

Jumpstarting the Public Sphere: Information Policy Issues for the 21st Century

By Jennifer Wilson.



The Opening Keynote was presented by Michael Geist, Canada Research Chair in Internet and E-commerce Law.

In late October 2008 seventy library personnel, students and members of the public met at Vancouver Public Library for a day-long conference about established and emerging information policy issues. The morning lectures introduced the importance of freedom of information requests for open and accountable government; the trend of increasing media concentration in Canada; and, new telecommunications policies influencing public use.

"A conference about net neutrality, media concentration, telecommunications policy, TILMA, access to information, and intellectual property."

The afternoon lectures focused on the influence of trade agreements such as TILMA on libraries; the need to adopt a forward-looking attitude towards copyright and intellectual property policy development; and, the need to protect net neutrality – the transmission of data regardless of content, type or destination. As the afternoon lectures drew to a close, conference participants broke into discussion groups to focus on identifying action-based responses to some of today's newest challenges. To read more detailed discussions of the lectures and to

learn about some of the suggested activities, please visit the [Information Policy Blog](#).

Speakers at the conference included:

- **Brian Campbell**, founding member of the Information Policy Committee and distinguished public librarian who continues to be an active member of local and national advocacy groups.
- **Ellen Gould**, a Research Associate with the Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives who consults on the impact of trade and investment agreements.
- **Paul Holden**, the Vice-President of the British Columbia Freedom of Information and Privacy Association.
- **David Loukedlis**, the Information and Privacy Commissioner for British Columbia.
- **Leslie Regan Shade**, Associate Professor in Communication Studies at Concordia University.
- **David Skinner**, Professor in the Communication Studies Program in the Division of Social Science at York University, Toronto.
- **Paul Whitney**, the City Librarian at Vancouver Public Library.



The closing keynote was presented by Samuel Trosow, Associate Professor at the University of Western Ontario.

Thank you to our supporters

- British Columbia Library Association
- Vancouver Public Library
- BC Electronic Library Network (BC ELN)
- Canadian Centre for Policy Alternatives
- Simon Fraser University Libraries
- Vancouver Island University

Photographs by Sandra Wong.

*Jennifer Wilson is a new librarian and a member of
the Information Policy Committee.*