



# LIBRARY MATTERS @ MCGILL

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Janine Schmidt, Trenholme Director of Libraries, Dr. Richard Levin, Dean of Medicine and Susan Murray, Head Librarian, Life Sciences Library, opened the newly refurbished Life Sciences Library on December 3.

## FROM THE TRENHOLME DIRECTOR OF LIBRARIES



**JANINE SCHMIDT,  
TRENHOLME DIRECTOR  
OF LIBRARIES**

The statistics of library use continue to change in response to changes in teaching, learning and research methods, and changes in the type of use of library resources, particularly of electronic resources. The physical items borrowed from other libraries and the copies received went from 14,309 in 2005 to 11,257 in 2009, a reduction of over 20%. Hopefully, this reflects improvements in the content of our library collections. Over the same period, the physical items supplied and the copies provided to other libraries increased from 17,596 to 20,387, an increase of over 20%. No doubt this also reflects on the collection improvements which have been appreciated by other libraries! Congratulations to the team of staff in our interlibrary loan groups across the library branches.

Library attendance figures have soared with the improvements in our physical facilities, extended opening hours and the improved services and collections. From 3,216,504 on our door counts in 2004, they have climbed to 5,142,934 in 2009 - a staggering increase of almost 60%. No wonder it has seemed busy. At the same time, loans have gone down from 1,103,238 in 2005 to 805,862 in 2009, a reduction of approximately 18%. The items used in the reserve collections has fluctuated but at 146,890 in 2009 is almost the same as the figures of 147,544 in 2005. It will be interesting to note any changes in the coming year with the extended online course reserve project. Shelving has also gone down from 1,236,619 items in 2005 to 826,412 in 2009, a reduction of

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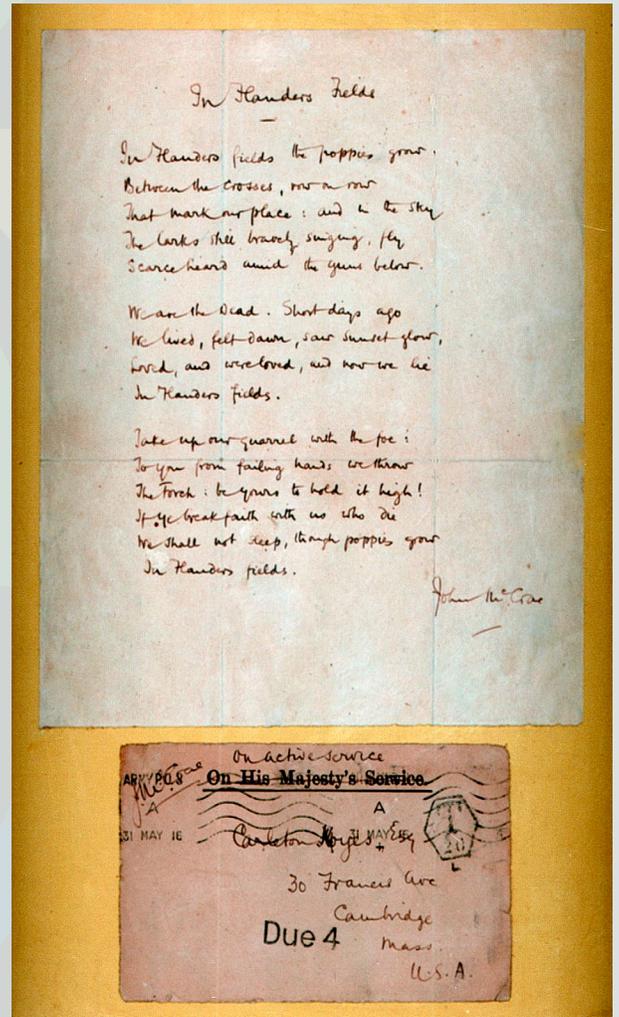


# MCGILL HOSTS MONTREAL REMEMBRANCE CEREMONY

More than 2,000 people paid tribute to fallen Canadian soldiers in a 90-minute Remembrance Day ceremony on McGill's lower campus on November 11. The traditional two-minutes of silence commemorating the nation's war heroes was broken by a 21-gun salute by four C3 howitzers that rattled nearby windows and set off car alarms.

Organized by the Royal Canadian Legion, Quebec Command, Remembrance Day ceremonies are usually held at Place du Canada. However, ongoing renovations of Place du Canada and adjoining Dorchester Square left the ceremony bereft of a venue - until McGill stepped forward and offered its grounds.

The occasion provided McGill students, faculty and staff the opportunity to pay their respects to soldiers who gave their lives in the First and Second World Wars, the Korean War, Afghanistan and various peacekeeping missions. Volunteers from the Library also handed out print copies of an original manuscript in John McCrae's hand of *In Flanders Fields* (pictured bottom right), a well-known poem written during World War I <[http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media\\_of\\_World\\_War\\_I](http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Media_of_World_War_I)> that is held in the Osler Library of the History of Medicine.



