

# **Keeping government information on the record: stewardship in a digital era**

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Founding / Former Chair, CGI DPN Steering Committee  
CARL Leviathan North, May 15, 2015**

# Assumption

- Canada's Depository Services Program (DSP) publishes and distributes all information products created by the Government of Canada (GOC) and its agencies

*\* Treasury Board Secretariat Communications Policy*  
<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=12316>  
*Treasury Board Secretariat Procedures for Publishing*  
<http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/pol/doc-eng.aspx?id=27167>

# Reality

- DSP is not a publisher and many publications are not made available to the DSP (despite TBS PPs\*)
- DSP stopped distributing paper in 2014; only collects PDFs from listed agencies (TBS web protocols prioritize html over PDFs)

# Assumption

- Library and Archives Canada (LAC) collects and preserves all government information, regardless of format

# Reality

- despite legal deposit and TBS PPs, many publications are not collected and preserved by LAC
- recent (post 2007) content acquired via LAC's renewed web harvesting program is not (yet) available to the public

# Assumption

- All non-sensitive GOC information is online and/or searchable via Google
- Open Government is a GOC priority which means all government publications are available online

# Reality

- been waiting years for a centralized Virtual Library for government information
- publications have been removed from GOC web sites
- researchers use [archive.org](https://archive.org) to find removed GOC web content

# REPORT

OF THE

# COMMISSION

APPOINTED TO INQUIRE

INTO THE

STATE OF THE PUBLIC RECORDS

1897



OTTAWA

PRINTED BY S. E. DAWSON, PRINTER TO THE QUEEN  
EXCELLENT MAJESTY  
1898

# REPORT.

*To the Honourable the Treasury Board:*

The undersigned, in conformity with the terms of a Minute Board recommending their appointment as a departmental commission into the whole question of the state of the public records, which was approved by His Excellency the Governor General in Council on the 18th of July, 1897, have the honour to report:

That in the execution of this duty they have visited the several departments and made as thorough an inspection of the records in each as circumstances permit. This examination discloses a state of affairs which, in the opinion of the undersigned, calls for prompt and vigorous measures of reform.

The objects of the inquiry falling under several heads, it may be convenient to observe a similar division in this report. It is proposed to examine the subject under the following sub-heads, which method is adopted to exhibit the whole question in the clearest manner:

1. The actual state of the records and public documents in the several departments.
2. The danger to which they are exposed from fire.
3. What papers or records might be destroyed and after what time.
4. General recommendations of the Commissioners.

## 1.—THE ACTUAL CONDITION OF AFFAIRS.

Throughout their inspection the commissioners were impressed with the necessity of a plan among the several departments for the preservation of their records. As a rule departmental papers of some years back are convenient of access. Those of older date are confined to the basement (apparently rather as lumber to be got rid of than as documents to be preserved) where they are stored, often under conditions unfavourable to their preservation and use. In some departments part of the papers are destroyed after periods varying from three to ten years. In the majority of instances, however, they remain indefinitely in underground storage, becoming more and more difficult of access as fresh accumulations are added. This condition of affairs is due to the want of a uniform system for the service for the disposal of records, and is aggravated by the

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COMMISSION ON PUBLIC RECORDS.

the departments which are gradually becoming choked with an ever increasing mass of documents.

The above remarks apply to public documents generally. As regards the older papers of historic interest which form the archives of the country, the undersigned are unable to speak more favourably. It is true there is a collection of valuable papers bearing on the early history of Canada in the Department of Agriculture, under the control of an official known as the Dominion Archivist, but this officer though amply qualified for the post, has never been provided with facilities for its adequate administration, nor enjoyed anything beyond a casual and perfunctory recognition. The Department of the Secretary of State possesses a similar collection of papers under the immediate charge of an officer known as "The Keeper of Records." These two branches of the public service, though ostensibly devoted to the promotion of a common object, are not in any sense of the word auxiliary to each other. On the contrary, they are distinct, and even antagonistic. The Commissioners, for instance, understand that for the purpose of bridging over breaks in the archives, copies have been made of documents in the libraries of European capitals when the originals of these very documents were at the time in the custody of one or other of the public departments. It is not too much to say that the rivalry existing between these offices has long been an obstacle to the attainment of that unity of responsibility and control essential to the introduction of a perfect system. Another collection of State papers relating to the century immediately preceding Confederation exists in the Privy Council Office, and there are many minor deposits to one of which reference may be made. In the Department of Indian Affairs the Commissioners were shown a number of bound volumes of manuscript containing the reports of the Indian Commissioners at Albany, from 1722-23, and amongst other matters of historic interest the story, in part, of the Mohawk war, the conspiracy of Pontiac, and the migration of the Six Nation Indians. These books are quite unprotected from fire and their destruction would be a serious loss. Thus, records which united would form a collection of rare interest, are dispersed throughout the departments, where they lie in every stage of insecurity, often unarranged and undescribed, suffering more or less from damp, their value sometimes unrecognized and their very existence, it may be, unknown. Nor is this surprising when it is borne in mind that until the fire of February last the care of records was not considered a matter of immediate concern.

