School Libraries in Canada

An On-Line Journal
of the Canadian Library Association
Serving Canada's School Library Community

Exploring the World

TURNING THE PAGE

AASL

American Association
of School Librarians

15TH NATIONAL CONFERENCE AND EXHIBITION

OPENING GENERAL SESSION: THURSDAY, OCTOBER 27, 4:00–5:30 P.M.

Nicholas Carr

Don't miss the opening general session as prolific and nimble thought-leader Nicholas Carr shares his perspective on what has become a highly controversial topic in the learning community. Is the contemplative mind threatened by the world's mechanical busyness? Based on his most recent book, *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*, Carr will speak on the intellectual and social consequences of the Web: the good, the bad, and the ugly.

CLOSING GENERAL SESSION: SATURDAY, OCTOBER 29, 2:30–4:00 P.M.

Mimi Ito

Close your conference experience with Mimi Ito, cultural anthropologist and coauthor of *Hanging Out, Messing Around, and Geeking Out: Kids Living and Learning with New Media*. Ito will speak about the value of digitally-augmented social practices in education, countering the perception that new media is hostile to learning. Ito will help attendees understand how educators can be more proactive in finding coordinated ways to link formal learning with online engagement.

ONE BOOK ONE CONFERENCE: FRIDAY, OCTOBER 28, 7:00–7:45 A.M.

The Shallows:
What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains

Turn the page through understanding *The Shallows: What the Internet is Doing to Our Brains*. Read the book before the conference and then join the discussion at a facilitated forum to be attended by author Nicholas Carr.

FOR MORE INFORMATION AND TO REGISTER, VISIT WWW.AASL11.ORG.

For general inquiries, contact AASL at 800-545-2433 x4382 or aasi@ala.org.

School Libraries in Canada
Volume 29, Number 2   Spring 2011

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Spring 2011
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Dalhousie School

...Our Differences
make us strong!

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Storyteller, Motivational Speaker
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Craig Kielberger

Founder, "Free the Children"
Co-Founder "Me to We"

Linda Shantz-Keresztes

Past President CASL
School Library Consultant

School libraries will provide the keys to discovering the world … given the chance!

by Derrick Grose
Editor,
School Libraries in Canada
and Teacher-Librarian,
Lisgar Collegiate, Ottawa

These are challenging and exciting times in Canadian school libraries. Across the country school libraries are closing or are threatened with staffing cutbacks or closure. This is a continuation of a long-term trend documented in a front page story in the *Globe and Mail* on May 16th (http://www.theglobeandmail.com/news/national/librarians-fight-for-a-role-in-a-digital-world/article2023169/). At the same time, prominent Canadians such as Jian Ghomeshi are speaking out in defense of school librarians and their role in connecting teachers and students with books and other resources that will provoke questions and inspire learning (http://www.cbc.ca/q/add_category/2011/05/18/who-will-speak-for-the-librarian/).

One of the goals of *School Libraries in Canada* is to help school library staff find those books and resources. In this issue, readers will find out about Adwoa Badoe and Rukhsana Khan, Canadian authors who will lead both children and young adults to a better understanding of the world beyond Canada's borders. Their fictional works are complemented by resources for student research provided by the Canadian International Development Agency. Putting traditional library resources into a contemporary technological and pedagogical framework, Anita Brooks Kirkland will discuss the continuing importance of the library web site in an age of social networking. This sampling of the resources available for today's students suggests that these should be "the best of times."

But they are not. In recent weeks newspaper articles and blogs have discussed teacher-librarians in Los Angeles losing their positions and having to argue in court to defend their right to employment as teachers (http://www.latimes.com/news/local/la-me-0513-tobar-20110513,0,3002882.column)as educational administrators lose sight of their educational goals in their efforts to economize. Despite Canada's relative prosperity in the face of the global economic challenges, school boards in many parts of the country are laying off staff and closing school libraries to make up for budgetary shortfalls. For many school libraries, and the students they serve, these are, "the worst of times."

Charles Dickens' juxtaposition of wisdom with foolishness and belief with incredulity in a *A Tale of Two Cities* seems appropriate to current times in school libraries. Certainly we live in an age of contrasts. Access to the wisdom of the ages and to the best thinkers of our own times has never been more widely or freely available. Unfortunately, a bureaucratic focus on balancing the books loses sight of the cost in terms of learning. This chokes the opportunity to build upon the accessibility of intimidating quantities of information. Excitement in school libraries about the concept of the learning commons, is tempered with a lack of faith in the political commitment to provide the human resources to implement it.

It is frightening when educational decision makers have such a naive view of what technology can accomplish, and such a narrow view of what a library is, that they believe that they can promote learning by abandoning libraries and shifting their investment to technology. There needs to be a balance. In the past, some jurisdictions invested money in school libraries without providing staff to supervise and promote the use of those libraries; expensive books were often locked away to collect dust. New technological solutions will suffer the same fate. Books do not collect dust because they are useless or because they are an alien technology that teachers and students do not know how to use. They do not gather dust because the curriculum does not mandate their use. Investments in both books and technological "solutions" are likely to

be wasted unless there are people in schools to support teachers and students in finding and using the resources to discover the answers they need.

The answers that are really needed are not ones that are easily looked up on *Wikipedia* or found with a simple Google search. Libraries are not just places where students fill in blanks. Margaret Atwood is quoted in the May 24th *Wall Street Journal* blog as saying, "The librarian is the key person you don't want to remove from a school" (http://blogs.wsj.com/speakeasy/2011/05/24/margaret-atwood-on-why-school-librarians-rule/). She reasons that librarians select the books that will turn students into readers and connect those students with those books. In libraries, students and teachers discover both answers and questions that they might not have imagined elsewhere. You cannot Google what you do not know. School libraries are as important as ever in inspiring learners to stretch their imaginations and explore new worlds.

President's Report
Voices for School Libraries: Networking for a New Future

by Linda Shantz-Keresztes
Past President, Canadian Association for School Libraries
School Library Consultant

This past year, the Canadian Library Association(CLA) has been visioning a new future for the organization. Financial challenges for the CLA resulted in the CLA Executive Council moving forward with a new structure for the organization through the introduction of the Future Plan document. Throughout the year, all CLA members were kept informed of proposed changes and encouraged to respond to the contents in various ways, including the CLA Blog.

The Executive Council members of the Canadian Association for School Libraries(CASL) spent a great deal of time and energy throughout the past year reviewing and responding to the Future Plan. At the Canadian Library Conference in Halifax at the end of May, a new CLA constitution was passed and the vision of the Future Plan was supported by the membership. This resulted in the dissolution of the library divisions, with the formation of a new structure that included a smaller CLA Executive Council and the introduction of member initiated networks.

Members of CASL Executive Council had been preparing for the challenges ahead with much thought given to a possible school library network, particularly in light of the media attention to school districts who were removing teacher-librarians and other school library staff. Following the CASL Annual General Meeting and Awards Reception in Halifax, CASL members were invited to take part in an organizational meeting for setting up a CLA network. This resulted in a submission to the CLA Executive Council of a Voices for School Libraries Network and a proposal for an Advisory Committee for School Library Issues. This felt to be a fitting time to encourage all persons who are supporters of school libraries and qualified school library staff to consider joining this future network and to let their voices be heard nationally. To become more informed of this future network, please follow the updates of the CLA(http://www.cla.ca) website and the new CATL Network (http://caslnetwork.ning.com/), Canadian Teacher Librarian Network.

Finally, as I end my two years as President of CASL, I would like to thank the dedicated and talented members of the CASL Executive Council, Richard Beaudry, Diana Gauthier, Cindy Matthews, Dianne Leong-Fortier, and Wendy Doucette. Equally committed and essential to the success of CASL's work on behalf of school libraries nationally, is the CASL Editorial Board, which included Derrick Grose, Vicki Pennell, Linsey Hammond, John Tooth, and Judy Sykes. The CASL President's Advisory Committee (CASL PAC) consisting of presidents and representatives of provincial and territorial school library associations were also instrumental in keeping everyone informed of school library issues and events across the country.

The future CLA landscape looks different but continues to provide advocacy for all libraries in Canada. We look forward to connecting with everyone through the national school library network, Voices for School Libraries.

Regards,
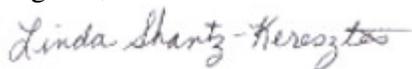
Linda Shantz-Keresztes
Past President, Canadian Association for School Libraries (CASL)

The Canadian International Development Agency: Offering a variety of online tools on Canada's involvement in international development

by Chantal Havard
Acting Senior Communications Officer, CIDA

The Canadian International Development Agency (CIDA) is Canada's lead agency for development assistance. Whether educators are looking for an extensive selection of tools and information on developing countries, or more information on Canada's contribution to international development, CIDA's website is definitely the place to visit.

The Youth Zone

The Youth Zone [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-12882713-HSK] contains great ideas and concrete examples of how young Canadians can become global citizens and get involved in international development. It also provides a list of youth development organizations, as well as a link to the CIDA-funded International Youth Internship Program.

