

Transformation, exploration, innovation: Library and Archives Canada's Access Policy Framework

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In 2004, Library and Archives Canada (LAC) was created from the former National Library and National Archives. The new mandate was derived from the opportunities presented by the power of the Internet and the rallying cry of the official transformation document, Directions for Change, was 'access is the primary driver'. This paper provides an account of the voyage from the transformation challenge in 2004 to the development of a keystone framework document in 2007 which provides future direction for access, called the LAC Access Policy Framework. The framework provides a definition of access, four principles of access, and several guiding objectives which underpin the principles. While the final product is not very long, it represents wide-ranging, intense discussions from all parts of the new institution which helped to nuance the balance which all cultural institutions face between preservation and access. The original points of departure on this exploratory voyage were quite disparate but the final result represents a true convergence in its innovation. Other cultural institutions that are also facing the challenges of access and the Internet, yet recognise the need to fulfil their mission of long-term preservation, will find this example from LAC helpful in its futuristic orientation.

Introduction

In 2004 the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada amalgamated to become one institution, Library and Archives Canada. Several factors contributed to the creation of the new institution, but by far the greatest impetus was the opportunity for digital access presented by the pervasiveness of the Internet. The pivotal 'transformation' document which explained the way forward, *Directions for Change*, stated that 'access is the primary driver' for Library and Archives Canada (LAC). All functions and activities of the organisation - from acquisition to description, preservation to reference - were henceforth to be oriented for one purpose: access to the LAC collection. This unique experiment on the world cultural scene - the joining of a national library, an archives, and also an interpretive cultural entity (like a museum), the Portrait Gallery of Canada - was now focused on the exploration of new and innovative ways to transform itself to serve all clients - Canadians and international researchers.¹

This paper examines the development of LAC's *Access Policy Framework (APF)*, a policy statement designed to give full voice to the new emphasis on access and to guide future detailed policy and operational change related to access issues. It begins with the transformation challenge of the new institution as stipulated in the new legislation and related documentation. The second and by far the largest section of the paper is an exploration of issues that a working group faced as they developed the *APF*, issues that all areas of the new institution were grappling with. These issues are my interpretation of the deliberations of the working group; as represented here, they are not distinct but overlap each other. The four principles, their supporting objectives, and the definition of access from the *APF* which speak to the issues, are sometimes woven into this section. The last short section summarises the issues by demonstrating how the text of the *APF* encompasses all the issues and opportunities in an innovative expression of the new direction for the new institution.²

Transformation challenge of access

The law which enacted the creation of Library and Archives Canada was very explicit about the change in direction. In the preamble to the

law, among four statements which underpin the *raison d'être* for LAC, two are wholly about access, stating that:

- the collection be accessible to all; and
- the institution contribute to the advancement of Canadian society.³

While it is fair to say that the National Library (NL), like all libraries, was always a promoter of access, one could argue that its former legislation and policies encouraged a muted access: patrons could not (and cannot still today) remove books from the premises; collection activities, such as fulfilling its role as the receptor for the legal deposit of two copies of all books published in Canada, were carried out because of its cultural, preservation mandate (the guarantor of preservation for Canadian books); and the role of serving as a hub for the huge network of Canadian libraries – witness inter-library loan and national leadership at the federal level – was very important but not only for the duty of service to the public, or access. The National Library saw itself as the library of Canadian libraries, and it relied on the traditional access services at its location in Ottawa.

The latest legislation for the National Archives (1987) also touched upon the mandate of service, but not in a broad, democratic sense. The archives main clientele had always been government researchers and elite historians, and that did not change after 1987. What changed in the 1987 legislation was added authority to the role of the National Archivist as the sole determiner of which federal government records should be kept for posterity and which should be destroyed. The emphasis was on acquisition, on the keep or destroy decision, and on the fact that the decision was not made based on future researcher interest (or informational value) but on evidence of administrative functions. Records had archival and historical value when they contained evidence of the government's mandate and functions, and researchers' potential interest in records was only a final consideration. There were clauses that stated the National Archive's reference mandate, referring to reference tools and so on, but these were certainly not a new focus of the law.

