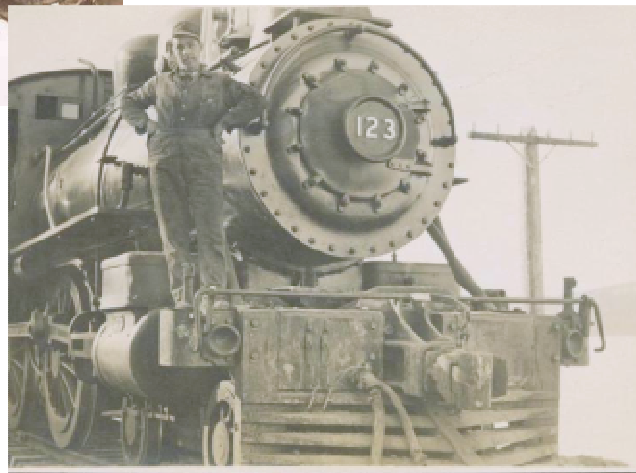
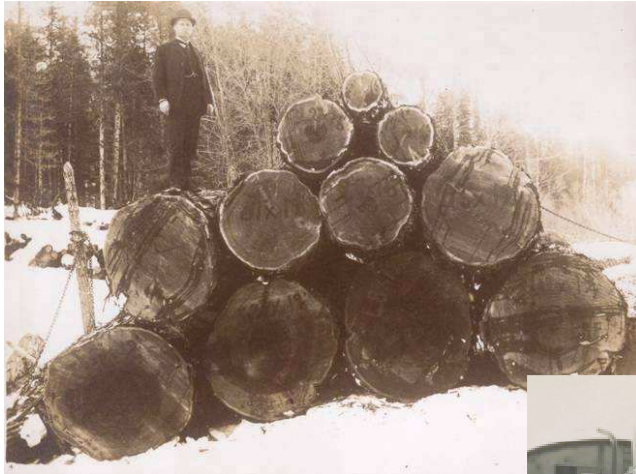


Digitization Update: National and Provincial Collaborations Report June 2010














“Wonderful to hear about
digitization initiatives throughout
BC”

Feedback, Digitization Update 2010





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Overview

Digitization Update: National and Provincial Collaborations was a one-day event which took place on June 15, 2010, at Simon Fraser University's Harbour Centre Campus. Over 50 attendees were present including representatives from all the cultural heritage sectors in BC including archives, libraries, historical societies, K-12 education, and museums. The purpose of the event was for attendees to hear an update on digitization initiatives at the national and provincial levels from Canadiana.org and the BC Digitization Coalition, and to discuss the Coalition's strategy document *Components of a Provincial Digitization Initiative*. This report summarizes the presentations and discussion which took place at the event.

Canadiana.org Update

Carolynne Presser is the Chair of Canadiana.org's Marketing and Membership Committee and the former University of Manitoba University Librarian. Carolynne's presentation provided an overview of the Canadiana.org organization, and informed attendees about the benefits of membership.

Canadiana's mission is to "present our cultural and scientific heritage in its bilingual and multicultural variety to our citizens and to the world, and to develop a comprehensive plan to provide Canadians with enduring digital access to that heritage." It was formed in 2008 as a merger of the Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CHIM) and Alouette Canada, and is perhaps best known at present as the home of the Early Canadiana Online (ECO) collection, a partially subscription-supported product including 3.2 million pages of digitized documents.

Canadiana's ambitious goals encompass an expansion of digitization activities to cover the entire corpus of Canadian documentary heritage, along with a preservation network to protect those digital files and the facilitation of online access. Specific objectives include:

- Organizing pan-Canadian collaboration among memory institutions;
- Expanding membership to engage all sectors;
- Promoting standards and policies for an integrated national network;
- Sharing expertise and tools.

Carolynne urged attendees to consider becoming Canadiana members. Membership is open to all types of memory institutions including archives, libraries, museums, school boards, publishers, etc. and also to individual citizens. Membership includes access to a variety of tools and services such as discovery portals, digitization centres, and a network of Trusted Digital Repositories (TDRs). The ECO collection is also available by subscription. Members are able to collaborate to meet common challenges in areas such as preservation and access, maximize efficiencies of scale, and coordinate activities such as fundraising for greater success.

Carolynne ended her presentation with a strong call to action: attendees should join Canadiana and get involved with local, provincial, and national collaborations around digitization.

BC Digitization Coalition Update

Simon Neame is the Assistant Director of the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at UBC. Speaking in his capacity as the Chair of the BC Digitization Coalition, Simon gave an overview of the Coalition's background, terms of reference and key activities to date. The Coalition is a multi-sector collaboration representing libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, the education sector and other 'memory' organizations. Recently several institutions were invited to join the Coalition to share their expertise and experience. These institutions have been leaders in digitization initiatives in their respective areas and include UBC Library, UVic Library, SFU Library and the Vancouver Public Library. The current President of Canadiana.org has also joined the Coalition to represent the broader national initiative.

