Opening the Book:

A Strategy for a National Network for Equitable Library Service for Canadians with Print Disabilities

By Canadian Library Association,
Working Group to Define a National Network for Equitable Library Service

Ottawa, Canada
September 2005

"Let's Go to the Library!"

Magic words to a seven-year-old child who had just been introduced to the Public Library in Calgary, Alberta. Every Saturday afternoon in the spring of 1929, my Dad and I walked to the Carnegie Library. Those visits established a lifelong habit.

Today, I go to a Library with my 'walker' where the door opens automatically for me to enter the magical world of words. Once inside, I can choose from an excellent collection of large print and talking books. The horizon is widened with access to the computer via the text enlarging software, with a scanner that enlarges the print, and copies that can be made of any information I want to keep. Headphones enable me to listen as the computer reads the text to me.

I realize that I am very fortunate to live in an area that provides such excellent service for persons with disabilities. However, not everyone is able to live within a serviced area and it is for those people that I appeal for equality of service and access to public library services to ensure that all Canadians can answer the call "**Let's go to the library!"**

Elinor Hodgson
Vineland, Ontario
April 25, 2005

Letter of Transmittal

Ottawa, September 6, 2005

Ms. Barbara Clubb,
President, Canadian Library Association

Dear Ms. Clubb,

As Chair of your Working Group to Define a National Network for Equitable Library Service, I take pleasure in presenting you with our report *Opening the Book : A Strategy for a National Network for Equitable Library Service for Canadians with Print Disabilities*.

During the consultation process which helped to develop this strategy, a number of different models were suggested. The Working Group gave careful consideration to all contributions. We were charged with developing a vision for a library service network and with developing a plan to get there. Our plan recognizes the current realities of Canadian copyright law and the availability of resources. We recognize, however, that the longer term goal is for a mainstream library service which ensures that information is accessible to everyone. We believe that our recommended strategy places us on the road to reaching this longer term goal.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank the members of the Working Group, named on the following page, for their dedicated and tireless work over the past sixteen months. Many others gave of their time and energy to help the Working Group develop this strategy for which we are extremely grateful. In particular, I would be remiss if I did not recognize the significant contributions to the form and content of this report that were made by Jane Beaumont, Beaumont and Associates Inc. and Trisha Lucy, Library and Archives Canada.

Yours respectfully,

Ralph W. Manning
Chair

cc. Mr. Don Butcher
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Definitions

AMICUS   Library and Archives Canada's national union catalogue which lists the holdings of libraries across Canada, including materials in alternative format materials
BC   British Columbia
BNQ   Bibliothèque nationale du Québec
CAER   Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Formats
CANWIP   Canadian Works in Progress
CCTV   closed circuit television
CD   compact disk
CEO   Chief Executive Officer
CLA   Canadian Library Association
CLF   Common Look and Feel
CNIB   Canadian National Institute for the Blind
CNIB Library Canadian National Institute for the Blind Library for the Blind
Council   Council on Access for Information for Print-Disabled Canadians
DAISY   digital accessible information system
DHS   digital handling system
IFLA   International Federation of Library Associations
INLB   Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille
LAC   Library and Archives Canada
NIMAS   National Instructional Material Standards
NISO   National Information Standards Organization
NLS   National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Disabled (Library of Congress)
Network   National Network for Equitable Library Service for Canadians with Print Disabilities
OCR   optical character recognition
SQLA   Service québécois de livre adapte
UN   United Nations
UNESCO   United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization
Working Group Canadian Library Association Working Group to Define a National Network for Equitable Library Service
XML   extensible markup language

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Executive Summary

The Challenge

We live in a networked society characterized by the exchange of information to a degree that is unprecedented in human history. It is universally accepted that access to information has become a decisive determinant of an individual's ability to participate in and contribute to society. And yet the stark reality is that one out of every ten Canadians is excluded from full participation in this new economy because of a print disability. Put another way, Canada is the poorer because it is missing out on potential contributions from up to 10% of its people.

Print disabilities are impairments that prevent people from reading standard print due to a visual, perceptual or physical disability. Such a disability may be the result of vision impairment, a learning disability, or a disability that prevents the physical holding of a book.

According to the 1991 Statistics Canada *Health and Activity Limitations Survey*, there are three million Canadians who are print disabled. Blindness, cognitive disabilities, or physical impairments affect every age group and every part of Canadian society. At the same time, it is not surprising that a significant proportion of those with print disabilities are seniors. Given the absolute numbers involved and the extent to which they permeate our society, it is likely that most Canadians know at least one or two individuals with a print disability, whether that disability is apparent or not.

What is more, it is also likely that as Canadians age, a significant and growing number of them will eventually have a print disability. As life expectancy increases, it is estimated that by the year 2026, one out of five Canadians will be a senior, and fully one quarter of that number will be blind or experience reduced vision.

An Imperative to Act

The prevalence of print disabilities throughout Canadian society argues for immediate and effective action. Indeed, the case for action consists of a series of clear imperatives:

The economic imperative: In today's highly competitive global economy, Canada simply cannot afford to forego potential input from one tenth of its population. If persons with print disabilities were given the means of full participation in the information economy, Canada's national productivity would benefit from the contribution of this newly realized asset. Canada would tap into a huge reservoir of potential that could enrich our society with new ideas and new interactions.

The legal imperative: The equality provisions in both Canada's domestic laws and in its international undertakings mean that we are obligated to act. Section 15.1 of the *Canadian*

Charter of Rights and Freedoms explicitly states that "Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability". The *Constitution Act* of 1982 states that every Canadian is equal before the law, has equal protection of the law, and equal benefit of the law without discrimination. The *Canadian Human Rights Act*, as amended in 1998, builds on this by making it a legal requirement for employers and service providers to accommodate persons with disabilities if doing so does not cause undue hardship. Internationally, Canada is a co-signatory of the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* of which Article 19 includes the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers." Provincial and territorial human rights legislation prohibits discrimination against persons with disabilities. Taken together, these and numerous other undertakings argue for measures that would give persons with print disabilities equal access to information not just as a social preference but as a matter of legal obligation.

Moral imperative: Providing access to information for persons with print disabilities speaks to the kind of a society we are. By ending the isolation of persons with print disabilities, Canadians would finally make good on two decades of promises to act.

Ultimately, what makes the need to act even more compelling is the simple fact that technological evolution has now made it far easier to help persons with print disabilities. Those who are blind can benefit from books in alternative formats such as braille, audio large print, electronic books and online books, delivered over computers, the Internet or on increasingly popular personal playback devices such as MP3 players. Large screen computer displays can provide access for people with reduced vision. Individuals with reduced mobility can access materials over the Internet. Those with other physical disabilities can benefit from a wide range of assistive technologies. As a result, there really is no excuse for inaction.

Proposed Actions

A review of best practices in Scandinavia and the United States suggests that successful action depends not only on appropriate levels of funding, but also on articulating a clear national vision, coordinating the activities of numerous stakeholders by setting standards and forging partnerships, focusing on production of materials in alternative formats, and exploiting the opportunities for broad-scale dissemination that today's technologies make possible. In such environments, public libraries play a vital role in connecting citizens with print disabilities to the service. Moreover, all persons with print disabilities are eligible for service, regardless of whether or not the source of their disability is visual, physical or cognitive.

