Canadian Association of Research Libraries

Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada

CARL ABRC

About CARL
July 2013

CARL represents the country's twenty-nine largest university libraries and two major federal library institutions (Library and Archives Canada and the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information) that do not engage in CARL's advocacy work.

CARL provides a forum for bilingual discussion among the directors of its member libraries, coordinates joint projects of the member libraries, and advocates on behalf of Canada's research libraries in the interests of research and higher education. CARL member libraries are normally represented by library directors and others, such as associate university librarians or subject experts, participate in CARL committees and project work.

The larger 17 CARL member libraries are also members of the (US-based) Association of Research Libraries (ARL), with which CARL works closely, so the directors of those libraries also meet and network in the context of ARL membership meetings and committee activities. CARL also maintains frequent contact with the four regional university library consortia in Canada (COPPUL, OCUL, CREPUQ, CAUL), of which all CARL university library members are members of one.

Governance

CARL is a not-for-profit corporation operating under the (federal) Canada-Not-for-profit Corporations Act (S.C. 2009, C. 23). It is also a registered charity.

The association is governed by an elected Board of Directors of six member library directors. All Board terms are two years in length and the Vice-President automatically becomes President (currently Gerald Beasley, University of Alberta).

Executive Director Brent Roe, a professional library appointed in 2008, manages the association's operations. Based in Ottawa, CARL interacts with the federal government and other national organizations with interests in libraries, research and higher education. The CARL office shares an office in downtown Ottawa with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, of which CARL is an associate member.

CARL holds two general membership meetings each year, with the spring meeting held in a different member city each year and the fall meeting in Ottawa or Gatineau. The Board of Directors and most committees also meet in person at these times to complement day-to-day communications.

The association' annual budget of approximately $750,000 comes mostly from membership dues. Member libraries can also make special contributions to particular projects. Its fiscal year is the calendar year.

Strategic Directions

CARL's activities are guided the 2013-2016 Strategic Directions, which serves as the association's strategic plan. It focuses on "advancing the vision of Canadian research libraries"

by helping its membership redefine the research library collection and services, collaborate nationally, and develop their roles in university community engagement and internationalization.

The Strategic Directions also emphasize "building the capacity of Canadian research libraries" by facilitating the sharing and preservation of research collections, developing new library expertise, and the surmounting of resource management issues. It also promotes "the value of Canadian research libraries" by developing outcomes measures and assessment of library services, building the role of the library in research. Finally, the plan commits CARL to "supporting access to research" by coordinating research data management initiatives, promoting Open Access and new forms of scholarly communication, and representing academic interests in information policy.

The Strategic Directions are implemented through a number of projects and activities listed below.

What we do

The CARL office coordinates the associations various activities and ensures the implementation of our strategic directions. Some of our tasks include:

- Compiling library statistics
- Working to improve access to knowledge
- Improving services to students, faculty and researchers
- Promoting effective and sustainable scholarly communication
- Ensuring that Canada's researchers have world class information management capacities
- Sharing best practices and experiences
- Advocating for public policies that enable broad access to scholarly information
- Keeping our members abreast of relevant activities and developments with our weekly newsletter
- Issuing librarian research grants and awards
- Promoting Open Access to publicly funded research
- Coordinating our work with other relevant associations, such as the Canadian Urban Libraries Council and the Canadian Consortium for Research.

Two organizations were initially created as major CARL projects. The Canadian National Site Licensing Project, launched in 1996, was incorporated as the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) in 2001. Alouette Canada, a project promoting and coordinating institutional digitization projects, merged the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproduction (CIHM) - itself a creation of CARL member libraries - to form Canadiana.org in 2008.

CARL Interests and Activities

Open Access to the results of publicly funded research
- Worked with federal granting councils in planning a stakeholder consultation
- Supported development of the Coalition of Open Access Resources
- Developed recommendations for CARL, CRKN, and research libraries; following up on recommendations
- Ensuring that all researchers in Canada have recourse to an Open Access repository for their work

Infrastructure for the preservation and sharing of research data
- Developed a model of what such an infrastructure may look like and cultivated the interest of research support organizations
- Supporting the development of Research Data Canada
- Working to develop a network of local and regional data management projects

Balanced copyright and understanding of copyright by library staff
- Prepared letters, briefs, visits encouraging the passage of Bill C-11
- Held teleconference with lawyer Wanda Noel on the implications of recent Supreme Court decisions
- Wrote Letters in support of Canada's support of the WIPO treaty for the blind
- Prepared letters and visits to express our concerns about potential copyright implications of trade agreements

Access to broadband Internet for all Canadians; Internet privacy; Federal government funding of research and its indirect costs; Federal government support of national research support institutions
- Prepared letters, briefs and visits to express our concerns recommendations for government policy and programs

Development of the research skills of academic librarians
- Planned and held two Librarians' Research Institutes
- Offer two research grants for librarians' research each year

Development of research data management skills of academic librarians
- Planned and held an Introduction to Research Data Management Services course for librarians
- Facilitating a "community of practice" among librarians beginning to deal with research data

Awareness of library directors of developments in libraries and scholarly communication around the world
- Organized a study tour to China for library directors in 2011; organizing another to Brazil in 2014
- Produce a weekly "E-lert" for library directors and their staff
- Organize spring and fall membership meetings for member exchange of ideas and experiences

Facilitation of library assessment
- Organized pan-Canadian consortia runs of LibQUAL+ in 2010 and 2013
- Carry on a program of research library statistics
- Planning a Canadian Library Assessment Conference in October 2014

Understanding of trends in research library human resources
- Sponsoring a 2013 research libraries version of the national library HR ("8Rs") study
- Held program for library directors to identify issues

Greater mutual and public awareness of local research library special collections
- Surveyed member libraries on needs and priorities; projects being defined

- Undertaking a census of information and potential digitization project on Chinese immigration to Canada

Support for digitization of Canadian historical documentation
- Offer ongoing funding and governance support of Canadiana.org; supported PR efforts for Héritage Project