

# AABC newsletter

ARCHIVES ASSOCIATION OF BRITISH COLUMBIA

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## President's Report

Jane Morrison, *AABC President*

**T**HIS ISSUE OF THE NEWSLETTER comes hard on the heels of our annual general meeting and conference, so I would like to start by thanking the outgoing executive members President Janine Johnston, Treasurer Linda Nobrega and interim Individual Member-at-Large Corinne Rogers for their many hours of work; it was a pleasure to be on the executive with them. Our complete 2011–12 executive other than myself is: Courtney Mumma as Vice-President (President 2012–13), Christine Gergich as Treasurer, Jennifer Pecho continuing as Secretary, Deidre Brocklehurst as Individual Member-at-Large and Peter Johnson continuing as Institutional Member-at-Large.

The conference “Networks and Archives/Networks in Archives” held on April 29th and 30th was a great success. Thanks to the conference committee comprised of Jill Teasley, Corinne Rogers, Alexandra Allen, Nicole Stocking and Elizabeth Shaffer. Many thanks as well to the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre at the University of British Columbia for its generous hosting of the conference and annual general meeting again this year. The conference committee lined up a program of sensitive, thoughtful, entertaining and information-packed sessions. If anyone is interested in participating in the 2012 conference committee (location to be determined), please contact Deidre Brocklehurst.

We are looking ahead this year to the continuing development of MemoryBC/ICA-AtOM, to renewing our website and considering membership issues. AABC course offerings over the coming year include three Distance Education courses: from Education Advisory Services, Managing Plans and Drawings, and Oral History: From Theory to Practice; and from Preservation Services, Introduction to Archival Preservation. Exact dates are not yet set for these offerings, but look for them starting in the fall. The Preservation and Education Advisory co-ordinators will be developing a two-day workshop on Oral History/Audio Tapes: Archival Best Practice, which will then be taught in subsequent years.

I think we have a strong AABC team in place with our executive, contractors and committees. Please feel free to contact us at any time.

Best wishes for a pleasant summer.

I'm looking forward to another successful year for the AABC. If you have any questions, concerns, or suggestions regarding our association feel free to contact me at any time. ☒

## Best of the Web: Archives Edition

Sonia Nicholson, *AABC Newsletter*

As archives professionals, we consult a wide range of reference material in both traditional and increasingly in digital formats. Many of these sources, however, are not actually directly related to archival institutions and organizations. One such example is BCPL8S.ca, a comprehensive site on British Columbia license plate history. Visitors can select from an extensive list of plate types—from passenger and motorcycle to various specialty plates. Within each category, images of license plates are arranged in date order, which allows one to quickly notice the differences from year to year, and are accompanied by background information and other details. The site can be of considerable use in dating photographs containing vehicles.

BCPL8S.ca was the recipient of a British Columbia Historical Federation 2001 History Web Site Award.

Interest piqued? Explore the site for yourself at <http://www.bcpl8s.ca/>.

*Do you know an interesting, useful and/or unique archives-related website that you would like to share with other Archives Association members? Send your suggestions of must-browse sites to the Newsletter Editor at [leah.pearse@gmail.com](mailto:leah.pearse@gmail.com). Be sure to include the URL and a brief summary.*

## Networks in Archives / Networks and Archives AABC Conference 2011: A Success! Corinne Rogers, *Conference Committee and AABC Executive (term ended April 2011)*

The annual conference of the AABC took place at the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre on April 29th and 30th. This year's theme of Networks and Networking was a timely one, and Canada's archival networks were represented at all levels of government. The priority in the profession of building cooperative networks was evidenced in sessions such as the Reciprocal Research Network, which introduced the possibilities for linking diverse collections such as those that exist in First Nations and Museum archives, and Cooperative Acquisition Strategies, prompting excellent discussion among BC archivists. Keynote speakers Sean Berrigan and Jean-Stéphan Piché introduced the importance of networks and networking at Library and Archives Canada, and Elizabeth Denham, Information and Privacy Commissioner for BC, offered closing remarks following a panel discussion with archivists working in federal, provincial, municipal, First Nations, university and community archives. Two pre-conference workshops, Managing Photographic Media, and Archivemata Digital Preservation Workshop, rounded out the program for four informative and inspiring days. Thank you to the conference committee, the Executive, our volunteers, and of course, presenters and attendees! Grateful thanks also to our sponsors: Andornot, Artefactual Systems, Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, City of Vancouver, Royal BC Museum, SLAIS, SFU, UBC Library Vault, Vancouver School of Theology and University of Victoria.

