

Advocacy: Value, Impact, and Presence

The Case of Ontario Public Libraries

Quebec Public Libraries
Association Rendezvous

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FOPL Mission

- Collaborative body offering one **loud** voice for all Ontario Public Libraries based on agreed cooperative strategies, and priorities and research.

ONE VOICE FOR ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

FOPL Positioning

- *Simply put: Ontario's Public Libraries. Now more than ever before, they play a **critical role in the social, educational, cultural and economic success** of the communities in our province.*
- *Public Libraries are an **essential investment** in the future of our communities and are essential drivers of success in school preparedness, reading readiness, economic and employment success, and social equity.*
- *As the development of the **knowledge economy** progresses, public libraries are a vital link for every resident and every community to ensure success of all Ontarians, regardless of location or background.*

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Can we prove it?
CAN WE TELL THE STORY?

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FOPL Talking Points

The Public Library value proposition is strong and includes (but isn't limited to):

- *Excellent* Return on Investment
- *Strong* Economic Development
- *Great* Employment Support
- *Welcoming* New Canadians
- *Provable* Early Literacy Development
- *Ongoing* Support for Formal Education and Homework Help
- Serve the whole community *equitably*
- *Affordable* access to community resources
- Access to Government Services and *e-government*
- Questions Deserve *Quality* Answers
- *Support* Cultural Vitality
- **Recognized and Valued Leisure Activities for majority of Ontarians**

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What's the 'Problem'?

- We have a very COMPLEX (not complicated) value proposition
- We have great competencies BUT we need to up our game on influence, advocacy, and focus.
- Ontario Libraries are focusing on providing the structure, proofs and strategies to get our message out with impact.

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Ontario's Public Library Systems

- 444 Municipalities in Ontario
- 260 Independent Library Boards
- Others are 'contracting municipalities'
- 45 First Nations libraries
- 10,156 library employees + 14,581 volunteers
- Note: There are about 304 library systems in Ontario but 4 cover 75% of our residents.
- We cooperate: SOLS, OLS-North, OLA & FOPL

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At our Libraries 2020 Summit we identified:

- What we didn't know!
- And what was that?

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A lot!

- What are our numbers longitudinally?
- What is our impact? (schools, children's programs, summer reading, economic, new Canadians, etc. etc.)
- How do our 'places' need to change?
- How do we develop staff at scale?
- What does the public think?
- What motivates politicians and civil servants?
- What is our brand and how do we cost-effectively access all Ontarians?

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So we cooperated and pulled our sleeves up . . .

- Starting in a hole – a previous government had cut the provincial library grant by 50%
- Yuck – hand wringing and whining and then we adapted.
- We convinced the provincial government to invest \$18 million in all systems
- This year we accessed another \$10 million in research and innovation grants

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The Secret?

- Collaboration, coordination, cooperation
- All organizations started to work as one.
- FOPL, SOLS, OLS-North, CULC, OLA (OPLA and OLBA), consortia, etc.
- We shared the load(s)!

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Investing in our people

- Province wide learning management system
- One place to look for courses, mentors, professional development, communities of practice ... LearnHQ
- Province wide and national sustainable leadership training (NELI, PLLF, APPL)
- CDF: Province wide e-learning for trustees and library boards- 5 full programs & Boot Camp
- A PhD dissertation on leadership in libraries as well as advocacy

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Knowing our numbers

- 1996-2014 public library data was locked in PDFs
- We successfully lobbied for it to open data
- We analyzed the heck out of it.
- Held 3 symposia to develop new measures for libraries
- Published it for all in digital and print
- Next step – an open database

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Doing the Research

- Used independent and academic researchers for unbiased research.
- Studied impact and outcomes for:
 - MPI TPL economic Impact study and model
 - OLA Children's services study
 - OLA Teen services study
 - FOPL Early years reading programs
 - TD Summer Reading
 - OLA Forest of Trees reading programs
 - And more coming

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Influence

- A (inter)national MOOC on advocacy
- Symposia on advocacy and influence
- 10 province-wide webinars on approaches to influence
- A PhD dissertation on influence and Canadian politicians

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Marketing

- Updated a full public opinion poll in 2015 of all Ontario residents
- Studied successful and unsuccessful campaigns in libraries
- Did a census of all 304 systems social media and website presences
- Surveyed CAOs about perceptions and budgets
- Developing tagline with person-on-the-street interviews

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How we fit in...

- OLA, OPLA, OLBA (individuals and broadly focused)
- SOLS, OLS-North (Restricted Agencies)
- CULC (National)
- Consortia (operationally-focused)

- Only FOPL is focused on Ontario issues and can legally lobby our government(s) and focus solely on public libraries

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ONE VOICE FOR ONTARIO PUBLIC LIBRARIES

- When FOPL speaks we can point to the fact that we represent nearly all of Ontario's population of library members. This is, indeed, at the riding level.
- There are few exceptions.

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So, how does FOPL accomplish our community's goals?

