



BC PDL Communiqué January 2017

"Balancing perfection with agility in both planning and development."
May 10th PDL Symposium, p. 3



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Happy New Year!

We hope that everyone enjoyed a relaxing holiday and are feeling energized for the new year. It's hard not to talk about the weather this winter when all of BC has been united by snow, ice, and subzero temperatures, but just maybe this picture of skaters gathered around the swimming dock on Trout Lake on Vancouver's Eastside is worth a thousand words? The lake has not been open to skating for over 20 years!



With the new year brings renewed ideas and energy for the BC Provincial Digital Library initiative. Read on for a summary of what we've been up to!

(Photo by Jason Payne)

Infrastructure Models - from down South and Down Under



In collaboration with OurDigitalWorld (ODW), Matthew Barry has been hired to work full-time together with Dan Sifton from VIU on BC PDL technology. Welcome Matthew who joins in from Hamilton Ontario. The BC PDL initiative and ODW are both looking for community-based platforms for similar types of collections and aim to strengthen and advance both initiatives by working together.

The Admin team continues their exploration of 'hub and spoke' infrastructure models. While initially the DPLA (Digital Public Library of America - (<https://dp.la>)) platform was the main focus identified through research and stakeholder consultations, Supplejack which is the platform that supports DigitalNZ (<http://www.digitalnz.org/>), is now also being considered as another candidate.

Supplejack has a strong developer community and consequently BC PDL platform exploration has benefitted from regular communication between SuppleJack developers and BC PDL Admin team members. Both the DPLA Platform and Supplejack use the hub and spoke model, which the BC PDL Steering Committee put forward as a best practice for the BC PDL project in July 2016.

The team is currently working with both platforms in a local development environment, comparing and contrasting them as working models for the BC PDL.

A Conversation with Loren Fantin, OurDigital World

Recently we caught up with Loren Fantin, Executive Director of OurDigitalWorld (ODL); *OurOntario* is just one of the services that ODL provides.



CD: How did the OurOntario initiative begin?

LF: It began as a project of widespread consultations between the Ontario Library Association and provincial stakeholders representing Ontario's public libraries, colleges, universities, public schools, and government ministries. The Government of Ontario provided grant money as a start-up for the project. The OurOntario initiative was officially launched in 2007 as a service of Knowledge Ontario – a not for profit. OurDigitalWorld (ODW) was formed when Knowledge Ontario ceased operation in 2012, and has carried on the important work of making our local history globally accessible. ODW works with many different types of organizations including small and large public and academic libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, cultural heritage associations, women's institutes, newspaper publishers and community organizations.

CD: Do you have a sense of how many people are using the OurOntario portal?

LF: Since 2009, we've served over 150,000 searches every year on OurOntario.ca. That means there is a search every three seconds.

CD: Can you explain who is using OurOntario?

LF: Our audience is varied – we have researchers, teachers, publishers, entrepreneurs, children, to name a few groups that use the site. We have stories of historical researchers finding last copies of documents, or of Ontario citizens able to locate actual recordings of a grandparent's voice – all through OurOntario.

CD: Do you have any OurOntario impact stories you can share?

LF: We've just updated our organizational website and included [a story from Cramahe Public Library](#). It's quite a success! Cramahe started digitizing and sharing local history using our VITA toolkit in 2013; they're a municipality of about 6,000 people, but their Digital Archive received about 15,000 hits in the first year. They found foot traffic to the library went up and more people asked for their physical heritage materials. They also threw a number of community history events. This success snowballed into more grants and municipal funding.

CD: What advantages are there for BC and Ontario to work together on their digital initiatives?

LF: It's the only way which we can go forward and create initiatives that are sustainable. Not only can we no longer afford individual projects, it doesn't make any sense in a networked world to work on a stand alone project or tool. We need to think about digital libraries in the global perspective and make Canadian content interoperable not only at a national level, but with collections from other countries (i.e. DPLA, Europeana). The GLAM (Galleries, Library, Archives, Museum) organizations need to work together to be successful. We're actually a small community and it just doesn't make sense to scatter our resources – we need to collaborate and leverage our resources. If we don't have a community of support at all different levels, technical and beyond, then projects will not move forward.

CD: Thank you Loren!

A review of OurOntario's community influence shows that:

- OurOntario.ca currently searches over 2 million items, not including another 2 million newspaper and book pages
- More than 8,000 comments have been posted on items
- They have almost 300 heritage organizations indexed in OurOntario.ca, including more than 200 VITA platform users, who have created over 200 exhibits
- Their newspaper portals cover over 2 million newspaper pages – the largest online archive of Ontario newspapers
- They won the 2008 Ontario Library Information Technology Association Award for Technological Innovation and the 2017 OLA Award for Archival and Preservation Achievement

Find more facts at <https://ourdigitalworld.net/what-we-do/community-heritage/>

BC PDL Steering Committee Terms of Reference

On February 24, 2017, the PDL Steering Committee will meet in person with an agenda that includes a discussion of interim terms of reference for the Steering Committee. Governance was highlighted at both previous community meetings as an important step in the realization of a provincial effort.

An engaged Steering Committee with representation across the Library, Archives, and Museum sectors will strengthen the initiative. The interim Steering Committee members are listed at <https://bclaconnect.ca/provincial-digital-library-pdl/>.

Relationship Building

The PDL Admin Team and the Steering Committee have been in the field forging relationships and building awareness amongst different institutions and organizations. Here are a few of our interactions for the past months:

- **Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, UBC**
An initial meeting occurred with the intention to build upon expertise of the Barber Centre in working with Indigenous organizations and knowledge.
- **Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries (COPPUL) and their Digital Preservation Network (DPN)**
A conversation with Corey Davis, DPN Manager, explored how COPPUL and the BC PDL might work together and benefit from COPPUL's digital preservation initiatives in the future.
- **OurDigital World**
Regular meetings of technological and administrative staff take place to stay current on ODW developments and vice versa.
- **Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC)**
Steering Committee members met with the new Executive Director Maureen Ciarniello to discuss K-12 sector participation in the BC PDL in the future.
- **National Heritage Digitization Strategy (NHDS)**
An initial conversation between BC PDL Admin team members and Caitlin Horrall, Director of the Secretariat to the NHDS, uncovered the synergies between the National strategy and BC PDL. It is expected that conversations will continue.

Building Momentum: On the Road with the BC PDL

- **Code4Lib BC**
This past December, Dan Sifton presented at the Code4Lib BC conference held at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at UBC. Code4Lib BC is a participant-driven unconference for library developers and non-developers who are engaging in collaborative problem solving through technology. It was an ideal venue for Dan to present his investigations with the DPLA and SuppleJack platforms, and to compare and contrast the promise that each may hold for the BC PDL project.
- **BC Library Conference**
The BC PDL will host a session at the BC Library conference. Planning is underway for the presentation and we hope to see as many of you as possible! Join us to receive an update and to learn from the experience of other successful digital libraries.
- **BC Studies Conference**
The PDL Admin team was successful in proposing to present a poster at the BC Studies conference. The conference will be held May 4 and 5 at Vancouver Island University.
- **BC Museums Association Conference 2016**
PDL Steering Committee member Ben Hyman presented together with David Alexander of the Royal BC Museum on the PDL at the BC Museums Association Conference 2016. The panel session raised awareness of the PDL among the BC museum and archives community.

Next Steps for the BC PDL

- **New BC PDL website**
Watch for a new website hosted by BC ELN to be launched in 2017. The domain name BCPDL.ca has been secured for the project!
- **Conference Season:**
The BC PDL has so far secured sessions on the programs for BC Library conference 2017 & BC Studies 2017.