Unfortunately, Canada has lagged behind other major industrialized nations. It has not even taken the first step, which is to legislate support or provide long-term funding for a national library service aimed at persons with print disabilities. Yet the needs of Canadians with print disabilities were recognized as early as 1976. After more than two decades and in response to *Fulfilling the Promise*, the 2000 report of the Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled

Canadians, the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians was established in 2001. This was followed by the unanimous passage of a resolution proposing the establishment of a national equitable library network at the June 2003 Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Library Association. A Working Group to Define a National Network for Equitable Library Service was set up in 2004 and its recommendation for the establishment of a network forms the foundation upon which this proposal is based. Following many years of talking about the challenge, this report proposes a concrete action plan for addressing it.

The National Network for Equitable Library Service for Canadians with print disabilities (the Network) would be comprised of a partnership of three distinct, but closely connected components:

1. Service Libraries to provide accessible public library type services that are appropriate to the needs of Canadians with print disabilities in their local communities

2. A National Coordinating Office at the federal government level to coordinate the Network and fund its activities. It is proposed that Library and Archives Canada could assume responsibility for this national coordinating role

3. Production Centres to provide staff expertise and specialized resources to acquire, catalogue, produce, store and preserve alternative format collections

The Federal Budget of 2005 has provided initial funding of $1 million per year over a period of three years, starting in 2006/07 to investigate the true costs of providing equitable access to information for persons with print disabilities. A preliminary estimate provided in Section 4 of this report suggests that significant additional funding will be required to achieve full equality of access to information.

This action plan offers a concrete, affordable and effective approach to addressing the needs of persons with print disabilities. When the plan is implemented, more materials in alternative formats will be produced in a coordinated, efficient and cost effective manner. Descriptions of these materials will be made available in a publicly accessible manner to ensure that those who need them can readily find what they want. A network of local libraries integrated into the program will serve as delivery points, ensuring responsiveness to the needs of persons with print disabilities at the local community level.

Ultimately, the program will make good on more than two decades of promises by providing Canadians with print disabilities access to a broader range of information. In doing so, it will remove a major barrier to their full participation in society and eliminate a significant source of inequality in Canada.

1. Introduction

Almost 30 years ago, in 1976, the National Library of Canada's Task Group on Library Service to the Handicapped acknowledged, "during the past few years, there has been a growing awareness of the inadequacy of library services for handicapped Canadians."[1] In spite of many developments and advances in technology, Canadians with print disabilities continue to be underserved. As the population ages and the number of Canadians with print disabilities grows, there is an increasing urgency to address the problem.

In 2001, the then National Librarian established the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians (the Council). The Council's mandate is to provide advice, identify funding requirements, monitor progress and make recommendations regarding the implementation of *Fulfilling the Promise: The Report of the Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians*.[2] The recommendations of that report were far-reaching action items to improve access to information, but a complete vision for equitable library access had yet to be developed.

What is a National Network for Equitable Library Service? A Network of cooperating libraries and production centres, with national support, providing alternative format publications and public library type services to Canadians with print disabilities, comparable to those received by citizens who read conventional print.

In a presentation to the Council in April 2003, Jim Sanders, President and CEO of the Canadian National Institution for the Blind (CNIB) implored the Council to find a way for those who are print disabled to access the full resources of Canada's public library system. All Canadians with print disabilities should have access to the same information that the majority of Canadians have. To paraphrase Jim Sanders' comments from *A Closed Book*,[3] we need a 'made in Canada' solution, where federal, provincial, territorial and municipal governments will work to develop partnerships among themselves and with the non-government sectors to realize the opportunities offered by digital alternative formats. A public-private partnership in Canada can set the pace and act as a benchmark for the rest of the world.

Alternative format refers to print material that has undergone a transcription process resulting in a version of the print material (audio, large print, braille, electronic text format, etc.) suitable for use by all persons including those with print disabilities.   **Note**: The term *alternative format* has been used throughout this report for consistency. The term *multiple format* is also in common usage.

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[1] Task Group on Library Service to the Handicapped. *Report Presented to the National Librarian* (Ottawa : National Library of Canada, 1976), 1.

[2] Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. *Fulfilling the Promise: Report of the Task Force.* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada/ Toronto: The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, 2000). Also available online at: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-200-e.html

[3] Jim Sanders. *A Closed Book: Library Services for Print-Disabled Canadians*: *Presentation to the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians, April 7, 2003*, http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-300-e.html

The Council supported a resolution that was unanimously passed at the June 2003 Annual General Meeting of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) proposing the establishment of a national equitable library network. This CLA resolution was also endorsed by the CNIB, the Canadian Association of Large Urban Public Libraries (now the Canadian Urban Libraries Council), the Movement for Canadian Literacy, and several provincial library associations and municipal public library boards.

In response to the resolution, CLA proposed to the Council in December 2003 that a Working Group be appointed to define the scope of a nationwide network for equitable library services for Canadians with print disabilities. CLA called for volunteers and in spring 2004, the Working Group was established. Members, whose names appear at the beginning of this document, were selected to ensure expertise and representation by type of library and geographic location. At its 2005 Annual General Meeting, the membership of the Canadian Library Association resolved to support the development of a network.

In its charge, the Working Group has prepared this report to set out a plan for the "National Network for Equitable Library Service for Canadians with Print Disabilities" (the Network). It describes the essential components of the Network and outlines the activities that are necessary to ensure an equitable library service for persons with print disabilities who reside in Canada. Based on a solid vision, this document presents an implementation strategy and describes the funding that must be put in place to initiate the development of the Network.

For too long, report after report has recommended improvements to access to library service for Canadians with print disabilities with relatively little outcome (see Appendix A.). The time for action is now and this plan shows the way.

2. Analysis of the current situation

2.1 Canadians with print disabilities – who are they and what do they need?

Print disabilities are impairments that prevent people from reading standard print due to a visual, perceptual or physical disability. Such a disability may be the result of vision impairment, a learning disability, or a disability that prevents the physical holding of a book.

Library users who are print disabled are as diverse as the Canadian population. They range from retired seniors to people employed in many different professions, to students of all ages, to young children learning to read. According to *Fulfilling the Promise*,[4]

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[4] Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. *Fulfilling the Promise: Report of the Task Force*. (Ottawa: National Library of Canada/ Toronto: The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, 2000). Also available online at: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-200-e.html

3 million people, or 10% of the population, have print disabilities. A sizable portion of this group will be seniors. By the year 2026, one in five Canadians will be a senior citizen and twenty-six percent of those seniors will be blind or have low vision. This expanding population will drastically increase the number of Canadians who rely on access to information in alternative formats.

Print or perceptual disability, as defined in the Copyright Act, means a disability that prevents or inhibits a person from reading or hearing a literary, musical, dramatic or artistic work in its original format, and includes disabilities resulting from:
a)   severe or total impairment of sight or hearing or the inability to focus or move one's eyes;
b)   the inability to hold or manipulate a book;
c)   or an impairment relating to comprehension.

People with print disabilities require materials, reference and information services in accessible formats and a catalogue they can use to conduct their own research and make their own reading choices, just like everyone else.

Students with print disabilities at schools, colleges, or universities have particular needs for reading materials, but face the continuous problem of not receiving materials in appropriate formats in a timely fashion.

To participate fully in today's information based society, these Canadians require that information be 'transcribed' into alternative formats such as audio, electronic text, large print or braille. They also need assistive technologies and services.

An Assistive Technology Device is any item, piece of equipment or product system, whether acquired commercially off the shelf, modified, or customized, that is used to increase, maintain, or improve the functional capabilities of individuals with disabilities.