See everyone next year! ☒

# Truth and Reconciliation Commission—National Research Centre Forum

Christopher Hives, *University of British Columbia Archives*

**I**N EARLY MARCH, I attended the three-day National Research Centre forum in Vancouver sponsored by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC). The primary objective of the forum was to discuss and explore issues and options in the preservation of the records created and collected through the work of the TRC and, in particular, the recorded testimonials solicited from survivors of the Indian residential schools and their families.

## Indian Residential Schools—Background

Begun in the latter half of the nineteenth century, the Indian Residential Schools system represented a Canadian government initiative to deal with what had been characterized as the “Indian problem.” Funded by the federal government and operated by a number of religious organizations, the schools focussed on “civilizing” and “Christianizing” aboriginal youth so that they might be more easily assimilated into Canadian society. Between 1870 and 1969 when the program formally ended (although the last school did not close until the 1990s), it is estimated that more than 150,000 First Nations, Metis and Inuit children were largely compelled to attend the 130 residential schools operated throughout the country.

After attendance at residential schools became mandatory in the 1920s, government agents often forcibly removed young children from their families and communities, relocating them to facilities hundreds of miles from their villages where they remained for a minimum of ten months of the year. The children came to institutions where they were often referred to only by their assigned number and residential school staff

sought to extinguish all traces of their indigenous culture and traditions by whatever means necessary. Students attending the residential schools were punished for speaking their native language and often fed a diet of foods quite unfamiliar to them. Many of the children at the schools endured physical, psychological and sexual abuse at the hands of those entrusted with their care.

Inadequate operating funds for residential schools often resulted in the children having to engage in a variety of chores to help maintain those facilities. Limited funding also resulted in sub-standard living conditions as some overcrowded school buildings lacked adequate heating, sanitation and ventilation systems; this gave rise to outbreaks of various infectious diseases resulting in high mortality rates among the students. It is little wonder that in light of their treatment and the harsh physical conditions numerous students attempted to escape to return to their families and villages. Unfortunately all too often, these efforts ended tragically and contributed to the high mortality rates.

The removal of children from the First Nations, Metis and Inuit communities and the significant physical distances involved often resulted in the substantial weakening or entire destruction of parent-child relationships. Children lacked the opportunity to experience a nurturing, healthy family life or to develop the skills necessary for successful parenting. The abuse endured by many of the survivors of the residential schools often repeated itself within their own families. As a method of coping, many turned to alcohol and drugs to help deal with the situation.

As profound as these experiences must have been for the students themselves, the impact of residential schools, unfortunately, spread far beyond them. Parents, family members and communities from whom the children were taken were deprived of the opportunity to enjoy watching an entire generation grow, learn and come of age. This is particularly significant for societies where the inter-generational transfer of traditions, culture, languages and spirituality largely through the oral traditions is so important.

### Truth and Reconciliation Commission

In the 1990s, the churches that operated the residential schools began to offer formal apologies for their roles in the operation of the residential schools. About this time, former students also began to speak out about their treatment and many hundreds of individual law suits quickly followed. Criminal charges were laid against sexual abusers and a class-action suit was filed against the churches and the federal government. Extensive negotiations eventually gave rise to the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA) between representatives of former students, the churches, federal government, Assembly of First Nations and other aboriginal organizations in 2006. Amongst other things, the settlement provided for the creation of a compensation fund of at least \$1.9 billion for former students and the creation of an Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission. Officially established in 2008, the TRC (currently comprised of Justice Murray Sinclair, Chief Wilton Littlechild and Marie Wilson) has a five-year mandate to complete its ambitious work.

Broadly speaking, the mandate of the Commission is to develop an accurate assessment of the nature and impact of the treatment endured by residential school survivors to help them and their families better understand and contextualize their experiences. This is being done through the identification and collection of copies of historical documents held by those institutions that operated and funded the schools, solicitation of input from school administrators and staff as well as through

the recorded testimonials provided by former students and their families. This important documentation, and in particular, the testimonials of former students, is to be gathered together and preserved permanently in a National Research Centre for the survivors, their families and all of Canadian society so that this episode in our history is not forgotten and is never allowed to happen again.