## 2.—THE DANGER TO WHICH THE GOVERNMENT RECORDS ARE EXPOSED FROM FIRE.

Recent experience must have taught all persons, as it has greatly impressed the undersigned with the conviction, that the danger from fire to which the public records are exposed is a serious and ever present one.

# Web Renewal Action Plan



The screenshot shows the Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat website. The header features a blue banner with a red maple leaf and the text "Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat". Below the banner is a navigation bar with links: "Home", "News Releases", "Speeches", "Media Advisories", and "Multimedia". The main content area is titled "Web Standards" and "Reduce Redundant, Outdated and Trivial Content". It includes a sidebar with a table of contents and a main text area with a search bar and a "Show table of contents" button.

**Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat**

**Canada**

Home > Me

News Releases

Speeches

Media Advisories

Multimedia

Departmental Activities Policy Suite Information for Resource Centre

Home > TB Policy Suite > Web Standards > Web Usability > Reduce Redundant, Outdated and Trivial Content

**Web Standards**

**Web Accessibility**

Assessment Methodology

Web Experience Toolkit

**Web Usability**

Reduce Redundant, Outdated and Trivial Content

Sample Notices

**Web Interoperability**

**Mobile Optimization**

Technical Specifications for the Web and Mobile Presence

**Web Communities**

**Reduce Redundant, Outdated and Trivial Content**

Government of Canada websites should deliver easy-to-find, clear, accurate, up-to-date information to their visitors. To make government information easy to find and use, government departments need to be aware of the information published online and ensure quality information is delivered, evaluated and reviewed regularly.

The key steps in managing an effective content lifecycle are outlined below.

The benefits of removing Web content that has become redundant, outdated or trivial (ROT) include:

- Increased ease of finding and using Web content
- A better experience for visitors
- Decreased website maintenance costs
- Enhanced ability to deliver services online

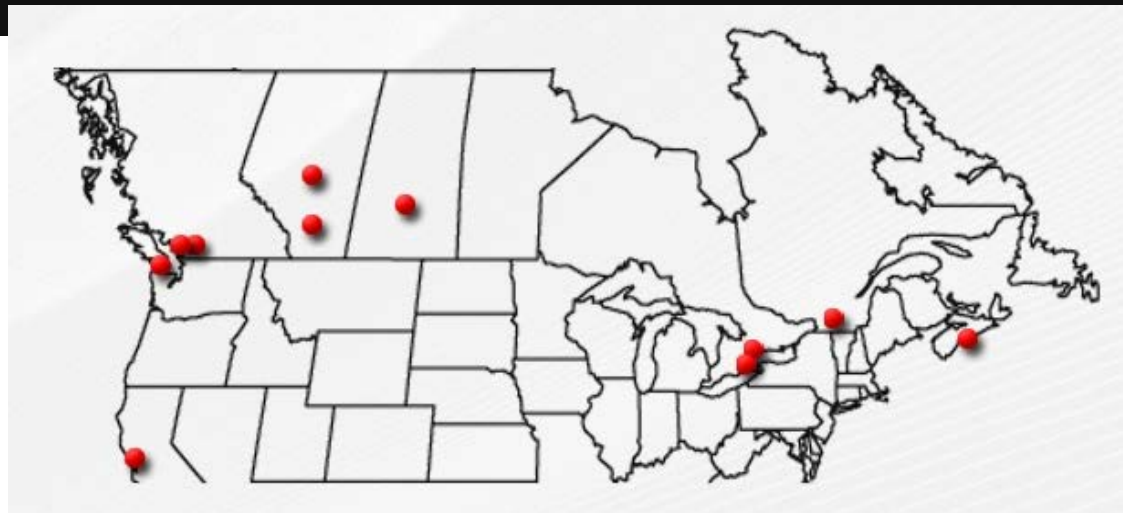
Show table of contents

# CGI DPN

## Canadian Government Information Digital Preservation Network

- start date: October 2012
- content: DSP pdfs, Government of Canada web content
- governance: committee and policy
- [http://plnwiki.lockss.org/wiki/index.php/CGI\\_network](http://plnwiki.lockss.org/wiki/index.php/CGI_network)

# Canadian Government Information DPN



University of Victoria  
University of British Columbia  
Simon Fraser University  
Stanford University  
University of Alberta  
University of Calgary

University of Saskatchewan  
University of Toronto / Scholars Portal  
McGill University  
Dalhousie University



# CGI-DPN Governance

## Steering Committee

- sets policy (e.g., *Collection and Access*)
- special projects (e.g., fugitive docs, etc.)