An Assistive Technology Service is any service that directly assists an individual with a disability in the selection, acquisition, or use of an assistive technology device. Such term includes the evaluation of the needs of an individual with a disability, including a functional evaluation of the individual in the individual's customary environment.   *US Assistive Technology Act of 2004*

The demands that will inevitably be placed on Canada's information resources cannot be overstated. The Network must meet the needs of this diverse community of people with print disabilities.

This plan addresses how to meet the democratic right to access information, continuous learning, and culture for Canadians with print disabilities who do not currently have equitable access to books and information in their library.

2.2 Legal framework

Why develop a Network for equitable access to information? Because it's the right thing to do and it's the law.

> The *Constitution Act* **1982**, which includes the *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* states:
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> "15(1) Every individual is equal before and under the law and has the right to the equal protection and equal benefit of the law without discrimination and, in particular, without discrimination based on race, national or ethnic origin, colour, religion, sex, age or mental or physical disability.[5]

In 1946, the United Nations (UN) recognized the importance of access to information as a human right. The UN General Assembly resolved that "Freedom of Information is a fundamental human right and the touchstone for all freedoms to which the United Nations is consecrated"[6].

Article 19 of the UN's *Universal Declaration of Human Rights* includes the right "to seek, receive and impart information and ideas through any media and regardless of frontiers."[7] Canada is a signatory to this declaration.

Provincial and territorial governments also have various laws that prohibit discrimination against persons with disabilities, including human rights codes, acts or charters. However, provincial definitions of disability often differ.[8] In Quebec, legislation explicitly states that a person who is print disabled must have the same access to a public library service that a sighted person has.[9]

The *Canadian Copyright Act* [10] was revised in 1997 to provide exceptions permitting the production of alternative format materials while protecting the rights of publishers.

The Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians (the Council) in its 2001 Submission on the Copyright Reform Process[11] requested that the act be revised to include additional exceptions for large print publications and for the non-commercial narrative description of cinematographic works to ensure that print-disabled Canadians have equal opportunity to access content irrespective of its format.

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[5] *Canada Act*, 1982, c. 11, "Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms," http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/charter/#egalite
[6] UN General Assembly, 65th Plenary Meeting, Resolution 59 (1), December 14, 1946.
[7] UN General Assembly, *Universal Declaration of Human Rights*, 1948, http://www.un.org/Overview/rights.html
[8] Human Resources Development Canada, Office for Disability Issues, *Defining Disability* (2003), http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=/en/hip/odi/documents/Definitions/Definitions012.shtml&hs=pyp.
[9] Québec, Ministère de la Culture et des Communications. *Politique de la lecture et du livre: le temps de lire, un art de vivre* (Québec: Ministère de la Culture et des Communications, 1998): 31.
[10] Canada, *Copyright Act*, RSC 1985, c. C-42, http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/C-42/index.html
[11] Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. *Submission to the Copyright Reform Process* (14 September 2001), http://strategis.ic.gc.ca/epic/internet/incrp-prda.nsf/en/rp00250e.html

The Council stated that:

> "The inequitable access to information for print-disabled Canadians that currently exists in the 'print on paper' world must not continue in the digital environment. Technology promises many exciting opportunities to improve access to information for print-disabled Canadians. Morally and constitutionally, it is not acceptable that these improvements be constrained or curtailed by inadequate or inappropriate copyright law." [12]

Canadian Copyright Act - Persons with Perceptual Disabilities

32. (1) It is not an infringement of copyright for a person, at the request of a person with a perceptual disability, or for a non-profit organization acting for his or her benefit, to
(a) make a copy or sound recording of a literary, musical, artistic or dramatic work, other than a cinematographic work, in a format specially designed for persons with a perceptual disability;
(b) translate, adapt or reproduce in sign language a literary or dramatic work, other than a cinematographic work, in a format specially designed for persons with a perceptual disability; or
(c) perform in public a literary or dramatic work, other than a cinematographic work, in sign language, either live or in a format specially designed for persons with a perceptual disability.

(2) Subsection (1) does not authorize the making of a large print book.

(3) Subsection (1) does not apply where the work or sound recording is commercially available in a format specially designed to meet the needs of any person referred to in that subsection, within the meaning of paragraph (*a*) of the definition "commercially available".

In 1996 Jim Sanders, then National Director of Government Relations and International Services of the CNIB, made a presentation to the House of Commons Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage which was meeting to discuss copyright amendments. Mr. Sanders said:

> "We believe that blind people will only achieve full equality of access to information when alternative format material, for example material in braille or on audio cassette, is available commercially at relatively the same time and at relatively the same price. At that point the copyright issues being discussed here now, and contained in section 32, become irrelevant. In other words, blind people look forward to the day when we can purchase material in braille, audio cassette, electronic diskette or large print. That is the day when we as blind people and blind people throughout the country will achieve equality. Blind people look forward to the day we can pay royalties just like every other Canadian." [13]

The *Communications Policy[14]* of the Government of Canada requires that multiple formats be provided to ensure equal access to public information.

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[12] Ibid.

[13] Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. *Minutes of Proceedings*, Meeting no. 33 (31 October 1996).

[14] Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Communications Policy of the Government of Canada* (29 November 2004), http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pubs_pol/sipubs/comm/comm1_e.asp#publis

The Government's *Common Look and Feel* policy[15] makes it mandatory for all Government of Canada websites to be accessible to all users.

The *Library and Archives of Canada Act* states in its preamble that:

> "Canada be served by an institution that is a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society"[16]

Access to information that enables one to be a full participant in society is a right. Canadian legislation supports these rights but compliance requires financial support and action.

2.3 Service providers and producers of alternative format materials

In spite of the numbers of Canadians who cannot easily read standard print materials, and their right to equality, there are relatively few resources available directly for those who have learning disabilities or who are physically disabled and cannot hold books. Most public libraries have small collections of commercially produced audio, large print books and CNIB produced books on tape. Collectively public libraries across Canada hold thousands of audio books and large print books. But collections vary greatly and the range of available titles is very limited.

AMICUS
For over 25 years, LAC has maintained a national union catalogue of alternative format materials as part of the larger National Union Catalogue (AMICUS). The catalogue is freely accessible on the Internet and provides mainstream access to materials in Canadian libraries, including alternative formats.

Canada's largest bilingual library service for people who are blind or visually impaired is the Canadian National Institute for the Blind Library for the Blind (CNIB Library). The CNIB Library relies on charitable donations and on 700 volunteers to produce books in alternative formats. Typically, the CNIB Library has produced between 2,000 and 2,500 audio and braille titles a year.

The CNIB Library, because of its mandate and charitable status as well as limited financial resources, directly serves only library users who are blind or visually impaired. In 1999 CNIB Library launched the Visunet Canada Partners Program that offers libraries and library consortia in Canada the opportunity to access the CNIB Library collection for an annual fee to serve members of their community who are unable to read print for

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[15] Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, *Common Look and Feel for the Internet* (Revised, 4 March 2004), http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/clf-nsi/index_e.asp
[16] *Library and Archives of Canada Act,* 2004, c.11, http://laws.justice.gc.ca/en/L-7.7/80647.html

reasons other than a visual impairment. However, the reach of this program has been limited.