### National Research Centre Forum

To help shape their recommendations for the creation and operation of a permanent National Research Centre, the TRC convened a forum in Vancouver March 1–3, 2011 where participants included advocates, archivists and residential school survivors. The forum featured an outstanding roster of international speakers from South Africa, Serbia, Rwanda, Germany, Chile, Australia, Guatemala, Spain, United States, East Timor, Bangladesh, Peru, New Zealand, Sudan and Canada. The presenters spoke eloquently on their own experiences with documentation as it related to genocide and human rights violations, truth and reconciliation commissions in their countries, challenges in the collection of information necessary to pursue criminal prosecution and the importance of establishing commemorative centres to both promote healing within and between communities, as well as to keep the experiences within the public eye.

Here is a summary of just a few of the many presentations. Archivist Trudy Huskcamp Peterson gave a very interesting overview and analysis of the records and their treatment of truth commissions held in some 45 countries out of about 145 countries in the world. Director of the Kalali Genocide Memorial Freddy Mutanguha spoke about the role of his facility in documenting events in Rwanda, the site of one of the world's worst modern-day genocides. Mutanguha, who lost his parents and four sisters during the three months of fighting between Hutu and Tutsi tribesmen, stressed the importance of collecting and displaying archival materials "to help our children understand the past and for all to have a better future." Catherine

Kennedy, Director of the independent South African History Archive, a Johannesburg-based human rights archive, discussed the difficulties presented by apartheid-sympathetic governments in their attempts to locate and open the archives of the South African Truth Commission. She indicated that gaps in the documentary record make it difficult to get at the “truth,” which in turn impacts negatively on efforts of reconciliation. Other presentations touched on efforts and issues associated with the documentation of First Nations communities in the United States and Canada. At a couple of points during the proceedings, forum participants also had the opportunity to hear some incredibly moving testimonials from survivors of our residential schools.

The quality of presentations from the opening to the conclusion of the three day event was outstanding. As I can't even begin to do justice to the scope of the important information shared during the event, I would invite anyone interested in this topic to check out the webcast recordings of the forum presentations at: <http://www.trc-nrc.ca/websites/NRC/index.php?p=181>.

What really resonated for me when listening to the presentations was the centrality of records and their proper management in safeguarding fundamental human rights, providing people with the opportunity for healing, understanding and reconciliation, and perhaps even in some cases ensuring the successful pursuit of legal redress against those responsible for criminal atrocities. The importance of identifying, locating, preserving and providing access to records in these contexts is obvious and certainly provides a different way of looking at the roles of records than might be familiar to many of us in our archival settings.

The TRC commissioners undoubtedly face myriad challenges in their deliberations over options for the development of a National Research Centre to house, preserve and provide access to an accurate and comprehensive historical record of the operation and impact of the residential schools. Arguably, there

are both pros and cons to the establishment of a single, monolithic repository/memorial as there are with the development of a decentralized physical or virtual network. My personal hope is that there is an opportunity for some sort of a decentralized model. Notwithstanding the ubiquitous nature of technology, it seems to me that there would be particular advantages to ensuring that the testimonials offered by residential school survivors and their families be physically housed in the regions in which the interviewees lived to ensure that they would not have to travel significant distances to access the original recordings if that were their wish. In addition, the development of a regionally focussed approach may well provide the catalyst or core around which a dynamic collection of knowledge and information will continue to grow into the future.

After spending three days at the National Research Centre forum I came away with a much better understanding of the complex issues confronting the TRC in pursuit of its ambitious mandate. The Commission is certainly to be commended on its extensive consultation with various communities and constituencies as well as its recognition of the importance of engaging in discussions with those experienced in the preservation of archival records. It seems to me that the work of the TRC and, in particular, the establishment of a permanent repository for its records and the recorded testimonials of residential school survivors will be of considerable interest to the Canadian archival community. ☒

# Ocean Falls Project: A BC Archives Success Story

Claire E. Gilbert, *Archivist, British Columbia Archives*

**2**010 WAS AN EXCITING YEAR for the British Columbia Archives at the Royal BC Museum as we completed an appraisal, arrangement and description project twenty-five years in the making.

The Ocean Falls Project focused a team of four, under the direction of a Project Manager, on the appraisal, arrangement and description, conservation and rehousing of a multiple media fonds accessioned by the BC Archives from the townsite of Ocean Falls, British Columbia. The fonds totaled approximately 170m of records of the Ocean Falls Corporation and its predecessor companies, which had been transported to Victoria from Ocean Falls via sea barge in late fall 1985. Piled in a stack, end-to-end, the records would be 6 times the height of the Netherlands Carillon Tower.

