

COPING WITH BUDGET CUTS: HOW CANADIAN LIBRARIES COMPARE WITH OTHER COUNTRIES*

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Sommaire

Cet article a deux objectifs principaux. Le premier objectif est de comparer la situation des services d'information, l'infrastructure internet, les activités des bibliothèques, et l'accès à l'information entre le Canada et d'autres pays à travers le monde. Le deuxième objectif est d'examiner des initiatives internationales et les solutions appliquées par certaines bibliothèques de cabinets d'avocats et des bibliothèques de droit universitaires en Europe en réponse aux défis économiques mondiaux actuels. Les résultats indiquent que différentes alternatives ont été utilisées, variant entre la fermeture complète des bibliothèques de droit à la fusion de services avec ceux d'autres institutions.

Abstract

This article has two main purposes. The first purpose is to compare information services, Internet infrastructure, library operations, and access to information between Canada and other countries around the World. The second purpose is to examine international initiatives and solutions from some law firm libraries and university law libraries in Europe in response to current global economic challenges. Findings indicate different alternatives have been used ranging from closing law libraries entirely to combining services with other institutions.

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1. Introduction

This paper has two main purposes. The first aim is to examine how Canada compares to a representative sample of countries around the world with respect to its information services, internet infrastructure, library operations and access to information. We selected the following countries as a representative sample:

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| Commonwealth countries: | Australia, Ireland, New Zealand, Pakistan, India, and the United Kingdom. |
| European Union countries: | Germany, France, Greece, Spain, Sweden, and the Netherlands. |
| North American countries: | United States |
| Former Soviet Union countries: | Hungary, Bulgaria, Poland, Romania, Russia, and Ukraine. |
| Asia and Middle East countries: | Japan, China, Morocco, Saudi Arabia, Turkey, Israel, and Egypt. |
| African countries: | Nigeria, the Republic of Congo, Senegal, South Africa, Zambia, and Tanzania. |
| Latin American countries : | Argentina, Venezuela, Brazil, Colombia, Cuba, and Mexico |

We used the selection criteria of literacy rate to determine which countries would be included in this study. To be included the country would have to have a high literacy rate greater than 49%. This particular criteria is important because it enables a meaningful comparison between countries that have similar demands for library services. This demand for library services led us to consider other related aspects of literacy across countries such as government funding policies for libraries, the type of library collections, the technologies that are used to access information such as the Internet, e-books, etc.

The second purpose of this paper is to describe some of the international initiatives and solutions that various law libraries have used in response to the 2008 global financial crisis and the current economic challenges that they continue to face. As many analysts have concluded, the principal cause of this crisis was the U.S. housing market bubble, which led to the collapse of the major financial institutions that held overvalued subprime mortgages.¹ Many economists consider this crisis as the worst since the Great Depression and it continues to have its effects felt today.² Hence, many countries have been facing economic downturns and many libraries have to manage with greatly reduced budgets for sustaining information services, library operations, and technologies for access to collections.

2. The Study

As we noted in the introduction, the first aim of this study is to examine how Canada compares to other countries with respect to its information services, Internet infrastructure, library operations and access to information. These comparisons include some aspects of the countries' background, the estimated number of libraries, the access to the Internet that libraries provide, issues of copyright, and the status of information professionals. The data for this study was extracted from International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA) reports, academic journal articles, online publications, as well as an interview undertaken by the first author.

¹ David Kotz, "The Financial and Economic Crisis of 2008: A Systemic Crisis of Neoliberal Capitalism" (2009) 41:3 *Rev of Radical Political Economics* 305, DOI: <10.1177/04866613409335093>.

² James Crotty, "Structural Causes of the Global Financial Crisis: A Critical Assessment of the 'New Financial Architecture'" (2009) 33:4 *Cambridge J of Economics* 3, DOI: <10.1093/cje/bep023>.

