

Debbie Schachter



## Spotlight on Good Works: BC Courthouse Library Society

The Notary Foundation of BC has recently provided a grant to the BC Courthouse Library Society (BCCLS) to assist in access to justice for the public throughout the province. This project involves providing new public-access computers in regional courthouse libraries.

The BC Courthouse Library Society manages 35 courthouse libraries throughout the province, with Vancouver as the provincial resources centre, six regional libraries, and 28 smaller local libraries. Through these physical locations, in addition to virtual service through a toll-free legal information service line and the Website, the Society provides free access to legal information assistance and materials to the entire province.

Access to the legal information materials includes traditional physical collections of texts, law reports, and legislation; more and more it involves providing access to electronic materials available as subscription-based resources as well as free Internet resources.

Access to electronic materials is becoming increasingly important throughout the province. With the proliferation of legal information resources available in a variety of electronic formats, BCCLS recognizes the significance of free electronic access to materials as an essential part of access to justice for the public.

Moreover, access to information and free legal services to the public has recently become more limited, due to the changes to funding of legal assistance programs throughout BC. Many people in the province are unable even to obtain access to the increasing number of free legal information resources available on the Internet, through lack of access to computers or Internet connections.

---

***Use of the  
computers and the  
resources on them is  
provided to all library  
users without charge.***

---

The recent grant made by The Notary Foundation to the BC Courthouse Library Society has provided for the placement of three additional public-access computer workstations in three of our larger regional libraries in BC: Kamloops, New Westminster, and Victoria.

These new computers increase the number of access points for members of the public and members of the legal community to obtain current and key legal resources and increase their ability to do legal research. Use of the computers and the resources on them is provided to all library users without charge.

The types of information freely available on these computers—through both ongoing paid subscriptions by the BCCLS and through the BCCLS Website—include:

- case law materials;
- statutes and regulations;
- legal journals;
- subject-based research guides directed at the public;
- links to other legal information organizations providing legal information;
- BCCLS catalogue of resources available in the 35 library locations; and
- Internet access.

Meeting the legal information needs of the public of BC is one of the primary service mandates for the BC Courthouse Library Society. BCCLS will continue to develop new methods of providing access to legal information and free information services to all users, regardless of their location in BC. ▲

**Debbie Schachter**, BA, MLS, MBA, is the Head of Strategic Planning and Development at the BC Courthouse Library Society where she is involved in organization-wide projects, marketing and communications, reference service, Website management, and branch supervision.

[www.bccls.bc.ca](http://www.bccls.bc.ca)