Government Information in Canada

Access and Stewardship

AMANDA WAKARUK & SAM-CHIN LI, Editors
Government Information in Canada
Copyright page
This collection is dedicated to government information librarians whose commitment to democratic engagement, professional values, and intellectual curiosity inspire stewardship and service for the betterment of the public good. Special thanks go to Peter Hajnal (University of Toronto), Vivienne Monty (York University), and Gay Lepkey (Government of Canada) for their leadership, passion, and years of perseverance in connecting Canadians with the works of their government.
Contents

Abbreviations ▹ 10

INTRODUCTION:
The Evolution of Government Information Services and Stewardship in Canada ▹ 13
   Amanda Wakaruk and Sam-chin Li

1 HISTORICAL OVERVIEWS

1 Government Publication Deposit Programs: The Canadian Federal, Provincial, and Territorial Landscapes ▹ 35
   Graeme Campbell, Michelle Lake, and Catherine McGoveran

2 Official Publications and Select Digital Library Collections at Library and Archives Canada, 1923 to the Present ▹ 79
   Tom J. Smyth

3 Parliamentary Information in Canada: Form and Function ▹ 111
   Talia Chung and Maureen Martyn

4 Commissions and Tribunals ▹ 149
   Caron Rollins
II ▶ PROVINCIAL LANDSCAPE

5  Alberta Government Publishing ▶ 185  
   Dani J. Pahulje

6  Saskatchewan Government Publications Deposit  
in the Legislative Library ▶ 221  
   Gregory Salmers

7  Inside Track: Challenges of Collecting, Accessing,  
and Preserving Ontario Government Publications ▶ 243  
   Sandra Craig and Martha Murphy

8  Digitization of Government Publications:  
A Review of the Ontario Digitization Initiative ▶ 259  
   Carol Perry, Brian Tobin, and Sam-chin Li
III ➤ LOOKING FORWARD: COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP

9  GALLOP Portal:
Making Government Publications in Legislative Libraries Findable ➤ 291
Peter Ellinger

10 The Canadian Government Information Digital Preservation Network:
A Collective Response to a National Crisis ➤ 307
Amanda Wakaruk and Steve Marks

11 Web Harvesting and Reporting Fugitive Government Materials:
Collaborative Stewardship of At-Risk Documents ➤ 327
Susan Paterson, Nicholas Worby, and Darlene Fichter

Contributors ➤ 357
Index ➤ 363
Abbreviations

ABC agency, board, and commission
ADLP Alberta Depository Library Program
ALA American Library Association
API application programming interface
APLI Association of Parliamentary Libraries in Canada
BANQ Bibliothèque et Archives nationales du Québec
BCLA British Columbia Library Association
CanLII Canadian Legal Information Institute
CARL Canadian Association of Research Libraries
CEAA Canadian Environmental Assessment Agency
CGI DPN Canadian Government Information Digital Preservation Network
CLA Canadian Library Association
COI commission of inquiry
COPPUL Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries
CPAC Cable Public Affairs Channel
DSP Depository Services Program
DSP-LAC Depository Services Program Library Advisory Committee
GALLOP Government and Legislative Libraries Online Publications
GC Government of Canada
GCPE Government of Canada Publications electronic collection
GCWA Government of Canada Web Archive
HTML hypertext markup language
IIPC International Internet Preservation Consortium
IRSSA Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement
ISBN International Standard Book Number
ISSN International Standard Serial Number
LAC Library and Archives Canada
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>LACEC</td>
<td>Library and Archives Canada electronic collection</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>LOCKSS</td>
<td>Lots of copies keep stuff safe</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MARC</td>
<td>Machine-readable cataloguing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>MM</td>
<td>Micromedia Proquest microform collections</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NCTR</td>
<td>National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>NEB</td>
<td>National Energy Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCR</td>
<td>Optical character recognition</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OCUl</td>
<td>Ontario Council of University Libraries</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>ODW</td>
<td>OurDigitalWorld</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OGLC</td>
<td>Ontario Government Libraries Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>OIC</td>
<td>Order-in-Council</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PCO</td>
<td>Privy Council Office</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDF</td>
<td>Portable document format</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PDS</td>
<td>Publishing and Depository Services Directorate</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PEILDO</td>
<td>Prince Edward Island Legislative Documents Online</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PLN</td>
<td>Private LOCKSS network</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>POR</td>
<td>Public opinion research</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>PWGSC</td>
<td>Public Works and Government Services Canada</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RCAP</td>
<td>Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>RSS</td>
<td>Rich Site Summary</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>SI</td>
<td>Statutory instrument</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TBS</td>
<td>Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TRC</td>
<td>Truth and Reconciliation Commission</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>TSB</td>
<td>Transportation Safety Board</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>URL</td>
<td>Uniform Resource Locator</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>UTL</td>
<td>University of Toronto Libraries</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Introduction