Country Background – This section covers some of the background information about some of the countries with which we are comparing Canada, including the following three areas: population, language, and literacy.

Population, in this context, refers to the total number of people who live in a given geographical area and which, for any given library system, may simply be the number of people who are served by it. For our purposes, we consider the population of countries as a whole and consider their libraries in aggregate. Importantly, a country's overall population enables libraries to estimate the number of potential users, staff needed, and the volumes of collections required. Currently, Canada's population is approximately 35 million. In comparison, China has more than 1.3 billion people, India has a population of 1.1 billion, and the population of Mexico is approximately 112 million.³ Obviously, libraries in Canada have a much smaller number of users, staff, and collections than these more populous countries. However, on a per capita basis, Canada's user population, staff and collections are much larger.

The multilingual character of a nation is another characteristic that has an impact on services and collections. Libraries in such countries have to ensure that they develop linguistically suitable collections and provide appropriate services based on their official languages policy. Canada has two official languages and most libraries in Canada house multilingual collections mainly in English and French. Federal government libraries in Canada are also required to provide services in both English and French. Similarly, many African countries also have more than one official language. For example there are 11 official languages

³ International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions, "IFLA World Report 2010", online: <www.ifla-world-report.org> [IFLA].

in South Africa, and both Swahili and English are official languages in Tanzania.⁴ The effect of those official language laws in those countries is that library acquisition policies must be tailored to satisfy them.

In terms of literacy, the library has always been viewed by both governments and citizens as a knowledge centre. In societies that have a high literacy rate, citizens place a high value on libraries.⁵ Statistics show that countries in the European Union have very high literacy rates: France 99%, Germany 99%, Greece 96%, Netherlands 99%, Spain 97.90%, and Sweden 99%.⁶ Thus, library usage in the European Union countries is high and their citizens place a high value on libraries. Unfortunately, some other countries that we consider in this study have local socio-economic conditions which hinder the improvement of literacy levels. Some of the non-European union countries considered in this article still have to improve equality of access to education among their own populations in order to reach the high literacy rate of European nations. Some conditions that are not conducive to high literacy rates include the school systems, income inequality and the class structure of societies. For example, the caste structure and education system in India limits the literacy rate to only 61%.⁷ Gender inequality in education caused in part by ideological discrimination against women can create a dramatic gender disparity in literacy rates, particularly in poor countries. In Senegal, for example, the literacy rate

⁴ *Ibid.*

⁵ Leslie Fitch & Jody Warner, "Dividends: The Value of Public Libraries in Canada" (1998) 11: 4 *The Bottom Line: Managing Library Finances* 158.

⁶ *IFLA, supra* note 3.

⁷ *Ibid.*

for females is 33.60% while for males it is 52.80%.⁸ Similarly in Pakistan, the male literacy rate is 69.86%, but it is not much more than half that rate for the female population, at only 43.07%.⁹

Another condition that is disadvantageous to literacy is colonization. Both Pakistan and India are former colonies of the British Empire that gained their independence in 1947 after 90 years of foreign occupation. Pyati points out that the development of public libraries in India increased in the post-independence period.¹⁰ Literacy rates take generations to improve, particularly in a country that has historically faced dramatic political challenges. It seems almost impossible for libraries in countries with political uncertainty or conflict zones to be able to provide citizens adequate services and access to collections. In such conditions, personal safety and basic needs are the immediate priorities that naturally take precedence over literacy and libraries. In addition, there are numerous other factors in post-colonial countries like Pakistan and India that also contribute to their domestic literacy rates such as the number of languages spoken. In richer countries like Canada that have stable political and economic conditions literacy is less of a concern. Like the affluent European countries mentioned above, the literacy rate in Canada is very high at 99 %¹¹ and both female and male populations have equal access to education.

Estimated Number of Libraries – Every country that is a member of IFLA has its own national library. In general national libraries are responsible for the policies concerning

⁸ UNESCO, “Senegal”, online: < <http://en.unesco.org/countries/senegal>>.