The project was funded through the Taylor Trust, a trust established in 1979 in the will of Geoffrey Wilson Taylor. Mr. Taylor was an accountant by training who had a keen interest in business history in British Columbia, authoring a number of books on the subject. Upon his death in 1992 the BC Archives had become one of the main beneficiaries of his estate, receiving a bequest in excess of \$540,000. Of this Trust, \$150,000 was made available for this specific project—the first time the Archives had used any of the money.

The project took place over 8 months and was a great opportunity for the BC Archives to once again step into an educational leadership role, hiring two co-op students from the School of Library Archives and Information Studies (SLAIS) at the University of British Columbia to fill the roles of Archives Technicians, as well as hiring a contract Project Archivist and contract Conservator (also a student).





Opposite Page  
Top: Ocean Falls Project workspace  
Bottom: Water damaged plans

This Page  
Left: Beth in fume hood  
Right: Organized chaos

Photos by Claire E. Gilbert

The largest challenge of this project were the records themselves—there was no comprehensive inventory of the collection and no comprehensive conservation reports. A few research requests had been processed in recent years, in relation to litigation and maintenance of the power dam, but only small file lists of the physical contents of boxes had been made on these occasions. No intellectual arrangement existed and one was left to assume that damage to the records occurred before, en route (i.e. on barge) or upon arrival in Victoria.

This project was also intended to establish best practices and guidelines for the BC Archives to undertake similar projects in the future. Working against Canadian Council of Archives (CCA) guidelines, and in reference to the MPLP (More Product, Less Process) approach, goals and objectives were challenged, proved, amended and reported for future reference. Further, mobile shelving, laptop computers and an organized processing space was established within the precinct for use in future initiatives.

The project's success is due, in great part, to the skills of the project staff. They showed a commitment to learning about Ocean Falls the place and a determination to work through the dirt and the mould, as well as a great team spirit which they embodied to meet all challenges head on.

As Project Manager, this project served as a challenge and an opportunity to process records that had plagued me for the previous eight years while working as a reference archivist. Before completion of this project, an inquiry into the records could take days to answer – and that was if you knew “sort of, kind of” how things were arranged. Now this collection is available to researchers on a much more broad level with an item level inventory of over 19, 434 architectural drawings/plans, over 3,000 photos and 177 containers of textual records, as well as an intellectual association between all of its parts.

The Ocean Falls Corporation was dissolved by Order-in-Council No. 606 in March 1986. The Ocean Falls Corporation fonds was completed and available for consultation on September 12, 2010.

For further readings on the MPLP process, please consult the following resources:

“More Product, Less Process: Revamping Traditional Archival Processing”. Mark A Greene and Dennis Meissner. *The American Archivist*, Vol. 68 (Fall/Winter 2005) : p.208-263.

“Accessioning as Processing”. Christine Weideman. *The American Archivist*, Vol. 69 (Fall/Winter 2006) : p.274-283. ☒

## News from SLAIS

Michelle Mallette, *SLAIS Student Services Coordinator*, [michelle.mallette@ubc.ca](mailto:michelle.mallette@ubc.ca)

**S**LAIS ALUMNI, FACULTY AND FRIENDS put on the ritz and spent a weekend reminiscing and reconnecting as they gathered in Vancouver to celebrate the 50th Anniversary of the School. Events were held both at UBC and in downtown Vancouver April 29–30. The weekend began with a reception at UBC, where UBC President Stephen Toope congratulated the faculty, staff, students and alumni on the accomplishments since 1961, noting how the School continually revived and renewed itself over 50 years, embracing the growing impact of information and records management, archives and technology, children's literature and digital literacy and expanding its offerings and research contributions accordingly. Alumni of the School also spoke, including UBC University Archivist Chris Hives, UBC University Librarian Ingrid Parent, Vancouver City Librarian Sandra Singh, and Janet Giltrow, UBC Faculty of Arts Associate Dean of Students, as well as Irving K. Barber and SLAIS Director Caroline Haythornthwaite.

Alumni, employers and newly admitted students crowded into SLAIS at an Open House on April 30 to find out what SLAIS has to offer today, from research topics to co-op employment opportunities. Nearly 100 attended this event which was held at the top of the Irving K. Barber Centre on the UBC Campus, where SLAIS relocated in February 2008.