THE EVOLUTION OF GOVERNMENT INFORMATION SERVICES AND STEWARDSHIP IN CANADA

Amanda Wakaruk and Sam-chin Li

Government information is not something that most people think about until they need it or see it in a headline. Indeed, even then librarians, journalists, and intellectually curious citizens will rarely recognize or identify that the statistics needed to complete a report, or the scandal-breaking evidence behind a politician’s resignation, was sourced from taxpayer-funded publications and documents. Fewer people will likely appreciate the fact that access to government information is a requirement of a democratic society.

Government Information in Canada introduces the average librarian, journalist, researcher, and intellectually curious citizen to the often complex, rarely obvious, and sometimes elusive foundational element of a liberal democracy: publicly accessible government information. While our primary goal is to provide an overview of the state of access to Canadian government information in the late-twentieth and early-twenty-first centuries, we hope that this work will also encourage its readers to become more active in the government information community by contributing to government consultations and seeking out information that is produced by their governing bodies.
Like all information, government documents and publications are a product of a socio-political environment that is informed by those in control of the mechanisms of production. For example, the political leanings of the party in power shape the policies and practices of the government that produces, disseminates, and archives the output of its agencies. In Canada, government documents and publications are produced by numerous agencies at all three levels of government: federal, provincial, and municipal. Put simply, most practitioners consider documents to be information objects that are produced as part of the process of governing, and publications to be information objects produced primarily for the purpose of communicating something to an audience external to government (e.g., members of the public).

In practice, the category of information objects labelled “government documents” normally includes output such as the verbatim record of what is said in the House of Commons (i.e., House of Commons Debates) and reports generated by legislative committees, because these materials are produced as part of the process of governing. However, from the perspective of those working within Canadian legislatures, this output is often referred to as “government publications” because the objects in question are disseminated outside the author agency. To complicate matters further, the colloquial phrase government documents also rightly refers to a wide range of records and internal reports created by government agencies. Much of this material is subject to records retention protocols, and, in jurisdictions with such protocols, a selection of these records will be deposited in the relevant archival institution. When someone submits an access-to-information request, that person is requesting a specific document or set of documents from this body of works. Published materials (i.e., publications) are excluded from the provisions of federal access-to-information legislation as they have already been or will be disseminated to the public.¹

Inconsistent uses of these basic terms are not limited to practitioners. Official definitions of what constitutes a government publication and/or document vary between jurisdictions, and it is not uncommon for professors of government information in graduate-level library courses to begin them with a lecture on the nature of this problem and to clarify how the terms will be used within their own classroom.
This present volume of works is primarily interested in describing the production, dissemination, and stewardship of government publications in a broad sense. When the phrase government publication is used here, it refers to the group of materials that has been produced for the purposes of communicating to those outside government. It includes most maps, communication products, and a wide variety of monographic and serial works, including annual and statistical reports. Although we have chosen to maintain the traditional definitional dichotomy based on production to distinguish between document and publication (i.e., the purpose for which the object was created—governance or communication), there is a strong argument for recognizing broader definitions. Given that digital production allows for a convergence of dissemination paths, publications could be defined as anything that is shared (not necessarily produced) for public consumption. This, then, would include anything placed on a government website. The potential becomes readily apparent in the chapters that refer to the current and future role of web “archiving” programs, to use another evolving and problematic term in the information professions.