⁹ UNESCO, “Pakistan”, online: <<http://en.unesco.org/countries/pakistan>>.

¹⁰ Ajit K. Pyati, “Public Library Revitalizing in India: Hopes, Challenges and New Visions”, online: (2009) 14:7 First Monday 6 <www.firstmonday.org/ojs/index.php/fm/article/view/2588/2237>.

¹¹ *IFLA*, *supra* note 3.

information services and management for the whole country. For example, the King Fahad National Library is the legal depository for all the intellectual creations in Saudi Arabia. Similarly, Canada's Library and Archives of Canada (LAC) has the mandate to preserve the documentation of Canadian heritage and through the mechanism of legal deposit collects all material published in Canada. Unlike LAC, the Library of Congress, the national library of the United States, has both a domestic and international mandate related to information services and management. For example, the Library of Congress developed and is responsible for the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) system, which is used by libraries around the world including many academic libraries in Canada. The Library of Congress is also in charge of maintaining the Library of Congress Subject Headings, a controlled vocabulary used for bibliographic control in libraries around the world.

According to the 2010 IFLA World Report, in Canada there are an estimated 3,100 public libraries, 95 university research libraries, 14,300 school libraries, and 40 government funded research libraries.¹² In comparison China, with 38 times the population, had 300 university research libraries and 400 government funded research libraries.¹³ Thus, if one considers only the statistics above, on a per capita basis Canadian university research libraries would seem to serve fewer users than university research libraries in the People's Republic of China. However, China has relatively fewer researchers per capita than Canada. If we assume the average researcher in China and in Canada produces the same number of citable documents per year, 2010 data from Scimago Journal and Country Rankings¹⁴ indicate that, relative to the number of researchers (4x

¹² *Ibid.*

¹³ *Ibid.*

¹⁴ SCImago Journal & Country Rank, "Country Rankings", online: <http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?area=0&category=0®ion=all&year=2010&order=h&min=0&min_type=it>.

more in China) there are more university libraries per researcher in Canada but many more government research libraries per researcher in China. Although the 2010 IFLA report does not list the number of public libraries found in China, data from the National Bureau of Statistics of China shows that at the end of 2012 there were 2,975 public libraries and that this number rose to 3,073 by the end of 2013.^{15 16} This indicates that while the number of public libraries per capita in China is much smaller than in Canada, China's rapid and continued economic growth allows it to invest more in public services and infrastructure, and that public libraries have benefited from this investment.¹⁷ This is corroborated by from Scimago Journal and Country Rankings for 2014 which indicates a 32% growth in the number of citable documents over four years.¹⁸

Libraries and the Internet - Information technologies, especially the internet, have allowed libraries to make their services available to more users.

The data shows that the majority of Commonwealth countries (with the exception of the Islamic Republic of Pakistan) and European Union countries (except Spain) offer internet access to their users in approximately 81-100% of public libraries, university libraries, school libraries and government funded research libraries.¹⁹ Not surprisingly, the high rates of Internet access

¹⁵ National Bureau of Statistics of China, "Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2012 National Economic and Social Development", online: (2013) < http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/StatisticalCommuniqu/201302/t20130222_61456.html>.

¹⁶ National Bureau of Statistics of China, "Statistical Communiqué of the People's Republic of China on the 2013 National Economic and Social Development", online: (2014) < http://www.stats.gov.cn/english/PressRelease/201402/t20140224_515103.html>.

¹⁷ Elaine Xiaofen Dong & Tim Jiping Zou, "Library Consortia in China" (2009) 19:1 Library and Information Science Research Electronic J 1.

¹⁸ SCImago Journal & Country Rank, "Country Rankings", online: <http://www.scimagojr.com/countryrank.php?area=0&category=0®ion=all&year=2014&order=itp&min=0&min_type=it>.

