

**Welcome and Introductory Remarks
by Ingrid Parent**

Good morning; and welcome to the Consultation on Online Publications.

I am Ingrid Parent, Director General, Acquisitions and Bibliographic Services, National Library of Canada. I am very pleased to welcome you here to this important consultation meeting on the topic of Online Publications. This is quite a momentous occasion, bringing together so many professionals and experts from various sectors of the publishing and creator communities, and I really look forward to having a good discussion and getting effective results from this meeting on a topic that is both exciting and a challenge for all of us.

Our recently appointed National Librarian, Mr. Roch Carrier, sends along his greetings and best wishes for a successful day. He had originally planned to open this meeting, but he has unfortunately been called to another meeting. However he intends to join us later in the day as we complete our discussions.

The National Library has been for a few years now, as I'm sure along with most of you, very impressed, almost amazed, at the tremendous proliferation of electronic publications and has been adjusting its policies and procedures in response to the special characteristics of this format of publication. I have to admit though that we do not have all the answers in this area; I'm not sure that anyone has all the answers. One could call this a period of transition from dealing with the traditional material to moving to the electronic world. However, I think that more is at play here, and that old models and methods of thinking will have to be transformed into new procedures, new roles and responsibilities and new relationships and partnerships. The Internet is not only giving us the opportunity to do what we do faster and giving us more choices in our personal and professional activities; it is also transforming what we do, and has the potential to become a tremendous agent of change. This consultation is meant to raise some of the key issues that the National Library must deal with in collecting and providing access to electronic publications, and then to begin to shape a new approach through the advice of the experts in this room.

For 50 years now, the mission of the National Library of Canada has been to gather and to provide access to the published heritage of this country, and we have built up a great deal of expertise in collections, preservation, standards and access mechanisms. In addition the Library's mission also includes the provision of access to information and knowledge for all Canadians from whatever source it comes.

We would be remiss if we did not consider electronic publications to be an integral part of the published heritage of this country. While online electronic publications have not had a very long life-span so far, some of the material that has been produced has unfortunately already been lost, either deliberately or carelessly, never to be recovered. Timeliness is

critical. The challenge for us now is to interpret and apply our mandate to the electronic world. Conventional methods, procedures, and policies don't seem to mesh easily with digital publications. While our objectives and mandate haven't changed, we feel that we must seriously rethink and re-examine how we can meet those objectives in the most effective and acceptable way.

We can look at electronic publications from all sorts of dimensions, and we will do so today. An example, and one which I know will be raised in our discussions, is legal deposit. Legal deposit has been the principal mechanism for acquiring the National Library's collections over the past 50 years. But it is just that, a mechanism, albeit a very powerful one. What we are asking ourselves, is whether this particular mechanism is the most effective one that will help the National Library meet its mandate and also be acceptable and serve the interests of the publishing community. It is a question up for discussion and I look forward to hearing your views on this later.

In planning for and setting up this consultation meeting, there are three objectives that I hope we will achieve today. First of all, this is an opportunity for us to get to know each other better, to share information and best practices and to learn from each other. It is nice to be able to put a face to a name. Secondly, I hope that we will be able to openly and informally discuss the many issues related to electronic publications such as acquisition and access, preservation and archiving, and standards development and implementation, and identify what ideas and concerns the publishing community has in these areas. It is important for us to have an understanding of your views so that we can identify areas of agreement but also so that we can focus on areas where opinions diverge and then work together to find solutions. And finally, I would like this meeting to result in the development of a strategy or a plan that will map out the way forward, so that we continue to work together in some fashion to meet our common objectives. This meeting today could be the first of many to continue the work that has started. In speaking with representatives in the publishing community, both with many of you and also with your colleagues internationally, I feel that there is much good will among publishers and librarians to cooperate, and it makes good business sense to work together for mutual benefit.

The day has been planned very carefully by Donna-Lyn Kent from the National Library, along with a steering committee composed of five members from the publishing community who are all here today. The agenda basically consists of presentations by National Library staff on the key issues followed by either group or plenary discussions. By providing you with background material beforehand, we do not intend to spend much time in the various presentations on detailed descriptions of what we do. Rather, the emphasis will be on your contribution and participation to chew over, and perhaps even chew up, what is being done or being proposed. The challenge will be to reconstruct the pieces into something positive and mutually beneficial, so that we can move forward with the digital agenda.

As you will have noticed from the agenda, our day is extremely full and demanding. In order to keep us focused and to allow for full participation by both the publishers and library staff, we have engaged the services of a professional facilitator, whom I would like to introduce to you now. He is Mr. Marc Vales of the firm Intersol Consulting Associates Ltd. The Intersol team has much experience in planning and facilitating public consultations in the public and private sectors. Marc has been a Senior Consultant with Intersol since 1994 and prior to that time has had some 14 years experience as a Manager and Director in two major corporations and as a counselor in labour relations. He has designed and delivered multi-stakeholder consultations for clients at the most senior levels of government, national industry associations, and the private sector.

I therefore would like to wish you all a very fruitful day, full of stimulating discussion and creative solutions.

