

CASLIS TORONTO NEWS



CANADIAN ASSOCIATION OF SPECIAL LIBRARIES AND INFORMATION SERVICES

From Our Incoming President

Greetings friends and colleagues.

As I write this on a blustery, rainy day, I am reminded of the importance of adapting to changing circumstances, and of the value in reframing one's mindset to do so successfully. As sheets of rain blow past my window, today's adaptation means adjusting my cycle home, and reframing involves curbing my initial desire to curse the rain and recontextualizing it with the needs of my garden in mind.

Organizationally for CASLIS, the past two years have involved adapting and reframing our priorities and structure through the 2002-03 National Strategic Planning process, and through the National Governance process that has followed this past year. For a chapter executive, as our profession changes, adapting and reframing means ensuring that we respond to member needs. And the only way we can do that is with your help, through your input and suggestions. We welcome your insights into how CASLIS can best respond to member needs.

The Executive and I are looking forward to working with all of you in the year ahead, listening to your wise counsel on the issues that face us, and seeking to serve your needs. Our contact information is listed in this newsletter and on the website for future reference. So, please speak up, drop us an email, complete your program evaluation forms and give us your feedback.

Your ideas and energy will help the chapter adapt and reframe for the future. And getting back to that garden metaphor, you will help our professional garden to grow – with a little heavy lifting, some weeding and replanting, nourished by a mix of organic material, rain, and sunshine

– we think it will bear good fruit for all of us to harvest.

Best wishes for the summer,

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Remarks from our Outgoing President at the May 13 AGM

This time last year I was eagerly and anxiously looking forward to my term as president of the CASLIS Toronto Chapter. I knew it would be busy year, and that all my best intentions would inevitably be subsumed to a more pragmatic view of the world.

Of course, it didn't take long for pragmatism to take hold. This is the life of a volunteer, a fact with which many in this room are already familiar. Nonetheless, we as an executive accomplished a number of key activities over the past 12 months, not the least of which is the completion of another program year, our 29th program year, in fact.

Our programming is the most public face of the chapter for all of the membership, and it has long been one of the Toronto Chapter's strengths. I'm sure every executive over the past few decades has dreamt of putting on the perfect program year: where we see the majority of chapter members

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attending programs; where finding volunteers for vacant positions is a breeze; where sponsors are coming out of the woodwork wanting to help us put on the best possible programs for the lowest possible cost . . . Ah yes, I remember that dream.

The reality is that our members vote with their wallets, and if programs are not to their taste they don't attend; it is a bitter lesson, one we all understand much more clearly now.

Over the past year our attendance ranged from 15 to 33, considerably lower than past years. Why? The failure is ours, of course. We have not been as active over the past few years in soliciting feedback and input from our membership, and our attendance over the past year highlights this. We as an exec have been paying attention, and will be undertaking efforts to make our programming everything you want it to be.

The executive also undertook 2 other initiatives over the past year: revising our chapter Roles and Responsibilities document; and weeding and organizing the chapter's archival documents stretching back into the 1970s. The first task was to rationalize and update our executive structure and make clear the functions of each executive and non executive role. This process does impact the membership, albeit indirectly.

Our new roles and responsibilities handbook clarifies the roles and inter-relationships of the various positions, facilitating a more efficient and hopefully more effective executive structure. The key change was to create non-executive positions for program planning, so that the positions would be less time consuming. Feedback from program planners has so far been favourable toward the change.

The second initiative was prompted by a former executive member who wanted to move 3 boxes of CASLIS documentation out of her small storage space. We spent an afternoon going through old minutes, newsletters, communications and financials, organizing the various types of content. This was just the first step in what will be an ongoing process of capturing the content from our archival documents, while at the same time maintaining the integrity of the hard copies.

The Toronto chapter continued to be involved with CASLIS National as the association began implementation of the strategic plan. Erika Steffer, our chapter VP/President-Elect participated in the creation of a new governance proposal which will be voted on at the CASLIS AGM this month in Victoria. The essence of the proposal is to create

parallel structures between CASLIS National and the chapters, and to streamline CASLIS National governance by eliminating 2 executive positions and creating a number of non-executive positions.

