

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

CANADIAN RESEARCH KNOWLEDGE NETWORK ESTABLISHED

Ottawa, May 20, 2004 - The Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) is pleased to announce its incorporation as a not-for-profit program of Canadian universities, dedicated to expanding access to scholarly research in digital formats for the benefit of academic researchers nation-wide.

The new corporation builds upon successful initiatives begun under the Canadian National Site Licensing Project (CNSLP), a pilot project launched in 2000 with seed funding totaling \$50 million from the Canada Foundation for Innovation, provincial and regional government sources, and 64 universities. Under the pilot project, more than 2,200 scholarly journals and key research databases have been made available online to over 650,000 university researchers and students, fostering their capacity to conduct interdisciplinary and innovative work.

CRKN strengthens the partnerships among university researchers, librarians, administrators, and national associations that have been a hallmark of success during the pilot phase. CRKN's membership structure opens participation to additional degree-granting institutions in Canada. In addition, national collaboration is reflected in an expanded Board of Directors that includes designates of regional and national organizations as well as representatives elected by the membership at large.

The CRKN Board of Directors is chaired by Dr. Howard Alper, Vice-President, Research at the University of Ottawa. Alper comments "The Canadian Research Knowledge Network is an outstanding example of what can be achieved through vision, collaboration and investment on a national scale. I would like to congratulate all groups -- librarians, researchers, administrators, institutions large and small -- on the partnerships created and objectives realized to date. CRKN will leverage past experience and expand the reach of this initiative, to ensure that our diverse research communities have the knowledge resources they need to fuel innovation in Canada."

CRKN's inaugural annual general meeting was held April 22-23, 2004 in Toronto, and provided members and prospective members an opportunity to celebrate accomplishments, explore issues, participate in decision-making, and provide direction to the new Board of Directors. Highlights of the meeting included reflections by three outstanding researchers -- John Cutcliffe (University of Northern British Columbia), Judee Onyskiw (University of New Brunswick) and Molly Shoichet (University of Toronto) -- on the impact of expanded access to digital content on their research. A closing address by David Kohl, University Librarian Emeritus at the University of Cincinnati, focused on the benchmark set by Canadian universities in digital library services, and challenged CRKN members to bring more of Canada's influence to bear on scholarly communication developments internationally.

For more information:

CRKN Board of Directors: www.ResearchKnowledge.ca/committees/crkn-board
Annual General Meeting, April 22-23, 2004: www.ResearchKnowledge.ca/events/toronto/
Members: www.ResearchKnowledge.ca/participants/members

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