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Making Known a National Collection of News Media in Canada
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In 2002 two very important events occurred to heighten the awareness of newspapers and the news media in Canada. We celebrated the 250th anniversary of the oldest newspaper published in Canada and we held a national consultation on newspapers called *Canadian Newspapers online : a national consultation*. At first, these two events do not seem to be related. However, they both served to heighten Canadian awareness of a valuable print collection and the danger it is in as well as draw attention to the fact that we are in greater danger of not preserving for future generations what will be the news heritage of 2002.

In locating an issue of the *Halifax gazette*, published in Halifax Nova Scotia in 1752, we were very lucky. We had several good verified sources that told us where we could find the issue. We already had both a microfilmed copy and a reprint and through careful negotiations in 2002, we acquired not only the first issue published March 23, 1752 but also an almost complete run of the paper up until 1754. The history of this paper serves as an illustration of how history can take strange twists and turns.

The paper was published by a Bostonian and the early issues were returned to Boston in the 19th century in a folio to the Massachusetts Historical Society where they remained until the late 19th century when a newspaper editor from Yarmouth visited Boston and saw the newspaper. Up to that time, it was thought that the earliest newspaper in Canada was the *Quebec Gazette* published in 1764. In 2002, the Massachusetts Historical Society kindly made it possible for the National Library to acquire the copies from them, including the first issue. This is not an unusual story in the history of newspaper publishing in Canada. Out of the close to 20,000 newspapers published in Canada, the National Library has perhaps ¼ of these in any print form, usually the first issue or an issue published in the first year and of these, perhaps only ½ have been microfilmed in their entirety. This portion of Canada's newspaper heritage is the result of a decision to collect decentrally and to retain a representative portion of the Canadian press.

Canadian newspapers are not required on legal deposit although we do collect 10 representative dailies from across Canada since their original dates and we have over 18,000 volumes of newspapers collected and bound by the Library of Parliament who donated them to the National Library in 1967 when the new building was opened. We also try to collect first, last and special issues of Canadian newspapers as well as all ethnic Canadian titles, all titles published by aboriginal groups and all student newspapers. Our definition of a newspaper is somewhat narrower than many libraries use. Publications which are devoted to a specific subject, industry or interest; e.g. financial, industrial or military or magazine supplements, house organs, reviews, alumni publications and political, labour, religious and community publications printed monthly without news, editorials, features, ads or other matters of current interest are considered to be periodicals and are subject to legal deposit since 1952. As well, we have acquired long and complete runs of the pre-1952 periodicals. Nevertheless, we do rely on a very good network of interlibrary loan and communications as well as our online catalogue AMICUS which includes the updated *Union List of Canadian Newspapers* to allow us to locate newspapers, both in print and on microfilm, that we do not have. We are also different from many national libraries in that we have not had a retrospective or current microfilming program for newspapers. Since 1981, we have relied on a Decentralized Program for Canadian Newspapers whereby the ten provinces and now three territories of Canada are responsible for listing and filming their newspapers and the National Library of Canada then purchases a copy of the microfilm and lists it in the AMICUS.

We also provide standards for acquisitions, cataloguing and preservation of newspapers as well as purchase copies of the filmed newspapers as funds permit.

In 2002, when we highlighted the 250th anniversary, we were also increasingly aware of the limitations of collecting only the print and microfilmed newspaper. We extended legal deposit in 1993 to all CD-ROM's and in 1995 to all electronic publications on all types of physical formats. However, we were still missing the newspaper as it appeared in its many electronic versions on the web. In 2002, we decided to hold a national consultation on newspapers to try to answer such questions as what were the trends in e-papers, who was ensuring long-term access to Canadian newspapers in electronic format and what was the industry perspective and what role would it play? Eighty participants including provincial and academic librarians, newspaper publishers and newspaper electronic vendors met at the National Library a few days after the National Librarian and the National Archivist announced a decision to join the two institutions together to become the Library and Archives of Canada. This consultation became part of a movement to articulate a national strategy to strengthen access and preservation of Canadian newspaper and the news in Canada.

As one institution, we would be in even a better position to develop common goals such as good housing for current and future collections in all formats, making known all types of news in our collections ranging from print to broadcast news and from news histories to newspaper photographs and making these collections accessible to all Canadians and to all people interested in Canadian news. There was no one solution as a result of the consultation but there were a number of good issues raised and very strong concerns. Primary of concern was the need for a leader to establish a newspaper centre which could address on a more permanent and high-profile basis the strategies developed by the consultation participants, including legislation, standards, and preservation. It would lobby for funds, be a research centre of excellence, and develop digitization toolkits and other resources. The Centre would also promote the value of digital newspapers as a source of information for Canadian education, research and innovation at all levels and monitor newspaper access and preservation initiatives in other countries, including the goals and activities of the American working group on newspapers formed under the OCLC Digital and Preservation Co-op. There were also recommendations for other long-term strategies such as