Although the BC Digitization Coalition is not a formally elected committee, Simon highlighted the Coalition's Terms of Reference document and guiding principles and emphasized that membership will continue to evolve based on current activities. Simon reviewed the Coalition's key roles as determined by the priorities identified at the 2008 BC Digitization Symposium, including:

- Advocacy for digitization projects and related funding;
- Support for developing best practices and standards including metadata;
- Fostering collaboration and dialogue around digitization initiatives;
- Strategies to ensure that digitized materials are accessible through the provincial search portal West Beyond the West and the national portal Canadiana.org.

Recent activities of the Coalition include the draft *Components of a Provincial Digitization Initiative* document, a blueprint for developing a provincial digitization strategy, the Digitization Dialogue workshop in Fort St. John, and the formation of a working group currently evaluating software to enhance the provincial search portal. The Coalition is also hiring a Community Digitization Librarian/Archivist to further support the implementation of its mandate, with funding provided by the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre (Update: the position has now been filled and Mimi Lam has started in the position as of August 16, 2010).

Simon concluded by introducing the *Components* document for discussion later in the workshop, stressing that it is a living document and that feedback will be incorporated into the document, also noting that the *Components* document will continue to evolve as provincial and national opportunities arise.

Digital Collection Builder Overview

Gordon Coleman is a project coordinator at the BC Electronic Library Network. Speaking in his capacity as a member of the BC Digitization Coalition, Gordon gave a brief overview of the Digital Collection Builder (DCB) including what it is and how it integrates into the Coalition's strategies.

The Digital Collection Builder (DCB) is a software tool that makes it simple for heritage organizations to provide access to their unique digitized collections. It allows organizations to transform historical materials such as photographs and letters into fully searchable online collections. It supports leading metadata formats, handles many document formats including images and video, and enables easy exporting of metadata for sharing with other search portals. Best of all, the DCB software can be downloaded for free.

The DCB is a key tool in meeting the BC Digitization Coalition's strategy to encourage the creation of more online collections. The Coalition is also offering DCB training workshops, and plans to offer further support through the Digitization Coordinator position, possibly a DCB hosting service, and the continued development and improvement of the software's tools and features.

Gordon closed by inviting attendees to visit the DCB website at <http://dcb-gcn.canadiana.org/> to read the documentation, try out a demo version, and download the software.

BC History Digitization Program Update

Chris Hives is the University Archivist at UBC and the Coordinator of the BC History Digitization Program (BCHDP) at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre. Chris gave an update on the BCHDP to date, including the most recent round of funding applications for 2009/2010. Since 2006 the BCHDP has awarded matching grants of over \$650,000 to 77 projects from libraries, archives, museums and other heritage organizations to digitize newspapers, photographs, video and other historical materials. The BCHDP is funded by the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at UBC as part of its mandate to support lifelong learning and digital access for all citizens of BC.

Component Discussion Feedback

The final component of the Digitization Update was a discussion by all attendees of the BC Digitization Coalition's strategy document *Components of a Provincial Digitization Initiative*. Attendees were asked to speak in small groups and respond to three questions:

- How do you see your organization fitting into the *Components* plans?
- How would you like to participate?
- What are the missing pieces?

Following the small group discussion, there was then a general discussion of the questions. The notes below record some of the key issues and topics mentioned during the general discussion.

- To gain a higher profile and build credibility, the Coalition should identify a “marquee” or “flashy” digitization project such BC bibliographies or archaeology site reports.
- Some attendees expressed confusion about whether it was necessary to share their metadata multiple times, e.g. with MemoryBC, West Beyond the West, and the national search portal Alouette. The Coalition needs to do a better job of explaining how these services integrate.
- The Coalition should think further about the desired end user experience and what the users really want. For example, the provincial search portal should make possible “deep linking”, leading users directly to the digital object and not just the host organization’s homepage or a page of metadata about the object.
- BC Digitization Grant recipients could be asked to share collections through the provincial search portal as a condition of the grant.
- The Coalition should consider how it can encourage sharing of information about ongoing digitization efforts in different sectors, e.g. through a regular newsletter, announcements, etc.
- Preservation is an important issue which the *Components* document does not address.
- The Coalition could play a role coordinating digitization activities by highlighting high-risk materials which should be a priority for digitization. At the same time the Coalition’s role should be around advocacy, coordination, and infrastructure, not actual content and projects.
- A number of attendees had concerns about any partnering with the private sector which might lead to people having to pay to access their own history.
- Lack of knowledge and understanding around copyright issues was identified as a major stumbling block for small organizations.

