Library Launches Campaign for Information and Learning Commons

THE CASE – for the Information and Learning Commons at Ryerson University Library

Libraries across North America have been changing to reflect the impact of digital information on their operations. Given these changes, spaces, sometimes called Information or Learning Commons, are being constructed or reconfigured by university libraries to ensure the effective delivery of digital information in a variety of formats and to provide related support services to students and faculty in their use of electronic information. In many instances, the development and maintenance of these facilities are based on collaborative approaches that draw on the expertise and resources of libraries, computing centres, and a range of services designed to support faculty research and teaching and student success. Major Commons sites in Canada include the Scotiabank Information Commons at the University of Toronto, the Dalhousie Learning Commons at Dalhousie University, and Seneca@York, a joint project of Seneca College and York University.

An Information Commons is not just a computer lab in the Library! The CASE for an Information and Learning Commons at Ryerson looks at four key elements – Content, Access, Space and Expertise – that will provide the foundation for the development of a Commons at Ryerson.

CONTENT – Investing in Information

All the technology in the world is of no value unless it provides access to a rich depth of content, the scholarly record of publication upon which sound teaching and research are based. The job of librarians is to identify, evaluate, acquire and make accessible this wealth of scholarly information. The Ryerson Library expends over $1 million annually to acquire digital resources – including e-books, e-journals, citation and numeric databases, government and scholarly publications, maps, sound files and images. The Information and Learning Commons, populated with several hundred computer workstations linked to the University's gigabit backbone, will provide a venue in which the effective retrieval and delivery of this rich depth of content is assured.

ACCESS – Providing a Link to Resources and Services

Access to information, access to technology, and access to related support services are central to teaching, learning and research in today's university. Web-based navigational tools and instruction provided by library staff will ensure that Ryerson students and faculty are able to identify and retrieve relevant sources of information. Interlibrary loan and document delivery services will provide users with content extending beyond the boundaries – physical and electronic – of the Ryerson Library.

Librarians from universities across Ontario are working together to create uniform modes of access to the wide array of electronic resources offered. For example, Scholarsportal

While not the actual plan, this architectural rendering by Sterling Finlayson Architects hints at the possibilities of what the Information and Learning Commons could be.

(http://www.library.utoronto.ca/scholarsportal/) is a collaborative project of the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) that provides a common search interface to journals from several publishers. Partially funded by the Ontario Innovation Trust, Scholarsportal brings together a growing number of scholarly digital resources. It currently provides access to the full text of over 3,203 journals published by Academic

Continued on page 2

RYERSON LIBRARY

Press, Elsevier Science, Kluwer Academic Publishers, Kluwer Law, Kluwer/Plenum, Springer/Verlag and Wiley. Another component of Scholarsportal is the Virtual Union Catalogue (Racer), which provides access to all Ontario university library collections through a single search point (described in more detail on p. 5).

The Library will explore opportunities with several campus groups and organizations to ensure that the range of services the Commons delivers will meet the information and instructional needs of students and faculty who use the Commons' resources. This proposed sharing of space and pooling of expertise will ensure seamless referral to appropriate individuals, groups and services based in the Commons.

SPACE – Building for the Future

Establishing an Information and Learning Commons in the Ryerson Library represents an opportunity to create a new and more visible gateway to the Library's resources and services and to the Ryerson campus. Situated at the top of Victoria Street, just steps from the Ryerson Parking Garage and the Dundas Subway Station, the Ryerson Library is at the crossroads of most pedestrian and vehicular traffic entering campus. Given this prominent location on the Ryerson campus, the Information and Learning Commons will provide a showcase for Ryerson's investment in digital resources and information technology generally.

The Information and Learning Commons will provide a common, convenient, and accessible location for the delivery of services that support teaching, learning, and research at Ryerson. Open lengthy hours and navigable to persons with special needs, the Commons will offer students and faculty technology-ready spaces configured to accommodate individual study and group work. Areas will also be provided to accommodate seminar and classroom-based instruction by Library staff.

EXPERTISE – Supporting the Curriculum Through Information Literacy

Ryerson's librarians are information professionals who direct the selection and organization of information appropriate to the needs of the University's curriculum. Their efforts ensure that information resources are available to support research undertak-

en by Ryerson faculty and students. This ability to select and organize information is reflected both in the Library's catalogue and in its Web site. The latter includes over forty subject guides to Library and Internet-based information sources. These guides or portals demonstrate the Library's ability to filter and repackage the phenomenal volume of information on the Internet to meet the needs of students and faculty.

