



History of the Canadian Conservation Institute Library

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Figure 1. The CCI Library.

The origins of the Canadian Conservation Institute (CCI) Library date back to the creation of CCI in 1972. While much has changed since then, the CCI Library's essential purpose remains unchanged. It supports the work and research of staff and provides services to the wider heritage community in Canada and internationally.

The CCI Library would not be what it is today without the hard work and expertise of past Library staff as well as the active support and engagement of CCI conservators, conservation scientists and management. In particular, the CCI Library Advisory Committee has played a key role over the years in providing feedback and suggestions about the development of the Library's collection and the services it offers. The CCI Library has always been a collective and collaborative endeavour.

A timeline of the CCI Library

1972: The creation of CCI.

1973–1974: CCI hired its first librarian, Geraldine Wallis. Book and journal purchases commenced.

1975: CCI moved into its current location, 1030 Innes Road in the east end of Ottawa.

1985: CCI and the Canadian Heritage Information Network (CHIN) joined an international collaboration of cultural heritage conservation institutions to form the Conservation Information Network. The Network developed three conservation databases, for which CHIN hosted and provided technical expertise. The materials and suppliers databases have been discontinued. The third database, the Bibliographic Database of the Conservation Information Network (BCIN), continues today and contains over 200,000 bibliographic records from the world's major conservation libraries.

1988: The CCI Library acquired the museology collection of the [National Museums of Canada](#) (NMC), the oldest, most comprehensive collection of museological literature in Canada, when the NMC was dissolved. The CCI Library relocated to a new, larger space within 1030 Innes Road. Alicia Prata transferred from the NMC Library and became CCI's new library manager. Prata was instrumental in creating the Bibliographie muséologique (BMUSE) database, which indexed museology books and journals. BMUSE brought together holdings from CCI, the ICOM Information Centre and the Direction des Musées de France.

1995: Library Technician Maureen Clark, who specialized in interlibrary loans and document delivery, retired after 17 years. Speaking on behalf of CCI, Ian Wainwright, then-manager of the analytical research laboratory at CCI, noted how the growth of the library had been the result of the contributions of Maureen Clark and her colleagues, both present and past.

1999: The CCI Library launched its first online catalogue.

2002: The BCIN database, which had previously only been available by subscription, was launched as a free web resource. Alicia Prata retired after 14 years of service at CCI and was succeeded by Joy Patel as the new library manager.

2004: The Library re-opened after a temporary closure in 2003 in a newly renovated space with compact shelving, enclosed cubicles, study carrels, open worktables, public-access workstations and a sunny lounge area for reading and conversation. Joy Patel was instrumental in maintaining basic library services during the Library's temporary closure as well as in its successful re-opening.

2007: Reference Librarian Vicki Davis, who played a leading role in the creation and success of the BCIN database, retired after 21 years.



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Figure 2. Reference Librarian Vicky Davis (right) helping an intern search the BCIN database.

2012: The CCI Library online catalogue was redesigned to meet new web accessibility standards (WCAG AA-level). The new catalogue was one of the first federal government library catalogues to meet this standard and owed much of its success to then-manager Debbie Laplante.

2015: CHIN and CCI began an administrative merger, and the CCI Library began to update its collection to better support the digital preservation and collections management work of CHIN. The two special operating agencies continue to have their own distinct but complementary mandates, and they work together to support the heritage community in Canada.

2021: The [BCIN database](#) was relaunched on a modernized platform with improved functionality. CCI executive management played a key role in this process as part of its collaboration with ICCROM, the Getty Conservation Institute and the International Council on Monuments and Sites (ICOMOS).

The CCI Library today

The CCI Library serves a wide variety of external clients: students, private conservators, museums, galleries, libraries, heritage associations and members of the public interested in cultural heritage conservation. The Library's world-class conservation and museology collection is unique in Canada and is one of only a small number of such collections in the world.

The Library is open to the public by appointment for on-site access to the collection, which can also be searched remotely using its [online catalogue](#). The CCI Library offers the following services, which are free for all Canadians:

- bibliographic research advice and assistance;
- electronic document delivery of articles from the CCI Library collection;
- direct loans to Canadian heritage organizations, including museums, galleries, libraries and heritage associations; and
- loans to individuals in Canada, including private conservators, through interlibrary loans to any municipal library in Canada.

As part of its free loans service within Canada, the Library covers 100% of the shipping costs (including return shipping).

The Library also serves as the first point of contact at CCI for questions and requests. Library staff respond directly to general enquiries. For more complex requests requiring scientific or technical advice, they coordinate with managers to direct the enquiries to one of CCI's expert conservators or conservation scientists.

Currently, there are two staff members, Librarian Finbarr Healy and Library Technician Faelan McEwen, who report to Véronik Mainville, Manager of the Knowledge Sharing Division. Staff are happy to provide you with library services and can be reached [via email](#).

Looking to the future, a new home, and new possibilities, are on the horizon for CCI and CHIN and the CCI Library. Together with archaeologists and conservators at Parks Canada, CCI and CHIN will be forming a [Cultural Heritage Science](#) (CHS) hub as part of the Government of Canada's [Laboratories Canada](#) project. We are looking forward to this new chapter, when we will have the opportunity for additional collaboration with our Parks Canada colleagues.

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