Directions for Change,⁴ the pivotal internal document which guided the transformation, took the power of the 2004 legislation which created LAC and nuanced it by providing five directions for the new institution. These five major directions were given additional weight when the so-called five 'strategic choices' were developed subsequently by policy working groups. Once again, the focus on access is paramount. Summarised, the five choices are: digital permeates everything; have influence throughout the country beyond the National Capital Region; focus on supporting recordkeeping throughout the government; use partnerships to realise our mandate; and understand the LAC client through a series of evaluations. Thus, the backdrop for the creation of policy framework documents – to support the four major functions of the institution: acquisition, description, preservation, and access – was in place as the *Access Policy Framework Working Group (APF WG)* began its task in earnest in January 2007.

The decision to seek representation on the *APF WG* from all sectors and branches and from many divisions (that is, not only access-related divisions) reinforced the pervasiveness and importance of the focus on access. The objects of our study of access were the user and the LAC collection, which consists of federal government and private documentary heritage, published and unpublished, in all media.

Six issues

Three different entities

Archives, libraries, and museums have distinct views of access. How would the new institution – and the *Access Policy Framework Working Group* – reconcile these in one framework document? An archive is a resting place for original documentation of differing provenances. In Canada, at the national level, the archive is the repository for federal government documentation and for private records with 'national significance' in all media. The complications of legalities concerning acquisition and donor restrictions muddy the waters of access; legislation, such as the *Access to Information Act*, the *Privacy Act* and the *Copyright Act*, provides decisiveness and lack of clarity at the same time, depending on the particular situation. The National Archives

viewed its role of access as service to special researchers – those that could make it to Ottawa – as well as small resident and travelling exhibitions of documentary heritage. To contrast (at least as far as the analog collection is concerned), a library celebrates access and universality of openness for all those who walk through the door (or request books through inter-library loan). Historically, libraries have not been cautious about lending, for there are few, if any, restrictions to borrowing books, only conditions that might apply. Librarians understand that descriptions of documentary heritage must evolve towards ‘resource discovery’, encouraging open access for the user, not protection of the documentary heritage. While librarians at the National Library were aligned with their profession in regard to access, the institution itself was on the conservative side and viewed its role as facilitating access for other libraries by providing bibliographic records of inter-library loan services. Museums as an entity are most interested in interpreting cultural heritage for the benefit of the visitor (or user). Museums understand the unique nature of originals, like archivists, but they understand the broad, general public and their interests, much like librarians. Museums understand their audiences well and assume a moral role in society to educate the population about the past. Archives and libraries are less interested, generally speaking, about engaging or influencing the user, rather leaving the user to decide how to interpret the documentary heritage.

Three different entities with three different views of access were the cards that the APF WG was dealt. The diverse membership on the WG – with representation from policy analysts as well as directors of archivists, librarians, and curators from the Portrait Gallery – led to a healthy blurring of our understanding of who the LAC user is or might be; of what our definition of access should be; and of the expanded means of reaching the user. Put concretely, archivists became more aware of their subjectivity in the creation of (interpretive) discovery tools and also, most fundamentally perhaps, learned to appreciate the new paradigm of reaching the ‘average’ Canadian researcher; librarians became appreciative of the possible complications related to the principle of universal access, especially in a digital environment, depending on the documentary heritage in question, and of the real meaning of stewardship of the collection; and curators welcomed the

possibilities for expanded researcher access beyond the artefact or interpreted portrait because the Portrait Gallery is uniquely situated 'inside' a library and an archive.

