



## AGENDA ITEM

**Subject:** FOPL Executive Director 2020 Year in Review  
**Date:** Jan. 14, 2020  
**Prepared by:** Stephen Abram, FOPL Executive Director  
**Prepared for:** FOPL Annual General Meeting, Jan. 31, 2020

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### FOPL 2020 Year in Review Executive Director's Report for 2020 Annual General Meeting

Once again, I am reporting FOPL activities based on the FOPL Strategic Plan 2016-2020 (revised Nov. 2019).

My top priorities and time commitment in 2019 are:

1. [Advocacy and Influence: Ensure "One Voice for Ontario's Public Libraries"](#)
2. [Marketing Public Library Value and Impact](#)
3. [People Capacity: Leadership Training & Development](#)
4. [FOPL Organizational Resilience](#)

**As we have passed our 2019 year-end, it's time for reflection on our fiscal year's accomplishments and look forward.**

***I would be remiss if I didn't thank the FOPL Board for their strong support of our activities this year. We've had good success and the credit goes to Julia Merritt's leadership and a visionary FOPL Board. I also couldn't succeed without the support and advice of Helen Morrison, your FOPL executive assistant who makes a difference to our progress every day.***

#### **The BIG Stuff:**

While we deal with Ontario public library issues-big and small - every day, this year has seen a maturation of our strategies. We are now brought into the government on major policy changes in advance. We're at the table. Shelagh Paterson and I along with our Government Relations Advisors meet with the senior policy advisors, Cabinet Ministers and key contacts in a number of Ministries and shared a number of follow up information documents at their request.

## **FOPL/OLA 2019 and 2020 Provincial Budget “ASK”**

We continue to reframe our “asks” in the context of the stated priorities for the Ontario government. This presents particular challenges when their agenda may potentially seem at conflict with our own sector’s priorities and values.

We continue to work on the concept of an Ontario Digital Public Library – Content in the Pipes. There is interest with our new Minister, Lisa McLeod, as well as other Ministries. We continued our excellent collaboration with OLA et al and our government relations Counsel Public Affairs to continue to align our plans with the government’s priorities and consultation opportunities.

## **Bill 108: More Homes, More Choice Act, 2019**

This legislation proposes sweeping changes to the DC – Development Charge – regime in Ontario and creates a separate charge for social infrastructure funding including public libraries. These charges are called Community Benefit Charges or CBC’s for short. This legislation passed and we await the issuance of the draft regulations as well as the dates for implementation. For FOPL, this involved creating new relationships with the Ministry of Municipal Affairs and Housing. We were at the table with the senior staff at the Ministry and provided them with the data and advice needed.

FOPL did member surveys on how Ontario’s public libraries used DC’s in the past and what would need to be reflected in the new CBC’s in terms of overall revenue as well as support for digital initiatives, collection growth, opening day collections in addition to Capital funds for new and renovated facilities. At this juncture, each Ontario municipality is required to update their DC Bylaw(s) by 2021 with consultations and the addition of CBC revenue collection.

**2020 ACTION:** FOPL has engaged Hemson Consulting to create a white paper to educate our Boards and CEOs and staff about these changes and to provide guidance to assist our members in influencing the local DC/CBC bylaws. Hemson will also provide a province-wide webinar for our members. Our only issue is the delayed issuance of the draft regulations and guidance for municipalities.

## **Bill 132: Better for People, Smarter for Business Act, 2019**

This legislation is part of the red tape / burden reduction initiatives of the provincial government. Two of these were amendments to the Public Libraries Act. One proposed to allow Permanent Canadian Residents to be eligible for library board appointment. FOPL supported this change in the interests of potentially opening our boards to greater diversity and to align our boards with the legislation governing other provincial for profit and not-for-profit boards. The second proposal was to reduce the number of required meetings for our volunteer boards to 4 per year from 10. FOPL did a member survey on this issue and there was very strong support that this was too low. The consensus was that 7-8 required meetings was the best option and the FOPL executive director testified to the Legislative

Committee in Peterborough after second reading. We were successful in making this change on third reading and now, although library boards can have as many meetings as they choose, they must have at least 7 per year.

### **Inter-Library Loan**

The changes to ILL and the budget cuts to our library services organizations – SOLS and OLS-North – caught us by surprise. It was not announced in the provincial Budget nor was it flagged as an issue by our Ministry. FOPL and OLA coordinated our response and provided the government with correct data. While the policy and cuts remained we were able to be consulted on the move forward. For 2020 we continue to monitor this issue and restoration of ILL funding is part of our 2020 “ASK”.

### **Regional Government Review**

The Executive Director testified at the public consultations on this issue before the commissioner hired to investigate the potential for mergers or changes in over 80 southern Ontario municipalities and Simcoe County. We emphasized that our community-led boards were essential for the long-term success of local public library systems. We also investigated the stomach for these potential changes at the AMO Conference in Ottawa. The government pulled back from this agenda and announced that they wouldn't proceed along this path.