¹⁹ IFLA, *supra* note 3.

found in Canadian libraries are also found in the Commonwealth and European Union.²⁰ In contrast, however, Internet access in libraries in Latin American countries, including Argentina, Venezuela, Columbia, Cuba, and Mexico, is very low due to poor Internet infrastructure and slow connections. Brazil is the exception, because libraries there receive significant government financial and policy support for digital library projects and initiatives, particularly for IT infrastructure development. Interestingly, the government of Brazil saw the benefits of establishing cooperation between government digital library projects and academic organizations and technology companies. As a result of the cooperation, they were able to improve Internet connectivity and to make online intellectual materials widely available at many local libraries.²¹ Between 2002 -2006 during President Lula's administration, the government of Brazil launched a national mandate to reduce the domestic digital divide by increasing Internet access for low income families and populations living in remote areas. The government began to offer high speed Internet through satellite for people in remote locations who usually face problems accessing broadband Internet, and provided financial support for poor families to purchase computers.²²

While most Canadian libraries do not generally face the same kinds of challenges with Internet access as Latin American countries do, there are the exceptions with some libraries located in rural areas, particularly those in the northernmost region of Canada (Yukon,

²⁰ *Ibid.*

²¹ Cavan McCarthy & Murilo Bastos da Cunha, "Digital Library Development in Brazil" (2003) 19:3 OCLC Systems & Services 114.

²² Carolina Matos, "The Internet for the Public Interest: Overcoming the Digital Divide in Brazil" in Ernesto Vivares, Cheryl Martens, & Robert W. McChesney, eds, *The International Political Economy of Communication: Media and Power in South America* (Basingstoke: Palgrave Macmillan, 2014) 116.

Northwest Territories, and Nunavut). Internet service providers do not invest significantly in telecommunications infrastructure in the Arctic region since it comprises a very large surface area of land that is sparsely populated. Therefore, most Canadians in the north depend on outdated dial-up connections that provide only slow and unreliable internet access.²³

Over the years, access to the Internet through the library has unfortunately given rise to some social and legal concerns. Some libraries have made the decision to use filtering systems on library Internet terminals to prevent users from accessing certain information sources. Those responsible for these library policies claim that this helps to prevent crime and to safeguard public morality.²⁴ In Canada, filtering software is used in libraries to some extent, mainly for the protection of children and the prevention of crime. Filtering software is also widespread in libraries in the United States.²⁵ Since the September 11, 2001 attacks, security has become a top priority for the US federal government and since the US and Canada share a border, both countries have put restrictions on Internet content on library terminals to reduce the incidence of criminal activity in public spaces. The legitimacy and efficacy of filtering and blocking of information is still an ongoing debate within library communities worldwide.²⁶

Copyright Issues – Libraries have an especially important role to play in copyright law particularly when it concerns making copyrighted materials available to users both in physical

²³ Barney Warf, “Contour, Contrasts, and Contradictions of the Arctic Internet” (2011) 34:3 *Polar Geography* 3, DOI: <10.1080/1088937X.2011.589012>.

²⁴ Rachel Spacey et al, “Regulating Use of the Internet in Public Libraries: A Review” (2014) 70:3 *J of Documentation* 478.

²⁵ *IFLA*, *supra* note 3.

²⁶ Spacey, *supra* note 24.

and digital spaces, negotiating and signing licensed library resource agreements, and educating users on how to accurately use copyrighted materials to comply with copyright laws. Library collections contain books, DVD and audio CDs, works to which their author(s) or publishers have exclusive rights. Furthermore Canada's Copyright Act is well understood by librarians: the Supreme Court of Canada's interpretation of the Act hinges on a case involving libraries.²⁷ Copyright is a challenging issue because each country has different legal enforcement standards. Scholars are worried that copyright issues in the poorer countries, such as African countries, have an adverse effect on citizens' access to intellectual material. For example Egyptian copyright law confers the copyright owner the right to prevent the borrowing of their work, thus potentially hampering the social function of the library in providing access to textbooks.²⁸ In Canada, however, students do not face any such issues for access to textbooks. Academic libraries in Canada now even provide access to some electronic textbooks thanks to electronic protection measures that mimic the traditional characteristics of a "loan" for physical resources. Furthermore, materials can be provided through inter-library loan services from other institutions.