The Canada's Engagement in Afghanistan [http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/index.aspx?lang=eng] site, linked to CIDA's website, also offers an extensive Youth Zone [http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/youth-jeunesse.aspx] with an information kit, photos, and videos from Afghanistan, as well as a tool to request the "Kandahar Through Afghan Eyes 2010" photo exhibit.
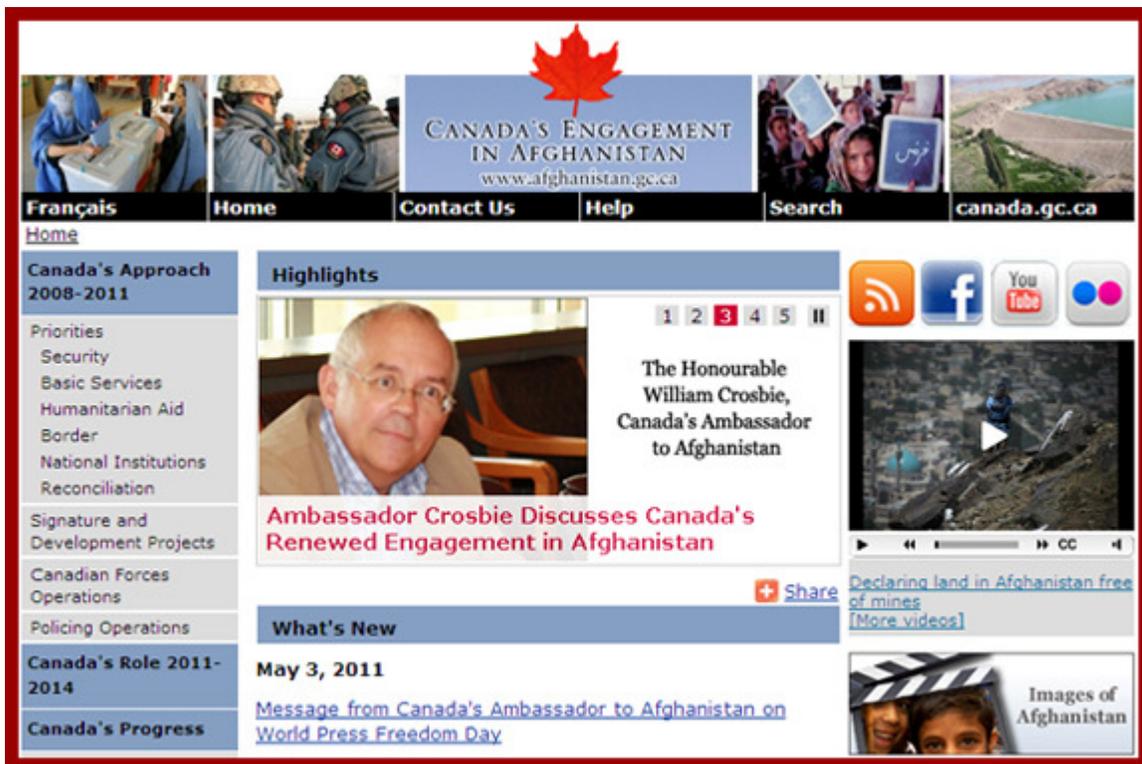
Teacher Zone

Teachers and educators can find a unique portal in the Teacher Zone, [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/eng/JUD-12815027-RGC] which provides high quality, curriculum-based educational resources to bring international development to the classroom. You can search for resources by age group, theme or region.

Also in the Teacher Zone is information on CIDA's Global Classroom Initiative, [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/gci] a funding mechanism that supports the development of school-based global education resources and activities, enabling youth to become active global citizens and to understand the global impact of their choices.

The Developing World Map

The [Developing World](http://magazine.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap/cida/requestamap.asp?language=EN)
[http://magazine.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap/cida/requestamap.asp?language=EN] wall map provides
information based on the UNDP Human Development Index for each country, which makes it a very useful
tool in classrooms. The online map offers lesson plans for teachers and a glossary on international
development. Produced by CIDA and Canadian Geographic, the map is free and can be ordered online.
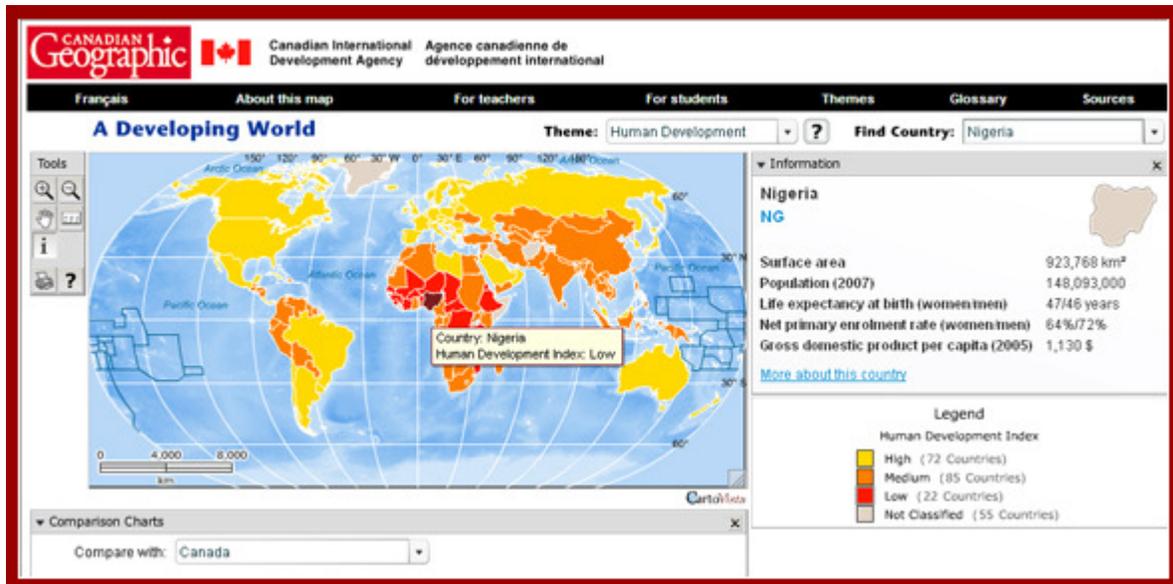
International Development Week

Each year during the first full week of February, CIDA participates in [International Development Week](http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-27114747-MPW)
[http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-27114747-MPW] to engage Canadians on
international development issues. The website includes information on that year's theme, posters, and other
web tools as well as a list of events taking place in Canada such as conferences, films, debates, and fairs.

Photo Gallery and Multimedia

CIDA's world-class photo library has been collecting photos for more than 25 years and includes the work of
award-winning photographers from Canada and abroad. The library holds more than 150,000 photos,
capturing Canada's role in international development.

Browse the Photo Gallery [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/FRA-102785529-H6R] for inspiring images of people whose lives have benefited from Canada's international development assistance. Find other examples of results achieved by CIDA and its partners in the short, dynamic videos presented in the Multimedia [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/RAC-22102232-L2N] section.

Stories from the Field and results

For those wishing to learn about results in the fight against poverty, the Stories from the Field [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-52684956-H39] section offers many thought-provoking success stories from the developing world. See how people living in difficult conditions have been able to bring about powerful change in their daily lives. These stories are an eye-opening experience.

Another visual illustration of the projects funded by CIDA can be found through geo-mapping, which provides a quick overview and summary of projects with one click. Haiti [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/ANN-102891452-HJU] and Sudan [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/ANN-122185528-JC8] are currently available.
The Development for Results [Link to Development for Results at http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/eng/JUD-12214478-DH6] report, published since 2007, highlights CIDA's ongoing efforts to ensure that Canada's international development assistance makes a real difference in the lives of the world's poorest and more vulnerable people. It provides up-to-date information on projects related to CIDA's three priority themes:

- Increasing food security
- Securing the future of children and youth
- Stimulating sustainable economic growth

It also provides information on the 20 countries of focus, which receive the bulk of Canada's bilateral assistance.

Regions and Countries

As part of its Aid Effectiveness Agenda, the Government of Canada announced in 2009 that it will be focusing 80 percent of bilateral resources in 20 countries of focus. These 20 countries were chosen based on their real needs, their capacity to benefit from aid, and their alignment with Canadian foreign policy priorities. The goal is to make Canada's international assistance more focused, more effective and more accountable.

Project Browser

To find an extensive list of projects funded by CIDA, go to the Project Browser: [http://les.acdi-cida.gc.ca/project-browser] a user-friendly tool that contains a summary of the projects as well as mention of partners involved. You can search either by key word or by country.

CIDA's website is updated regularly, so teachers and educators are encouraged to visit the site frequently.

CIDA is looking forward to welcoming new visitors to its website. Positive and compassionate stories about the developing world are just one click away!

L'Agence canadienne de développement international :
Un éventail d'outils en ligne sur la participation du Canada au développement international

par Chantal Havard
agente principale des communications par intérim, ACDI

Au Canada, l'Agence canadienne de développement international (ACDI) est le principal organisme responsable de l'aide au développement, et son site Web est sans contredit une mine d'or, entre autres pour les éducateurs. En effet, il contient une grande quantité d'outils de recherche et de renseignements sur les pays en développement ou sur la contribution du Canada au développement international.

Zone jeunesse

La **Zone jeunesse** [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/JUD-12882713-HSK] présente de très bonnes idées et des exemples concrets de la façon dont les jeunes Canadiens peuvent devenir des citoyens du monde et participer à des activités de développement international. Ce site contient également une liste des organismes de développement voués aux jeunes, de même qu'un lien vers le Programme de stages internationaux pour les jeunes (PSIJ) financé par l'ACDI.

Le site **L'engagement du Canada en Afghanistan**, [http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/index.aspx?lang=fra] qui est lié au site Web de l'ACDI, contient aussi une **Zone jeunesse**[http://www.afghanistan.gc.ca/canada-afghanistan/youth-jeunesse.aspx?lang=fra] bien garnie. On y trouve une trousse d'information, des photos et des vidéos tournées en Afghanistan, de même qu'un lien pour obtenir de l'information si vous souhaitez accueillir l'exposition de photos « Kandahar à travers les yeux des jeunes Afghans 2010 ».

Zone des profs

La **Zone des profs** [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/acdi-cida.nsf/fra/JUD-12815027-RGC] est un portail unique pour les enseignants et les éducateurs. En effet, elle contient des ressources éducatives de grande qualité axées sur les programmes scolaires pour amener le développement international au cœur de la salle de classe. Vous pouvez effectuer vos recherches par groupe d'âge, thème ou région.
La Zone des profs contient également des renseignements sur **L'initiative Le monde en classe** [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/ANN-93083137-GPT] de l'ACDI. Il s'agit d'un mécanisme de financement qui appuie l'élaboration d'activités et de ressources mondiales adaptées au milieu scolaire, permettant ainsi aux jeunes de devenir des citoyens du monde actifs et de comprendre comment leurs choix se répercutent à l'échelle mondiale.