### **ServiceOntario**

The FOPL Executive Director and OLA have participated in a number of discussions and workshops for the development of a new model for ServiceOntario and the role and opportunities for public libraries. We expect to continue with this engagement throughout 2020.

### **People Capacity in Ontario's Public Libraries**

FOPL's People Capacity Working Group accomplished surveys of Public Library CEOs and High Potential (HiPot) leaders on leadership needs, succession planning, etc. Just prior to this Super Conference we released their report and recommendations with analysis and gapping insights.

### **Broadband Technology Infrastructure**

FOPL continued our partnership with ORION. We are seeking government support for a library broadband Pilot Initiative in the north. We have a plan of action for improving broadband in Ontario and especially First Nations, rural/small town, and the North. We expect to see a southern pilot in 2020.

## **Library Funding: PLOG et al**

It may be called a success in our lobbying for Public and First Nation Public Libraries That we were spared cuts to the PLOG and most other funding sources. The 2018-19 Culture Strategy consultations are over now but continue to inform the Ministry. We expect no cuts in 2020.

## **Ontario Trillium Foundation**

FOPL was successful in being award a \$70,000 grant from the OTF to pilot a process for MINE: Mobile Information for Newcomer Employment. We have a wealth of partners in Kitchener-Waterloo including the local library systems. A final report is expected in Fall 2020.

## **Ontario Library Measurements, Rankings and Statistics**

We updated our popular Peer Measurements & Statistics for Ontario Public Libraries 2020 (2019 data). This is the largest report ever and we have pulled many talking points from it and shared them via the FOPL blog. We have provided a number of special custom peer reports for individual library systems to support their strategic planning, budget deliberations and priority setting and municipal challenges. These data underpin many of our proofs and talking points when dealing with the province.

## **CELA**

We were successful in supporting the CELA funding renewal along with CELA. We sent a letter of support for the 2019 budget and it was funded (\$900K). We have also sent a letter of support for the 2020 provincial budgets. The executive director and OLA met with the new CELA executive director.

## **Girls Who Code in Ontario Public Libraries**

**Girls Who Code has now launched over 240 Clubs in 9 provinces across Canada** within our first year. The largest cohort is in Ontario! FOPL signed up with Girls Who Code to support your programming needs. It's free, transformational and inspiring. Please consider adding this initiative to your programs portfolio. **How to Participate in Girls Who Code in Ontario Public Libraries**

<http://fopl.ca/news/how-to-participate-in-girls-who-code-in-ontario-public-libraries/>

## ***Art in Your Wallet Book***

We built a strategy to welcome new MPPs, Councillors and Library Board Trustee members. Buy copies of ***Art in Your Wallet*** for gifting in your meeting with your new boards, councilors and mayors. It's a great gift and continues to sell at a great price. A limited number will be at OLA Super Conference for \$20 a copy!

<http://fopl.ca/news/exciting-news-fopl-book-on-libraries-library-cards-and-our-value-is-available-now/>

## **AMO, ROMA, OSUM, NOMA, etc.**

FOPL attended conference meetings and staffed trade show booths. We engaged a large number of municipal councilors and senior staff about the quality, success, and impact of public libraries. We held meetings with leadership teams at AMO and AMCTO.

## **OpenMediaDesk**

We delivered on the third and final year of our FOPL OMD marketing and branding plan and engaged our members and communities at an increasingly higher level. The Open Media Desk (OMD) project is successfully changing the marketing culture of Ontario public libraries and providing a framework to influence our public and the government. OMD is building sustainable e-learning for the project as a legacy.

OMD is more than training. It's a collegial group that co-creates great communication pieces to an FP500 standard! It's a News Room, a source for articles, micro-videos, podcasts, and graphics. It's also a resource for province-wide benchmarks and measurements for success. And it's a dashboard window on Ontario's libraries where we can co-create together and share creations, ideas and successes.

We have trained many, many groups of library staff in advanced social media engagement. We do this for no charge for FOPL members. It is a major benefit of FOPL membership and aligns with our mandate to increase the branding, marketing strength of public libraries in Ontario whilst promoting the value and economic of public libraries to Ontario residents – socially, economically, recreationally, and educationally.

We now have over 90 library systems on the program covering more than 75% of Ontario's population! Social media is the most impactful and affordable way for us to connect with our public and cardholders to engage them in telling their stories of the impact and value of public libraries. After the training, we have discovered massive increases in engagement with social media growth in the hundreds and thousands of per cents.

## **LDii: Library Digital Impact Index**

A measurement tool that allows you to compare your social media and marketing success and compare your library to others. We call this the LDii – Library Digital Impact Index. Watch for more news soon.

## **eOMD**

An e-learning course that works on any platform or device! For those of you who have trouble joining the 6-week commitment, we will launch early in 2019 an e-learning course that delivers the training we've found libraries need. We call this **eOMD!**

Lastly, all participants have access to:

- A provincial dashboard of their library's social media and website metrics.
- A provincial metrics dashboard of all OMD participant library's social media and website metrics.
- A weekly newsletter of usable stories, videos, and podcasts about public library impact and value.
- An archive of usable stories, videos, and podcasts about public library impact and value.
- Membership in a private FOPL OMD Facebook Group of OMD participants.