The selection and organization of information are augmented by a multifaceted program of instruction offered by the Library. Working collaboratively with faculty, Ryerson's librarians have developed formal and informal approaches to teach program appropriate "information literacy" – the ability to understand an information need and to then identify, retrieve, and evaluate relevant sources of information to meet that need. Students who can become critical information consumers in this way can improve the quality of their academic work and acquire skills that will enable them to succeed in the workplace.

The Information and Learning Commons will provide the environment and facilities necessary to ensuring that the organization of information and the delivery of instruction undertaken by Ryerson's librarians address the information needs of Ryerson's students. Classrooms equipped with presentation technology, wired seminar rooms, and clusters of networked computer workstations will be available to ensure the delivery of formal and informal instruction by librarians.

INVESTING IN THE COMMON GOOD

Realizing the Library's vision of the Commons will require a significant commitment of resources on the part of the University. As one of the key initiatives in the Technological and Electronic Advancement component of the University's Invest in Futures campaign, the Commons initiative is seeking $4 million in funding. Making a contribution to this initiative will enable Ryerson to be in the vanguard of innovation by helping its students to realize their potential in a knowledge-based economy.

A more detailed version of the CASE (currently under revision) is available on the Library's Web site at: http://www.ryerson.ca/library/commons

If you have questions about the CASE or the Commons proposal generally, please contact Cathy Matthews at 416-979-5142, cmatthew@ryerson.ca

Olé OLA: Ontario Library Association Conference

Ryerson librarians played a significant role in the outstanding success of the 2003 Ontario Library Association Conference. Held at the Metro Toronto Convention Centre from January 29th to February 1st this year, the OLA annual "Super" Conference is the largest library conference in Canada, and attracted over 3500 information professionals from across the continent to over 300 sessions, plenaries and events.

Don Kinder co-coordinated and planned the overall conference for the Ontario Library Association and will continue to serve in this role for the 2004 Conference next January.

Brian Cameron co-presented a session entitled "The Impact of Impact Factors", a critical look at how Citation Index databases are compiled and used and the subsequent implications on scholarship and academic publishing.

Diane Granfield co-presented a session entitled: "Collaborative Virtual Reference Services: The Future of VR", which examined the Ryerson Library's Internet-based "chat" reference service and its joint venture with the University of Guelph Library and York University Library to offer expanded, "outside the box" reference service to the university community.

Suzette Giles co-presented a session entitled: "GIS and Digital Map Reference for Non-Map Librarians", which explored the potential of geospatial and digital map data products for reference, research and teaching applications. Sue also convened the session: "Get Familiar with Canada!" an examination of the 2001 Census Canada information currently available.

Daniel Phelan convened the session "Blogapalooza: The Social Life of Blogs", which focused on Web logs and their potential use in libraries.

Trina Grover convened the session "Making Television and Making History: Behind the Scenes at Canada: A People's History", by Ryerson Journalism professor and producer of the series, Gene Allen.

Susan Patrick convened the session: "How to overcome the obstacles in the way of creating open access archives", a look at the reform of scholarly publishing in the wake of the Budapest Open Access Initiative.

AT RYERSON,
archival means vital

When Brian Segal was President of Ryerson in the 1980s, his office contacted the University Archives in the hope of finding critical information for proposed changes to the Ryerson Act — another step on the road to Ryerson's eventual designation as full-fledged university. Thanks to a solid collection and the Archives' long-standing focus on vital records (including records at the senior management level), pertinent records were found and the query satisfactorily answered.

The Archives' collection policies have been successful in developing holdings which have served the Ryerson Community well. Archival sources have proved invaluable and, in many cases indispensable, in such diverse activities as course-related student assignments, fundraising campaigns, and even the University's day-to-day administrative and academic business. The University is fortunate to have had in place a solid framework for a records management program, although it has lacked the resources for its full implementation.

For every successful story of records custodianship, however, there are many with less fortunate endings. Indeed, as Canada's National Archivist lamented several years ago, poor records-keeping, more than ever, threatens our national memory and our ability to bequeath information to future generations.