Next Steps

Coalition members feel the *Digitization Update* event was an excellent opportunity for creating engagement with and among stakeholders from the cultural heritage sectors. At the same time, it was clear from comments during the discussion portion of the event and from the feedback forms that the Coalition could seek to make improvements in several areas. The Coalition therefore commits to the following Next Steps to implement what was learned at the event.

- The *Components* document will be revised to better emphasize and highlight the Coalition's role in promoting education on digitization topics, coordinating between sectors, and advocating on behalf of all sectors
- The Coalition will undertake a more systematic communication strategy to ensure that stakeholders have a clear understanding of the Coalition's mission and role, and of the West Beyond the West portal (in particular how it will integrate with other search portals such as MemoryBC and Canadiana's national search portal).

Much of this improvement in communications will be achieved when the Coalition launches its new website in a few months' time. The website will feature in-depth information on Coalition services such as West Beyond the West and the DCB, as well as RSS feeds for pushing out information, a regular newsletter, and possibly an open listserv for any stakeholders interested in the area of digitization.

Appendix 1: Components Document

Components of a Provincial Digitization Initiative

Created by the BC Digitization Coalition

Version: February 4, 2010

The BC Digitization Coalition is an informal group working towards the creation of a digitization initiative in BC. The Coalition evolved from the committee that organized the 2008 BC Digitization Symposium, an event attended by stakeholders representing archives, historical societies, libraries, museums, and the K-12 educators. For more information on the Symposium, its Final Report, and the Coalition members, please see: <http://symposium.westbeyondthewest.ca/>

This document describes the components or “building blocks” we believe are necessary to create a functioning provincial digitization initiative. The document indicates a path forward that will:

- speak to the vision presented at the Symposium and in the Symposium Final Report,
- support the Coalition within the scope established by its Terms of Reference, and
- be inclusive of all partners and possible partners across BC, large and small, in any sector relevant to the creation and preservation of our common heritage in digital form.

The document is “living” and “organic”; the Coalition may revise it from time to time as new opportunities appear and new goals are set.

Components

The challenges of building a BC digitization initiative fall into three areas:

1. Encourage the creation of more online collections by libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other heritage organizations.
2. Ensure these collections are findable by end users through provincial and national search portals which harvest and aggregate metadata.
3. Improve coordination of digitization activities across sectors within the province.

For each challenge the Coalition has identified a strategy and specific steps or components which could be carried out either by the Coalition alone or acting with other partners.

Challenge: Encourage the creation of more online collections by libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, and other heritage organizations.

Strategy: Assist heritage organizations in BC to digitize their collections and make them available online, either with the free Digital Collection Builder (DCB) software or other tools.

Specific components:

1.1 General Digitization Support: Provide a staff resource to advise organizations on aspects of creating digital collections, and promote existing online resources.

1.2 DCB Training: Offer a program of training in the use of the DCB software.

1.3 DCB Hosting Service: Seek a host for a central instance of the DCB so that small organizations with limited resources can have their collections hosted at no or minimal cost.

1.4 DCB Software Development: Participate with other partners in the continued development of the software by adding desired features, bug fixes, etc.

1.5 Funding for Digitization: Promote funding sources which support digitization projects such as the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre's British Columbia History Digitization Program grants.

Challenge: Ensure digital collections are findable by end users through provincial and national search portals which harvest and aggregate metadata.

Strategy: Coordinate the harvesting of metadata from BC collections and its loading to both the provincial search portal *West Beyond the West* and to the national search portal, *Canadiana.org's Alouette*.

Specific components:

2.1 Provincial Search Portal: Further develop the features of the West Beyond the West portal.

2.2 Metadata Wrangling: Coordinate a process through which metadata is harvested, normalized, and loaded into the provincial and national portals.

2.3 Promote Metadata Best Practices: Gather and share information on best practices in metadata creation across all the sectors to raise data quality and facilitate harvesting.

Challenge: Improve coordination of digitization activities across sectors within the province.

Strategy: Build infrastructure and carry out activities to increase communication, coordination, and partnerships among participating organizations.

3.1 Communication and Promotion: Communicate to the community of heritage organizations about the initiative, its benefits, and methods of participating.

3.2 Coalition Infrastructure: Establish structures to better engage potential stakeholders including creator and user groups, the K-12 sector, etc.

3.3 Coalition Website Development: Create a website as the public face of the initiative, housing the search portal, community features, links to resources on digitization, blog news feeds and listservs, etc.

Future Plans

The BC Digitization Coalition will move forward with the strategies indicated in this document, developing action plans to build the components and seeking to partner with BC and national organizations working toward similar aims.