In Quebec, new braille titles are produced either by Institut Nazareth et Louis-Braille (INLB) or by various private producers. Existing braille books are also purchased from European agencies. Audio books are produced in French by La Magnétothèque. Since 1995 most library services to blind and vision-impaired francophones in Quebec have been delivered through the INLB and La Magnétothèque. As of that date, CNIB entrusted the circulation of its French analogue audio collection (excluding periodicals) to INLB. The CNIB also circulates French digital audio magazines and books directly to francophones across Canada. In 2001, INLB and La Magnétothèque were combined into one single program: the Service québécois du livre adapté (SQLA), this being a temporary measure and a transitional step toward the transfer of all library services to the new Bibliothèque nationale du Québec (BNQ) in May 2005.

The Montreal Association for the Blind produces alternative formats and provides services to anglophones living in Quebec.

In British Columbia (BC) there was an Audiobook Program funded by the Public Library Services Branch until 2002 when the provincial government cancelled the funding. Due to public outcry from libraries and library users with print disabilities, the BC government offered a one-time grant of $200,000 to InterLINK to provide this service. InterLINK is a public library federation in the lower mainland and while funding is only in place for five years it is producing 50-60 titles per year with the assistance of fundraising and funds from InterLINK member libraries.

Many provinces including BC, Ontario, and Manitoba provide alternative format material for post secondary students. Some provinces provide services only to students from elementary through high school, and mandates for providing services for learning disabled students vary from province to province. However, all members of the Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Formats (CAER) provide interlending services to each other.

In addition, most individual post-secondary institutions across Canada provide local services to their students. Larger university services such as the Crane Resource Centre at the University of British Columbia also loan materials extensively to other institutions. The level of production services varies considerably from requiring students to do their own self-productions to standardized products in a range of alternative formats, including braille, tactile graphics, audio, digital audio, DAISY, e-texts, MP3, and large print formats.

There are also commercial agencies that will produce personal, business or government information in alternative formats for a fee.

While these programs and services help to serve the needs of Canadians with print disabilities, they are not fully integrated and have been unable to provide an equitable level of service. It has been estimated that only 2-5% of published information in English and 1-2% of published information in French is available in alternative formats.

Assistive technologies and services
In 2004, a survey by the Working Group resulted in a response from 24 Canadian institutions (public and university libraries) indicating their best practices dealing with the provision of assistive technologies for library users with print disabilities. Very few institutions provided a full set up of equipment (CCTV, computer stations with magnification software, JAWS and refreshable braille, reading machines, scanners with OCR, braille embossers, synthetic speech input and closed captioning equipment). Others had some of the above. Most had at least one input and one output technology. One reported having Industry Canada's Web 4 All system. The survey revealed the following common challenges:

- Having trained staff on hand to help their library users

- A need for constant vigilance in updating the equipment with the consequent learning curve

- Lack of a standard setup and training materials to assist librarians in better serving their library users with print disabilities

2.4 Funding situation and needs

Canada lags behind other major industrialized nations in that it does not legislate support or provide long-term funding for a national library service for persons with print disabilities. Examples of legislated and funded services include The Celia Library for the Visually Impaired in Finland, the Swedish Library of Talking Books and Braille and the National Library Service for the Blind and Physically Disabled (NLS) at the Library of Congress in the United States. NLS has a total budget of close to $166 million USD of which $50 million is dedicated to the production of materials in alternative formats.

Over the past 25 years, the Federal Government has consistently recognized the rights of Canadians with disabilities to equitable access to information, but has failed to act. Important examples include *Preparing Canada for a digital world* (1997),[17] the Scott Task Force (1996),[18] *Challenge for change* (2000)[19] and the principle of inclusion

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[17] Information Highway Advisory Council. *Preparing Canada for a Digital World: Final Report.* (Ottawa: Industry Canada, 1997), Also available online at: http://www.iigr.ca/pdf/documents/768_Preparing_Canada_for_a_D.pdf
[18] Federal Task Force on Disability Issues, *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act,* (21 October 1996), http://www.sdc.gc.ca/en/hip/odi/documents/scottTaskForce/scottTaskForce.pdf

reiterated in the October 2004 Speech from the Throne.[20] The Government's 2004 report on disabilities states that the "Government of Canada is committed to bringing down the barriers to the inclusion of people with disabilities."[21] However, no single federal government ministry has a program to support access to information for Canadians with print disabilities or has ownership for this issue at any level. LAC is committed to universal accessibility but has not yet developed a sustained mechanism to financially support libraries for providing alternative format services.

The Government of Canada has stated its commitment to the full participation and inclusion of Canadians with disabilities in our society, communities and economy. Making information and written heritage accessible to Canadians with print disabilities is also an essential part of the government of Canada's technology, skills and literacy agenda. The October 2004 Speech from the Throne made a commitment to the concept of inclusion of all people within vibrant communities with strong cultural institutions, which respond to the digital economy.

The Canadian Government supports free circulation of "Literature for the Blind" through Canada Post, however this policy does not serve Canadians who are unable to read print for reasons other than a visual impairment. While existing programs continue to provide some access to information for persons with print disabilities, there is no funded initiative to close the serious gap between what Canadians with print disabilities can access and what Canadians without print disabilities can access. Sustained government funding must be made available to address the gap on a broad and long term basis. The provision of equitable library service through public libraries to library users with print disabilities is not viable unless there is an integrated approach involving national coordination and funding.

2.5 Key success factors from foreign models

The most successful service models for persons with print disabilities are in Scandinavia and the United States. The optimum elements of those models are:

- National coordination by a government funded agency

- Effective combination of centralized and decentralized approach to service delivery

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[19] Standing Committee on Canadian Heritage. *The Challenge of Change: A Consideration of the Canadian Book Industry* (June 2000), http://www.parl.gc.ca/infocomdoc/36/2/heri/studies/reports/heri01/04-toc-e.html
[20] Canada, *Speech from the Throne to open the First Session of the Thirty-Eighth Parliament of Canada* (5 October 2004), http://pm.gc.ca/grfx/docs/sft_e.pdf
[21] Social Development Canada, *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2004*, http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/odi/documents/advancingInclusion04/index.shtml&hs=pyp

- Public libraries playing the leading role in providing citizens with accessible services and materials

- Eligibility of all print disabled citizens, whether they have a visual impairment, a learning disability, or a physical impairment

- Availability of advice and consulting services to network members

- A move to a digital environment

Once implemented, the Network will establish Canada as a world leader in innovative and networked delivery of digital based information services and help fulfill the government's objective of being the most connected nation in the world.

3. Strategy for a National Network for Equitable Library Service

Given the current situation, it is critical that we *"fulfill the promise"* of the 2000 Task Force Report,[22] and build a Network. This unified strategy includes the possibility of new partnerships with the private sector building on present initiatives and well-established services and programs offered by existing institutions.

It will take leadership and commitment from every municipality, province and territory throughout the nation to build and sustain the Network. It will also take a financial investment by the Government of Canada to develop the Network initially and to sustain it in perpetuity once the Network is established and operational.

These requirements are prescribed for a nationwide public library type service that builds on existing resources and is accessible to approximately three million Canadians with print disabilities spread throughout the country with the same diversity of needs and circumstances as the rest of the population.

The Network would be comprised of a partnership of three distinct, but closely connected components:

4. Service Libraries to provide accessible public library type services that are appropriate to the needs of Canadians with print disabilities in their local communities

5. A National Coordinating Office at the federal government level to coordinate the Network and fund its activities

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[22] Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. *Fulfilling the Promise: Report of the Task Force.* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada/ Toronto: The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, 2000). Also available online at: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-200-e.html.