That evening, 200 gathered at the Sutton Place Hotel to celebrate the 10 recipients of the 50th Anniversary SLAIS Alumni Service & Leadership Awards. SLAIS Director Caroline Haythornthwaite presented Sam Rothstein, the founding Director of SLAIS, with a special medal honouring his status as the “founding father” of the School in 1961. Caroline also announced a new scholarship in Sam Rothstein's name, which will be used to recognize students who demonstrate innovation and foresight. She then welcomed each of the School's

past directors: Sam Rothstein, Basil Stuart-Stubbs, Ken Haycock, Edie Rasmussen and interim director Terry Eastwood. Over the four-course meal, each director introduced and presented awards to two winners of the SLAIS Alumni Leadership & Service Awards. For the 50th anniversary, the winners were Ann Curry, Master of Library Science; Elizabeth Denham, Master of Archival Studies; Sarah Ellis, Master of Library Science; Dean Giustini, Master of Library Science; Cate McNeely, Master of Library Science; Laura Millar, Master of Archival Studies; Ingrid Parent, Bachelor of Library Science; Judith Saltman, Bachelor of Library Science; Shelley Sweeney, Master of Archival Studies; and Peter Van Garderen, Master of Archival Studies. 1962 alumna Joss Halverson (BLS) and current student Leah Hopton (MLIS) were the final speakers as they led the 200 attendees in toasts to the past and to the future. The SLAIS Alumni Association, led by MACL alumna Kathie Shoemaker, raised funds for the SLAIS Scholarship Fund with a silent auction and the evening culminated with music and dancing, courtesy of DJ and SLAIS alumnus Randy Gatley.

### SLAIS Welcomes Newest Faculty Member

SLAIS is pleased to announce the appointment of Dr. Giovanni Michetti as an Assistant Professor, effective January 1, 2012. Dr. Michetti joins the SLAIS faculty from the University of Rome, where he is Assistant Professor of Archival Science at the Special School for Archivists and Librarians, now part of the Department of Documentation Science, Linguistics, Philology and Geography. He holds a Ph.D. in archival science from the University of Rome, where he has been a faculty member since 2004. As an archivist he developed the Italian version of the standard Encoded Archival Description (EAD) standard, worked with public institutions to address issues raised by changing documentary objects and process, and has conducted research on archival legislation. His research interests

Photos from the SLAIS 50<sup>th</sup> Anniversary Event





**From start, left to right:** Terry Eastwood, MAS program founder and emeritus professor; Chris Hives with Elizabeth Denham; Shelley Sweeney; UBC President Stephen Toope, SLAIS Director Caroline Haythornthwaite, and Irving K. "Ike" Barber; Kelley Stewart, Jennifer Yuhasz and Jill Teasley; Former SLAIS director Basil Stuart-Stubbs and Prof. Luciana Duranti; SLAIS Alumni Leadership & Service Award winners with Caroline Haythornthwaite ; Marnie Burnham, John Pisacreta, Holly Yoo, Caitlin Webster, Robert Helms and Jana Buhlmann.  
-- Photos by Don Erhardt, UBC

focus on digital preservation and records management, and his teaching areas range from markup languages in archival functions to cryptography and informatics. He will be at SLAIS this summer, teaching Advanced Arrangement & Description in July and August, before returning to Rome for the fall, and formally joining the faculty in January.

#### Awards for SLAIS Faculty, Alumni & Students

The SLAIS community continues its impressive record of success in earning awards. Faculty member Dr. Victoria Lemieux earned an Outstanding Paper Award at the 2011 Literati Awards for Excellence for her article, "The Records-risk Nexus: Exploring the Relationship Between Records and Risk," published in *Records Management Journal*, Vol. 20, no. 2. Graduating MAS student Patrick Ansah and visiting Ph.D. student Umi Asma Mohktar, from University of Malaysia, have been chosen as the 2011 recipients of the Oliver Wendell Holmes Award from the Society of American Archivists. Established in 1979, the award is presented to an archivist from outside of the United States and who is already in North America, to support attendance

at the SAA Annual Meeting. Patrick came to SLAIS from Ghana to pursue the Master of Archival Studies. He has recently completed his MAS program, and will be conferred the degree at the convocation ceremonies in May. Umi is pursuing a Ph.D. at the University of Malaysia, and is a visiting student in the doctoral program at SLAIS. Kelly Lau, a student in the Dual MAS/MLIS program at SLAIS, won the Harold T. Pinkett Minority Ward from SAA, in support of minority students attending the annual meeting. It's the first time a SLAIS student has won this award. All three winners will receive their awards August 26 at the SAA Annual Meeting in Chicago. Finally, SLAIS adjunct faculty member Maggie deVries won the 2011 Sheila Egoff Award for Children's Literature for her recent novel, *Hunger Journeys*, published by HarperCollins Canada. Maggie is at SLAIS this summer, teaching LIBR 524 Writing, Publishing and the Book Trade for Children. ☒