## THE LIBRARY OUT AND ABOUT IN MONTREAL

by Steven Spodek,  
Development Officer

On Monday, November 9, 2009 the Library held the third of its *Circulating the Library* events which we have been holding in people's homes. The first was in Toronto at the home of Gail and Douglas Todgham and the second in Montreal at the home of Ann Vroom and David Lank.

The event on Monday was kindly hosted by Jane and Robert Coppentrath in their wonderful home. Mrs. Coppentrath had attended the previous event in June and was so impressed that she offered her own home to us.

Janine Schmidt took along several treasures from the collection and also gave out a copy of one of the *Voyageur* fur trade contracts which had been donated to us by the Coppentraths. The evening was entitled *From Special Collections to Social Connections: library resources today* and April Colosimo and Janine spoke wonderfully about what the Library is doing in relation to its real and virtual collections and services.

The Coppentraths have written to Janine and myself indicating that several people attending had expressed how much they enjoyed learning more about McGill, our libraries and how libraries are evolving. The Coppentraths have also offered to be of further help to us. All three events to date have provided opportunities for follow up and this has resulted in a number of gifts to the Library.

There is tremendous potential in these kinds of gatherings. We have been in communication with a member of the executive of McGill alumni branch in NY and they want to do something with the Library in 2010.

McGill and our Library have scored highly in a number of recent university rankings including the Times Higher Education World University Rankings, Maclean's magazine and the *Globe and Mail's* University Report Card which awarded the McGill Library an "A" grade, tops in Canada, for the second year in a row. Our Library and University are rich in history, rich in collections, and rich in the new discoveries nurtured within its walls.



## REFRESHING THE LIFE SCIENCES LIBRARY

There was a celebration of the newly renovated Life Sciences Library on December 3, with Vice-Principal (Health Affairs) and Dean of Medicine, Dr. Richard I. Levin officially opening the space. Located on three floors of the McIntyre Medical Sciences Building, the Life Sciences Library is one of the 13 branches of the McGill Library, and offers integrated collections and services to the McGill University community. It serves students, researchers, faculty, and staff in the Faculties of Medicine and Dentistry and the Departments of Biology and Psychology in the Faculty of Science. The Life Sciences Library is used by a widely distributed clientele from many units beyond its primary mandate. It also collaborates with other branches in serving the interdisciplinary needs of McGill clientele, in particular, the Macdonald Campus Library (Parasitology, Microbiology), the Humanities and Social Sciences Library (Psychology) and the Schulich Library of Science and Engineering.

The refurbishment of the Life Sciences Library is the first stage of a planned transformation which will ensure that all three floors of the Library match the needs of today's library users. The initial stage on the third and fourth floors has created a space where teachers, learners, librarians and members of the community focus on quality information access and learning experiences in a leading edge environment; a busy information hub that supports student learning outcomes, encourages excellent research experiences, provides opportunities for inspiration, access to the world of information and advancement of the teaching, learning, research and outreach activities.

Innovative design has focused on the experience of users, reflecting current study and learning techniques and optimizing the space, making best use of the unusual shape of the building. Seating around the perimeter of the building accommodates quiet individual study areas with electrical outlets for laptops and wireless support. The spaces facilitate experiential learning. New seating, lighting, desks, expanded power for laptops and an additional 30 computers accommodate a new generations of users. An attractive, welcoming entrance to the Library, appropriate housing for the collections, a reconfiguration of work areas which accommodate staff effectively near the students, and an improved service point providing expert assistance, make the facility a gateway to worldwide information in the life sciences with



assistance in use – high tech and high touch.

According to Vice-Principal (Health Affairs) and Dean of Medicine, Dr. Richard I. Levin, "The importance of revitalizing our library facilities cannot be overstated, as we embark on a new and transformative age in the life sciences. The exponential growth in scientific knowledge, together with the technological advances of the last century, requires us all to commit to lifelong learning. Centres of excellence such as the Life Sciences Library will serve as catalysts in harnessing the wonderful potential before us."

The project was partially funded by the Students' Society of McGill University (SSMU) through the Library Improvement Fund, reflecting their commitment to Library resources and facilities. The renovation of the Life Sciences Library is the latest development in a broad-scale renewal of facilities at McGill Library, transforming learning, study and research spaces.



## A GLIMPSE OF THE SEMANTIC WEB (ALONE ON A SATURDAY NIGHT)



by Louise O'Neill,  
Library Technology Services

The largely synonymous phrases “social networking” and “Web 2.0” have become familiar ones to library staff.

McGill Library now uses a number of web 2.0 tools for enhanced delivery of library services: a McGill Library Twitter account, the McGill Library blog, WorldCat Local with its interactive features such as user ratings and tagging, an application developed in-house for Facebook users to search the McGill catalogue directly from one’s Facebook page, use of Meebo for information service via Instant Messaging, and the McGill Library island in Second Life (part of which is currently being used by graduate Education students to experiment with teaching techniques in a virtual environment).

WorldCat Local can be accessed with iPhones, and McGill-oriented iPhone applications are under development by LTS staff.