Simply due to the amalgamation of the three entities and the mandate before the *APF* WG, we were forced to appreciate each others' views of access, and our deliberations resulted in a richer definition of access for the new institution. The conversations among the professions who were represented enlarged our institution's understanding of access and of the user, because each of the professionals brought their particular expertise to bear on the questions. Through our deliberations we realised our mandate, which was to develop a policy framework that would:

- provide grounding and cohesion to internal access-related policies and guidelines, current and future;
- respect LAC's legal obligations; and
- present clear direction on access to inform strategies and desired outcomes.

The user

A second issue for the new institution was to understand the complexion of the new user. The so-called elite researcher, typically a serious historian, is fast holding less sway or influence simply because he or she is increasingly out-numbered. Even before the amalgamation of the former National Library and National Archives, genealogists were competing favourably with other kinds of researchers. More recently, especially due to the democratising power of the Internet, the LAC 'user' is the 'average' Canadian curious about his or her own past – their family and community history, as well as the larger context of events that situate their personal stories. Average Canadians are interested in what the Librarian and Archivist of Canada has called 'history, first person singular.'

The *APF* WG understood that perhaps the biggest challenge to realise the access mandate of the institution was to understand the current and future user. Before discussing the user as someone who interfaces with the collection in some way, we had to recognise LAC's obligations

towards the user, its guest. The first paragraph of the introduction to the APF puts it well:

Access is focused on users: fair and equitable access to the documentary heritage collection, individual and collective enrichment, and the protection of individual and community rights.⁵

Then, to answer the question 'Who is our user?' we examined users along a continuum of their experience. We saw users at one of three phases or more, depending on their question or research interest, and we associated verbs with their possible actions in each phase: 'discover', 'use', and 'understand'. The discovery phase was where the user would find, identify or locate information of interest to them. For example, a genealogist discovers, through the use of an online research tool for the census of 1901 that his ancestor indeed lived in a certain house on a certain street in a certain town, and so on. The user, in this case, is satisfied with his finding or answer to his factual question. The second phase, which we called use, is further along the continuum, a place where the user seeks a contextual grasp of some aspect of Canadian history. For example, the genealogist moves beyond searching for a quick answer to a straightforward question towards a deepening interest in understanding the reasons behind the facts, or a lawyer seeks to understand the context behind precedence in legal decisions, and so on. In other words, the user is seeking information to form her own opinions and analyses about aspects of the content found in the documentary heritage. Finally, the third phase encompasses that user who accesses LAC's collection with a view to helping Canadians understand it better, usually through some form of interpretation: to explain an aspect of Canadian history as part of an exhibition; or as part of a thematic book; or as part of an educational tool; and so on. This third phase sees users possibly even reformulating parts of the documentary heritage collection through their interpretations and, in this way, subtly revising that heritage.

While the continuum helped to focus our discussion on the user, a by-product was the definition of access, which we debated over several hours. In the end, the definition of access was rather concise: 'Access is the ability to discover, use, and understand the LAC documentary

heritage collection.' Users today include all manner of Canadians (and those interested in Canada) looking to discover answers, seek greater understanding, and interpret the documentary heritage to reach others. Our users are school children, educators, curators, historians, tourists, genealogists, technologists, lawyers, government employees, and so on. They come to us via a multiplicity of channels: written letter, email, blog, podcast, email, and in person. They face challenges related to their abilities, ethnicity, age – and we must treat them equitably with a set of service standards that do not discriminate. Part of knowing who our users are means that LAC must continually invest in evaluation studies of our users. What are their profiles, interests, experiences inside our institution, and so on? How can we reach users better, understand them and their needs, and therefore better serve them?⁶ Beyond LAC's interests in users, what are users' interests in LAC? Is the institution meeting the challenge of responding to (unknown) client needs for access?

