

# Introducing the Commons: A new online community for B.C. libraries

By Susan Laidlaw.

On November 29th, 2012 the Commons opened its virtual doors at [commons.bclibraries.ca](http://commons.bclibraries.ca). The Commons was designed for and by you – librarians, library technicians, trustees and other library workers from across the province. An online community, the Commons is a place for all of us to continue to make B.C. libraries relevant and vibrant in the communities we serve.

## What is the Commons?

The Commons tagline is: Connecting and Supporting the B.C. Library Community. The Commons exists primarily as a platform to encourage conversation, idea sharing and collaboration among libraries. Its secondary purpose is to provide libraries with tools to innovate and develop, such as training resources, information and best practices.

## Making connections

Within the first month, the Commons had more than 300 members from libraries across the province and that number is growing daily. Within our Collaborate section, we have created discussion forums on topics such as learning commons, interlibrary loan, technology in libraries, rural libraries, teen services and many, many more. If you don't see a group you are interested in, we are quite happy to create one for you.

Within each discussion forum, you can share ideas and documents or ask for help with challenges you are facing. Groups are like listservs, but better in several ways: you can easily see who else is in your group and your conversations and documents are stored in one place for easy reference later on. The Commons is ultimately about sharing information and supporting each other; groups are one way to do that.

## Providing support

In addition to the forums, the Commons has other content such as links to training resources, announcements about upcoming events, a blog on current issues in libraries and a database of

frequently asked questions we receive at the Ministry of Education that we call the Knowledge Base. As well as including links to LLB webinars and training, our Learn section will also promote learning opportunities offered to B.C. libraries by other organizations.

## Data and evidence

Our Results section is all about demonstrating the value of libraries through statistics and performance measures. This section also includes the Showcase - a place to celebrate our successes in the B.C. library community to inspire each other and to show the amazing, innovative activities that happen in libraries every day.

## About Libraries and Literacy

The Commons platform was built for you by a group of dedicated library professionals who work for the provincial government. Have a look at the Connect section of the Commons for information about us and what we do.



The Libraries and Literacy team celebrates the Commons launch. Photo by B.C. Ministry of Education.

We hope see you online at [commons.bclibraries.ca](http://commons.bclibraries.ca)!

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