# AABC Data Migration Toolkit Project

Peter Van Garderen, *Artefactual Systems*

## Project Overview

The AABC Data Migration Toolkit project is a collaboration between the Archives Association of British Columbia (AABC), Artefactual Systems, the Anglican Diocese of New Westminster Archives, Simon Fraser University Archives, the University of Victoria Archives, and the University of Northern British Columbia Archives to migrate data from their current archival description systems into ICA-AtoM. The project began in December 2010 and will run into April 2011 to complete all tasks.

Each of the participating institutions has provided funding to contribute towards the costs of migrating their existing datasets while the core of the project's funding was provided through a National Archival Development Program (NADP) grant requested by the AABC specifically for this project. The project involved analyzing and selecting appropriate technical tool(s) to use in the migration process as well as developing a generic methodology to assist those doing data migration projects. This 'toolkit' should have enough generic application to be useful for other data migration projects, not just those migrating data into ICA-AtoM.

## Project Objective

The rationale for the project emerged after the AABC migrated its BC Archival Union List (BCAUL) to run on ICA-AtoM software for BC's new database and portal, <http://memorybc.ca>. This generated interest from several BC archival institutions to move to ICA-AtoM as their archival description and access system. One of the primary draws is that ICA-AtoM is free and open-source software. This eliminates software license cost. However, there is still a cost associated with migrating to ICA-AtoM, namely in the time spent to map legacy datasets to the ICA-AtoM data structure.

The time and cost to perform the data migration, both for in-house technical support, or to hire a technical services company like Artefactual Systems at an hourly rate, can quickly add up and become prohibitive. The goal of the AABC Data Migration Toolkit project is to investigate the data migration process more closely, and to discover whether it is possible to standardize and build shared technical capacity around a single data migration tool and methodology. The primary aim of this integrated "toolkit" is to reduce the time and cost to migrate archival description datasets to ICA-AtoM.

## Source Data

The UNBC Archives migration involved data from their custom-developed MS SQL Server and MS Access databases with no data model documentation. It also included archival descriptions started in an ICA-AtoM (Release 1.0.9) MySQL database and importing over 5,000 digital asset files (image and video).

The SFU Archives migration involved data from a custom-developed FileMakerPro archival information system that has quite extensive data model documentation and included detailed ICA-AtoM data mappings drafted by the developer of the SFU application. The Anglican Diocese of New Westminster Archives is migrating from an Inmagic/DBTextworks database.

The UVIC Archives is migrating from MS-Word finding aids as well as the institutional descriptions it has been maintaining in MemoryBC since its launch. The UVIC Archives migration also includes scanned photographs with item-level descriptions from a custom-built Apple WebObjects database.

All of the participant datasets and digital assets are being migrated to the 1.1 release of ICA-AtoM. UNBC and the Anglican Archives will use Artefactual's ICA-AtoM hosting service while SFU and UVIC Archives will host their own copy of ICA-AtoM. UNBC Archives intends to migrate their ICA-AtoM data from the hosted copy to their own in-house version at a later date. The UNBC, SFU and Anglican Archives each have accession record data. ICA-AtoM will not have accession record support until release 1.2, which is scheduled for September 2011. The accession data from these three institutions will be migrated at the time of their upgrade to ICA-AtoM 1.2.

### Technical Options

At the project outset, three free technical options were investigated for use as the data migration tool: Drupal CMS, Google Refine and Pentaho ETL. Drupal was ruled out due to the installation and configuration complexity required to turn this CMS into a data migration tool. Google Refine was initially ruled out because it is only capable of reading and producing simple flat file comma-separated value (CSV) files while ICA-AtoM implements a fairly sophisticated relational data model that involves a variety of foreign key relationships and table joins. 'Extract, Transform, and Load' (ETL) refers to a category of tools designed specifically to handle complex data migrations and mappings.