Balancing open access with legal frameworks

A third issue was the challenge of balancing access to sensitive documentation in a controlled legal environment. As a total archives, LAC holds open and closed federal government information, as well as donated documentary heritage with idiosyncratic access restrictions tied to the donor agreement. Throw into this mix Canada's *Copyright Act* (currently under review), the *Access to Information Act*, the *Privacy Act*, legal deposit regulations applying to all books published in Canada, our new mandate to archive Canadian websites with all kinds of information, sensitive and banal, ephemeral and long-lasting, and the overall goal of open and unrestricted access to the documentary heritage seems rather farfetched. Nevertheless, advances have been made, and general forward-looking visions or policy frameworks, like the one for access, can have an impact on operations. One example is the new template of a typical donor agreement which encourages donors to lift access restrictions sooner rather than later. Another example is the creation of an infrastructure which allows for 'block reviews' to open groups of like restricted material under the *Access to Information Act* using well defined criteria, instead of putting each

document under the lens as it is requested by a user. Other examples from experience pull in the opposite direction, with the conclusion that the vision for access must always be tempered by the reality of legal contexts, part of our stewardship of the collection.

Meaning of service

A fourth access issue concerns the services surrounding access. For example, can we favour one researcher over another, based on the channel they use to reach us or their particular topic of interest? What does it really mean to treat researchers equitably? Should we charge for digital copies only the first time, each time they are requested, or not at all? Should the prices for digital copying compare with those for photocopying? Should LAC outsource the copying function? Is this responsible stewardship? The inherited principle of universality of borrowing books from a library – open access – is seemingly contradictory to the inherited archival principle of protection of the original document. A balance must be achieved.

The first principle of the *APF* addresses this issue in part. It states that LAC has the responsibility to provide fair and equitable access. 'Fair and equitable' is not 'equal access', which means that, as far as possible, and in balance, LAC will provide everyone access to the whole of the collection. Examples of balance include honouring the researcher's request, 'providing other objectives of the *APF* are not compromised.' Such other objectives include respecting diverse access needs and 'responding with an appropriate level' of service. Balance also means 'embracing e-service while maintaining certain traditional means to access the documentary heritage.' Beyond the need to balance service offerings with other aspects of our mandate, the issue of service also reminds us to focus on broader government-wide goals for serving all Canadians by 'removing barriers to access such as gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability' and 'developing service standards and fee structures in an open and transparent way.' The objective of 'providing timely access to the collection' is imperative for the user, whether they are inside the National Capital Region or somewhere else in our vast country.

There is much to be gained by engaging our users in our description efforts. User-generated metadata, for example, is certainly profitable for documentary heritage institutions as well as users. In looking at such ideas, the Working Group also hinged its conversations on the meaning of service by moving beyond collection-serving and profession-serving notions of access. Inside LAC such work has since been carried on by other working groups examining resource discovery, the use of metadata, and digital access, in other words, the access of the future.

What kinds of tools and professional expertise encourage optimum access, perhaps even going so far as to explain the value and meaning of the collection to Canadians? As far as research tools are concerned, one of the biggest challenges facing LAC is the ongoing integration of and improvements to the mammoth descriptive systems so that the researcher has a seamless research experience centred around the question she has and not around the particular and often idiosyncratic research tools of the diverse components of the collection. Along with improving our own systems and tools, we want to build upon and share the expertise resident in our professionals – not only for the sake of LAC professionals' better comprehension of the collection but especially for the users. LAC wishes to move beyond hoarding its intellectual capital towards a model where services, systems and tools capture the expertise and support autonomous access to the collection.

The recognition that service is an integral part of the renewed focus on the user has served the new amalgamated institution well in the transformation. While there may be different acquisition strategies or descriptive standards, depending on which part of the collection is at stake, the idea that one user is nonetheless potentially accessing all parts of the collection thus serves as a unifying element for the institution to move forward in providing access through its tools and via its expertise, not to mention in democratising description and taking a macro approach to acquisition.

