

Canadian Digital Information Strategy
Web Comment Page
November 23, 2007

Linda Mackenzie
Director Research and Reference Libraries
Toronto Public Library

Thank you for the opportunity to provide feedback on the October 2007 Canadian Digital Information Strategy consultation draft.

Overall, the Toronto Public Library supports the Strategy's vision and scope. Further it agrees that the Strategy has identified the three broad challenges that must be addressed in order to achieve the vision: digital content creation, ensuring preservation and maximizing access.

Canada lags behind other countries in the development of digital strategies and programs. Strong, timely and effective leadership will be needed to successfully realize a Canadian digital information strategy. We agree that there is an urgent need to address these digital issues, and we believe that an ambitious time line with priority-identified milestones would be a successful way to both achieve some critical goals in the short term but also generate needed support, credibility and momentum in the public and private sectors, as well as with the public.

We noted the progress made in a number of areas, and would encourage further action in several priority areas: support for mass digitization; "orphan works" and public access; crown copyright; and, preservation of older content.

In terms of strengthening the Strategy, we would like to have seen specific policy development actions identified for a fair use approach to digitization and public use overall, and the digitization of "orphan works" which continue to remain inaccessible because the creator cannot be located. An early move to a more open interpretation of Crown copyright would also be welcome. New workplace skills development is an issue across the three objectives/challenges -content creation, preservation and access that could also be an early focus.

We would also urge that the vision not be compromised by a concentrated focus on technology and infrastructure development to the detriment of other elements. All aspects will need to be considered and developed to deliver fully on the strategy.

We look forward to seeing the final version of this strategy with its key implementation actions. The Library would welcome opportunities to support this important work and would be pleased to hear of areas where our involvement might be of benefit.

Linda Mackenzie
Director Research and Reference Libraries Toronto Public Library