6. Production Centres to provide staff expertise and specialized resources to acquire, catalogue, produce, store and preserve alternative format collections

3.1 Service Libraries

In the proposed plan, Canadians with print disabilities can turn to their public libraries to receive services in the same way that others can. Collection building, training, outreach marketing and advocacy are all part of the service delivery that will occur locally with the support of the Network.

The value of public library service

Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision- making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

IFLA / UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994[23]
(Full text in Appendix B)

Service Libraries are the face of the Network at the local community level and include libraries and information resource centres of all types: public, academic, school and special. The Network requires a commitment from all libraries to provide inclusive service with books, information and other services appropriate to library users with print disabilities. Municipal and provincial/territorial governments provide annual appropriations to be used in part for funding inclusive services within their respective library communities.

3.1.1 Roles and responsibilities – Service Libraries

The Service Libraries, with the support of the National Coordinating Office, and the Production Centres, will provide services that are appropriate to the needs of their communities by integrating the existing resources in their libraries with alternative formats and digital resources.

Some library distribution points will be unique. Large library centres may need the capacity to store on-the-shelf collections as well as to download to a CD or flash card and create books on demand for walk-in library users or to make any other special local service arrangements.

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[23] IFLA and UNESCO, *Public Library Manifesto 1994* (Revised, 3 November 2004), http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm

With the support of the Network, key roles and responsibilities of Service Libraries include:

Development and production of content
- Participating in collection development for the Network

- Working with the Production Centres to develop local collections in alternative formats, parts of which may be produced locally, that are relevant to their communities and represent regional interests.

Access to information and service
Providing library service to persons with print disabilities that is comparable to services provided to other library users including:

- Managing registration procedures in an appropriate manner to meet privacy laws, copyright and access requirements

- Assisting library users whether they are searching for information resources or the latest best-seller

- Linking library users to physical and digital resources from the in-house collection and external collections using interlibrary loan or electronic means

- Introducing library users to new and innovative sources of books and information, for example, streamed online digital audio delivered by Production Centres

- Offering programs to engage library users, (for example, how to use the Internet with assistive technologies)

- Providing accessible reference service, including appropriate referrals to other resources, (for example, LAC is developing a virtual reference and referral strategy which may be used as an appropriate model)

- Working closely with appropriate local agencies who provide services to persons with print disabilities

Training, awareness, and outreach
There are challenges in serving the needs of people who represent a smaller portion of the overall community, who have diverse information needs, and who may not have experience in accessing services from their local libraries. Strong communication and outreach will encourage wider use of library services. Service Libraries will:

- Collaborate with the National Coordinating Office to receive the support they need to fully engage library users with print disabilities

- Advise the National Coordinating Office on the training needs for their staff, including sensitivity training for front line staff

- Ensure that local resources are allocated for staff training in support of the implementation of the Network

- Ensure that library users with print disabilities are included in community surveys in planning for future services

- Strengthen outreach and communication regarding existing services, and develop additional programs and products targeted to persons with print disabilities in their communities.

3.2 National Coordinating Office

The National Coordinating Office will manage a Government of Canada program to lead and support the Network, to foster the development of content in alternative formats, to ensure financial stability for the Network and to provide advice to libraries and publishers on best practices and accessible technologies and services.

As a national entity, LAC is positioned to play a pivotal leadership role in achieving the vision of this plan. LAC has a mandate to support the development of the library and archive communities and it is recommended that it assume the role of the National Coordinating Office. LAC has the authority to enter into agreements with libraries, archives or institutions in or outside Canada. It also has the authority to provide professional, technical and financial support for those involved in preservation and promotion of documentary heritage, and in providing access to it.

The National Coordinating Office will have six major areas of responsibility as the focus of its activities:

1. Acquiring and maintaining financial stability for the network by encouraging the federal government to fund and support equitable library service

2. Working with publishers to increase the availability of production-ready digital content

3. Working with Production Centres to increase the production of alternative format content including digital formats

4. Implementing appropriate services for library users with print disabilities within the national resource sharing strategy

5. Ensuring the availability of assistive technologies in libraries

6. Providing support, leadership and resources to the Service Libraries

3.2.1 Roles and responsibilities – National Coordinating Office

The National Coordinating Office will work in partnership with government agencies at all levels, with specialized agencies, including alternative format producers, libraries, publishers and the private sector. Three key roles and responsibilities include:

1. Developing a detailed work plan and budget for the Network, in cooperation with the partners, and encourage the federal government to fund and support equitable library service. Upon acceptance, incorporating the plan into its operational framework and ensuring appropriate staffing and support for the National Coordinating Office

2. Managing a Government of Canada program to support the development of the Network in partnership with the 22,000 libraries in Canada,[24] the Production Centres and the publishing community. Financial stability for the Network is also a key priority.

3. Providing leadership in the following areas:

Development and production of content
The Council has identified a vision for a clearinghouse for electronic texts through which Canadian publishers make their works available to alternative format producers.[25] Within Canadian copyright provisions, the intention is to create a standard agreement for use with publishers and a standard request form. The National Coordinating Office and Production Centres will implement the appropriate service model to receive, store and share digital files from publishers for alternative format production. While further work often needs to be done to prepare a file for braille or audio outputs, the elimination of scanning a print book, and cleaning the resulting file will serve to increase the number of books available.

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[24] Ralph W. Manning, "Counting Canadian Libraries," *Feliciter* 43, no. 9 (September 1997): 40.
[25] Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians, *Vision and Implementation Plan for a Clearinghouse for Print-Disabled Canadians* (1 May 2003), http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-205-e.html

The National Coordinating Office will work with Production Centres to:

- Facilitate collaboration to avoid duplication and maximize availability of content

- Coordinate the acquisition, production and distribution of titles

- Increase the production of alternative format content

And will work with both Service Libraries and Production Centres to:
- Prepare collection development guidelines

Access to Information

Cooperation and resource sharing is imperative because resources are limited and production and distribution of content in alternative formats is costly. Through cooperation, the Network can develop collections, embrace future technologies and share resources without wasteful duplication of effort. The resource sharing goals of LAC in its *Review of a Canadian Information Resource Sharing Strategy*[26] are to:

- Provide seamless access to information for all Canadians

- Create an attractive comprehensive listing of all materials held by Canadian libraries

- Develop resource sharing policies and leadership to support universal access to information for all Canadians

These goals are completely aligned with the parameters of a library service for persons with print disabilities. With respect to this service there is a need to consider accessibility issues and to:

- Maintain the capability of locating and delivering alternative format titles as required

- Ensure that a fully accessible gateway to all holdings in alternative formats in Canada is maintained. This includes streamlining and promoting to producers the Canadian Works in Progress (CANWIP) program, reviewing the process of reporting alternative format titles and setting

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[26] Carrol Lunau, *Review of a Canadian Information Resource Sharing Strategy: Final Report* (25 May 2001), http://www.collectionscanada.ca/8/3/r3-640-e.html

priorities for resource location in the LAC's national union catalogue of alternative format materials (AMICUS)

- Work with the publishing community to investigate alternative mechanisms for access to their works. Mainstream access to publications in alternative formats will significantly improve access to information for all Canadians.