One of our goals is to document the state of government information in Canada at a point of transition. To help orient readers to today’s sub-discipline of librarianship, we offer four points that have been observed and learned over decades of working with government information in academic environments.  

1. Access to government information is the foundation of a functioning democracy and underpins informed citizen engagement. Government information allows us to assess our governing bodies — access that is required for a democracy to function.

2. Government information has enduring value. The work of countless academics and other experts is disseminated via government information. Government publications and documents are used by academics and social commentators in all areas of intellectual output, resulting in the production of books, reports, speeches, and so forth, which have shaped our society and understanding of the world. For example, the...
book that introduced the public to the science of climate change, *Silent Spring*, was full of references to government information; furthermore, legal scholars, lawyers, and judges use legislative documents to interpret and apply the law; journalists use government documents to inform the electorate about their governing bodies.

3. Government information is precarious and requires stewardship. The strongest system of stewardship for government information is one that operates in partnership with, and at arm’s length of, author agencies. Most content is digital, but this does not mean that it is posted and openly available online. Furthermore, content made available online does not necessarily remain accessible to the public.

4. Government publications and documents are different from most books, journals, and content born on the Internet. Government information does not fit into the traditional dissemination channels developed and simplified through customer feedback and the pursuit of higher profits. The agencies that produce government information are motivated by different factors than those of traditional publishers.

Traditionally, library collections of government information were produced in paper or micro-formats and, in Canada, organized by a provenance-based classification system called *codoc*. For much of the twentieth century this system segregated the collections, and the labour that was required to process and maintain them, from main or general library systems and holdings. While this approach benefited specialized searching and expert research (and produced separate indexes and catalogues), it resulted in a secondary and unintentional barrier to access. The government information librarian served as translator, mediator, and unfortunately at times as gatekeeper.

The widespread automation of library reference tools in the 1990s (especially card catalogues) allowed for the intellectual access points to government collections to be integrated into general library systems. In many cases this required time-consuming and labour-intensive reclassification projects. These important efforts resulted in subject access to
government publications, often for the first time. While the road has not always been straight or level, the integration of government print collections has largely followed. At the time of writing, only a few major academic institutions continued to maintain some type of segregated print collection of government materials. From a public service perspective, these changes often resulted in a confusing hybrid print collection, with some portion of the collection remaining in a provenance-based system of organization. Many academic librarians, in particular, found themselves in the new role of peer-educator, assisting and teaching often reluctant colleagues to provide basic reference services for manifestly different collections and users.

More broadly, many of the changes in contemporary libraries were preceded by technological innovations. In some ways, government information and its related services have served as a test case for the impacts of digitization and digital publishing on general library collections and services. Government publishers were some of the first to move to digital outputs. While this allowed for vast improvements in access to new publications, these documents and publications were also the first victims of technological obsolescence associated with digital files. Publishing and access improved without suitable or stable preservation and stewardship strategies in place. One long-standing case is that of *For Seven Generations* CD-ROM. This collection of research reports and transcripts submitted to the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) was published by Libraxus in 1997 and ran on a now-obsolete software application and operating system. In addition, confusion related to the copyright status of this collected work prevented librarians from making copies for researchers, which in practice created a situation where hundreds of RCAP research papers were essentially inaccessible for well over ten years.