We will also be represented at the CLA conference in Victoria by way of our 5 for 4 program. CASLIS National is participating in a poster session at the conference, and has asked the chapters for best practices input for one of the posters. It was at least a decade ago that the chapter executive, in their wisdom, adopted Barbara Fingerote's suggestion to offer a "5 programs for the price of 4" incentive to members, and the program has been going strong ever since. We consider this one of our best practices, and have submitted information about it to CASLIS National for the poster session.

A few numbers: in addition to 5 programs and the jointly hosted holiday social, we published 5 newsletters this year, held 6 executive meetings, and have been working to serve all 240 chapter members.

I keep using the word "we": what a powerful word that is. In this case, the "we" behind all of these activities consists of

- Erika Steffer, VP/president-elect
- Jennifer McCready Treasurer and Past President
- Michel-Adrien Sheppard Secretary and Newsletter Editor
- Astrid Lange Website Administrator and Publicity Director
- Vicky Ly Registrar
- Peggy Cameron Program Facilities and Catering director
- Barbara Fingerote Member at Large
- Program Planners Laura Knapp, Yasmin Khan, Jeannie An, and Margaret Williams
- Rani Pooran FIS student liason

These are the CASLIS Toronto members whose efforts on our behalf have brought us our 29th program year. Thanks to all of you!

Robyn Stockand

President, CASLIS Toronto 2003-04

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April Program Report

by Margaret Williams
Community Information Toronto
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Usability: Making Digital Products Work for Users and the Bottomline (April 8, 2004)

Terry Costantino, co-founder of consulting firm Usability Matters (<http://www.usabilitymatters.com/>), shared her insights with CASLIS members into a field that is opening up new opportunities for librarians. Terry, who graduated with an MLS from the University of Toronto, explained that usability ranges beyond labs with two-way mirrors where observers study how users interact with a product.

It can cover the whole gamut of product development - from market research to content development to user satisfaction post implementation.

Common job titles for usability experts include information architect, interface engineer, business analyst, and user experience specialist. Usability experts work either within companies or on a consulting basis, and the earlier they are engaged in the process of product development, the more effective the outcome. Companies save time, money, frustration and, ultimately, build better customer loyalty.

There is no one educational stream for entering into the field of usability, and practitioners come from a variety of backgrounds, ranging from engineering to fine arts. Courses specific to usability are available through some library and information science programs, and associations such as the Toronto Usability Professionals' Association (TUPA) offer opportunities for professional development.

As for skills required, Terry emphasized good communications skills, a sense of design, attention to detail, and a firm commitment to advocating on behalf of users. She said that organizations often hire her to bring an objective eye to a project, and when you're assisting a client who has worked closely on a product for some time, you not only need to be diplomatic but also present your recommendations with conviction.

Selected Usability Links

Toronto Usability Professionals' Association (TUPA)
<http://www.tupa.org/>

useit.com - Jakob Nielson's usability advice site
<http://www.useit.com/>

Boxes and Arrows - online peer-written journal
<http://www.bboxesandarrows.com/>

Information Architecture for the World Wide Web, 2nd edition - book by Louis Rosenfeld and Peter Morville
<http://louisrosenfeld.com/home/>

The Design of Everyday Things - book by Donald Norman
<http://www.jnd.org/>

WEB WATCH

Canadian Federal Elections

By Michel-Adrien Sheppard

I can't seem to get the lyrics from the Who's song "Won't Get Fooled Again" out of my mind. You know what I mean, the line that goes: "Meet the new boss, same as the old boss..."? Oh well, all (fully justified) cynicism aside, we're in for a fun-filled month of punditry, spin by party hacks, mudslinging, voter anger and promises out the wazoo. And if you're like me, you'll enjoy every minute of our second national contact sport. Here are some recommended sites to help you be a good Canuck.