- Facilitate access to Canadian and international alternative format collections via interlending

- Facilitate access to digital media online by establishing an accessible portal to online digital collections

- Ensure the availability of assistive technologies in libraries

- Improve access to alternative formats and digital content by ensuring Canadian involvement in the broader international effort to overcome copyright limitations

- Advocate that Canada Post's "Literature for the Blind" policy be expanded to include all alternative format library materials available for all persons with print disabilities [27]

Training, awareness, and outreach
Provide leadership and support to Services Libraries' endeavours to improve service to their library users with print disabilities by:
- Developing and fostering training programs in service delivery to library users with print disabilities

- Delivering communications programs and templates that can be adapted locally

Standards
- Developing and maintain national cataloguing standards for alternative format materials in collaboration with other organizations

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[27] Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. *Fulfilling the Promise: Report of the Task Force.* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada/ Toronto: The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, 2000). Also available online at: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-200-e.html.
Section 5, Recommendation 24: That the Literature for the Blind policy be extended to include those with a learning disability, as well as a subsidy be extended to include the distribution of large print, e-text and other digital materials, and new alternative formats.

- Supporting development and promotion of standards for the creation of braille, digital, and other alternative formats and promoting these standards to the publishing community

- Facilitating the participation of Canadian experts in professional associations and standards development organizations

- Developing guidelines and a checklist (based on IFLA guidelines[28]) for libraries to use in implementing and assessing current services

- Establishing and promoting standards and best practices to Service Libraries for the provision of library services to library users with print disabilities

- Advocating for standards for assistive technologies and services, and software to support access to the Network and its resources

3.3 Production Centres

Central to the development and sustainability of the Network are the Production Centres. Production Centres have the staff expertise and technology to produce, manage, store, archive, record and circulate books and information in alternative formats based on universal standards. Production Centres also act as Service Libraries when they provide services directly to people with print disabilities. They will supply the Service Libraries with books and information in alternative formats to deliver to Canadians with print disabilities.

They are conversant with assistive technologies and services, and software in response to the access needs of persons with print disabilities. Their staffs have expertise and resources required to support the production and development of alternative format collections. They also have systems for storing, preserving and distributing alternative format materials based on standards. In addition, they have well-established relationships with the publishing community in Canada and international library service providers for persons with print disabilities.

Private producers of alternative format material are located in many centres across Canada. Within an open and competitive marketplace, and with appropriate funding, partnerships may be established permitting the production of a greater quantity of more diverse alternative format materials.

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[28] IFLA, *Libraries for the Blind in the Information Age: Guidelines for Development,* eds. Rosemary Kavanagh and Beatrice Christensen Sköld, IFLA Professional Reports: 86 (The Hague: IFLA, 2005), http://www.ifla.org/VII/s31/pub/Profrep86.pdf

Education Resource Centres are important production centers that produce materials in alternative formats and provide a range of services directly to students with print disabilities. They have resources and expertise in all aspects of providing access to information for persons with print disabilities. They work collaboratively across Canada to avoid duplication and maximize production of specific curriculum related materials for students. Educational Resource Centres are an important resource that will intersect, collaborate and inform the Network from the educational perspective.

CAER (Canadian Association of Educational Resource Centres for Alternate Formats) is a model of successful networking relationships across Canada and across political jurisdictions, including ministries of education, social services and post-secondary institutions.

For public library type service, the largest centres of expertise for alternative format library collections in Canada are the CNIB Library and the BNQ. They have the infrastructure to underpin the public library service envisioned as the core of the Network. To assume this role the CNIB Library and BNQ require sustained annual funding to allow them to expand their services beyond their presently mandated user base.

It will be important for all producers of alternative formats to work cooperatively to avoid duplication and to maximize the production of alternative formats and electronic delivery in both official languages.

3.3.1 Roles and responsibilities - Production Centres

Recommendation #2 in *Fulfilling the Promise* suggested that CNIB pursue the extension of its library services to all print disabled Canadians[29] but did not give any guidance on how this was to be achieved or how the resources would be provided.   This proposal for a multi-tiered Network is in response to that recommendation and provides a mechanism for CNIB Library to work with Network partners to improve access to information for all Canadians with print disabilities.

Federal government funding is necessary in order to advance the Network with the support of the National Coordinating Office to increase content in alternative formats at specialized production centres, including digital online delivery, to an acceptable level.

The digital infrastructure is the cornerstone for the Network and will require expansion to serve all Canadians with print disabilities. In addition, public libraries are investing in licensed and locally created digital resources that with

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[29] Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. *Fulfilling the Promise: Report of the Task Force.* (Ottawa: National Library of Canada/ Toronto: The Canadian National Institute for the Blind, 2000). Also available online at: http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-200-e.html

appropriate accessibility tools will also be available on an equitable basis to library users with print disabilities.

With a well established cooperative approach to production, actual service delivery can be decentralized so that library users can receive services locally.

Production Centres will have the following responsibilities:

Development and production of content
- Providing resources dedicated to the production of Canadian and other library content in alternative formats to established standards

- Together with the National Coordinating Office preparing collection development guidelines for use in conjunction with collections and online resources available from specialized sources

- Providing leadership in finding new and innovative ways to build digital collections that can be used in a variety of formats and delivery mechanisms: braille, e-braille, text file linked to digital audio in DAISY books, input for synthesized voice, international exchange agreements with other libraries for the blind for content, etc.

Access to information and service
Most of the principles of library collection management and preservation are equally applicable to a library collection serving those who have print disabilities. However, the following activities are specific to managing and providing access to a collection of alternative format materials:

- Managing digital repositories to store, archive and provide secure access to digital recordings and electronic texts, and protect digital content from technological obsolescence

- Housing and distributing physical or hard copy versions of alternative format materials for access by people with print disabilities on a self-serve basis or by Service Libraries for their library users at the local level

- Managing a coordinated approach to acquisition, cataloguing and access to remote collections

- Managing a coordinated approach to make content accessible through a centralized operating system

- Managing authentication and security in order to create a "trusted" secure environment for digital rights management

- Providing advisory services to Service Libraries that want to acquire alternative format collections and/or make digital resources and services available to library users with print disabilities

- Providing leadership in building accessible public library collections in both official languages that meet IFLA guidelines[30] for comprehensiveness

- Developing, managing and working to improve national distribution systems effected through Canada Post, electronic delivery or any other service and delivery methods contracted or organized with Service Libraries and/or third parties

With the support of the National Coordinating Office:
- Working with suppliers/vendors for the acquisition of assistive technologies and services, and software required by the Network for the delivery of nationwide service

- Setting guidelines and establishing service arrangements with Service Libraries

- Developing a fully accessible portal for the direct delivery of digital alternative formats to Service Libraries and library users with print disabilities

- Managing the international relationships and partnerships necessary for fostering cooperation and sharing of alternative format resources

- Providing ongoing research and development of accessible services to create a responsive Network

Training, awareness, and outreach
With the support of the National Coordinating Office:
- Developing communications and training materials together with programs for service providers at all levels of the Network, i.e., producers, creators, library staff, library users

Standards
- Reporting all holdings and alternative format production in progress to CANWIP

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[30] IFLA, *Libraries for the Blind in the Information Age: Guidelines for Development,* eds. Rosemary Kavanagh and Beatrice Christensen Sköld, IFLA Professional Reports: 86 (The Hague: IFLA, 2005), http://www.ifla.org/VII/s31/pub/Profrep86.pdf

- Developing and adopting standards and best practices for production facilities

With the support of the National Coordinating Office:
- Supporting and monitoring standards for the creation of braille, digital, and other alternative format titles for ongoing quality control of all alternative format production

- Assisting in establishing and advocating standards for assistive technologies and services, and software to support access to the Network and its resources

3.4 The 'made in Canada' solution

The strategy described in this plan for a 'made in Canada' solution to the provision of equitable library services for Canadians with print disabilities recognizes our federal, provincial, territorial and municipal jurisdictions in a service model that builds on elements identified as key success factors in other countries (see section 2.5).