Carte Un monde en développement

La carte **Un Monde en développement**[http://magazine.canadiangeographic.ca/worldmap/cida/requestamap.asp?language=FR&Resolution=] donne des renseignements sur l'Indice du développement humain de l'ONU pour chaque pays, ce qui en fait un outil très utile en classe. Cette carte en ligne offre des plans de cours aux enseignants et un glossaire sur le développement international. Conçue par l'ACDI et Canadian Geographic, cette carte peut être commandée en ligne sans frais.
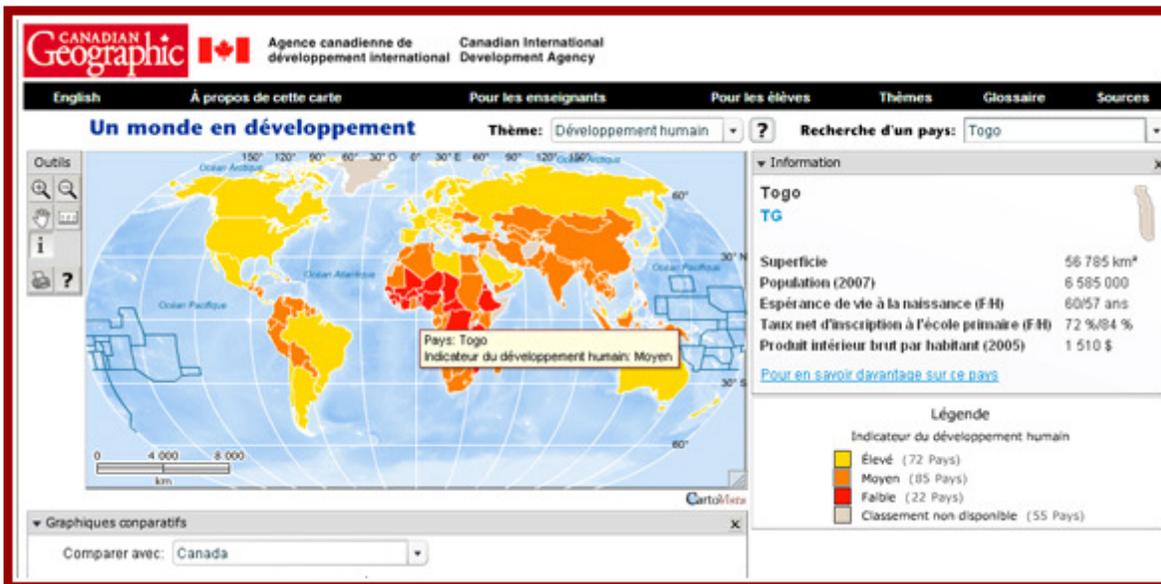
la Semaine du développement international

Dans le cadre de la **Semaine du développement international**, [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/JUD-27114747-MPW] qui se tient durant la première semaine complète de février, l'ACDI sensibilise les Canadiens aux questions de développement international. Le site Web de l'Agence contient des renseignements sur le thème de l'année, des affiches, des outils Web, ainsi qu'un calendrier des activités qui se tiendront au Canada, comme des conférences, des films, des discussions et des foires.

Galerie de photos et Multimédia

La photothèque de l'ACDI, de renommée internationale, recueille depuis plus de 25 ans des photos qui ont été prises par les meilleurs photographes canadiens et étrangers. Cette collection rassemble plus de 150 000 photos qui illustrent le rôle du Canada dans le développement international.

Vous trouverez dans la **Galerie de photos** [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/FRA-102785529-H6R] des photos inspirantes de personnes dont la vie a été améliorée grâce à l'aide au développement international du Canada. Quant à la section **Multimédia**, [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/RAC-22102232-L2N] elle contient des vidéos succinctes et dynamiques qui présentent d'autres exemples de résultats obtenus par l'ACDI et ses partenaires.

Sur le terrain et resultants

Vous souhaitez en apprendre davantage sur les efforts de lutte contre la pauvreté? La section **Sur le terrain** [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/JUD-52684956-H39] présente de nombreuses histoires de réussite vécues dans les pays en développement qui suscitent la réflexion. Vous apprendrez comment les personnes qui vivent dans des conditions difficiles ont réussi à apporter de grands changements dans leur quotidien. Ces histoires sont des expériences révélatrices.
Les cartes interactives sont un autre moyen d'avoir, en un seul clic, un aperçu et un résumé des projets financés par l'ACDI. Pour l'instant, il est possible d'avoir de l'information sur les projets menés en **Haïti** [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/ANN-102891452-HJU] et au **Soudan**[http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/ANN-122185528-JC8].
Le rapport intitulé **Le développement axé sur les résultats**, [http://www.acdi-cida.gc.ca/acdi-cida/ACDI-CIDA.nsf/fra/JUD-12214478-DH6] qui est publié depuis 2007, met en valeur les efforts que l'ACDI ne cesse de déployer afin que l'aide au développement international du Canada améliore véritablement la vie des plus démunis et des plus vulnérables dans le monde. Il contient les plus récents renseignements sur des projets liés aux priorités thématiques de l'ACDI, à savoir :

• Accroître la sécurité alimentaire
• Assurer l'avenir des enfants et des jeunes
• Favoriser une croissance économique durable

Il contient aussi des renseignements sur les 20 pays ciblés, qui reçoivent la plus grande part de l'aide bilatérale du Canada.

Régions et pays

Dans le cadre de son plan d'action sur l'efficacité de l'aide, le gouvernement du Canada a annoncé en 2009 qu'il concentrera 80 % de ses ressources bilatérales dans 20 pays ciblés. Ces 20 pays ont été sélectionnés selon leurs besoins réels, leur capacité de bénéficier de l'aide et leur conformité avec les priorités de la politique étrangère du Canada. L'objectif est d'offrir une aide internationale plus centrée, plus efficace et plus responsable.

Banque de projets

La **Banque de projets** [http://les.acdi-cida.gc.ca/servlet/JKMSearchController?desTemplateFile=cpoSearchFr.htm&desClientLocale=frFR&AppID=cpoFr] contient une liste exhaustive des projets financés par l'ACDI. Il s'agit d'un outil convivial qui donne un résumé de chaque projet et mentionne les partenaires qui y participent. Vous pouvez effectuer une recherche par mot clé ou par pays.

Comme le site Web de l'ACDI est régulièrement mis à jour, les enseignants et les éducateurs sont invités à le consulter souvent.

L'ACDI se réjouit à l'idée d'accueillir de nouveaux visiteurs sur son site Web. Un simple clic vous permet de lire des histoires touchantes par le positivisme et la compassion qui s'en dégagent.

"Like the traditional West African Griot,
I inform, entertain and inspire society "

"I am proud that I can help keep the old traditions alive while stepping into contemporary forms. I feel very fortunate."

- Adwoa Badoe

Photo Credit:
http://www.afroculture.com/AdwoaBadoe.html

Adwoa Badoe was born in Ghana and has lived in Guelph, Ontario, Canada since 1992. She has published on three continents, North America, Europe and Africa. She is the author of sixteen books, the co-author of two others and has contributed a memoir in the Canadian Anthology, *My Wedding Dress*. Her books include a collection of folktales, picture-books, as well as readers for educational markets. In her brand new novel, *Between Sisters*, she tells the story of a sixteen year old girl of Accra, Ghana. Gloria is an ingenuous and endearing character who has been blindsided by the sudden demands of adulthood, but who, like any teenager, is trying to find a way to reconcile her future, her family, her identity and her own interests. *Between Sisters* is published by Groundwood Books, House of Anansi. Her other books by Groundwood are, *The Pot of Wisdom: Ananse Stories* and *Nana's Cold Days*. Adwoa Badoe is also a speaker and an award winning performance artist of storytelling and dance.

DG - Although you trained as a physician in Ghana, your website says that you "have evolved quite naturally into an African Griot." Please explain what being a Griot means to you and why taking on that role has come to you so naturally.

AB - Griot is a term used for a West African specialist teller of history and praise singer. They are entertainers and repositories of oral tradition who also interpret history and current affairs with reference to their community. I use that term loosely for myself as I retell and interpret African histories in the context of folk tales, written histories and legends. I entertain and do my best to represent many of the peoples of Sub Saharan Africa through the interpretation of their stories and traditions. The role has come naturally to me because of a great love of story and storytelling which I embraced from my early immersion in Ghanaian Folkloric culture.

DG - How does your role as a Griot in the modern world, writing for both Canadian and African markets, compare with that of the Griot in traditional African cultures?

AB - Like the traditional West African Griot, I inform, entertain and inspire society while I keep our stories alive and regenerated for the next generation. Unlike the traditional Griot, I did not inherit my place as a storyteller and I research and create my stories from various sources.

DG - What was the role of stories and books in your life when you were growing up? What stories that you heard or read as a young person do you remember best? What makes them memorable for you?

AB - I grew up on a rich diet of oral stories, mostly folktales of Ananse and other characters, but also family stories. I read a lot, mainly mass media books written by Enid Blyton and set in England. I progressed through romance novels and popular novels by popular writers such as Sidney Sheldon and Harold Robbins. In school we were made to read books like *The Invisible Man*, *The Day of the Triffids*, *My Family and Other Animals* and *Macbeth*. It was also in school that I was introduced to African Writers such as Peter Abrahams and his novel,*Mine Boy*, and Chinua Achebe.

DG - What experience or experiences in life have had the greatest influence on you as a storyteller and writer?

AB - I can name motherhood as one very special influence because sharing my stories with my children was a delight. Immigration put my stories in a different and more important light because they became a source of culture and identity descriptor for me—a kind of anchor.

DG - Who has been the most influential person in your life as a storyteller and writer? Why?

AB - Although my love for story has come from so many people, including relatives, teachers and writers, I'll probably say my dad, because he enjoyed telling personal stories every day and was always keen to listen to me and read anything I wrote.

DG - Do you have an on-going connection with Ghana? How has it changed in the years since you moved to Canada?

AB - Yes, I have connections with Ghana as I keep in touch with my family, friends and old school mates by Facebook, telephone and visits. I have done small projects such as presenting books for a school library start-up at a local school in my hometown. I also have several works published there. Accra, the capital city of Ghana has grown much bigger and more crowded, with an increasing gap between the rich and the poor. However there are now, more institutions of higher education and so many young people are able to reach for higher education than ever before. There is a greater sense of hope as young people seek out their future.