New digital publishing policies were implemented by federal and provincial government agencies, seemingly without regard for preservation or stewardship of this new medium. As early as the mid-2000s librarians started noticing the loss of websites and web content. Today we know that much has been removed without official documentation. This is content that would have been produced in paper and been
subject to publishing policies that required dissemination to libraries across the country. Some of these deletions are related to the Common Look and Feel and Web Renewal initiatives, and other content losses can be associated with the staggering reduction of federal departmental library budgets that has occurred in the past three decades, but especially during 2012–13. While Library and Archives Canada (LAC) made repeated statements about the capture and retention of select web content between the years of 2002 and 2015, it was not until April 2016 that a publicly accessible collection of government web content was made available. Previously, a limited collection of content with considerable gaps left many consumers turning to the Internet Archive (an organization based in the United States) for access to historic Canadian government web content. This is unsurprising given the massive cuts to LAC between 2010 and 2014.

The reduction in government services supporting the production and access to government information directly affected all consumers of government information and especially public and academic librarians. Government information librarians were often left scrambling to assist users who would have otherwise benefited from the defunct programs. In the course of this work many librarians also became de facto informal auditors for content availability. This role was especially challenging given that no comprehensive, systematic listing of government works was available. It could also be politically sensitive, and it is not surprising that those most active in this area hold positions in institutions that recognize the need for academic freedom protections for librarians.

The collective response of the government information community to the changes in the nature and tenor of government publishing over the past thirty years has inspired the work you are reading. This collection strives to bridge a gap in the literature by bringing together a seminal group of contributors who have lived through the noted changes. Chapter authors include librarians working in academic, parliamentary, government, and legislative libraries across Canada, and many have decades of professional experience. We are especially fortunate to have government employees contributing to this work. Restrictions on freedom of expression (and, in many cases, intellectual freedom) were
severe under the Harper government’s years in power and under LAC’s Harper-appointed chief librarian and archivist, Daniel Caron, who attempted to implement policies that restricted the freedom of professional LAC employees.⁹

Part I, Historical Overviews

Historically, our Western democratic understanding of government information and its dissemination has been informed by the publishing of printed materials by or for author government agencies. In Canada this print-based system included federal agencies as the default publishers, the Depository Services Program of Canada (DSP) as the distributor, and depository libraries as the stewards and access points for this output. Related publishing policies were, and continue to be, established by the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat.¹⁰ In practice, it was the research libraries (LAC, academic, and legislative libraries) of the depository system that served as default preservationists of government information for the populace. Or, rather, these cultural-memory organizations maintained collections of what was distributed by the DSP. The DSP distributed publications that were provided to them by federal agencies, and the compliance rates for submission of print publications were variable at best.¹¹ Official publications not identified or distributed by the DSP are deemed “fugitive” documents or publications.

While the DSP was established in 1927, it was not until 1988 (following an extended review of the Task Group on Depository Program) that a library advisory committee was established as a vehicle for communication with government information stakeholders, a group that included practising librarians who were working with depository collections.

In the first chapter of this collection, “Government Publication Deposit Programs,” academic librarians Graeme Campbell, Michelle Lake, and Catherine McGoveran introduce and compare depository systems at both the federal and the provincial or territorial level. Once referred to as our nation’s information safety net, these programs are now adapting to changes in publishing formats, government policy, funding, and the progression of the open government movement. The chapter (including a DSP timeline) provides readers with a historical overview that
is essential to understanding the current tensions between government publishers and consumers.

As a full depository library, LAC receives all federal DSP shipments and lists but has a mandate for acquisition that, at the policy level, grants it the potential to cast a much wider net. In chapter 2 we are fortunate to be able to offer readers a ninety-year overview of the major legislative and policy instruments that have affected LAC’s work with government information. LAC manager Tom J. Smyth not only documents these governance instruments but also clarifies their influence on the stewardship role of our nation’s largest and most visible cultural heritage organization. This is demonstrated, in part, through sections dedicated to programs that are currently under his purview: LAC’s collection of official publications of the Government of Canada in digital format, web archiving activities, Royal Commissions and commissions of inquiry, and the federal Public Opinion Research collection.