Copyright issues are also central to libraries because of the licensing terms for works in electronic form. A recent judgement from the US 2nd Circuit appeals court sided with Google's claim that its scanning of library books constitutes "Fair Use"²⁹, and many authors involved in

²⁷ *CCH Canadian Ltd. v Law Society of Upper Canada*, 2004 SCC 13, [2004] 1 SCR 339.

²⁸ C Armstrong et al, eds, *Access to Knowledge in Africa: The Role of Copyright* (Claremont, South Africa: UCT Press, 2010) at 38.

²⁹ Mike Masnick, "Appeals Court Gives Google A Clear And Total Fair Use Win On Book Scanning" (16 October 2015), online: <<https://www.techdirt.com/articles/20151016/08010632559/appeals-court-explains-yet-again-to-authors-guild-that-googles-book-scanning-is-fair-use.shtml>>

the class action lawsuit against Google still think that the settlement offered by Google is unfair.³⁰ There are also a lot of concerns over orphan works, for which no one has claimed authorship and concerns that Google will take ownership over them.³¹ Interestingly, no Canadian library has agreed to participate in the Google Books Project.³² Only American and European libraries have participated in Google's project, including the Austrian National Library, the Bavarian State Library, Columbia University Library and the Cornell University Library.³³ This shows that Canadian libraries treat copyright law on digitization differently than some American and European libraries.

Status of Information Professionals –In Canada, to become a librarian, the candidate requires a Master in Information Studies (MIS) from a program accredited by the American Library Association. Yet librarianship remains an unregulated profession in Canada. Dali and Dilevko point out that a national policy and regulation agency would bring the status of the Canadian information professional closer to that of other regulated occupations and enable the recognition of international credentials.³⁴

Librarianship is a regulated profession in the United Kingdom under the Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals (CILIP), a professional body representing

³⁰ Pamela Samuelson, "Academic Author Objections to the Google Book Search Settlement" (2010) 8:2 J on Telecommunications and High Technology L 491.

³¹ *Ibid.*

³² Google, "Google Books: Library Partners", online: <<http://www.google.ca/googlebooks/library/partners.html>>.

³³ *Ibid.*

³⁴ Keren Dali & Juris Dilevko, "The Evaluation of International Credentials and the Hiring of Internationally Trained Librarians in Canadian Academic and Public Libraries" (2009) 41:3 International Information & Library Review 4, DOI: <10.1016/j.iilr.2009.07.005>.

librarians and other information professionals. One of the CILIP responsibilities is to ensure that all librarians have worked with a mentor and have demonstrated through their portfolio that they meet the required criteria to become a librarian.³⁵ Thus, a more formalized process for recognizing the status of information professionals exists in the United Kingdom.

3. Current Economic Challenges

Impact of Economic Recession on Libraries – Many libraries around the globe are challenged by dwindling resources.³⁶ Tight budgets directly affect acquisition and collection management, the range of services provided and the number of staff. This makes it very difficult for libraries to be able to purchase necessary materials and the number and frequency of programs or services may need to be curtailed. Salaries are one of the major operational costs for libraries. At present, many libraries are pressured to have a minimal number of librarians and library staff.³⁷ This practice can lead to a sense of pressure and work overload. The most common economic issue is inflation, which increases the general level of prices for goods and services. For libraries, this problem manifests in price increases for databases, periodicals, and books.³⁸ At the same time, the annual library budget is not sufficient to keep pace with the increase in prices and publishers' bundling strategies. The current economic challenge is a global phenomenon, but is far more concentrated in Europe and North America.³⁹ Libraries in different countries respond to economic challenges differently.

