Arca Digital Repository Actions & Achievements

2020

Message from the Chair

While COVID-19 forced temporary closures of in-person services at libraries and other memory institutions in 2020, Arca enabled individuals to share, discover, and connect online. Seven new GLAM organizations joined the service, and thousands more items were added to the open repository. Behind the scenes, the Administrative Centre strengthened the infrastructure that facilitated this growth.

Through a challenging year, Arca has continued to uphold its vision of creating "opportunities to share digital scholarship and heritage, and to build communities in British Columbia and beyond…." I am proud of Arca's achievements, and I look forward to its future growth.

Kim Isaac
University Librarian
University of the Fraser Valley
Arca Advisory Committee Chair

Highlights of 2020:

7 new members joined Arca

Including: grunt gallery, Hazleton Oral Histories Project, Karen Jamieson Dance Society, Mount Royal University, University of the Fraser Valley Library Technician Program, Vancouver Public Library, and White Rock Museum & Archives.

Arca participants saved $1.5 million

By sharing infrastructure, storage, expertise, and coordination, Arca members avoid significant costs.

40,000 items were added to Arca

From research papers to historic photographs, Arca members share digital content for discovery by anyone, anywhere.

170,000 searches were conducted

Visitors from around the globe – 207 distinct countries to be exact – perform thousands of searches in Arca each year.

On the Cover: Philip Timms' Vancouver

Philip Timms (pictured at right) worked in and around the Lower Mainland in the first half of the last century taking photographs of people, buildings, and daily life in town and country. His photo of the 300 Block of West Hastings (cover) in Vancouver is available in Arca as part of Vancouver Public Library's "This Vancouver" collections.

At right: "Philip Timms with violin and piano", by Philip Timms, Vancouver Public Library, Public Domain

2020 Achievements

Improved Member Experience

▶ Simplified the upload process by installing *Islandora Multi-Importer*, allowing Arca sites to batch upload objects independently with a manageable spreadsheet of metadata

▶ Customized ingest queues to ensure that each member site has fair access, i.e. sites ingesting large amounts of content will not affect ingest speed of other sites

▶ Performed a Privacy Impact Assessment and enabled Arca to connect with institutions' Centralized Authentication Systems, allowing users to log in with their institution accounts

Developed and Enhanced Arca's Platform

▶ Implemented Cloudflare, a web-based firewall service, to protect Arca from Distributed Denial of Service (DDOS) attacks and bot activity while at the same time improving performance

▶ Expanded server architecture to improve stability and increase Arca's capacity for further growth

▶ Re-wrote the code for certain Islandora modules to ensure the system's capacity to support Arca's large amount of content

▶ Joined Cultural Institutions Working Group for LocalContexts, to contribute to, and stay abreast of, Traditional Knowledge labels and Cultural Institution notices development in preparation for future Arca implementation

Supported Knowledge Exchange & Communities of Practice

▶ Presented an online session for the Maskwacis Cultural College Microlearning Series: "Put it Online! Opportunities for Small BC Cultural Organizations," geared to GLAM organizations across Canada

▶ Provided support to the online Islandora Conference; assisted with planning, session convening and technical support

▶ Launched the Arca Newsletter "The Arc" to keep Arca partners and the BC ELN community at large informed as the service progresses

▶ Built a teaching and learning environment for the University of the Fraser Valley Library Technician program to support hands-on learning

Did You Know?

Arca is built on Islandora, a Canadian-developed, open-source platform.

"Arca" is the Latin word for a treasure chest or box for valuables.

The most viewed photograph in Arca is of an onion (Allium cepa).

Institution Spotlight: Douglas College's Open "DOOR"

While COVID-19 restrictions interrupted Douglas College's in-person events and meetings, the DOuglas Open Repository (DOOR) – an established Arca repository – allowed students, faculty, and staff to continue sharing their work, and even create new connections, throughout the pandemic.

Fostering Communities

The Research and Innovation Office (RIO) at Douglas College supports students and faculty in pursuit of their research goals. When COVID-19 halted physical meetings, RIO shifted its Research Cafés – in-person events for Douglas College researchers to share their work – online. Seeing an opportunity to further broadcast this research and foster new connections, Dr. Colleen Reid, faculty member and RIO Coordinator, worked with Douglas College Librarian Gretchen Goertz to create a Research Café collection in DOOR.

"At the Research and Innovation Office we felt it was a priority to work with DOOR to help foster a sense of community..."

"As researchers we often work in isolation and it can be hard to find the time or opportunity to share our research with our colleagues. At the Research and Innovation Office we felt it was a priority to work with DOOR to help foster a sense of community through sharing our researchers' work. With this partnership in place, DOOR has become a vibrant and current repository for faculty and student research at the College," says Dr. Reid.

Reaching a Wider Audience

Dr. Jaime Yard, faculty member in the Anthropology department at Douglas College, hit a roadblock when original plans to distribute a class zine were scuttled. Fortunately, DOOR proved itself to be an effective tool for dissemination: "Students in my Contemporary Issues Gender Sexualities and Women's Studies class put together a zine of their writing and art as a final class project. We intended to distribute it through community little libraries near our campuses. When the pandemic hit, the class pivoted to an e-zine and DOOR made it possible to reach not only our communities but also to share the work more broadly. I cannot count how many times I have shared the DOOR link. A new class has published a second issue, available through DOOR."

Click on the image above to read Dr. Yard's class zine: Little Feminist Zine

A DOOR to Douglas College's Past

Douglas College celebrated its 50th anniversary in 2020, and in honour of this significant milestone the Douglas College Archives created a collection of digitized historic photographs in DOOR. Both a celebration of the anniversary and a growing portal for research into the College's history, Maxwell Otte, archivist at Douglas College, says this is just the beginning of the College's investment in its archival holdings: "We are excited to continue to add our unique and valuable archival holdings to DOOR. As our holdings are digitized and made available through DOOR, researchers and students will benefit by easily finding the information that they want and learning more about Douglas College's history and development."

Arca Financials

	2019/20 Actual	2020/21 Projected
	Revenue	**Revenue**
Member Service Support • Service Support Fees • Additional Support Fees • Additional Storage Fees	121,679	129,838
BC ELN Contribution	8,000	10,000
Miscellaneous (Unrestricted and targeted carryforward, etc.)	15,791	19,661
Total	**145,470**	**159,499**
	Expenses	**Expenses**
Staffing and Coordination Infrastructure	96,314	93,996
Islandora Foundation Membership	4,000	4,000
Security Service Implementation	n/a	6,335
Administration/Communication/Governance	3,203	848
Vendor Support & Technology Infrastructure	22,292	33,529
Targeted Carryforward: Migration to Islandora 8	15,000	15,000
Total	**140,809**	**153,708**
Revenue - Expenses (Carryforward)	**4,661**	**5,791**

A Look Ahead to 2021

In addition to supporting further growth of Arca member collections and pursuing new partnerships, a major undertaking for 2021 will be preparing for a migration from Islandora 7 to Islandora 8. Moving Islandora 8 will present opportunities to:

▸ rethink Arca's structure, and potentially rebuild its infrastructure in a way that better supports its many members, and reflects the tremendous growth over the years;

▸ make the service more scalable, nimble, reliable, and fast; and

▸ create a new theme that reflects the community's evolving collections and types of members, while putting accessibility at the forefront.

The Arca Advisory Committee will also update its Terms of Reference to ensure alignment with its service host and BC ELN's other service areas.

Arca Digital Repository is a service of the BC Electronic Library Network.

Interested in hosting your collections in Arca? Have any questions or want to learn more? Contact the Arca Administrative Centre.