

Canadian researchers to have greater access to published research

\$20-million grant will improve dramatically quantity, breadth and depth of available electronic journals in Canadian universities

OTTAWA (*Thursday, June 24, 1999*) — The Canada Foundation for Innovation will provide \$20 million over three years to fund the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP). The project is spearheaded by the Canadian Association of Research Libraries (CARL) and will be administered by the University of Ottawa.

The goal of the CNSLP is to dramatically increase the quantity, breadth and depth of the most current research literature available to Canadian academic researchers. A national consortium of 64 Canadian universities will negotiate with journal publishers and vendors to obtain pan-Canadian site licenses for electronic versions of scholarly journals mostly in scientific disciplines.

“To remain internationally competitive, Canadian researchers require speedy and convenient access to the primary scientific, engineering, health, and environment research literature,” said Dr. Howard Alper, University of Ottawa’s Vice-Rector, Research, who heads the CNSLP steering committee. “National site licensing has the potential of providing this type of access for over 34,000 university researchers and 76,000 graduate students in Canada.”

“This is wonderful news,” said CARL president, Frances Groen, following the grant announcement. “Canada’s researchers will benefit immeasurably from this national initiative. Now researchers across the country will enjoy equal access to research literature and findings.” The CARL headquarters are housed at the University of Ottawa.

By uniting their efforts under the CNSLP, institutions will greatly increase their buying power and will be able to negotiate better contractual terms to gain access to a much larger body of published research. In addition, they will improve accessibility through electronic delivery of research material, which creates the possibility of national digital library services.

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A decade of double-digit price increases from publishers, proliferation of publications and rapid technological innovation in electronic publishing provide a powerful impetus to transform library systems. The use of information technology is accelerating the pace of the entire research cycle. There is a growing shift from the distribution of research results in print format to its rapid dissemination through electronic networks.

Increasingly, libraries no longer purchase individual journal titles in print format. Instead they enter into license agreements with publishers or vendors to gain access to journal collections via electronic means. This is called site licensing.

In recent years, Canadian libraries have entered into site licensing arrangements at the provincial and regional levels. The strategy worldwide, however, is toward national site licensing. Because the Canadian academic market for electronic publications is relatively small, it is crucial to consolidate the negotiating and buying power of academic libraries to reduce costs.

The project funding from the Canada Foundation for Innovation (CFI) comes from the Institutional Innovation Fund. The \$20-million grant will cover about 40 percent of the cost of the CNSLP, with the remaining \$30 million coming from regional or provincial partners and the 64 participating institutions.

CFI is a corporation established by the federal government to strengthen Canadian capability for research. Its mandate is to increase the capability of Canadian universities, colleges, hospitals, and other not-for-profit institutions to carry out important world-class scientific research and technology development.

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