DG - There is a tremendous range in your work as an author. You have done children's books such as Crabs for Dinner, The Queen's New Shoes, your collection of Ananse stories, The Pot of Wisdom and Nana's Cold Days as well as novels for tweens and young adults such as Between Sisters and the Hiv/aids Action Readers, It's Ok to Be Sad and My Sister Julie. What are the particular challenges and rewards for you of each kind of writing?

AB - I enjoy writing and I will keep reaching for other challenges. Each kind of writing has its own particular challenges, and suit specific seasons in which I find myself. For example, I get very busy with performances in the winter so I create oral stories and poetry. In the summer I work on longer pieces. With picture books and short forms of literature, I focus on the rhythm of the language and on choosing the right words for expression. Even for little children, I like to mix in the occasional difficult word with grade-level words to inspire curiosity. For the books I have published with MacMillan (UK) Educational, the challenge is to tell an interesting story in the confines of rigorous language and topical boundaries. The novel is the most challenging form for me because beyond the plot, there is the work of careful characterization, not to mention, more pages to edit.

DG - What are the key elements in a good children's book?

AB - In a picture book it is the action and the rhythm of the language as well as unforgettable illustrations.

DG - What are key elements in a good book for tweens and young adults?

AB - I would say a believable character is of utmost importance, honest circumstances and the element of hope.

DG - What is the best part of being a writer and Griot?

AB - I am proud that I can help keep the old traditions alive while stepping into contemporary forms. I feel very fortunate.

What do you like to read when you are not busy writing your own books?

I read folktales, novels and collections of short stories. I also read young adult books and I'm partial to a good story set in Africa. I also enjoy novels from the east, especially India.

DG - What projects are you planning for the future?

AB - I have the first draft of a novel set here in Canada. I'm also doing exploratory writing on a historical character for a young adult novel. These works are about Africans in diaspora. On the Griot front, I may be recording some stories I wrote about my new creation, Asabea, Ananse's Daughter, a girl trickster and folktale type of character. I would also like to publish those stories.

DG - What is the most interesting experience that you have ever had in a school library?

AB - Once, during a writing workshop, the students who had visited my website begged me to dance for them and so I did.

DG - Thank you very much for giving us some insight into your writing and your work as a contemporary Griot.

Visit Adwoa Badoe Online at:
http://www.afroculture.com/AdwoaBadoe.html
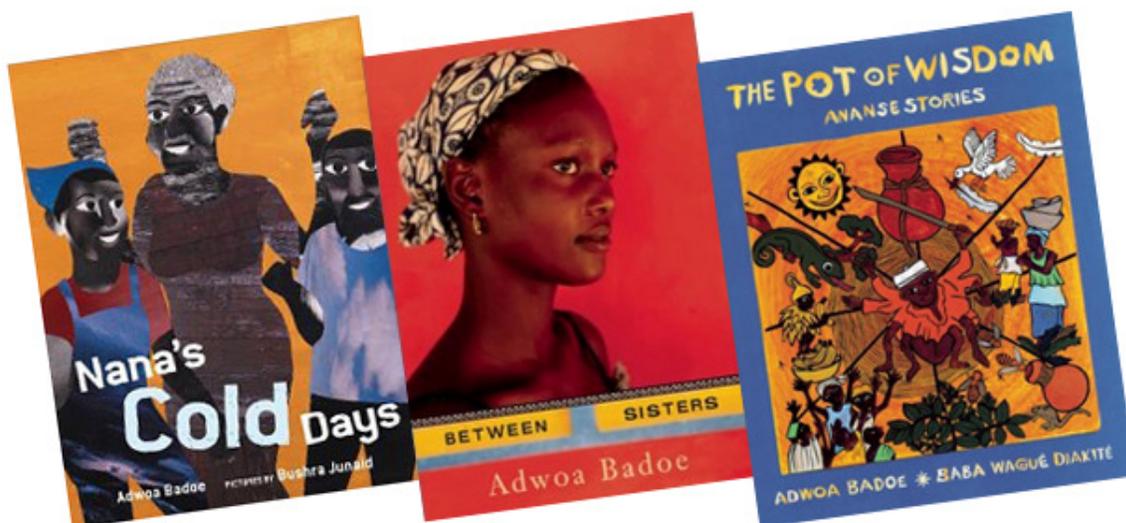
Cover art courtesy of Groundwood Books

We asked ... Craig Kielburger

What should be Canada's national priority in terms of contributing to international development?

Canada's national priority should be a focus on sustainable development. There's often great pressure to rush from crisis to crisis, such as the natural disasters in Haiti, Pakistan and Japan. But if we're to break the cycle of poverty once and for all, we must stay the course and focus on long-term development. In the past, priorities have been constantly shifting. Canada needs to pick the regions of greatest need and continue with long-term projects.

What advice would you give to a Canadian student in elementary or secondary school who wants to contribute to global development?

There are many ways that young people can contribute every single day. Yes, they can fundraise for things like our "Adopt A Village" program overseas and participate in volunteer trips in developing nations. But it's also as simple as the ethically made t-shirt they wear or the fair trade coffee they buy. It can mean reading up on current events and joining organizations and associations in North America that focus on social justice. It's these everyday choices we can make every single day in order to change the world for the better.
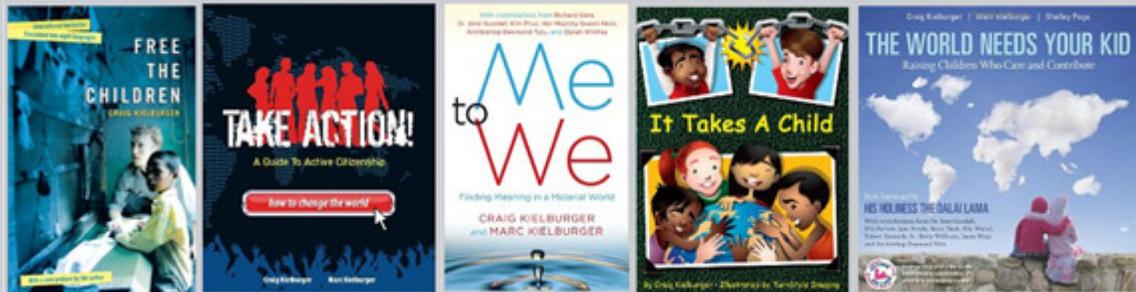
Craig Kielburger has authored or co-authored five books about engaging young people to promote social change: *Free the Children* (1998), *Take Action* (2002), *Me to We* (2007), *It Takes a Child* (2009) and *The World Needs Your Kid* (2010).

In 1995, at the age of twelve, Craig Kielburger, founded the charity "Free the Children," a network of children helping children through education. He is also the co-founder of "Me to We." A social enterprise designed to help support the work of "Free The Children," "Me to We" provides consumers with socially responsible lifestyle choices, including sweatshop-free clothing, a line of original accessories handcrafted by artisans in "Free The Children" communities across the globe, socially responsible international volunteer trips for youth, families and corporations, leadership training programs and materials, and books which address issues of positive social change. "Me to We" annually donates half of its profits to "Free The Children" and re-invests the other half to grow the enterprise and ensure its sustainability.

In addition to the accomplishments mentioned above, Craig is also a graduate in peace and conflict studies from the University of Toronto and the youngest-ever graduate of the Kellogg-Schulich Executive MBA program. He has also received six honorary doctorates and three nominations for the Nobel Peace Prize. His work has been recognized with the Nelson Mandela Human Rights Award, the World Economic Forum GLT Award, the State of the World Forum Award, The Roosevelt Freedom Medal and The World Children's Prize for the Rights of the Child (often called the Children's Nobel Prize). He is also a recipient of the Governor General's Medal of Meritorious Service and a member of the Order of Canada. He has publicly acknowledged the role of libraries and librarians in helping him to become aware of the issues to which he has dedicated his life's work.

For more information for teachers on Free the Children go to:
http://www.freethechildren.com/getinvolved/educator/

Educating and empowering students to make a difference in the fight against hunger

As Canada's rural population declines, it becomes increasingly difficult for many students to relate to the lives of farmers in Canada. It is even more difficult to relate to the struggles of impoverished peasants in other parts of the world. Although occasionally Canadians are still touched by ice storms, blizzards, floods, forest fires and other devastating natural disasters, most of us are less susceptible to the whims of nature than are subsistence farmers in other nations.

Kids Can Press, One Hen, Inc. and Hasbro, Inc. have collaborated in creating Chutes and Ladders® The Good Garden Edition. This game encourages kids to learn more about the global food crisis. It is based on the book *The Good Garden: How One Family Went from Hunger to Having Enough* (ISBN 9781554534883) from the Kids Can Press' CitizenKid series. Although the game is not available for purchase, copies have been donated to 500 elementary schools across Canada.

When playing The Good Garden Edition of Chutes and Ladders, students get a chance to visualize how a random spin of events can undo progress achieved over the course of almost an entire game. Students learn how in real life a hurricane, a windstorm, drought, bad seeds, a sick animal or poor crop yields can strike suddenly and ruin the lives of subsistence farmers and their families who are also vulnerable to unstable markets, predatory landlords and unscrupulous money-lenders.

At the same time, the game informs players about measures that farmers can take to mitigate the risks they face. Students learn how cross planting, terracing land against erosion and using organic fertilizers can improve yields. Land reform, crop insurance, micro-banking and the production of cash crops are ladders boosting subsistence farmers to prosperity.

Some of the concepts touched upon in this special edition of a classic board game may be complex, but the games lessons are meaningful at many different levels and the simplicity of play makes it enjoyable for children from six years of age and up.

"Both the game and the book are designed to introduce young people to the issue of food security," said Lisa Lyons, President,Kids Can Press. "Using these materials in classrooms is a great way to inspire students to make a difference both locally and globally."

"It's exciting to bring these critical lessons to life through play using our classic Chutes & Ladders game. Educating and empowering students to make a difference in the fight against hunger is important," said Karen Davis, Vice President of Community Relations at Hasbro, Inc.

"All One Hen programs are built around a key global issue and are designed to inspire kids to four values: financial responsibility, personal initiative, global awareness and giving back," said Amma Sefa-Dedeh, the Executive Director of One Hen. "The goal of the Good Garden program is to reach classrooms with the message that kids can make a difference and empower them to take action in their communities and abroad."

