

## NEWS FROM LIBRARY AND ARCHIVES CANADA

As libraries and archives around the world transform their traditional roles to meet the challenges of the digital age, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) wraps up its own year of adaptation and change.

During 2005, Library and Archives Canada gathered together leading experts to discuss the development of a Canadian Digital Information Strategy, in preparation for a National Summit scheduled for March 2006. The strategy, to be developed in collaboration with industry, government, heritage institutions like libraries, archives and museums, heritage associations such as the CHA, as well as universities and research organizations, seeks to ensure the preservation of a vibrant and enduring body of Canadian digital content.

The Summit is one of the first key national initiatives of our transformed institution, representing LAC's new role as a dynamic force, across government, and in the lives of Canadians. Library and Archives Canada will also be working closely with other departments to create an IM (information management) strategy so that the management of information across government is fully integrated and part of a common vision that reflects the values and ethics of Canadians.

The changes at LAC have been successful on a variety of other fronts: the relocation of many staff to Place de la Cité in Gatineau, next to the Preservation Centre; the acquisition of additional storage space for our collection; the creation of new work processes designed to streamline and improve the way we do our jobs; and the launch of a number of service improvements aimed at facilitating access to and use of LAC resources. Service improvement is one of LAC's four "catalytic" initiatives currently under way: the other three deal with digital collection, a metadata strategy and the integration of core business systems.

One of the most visible projects under service improvement was designed to eliminate the backlog of Privacy and Access to Information requests. On the access side, the backlog was reduced from 900 requests to fewer than 300. On the privacy

side, we completed the review of all 2,600 privacy requests. All responses were to be sent out by December 31, 2005.

I am happy to announce that self-service digital copying, and microfilm-to-CD burning are now both available in our reading rooms at 395 Wellington in Ottawa. Researchers can also bring their laptops to the 2<sup>nd</sup> and 3<sup>rd</sup> floors and use the Internet for free, under the Wireless Network Access program. We are also reconfiguring these two floors so that services for the reference and consultation rooms, as well as the Canadian Genealogy Centre, are fully integrated. As this work progresses over the next six months, there may be some service interruptions for short periods of time. Information about these interruptions will be posted on our website, so that researchers can schedule their research time accordingly.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank all those who worked tirelessly to encourage Parliament to pass Bill S-18, enabling the release of the 1911 census records. This was in every respect a monumental achievement, and I understand that every day, thousands of Canadians explore this site to uncover the threads of their own fascinating history.

The availability of census records changes the face of our history, creating new heroes and challenging long-held assumptions about who we are and where we've come from. So too does the transformation of Library and Archives Canada, as we embark on the future with a new face, a new mandate that puts clients and access at the forefront of our concerns. I look forward to keeping CHA members updated on our progress.

*Ian E. Wilson*  
*Librarian and Archivist of Canada*