



Canadian Association of Research Libraries

Association des bibliothèques de recherche du Canada

The Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) – www.carl-abrc.ca – 613-482-9344 – info@carl-abrc.ca

CARL, “the leadership organization for the Canadian research library community,” includes as members the 29 larger university libraries in Canada and three major federal library institutions (Library and Archives Canada, the Canada Institute for Scientific and Technical Information, and the Library of Parliament).

In general, CARL provides a forum for discussion (in both English and French) among the directors of its member libraries, coordinates joint projects of the member libraries, and advocates on behalf of Canada’s research libraries in the interests of research and higher education. It should be noted that our national institution members do not participate in the advocacy work of CARL. The representatives of the CARL member libraries are normally the library directors, but others, e.g., associate university librarians or subject experts, participate in CARL committees and project work.

The association is governed by an elected Board of Directors of six member library directors. All Board terms are two-years in length; the Vice-President automatically becomes President (currently Tom Hickerson, University of Calgary). Operations of the association are managed by an Executive Director, Brent Roe, since 2008, a librarian by profession.

CARL is based in Ottawa since it interacts with both the federal government and other national organizations with interests in libraries, research and higher education. CARL’s staff of five currently works in a downtown Ottawa office shared with the Association of Universities and Colleges of Canada, of which CARL is an associate member.

CARL holds two general membership meetings each year, the spring meeting being held in a different member city each year and the fall meeting in Ottawa. The Board of Directors and most committees also meet in person at these times, but there are also conference calls and listservs that support communication with and among members.

The largest 18 CARL member libraries are also members of the (US-based) Association of Research Libraries (ARL), with which CARL works closely, so the directors of those libraries also meet and network in the context of ARL membership meetings and committee activities. CARL also maintains frequent contact with the four regional university library consortia in Canada (COPPUL, OCUL, CREPUQ, CAUL), of which all CARL university library members are members.

CARL’s activities are guided by a strategic plan, the most recent covering the years 2010-2012. The strategic directions identified in the current plan broadly concern scholarly communication (giving particular focus to open access archiving and publishing, digitization, research data management, and legacy and special collections), public policy (focusing especially on copyright, research policy and funding, Internet access and privacy, our national libraries) and the research library (promoting the role of the library in campus research and teaching, demonstration of value through measurement, development of library human resources, and learning from the experience of other libraries).

Over the last year, important projects have been the planning and promotion of a national collaborative infrastructure for the archiving and making available of research data, the creation of a librarian research institute (to take place in June 2012), and the development and promotion of positions around copyright legislation.



CARL also organized a study tour to China for member library directors, visiting university and national research libraries in Hong Kong, Shanghai and Beijing. As the then-incoming President of IFLA (International Federation of Library Associations) is a CARL library director (Ingrid Parent, UBC), CARL worked with other Canadian library organizations to showcase the library activities in Canada through a joint exhibit booth and a networking reception, both at the IFLA conference in Puerto Rico. In 2012, CARL will be organizing a stream of conference sessions at the Canadian Library Association (CLA) conference in Winnipeg (Karen Adams, University of Manitoba, the current President of CLA, is a CARL library director).

CARL provides a number of regular services for its member libraries, including a library statistics collection and management service and coordination of LibQUAL+ Canada; preparation of a weekly e-mail alert of reports, articles, and events of relevance to research libraries; responses on members' collective behalf to federal government consultations; a program of letters, briefs and visits to government officials; support for institutional repository development and promotion of member OA activities; a program of librarian research grants and special achievement awards; resources for sponsoring of member-promoted events consistent with association aims; production of awareness brochures, a website (a new version appearing soon), annual reports and statistical reports; etc.

Some CARL projects have developed into separate ongoing enterprises. The CARL-developed Canadian National Site Licensing Project, begun in 1996 for negotiation of e-content licensing on behalf of most Canadian universities was incorporated as the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) in 2001. The 2006 CARL-originated AlouetteCanada project for the discovery and coordination of digitization projects across Canadian memory institutions, merged with Canadiana.org (formerly CIHM), an earlier CARL-originated microfilming/digitization organization to form a new Canadiana.org, incorporated in 2008.