- Advocacy and Influence
- Research with Power
- Marketing Our Brand
- VIP – Value, Impact and Positioning

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So what have we done in the past 10 years to achieve progress

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- 2005 – Libraries 2020 Summit
 - 4 provincial priorities
 - Gained \$18+ million in added provincial funding
- 2015 Libraries 2025 Summit
 - 3 Provincial priorities
 - Seeking self funding as well as public funds

Progress: Building Our People

- LearnHQ
 - Province wide learning management system for all courses, webinars, leadership and trustee training
 - Includes thousands of courses, mentoring, communities of practice, performance reviews, standard competencies, PD forward planning
- CDF Trustee Training Modules
 - Learning by Design, One Place to Look

We Now Know Our Numbers

- Lobbied successfully for all PL Data to be released as Open Data and freed from PDFs.
- Hired a PhD Analyst to perform longitudinal analysis of our sector from 1998-2014 based on measurements not statistics.
- Hosted Symposia and webinars in partnership with U of T about New Measurements to build sector buy-in

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Progress: Marketing and Branding

- Person-on-the-street interviews to develop province-wide tagline in 2016
- Building an Open Media Desk and social media **dashboard** to entire sector in province
- Hiring 3-4 part-time journalists to build articles, social media, and video at critical mass
- Release, release, release
- Build a media culture of good not perfect

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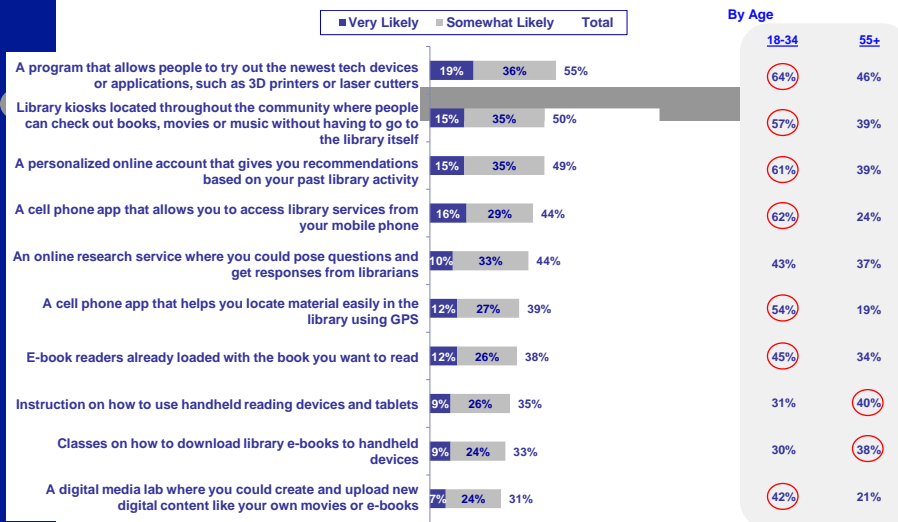
Progress: Marketing

- Performed statistically valid public opinion polls in 2000, 2005, 2010 and 2015
- 2015 Poll shows:
 - 74% of Ontarians use Public Libraries and support continues to be very strong
 - Identifies strengths and weaknesses and shows the way forward (internet vs. in-person users)

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Interest in new library service concepts varies, in many cases based on age

Likelihood of Using Different Library Services



Building the Case for Influence

- We must increase our access to government decision-making.
- In 2014/5 FOPL:
 - Submission to the Minister of Finance's Pre-budget Consultation 2016
 - Submitted Cabinet level documents on Ontario's Culture Strategy, Community Hubs, Municipal Act consultations. . .
 - Co-planned and implemented the second annual large scale Library Day at Queen's Park
 - Co-planned an all day symposium of over 10 ministries with over 150 civil servants and librarians / trustees
 - Met regularly with our 'minister' and key staff on issues like the OLCF, CDF, Open Data, Ministry Awards, operating grants, OPLW, etc.
 - Contracted for legal opinions on legislative changes

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Building the Case for Influence

- Summary 2016 Goals
 - Completion and communication of Provincial Library Statistics analysis 2001-2014 and the development of a FOPL Index of Community Engagement ranking libraries across the province.
 - Promote Key Findings of Provincial Public Opinion Poll
 - Online Board training accessible and communicated (LearnHQ)
 - Implementation of provincial marketing campaign and successful application for significant grant funding from private sector
 - Insertion of public library voice into Premier's Community Hub Advisory Group and the Culture Strategy
 - In partnership with TPL and OPL plan for some success re: e-book pricing initiatives
 - Follow through on Libraries 2025 Summit and plan the 'ASK' for next 5 years
 - Invitations into discussions and consultations from Government and granting agencies

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FOPL Government Relations Agenda (Draft)

- \$\$ Budgets and PLOG and Grants
- Infrastructure funding eligibility and AODA
- eBook pricing and licensing
- e-Resource funding for schools and Public Libraries
- Community Hubs
- Culture Strategy
- Seniors Social Isolation
- Anti-Poverty
- Legal Opinions
- Municipal Act changes
- CRTC and Broadband
- First Nations
- OLA Strategic Partnership
- e-Government
- AMO et al
- Other opportunities?
- Random Federal Cooperation (CASL, Access Canada Copyright, Privacy, Cyberbullying, etc.)

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Selected Key Results

1. Libraries are now mentioned in all critical government policy documents
2. Attendance at Programs can exceed 25,000+ for some in a day!
3. We coordinate reading programs at the provincial level (Summer Reading, First of Trees)
4. We have agreed provincial competencies for all positions and technology infrastructure for professional development
5. We are investing in VIP marketing that is cost-effective and based in research
6. We are focused on community-led strategic planning, investments in advanced technology infrastructure and training
7. We know our numbers, demographics and are investing in R&D for qualitative data
8. We are aligning with government 'language' and priorities

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Thank You



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These slides are available on
Slideshare and FOPL.ca