³⁵ Chartered Institute of Library and Information Professionals, "Mentoring", online: < <http://www.cilip.org.uk/cilip/jobs-and-careers/qualifications-and-professional-development/mentoring>>.

³⁶ Norm Medeiros, "Crisis Management" (2009) 25:2 OCLC Systems & Services 73.

³⁷ Ashley Parker, "Staffing Issues: Small Budgets, Big Shoes" (2010) 67:1 Arkansas Libraries 8.

³⁸ Walt Crawford, "What can be Done?" (2014) 50:4 Library Technology Reports 45.

³⁹ Wilfried Martens, "European Values in the New Global Content" in Thierry Chopin & Michel Foucher, eds,

Specific Impact on Law Libraries – Generally, law libraries around the world have responded to the global economic recession similarly to other types of libraries. The extent of the impact varies depending on the type of law library. At the university level in Canada, governments contribute funding to the university as a whole and some part of this funding is allocated to support its libraries. In addition, some universities have other sources of income such as student fees and private donations.

World economic conditions have forced people out of jobs and young people want to retrain themselves for better future employment. A law degree can serve these retraining needs and law program enrollments have not declined.⁴⁰ University law libraries are a key part of all university legal study programs: law students need help with their research papers and assignments and law professors need legal collections for their classes and research projects. They may also need law librarians to assist them with finding relevant case law, articles, and other materials. However, reduced government funding has resulted in corresponding reductions to university law library budgets.⁴¹ Hence acquisition budgets will either decline or not see much increase.

Another specific impact of reduced government funding to universities is on staffing. In his report on the activities and funding of academic law libraries in the UK and Ireland for 2009/2010, Peter Clinch concludes that not many full time or new positions are being created for either law librarians or law library technicians and that the number of librarians per user is now

Schuman Report on Europe: State of the Union 2012 (Paris: Springer Verlag, 2012) at 107.

⁴⁰ Herbert M. Kritzer, “It’s the Law Schools Stupid! Explaining the Continuing Increase in the Number of Lawyers” (2012) 19:2-3 *Intl J of the Leg Profession* 209.

⁴¹ Taylor Fitchett et al, “Law Library Budgets in Hard Times” (2011) 103:1 *Law Libr J* 91.

much lower in many universities.⁴² This higher workload for librarians can directly affect the quality of reference services offered and negate the ability to offer personalized services.

The economic downturn also has an impact on law firm libraries. Normally only large law firms have the luxury to operate their own private libraries; medium, small and sole legal practitioner groups often do not have sufficient funds nor enough human resources to run their own libraries. Often, they use the local law association libraries where they already are a member, courthouse libraries, and academic law libraries because they are able to conduct research as public users or alumni at either no cost or minimal fees. Many academic law libraries and some government and courthouse libraries are often welcoming to outsiders, as part of the library's mission to support social responsibility and the public's civil rights. So, ease of access elsewhere perhaps makes the decision to close a law firm library more palatable during a time of economic challenges, since lawyers can use library services elsewhere without much cost. There is also a growing trend of freelance legal assistants among small to medium law firms. Lawyers will hire temporary legal assistants to work on their current cases and to conduct research at the law libraries that are open to the public or where they are members.

Government law departments have been impacted greatly by austerity policies during the economic crisis. For instance, many government department libraries in Canada are now closed entirely or have been consolidated with other departmental libraries to share collections, services, and budgets and to serve users from across departments and agencies.⁴³ Courthouse libraries would seem to be an exception to this trend. Judges, lawyers and law clerks rely heavily on

⁴² Peter Clinch, "SLS/BIALL Academic Law Library Survey 2009/2010" (2011) 11:4 Leg Info Mgmt 272.