The free and open-source Pentaho ETL tool was chosen to tackle the UNBC migration, the most complicated of the four migrations. Pentaho's features include a graphical user interface to design data migration workflows and provides end-to-end read and write capabilities for MS SQL Server, MS Access, MySQL and a large variety of other relational databases, flat-file formats (including XML) and web service interfaces. This allows reading directly from the source dataset, mapping and transformation of the data, and writing directly to ICA-AtoM's MySQL database tables. The tool evaluations and detailed documentation of how Pentaho was utilized for the UNBC migration is provided on the project wiki at <http://artefactual.com/>

[wiki/index.php?title=AABC\\_Data\\_Migration\\_Toolkit](http://wiki/index.php?title=AABC_Data_Migration_Toolkit). Unfortunately, the complexity of both the UNBC source data and the Pentaho software led to some significant project delays and re-evaluation of the selected tool and methodology. There is no doubt that Pentaho is a powerful tool that Artefactual plans to use in future complex data migration projects. However, it simply involves too steep of a learning curve to recommend as a community solution.

The project focus therefore returned to comma separated value (CSV) datasets. While using CSV does mean making compromises for more sophisticated data mappings, in some cases making these impossible, the CSV format has the advantages of being simple to understand, easy to manipulate via commonly used tools such as Microsoft Excel, and ubiquitous for import and export of application data. Therefore, the decision was made to base the ICA-AtoM data migration methodology around CSV for the remaining SFU, UVIC and Anglican Archives migrations. Artefactual is currently developing a CSV import mapping to support this approach. This feature will be available to other projects in the ICA-AtoM 1.2 release.

Many archivists are already familiar with massaging CSV files in spreadsheet software like MS-Excel. Google Refine is a free tool that is designed to optimize and enhance the manipulation of flat-file data with an interface that is similar to standard spreadsheet software. Therefore, archivists wanting to migrate to ICA-AtoM 1.2 in the near future will have the option to use MS-Excel or to use the Google Refine, with documentation supplemented by specific Google Refine examples from this project, to arrive at the CSV format required for import into ICA-AtoM.

### Project Findings

While the goal of this project has been to reduce the time and thereby cost involved in data migration projects, it has highlighted the fact that most data migration projects, including those mentioned here, present a significant challenge that is often under-

estimated at the outset. This is particularly true for custom-built systems where a common data mapping cannot be re-used but must be developed from scratch in each instance. The good news is that the tools and recommendations from this project will help to reduce the time required to migrate datasets to ICA-AtoM and other sources.

The bad news is that this required time is usually much greater than first calculated. Documenting the source data structure, creating an initial data mapping, running test loads of the data conversions, reviewing the conversions, correcting errors and omissions and re-running conversions is a multiple iteration process that requires close communication between the technical staff qualified to work with the tools and the archivists responsible for data quality.

While technical tasks take up the majority of time, delays in communication between technical and archival professional staff also add up (responding to emails, scheduling meetings). Therefore, the project conclusion is that a CSV based approach that can be implemented by archivists themselves without much additional technical assistance will be the most efficient use of available resources for ICA-AtoM data migration projects. The migration projects should include a generous project timeline, some budgeting for internal or third-party technical support (if archivist technical capacity is limited), and a clear reason to justify the time and expense of the migration, e.g. features present in ICA-AtoM not available in currently used platform, moving from a custom-built, unsupported system to a common open-source platform with the benefit of shared tools and maintenance, etc.

For further information about the project and technical details about the tools and dataset mappings, see the project wiki at [http://artefactual.com/wiki/index.php?title=AABC\\_Data\\_Migration\\_Toolkit](http://artefactual.com/wiki/index.php?title=AABC_Data_Migration_Toolkit). 

## Open Letter to Christy Clark and Responses

IN EARLY MARCH 2011, Christy Clark, Liberal Party Leader was named the Premier Designate for British Columbia. In the weeks before becoming Premier, Ms. Clark was campaigning for an Open Government Initiative and had requested that the public send our thoughts and ideas to her via her website. This was a opportune time for the AABC to advocate to the province on archival issues.

On the following pages, you will find the open letter that AABC sent to Clark, which was drafted by Janine Johnston, Jane Morrison and Jennifer Borland, the AABC's Chair to the Public Awareness, Advocacy, and Legislation Committee. This open letter was also forwarded to The Honourable Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government, as well as to The Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development. Clark and Cadieux wrote letters to AABC in response; these have been reproduced on the following pages as well.