The work of another highly visible but often misunderstood library, the Library of Parliament, is highlighted in chapter 3, “Parliamentary Information in Canada.” Academic librarian Talia Chung and Library of Parliament manager Maureen Martyn introduce readers to our nation’s less-than-intuitive parliamentary process, providing a clear road map for those navigating both the records and the tools that connect Canadians with their federal lawmakers. Chung and Martyn use a case-study approach, tracing the parliamentary treatment of gun control and providing readers with an accessible introduction for connecting with the federal legislative documents that ultimately define how we work and live in Canada.

Another rich source of cultural evidence in liberal democracies is the output of commissions and tribunals—initiatives by federal and provincial governments to address issues of importance to Canadians. In chapter 4, law and government publications librarian Caron Rollins defines the roles and responsibilities of these temporary but instrumental bodies, offering a clear picture of the effects of recent digital developments on the publication, dissemination, and preservation of related reports, submissions, and hearings.
Part II, Provincial Landscape

The second part of the book is dedicated to provincial practices, and reflects the regionalism that defines our nation. As noted elsewhere, government publishing in the Canadian provinces has historically been decentralized, with little coordination between departmental publishing bodies. Unfortunately, such inconsistencies continue to hamper those who manage provincial government information. While we were hopeful that more jurisdictions would be covered here, we are confident that the value of the chapters in this section will motivate practitioners to continue the conversation by preparing publications that address the government publishing and dissemination situations in British Columbia, Quebec, and the Maritime provinces.

Two provinces joined Canada in 1905: Alberta and Saskatchewan. As documented in chapters 5 and 6, the similarities between government publishing in these provinces might very well have begun and ended at that time. Astute readers will see the results of two very different political histories in these chapters. In “Alberta Government Publishing,” government publications librarian Dani J. Pahulje provides a historical overview of the Alberta government information landscape, including a thorough depiction of the drawbacks associated with a decentralized publishing and under-resourced distribution system and the exacerbation of these issues in a digital environment.

In the chapter that follows, a very different point of view provides an exceptional snapshot of the Saskatchewan government information experience. Gregory Salmers, a director with the Saskatchewan Legislative Library, offers a thoughtful case study of this organization’s role in the province’s publishing, depository, and access structure ecosystem. Salmers adeptly documents an issue of concern common to all jurisdictions: deposit compliance by author agencies. This chapter provides an examination of the Saskatchewan Legislation Library’s attempt to increase awareness of its legal deposit program among author departments. A role model for other jurisdictions, this library’s simultaneous efforts to increase deposit compliance and ensure the inclusion of digital government information (vis-à-vis tools like GALLoP, discussed in chapter 9) should be required reading for all library-school graduate students.

Introduction ◄ 21
Compliance issues are also addressed in chapter 7, focusing on Canada’s largest province, Ontario. Providing another unique perspective on the provincial government information system, library managers Sandra Craig and Martha Murphy, from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario and the Workplace Safety and Insurance Appeals Tribunal, respectively, expand on the challenges facing librarians in stewardship roles. Despite a deposit system operated by Publications Ontario, it is the Legislative Library’s work to establish and build on partnerships with provincial government libraries and legislative libraries across Canada, which has resulted in both digitization and digital repository projects that will enable access for the next generation of government information consumers. Indeed, it is these partnerships and collaborative models that will define success for government information stewardship in the future.

The Ontario Digitization Initiative brings together partners from university libraries, the provincial legislature, and non-profit organizations. Authors Carol Perry, Brian Tobin, and Sam-chin Li provide a careful case study for practitioners, covering topics like planning, metadata creation, copyright, and the navigation inherent in sharing resources and costs across a collaborative project. Chapter 8 also presents useful overviews of nationally important government digitization projects like the Sessional Papers of Canada and communicates the results of a 2013 survey related to digitization projects more broadly. The commitment by Ontario librarians to act as stewards and provide improved access to digital government publications is commendable.

