



22 July, 2014

Guy Berthiaume  
Librarian and Archivist of Canada  
Library and Archives Canada  
550 Place de le Cité  
Gatineau, Quebec  
J8T 0A7

Dear Guy Berthiaume,

The British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) is concerned by the recent announcement that Library and Archives Canada (LAC) is proposing a contract with the Online Computer Library Center, Inc. (OCLC) to host Canada's Union Catalogue.

BCLA has long been concerned that LAC is significantly narrowing its role in preserving Canada's cultural and historical heritage. Over the past three years we have seen a marked decline in the quality of LAC services, and in the way collections are acquired and managed. Such changes negatively impact the accessibility of our national collection and inhibit the preservation of our national identity.

Libraries across Canada use the Canadian Union Catalogue, presently in Amicus, to acquire MARC cataloguing records on a daily basis, with and without registration, and free of charge. We are concerned that this will change once OCLC administers our Canadian Union Catalogue. OCLC has a history of claiming ownership of records, classification schemes and other information, regardless of the original source. At the same time we are aware that access to OCLC's cataloguing services is costly. Libraries across Canada will lack a stable and current source of catalogue records if access to the Canadian Union Catalogue is limited by prohibitive fees. Such a deficiency in accessible, affordable and



essential information will undermine Canadian libraries' ability to provide open and equitable information to the Canadian public.

BCLA requests that LAC reassure the library community and clearly state that Canadian libraries will continue to have free and timely access to the Canadian Union Catalogue. We look forward to hearing that LAC has made all possible provisions ensuring that the OCLC maintains unrestricted, timely and free access to catalogue records created by LAC. Such confirmation would help build trust in LAC management and future changes.

BCLA is a non-profit, cross-sectorial association representing over 900 librarians, library staff, and institutions and this letter is written on their behalf.

Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Heather Buzzell". The signature is written in a cursive, flowing style.

Heather Buzzell  
President  
British Columbia Library Association

CC: Canadian Library Association