Decision 2004 (Globe and Mail)

<http://www.theglobeandmail.com/generated/realtime/specialDecision2004.html>

Includes features such as reports from the leaders' campaign buses, day-to-day campaign event tracker, analysis of the party platforms, leader profiles, etc.

Federal Election '04 (Toronto Star)

<http://tinyurl.com/2cmbk>

Analysis of the platforms, an election glossary of "politicalspeak" ('oppo research' anyone?), full campaign coverage.

Canada Votes 2004 (CBC)

<http://www.cbc.ca/canadavotes/>

Very complete coverage includes daily summary of what the newspapers are saying, cartoons, "Spin Cycle" (an analysis of media manipulation by politicians), riding profiles, leader profiles, a historical archive from earlier elections, etc.

Decision Canada (CanWest Global)

<http://www.canada.com/national/features/decisioncanada/index.html>

Riding profiles, news from local papers owned by the CanWest Global chain, polling information

Bloc québécois platform

http://www2.bloc.org/2004/fr/elections_2004/images/PDF/platform_24-05_en.pdf

Conservative Party platform

<http://www.conservative.ca/english/issues.asp>

New Democratic Party platform

http://www.ndp.ca/index.php?nid=349&page_id=401&

Liberal Party platform

http://www.liberal.ca/policy_e.aspx

Green Party platform

<http://www.greenparty.ca/platform2004/en/index.php?p>

BlogsCanada –Canadian Political Index

<http://www.blogscanada.ca/politics/default.aspx>

This is an index of Canadian political commentary websites, with an emphasis on blogs, but there are also links to advocacy sites, party sites, news media and government sites.

Election Prediction Project

http://www.electionprediction.org/2004_fed/index.html

"Election Prediction Project started as part of the honour thesis research of Milton Chan, founder of the initiative. It attempted to predict the outcome of the 1999 Ontario election with moderate success. The project was initially hosted by the Political Science Department of University of Waterloo. Since then, Milton has finished his schooling in

University of Waterloo, and the Project has grown from an individual's research work to a group effort." They boast a 94% accuracy level in the last Ontario election.

Centre for Research and Information on Canada

http://www.cric.ca/en_html/index.html

Ottawa-based think tank for Canadian unity. Its website is a good place to find all the most recent political polls from various sources.

Canadian Politics, Elections and Political Parties

<http://www.library.ubc.ca/poli/cpwebpr.html>

Web site developed by the Library at UBC full of links to political parties, the electoral system etc.

Political Parties and Elections in Canada

<http://www.canadiansocialresearch.net/politics.htm>

This is a subsection of Canadian Social Research Links, a "virtual resource centre" created by Gilles Séguin, an employee at what used to be HRDC (now Social Development Canada). It is a heavily annotated guide to social policy and political resources in Canada and abroad.

PoliticsWatch

<http://www.politicswatch.com/index2.html>

Offers comprehensive information on Canadian politics including a daily review of political and national news, voter resources and information on political parties, leaders and other multimedia resources.

Elections Canada

<http://www.elections.ca/home.asp?textonly=false>

"Elections Canada is an independent, non-partisan agency reporting directly to Canada's Parliament. Its ongoing concern is to fulfill its responsibility to ensure Canadians can exercise their choices in elections and referendums in an open and impartial process."

Quick Guide – Democratic Reform

http://www.cric.ca/en_html/guide/democratic_reform/dem_reform.html

A compendium of resources on attempts to correct the problems created by Canada's first-past-the-post electoral system. Includes studies and reports

from provincial and federal government commissions, think tanks and advocacy groups on issues such as a low voter turn-out, different models of electoral reform such as proportional representation etc.

Canadian Election Study

<http://www.fas.umontreal.ca/pol/ces-eecces.html>

Researchers at McGill, the University of Toronto and the Université de Montréal conducted interviews with thousands of Canadians in 1997 and 2000 to “provide a thorough account (of the elections), to underline the main reasons why people vote the way they do, to indicate what does and does not change during the campaign and from one election to another, and to highlight similarities and differences between voting and elections in Canada and in other democratic countries.” See the publications section if you want to read some of the studies.