Preservation and access

A fifth issue, one that the APF WG wrestled with but did not completely resolve, was the status of preservation for a cultural institution mandated to care for a priceless collection when access is the primary driver. The WG vigorously debated the persistence and permeation of the preservation function with the enhanced access mandate. Does a cultural institution preserve in order to provide access? Or is preservation's main function to preserve for eternity, regardless of the potential use of the heritage materials? To push it a bit further, are we now acquiring with access in mind? To what extent do access needs determine the selection and retention criteria as well as the choice of what gets the attention of preservation? What is the full range of opportunities that digital preservation brings? From a practical resource point of view, does mass deacidification, a preventive care measure, take precedence over the laborious stabilisation of iron gall ink?

A creative solution to these fundamental questions for preservation was developed in the preservation area itself – an inclusive approach which is 'neither-nor.' As the *Directions for Change* clearly stated, 'Everyone at LAC is in the access business.' The preservation area took this to heart by developing a preservation decision tree for enabling current and long-term access. Both current and long-term access are recognised as important and, depending on the challenges and business lines for a particular year, resources are apportioned accordingly. Preservation for current access includes all kinds of activities, like preparing the collection for exhibitions, all aspects of reprography/copying, preventive care measures and temporary storage. Drivers for current access may include: client request; legal requirement; and program request. Examples of preservation for long-term access include: serious conservation of an unusually large map that is rarely consulted or accessed; restoration removal of particular inks and repairs to oil paintings of portraits; and migration copying of old videos. Drivers for long-term access may include: the medium is obsolete or near-obsolete; the preservation copy is unusable or unavailable; the documentation is frequently requested; poor condition; and inherent vice. At LAC, most resources in preservation are dedicated to short-term access projects,

but, admittedly, this is slowly changing. This fundamental paradigm shift in traditional thinking around preservation of cultural heritage has permeated LAC, with the impetus provided by the new driver: access (the user).⁷

The APF followed the lead of this most recent thinking around preservation and access in the development of one of its four main principles: LAC has the responsibility to ensure access to its collection for the benefit of present and future generations. One of the objectives to guide LAC in its adherence to this principle is to 'balance current access with considerations for future access.' Innovation and creativity are required in preservation for LAC to fulfill its short- and long-term obligations, whatever they may be, and to consider new ways of doing so, such as through partnerships.

Collaborating with others for access

A sixth issue that the WG grappled with was collaborating with others for access. One incentive behind the amalgamation of two institutions with good reputations was the opportunity of one larger, stronger institution to seize upon innovative solutions for access through partnerships. It also is recognition that we cannot do it alone, and in fact some can do it better than we can. Increasingly, this has meant collaborating with other entities, both public and private, in digitisation initiatives. The desired outcome seems simple enough: shared access to digitised content, published as well as unpublished, freely available to all, thanks to the Internet. The principle of collaborating 'to promote and facilitate access to Canada's documentary heritage' means partnering with communities of users, Government of Canada institutions, individuals, public and private organisations, local, provincial, territorial, national and international organisations, educators, other documentary heritage institutions and other governments. In order to do so, LAC recognises that it must develop the necessary skills and knowledge and governance structures, and align itself with other institution and communities of users. In particular, LAC needs to create, cooperate and collaborate with networks of digital entities for preservation of and access to the documentary heritage, whether a public trusted digital repository or a private conglomerate of digitisation companies.

But partnerships present certain risks. Some issues surrounding collaborating with others concern the value – and thus ethical considerations – of the content of our collection. We must be vigilant about balancing public documentation with private interest. For example, who owns the digitised images when a partnered private company digitises the mass of a part of the collection? What is the model for collaboration when it concerns discussions about ownership of the original? Furthermore, what are the ‘rules of ownership’ in the pervasive, multi-tiered digital world that knows no geo-political boundaries? Partnerships and collaborations open doors that might be impossible for LAC to open alone, yet the associated risks must be mitigated and managed carefully. The WG agreed upon an objective which addressed this issue: ‘Ensure access to documentary heritage is not impeded when undertaking accessibility initiatives with external parties.’