Certainly one valuable accomplishment of both the Chutes and Ladders game and the The Good Garden book that inspired it, will be to make students think about where food comes from and about the fact that there are people hidden away on the other side of the supermarket who produce the food we eat.

More on the struggles of Indigenous Central American Peasant Farmers
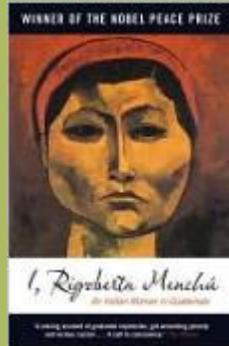
In *I Rigoberta Menchu*, a leader in the struggle of Guatemalan peasants against an oppressive military government, Nobel Peace Prize winner Rigoberta Menchu, tells of hardships and struggles that are typical in many Indian communities in Latin America. She has also written several children's books celebrating the traditions of her people: *The Secret Legacy*, *The Honey Jar* and *The Girl from Chimel*.

School Library Profile

Dalhousie School, Winnipeg, Manitoba

Photo Credit: Ming Song

Dalhousie School is a K-6 school in a very diverse and wonderful community! We have families and students from literally all over the world. We have a high percentage of EAL and international students as well as many students who have always been a part of our neighborhood. Our students also come from a wide variety of socio-economic backgrounds and have demonstrated excellence in music, athletics, and academics consistently throughout the years.

The school has 376 students with twenty-four teachers, one teacher-librarian and two library technicians. There are eight computers in the library and a collection of more than 11 000 books.
The library is also the home for many of our extra-curricular clubs including "Library Leaders" and Strategy Games Club. The library is used throughout the year by our EAL staff as a gathering place for evening conversation groups that serve new immigrants who are developing their language skills and adapting to Canadian culture.

"Everyone who comes through our library comments on the library. We have the unique feature of a 25 foot paper maché dragon that lives suspended above our circulation desk!"
Photo Credits: Andrew Volk and Paula Jasper-Hall

The most popular parts of the collection include Graphic Novels, Fantasy Series, MYRCA books, Geronimo Stilton, Fairy stories, and Non-Fiction such as origami, history and drawing series.

The library is located in the center of our open area school, so it makes up a large, central expanse around which the corridors and classrooms of the school lie. We have a huge selection of books, staff resource area, computers, a Smart Board, a pit-style assembly area, lots of workspace and comfortable reading areas. We are also in the process of developing a seniors and community use area to encourage and strengthen our relationship with our community.

Adequate funding to purchase and replace our collection is always a challenge. However, despite this challenge, the library is widely used by teachers, students and the community. It provides a friendly and inviting atmosphere with visual stimulation, displays, and celebrations of reading and literacy. We have a caring and attentive staff that provides an array of services to meet the needs of the school and the community.

Everyone who comes through our library comments on the library. We have the unique feature of a 25' paper mache dragon that lives suspended above our circulation desk!

Submit your school library profile for consideration for publication in a future issue of **School Libraries in Canada.**

School Library Profile (.pdf)

Profile.doc

Profil d'une bibliothèque scolaire (.pdf)

Profil.doc

The Virtual Library:
Have We Put the Cart Before the Horse?

by Anita Brooks Kirkland

Library Consultant, Information Technology Services
Waterloo Region District School Board

In the very first article of this series I asked the question, "The School Library Learning Commons: Are We "Virtually" There?" The answer to that question is, unfortunately, no. The virtual library is a critical part of the transformation to the learning commons, yet the most basic component of that virtual presence, the library website, continues to be a formidable challenge for many. It is an old and persistent problem. Clearly, with the emergence of the learning commons philosophy there is a compelling urgency to solve this. In the new library learning commons the virtual space is as important as the physical space for supporting learners, yet many, and perhaps even most school libraries have no visible online presence.

Rewind to the Ontario Library Association Super Conference, 2006. Yes 2006. I remember listening to the Ontario School Library Association's spotlight speaker, Joyce Valenza, talking to the large group assembled about the importance of the library website. And digging through my archive of conference programs, Valenza's predictions ring more true today than ever before. The session description says it all. "It is absolutely logical that the 21st century virtual school library will have as broad an influence as its physical counterpart, expanding and reinterpreting library service, meeting young users' information needs where they live, play and work – on the Web" (OLA, 2006). Even though the notion of a school library website was by no means new at the time, I do remember the high level of anxiety in the room. Websites were hard to create and maintain. Time was tight and thinking about a website was low on the list of priorities for many. Although the need was clearly understood, the reality of getting there presented far too formidable a challenge for many or even most of those present.

It's 2011 and Everything Has Changed

Fast forward to 2011. When it comes to the web, everything has changed. In early 2006 there was no Twitter and no Google Apps. Blogs and wikis were cutting edge technologies, and Facebook was the new kid on the block. There were no smart phones. In the years since Web 2.0 has transformed the Internet into a giant conversation. Many educators are exploring the interactivity of the web and are using it to create meaningful collaborative learning opportunities for their students.

Over the past few months I have had the opportunity to work with teacher-librarians from seven different school districts in Ontario on professional learning activities related to the implementation of the new guideline document, *Together for Learning: School Libraries and the Emergence of the Learning Commons* (OSLA, 2010). It is very clear to me that teacher-librarians are embracing the new context of the interactive web and are continuing to take leadership with using learning technology to foster critical thinking. Bridging the digital learning divide is clearly the work of the school library program.

It's 2011 and Nothing Has Changed

Yet amidst this innovative use of technology and engagement in the interactive web as a platform for learning, the state of school library websites has barely evolved since that winter morning in 2006 when we all wrestled with our lack of capacity.

Over the past few weeks I have been conducting an extensive informal exploration of school library websites in Ontario and beyond. While there are many examples of great websites at the school and/or school district level, one can only hold these up as pockets of excellence. The overall reality defies the notion that our libraries exist as such in virtual space. The trends seem quite clear.

• Many, perhaps most, school libraries have no visible web presence.
• The problem is far more acute in elementary schools than in secondary.
• Where websites exist they often have minimal content.
• Lack of attention to design factors renders many websites difficult to use.
• School library websites, or where they don't exist, school websites, most frequently have no visible links to online resource collections like research databases or eBooks, let alone the library catalogue.
• Central school district library websites exist in only a few instances and where they exist schools are not always connected to them.
• Little imagination has been used in many cases to scaffold access to online resource collections for learning success.

The reasons for this situation also seem very clear. Demanding schedules, technology barriers and isolation remain the factors that prevent libraries from building their virtual branch. In a survey I conducted recently with a group of Ontario teacher-librarians about their implementation of *Together for Learning*, the anxiety about building an online presence was in striking contrast to the enthusiasm and confidence about most other areas for implementation. Two responses particularly captured this. "I continue to work on my website, with little knowledge on how to do this." "My virtual library has stalled. I don't have the time or knowledge right now to take it any further, and I think the next stage should be a board-wide library website, but this is not on the radar as far as I know right now."

If Websites Are Such a Problem, Why Bother?

Why do we need a website when we're engaging students in multiple ways online? The straight answer is that our library programs depend on it. Just as the resource-rich, technology-rich physical library environment fosters the messy business of learning that takes place within its four walls, the virtual library should provide seamless access to resources and tools for learners interacting in online collaborative spaces. The website supports learners wherever they are - in the physical library, the virtual library, at school or at home, 24/7.

It is hard to conceive of how even the most basic function of the library, providing access to resources, can be accomplished in 2011 without a website. How are schools without a web presence sharing access to online subscription resources? Only at school with lots of assistance? With printed lists of web addresses and logins? If we want students to learn how to use our digital resources effectively then we need to put as much thought into how we organize, present and support them as we do with the collections that sit on our shelves.

The technological barriers that used to exist for creating websites are evaporating. Open source content management systems like Drupal or Wordpress Multi-User make it simple to create polished and powerful websites almost as easily as creating simple documents. The bottlenecks of desktop software and file transfer protocols have disappeared. The new tools are meant to help multiple users share responsibility for content creation with online editing and instant publishing. And where access to these tools is still a barrier there are many options, from using a wiki to build a website or using a ready-made template in Google Sites.

Moving from Isolation to Collaboration

But the core issues remain. Despite new tools and compelling need, the reality still exists that teacher-librarians struggle to find the time to build content and get it up on the web. In elementary schools, which typically have more constraints on staffing, this is more the rule than the exception. I am quite convinced that the most powerful solution is widespread collaboration amongst teacher-librarians and where possible, with leadership from central library staff. When we collaborate what we produce is always better than what we can do on our own. Not easy to get going, perhaps, but definitely worth it.

Scaling the Solution

The most effective virtual library collaborations can produce a rich web presence for all of the participating school libraries while making it easy for local customization with school-specific content. New tools make it all possible. Secondary library websites in my school district are all built on a template that brings in content from our collaboratively built central site and allow each school's teacher-librarian to build their own content around it. Every elementary school website in the district has a prominent page linking to the central library learning commons with its supports for students and teachers. Collaborative learning spaces embed access to learning resources from the collective online commons created by teacher-librarians to scaffold the learning experience. Just a year into this large-scale collaboration the results are extremely positive and promising, and the group is energized and engaged in ongoing content development.

Efforts in our board are mirrored elsewhere in the province. Several school districts have put considerable effort into building central sites to help libraries build a meaningful online presence. Other school districts are exploring the possibilities, and where there is no central leadership teacher-librarians are collaborating together across schools. There is definitely a shift underway.

The bottom line is that the time is long past when a library website could be considered optional. As our resources and our learning spaces migrate online so must our library spaces. As it is eloquently stated in *Together for Learning*, "Just as the Internet has created a web of global connections, information and interactions, the Learning Commons creates a network of information, people and programs for learning within a school and beyond. Universal access ensures that learning is within reach of everyone at all hours… day or night." Understanding the critical importance of resource-rich, user-friendly and dynamic library websites is essential for moving this statement from vision to reality.

