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September 9, 2008

Ken Roberts
President
Canadian Library Association
328 Frank Street
Ottawa, Ontario
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Dear Ken:

I thank you for your letter of August 8, 2008 concerning CLA/ACB Resolution 2008-1: Resolution on Open File Format Standards. This resolution encourages the Federal Government to use open, interoperable and vendor-neutral standards such as the Open Document Format (ODF) for information whenever possible. You also suggest that Library and Archives Canada should utilize the objects and powers in the Library and Archives Act, 2004 to encourage the use of open file format standards.

Library and Archives Canada is already working with other federal government departments and agencies to achieve this goal. The Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat (TBS) develops information management (IM) policy and its implementation in the federal government is enhanced through guidance from LAC. To achieve the goal of preserving the records of interest to the nation and the government of Canada, LAC is promoting the formats and standards that are identified in a document that is entitled *Guidelines for Computer File Types, Interchange Formats and Information Standards*.

In this document, Library and Archives Canada identifies digital formats and standards which it is recommending to facilitate the interoperability of digital information between LAC and its clients, for the exchange of digital information between federal government institutions, and for the transfer of this information to LAC as historical or archival documentary heritage material.

Version 1 of this document currently resides on our website along with other types of guidance that we are providing to our clients. You can review the document at <http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/government/products-services/007002-3000-e.html>.

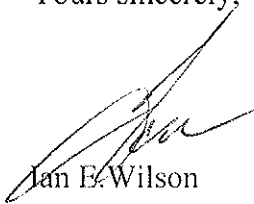
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I would like to inform you that version 2 of the document should be released later this fall. The document has been reformatted and there is a section that specifically addresses the use of the ODF file format. As you know, ODF is an XML-based file format for office documents, including, textual documents, spreadsheets, drawings and presentations, and is based on the ISO/IEC 26300:2006 standard. At the present time, LAC has identified the format as being one still under investigation because software vendors have not yet widely adopted the associated specification in software applications that are based on the standard. As you also indicate, the format is still under investigation because Microsoft has developed an equivalent format to ODF, called Open XML (OOXML), which is not totally compliant with the ISO/IEC 26300:2006 standard.

If you would like to review a draft copy of the new guidelines document, I encourage you to contact David Brown who is responsible for revising and writing version 2. David can be contacted at 819-934-6821 or via email at david.brown@lac-bac.gc.ca

I would like to thank you and the Canadian Library Association for your letter. The adoption of these formats and standards will facilitate information exchange, provide a basis for the implementation of common 'information management' practices, and ensure the preservation of 'records and publications of value' for future generations of Canadians.

Yours sincerely,



Ian E. Wilson