⁴³ Canadian Library Association, "CLA Member Advocacy Survey: The Impact of Federal Budget Cuts on Canada's Libraries" (November 2012), online: <http://www.cla.ca/Content/NavigationMenu/CLAAatWork/Advocacy/CLA_Member_Survey-Final_Summary_Report-Nov2012.pdf> [CLA].

these legal collections to make sound judgments. Their decisions often establish the rule of law for their nation, influence international standards and set legal precedents that have considerable national and international consequences. Hence, court libraries funds are generally better protected during times of economic challenge than those allocated to other government department libraries⁴⁴, but the lines between these types of law libraries has become blurred.

Reactions and possible solutions – The economic challenges facing libraries have been addressed in a variety of ways. This section examines how some European law librarians have handled economic hardship.

According to our interview with a librarian in the Netherlands regarding the impact of the current economic crisis on their region, we were told that we should:

“...expect in the period 2010-2014 serious budget cuts... the library organizations are looking for alternatives to substitute ... :by having self-service libraries, also plug-in library, ... by combining services with other institutions (although they also have budget cuts), by increasing digitized services ... ”⁴⁵

Recent research conducted by Fiona Brown shows that some in-house law firm libraries in the UK have had to close their entire operations in order to reduce the law firm costs. Law libraries now provide services by sharing library staff and collections with other law firms or by outsourcing works to commercial law library and legal research service providers.⁴⁶ The fact that law firm libraries are privately funded, and with operational costs continuing to rise, means that law firms often must seek out other lower-priced alternatives. However, Brown’s research

⁴⁴ David Gee, “A Survey of Major Law Libraries around the World” (2013) 41:2 Intl J Leg Info 108.

⁴⁵ Interview of librarian (2010), on file with the first author.

⁴⁶ Fiona Brown, “Outsourcing Law Firm Libraries to Commercial Law Library and Legal Research Services. The UK Experience” (2014) 45:3 Australian Academic & Research Libraries 2, DOI: <10.1080/00048623.2014.920130>.

indicates that there is a concern about the confidentiality risks of outsourcing. There are some risks associated with how the companies or providers deal with clients' usage history data. A lawyer can be at a disadvantage in a court case, if the opposition has knowledge of the research that has been conducted prior to the case being argued. This is a risk of outsourcing in any country around the world.

Christian Wolf, a law librarian at the Philipps-Universität in Marburg, Germany, describes in his research that the German government has recently begun to prevent Universities from incurring budget deficits but has also reduced their funding. Wolf is concerned about the foreign language law collection since the dwindling current budget will not allow university libraries to acquire the wide range of legal resources required to respond to the academic community's needs in the area of European Union laws and regulations.⁴⁷ A similar but worse situation is occurring at university law libraries in Spain. Some law libraries have been obliged to cancel subscriptions to regularly used law journals.⁴⁸ This is alarming and poses a very serious concern for the future quality of legal study and research in Spain.

In France, there is a positive example of how libraries are working together during a time of austerity. Since 2008, the French National Library and the Cujas Library (a Parisian inter-university law library) have been leading the national digitalisation program of heritage legal collections with other libraries in France that currently house legal collections including public libraries, academic libraries, government libraries, and private libraries. Their goal is to make

⁴⁷ Christian Wolf, "The Law Library Profession in Germany" (2014) 14:2 Legal Information Management 2, DOI: <10.1017/S1472669614000267>.

⁴⁸ Katia Fach Gómez, "Spain and the Lost Legal Generation: Spain's Dysfunctional University System Is Also to Blame" (2014) 15:6 German Law Journal 9, online: <http://papers.ssrn.com/sol3/papers.cfm?abstract_id=2507996>.

heritage legal materials available for free online on “Gallica” (<http://gallica.bnf.fr/>).⁴⁹ This is a collaboration in which members are sharing costs and human resources but all still receive full recognition from the public and government. Importantly, each of them is still able to carry on their own work with smaller budgets.