Conclusion

Access to cultural heritage must always be balanced by stewardship of that heritage, an imperative that the Working Group recognised in the introduction to the *APF*. What this means in practical terms is that LAC strongly advocates for intellectual freedom in our country and promotes free and open access to the collective archival and library collection of the nation. At the same time, LAC’s unique responsibility for stewardship of that collection demands a commitment to responsible use of it, including respect for contractual, legislative, and institutional rights and obligations. For example, the medium, fragility, rarity, and legal or other status of materials may influence the nature of the access that can be provided.

The *APF* WG took the transformation challenge of ‘access is the primary driver’, explored a myriad of situations and issues related to modern-day access and the user, and produced an innovative, tight policy framework to guide the new institution. Through our deliberations on the issues of understanding access in relation to stewardship and preservation, the three entities and professions, the user, the meaning of service, open access and legal frameworks, as well as collaborating for access, the *APF* WG realised its mandate:

the development of a policy framework which provides grounding and cohesion to internal access-related policies and guidelines, current and future, respects LAC's legal obligations, and presents clear direction on access to inform strategies and desired outcomes.

Library and Archives Canada is now better placed to make decisions on access-related questions, whether inside the institution or outside, and it has a policy framework which provides the contours for future policies, strategies, and procedures on access. The transformation of the former institutions into one amalgamated institution was challenging, partly for different notions of the meaning and delivery of the access mandate, but the challenge has been made easier with the *APF* now in place, representing as it does wide-ranging discussions from across the spectrum of the professions inside LAC. While the development of the *Access Policy Framework* heightened awareness and understanding of access at LAC, the full impact and true reading of the new amalgamated institution's emphasis on access is not known at this time. User evaluations, engagement policies, and fulsome strategies for services and resource discovery are either not completely telling yet, or still evolving. The final chapter on the effects of the transformation emphasis on access is still a long way away.

Appendix

Library Archives Canada – Introduction to Access Policy Framework, 13 July 2007

Context

Access to the LAC collection is the focus of Library and Archives Canada (LAC). The amalgamation in 2004 of the National Library of Canada and the National Archives of Canada envisioned the creation of a knowledge institution that views access to the collection as its 'primary driver'. There is a focus on integration of the strong service traditions of both former institutions together with increased efforts to render the combined vast and rich collection accessible to Canadians

and those with an interest in Canada. Access is focused on users: fair and equitable access to the documentary heritage collection, individual and collective enrichment, and the protection of individual and community rights.

Library and Archives Canada, in adopting access as its primary driver, strongly advocates for intellectual freedom in our country and promotes access to the collective archival and library collection of the nation. Accordingly, LAC commits to providing, whenever possible, free and open access to its rich heritage collection. At the same time, Library and Archives Canada has been given a unique responsibility in the stewardship of the collection, so that the collection may be carefully acquired, managed and preserved for future Canadians. LAC commits to actively promoting access to its collection, to the maximum possible, within the bounds of responsible use of the collection and its contractual, legislative and institutional rights and obligations. For example, the medium, rarity, fragility, and legal or other status of materials may influence the nature of the access that can be provided.

Through its enabling legislation, the *Library and Archives of Canada Act*, LAC has been given a clear and enhanced role as well as a strategic mandate in relation to the documentary heritage materials it makes available for Canadians. The Act states that LAC is a source of enduring knowledge; LAC contributes to the cultural, social, and economic advancement of Canada as a free and democratic society; the collection is for the benefit of present and future Canadians; it is accessible to all; LAC serves as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions; and LAC works in cooperation with other documentary heritage institutions in the country involved in the diffusion of knowledge. Indeed, in addition to promoting access to its own collection, LAC has an important national role and responsibility for Canada's documentary heritage collection as a whole. All of these legislative outcomes are possible when sustainable access to the collection is the overarching goal of the new institution.