The challenge of digital records-keeping

A growing and related challenge — both at Ryerson and in other organizations — is the handling and management of electronic, digital and media-related records and information. One of the pressing issues for institutions is how to deal with a growing and overwhelming quantity of information in the face of what appears to be a corresponding decrease in the durability and compatibility of systems and media to store this information.

Indeed, examples of the loss of information due to obsolete technology are numerous and well-documented. In the United States, for instance, 20% of the voluminous data generated by NASA's 1976 Viking mission to Mars can no longer be read. Prisoner records from the Vietnam War are inaccessible due to archaic computer systems. And 200,000 documents and images transferred in the 1980s onto optical disks (the cutting edge of new technology at the time) may not be playable today.

Obsolescent technology

At Ryerson, the Archives has experienced first-hand the problems of technological obsolescence and the difficulties in preserving related information and records. This is perhaps best illustrated by the acquisition, some years ago, of an early videotape of a 1960s Ryerson hockey game, which could not be played because the last suitable machine had been discarded two years earlier. (Only the National Archives in Ottawa had workable equipment capable of accommodating the tape.) Similar problems are on the rise today, as more and more departments are producing digital information — sometimes exclusively — in formats and technologies which may not be suitable for long- term preservation.

In a modest attempt to stem the tide of digital and technological obsolescence, the Archives has recently undertaken two initiatives. One is the conversion, to DVD format, of a collection of 225 3/4-inch videotapes produced by the former Ryerson Media Centre which can no longer be played on reliable equipment. With the generous assistance of the Rogers Communications Centre, and with the Library's own resources, they will be digitally transferred to a more stable and long-lasting medium.

The second initiative is the addition of a special section to the Archives and Records Management official Policy-Procedure (no. 1-441), which has been recently updated and should be available shortly. Entitled Digital and Electronic Records, it offers individuals and departments basic guidelines on the retention and disposition of: e-mail; word processed documents; databases and Web sites; data migration; the documentation of systems and formats; and the selective preservation of various generations of hardware and software. A preliminary copy is available on the Archives Web site at www.library.ryerson.ca/archives. Although by no means definitive, this document may also encourage the University to consider and examine the larger context of its record-keeping practices — with its many attendant issues and complexities — in order to help it manage its records more effectively and preserve information which is vital to its mission and operation.

Claude Doucet, *Ryerson Archivist*

www.library.ryerson.ca/archives

Focus on Students

Dialing for Dollars

Dialing for Dollars students: Left to right: Merrick McKay, Ryda Parry, Andre Cherrie with Greer Hospedales and Jill Berry.

A big thank you to the "Dialing for Dollars" students. During the past year, approximately sixty Ryerson students, typically working in two three-hour shifts a week in a computer lab, made phone call to students' parents for the Ryerson Annual Fund Campaign, which supports a number of areas in the university. Through their hard work, the students raised a significant amount for the University (from May 2002 – April 2003, over $200,000), with more than 90% of the pledges from parents designated for the Library.

Shelvers move "half the Library"
And another big thanks to our student shelvers. Twenty-nine Ryerson students were employed part-time by the Library during Fall and Winter terms, working over 3300 hours, and shelving, along with our five full-time shelvers, a total of more than 260,000 items – the equivalent of shelving more than half the Library collection! Well done all.

Library appreciates students
Ryerson Library was among the sponsors of the second annual Students Appreciation Day on February 19, an event initiated by CESAR and RYESAC to give students a lift in the mid-Winter. The main event took place in the Credit Union Lounge in Jorgenson Hall, where students were given treats like candy, pop, lanyards, mugs, etc. A roster of librarian volunteers represented the Library throughout the day, demonstrating the Library Web site and our electronic resources (and actually helping some students with research for assignments.) In the lounge, as well as in the reference area of the Library, we gave away candies and Ryerson Library pens to our students. The Library also participated in the draw for over 300 prizes, donating a ring-binder book tote to the gift array. Student comments about the event: "Awesome!", "I feel appreciated!", "Thanks for the great event!"