## Archives Association of British Columbia

Honorary Patron: The Honourable **Steven L. Point**, OBC, Lieutenant Governor of British Columbia

March 18<sup>th</sup>, 2011

The Honourable Christy Clark  
Premier of British Columbia  
Box 9041  
Station PROV GOVT  
Victoria, BC

Dear Premier,

On behalf of the Executive and members of the Archives Association of British Columbia (AABC), I would like to congratulate you on being sworn in as Premier of British Columbia.

The AABC is encouraged by your key initiative to enact proposals towards an Open Government. Archivists share the belief that government information should be accessible and provided freely or at minimal cost. BC archival institutions promote openness and accountability on a daily basis by providing access to historical records, digitizing archival material and providing access to these records online through our provincial archival network *MemoryBC.ca*.

Ensuring the preservation of and access to our archival heritage is a cornerstone of any open government initiative. Archives help to ensure that government is held accountable to the public by preserving the records that enable citizens to monitor the conduct of government bodies and public servants. In our province, the BC Archives is mandated with this role as the Official Archives of the Government of British Columbia.

Unfortunately, the provincial government has not been a strong supporter of its public archives over the last decade. BC still stands alone among the provinces and territories in having no Archives Act; such an act would define what public records are, address their transfer and disposition, and identify the role of the provincial institution. The *Document Disposal Act* fulfils only a limited part of these requirements.

In 2001, the archival community suffered a major setback with the loss of two essential provincial funding programs, the Community Archives Assistance Programme and the Community Archives Advisory and Training Programme. This left archives reliant on a federal grant funding envelope of approximately \$50,000 for the entire province.

In support of openness, accountability, and the preservation of BC's documentary heritage, we hope that your government will restore funding to the archival community programmes and draft provincial archival legislation to ensure the availability of public records. We encourage you to show your commitment to the principles of Open Government by supporting these initiatives.

I look forward to your response.

Janine Johnston, President  
Archives Association of British Columbia

cc: The Honourable Stephanie Cadieux, Minister of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open  
Government  
The Honourable Ida Chong, Minister of Community, Sport and Cultural Development



April 12, 2011

Janine Johnston  
President  
Archives Assn of BC  
34A, 2755 Lougheed Hwy  
Suite 249  
Port Coquitlam, BC V3B 5Y9

Dear Ms. Johnston:

Thank you for your letter and your kind words of congratulations. I am enjoying his new opportunity to make a difference and look forward to the important work ahead.

I appreciate your comments about the importance of open government and the role of public archives in that initiative. I note that you are also recommending an Archives Act to build on what is covered by the Document Disposal Act. I see you have shared your insight with my minister for Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government, the Honourable Stephanie Cadieux. Your input will most definitely be helpful to her in those important discussions.

Again, thank you for writing to me about this matter. I have asked Minister Cadieux to follow up directing with you at her earliest opportunity.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Christy Clark", is written over a horizontal line.

Christy Clark  
Premier

Pc: Hon. Stephanie Cadieux

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Office of the  
Premier

Mailing Address:  
PO Box 9041 Stn Prov Govt  
Victoria BC V8W 9E1

Location:  
Parliament Buildings, Victoria





MAY 05 2011

Ref: 65147

Janine Johnston  
President  
Archives Association of British Columbia  
34A, 2755 Lougheed Hwy  
Suite 249  
Port Coquitlam BC V3B 5Y9

Dear Ms. Johnston:

Thank you for your letter of March 18, 2011, addressed to the Honourable Christy Clark, Premier and copied to me as Minister of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government. My new role as Minister responsible for Open Government will be both exciting and challenging and I look forward to hearing from a wide range of stakeholders, such as your organization, as my ministry moves forward with this important initiative.

The points you raised in your letter, such as the role of archival institutions in providing information to the public; the comparative analysis to B.C.'s legislative framework as it relates to archives, and, in particular, the role that the preservation of records can play in creating an open government, are examples of the valuable insight to be gained from consultation with practitioners in these areas.

Thank you for taking the time to write and share your views. I can assure you that the information you provided will be carefully considered as part of a comprehensive review on open government. Over the next few months, we will be considering many factors as we formalize our thinking on this important issue.

Sincerely,



Honourable Stephanie Cadieux  
Minister of Labour, Citizens' Services and Open Government

pc Honourable Christy Clark, Premier

Ministry of  
Labour, Citizens' Services  
and Open Government

Office of  
the  
Minister

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