## Podcasts

These are our podcasts so far:

- ***Julia Merritt, CEO Stratford Public Library and Chair, FOPL***
- [FOPL podcast 001 Stratford PL CEO Julia Merritt](#)
- ***Nikolai and Myles, Millennials and the Public Library***
- <https://soundcloud.com/iceboxlogic-media/fopl-podcast-002-myles-nikolai>
- ***Brendan Howley interviews Stephen Abram about the OMD Project***
- <https://www.dropbox.com/s/0g5xim5w7s6duit/podcast%20stephen%20abrams.aif?dl=0>

## Archive of the short FOPL *Get Out The Vote* videos:

<http://fopl.ca/news/fopls-get-out-the-vote-videos/>

<https://youtu.be/7UKrEBuJIQA>

<https://youtu.be/FJJx0zGI08g>

[https://youtu.be/DYXa\\_ILt4ow](https://youtu.be/DYXa_ILt4ow)

## Articles:

There were articles in 2019 about the OMD project in Computers in Libraries magazine as well as Public Library Quarterly.

## Unsolicited OMD testimonial:

Ruth Berry, Georgina PL

*'Your OpenMediaDesk training is the best I've training ever taken, for anything, anywhere. By far. Thank you.'*

**"A Visit Will Get You Thinking."** or **"Une visite: ça fait réfléchir."**

Empowered the "One Voice for Ontario's Public Libraries" tagline and implemented the French and English reports on the website. Two websites are relevant to these activities: <http://www.ThinkAboutLibraries.ca> and <http://www.oplw.ca> FOPL coordinated with OLA, SOLS, OLS-North, CULC, and CFLA to coordinate Canadian Library Month and Ontario Public Library Week.

## **LearnHQ for Library Boards**

FOPL helped build new learning modules based on the 4-year Board cycle under a government grant. We participated in the launch and promotion of the Governance Hub which provide open access (paywall and password free!) for Ontario's volunteer library board members.

## **FOPL Resilience**

FOPL modernized all of its internal operational processes. We invested your membership dollars well. We again have a clean financial audit review for you – as always.

- We continue to provide HR capacity improvements through LearnHQ, webinars, Symposia, and our social media / blog activities.
- We continue to support OLA, OSLA, and TALCO in their influencing activities for school libraries in Ontario.

## **Public Library Board Development**

Ontario Public Library Board Centralized Governance HUB Launched  
<https://www.sols.org/index.php/governance-hub>

10 Things You Need to Know as a new library board member: Understanding Public Library Board Governance in Ontario  
<http://fopl.ca/news/10-things-you-need-to-know-as-a-new-library-board-member-understanding-public-library-board-governance-in-ontario/>

## **Public Library CEO Leadership Development**

Made in Canada Solutions for Public Library Leadership Development  
<http://fopl.ca/news/made-in-canada-solutions-for-public-library-leadership-development/>

## **Public Library Statistics and Metrics**

FOPL Summary of Ontario Public Library Statistical & Metrics Projects  
<http://fopl.ca/news/fopl-summary-pof-ontario-public-library-statistical-metrics-projects/>

The Complete List of Measurement, Metrics & Statistical Tools & Resources for Ontario Public Libraries  
<http://fopl.ca/news/what-are-all-of-these-library-statistics-tools-in-ontario-and-what-can-i-do-with-them/>

Municipal Benchmarking Network Canada: Libraries  
<http://fopl.ca/news/municipal-benchmarking-network-canada-libraries/>

## Influencing Activities

Municipal Talking Points for Ontario Public and School Libraries

<http://fopl.ca/news/municipal-talking-points-for-ontario-public-and-school-libraries/>

### **Exciting News: FOPL Book on Libraries, Library Cards and Our Value is AVAILABLE NOW**

<http://fopl.ca/news/exciting-news-fopl-book-on-libraries-library-cards-and-our-value-is-available-now/>

## Keeping Up-To-Date with FOPL

- FOPL Website & Blog: <http://www.fopl.ca>
- Twitter @foplnews
- Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/Federation-of-Ontario-Public-Libraries-160173540675944/>
- Facebook OMD Group: <https://www.facebook.com/groups/1176265332396425/>
- Stephen's Lighthouse: <http://stephenslighthouse.com/>
- How? Use an RSS reader to subscribe to favourite blogs (I use Feedly – <https://feedly.com/>)
- LearnHQ: <http://www.learnhq.ca/cms/One.aspx>
- Governance Hub: <https://resources.learnhq.ca/governance-HUB>
- CFLA: <http://cfla-fcab.ca/en/home-page/> All FOPL members are members of CFLA through FOPL and through CFLA to IFLA. We share information and updates from both on our website blog.

I am always available to chat and feel free to call me.

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*Stephen*

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