

# BC public libraries take a collaborative step forward in support of service excellence

By June Stockdale and Barbara Kelly.

We all know that repositories are tricky beasts and owe their success, both in the richness of the repository collection and in the demonstration of value, to broad participation and shared responsibility. For the past few months a project has been underway to bring the benefits of a Digital Learning Objects Repository (DLOR) to the BC public library community. Many of you have already been involved in discussions, the sharing of updates and the development of the repository collection and know that this is an amazing opportunity for demonstrating collaboration while strengthening the services we deliver to our communities.

This project was initiated by the Association of BC Public Library Directors. The directors recognize the need for library practitioners to share and easily access the training and programming materials that are being developed throughout BC libraries. The BC Libraries Cooperative has been managing the development and rollout of this service with support from the BC Ministry of Education, Libraries and Literacy Branch, and with direction from the project advisory committee. The committee members are June Stockdale (Nelson), Melanie Houlden (Surrey), Avi Silberstein (Grand Forks) and Chantelle McGee (Okanagan Regional). Participation from public library staff, both in uploading material to share and in accessing and using shared material, will be critical to realizing the full potential value of the repository; it is in its use that the repository moves from being a piece of software to being a service.

During recent discussions with library staff the DLOR has been referred to as a "bag of goodies", a "place for sharing expertise", a "springboard to ideas" and as a "pillar in developing a province wide community of practice". To put it simply, the repository will be an easy-to-use database of training and program materials created by, and shared with, library staff. At this time the BC Libraries Cooperative and The Alberta Library (TAL) have signed a historic Memorandum of Understanding to jointly develop TAL's Toolshed project <http://toolshed.thealbertalibrary.ab.ca> into a robust

and scalable repository that will meet the needs of both provinces. Scott Leslie (the BC Libraries Cooperative's System's Manager) is overseeing the development of this shared repository that will include a jurisdiction neutral theme and URL, access to all material from both provinces, and the ability to search for content by contributing library or region. Working with the team at the Toolshed is an exciting and promising opportunity for the project. Emma Dressler, Director of the Fernie Heritage Library, already uses the Toolshed and had this to say about it and collaboration between BC and Alberta:

"It [The Toolshed] is a great resource that allows our staff to better meet the needs of our users. Staff can easily find answers to many of the common questions we face in our daily work. We regularly use the videos when assisting patrons with Overdrive and Zinio. Patrons love the simple videos, staff love being able to assist the patrons, and I love that I don't have to "invent the wheel!" The DLOR offers the potential for even greater use. Services and products like the DLOR are key to offering seamless library service to all residents in BC, even those in the more remote areas."

The launch of the repository service is planned to coincide with the 2014 BC Library Conference. Hello, World! as a theme is a great fit for this service that will take us outside the walls of our libraries and openly demonstrate a commitment to collaboration, supporting staff efforts and talent, and improving library services to BC communities. Already the staff members at libraries, such as Surrey Public Library and West Vancouver Memorial Library, have recognized the value of this service and have offered programming and training materials for the repository. As Sarah Felkar, the Digital Access Librarian at West Vancouver said: "Sharing resources, connecting people, it is a project that fits perfectly with what libraries do."

### Next Steps

To get us to a successful launch we need to build the repository's collection. The collection will be developed by the library community and will be focused on materials that support training and programming. This includes, but is not limited to, scripts, templates, outlines, and links to webinars and toolkits. Material for the collection needs to be developed by a library staff member and needs to be approved by the home library for sharing. By launch time there will be easy to follow uploading guidelines on the site.

Everyone is invited to join the Commons DLOR discussion group that can be found at <http://commons.bclibraries.ca/groups/communities-of-practice/digital-learning-objects-repository/>

It would be a significant step in building the success of the repository to have every library represented on the forum. The forum provides a one-stop place for finding updates and news to share at staff meetings and for actively joining in discussions. Anyone can start a discussion and some upcoming topics include repository collection maintenance and how to integrate the repository into workflows and procedures. As well as the forum, any questions, ideas or comments about this project can be sent to Barbara at [barbara.kelly@bc.libraries.coop](mailto:barbara.kelly@bc.libraries.coop).

*June Stockdale is Chief Librarian at the Nelson Public Library and Barbara Kelly is Project Manager on behalf of the BC Libraries Cooperative for the Digital Learning Objects Repository.*