In Canada, as we indicated above, many libraries are affected by current economic challenges, especially government libraries. There have been serious budget cuts and the federal and provincial governments are laying off staff to balance their books which has caused members of the Canadian Library Association (CLA) to be concerned about the impact of federal government policy on library budgets. A CLA report shows that more than 200 jobs have vanished at Library and Archives Canada over 3 years (2013-2015).⁵⁰ The Canada Revenue Agency is planning to consolidate nine libraries into one. The Transport Canada Library, the Public Service Commission Library and the Citizenship and Immigration Canada Library have closed, along with many other libraries in various government departments.⁵¹ The Canadian Association of Law Libraries (CALL) has sent an official letter to the federal government’s Chief Information Officer on behalf of association members nationwide expressing their concern with the current federal library budget cuts and the recent decision on ending the print production of several important government legal publications and making them only available in electronic formats. In addition, CALL also expressed concern that the federal government does not have a

⁴⁹ Claire Bonello, “Discovering the Digitised Law Library of Heritage Collections: A Collaborative Achievement between French Libraries” (2012) 12:4 Legal Information Management 9, DOI: <<http://dx.doi.org/10.1017/S1472669612000667>>.

⁵⁰ *CLA*, *supra* note 43.

⁵¹ *Ibid.*

mature long-term digital curation and web archiving plan.⁵² Canadian libraries are thus facing considerable economic challenges that are similar to those of libraries in Europe.

The examples from law libraries in Canada and Europe show that they have adopted some similar strategies, including closing libraries, amalgamating libraries, laying off staff and working with dwindling acquisition budgets. In addition, there is a lot of attention on the conversion to electronic services such as the digitization projects that make heritage legal collections available on the Web (such as the French project planned for Gallica), the plan to increase digital library services (as in the Netherlands example), and the decision to stop printing government legal materials and make them all accessible only on the internet to cut the costs of publication and distribution (in the Canadian example).

Limitations and Further Research

The first part of this paper compared a sample of countries around the world with respect to issues of concern for libraries. The source of this information came mostly from the 2010 IFLA World Report, which is the most current edition at the time of writing. Emerging economy countries like China, India, and Brazil are working hard to improve their citizens' quality of life with government investment projects. In some cases this has resulted in considerable change as evidenced by the dramatic increase in the number of public libraries in China within only one year. Tracking such trends should be a topic for further research to better understand how libraries in those fast growing countries have changed in the last four to five years.

⁵² Canadian Association of Law Librarians, "Federal Budget Cuts Jeopardize Access to Law / Les Compressions Budgétaires du Gouvernement Fédéral Mettent en Péril l'Accès au Droit" (12 April 2013), online: <<http://www.callacbd.ca/en/content/federal-budget-cuts-jeopardize-access-law-les-compressions-budg%C3%A9naires-du-gouvernement-f%C3%A9d%C3%A9ral>>.

One limitation in the second part of this paper is that the research covers only a handful of samples of law libraries in European countries and Canada. There should be a future study with a greater number of law libraries in a larger number of countries. We might in this way discover more alternatives to how we can better cope with the economic recession and dwindling budgets.

Conclusion

This article compares Canadian library services to other libraries around the world. We used library data from representative countries from each continent. In total, 38 countries have been studied in this study including Canada. We found that Canadian libraries face the same kinds of service and operational issues as other libraries around the world as well as concerns regarding the status of information professionals, numbers of libraries, and Internet use in libraries. However, libraries in Canada do not face the same challenges when it comes to population, language, copyright, or literacy.

This article also describes some of the economic challenges and their effects on libraries worldwide. It focuses on law libraries in Canada and Europe and what those law libraries have been doing to find a way out of the economic crisis since 2008. We found that many alternative solutions have been used: closing law libraries entirely, combining services with other institutions, laying off staff, working with dwindling acquisition budgets, transforming library services to provide more digital channels, and increasing inter-institutional cooperation to share costs and responsibilities.