## Technical Committee

- advisory, develops workflows for ingest

# CGI-DPN Collection

## Workflow:

1. DSP catalogue report / identified at-risk web content
2. create seedlist
3. conduct and QA Archive-IT crawl <https://archive-it.org/collections/3572>
4. WARC files (including metadata) added to LOCKSS boxes using Archive-IT plugin

The screenshot shows the Archive-IT website interface. At the top, there is a navigation bar with links: HOME, EXPLORE, LEARN MORE, and CONTACT US. To the right of the navigation bar is a logo for the Internet Archive and a description: "The leading web archiving service for collecting and accessing cultural heritage on the web. Built at the Internet Archive". Below the navigation bar, there is a breadcrumb trail: "Explore >> Canadian Government Information PLN Web Archive >> Government of Canada Publications". The main content area features a large green banner with the Archive-IT logo and the text: "Government of Canada Publications", "Collected by: Canadian Government Information PLN Web Archive", "Archived since: Feb, 2013", and "No description.". Below the banner, there is a section titled "Narrow Your Results" with a message: "There are no further ways to narrow your results.". To the right of this section is a search bar with the placeholder text "Enter search terms here" and a "Search" button. Below the search bar, there are two tabs: "Sites" and "Search Page Text". The "Search Page Text" tab is selected, showing "Page 1 of 1,188 (118,766 Total Results)". Below the tabs, there is a "Sort By" section with options: "Title (A-Z)", "Title (Z-A)", "URL (A-Z)", and "URL (Z-A)". The main list of results shows four entries, each with a URL and a capture date. The first entry is "http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\_2010/statcan/51-008-X/51-008-x2010007-fra.pdf" and is circled in red. The second entry is "http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\_2010/statcan/67-001-X/67-001-x2010003-fra.pdf". The third entry is "http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\_2011/statcan/51-008-X/51-008-x2010010-fra.pdf". The fourth entry is "http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\_2011/statcan/67-001-X/67-001-x2010004-fra.pdf". The fifth entry is "http://publications.gc.ca/Collection-R/GSC-CGC/M42E/574/2016A.pdf".

HOME | EXPLORE | LEARN MORE | CONTACT US

The leading web archiving service for collecting and accessing cultural heritage on the web  
Built at the Internet Archive

Explore >> Canadian Government Information PLN Web Archive >> Government of Canada Publications

ARCHIVE-IT

Government of Canada Publications  
Collected by: Canadian Government Information PLN Web Archive  
Archived since: Feb, 2013  
No description.

Narrow Your Results

There are no further ways to narrow your results.

Enter search terms here Search Clear

Sites Search Page Text

Page 1 of 1,188 (118,766 Total Results) Next Page >

Sort By: Title (A-Z) | Title (Z-A) | URL (A-Z) | URL (Z-A)

URL: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2010/statcan/51-008-X/51-008-x2010007-fra.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/statcan/51-008-X/51-008-x2010007-fra.pdf)  
Captured 2 times between Apr 12, 2013 and Apr 18, 2013

URL: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2010/statcan/67-001-X/67-001-x2010003-fra.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2010/statcan/67-001-X/67-001-x2010003-fra.pdf)  
Captured 2 times between Apr 16, 2013 and Apr 18, 2013

URL: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/statcan/51-008-X/51-008-x2010010-fra.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/statcan/51-008-X/51-008-x2010010-fra.pdf)  
Captured once on Apr 22, 2013

URL: [http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection\\_2011/statcan/67-001-X/67-001-x2010004-fra.pdf](http://publications.gc.ca/collections/collection_2011/statcan/67-001-X/67-001-x2010004-fra.pdf)  
Captured once on Apr 23, 2013

URL: <http://publications.gc.ca/Collection-R/GSC-CGC/M42E/574/2016A.pdf>

# CGI-DPN Successes

- multi-institutional, coast to coast partnership
- self-organized network of government information librarians
- preservation of at-risk digital content
- joint Archive-IT account for capturing at-risk web content
- new research projects (e.g., fugitive docs, lost web content analysis)

# Questions?

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<https://sites.google.com/a/ualberta.ca/wakaruk/>

"What the Heck is Happening Up North? Canadian Government Information Circa 2014." *Documents to the People (DTTP)*, 42.1 (Spring 2014), p. 15-20. <http://hdl.handle.net/10402/era.38740>

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