- ensuring that comprehensive historical coverage was the goal for the preservation of currently-produced online newspaper content and for retrospective digitization of historical Canadian newspapers.
- Respecting the current complementary approach, whereby the private sector digitizes those Canadian dailies for which they see a market, and public-sector-based projects digitize newspapers of more local or limited reach.
- Strengthening the pan-Canadian coverage by developing a strong provincial approach, building upon and extending the scope of the original Decentralized Plan for Canadian Newspapers.
- Creating an inventory of all online newspapers and retrospective digitization projects, including those of libraries, historical societies, genealogical and other associations so that the full extent of gaps in coverage can be better known.
- Preparing an integrated, pan-Canadian strategy to address retrospective newspaper digitization. The focus should be on needs assessment, funding priorities, a business model, coordinated collaborative applications for funding, and a plan for funding the digitization of newspapers of limited or niche-market interest. Such a document would assist in the development of private/public sector partnerships.
- Funding a national strategy by compulsory legal deposit of electronic newspapers

- Preparing a business case for the digitization of Canadian newspapers and seeking government funding.
- Creating national technical standards by inventorying standards employed in current projects.
- Developing a set of recommended practices. For example, digitization projects in Canada should support, as a minimum, full-text keyword searching and the ability to view the original page image.
- Continuing to provide leadership in dialogue/discussions on technical standards, which should be vendor neutral to allow maximum interoperability.

Stakeholders agreed that unless new relationships are established, collections are at risk and a body of valuable Canadian digital content will be lost. The importance of partnerships and of complementary activity between private and public sectors was underlined, and meeting participants affirmed that sustained leadership from the Library and Archives of Canada was required.

In May 2003, the National Librarian and National Archivist announced the creation of a Centre for Newspapers and the News in Canada (provisional title) in order to address the challenges of preserving the newspaper collection and of ensuring improved access to the treasures of information contained therein and the appointment of Mary Jane Starr, former Director General of Communications, to manage and direct the development of the Centre. The vision for the Centre is that it would enhance public access to the content of Canadian news media, as well as public understanding of their impact and influence on Canadian life and that it would make the content of the national collection of news media easily accessible to all Canadians. The mission of the Newspaper Centre manager would be to make recommendations to the Librarian and Archivist of Canada on the organization of the Centre and on the definition of its objectives and appropriate strategies; develop partnerships and synergies within the new institution (genealogy, caricature, news reels, photographs etc.) which will permit the collection both a heightened profile and a better utilization; develop partnerships outside the institution with the industry, the professions, educational community, electronic newspaper sector and others as appropriate and desirable and plan the marketing and the promotion of the collection. In the spring of 2003 in conjunction with Phase 1 of the move to a new institution called the Library and Archives of Canada, a Working Group for the Centre began with the identification of the news media within the one LAC Collection. The identification process focused on significant collections, their provenance, characteristics, access and preservation. With this information in hand the Working Group developed a vision and the plans for the Centre in alignment with the strategic drivers of the new institution. This autumn, the Working Group concentrated on the functional model of the Centre, within the context of the Making Known component. Work involved identifying the core functions, the necessary supports, the crossovers with other areas of the institution, and the initial plans for the Centre's operation as of April 1, 2004. The Working Group's report to the Making Known component identified seven activities for the period January to March 2004. These seven activities are:

- * Developing a content strategy with special emphasis, in the first instance on the news media related to Aboriginal and cultural communities
- * Compiling a users' guide to news media at LAC based on an inventory of the collection
- * Planning for the collection move to the interim storage facility
- * Designing and populating the Web site with direct access to the digital editions of news media
- * Consulting with targeted stakeholders and clients
- * Developing the interpretation ('making known') plan
- * Proposing a product line of merchandise

It may seem strange to see newspaper preservation and access articulated in terms of a business plan but in Canada, cultural resources compete for the same taxpayer dollars as any other resource whether it is energy conservation, maintenance of a national sponsored free

health programme, funds for defence or employment strategies. Cultural communities such as the Library and Archives Canada have to prove to Canadians that the resources they require will be of benefit to all Canadians. It is not difficult to persuade an academic that it is absolutely necessary to have free full-text access to many Canadian daily newspapers in both official languages but if this access is already provided by the university, it is more difficult to convince the academic that all Canadians should have access to a resource such as this through the academic's increased tax dollar. It may be easy to persuade a publisher of a small ethnic newspaper that it would benefit future researchers to be able to look at his or her newspaper at the Library and Archives. It is more difficult to persuade this same publisher to make the paper accessible online currently and retrospectively to all Canadians through the electronic resources of the Library and Archives when this may effectively destroy all sales revenue and the basis of the newspaper's existence. In convincing people that funding is necessary to create adequate storage, preservation and access to print newspapers, electronic newspapers and broadcast news, we need to showcase these collections, provide truly national finding aids to what we have, embrace the digital news media by providing digitization on demand, place ourselves in a leadership role in providing educational programmes on Canadian news media and in the stewardship of news collections and develop navigational tools that match the client's needs for finding information through full-text searching of news media.

As institutions that care about our print heritage, it is our responsibility to share our problems and our solutions. We must work together to ensure that we make responsible decisions, that we communicate these decisions effectively and that we encourage participation from our researchers. We need to stop worrying about conserving everything and look at what we can conserve effectively. And we need to be informed about preservation methods and apply these appropriately. Most importantly, we need to become strong voices in the digital age and demand standards that will allow the news of 2003 to be as effectively conserved and accessible as the news of 1752.

ⁱ The above-listed recommendations are from *Canadian Newspapers Online: a national consultation toward a national strategy to strengthen access to Canadian newspapers online*. Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, October 7-8, 2002 available at:

<http://www.nlc-bnc.ca/8/3/r3-650-e.html>