RevMod Gaffe-o-Meter

http://www.revmod.ca/2004_03_01_revmod#108075722000220930

“Few of us will admit it, of course, but some election coverage comes from the same place as motor sports coverage - sure, it's fun to watch the candidates circle around, and I guess there's some sort of race involved, but wouldn't it be exciting to watch a huge crash? ... It's time to predict just how huge the screw-ups will be from the people who want nothing more than love and respect (and perhaps a nice job in Ottawa).” This is an election betting pool – if you correctly guess the seats each party wins, you can win used Canadian history books (this is Canada, OK, so you can't expect huge prizes)

Michel-Adrien Sheppard
 (msheppard@blqcanada.com) is the
 Communications Librarian at Borden Ladner
 Gervais LLP in downtown Toronto.

CLA Election Kit Available

The Canadian Library Association has prepared election campaign materials to help librarians get across issues affecting our profession to candidates running in the federal elections. The CLA has selected 3 broad issues: Educating Politicians

About Today's Libraries; Copyright; and the Library Book Rate. “These themes have been chosen with care, to attempt to be inclusive across the community and to reflect current advocacy issues.”

The Election Kit includes background material on library issues, tips on organizing a meeting with your candidates, and advice on how to follow-up.
http://www.cla.ca/issues/federal_election_2004.htm

Governance Restructuring at CASLIS National

Proposals to change CASLIS's governance structure will be presented at this year's National Annual General Meeting in Victoria in mid-June. The Proposal acts upon the findings of the 2003 CASLIS Strategic Plan which called for better collaboration between chapter and national executive teams.

The cornerstone of the proposal involves having parallel executive and non-executive positions at the local and national level. If necessary for resourcing purposes, local chapters may add, split or combine non-voting positions to ensure adequate coverage. To ensure adequate information flows between the local and national levels, individuals with parallel positions at the national and chapter levels will communicate regularly.

The CASLIS National Executive will also eliminate two executive positions (Director and Second Vice President), to reduce governance costs and align the national structure with that of other CLA divisions. The proposed National Executive is comprised of President, Vice President/President Elect (alternating years), Treasurer and Secretary. The duties of the Director and Second Vice President will be assumed and enhanced by several new non-executive positions.

You can see the newly created governance document and descriptions of the proposed new roles at:

<http://www.cla.ca/caslis/restructuring.htm>

CLA Victoria 2004 Conference

CASLIS is actively planning a number of activities during the 2004 CLA conference (June 16-19 in Victoria). This year, CASLIS will host its annual social with CACUL (Canadian Association of College and University Libraries). The event will focus on the 35th anniversary of CASLIS with Michael Gorman as the guest of honour. In addition, CASLIS will hold a conference luncheon in partnership with the Entrepreneurship in Librarianship Interest Group.

In terms of programming activities, CASLIS is pleased to present two poster sessions. The first will focus on the organization's 35th anniversary and profile best practices from the local chapters, with the second outlining the governance restructuring process.

CASLIS Toronto Listserv

Members are encouraged to subscribe to the Toronto Chapter's unmoderated discussion group.

The list provides a forum for discussion topics of interest to Canadian information professionals working in special libraries. The listserv is hosted by Yahoo! Groups.

TO SUBSCRIBE: Send a message to caslistoronto-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

After subscribing, you may receive a message saying that your e-mail address has been rejected. Do not fear! Yahoo Groups will only accept invited members to join their groups. Astrid Lange will review your e-mail and sign you up.

For more information, see the CASLIS website at : <http://www.caslistoronto.on.ca/Listserv5.html>

CASLIS Toronto Electronically

Stay on top of what's happening with CASLIS Toronto. Get advance notice of meetings and news of last minute changes.

See our Web site, www.caslistoronto.on.ca.

Get an electronic copy of the newsletter either on the Web site or by sending an email to Michel-Adrien Sheppard (criticalmass@idirect.com)

TORONTO CASLIS EXECUTIVE
2004-2005

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