

CCA response to information in LAC background document for Héritage digitization project

On October 1st, Canadians were made aware of several documents relating to the Héritage digitization project, via the blog of Dr. Michael Geist. <http://www.michaelgeist.ca/>

It should be noted that the door to dialogue with the archival community about this project was recently opened by the Canadiana.org Board. However, the Canadian Council of Archives, on behalf of the Canadian archival community, wishes to express our concern and provide clarification about the following points from the undated LAC document entitled “Backgrounder”:

“*Library associations support this partnership and the work of Canadiana.ca [sic]:

[list of Library Associations]

*Stakeholders of this collection are users of public, university and other libraries across Canada.

* The archival community’s only concern is that Canadian’s description approach will be consistent with their own.”

Canada’s more than 800 archives have been and continue to be committed to preserving the unique materials in their care and to providing democratic and free access to the information held in the collections, in both analogue and digital formats. The Canadian archival community was surprised that archives users and archival institutions were not considered potential stakeholders in this project at the time of this document's drafting. The Canadian archival community was not invited to be involved in this project, and no substantive discussions had occurred.

Archival description is only one aspect of the professional work required to make available documentary heritage in digital form. Without any consultation or involvement with the community, it was inappropriate to state that the project’s archival description standards is the Canadian archival community’s only concern. We have welcomed the recent opportunity to discuss this project.