(Please visit the Waterloo Region District School Board's
Library Learning Commons website at: http://library.wrdsb.ca)

Visit Anita Brooks Kirkland's "By the Brooks" Blog.
(http://bythebrooks.blogspot.com/)

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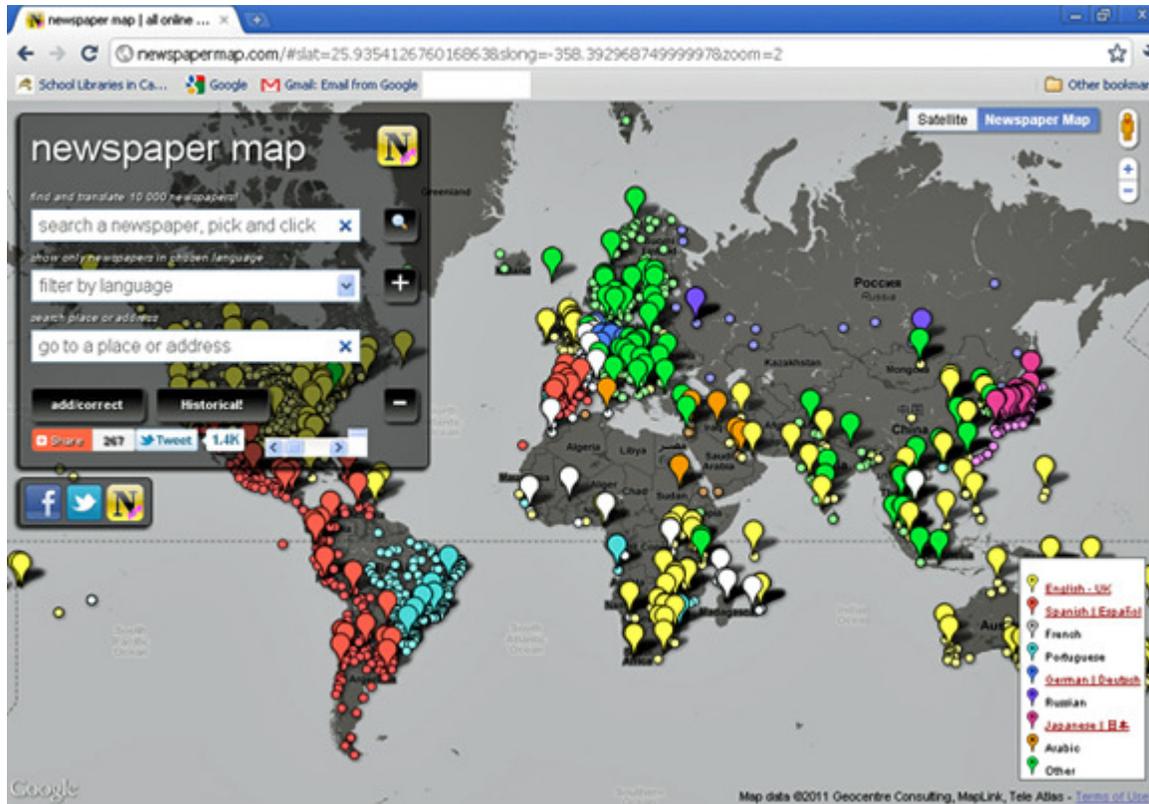
This site provides links to on-line newspapers from around the world in a variety of languages.

UN Data
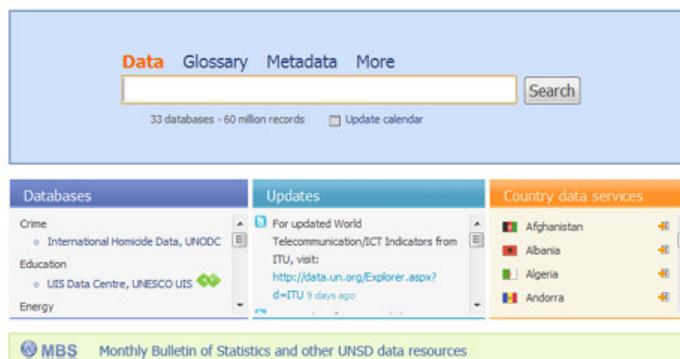
This site provides a wealth of demographic, geographic, economic and sociological data from around the

world. For younger students the Cyberschoolbus offers a more colourful issue-oriented portal.

Centre d'apprentissage interculturel

Centre for Intercultural Learning

Air, terre et mer: Une histoire d'exploration!

Air, Land, Sea: A Story about Exploration!

"I was brown, I was from Pakistan. Writers were white.
They were from England and America."

Rukhsana Khan
in conversation with
Derrick Grose

Rukhsana Khan in the desert just outside downtown Dubai - http://www.rukhsanakhan.com

Award-winning author and storyteller Rukhsana Khan was born in Lahore, Pakistan and immigrated to Canada at the age of three. In addition to her orginal stories, she tells tales of India, Persia and the Middle East. She has published eleven books, made numerous radio and television appearances and spoken at conferences around the world. She was on the road in Sudbury when she agreed to this interview with *School Libraries in Canada*.

DG - You have said, "When I was a kid growing up in the small town of Dundas, Ontario, I always dreamed of being an author." Where did that dream come from? What has helped you most in making that dream come true?

RK - The first person who ever encouraged me in my dream was my grade eight teacher Mr. Bakody. He gave us a creative writing assignment. We had to make a journal and write down one thought every day. He said that shouldn't be too hard; we should think at least once a day. Mine was full of melodramatic statements of

import. For instance, on Oct. 12th, 1975 I wrote: "The trees outside the road seem to beckon me. I heed their call and step forward."

Maybe it was my vocabulary that impressed Mr. Bakody (I don't know too many thirteen year olds who'd be able to use 'heed' correctly in a sentence!) because when he collected our notebooks he wrote me a big long note saying that I was a poet, and when I grew up I should become a writer.

I thought I couldn't. I was brown, I was from Pakistan. Writers were white. They were from England and America. Back then the Canadian publishing industry was very small. The only two Canadian authors I knew were L.M. Montgomery and Farley Mowat and for both of them, their books were published in the States and came back to us.

But I started to dream about it.

What helped me most in making that dream come true was the fact that whatever books that were out there about my culture, were written by white authors who didn't 'get' us at all.

And as a result, everywhere around me I saw Muslims who were ashamed of who they were, and yet we have a whole culture and civilization that is unique and fascinating and ironically not that different from Judeo-Christian values.

I started writing seriously in 1989. What kept me going was anger and frustration at all the horrible books out there about my culture. I was determined to write books that showed the way we really are, and tell good stories in the process.

DG - After being born in Lahore, Pakistan, you moved to Canada when you were three. In addition to your own stories, you have tales coming from Afghanistan, India, Persia, and elsewhere in the Middle East. What inspires you to write about these cultures rather than the land in which you have lived since you were a small child?

RK - Actually I have written about Canada. Two of my books: my first novel *Dahling if You Luv Me Would You Please Please Smile* and *Big Red Lollipop*, are set in Canada/North America. It just depends on the story.

Some of my stories have to be set in Pakistan. For instance, "Ruler of the Courtyard" is about a girl who's afraid of the chickens in the courtyard. She runs into the bathhouse and encounters a snake. That story had to be set in Pakistan. Not too many people in Canada have bathhouses in the yard, or chickens, or poisonous snakes—the Massasauga rattler excepted.

And *Silly Chicken* is based on a true story of an egg hatching in a cupboard after my grandmother's pet hen that had laid it, had been eaten. That couldn't happen in Canada; it's not hot enough. But it did happen in Pakistan when my mom was a little girl.

And *Wanting Mor* too, could only have been set in Afghanistan. It's based on the true story of a girl who's mother died during the war. Her father got remarried and her stepmother didn't want her so the father took her to a marketplace and left her there. She ended up in the orphanage that I sponsored with the proceeds of my book*The Roses in My Carpets* (about my Afghan refugee foster child).

I write stories that intrigue me and entertain me, whether they're set in Canada or overseas.

The books that are set overseas are often designed to give North American kids a taste of life in the rest of the world. I think it helps them be better global citizens.

DG - What stories or books that you heard or read as a young person do you remember best? What makes them memorable for you?

RK - Oh where to start! I remember reading a lot of Geoffrey Trease including *Cue For Treason*. I loved the adventure aspect of the story and all the plot twists and turns. I loved *Jane Eyre* and for a long time when I was sure no one was watching me, I'd walk around lifting imaginary petticoats and speaking in my version of an English accent. I think Jane's sense of outrage at the injustice she suffered, really appealed to me. But my all time favourite book as a child was *Mara, Daughter of the Nile*, by Eloise Jarvis McGraw. I was totally head over heels in love with Sheftu, this ancient Egyptian courtier! Basically it's an ancient Egyptian spy-thriller. Mara was everything I ever wished I could be, and there's a kiss in there…that's just oooh! I hate to admit that I actually stole this book from our library because I loved it so much. I grew up very poor and I didn't know you could buy books. I thought you could only get them from the library. One day I told the librarian that I'd already returned it and she believed me. I kept the book under my mattress for about a month before the guilt got the better of me and I finally hid it in my coat jacket and slipped it back on the shelves. When I came back to borrow it again, it was gone! I think the librarian had culled it—it was rather dog-eared and tattered. For years I pined for that book. When I grew up and saw it in a bookstore I bought all five copies on the shelf! Even now I reread it every once in a while.

DG - How have your experiences as a mother and a grandmother affected your work as a writer?

RK - When I was in the process of writing *Dahling if You Luv Me Would You Please Please Smile* my oldest daughter, who was in grade eight at the time, came running home after Drama class saying, "Mom, Mom, you have to try this exercise." It was a dramatic exercise where we each had to say the title phrase to each other to try to make the other person smile and then the person had to reply, "Dahling you know I love you, but I just can't smile." It was very hard to do. It's such a melodramatic phrase, it's easy to get the giggles! But as we were doing this I thought that in doing this exercise, in asking the other person to smile to show they loved you, the person was really asking for them to show approval. And that was ultimately the theme of that book. I thought it was a perfect title, and there's no way I would have come across it without my daughter's input.