**Part III, LOOKING FORWARD: COLLABORATIVE STEWARDSHIP**

To many outside the small and often fervent community of government information professionals, it might seem logical that the government itself should take responsibility for the organization and stewardship of its works. Historically, however, practices based on such assumptions have been fraught with complications. Commissions dating back to the 1890s called on our federal government to get its documentary house in order and to preserve the output of the state so that policy-makers
and residents alike might be able to meaningfully engage in their body politic. Unfortunately, these recommendations were never fully realized. As noted earlier in this introduction, we continue to live with the complicating impacts of political decisions on the stewardship of government information in this country. Another egregious example of this insecurity was the cancellation of the long-form census of Canada in 2011, providing evidence for the need to build and maintain arm’s-length systems of preservation and access for government information.\textsuperscript{14}

Canadian librarians are responding to and leading solutions for navigating the technological and policy changes and challenges experienced in the past decade. New collaborations and initiatives were formed to address the losses of the past and to chart a new path forward. The chapters in this section discuss important digitization and web archiving projects as well as award-winning collaborative services, and highlight the one thing that made these efforts both possible and successful: a commitment to working together.

Improved accessibility is key to the genesis of the Government and Legislative Libraries Online Publications (GALLoP) portal,\textsuperscript{15} an award-winning tool that enables users to search across the content of legislative libraries and the DSP catalogue. Contributed by Peter Ellinger, a lead on the project and manager at the Legislative Assembly of Ontario’s library, chapter 9 explores both the technological and the political realities of developing a project informed by interdependent collectors with a common goal. As all librarians know, standardization and consistency are key to reliable access.

The motivation and scope of the Canadian Government Information Digital Preservation Network (cGI DPN),\textsuperscript{16} like GALLoP, was informed by retractions in both funding and programs at LAC. Amanda Wakaruk and Steve Marks, both academic librarians, explore the context of this stressful period of government information management and stewardship in the penultimate chapter of this book. The award-winning\textsuperscript{17} collaborative service enabled a communal approach to the digital preservation of government information in Canada and provided practitioners with a forum for interrogating and implementing secondary projects, like those covered in the final chapter of this book.

\textit{Introduction} ∷ 23
Academic librarians Susan Paterson, Nicholas Worby, and Darlene Fichter provide an introduction to the web archiving of government information by practitioners working outside of government. Projects range from a focused harvest of the City of Toronto website to the more complicated and labour-intensive identification and harvesting of federal fugitive documents. The relationships being built between government and academic libraries in the pursuit of stewardship are the types of partnerships that will reinforce and enable access to government information in the future.

MOVING FORWARD

Libraries have adapted to changing formats for millennia. The transition from print to digital resources has had an impact on the entire communication cycle of government information, from producer to consumer. Part 1 of this book demonstrates the current and historical role of long-standing and official organizations in the Canadian government information ecosystem. While their value in our current environment is unquestionable and continuing, expectations held by non-governmental library practitioners often exceeded the ability of these organizations, which were grossly undervalued in the final decades of the twentieth century. For many years practitioners waited expectantly for the DSP (administered by the Treasury Board of Canada), LAC, and the Library of Parliament to step into leadership roles with the coordination of the output of federal institutions through long-promised services like the Open Government Portal and the still-to-be confirmed preservation programs. There was an assumption that these organizations would actively pursue and preserve government information on behalf of both practitioners and the general public.

The failure of the Government of Canada to deliver on open government commitments related to publications, to date, has been especially frustrating for librarians. Academic librarians patiently waited for a virtual library and/or open government portal that was first promised in 2012, and for the widespread assignment of an open government licence to government publications. Instead, the licence was applied to a scant couple of hundred publications, and librarians were often
refused permission to capture and redistribute born-digital government publications. As noted elsewhere, many of these publications were subsequently removed from government websites. More recently, references to making government publications open by default appear to have been directed to LAC and the DSP, the same organizations that were unable to prevent the previously mentioned losses of digital works.

