



FOPL CHAIR REPORT

Subject: FOPL Chair Report
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Prepared by: Julia Merritt, Chair, FOPL; CEO, Stratford Public Library
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Building on the successes of 2017 and the new Strategic Plan, 2018 has been another productive and influential year for FOPL.

Among the major successes, we note:

1. Success with respect to the Public Library Program Funding Review. Prior to the 2018 Provincial Election, the lobbying and advocacy efforts of FOPL in combination with OLA and the library sector secured a significant budget commitment from the Provincial Government. Now, although the Government has changed and that commitment was rolled back, we are encouraged by the positive relationships we are building with our new Minister and the staff at the Ministry, and we will continue to advocate for changes to the funding program for public libraries.
2. The Open Media Desk pilot project is in the final phases, successfully elevating the marketing culture of Ontario public libraries and providing a framework to influence our public and the government. Being able to communicate our value proposition to the general public, and have a collegial and collaborative forum for libraries across the province to work together on building our brand is a critical investment going forward for public libraries, and OMD has been very impactful in this way. As measured by population impact, over 75% of Ontario's population has been on the receiving end of marketing training received through OMD! We are looking forward to the continued evolution of this platform and training and for library staff to benefit from this training and database for many years to come.
3. FOPL is diligently pursuing the development of positive relationships with other key library sector associations and key organizations in related/relevant sectors. Pursuing relationships within the library sector, as well as the broader cultural, technological, and municipal sectors is going to be key for public libraries to continue to leverage their value with key partners in the future. By working together and achieving synergies we can better withstand disruption better; and although these relationships are relatively new we are pleased with the warm reception we've received.

These are just a few of the many items that the dedicated FOPL staff are tackling one by one. Their efforts are having a very real impact on creating a sustainable future for Ontario's public libraries and the FOPL Board is excited about what we will be able to accomplish next.