With *Wanting Mor* when I was deciding what type of girl my heroine was, I thought of all the stories coming out of Afghanistan. Most of them like *The Kite Runner* and *The Breadwinner* are actually stories from the perspective of the people in Kabul. But the people in the rest of Afghanistan are totally different from those in Kabul! I know this because my sister-in-law's family is from Kabul and my son-in-law's family is from Kandahar. There's a world of difference between their respective cultures! The people of Kabul are very westernized. They're more like "us." And for that reason maybe their stories are more easy for westerners to relate to. But people in the west are getting a skewed idea of Afghan culture. And since all three of my daughters, despite being born and raised in Canada, decided to wear not only the headscarf, like I do, but cover their faces like so many women do in Afghanistan, I wanted to understand my daughters' decision better, so I decided that the girl in my story would be from Kandahar and she'd wear the burka. In writing her story I'd come to understand why.

That said, I had no idea that the burka would actually work its way into the plot!

As for how my experience being a grandmother has affected my work as a writer, it's one of the biggest thrills in the world to see my granddaughter memorize and act out aspects of *Silly Chicken*, running around my daughter's house, checking behind the curtains, reciting phrases she's memorized from the book—without ever realizing that her Nani is the one who wrote it!

And one of the things I ask myself when writing a picture book, is, "Would Maryam (my oldest granddaughter) like it?"

DG - What other experience or experiences in life have had the greatest influence on you as a writer?

RK - Being bullied! They say if you want to be a writer it helps to have a really horrible childhood! I definitely qualify.

DG - What is your favourite aspect of being a writer?

RK -There are so many things that I love about being a writer. It's my dream come true. I love interacting with people, sharing my stories, telling my stories, making them laugh, making them cry, traveling to all the fascinating places I've been—to share my stories--with not only someone else paying to bring me there, but them paying me for my services! Don't they say that happiness is getting paid to do what you love?

But my all time favourite aspect of being a writer is actually the creation process of a new story—when it's working!

It's literally traipsing across an undiscovered country.

It's listening to characters whisper in my ear and then following them around twists and turns and up and down long corridors, through a maze of thoughts and possibilities, wondering where they're taking me, and then discovering that the journey comes together in a coherent narrative!

DG - Which of your own books is your favourite? Why?

RK - That's hard. It's like asking which of my children are my favourites.

Each book is entirely unique and individual and I worked extremely hard, giving each my all, at the time. Even the less successful books, are good stories that perhaps just didn't find their audience—yet.

But I do have a favourite. It's *Wanting Mor*. I think in writing *Wanting Mor* I created a truly unique heroine. All the most popular stories today consist of spunky girls doing bold things. And yet there's something kind of bothersome about the idea that for a heroine to be strong she needs to be 'spunky.' What about all the shy girls out there? And there are lots of them! Who speaks for them? And what is real strength?

I explored these themes in *Wanting Mor*. I wrote about the most stereotypical Muslim girl I could think of: the oppressed uneducated village girl from Kandahar who's so painfully shy she's always covering her face behind her head covering. And yet in writing the book, I wrote a story that I truly and deeply love. It's a story that as a child, I would have read over and over again, as many times as I read *Jane Eyre*! Only finally this is a girl who is Muslim—and admirable! Someone I could try to live up to, just like I tried to live up to Jane Eyre, and Mara, that Egyptian slave girl/double agent in Hatshepsut's court!

DG - What is the most important advice that you could share with a young person who shares your childhood dream of becoming a writer?

RK - Easy! That in the beginning, perseverance—not giving up, is more important than being talented. But eventually, it's talent that will help you rise above the rest.

There are plenty of very talented people who don't have the sticking power to keep going when they face rejection after rejection after rejection! Without perseverance you can't get to the point where your talent can shine.

DG - On your website you have listed a diverse selection of favorite reads, ranging from Daphne Dumaurier's *Rebecca* and Charlotte Bronte's *Jane Eyre* to Ursula Le Guin's Earthsea Trilogy, Cynthia Kadohata's *Kira-Kira* and Kenneth Oppel's *Firewing*. Is there a common element in all of these novels that make them best reads from your point of view? If not, what characteristics do you look for in most of the novels that you would consider "best reads"?

RK - Some of those books are stronger than others. Somehow I think the older books are in some ways stronger than the newer ones. Maybe it's because the story is meted out at a slower pace. Or maybe it's because I read them and fell in love with them when I was less knowledgeable about writing technique.

In the older books, the reader has to be patient. One of my all time favourites which you didn't mention (but is listed there) is *Watership Down*. The story unfolds so slowly and yet the payoff is phenomenal!

I listed them as favourite reads because those are the books that I go back to, over and over again. They contain characters that I fell in love with and they have a FANTASTIC story!

You need both!

Characters can be as interesting as can be, but if nothing unusual happens to them you have no story. And plots can be convoluted as can be but if you don't care about the characters—I mean really, what's the point?

These books contain characters whom I actually miss after a while: Hazel and Fiver in*Watership Down*, the unnamed protagonist in *Rebecca*, Jane Eyre, Mara, Ged in Earthsea Trilogy—although with that book and most fantasy I have religious problems and I find myself keeping away from them. Especially the second book in there, the *Tombs of Atuan* is a very antithetical read for a Muslim. But when I first read it, I wasn't that discerning.

Of the newer books I've mentioned, only *Tale of Despereaux* really has that *je ne s'ais quoi* element, that makes me want to read it again.

Now it's becoming harder and harder for me to get truly engrossed in a book. It's part of the pitfalls of becoming a writer. It's too easy to see through what the writer is doing to fully suspend disbelief. Oh, I'll enjoy the stories, but it's not the same.

DG - You have explained Deborah Ellis' tremendous success as a writer dealing with social justice saying, "… she writes about social justice topics she's passionate about, and she writes well!" Who else do you think does a good job of writing with a social conscience for an audience of young people?

RK - Oh dear. I'm not sure if I should admit this. It makes me sound incredibly shallow. But I really don't read too many other authors who write about social justice topics. I've read Deborah Ellis because she's written so much about Muslims and I have a Muslim booklist on my website that I'm always looking for books to add to. There's also Elizabeth Laird's *A Little Piece of Ground* about the Palestinian conflict. That's another book that contains themes of social justice, but it's actually written well.

For the most part when I'm researching social justice, I never read fiction! I look to non-fiction—newspapers, journals, first-hand accounts. To me fiction should be about story, and quite frankly of the social justice books

I have read in the past, many of them were thinly borrowed from headlines. Frankly they were boring. I'd much rather read the headlines and news stories they were borrowed from!

DG - You maintain a website and blog regularly. What are the advantages and disadvantages of having such a web presence from your personal point of view?

RK - I think in this day and age a website is a must for any author. It's basically a platform so people can get to know your work. Mine is kind of a very detailed resume including links to interviews and video clips about me.

Blogs are another story. I find my blogging takes a toll on my creativity.

I think carefully of each blog post, although in the early days of it, I didn't think carefully enough and got myself into a bit of trouble.

In my blog posts I can share things I'm learning on the journey. That's what I try to do. I figure that other people might find the kinds of challenges I face, interesting.

I would not really use these things in actual books I'm writing, but in my blog posts I allow myself to be vulnerable and full of self doubts when necessary, and I try to be as honest as possible.

The biggest disadvantage to blogging is definitely the time and energy it takes. I try not to let it compete with my actual writing, so I tend to write books and manuscripts first thing in the morning, and blogging is what I do at the end of the day.

DG - You do a lot of a work as a speaker promoting cross-cultural understanding. What is the biggest challenge in doing this work? What is its most rewarding aspect?

RK - The biggest challenge is definitely the fatigue factor. On days that I do a lot of presentations, it's very hard to also write. Writing takes its own toll on you. It is mentally tiring. And presenting is also tiring.

And yet, I'm pretty sure it's the presenting that has led people to the books.

When I first began storytelling, I was told by seasoned storytellers that I was a natural. If I'm doing one of my regular presentations (like *The Roses in My Carpets* or *Picture the Story*) I hardly ever get nervous at all. Mostly because I've done these presentations thousands of times over the years and I am fully confident that the audience will be engaged and informed at the same time.

Each of the presentations is designed that way—to both teach and entertain. And sometimes, when organizers want me to shorten the presentations I work even harder to still get the same amount of information into them. I figure that I probably won't see this particular audience again, so I want to leave them with the message because I think they're so worthwhile.

DG - What projects are you planning for the future?

RK - I'm always working on projects! Right now I've got two adult novels in the works and a picture book manuscript that I've been wrestling with. Plus I have ideas for two more middle grade novels.

I'm also doing some screenwriting. In fact I'm turning one of the adult novels into a screenplay, and it's been a fascinating process!

DG - What is the most interesting experience that you have ever had in a school library?

RK - At the end of my ESL to Author presentation, where I talk about the incident that inspired my book *Dahling if You Luv Me Would You Please Please Smile*, I usually call up a couple of the students to come and help me demonstrate how hard it is to carry out this dramatic exercise. One time I picked this rather chubby boy and a girl. The boy had to say "Dahling if you love me would you please please smile" to get the girl to smile. While doing so, he started fingering his nipples (kind of like Mike Myers in one of his crazy Austen Powers movies). He not only had the girl laughing he had the whole audience in stitches (including me). I often wonder what happened to that kid. He was quite amazing—and brave.

DG - Is there anything else that you would like to tell our readers about?

RK - I write very eclectically. When I'm writing a book I always ask myself, if I hadn't written this, would I want to read it? That's my litmus test to see if it's a good story. So far, I've never written a book that I wouldn't want to read. Some of them are sad or serious books and some are funny. You can't read just one of my books and think, okay, that's the kind of book Rukhsana Khan writes. But, if you read them all, you'll get a good idea of the kind of person I am.

DG - Thank you very much for contributing your insights into cross-cultural understanding and being a writer to *School Libraries in Canada*.

Cover Art: *Rukhsana Khan's web site*: http://www.rukhsanakhan.com/

Go to http://www.rukhsanakhan.com/index.html to visit Rukhsana Khan's official web site.

The CLA/ACB 2011 National Conference and Trade Show

The CLA/ACB 2011 National Conference and Trade Show has just concluded in Halifax as this issue of *School Libraries in Canada* is being released. Constitutional changes flowing from the CLA's Future Plan will be amongst the many topics to be discussed in the future by everyone who shares an interest in Canadian school libraries. This issue of *SLiC* will focus on some of the celebrations in Halifax.