The transition to digital government information created a gap in service at the federal level that is being filled by non-governmental actors and some provincial legislative libraries. Part 2 of this book highlights work undertaken by the legislative libraries of Saskatchewan and Ontario, where individuals have stepped into the breach created by LAC’s removal of provincial materials from its mandate. The exemplary compliance programs undertaken by the Saskatchewan Legislative Library and the collaborative efforts of the Ontario Legislative Library (with ServiceOntario Publications and the Ontario Council of University Libraries) serve as models for other jurisdictions. We hope to see more of this work, especially from other jurisdictions, documented in the library literature in the years to come.

Collaborative digital initiatives described by pioneering practitioners in part 3 of this book serve to secure access to government works in a new and changing environment. Many of these projects were only possible because librarians made unsupported interpretations of the terms of use and permissions associated with materials protected by Crown copyright. A rationale for assigning economic protections like copyright to works that were created to fulfill a government mandate is unclear. We strongly believe that government information should be in the public domain instead of restricted by antiquated legislative provisions. The barriers created by section 12 of the current Copyright Act have delayed digitization and web archiving projects that are intended to collect, preserve, and disseminate government information in this country, and such delays have resulted in the loss of innumerable documents and publications. Furthermore, this provision is in direct conflict with successive governments’ repeated commitments to the principles of open government.

Government information is now solidly digital, and librarians are adapting in order to continue their role as collectors, providers, and
preservationists and develop their role as observers and auditors. Like caring for the printed book, a social response is needed to make this happen. We need systems of communication and communities of practice in order to move forward. As seen in the case studies in part 3, this includes collaborative digitization and web harvesting projects, access tools, and preservation networks. It is worth noting that the results of these projects provide the only source of available federal government web content from December 2007 to September 2013, filling a gap in LAC’s collection. All of these resources were built on existing infrastructure, both social and technological, and informed by the socio-political environment in which we work.

Even as we move forward, unique traditional challenges remain. If the current levels of staffing and funding remain stable, it is doubtful that all government information produced in Canada will be digitized, treated for intellectual access, and preserved in a manner that will ensure its viability for the generations to come. The temptation to discard print versions upon producing a digital version is not only misguided but dangerous and offers no assurances for perpetual access. Likewise, the valuable but incomplete collections accumulated by commercial vendors are also unlikely to provide reliable perpetual access to government publications.

While political and partisan challenges will likely always be a part of working with government information, the technology used today is much more precarious than what preceded it and also much more dependent on intervention by arm’s-length stakeholders for its survival. It is no longer enough to catalogue and place a book in a climate-controlled environment. With paper, one could be fairly certain that a bit of light and an optical lens, bestowed on most of us by biological inheritance, would be enough to re-animate the work and to benefit from the information and knowledge contained within. Government reports produced today require intense technological intervention to ensure that multiple, stable copies are available in perpetuity and that relatively quick degradation is kept at bay. We do not know how information technologies or the governing systems that drive them will continue to evolve. In addition, it is sometimes difficult for those of us who were born into a democratic society to appreciate the fragility and
importance of access to government information, especially as it relates to government policy. Programs like the DSP and provisions enshrined in the Access to Information Act help government librarians outside of government agencies to continue to act as stewards for these works.

With the new complexities, uncertainties, and increasing volume of digital government information, collaboration is key to future stewardship of government information. In the past ten years we have witnessed an incredible resurgence in professional interest and energy in this area, as demonstrated by the overwhelming attendance and engaged participation at both the annual Government Information Day conference based in British Columbia, established in 1998, and the annual Ontario Government Information Day conference, established in 2013. In addition, it was a core group of dedicated government information librarians that reached out to managers at LAC when their web archiving activities were halted between 2008 and 2013. Working collaboratively, librarians at the University of Toronto and the University of Alberta captured content via Internet Archive’s Archive-It accounts that, combined with LAC’s web archive, provide Canadians with a more abundant cultural record. New leadership at LAC leaves us hopeful that this important cultural heritage institution will make space for transparent and collaborative stewardship partnerships that include academic and parliamentary libraries, and that the results of these projects will be openly accessible to everyone. We are also hopeful that the early-twenty-first century will mark the beginning of a stronger relationship between the governments of Canada, the public at large, and especially the group of librarians who chose to make enabling democracy through professional stewardship a part of, if not the driving force behind, their career contributions.
Notes