The National Coordinating Office will provide overarching support for resource sharing and development; program and outreach development; and managing standards, funding, and international relationships. Production Centres will develop collections of alternative format materials collaboratively to eliminate duplication, maximize resources and respond to the collection needs of Service Libraries. Library users with print disabilities will be able to expect a standard of service regardless of where they live. They will be able to go to their local library to and get materials and information services just like everyone else.

Given the growing obsolescence of analogue technology, it is vital that a digital library environment be adopted. Harnessing the opportunities provided by technology and mustering the will to create an integrated system will enable all Canadians with print disabilities to receive equitable library service.

There is a strong tradition in Canada of libraries sharing practices, ideas and resources in order to improve services. With central leadership, coordination, sustained funding, and access to specialized expertise this integrated Network has the capability of achieving excellence in service and becoming a model in the world.

4. Funding and finance

4.1 Framework guidelines

In order for the Network to be successful, it has to be coordinated and funded by the federal government.

Although federal government support is necessary to establish and coordinate this national Network, it is not sufficient to make the Network viable. A collaborative partnership and shared commitment to funding, which builds on existing knowledge, expertise and organizational resources among Service Libraries, Production Centres and a National Coordinating Office within LAC, is also required. The following guidelines establish a context for the proposed funding framework for this Network.

The most significant costs identified in the following funding framework are directly related to increasing production of published information available in English and French in alternative formats. The imperatives stated earlier in this report justifying the case for creating a Network that expands production and access to materials and library services for readers with print disabilities, remain compelling in the discussion of a funding framework.

4.1.1 Establishing the Network

4.1.1.1 National Coordinating Office

In partnership with Service Libraries and Production Centres, a National Coordinating Office is required to provide leadership, facilitation and centralized expertise to develop the Network.

The Federal Budget of 2005 has provided initial funding of $1 million per year over a period of three years, starting in 2006/07. By the end of the 3-year period, LAC will be required to report to the Minister of Canadian Heritage the true costs of providing equitable access to information for persons with print disabilities. The determination of costs will therefore be a priority.

4.1.1.2 Development of a business plan

The proposed funding framework addresses funding needs for a three year period. Within that period, the priority will be to prepare a detailed business plan and to determine real costs for subsequent years when it is expected that additional funds will be required.

An approved business plan will establish agreement on the Network's production targets, projected use, baseline financial costs, and performance measures

including input, output and outcome data that can be used to evaluate the Network's performance and to report back to Canadians through the Minister of Canadian Heritage. The business plan will recommend a mechanism for allocating funds to provide library services and to produce public library type materials in alternative formats.

4.1.1.3 Shared funding

All Network partners will contribute financial support either directly or indirectly from their existing organizations, based on their organization's current operations and primary objectives. In this way, funding for the Network brings these resources together into a more coordinated service and leverages additional funding to expand services to a larger, more inclusive client group defined in Section 1 as Canadians with print disabilities.

4.1.2 Funding production of alternative format materials

In addition to the incremental costs outlined below for the production of some alternative format materials, there are also significant infrastructure costs associated with this production. These costs are not included in the following estimates. Other formats, such as large print, are similarly excluded at this time because of provisions in Canadian copyright legislation.

4.1.2.1 Coordinated production and collection development

Through a competitive open bidding system (grants and contributions program), administered by the National Coordinating Office, producers would receive funding support to increase production of alternative format titles (in Braille and digital audio). These funds would supplement rather than be a substitute for existing financial resources already being expended by producers such as CNIB and BNQ.

4.1.2.2 Production Centre targets

Production projections are estimates only, based on 2004-05 figures provided by BNQ and CNIB, and are to be used as provisional baseline figures. The percentage of published information used in the estimate is based on current production figures noted in Section 2.3 of this draft report.

The percentages of published information in English and French indicated as targets for the Network's first three-year phasing-in period are estimates based on current levels as noted in Section 2.3 of this Report: "only 2-5% of published

information in English and 1-2% of published information in French is available in alternative formats."

To establish more equitable access to library services for Canadians with print disabilities, estimates in this section assume an initial increase in production to a level of 10% of published information.

4.1.2.3 Per title production costs

Estimates of per title production costs are are average costs only. Many factors influence the cost of producing a single title. Producing a title as an original is significantly more expensive than purchasing another vendor's electronic file or copy from which further copies can be made.

4.1.2.4 Service Libraries' digital audio production

Library staff will assist patrons in selecting and accessing resources and information services either from their local collections or virtually in the collections of centralized repositories. Some Service Libraries may choose to develop local digital and physical collections while others may rely more directly on the collections maintained by the centralized repositories.

Service Libraries may prefer to download digital audio files from a specialized library collection and then burn selected titles onto disposable media to enhance their local collections. Acquiring the equipment and resources required to perform this function would be likely be the responsibility of the Service Libraries.

4.1.2.5 Infrastructure for digital repositories

Currently CNIB has the most advanced digital repository and network infrastructure; however other producers have also invested in advanced information architecture to support their production and collections. One of the priorities of a new National Coordinating Office in partnership with CNIB and BNQ would be to investigate in more detail the costs of supporting an expanded network of digital handling systems and repositories.

None of the infrastructure costs for storage and handling is currently included in production estimates.

4.1.3 Distributing materials through Service Libraries

As the Network's local service delivery agents, Service Libraries will rely on both the National Coordinating Office and the specialized libraries and Production Centres to support library services in their communities. Training staff, communications activities, community advocacy, and collection access are functions that could require additional resources.

Regional hubs could be established to provide expertise and to house larger physical collections if required. Virtual library services provided by specialized libraries and delivered through Service Libraries could require other assistive technologies not readily available in all Service Libraries.

A grants and contribution program administered by the National Coordinating Office and funded by the federal government could be implemented to strengthen distribution and access among Service Libraries. The business plan would need to define such a program to support the Network at the community level.

4.1.4 Funding estimates summary (see table, page 29)

The following estimates outline the costs of increasing alternative format production to reach an initial goal of making 10% of published information available in alternative formats. This scenario envisages that over a three year period, production would increase each year to reach the initial 10% target.

In addition, it is estimated that a move to more mainstream publishing/distribution of alternative formats should increase the output significantly.

In addition to the incremental costs outlined for the production of alternative format materials, there are also significant infrastructure costs associated with this production. These costs are not included in the table of estimates on page 29.

Funding Estimates Summary	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3
National Coordinating Office The costs of establishing a National Coordinating Office and coordinating the Network are estimated at:	$375,000	$375,000	$375,000
Production of Materials in Alternative Formats The total estimated production costs only, to increase the number of titles produced in digital audio and Braille in French and English to reach the initial 10% target are:	$2,287,000	$6,058,000	$9,020,500
Support to Service Libraries To provide training, communications services, support for materials distribution, community advocacy, and to facilitate acquisition of assistive technologies, a grants and contributions program could be established and implemented by the National Coordinating Office.	$400,000	$400,000	$400,000
Yearly Total	**$3,062,000**	**$6,833,000**	**$9,795,500**

5. Next steps

This report is based on the input of the members of the Working Group. The Working Group's deliberations and drafts of the report were circulated to a considerably larger resource group and as the vision of the Network began to form, the document was circulated to a much wider audience. This process generated wide-ranging and thoughtful responses which were carefully considered by the Working Group in the final text of this report. Consultation on this model will be ongoing.