To begin, *School Libraries in Canada* congratulates the winners of Canadian Association for School Libraries award winners who received their awards at the Annual General Meeting and Awards reception on Friday, May 27th:

Heather Daly
Margaret B. Scott Award of Merit

The Margaret B. Scott Award of Merit awards an individual who has made an outstanding contribution to school librarianship at the national level.

Heather Daly stands out for the professional qualities that exemplify leadership in school libraries in Canada. Her vision, motivation and energy have contributed immensely to school libraries in the province of British Columbia.

Heather is currently the Library and Information Coordinator for School District #43 (Coquitlam) in British Columbia. She has taken and fulfilled opportunities to lead - in her school district, her teacher-librarian association and her professional union, and reaches out across Canada with the BCTLA President's blog, In Circulation, and her participation in CASL-PAC, the Provincial Advisory Council of CASL, the Canadian Association for School Libraries. She is a member of CASL and serves on the khan Working Group for the Canadian Library Association.

Heather represented British Columbia's school libraries as part of BC Library 2020, of leaders from the public, academic, special and school library communities who worked together on visioning and celebration for the BC library community, and to identify new opportunities for collaboration among BC's library sectors.

With the BC Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium (ERAC), an association of BC public school districts working together on software, video and learning resource acquisition and evaluation, Heather has served as writer/reviewer and on its advisory committee.

As President of the British Columbia Teacher-Librarians' Association (BCTLA), Heather has forged the association into a powerful, highly-achieving body and an agent of change. Heather's support of BCTLA's award-winning DEAR (Drop Everything and Read) event held annually in celebration of National School Library Day has led to this program being adopted by the Manitoba School Library Association (MSLA), with interest from more jurisdictions for next year. BCTLA's professional evaluation statement against the practice of assigning reading levels to students' reading material appears in their 2009 position statement Book Levelling and School Library Collections, which has been influential at the national and international level.

In 2007, Heather supported the formation of BCTLA's Information Literacy Task Force which had the goal of developing provincial learning outcomes for information literacy. The result is *The Points of Inquiry: A Framework for Information Literacy and the 21 st Century Learner*, which was published in 2011. With another CASL award winner, Mary Locke, she wrote the 2008 article "School Libraries as Classrooms," which was published in BCTLA's *The Bookmark* journal.

Heather Daly's career is a model of dedication, encapsulating the perseverance that accompanies the passion of an individual for a valued and essential component of education in Canada – its school libraries. CASL is honoured to grant this award in recognition of Heather's important achievements already made and in anticipation of the new and future goals for school library advocacy across Canada that we know she will accomplish.

Judith Comfort

The Follett International Teacher Librarian of the Year Award

The Canadian Association for School Libraries honours, through this award, a school-based teacherlibrarian who has made an outstanding contribution to school librarianship within Canada through planning and implementing school library programs, based on a collaborative model which integrates library and classroom programs. The award is generously sponsored by Follett International. Judith's current practice as teacher-

librarian at Charles Best Secondary School in Coquitlam, BC, and previous experiences as a teacher, professional writer, and teacher-librarian has been attested to and recognized by teachers, students and colleagues throughout her thirty-five year career. Judith began her teaching career 1975 at Liverpool Regional High School in Nova Scotia.

Judith successfully integrates 21st century literacy skills between library and classroom programs and her practice supports quality teaching and learning in face-to-face and virtual environments. Judith recently stated that, "she constantly pushes boundaries and as a master teacher-librarian, she is an information specialist working in collaboration with teachers in an evolving digital age". She believes that "transparency is advocacy" and her comprehensive web site, Dr. Charles Best Secondary School Library provides recommended print, virtual and digital resources, strategies, lessons and activities to support teaching and learning across curricular areas. Judith ensures that information literacy is embedded in her collaborative units and lessons are developed collaboratively with teachers at the school. Her numerous units, and lessons, in a range of subjects, reflect a strong interest in global perspectives, information bias, media literacy, and the ethics of information use. Judith promotes reading and literacy through various events and strategies and enables students and teachers to engage, interact and develop 21 st century skills through technology integration, and the use of virtual library resources and programs. She is knowledgeable in library collection development, and incorporates Web 2.0 technologies and resources to support curriculum.

Judith has contributed as a leader and advocate for school library-related campaigns and initiatives at various levels including, school, district, and provincial levels (British Columbia) and has been a member of the BCLA, CTA, BCTA, BCTLA, CTLA, BCTLE, the Writer's Federation of BC and CUPE. She has been a teacher-librarian presenter at conferences within Canada and in 2010 she was the keynote speaker at the Saskatchewan School Library Association Conference.

Judith is an online and offline mentor for teacher-librarians and teachers. Like many of her fellow teacher-librarians, she is a lifelong learner, and is committed to literacy, information literacy and technologies to enhance learning. Her school web site and personal site are informed by years of experience and collaborative planning with teachers and quality teaching with students. Judith is a role model and exemplary teacher-librarian who is very deserving of the 2011 Follett International Teacher-Librarian of the Year Award.

Moira Ekdahl

Angela Thacker Memorial Award

The Angela Thacker Memorial Award has been established in memory of Angela Thacker, teacherlibrarian, library coordinator, and school library colleague, mentor, leader and advocate who served the Association for Teacher-Librarianship in Canada (ATLC) and the Canadian School Library Association (CSLA) in many capacities. This Award honours teacher-librarians who have made contributions to the profession through publications, productions or professional development activities that deal with topics relevant to teacher-librarianship and/or information literacy.

Moira is currently the Teacher-Librarian Consultant for the Vancouver School District. She is a dedicated educator and her career has expanded three decades. She started as a classroom teacher in 1972, mostly teaching in secondary English and Social Studies classrooms and acknowledges "she is ever so grateful for the wonderful TLS that she worked with as a classroom teacher and for the collegial relationships that have encouraged and supported her work as a teacher-librarian". Moira acquired her Teacher-Librarian Diploma from UBC in 2003 and also holds a Masters degree in Social and Educational Studies (1993).
Moira is the Vancouver School District Teacher-Librarian Mentor and Liaison Chair for the BC TeacherLibrarians' Association and has co-authored, "Book Levelling and School Library Collections", a position statement response from the BCTLA and the subsequent position statement on school library programs, "School Library programs, Teacher-Librarians and Effective Teaching and Learning", and most recently, she co-authored the BCTLA InfoLit Task Force publication, Points of Inquiry: A Framework for Information Literacy and the 2lst Century Learner (2010). She has contributed to other significant campaigns and initiatives partnered with the BCTLA Executive which includes the DEAR campaign (Drop Everything and Read), the Downtown Eastside Women's Book Club.

Moira provides leadership and professional development services and resources for teacher-librarians in the Vancouver School Board related to reading, information literacy, school library program and curriculum support documents and technology integration. She communicates, and collaborates online through a blog, and wiki and tweets fellow TLS. She developed and maintains a blog, titled TL Special Weekly Report. She is also a member of various library associations, school and district committees. As VSB Teacher-Librarian Consultant/Mentor, Moira contributes to professional development, information literacy initiatives, publications, and literacy programs in the Vancouver district to support school libraries and teacher-librarianship.

Moira is a leader and mentor--a very worthy recipient of the 2011 Angela Thacker Memorial Award.

Publishers recommend . . .

Publishers of Canadian authors and illustrators are invited to submit the title of one book they have published in the last year that they would consider a "best book" or a "neglected gem". Let *School Libraries in Canada* know about recent works to satisfy the needs and interests of school library patrons.

Fiction

When Apples Grew Noses and White Horses Flew: Tales of Ti-Jean
written by Jan Andrews and Illustrated by Dušan Petricic
Groundwood Books, 2011.
72 p. Grades 2 – 5. ISBN 978-0-88899-952-8.

These three imaginative stories introduce us to Quebec's traditional folktale hero, Ti-Jean. He's an endearing character who is both wise and foolish and though he find himself in hard situations, in the end he somehow manages to do what needs to be done.

Without You
written and illustrated by Geneviève Côté
Kids Can Press, 2011.
32 p. Ages 2+. ISBN 978-1-55453-620-7.
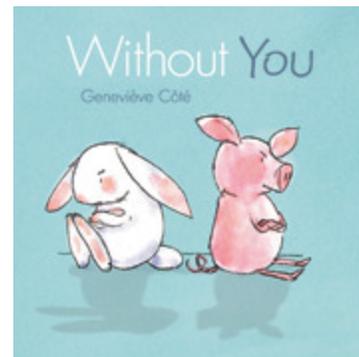
Geneviève Côté returns with a gently humorous, charmingly illustrated look at the ups and downs of friendship. After a falling out, a fussy bunny and an exuberant piggy explore all the things they can do without each other … and gradually realize that life is much sweeter when it's shared.

Non-Fiction
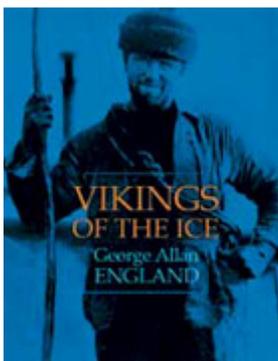
Vikings of the Ice
by George Allan England; Narrated by Frank Holden
Rattling Books, 2011.
13 hours (audio). Adult. ISBN 978-0-9737586-0-5 .

In 1922, George Allan England , an adventuring writer with an ear for dialect and an appreciation for folklore, sailed for the icefields on the Terra Nova; he wrote a detailed account of Newfoundland's offshore seal hunt that captures the blood, guts and toil of life with the sealers.

I am Canada: Shot at Dawn
written by John Wilson
Scholastic Canada, 2011.
72 p. Grades 2 – 5. ISBN 978-0-88899-952-8.
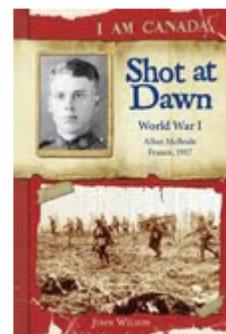
In this installment in a new series of Canadian historical fiction, a young WWI soldier, who has been sentenced to death for abandoning his unit, recounts the events leading up to his arrest. Through the eyes of this character, acclaimed author John Wilson explores life in the horrific trenches of WWI and the effect of battle on a shell-shocked soldier.