1. Canada, Access to Information Act, ss. 26, 68(a).
2. Adapted from Wakaruk, “Government Information Speaking Notes.”
3. The University of Toronto, Queen’s University, University of Ottawa, and Carleton University continue to maintain separate government print collections in addition to integrating government materials in their main print library collections.
4. codoc is one example of a provenance-based system organized by publishing agency, not by subject.
5. Only half of the respondents to Consulting and Audit Canada’s 2002 Management of Government Publications Survey reported that digital publications were managed to ensure long-term access (page v).
6. For more information about the RCAP case see other chapters in this volume dealing with commissions and tribunals and with the Canadian Government Information Digital Preservation Network.
9. See Groover, Contempt for Values; and Kandiuk, “The Rhetoric of Digitization and the Politicization of Canadian Heritage.”
10. For detailed information about the history of government policy relevant to information management, see Brown, “Coming to Terms with Information and Communications Technologies.”
11. Fewer than half of respondents to Consulting and Audit Canada’s 2002 Management of Government Publications Survey reported distributing publications to the Depository Services Program (page 24).
14. Implications of cancelling the long-form census in 2011 were the focus of a special issue of the Canadian Journal of Sociology, available at https://journals.library.ualberta.ca/cjs/index.php/CJS/issue/view/1362. The long-form census was reinstated in 2015 following a change in government.
Introduction


17. The Canadian Library Association honoured the **CGI DPN** with its 2015 **CLA/OCBC Award for Innovative Technology.** See http://cla.ca/cla-at-work/awards/claoclc-award-for-innovative-technology/ for more information about the award.


19. An open government licence for publications was listed as a foundational commitment in **Canada’s Action Plan on Open Government, 2012–2014.**

20. See Wakaruk, Personal Submission, **Copyright Act Review,** to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Industry, Science and Technology; and Wakaruk, “Heavy Is the Head That Wears the Crown (Copyright).”

21. See Li, “The Vanishing Act of Government Documents—And What to Do about It.”

22. See Freund and How, “Quagmire of Crown Copyright”; Wakaruk, “Canadian Crown Copyright Conundrum.”


24. See Jacobs, “What Are We to Keep?”

25. See https://govinfoday.ca/ and https://onesearch.library.utoronto.ca/government-information, respectively.

**Recommended Reading**


Bibliography


Introduction ▷ 31
Speech by BEIS Permanent Secretary Alex Chisholm at the Investment Association ‘Stewardship and governance’ conference.

We also use non-essential cookies to help us improve government digital services. Any data collected is anonymised. By continuing to use this site, you agree to our use of cookies. The Royal Canadian Navy (RCN) is tasked to provide maritime security along the Pacific, Atlantic and Arctic coasts of Canada, exercise Canada’s sovereignty over the Arctic archipelago, and support Canada’s multi-national and bilateral interests overseas. The RCN fleet comprises the Pacific Fleet at Canadian Forces Base (CFB) Esquimalt, and the Atlantic Fleet at CFB Halifax. CFB Esquimalt is located on Vancouver Island, in British Columbia, and is home to 15 vessels and 6,000 staff, the headquarters The Evolution of Canada’s International and Domestic Climate Policy From Divergence to Consistency? Silvia Maciunas and Géraud de Lassus Saint-Geniès. Canada in International Law at 150 and Beyond | Paper No. 21 April 2018. The Evolution of Canada’s International and Domestic Climate Policy: From Divergence to Consistency? Silvia Maciunas and Géraud de Lassus Saint-Geniès. CIGI Masthead. Printed in Canada on paper containing 100% post-consumer fibre and certified by the Forest Stewardship Council® and the Sustainable Forestry Initiative. Centre for International Governance Innovation and CIGI are registered trademarks. 67 Erb Street West Waterloo, ON, Canada N2L 6C2 www.cigionline.org.