Appendix 2: Participant List

| Name | Organization |
|----------------------|---|
| Betty (L.E.) Allen | BC Genealogical Society |
| Gohar Ashoughian | R. Weller Library, University of Northern British Columbia |
| Karen Bonneau | Coqualeetza Archive |
| Michael Burris | Public Library InterLINK |
| Beth Carter | Japanese Canadian National Museum |
| Alissa Cherry | Union of BC Indian Chiefs Resource Centre |
| Anita Cocchia | BC Electronic Library Network |
| Gordon Coleman | BC Electronic Library Network |
| Carole Compton-Smith | Douglas College |
| Lynn Copeland | Simon Fraser University |
| Wendy Cosby | United Empire Loyalists Assn. of Canada, Vancouver Branch Resource Library |
| Duncan Dixon | Trinity Western University |
| Moira Ekdahl | Vancouver School Board |
| Bob Foley | Vancouver Island University |
| Gretchen Goertz | Douglas College |
| Jacqueline Gresko | BC Historical Federation |
| Chris Hives | University of British Columbia |
| Jesse Horn | Squamish Public Library |
| Jonathan Jacobsen | Andornot Consulting |
| Alexis Jensen | Japanese Canadian National Museum |
| Janine Johnston | Archives Association of British Columbia |
| Jenna Kiesman | Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society |
| Cheryl Linstead | Royal BC Museum, BC Archives |
| Sherry Lovelaces | The Corporation of Delta |
| Mary-Anne MacDougall | University of the Fraser Valley |
| Marc Saunders | Prince George Public Library |
| Dana McFarland | Vancouver Island University |
| Laura Millar | Consultant |
| Gordon Miller | BC Historical Federation |
| George Modenesi | Capilano University |

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| Simon Neame | Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, UBC |
| Camille Owens | Museum of Vancouver |
| Susan Paterson | University of British Columbia |
| Carolynne Presser | Canadiana.Org |
| Heidi Rempfl | Gulf of Georgia Cannery Society |
| M. Diane Rogers | BC Genealogical Society / Women's History Network of British Columbia |
| Kate Russell | Vancouver Public Library |
| Debbie Schachter | Vancouver Public Library |
| Brenda L. Smith | British Columbia Historical Federation |
| Andrea Tartaglio | West Vancouver Memorial Library |
| Ross Tyner | Okanagan College |
| Ashley Van Dijk | Sto:lo Research and Resource Management Centre |
| Jacqueline van Dyk | Public Library Services Branch, Ministry of Education |
| Ulla Visscher | Pacific Newspaper Group |
| Jane Watt | BC Heritage Federation |
| Kayli Wilkinson | Squamish Public |
| Dr. Barbara J. Winter | Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology |

Appendix 3: Evaluation Form Summary

This document summarizes comments written on the evaluation forms which attendees were asked to fill in. In total 22 forms were received.

1. What was most valuable about the event?

In the responses, the following were the most mentioned topics:

- networking, info exchange across sectors: 6 mentions
- the Digital Collection Builder: 6 mentions
- Canadiana.org: 5 mentions
- the BC Digitization Coalition: 4 mentions
- BC History Digitization Grants: 1 mention
- the Components document: 1 mention

2. What unanswered questions or concerns do you have?

There were no clear patterns in the responses, and most topics were mentioned only once. This summary groups the responses into several themes.

Key digitization needs:

- prioritizing collections for digitization; training for small organizations; standards; ongoing support
- a common host/server
- support for copyright; how individuals can participate; a digi-mobile or digitization road show sharing expertise and equipment
- stronger emphasis on preservation – what if projects lose funding and collections disappear?

Questions:

- Would material shared with Canadiana.org require a subscription to access? → Answer: no, Canadiana would not charge for access to material freely shared by a partner. Canadiana's collections are a mix of free and subscription.
- Is the BCMA represented in the Coalition? → Yes, they are represented.

Other comments:

- too much choice for the end user
- the Coalition needs to do a better job of communicating what it's trying to do; there still seems to be confusion about its role, and ditto DCB vs. MemoryBC etc.

3. Do you have other comments?

A number of attendees made particular suggestions about ideas to follow up on:

- the RRNpilot.org website is a great example of collaboration between museums, archives and First Nations groups
- the Heritage Legacy Fund might be a good funding source
- the Land Title and Survey Authority is a possible ally
- there should be communication tools to spread the word to the BC "hinterland", and the BC Historical Federation has communication and education functions which could help
- digitizing sound and moving image is expensive; collaboration is the most viable way, and the BC Directors' Guild might be able to assist
- many small organizations have staff with little training, so information needs to be clear and basic
- a governing body could be established to standardize practices and provide a home for collections that lose funding

Also, several attendees took the time to express their appreciation for organizing the event:

- "Interesting, lots to think about ... Thank you!"
- "Wonderful to hear about digitization initiatives throughout BC"
- "It was really worthwhile!"
- "Well organized with good presentations that were interesting and on-topic."
- "Congratulations on your efforts to co-ordinate access to information"