Access Policy Framework – Introduction

A framework for access policies is a necessary part of building the LAC envisioned in the *Library and Archives of Canada Act*: a new institution that maintains the best of the access approaches of the predecessor institutions and adapts its access activities to the requirements of its own internal capacities, new strategic choices, and the digital environment. The framework provides a definition of access to the documentary heritage collection at LAC which builds upon the library and archives traditions, identifies the long-term principles to guide the access policy activity, and lists the objectives for LAC to realise those principles. This framework document is the foundation upon which subsequent LAC access work will build and the lens through which established access-related policies will be re-examined.

The four principles of access and their objectives are equally important. The first three principles pertain to the LAC collection, and the last principle concerns the broader documentary heritage collection which comprises all Canadian repositories' materials.

There are also pervasive enabling mechanisms, strategies, and sound management practices which will be applied to ensure effective implementation of the principles, according to resource capacity. The overall aim is that LAC will be first and foremost oriented to access in its policies and strategies and, to effectively implement this focus on access, LAC will strive to make its collection increasingly used and accessible; LAC will continually improve and innovate in access, for example, by exploiting technology and studying our users; LAC will communicate its access orientations, policies, and procedures; LAC will measure success based on maintaining and expanding access to the collection; and, related to measuring success, LAC will critically and continually examine its access objectives, and adjust them as required. Finally, this work forms part of a process of developing complementary policy frameworks to guide LAC (for example, Collection Development Framework, Metadata Framework for Resource Discovery, and so on).

Library Archives Canada

Access Policy Framework – Principles and Objectives –

13 July 2007

Principles of Access

In accordance with its mandate, and recognizing its role as an agency of government, LAC has the responsibility to:

- provide fair and equitable access;
- provide services, systems, tools and expertise to facilitate access and understanding of the documentary heritage;
- ensure access to its collection for the benefit of present and future generations;
- collaborate with others to promote and facilitate access to Canada's documentary heritage.

Definition of Access

In the context of the above responsibilities, access is the ability and opportunity to discover, use, and understand Canada's documentary heritage resources.

Principle 1: LAC has the responsibility to provide fair and equitable access

To support this principle, LAC will be guided by the following objectives:

1. Provide fair and equitable access in accordance with LAC's legislative obligations and stewardship responsibilities;
2. Remove barriers to access (e.g., gender, race, ethnicity, physical ability, etc.);
3. Provide access regardless of the user's purpose, providing other objectives of the Access Policy Framework are not compromised;
4. Develop service standards in a transparent and inclusive way, and make them available;

5. Offer a range of channels, based on users' needs, to access the documentary heritage;
6. Embrace e-service while maintaining certain traditional means to access the documentary heritage;
7. Provide increased access to LAC's documentary heritage outside the National Capital Region;
8. Establish, where necessary, and communicate in a transparent manner a fee structure which ensures fair and equitable access;
9. Provide a first or basic level of service to all users;
10. Recognise diverse access needs and respond with an appropriate level of service;
11. Ensure access to documentary heritage is not impeded when undertaking accessibility initiatives with external parties.

Principle 2: LAC has the responsibility to provide services, systems, tools and expertise to facilitate access and understanding of the documentary heritage

To support this principle, LAC will be guided by the following objectives:

1. Develop and disseminate services, systems and tools that support autonomous access to the collection;
2. Develop outreach and interpretive programs that promote LAC and explain the value and meaning of the collection to Canadians;
3. Help Canadians acquire the competencies to access LAC's documentary heritage;
4. Provide timely access to our services, systems and tools;
5. Identify and mitigate obstacles to access through consultation;
6. Continually improve our services, systems, tools and expertise to access the collection;
7. Integrate description of the collection to better respond to Canadians' needs for access;

8. Use digital technology where it will improve access to the collection;
9. Develop and share expertise about the documentary heritage collection;
10. Solicit information from users in order that LAC services, systems, tools and expertise will meet their needs;
11. Provide a welcoming environment to attract Canadians to meaningful enriching opportunities to experience their documentary heritage;
12. Value and present diverse perspectives in Canadian society when interpreting the collection;
13. Ensure that users understand their responsibility to respect the collection, staff and facilities;
14. Collaborate with communities of users to create services, systems and tools.

