at risk.

We will develop **partnerships with new players**: academia, non-profit organizations, the private sector, provincial and other public institutions such as public libraries.

EXPECTED RESULTS

► Set up a secretariat to manage implementation of the National Digitization Strategy

► Reach 10 agreements with new partners by 2019

ACTIVE COLLABORATION
"All Together Now" ♫

We will seek **public participation**, particularly among First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities, to enhance our descriptions. Our identification projects will be expanded to allow the public to share their knowledge concerning names, locations and events associated with records in our collections.

Under our **Documentary Heritage Communities Program (DHCP)**, we will spend $1.5 million a year to enable private documentary heritage organizations to preserve and showcase their collections.

Finally, we will leverage support from our **national and international partners** to fulfill our mandate efficiently.

EXPECTED RESULTS

► Allow the public to help enhance information related to two collections per year

► Provide $1.5M annually for community projects under the DHCP

► Adopt an international relations strategy

► Have 10 Canadian representatives on the major international documentary heritage committees, including the International Council on Archives, the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, and the International Internet Preservation Consortium

GREATER PUBLIC VISIBILITY

SHOWCASING THE COLLECTION
"Here, There and Everywhere" ♫

We will showcase the treasures in our collections through dynamic **public programming** and by making use of social media.

We will contribute to the commemoration of important events for Canada such as the 150th anniversary of Confederation.

We will leverage our collections, particularly our documentary art, and enhance their visibility by **lending them to other organizations for exhibitions**, thus sharing with a broader audience the thrill of coming into contact with original records.

We will pay special attention to **showcasing documents** related to First Nations, the Métis and the Inuit.

To reach out to Canadians from coast to coast, we will ensure **a strong and an active regional presence and conduct activities in the regions** to maximize the number of Canadians who can take advantage of LAC's services.

EXPECTED RESULTS

- ▶ Hold a total of 21 exhibitions organized by or in collaboration with LAC

- ▶ Create designated space for LAC's collections in two well-known exhibition venues

- ▶ Double the number of subscribers to LAC's social media pages

- ▶ Conclude 60 loan agreements for exhibitions

- ▶ Provide a renewed service offer in two Canadian cities