The report is the result of a CLA Working Group and will therefore be submitted to CLA for further action.

CLA will submit the report to the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians and to the Librarian and Archivist of Canada. As noted earlier, Library and Archives Canada has a legislated mandate to ensure access to information for the benefit of all Canadians.

6. Conclusion

Libraries must work together to make a virtual library for Canadians with print disabilities a common cause. The transformation of the infrastructure that supports library service for Canadians unable to read print cannot be addressed by any single agency, public or private, acting on its own. The absence of a publicly funded national strategy is not simply a function of lack of money, but until recently also about the disconnectedness of service to a group of people who are treated as a single market and who need to be part of a library service agenda larger than their municipalities or their academic campuses.

Library service is critical to the continuous learning required to compete for jobs and sustain quality of life in a civil society. Persons with print disabilities expect libraries to set new standards of access, to provide opportunities for learning, and to keep pace with change. Persons with print disabilities know that participating in the learning culture increases their prospects for employment and independence. It is their dream to be able to read the same newspapers and books as their neighbours and to receive equivalent library services in the same timeframe and at the same cost. This plan shows how to "open the book" and make this dream a reality.

Appendix A

Government of Canada Reports:
Canadians with Print Disabilities Chronology

1976   *Report Presented to the National Librarian.* Task Group on Library Service to the Handicapped. National Library of Canada.

1981   *Obstacles Report.* Report of the Special Parliamentary Committee on the Disabled and the Handicapped.
http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=/en/hip/odi/documents/obstacles/00_toc.shtml&hs=pyp

1996   *Equal Citizenship for Canadians with Disabilities: The Will to Act.* Federal Task Force on Disability Issues (also known as the Scott Task Force).
http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/odi/documents/scottTaskForce/00_toc.shtml&hs=pyp

1998   *In Unison: A Canadian Approach to Disability Issues.* Human Resources Development Canada.
http://socialunion.gc.ca/pwd/unison/unison_e.html

1999   *Future Directions to Address Disability Issues for the Government of Canada: Working Together for Full Citizenship.* Human Resources Development Canada.
http://www.hrsdc.gc.ca/en/cs/sp/sdc/socpol/publications/reports/1999-000046/page00.shtml

   Reflecting Interdependence: Disability, Parliament, Government and the Community. Sixth Report of the Standing Committee on Human Resources Development and the Status of Persons with Disabilities.
http://www.parl.gc.ca/InfoComDoc/36/1/SSPD/Studies/Reports/sspdrp06-e.htm#TOC

2000   *Fulfilling the Promise: Report of the Task Force.* Task Force on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians. National Library of Canada and the Canadian National Institute for the Blind.
http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/s36-200-e.html

2001   The National Library of Canada's National Librarian establishes the Council on Access to Information for Print-Disabled Canadians.
http://www.collectionscanada.ca/accessinfo/index-e.html

2002   *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2002.* Social Development Canada.
The Government of Canada's first comprehensive report on disability in Canada. Social
Development Canada
http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/odi/documents/advancingInclusion/aipd
Index.shtml&hs=pyp

2004   *Advancing the Inclusion of Persons with Disabilities 2004.* Social Development Canada.
The Government of Canada's second comprehensive report on disability in Canada.
http://www.sdc.gc.ca/asp/gateway.asp?hr=en/hip/odi/documents/advancingInclusion04/in
dex.shtml&hs=pyp

The Canadian Library Association establishes a Working Group to Define a National
Network for Equitable Library Service.
http://www.cla.ca/top/whatsnew/wnjl1204.htm

Appendix B

IFLA / UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994 [31]

Freedom, prosperity and the development of society and of individuals are fundamental human values. They will only be attained through the ability of well-informed citizens to exercise their democratic rights and to play an active role in society. Constructive participation and the development of democracy depend on satisfactory education as well as on free and unlimited access to knowledge, thought, culture and information.

The public library, the local gateway to knowledge, provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision- making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.

This Manifesto proclaims UNESCO's belief in the public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.

UNESCO therefore encourages national and local governments to support and actively engage in the development of public libraries.

The Public Library

The public library is the local centre of information, making all kinds of knowledge and information readily available to its users.

The services of the public library are provided on the basis of equality of access for all, regardless of age, race, sex, religion, nationality, language or social status. Specific services and materials must be provided for those users who cannot, for whatever reason, use the regular services and materials, for example linguistic minorities, people with disabilities or people in hospital or prison.

All age groups must find material relevant to their needs. Collections and services have to include all types of appropriate media and modern technologies as well as traditional materials. High quality and relevance to local needs and conditions are fundamental. Material must reflect current trends and the evolution of society, as well as the memory of human endeavour and imagination.

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[31] IFLA and UNESCO, *Public Library Manifesto 1994* (Revised, 3 November 2004), http://www.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm

Collections and services should not be subject to any form of ideological, political or religious censorship, nor commercial pressures.

Missions of the Public Library

The following key missions which relate to information, literacy, education and culture should be at the core of public library services:

1. creating and strengthening reading habits in children from an early age;

2. supporting both individual and self conducted education as well as formal education at all levels;

3. providing opportunities for personal creative development;

4. stimulating the imagination and creativity of children and young people;

5. promoting awareness of cultural heritage, appreciation of the arts, scientific achievements and innovations;

6. providing access to cultural expressions of all performing arts;

7. fostering inter-cultural dialogue and favouring cultural diversity;

8. supporting the oral tradition;

9. ensuring access for citizens to all sorts of community information;

10. providing adequate information services to local enterprises, associations and interest groups;

11. facilitating the development of information and computer literacy skills;

12. supporting and participating in literacy activities and programmes for all age groups, and initiating such activities if necessary.

Funding, legislation and networks

The public library shall in principle be free of charge.

The public library shall in principle be free of charge. The public library is the responsibility of local and national authorities. It must be supported by specific legislation and financed by national and local governments. It has to be an essential component of any long-term strategy for culture, information provision, literacy and education.

To ensure nationwide library coordination and cooperation, legislation and strategic plans must also define and promote a national library network based on agreed standards of service.
The public library network must be designed in relation to national, regional, research and special libraries as well as libraries in schools, colleges and universities.

Operation and management

A clear policy must be formulated, defining objectives, priorities and services in relation to the local community needs. The public library has to be organized effectively and professional standards of operation must be maintained.

Cooperation with relevant partners - for example, user groups and other professionals at local, regional, national as well as international level- has to be ensured.

Services have to be physically accessible to all members of the community. This requires well situated library buildings, good reading and study facilities, as well as relevant technologies and sufficient opening hours convenient to the users. It equally implies outreach services for those unable to visit the library.

The library services must be adapted to the different needs of communities in rural and urban areas.

The librarian is an active intermediary between users and resources. Professional and continuing education of the librarian is indispensable to ensure adequate services.

Outreach and user education programmes have to be provided to help users benefit from all the resources.

Implementing the Manifesto

Decision makers at national and local levels and the library community at large, around the world, are hereby urged to implement the principles expressed in this Manifesto.