Principle 3: LAC has the responsibility to ensure access to its collection for the benefit of present and future generations

To support this principle, LAC will be guided by the following objectives:

1. Provide integrated access which responds to Canadians' needs for access to the documentary heritage collection;
2. Share responsibility with users to access the collection in a way that does not harm future use;
3. Balance current access with considerations for future access;
4. Preserve both analog and digital materials for the purpose of access;
5. Provide access through innovative solutions;
6. Provide timely access to the collection;
7. Leverage our resources to increase access for Canadians;
8. Work with sources (e.g., creators, donors, vendors, publishers, etc.) of documentary heritage to maximise user access.

Principle 4: LAC has the responsibility to collaborate with others to promote and facilitate access to Canada's documentary heritage

To support this principle, LAC will be guided by the following objectives:

1. Promote and facilitate access to Canada's documentary heritage by collaborating with others, including:
 - a. Communities of users;
 - b. Government of Canada institutions;
 - c. Individuals, public and private organizations;
 - d. Local, provincial, territorial, national and international organizations;
 - e. Educators;
 - f. Other documentary heritage institutions;
 - g. Other governments.
2. Develop the necessary skills and knowledge, and implement an organizational governance structure, to collaborate effectively;
3. Develop and/or participate in programs that support communities and documentary heritage institutions in the provision of access to the Canadian collection;
4. Advocate for increased access to an increasing volume of documentary heritage assets on behalf of users and documentary heritage institutions and communities of Canada;
5. Collaborate for increased access within a network of trusted digital repositories.

Endnotes

¹ The views expressed in this article are my own, and not necessarily those of my institution (Library and Archives Canada or LAC). I would like to thank anonymous readers for their comments, as well as Daniel J Caron, Doug Rimmer and Alison Bullock, all at LAC.

Since this policy framework was developed, other less broad services strategies and policies have emerged, focusing, for example, on engaging the user. These recent developments, which are more 'outside-in' in focus, follow naturally now that the foundational *Access Policy Framework (APF)* is in place. During the deliberations leading

to the development of the *APF*, the institution was more internally focused or 'inside-out' and our assumptions were not formally tested with our growing user base. As well, since the transformation of 2004 and certainly in recent months, the institution is now concentrating on its core mandate, thus tempering the 2004 emphasis on access with equal emphasis on acquisition, description, and preservation. The story of the amalgamation of the National Archives and the National Library of Canada is another paper entirely. However, I would venture to say that the exercise helped us see our problematic from the perspectives of the user, the professions, and public administration, that is, more horizontally.

² An appendix to the paper contains the full text of the *LAC Access Policy Framework*, which was approved by LAC's Management Board on 13 July 2007.

³ *Library and Archives of Canada Act 2004*, c. 11, preamble, available at <<http://lois.justice.gc.ca/eng/L-7.7/page-1.html>>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁴ A new kind of knowledge institution; a truly national institution; working with others to strengthen the whole of Canada's documentary heritage; a prime learning destination; and a leader in government information management, see <<http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/about-us/directions-for-change/index-e.html>>, accessed 20 November 2009.

⁵ See *LAC Access Policy Framework*.

⁶ The Working Group confirmed that the literature on users is ample in library journals, and minimal in archival journals (although this is now changing). We also acknowledged that, without the benefit of published research or our own user studies, our understanding of our users would have to be – for now – more 'inside-out' than 'outside-in'. See also endnote 1.

⁷ Since the *Access Policy Framework* was written, the *Preservation Policy Framework* has taken shape and it is now in its final draft form. It represents some fundamental re-thinking of 'how' preservation is done, especially conservation treatment, and the role of the digital.