

What's **Traditional** *about* **Libraries?**

When you go back to pursue further education, what should you expect?

With the proliferation of online information, what has become of libraries?

The role of the library has not changed; the way the library goes about fulfilling that role has expanded enormously. If anything, the increase in available information makes libraries more necessary because, in the information traffic jam, libraries are the traffic directors.

This is the information age and the expectations of information seekers have risen exponentially. Not only do we expect more information, we expect to be able to find exactly what we need immediately and at no cost. But for many things, this just

isn't the case, especially when we are doing any kind of serious research.

The Library continues to be the gateway to all formats of information far beyond what is freely available on the Internet. Let's look at some of the realities of information on the Internet.

1. Not all information is available on the Internet. Though the Internet is vast, it is far from complete. Traditional sources that libraries house—books, periodicals, videos, tapes, and CDs—are for the most part not available on the Internet. Admittedly, sometimes they are but the choice is limited.

Librarians are trained to find those hidden resources.

2. Not all information on the Internet is available for free. Often, you diligently and victoriously track down what you need, only to find there is a cost associated if you actually want to read the article.
3. Not all information is easy to find on the Internet. The information you need may, indeed, be online but not in a format indexed by the search engines and therefore it is not readily available. Librarians are trained to find those hidden resources.
4. Publishers still need to make money if they are going to continue to publish. The majority of published material, even if available online, must be paid for, either by charging the user for individual items or through a licensed product.

Yes, the Internet does have its limitations. So, step into the library, either through the front doors or from your computer. Libraries now purchase licensed electronic products and offer many of their traditional resources online. Traditionally, libraries have paid for a print subscription, then allowed anyone to read the magazine. Now libraries subscribe to individual online magazines or to databases that house a multitude of subscriptions and, just as before, anyone can read these magazines, even from home.

As long as you are a member of the library, you have access to an unprecedented amount of published material—material simply not available on the Internet.

As well, many libraries have purchased electronic books (ebooks). You can access



Maureen Witney confers with Cap College student

Editor's

Thanks to Betty Honsinger, Manager of the Victoria office of Dye & Durham Inc., for writing the Manufactured Home Registry Update in our Winter 2004 issue. Betty is also President of the British Columbia Association of Professional Registry Agents.

Next Issue

Summer 2005

Allied Professionals: BC Lawyers



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Ralston Alexander, QC
2005 President of the Law Society of BC

Our focus on Allied Professionals continues, with articles on the Business of Law, City Solicitors, and more. Our Cover Story personality is Ralston Alexander, QC—his career, his goals, and his hobby! Of course, columns on a variety of timely topics are always part of our editorial mix.

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these from your library's catalogue, just as you would a printed book, but once you find the title, you can actually read the book online.

Most public libraries in the Lower Mainland provide access to both ebooks and online periodicals and databases. You can test-drive all these from home if you have an active membership. Go to <http://www.bcpl.gov.bc.ca/VRD/libraries/> for a list of British Columbia public libraries, then link to your public library to see what's available to you online. These are usually listed under "Electronic Resources" or a similar title.

If you are taking a course somewhere, find out what online resources are available to you as a student at that institution. Even if they are not required for your course, there may be a wealth of online resources you can use. Better yet, contact the library to ask what is available that best suits your needs.

Through a special agreement among public libraries, if you are a member of any public library in the Lower Mainland, you can become a member of any other public library. As with any collection, the larger the library, the more extensive the electronic resources will be. You might consider becoming a member of the Vancouver Public Library because it offers an extensive and varied array of subscriptions, databases, and online resources.

Perhaps you would be interested in the *Globe and Mail* back to 1844, *Business Week*, the *Economist*, the *New York Times*, or *Maclean's*. There is also a wealth of government information and statistics not released freely on the Internet.

Traditions continue. As they have always done, libraries provide access to an expansive array of resources that borrowers would not be able to afford individually. Some resources are only available in the library, but many you can access from your desktop. Discover what your library has for you. ▲

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