

# Information Policy Committee: Annual Report: 2012-13

By Myron Groover.

IPC's tradition of advocacy work has continued throughout the past year. IPC members have been instrumental in monitoring the ongoing changes to federal and provincial information policy, especially in the context of recent efforts by the federal government to severely curtail both Canadians' rights to privacy and their right to access government information and expertise.

In November-January, we articulated a response to a worrying privacy breach on behalf of the CBSA, who had (perhaps inadvertently) revealed the contact information of all subscribers to their quarterly list of banned and censored titles.

In January, with the help of the IPC, I wrote an article mourning the loss of revered Internet pioneer Aaron Swartz – this was featured on the front page of the BCLA website as well as the IPC site and blog. IPC was very involved in efforts to coordinate advocacy and activism following Swartz's death.

In February, IPC was instrumental in coordinating BCLA advocacy in response to the lawsuits filed by Edwin Mellen Press against our colleague Dale Askey. BCLA issued a full press release largely authored by IPC, and much work was done behind the scenes to encourage other individuals and institutions to participate in efforts to force a non-litigious resolution to the dispute. These efforts continued into March and beyond, as increasing details of the lawsuits and the company behind them came to light.

Also in February, IPC helped BCLA prepare a response to a consultation by the federal Information Commissioner regarding proposed changes to Canada's federal access to information laws. ATI/FOI is a major ongoing area of policy concern to IPC and we anticipate these efforts will continue into the future.

In March, IPC was at the forefront of the library community's response to Library and Archives Canada's leaked "code of conduct". With IPC help, BCLA issued a full press release on the Code and contributed significantly to the efforts of journalists and politicians towards exposing and rolling back these changes.

As IPC Chair I was interviewed by CBC Radio Canada on "as it happens", which helped garner wide interest in the issue, and since that time IPC has worked with the Environmental Law Centre at uVic as well as federal heritage Critics Pierre Nantel and Andrew Cash to generate political pressure – this culminated last week in a formal request from Pierre Nantel that the Federal Information Commissioner of Canada widen the current investigation into the muzzling of government scientists to include the staff of Library and Archives Canada.

IPC has also worked to build alliances with other BC organisations working in information policy including BC FIPA, BCCLA, and OpenMedia. IPC will co-present a session at the BCLA conference with Steve Anderson of OpenMedia aimed at raising librarians' awareness of emerging IP issues and fostering good relations between BCLA and OpenMedia so we can work in concert on issues as they emerge.

Following on from these advocacy efforts, IPC will introduce two resolutions at the BCLA AGM – one to honour Aaron Swartz and encourage librarians to further his legacy, and one to condemn the muzzling of government workers' intellectual freedom and right to freedom of expression in a political climate increasingly characterized by censorship and control.

IPC is also involved in ongoing advocacy regarding the recent lawsuits filed by Access Copyright against York University, and we anticipate this will continue until Access Copyright either loses the suit or has it dismissed from court.

IPC anticipates several important areas of advocacy for the coming year. These may include international trade treaties including CETA and TPP, recently-passed 'anti-terrorism' bill S-7, the Canadian ACTA compliance law C-56, the ongoing fallout from implementation of C-11, and possible CPC efforts to revive online spying legislation in the vein of the defeated C-30. We also anticipate the struggle against CISPA in the United States will be of interest to IPC.

We are also involved in planning Media Democracy Day again this year, and these efforts will continue. In

terms of outreach, we are currently looking to revive IPC's longstanding tradition of information policy salons (small, informal free events comprising instruction and discussion around IP issues).

As to the mechanics of IPC itself, I was asked in September whether I might be interested in taking the Chair, which prompted a very well-attended meeting in November where IPC formally agreed to

having me take over the role. We also discussed a new organizational structure and voting procedures which would enable us to be more flexible and responsive in decision making. These discussions have continued at subsequent meetings and we anticipate significant organizational change in the coming months; the size and scope of IPC's executive is projected to grow.