Project Facs: contributing to student life
The Library helps contribute to the quality of student life at Ryerson in part by providing recreational music and videos. Thanks to funding of $2,000 from Project-Facs (Project Funding Allocations Committee for Students), this year the Library was able to purchase 32 music CDs, and 13 feature film DVDs for students' enjoyment, as well as a DVD player, a VHS player and 10 headphones to enhance students' access to the AV collection.
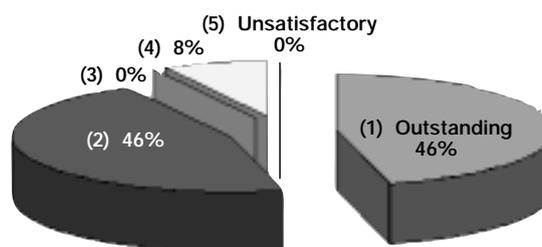
Library News

Library's Free Document Delivery Service Extended
A recent users' survey (results to be published later) indicates a high level of satisfaction with CISTISource, our fully-subsidized "self-serve" document delivery service for faculty and graduate students. This service will now be expanded to include Research Assistants and 4th year students.
See http://www.ryerson.ca/library/info/cisti.html for details.

**Ryerson University Library CISTI Source User Survey:
Rating Overall Satisfaction and Document Delivery**

(5) Unsatisfactory 0%
(4) 8%
(3) 0%
(2) 46%
(1) Outstanding 46%

Staff Notes

Jadwiga Kiebalo is now the collections assitant … responsible for donations to the Library collection. Helene De Souza will be the new Serials assistant, replacing Jadwiga who previously held that position.

And, between the receipt of this issue and the next one, long time employee Adrian Bevis of Audio Visual Services will be retiring. We wish Adrian well! Stop by to do the same when you are next in the Library!

What's in a name?

Henceforth, our building at the corner of Victoria and Gould, formerly called the LRC – Learning Resources Centre, will be known officially as the Library! We would like to remind all members of the Ryerson community that all publications, course outlines, brochures, Web sites or directions should refer now to the Library building. Room numbers will begin with the three-letter identifier LIB, as in LIB282.

RACER

(Rapid Access to Collections by Electronic Requesting)

Users can search simultaneously and in real-time the holdings of all Ontario university libraries and selected world catalogues.

Beginning in Fall 2003, Ryerson faculty and students will have access to RACER, a brand new interlibrary loan system, which provides "Rapid Access to Collections by Electronic Requesting". RACER is the Ontario Council of University Libraries' (OCUL) latest resource-sharing project, implementing a state-of-the-art ILL management system called VDX (Virtual Document eXchange), a product selected by academic and public libraries such as the National Libraries of Australia and New Zealand, the University of California Libraries, Ohio Public Library Information Network (OPLIN), and the Southern Ontario Library Service (SOLS). Users can search simultaneously and in real-time the holdings of all Ontario university libraries and selected world catalogues, and then instantly submit an interlibrary loan request to the Ryerson Library's ILL department, without having to re-key the bibliographic details derived from the search. Users will be able to monitor the progress of their requests and receive e-mail notifications of items received.

For a preview of the searching function, visit the Library Web page at http://www.library.ryerson.ca/libcat.html and select "OCUL Virtual Union Catalogue (Racer)" or directly access the RACER Web site at http://racer.scholarsportal.info/. Choose the "bibsearch" option to search across your selection of library catalogues. The ILL component, which requires user registration and log-in, will be available later in the year.

Speaking of the
LIBRARY

Presentations by Librarians at Ryerson's 12th Annual May Conference, May 14 and 15.

Ophelia Cheung and **Lucina Fraser**, librarians from the recently formed Borrower Services team: poster session: "One-stop inter-library loan: the RACER system and CISTISource direct ordering."

Maps, Data and GIS Librarian **Suzette Giles** and Systems Librarian **Sally Wilson**: two different workshops, "Finding the hidden treasure in Canadian survey data!" and "Census 2001 — finding what you want." Also, **Suzette Giles** with **Susan Laskin**, **Elizabeth Carlson**, and **Stephen Swales** from the Department of Geography, the workshop "Get more from your data — map them"

Librarian **Richard Malinski**, along with **Sandra Dicresce** from Human Resources, both of whom have taught organizational behaviour in class and via the Internet: "Online learning — from 'sage on the stage' to 'guide on the side' — facilitating the online learning experience for our students."

Librarians **Zita Murphy** and **Susan Patrick**: "Web to you: featuring the latest in electronic resources in the Ryerson Library."

Nexus
CONTRIBUTERS

www.library.ryerson.ca

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