McGill Library can’t be pegged as a mere tourist in the Web 2.0 world!

The phrase “Web 3.0” is also heard with increasing frequency. It is easy to assume that it is simply a reference to further technological development Web 2.0. In fact, Web 3.0 refers to the semantic web. And, quite the opposite of social networking technology which enhances peoples’ ability to communicate and collaborate virtually, the semantic web is about using artificial intelligence to enhance computers’ ability to communicate and understand each other over the internet.

Consider that when you type keywords into a search engine such as Google, it uses complex methodologies to return results that represent what you are looking to find, largely based on your choice of keywords. But the search engine does not understand the meaning of keywords that you have given it, and so some of the results that you see may be well off the mark. A semantic web search engine understands the meaning of the keywords and will therefore return more relevant results. This six-minute video explains the concept a little further: <http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=OGg8A2zfWKg>

At the International Semantic Web Conference which I attended in October (rubbing shoulders with fellow attendee Sir Tim Berners-Lee!) there was an amusing presentation where Web 2.0 was cast as the popular, handsome sports hero in high school that everyone wanted to be with and be like. By contrast, Web 3.0 was likened to the brainy but unpopular socially inept nerd studying alone on a Saturday night – someone whose qualities are not nearly as obvious as the Web 2.0 charmer.

Web 2.0 has unquestionably had a strong impact on libraries, but Web 3.0 has barely made a mark so far. Despite its simple

description here, the semantic web involves a number of

complex technologies. When Sir Tim Berners-

Lee introduced the vision of the semantic web to the world in the May 2001 issue of *Scientific American*, it was thought that it would take some time for the vision to be realized because it was originally dependent on everyone incorporating

semantic web elements into websites to make it work. This did not happen. Instead, semantic web technologies that are independent of

individual websites’ components have been created, enabling likely growth of the semantic web in the near

future.

What does this mean for libraries and librarians? Many of the underlying technologies of the semantic web such as the creation of ontologies in OWL (a web ontology language), and the use of RDF (Resource Description Framework) triples to describe the relationship between concepts, lend themselves to librarian expertise. And, a semantic web search engine that can analyze information from millions of websites and provide tailored, highly relevant results almost instantly will be a useful “partner” in providing library information services.

If the promise of the semantic web is realized, there are many implications for libraries. The time is now to begin to understand it so that we can contribute to and influence its development for use in libraries.



## DESIGNING AND DELIVERING EFFECTIVE INFORMATION SKILLS SESSIONS

by the Library-TLS Working Group,  
(*Mariela Tovar, Jennie Ferris, Amber Lannon, April Colosimo,  
Sara Holder*)

McGill Library partnered with Teaching and Learning Services to create a 1½ day workshop that addresses the specific needs of liaison librarians in conducting classes for our clients. Designing and Delivering Effective Information Skills Sessions was offered for the first time during the week of August 10-14, 2009. The workshop was attended by 16 librarians (75% of whom had less than 2 years of experience). A second session was held in November with 11 librarians attending. The learning outcomes were for librarians to be able to:

1. (Re)design a library session using learning-centered principles
2. Deliver a segment of the session and get feedback from peers
3. Use feedback and reflection to improve teaching and learning

Material covered on day one included strategies for: effectively communicating with faculty; relating sessions to course objectives; engaging, informing and providing practice and feedback opportunities during the session; ongoing formative assessment suitable for short and/or one-time sessions; evaluating the effectiveness of sessions. Active, learner-centered design was emphasized throughout.

On day two (½ day) participants taught small segments of a session and received feedback from their peers and facilitators. Data collected with interactive student response systems (clickers) showed a very positive response from the participants:

- 94% reported that the workshop met their expectations
- 94% felt that they had a better understanding of the teaching and learning process
- 94% indicated that the workshop was useful for their professional development
- 87% felt motivated to try new strategies in their teaching
- 88% would recommend the workshop to another colleague

Having achieved the first of the workshop's learning outcomes (to design, or re-design a library session) participants were able to immediately apply what they had learned to their day-to-day work, as reflected in the following comments from participants: "I think this workshop was excellent. I already feel much better prepared for my fall sessions." - "Loved the manual and extra references and that the course is partly established already!"

All workshop materials have been posted on the Library Knowledgebase.

## INSPIRING LECTURES REVISITED

For the *Friends of the Library's* F.R. Scott Lecture this year, Commissioner of Official Languages Graham Fraser outlined the development of Scott's thinking about French Canada, the impact he had on language rights and language legislation and the importance of his influence in fighting for a charter of rights and in defining language as a human right. To view the lecture go to: <http://bcooltv.mcgill.ca/Viewer1/?RecordingID=37946>. Mr. Fraser was also interviewed for the McGill Reporter's 'Four Burning Questions' column ([http://reporter.mcgill.ca/category/four\\_burning\\_questions/](http://reporter.mcgill.ca/category/four_burning_questions/)). He is pictured below second from right with Professor Lionel Smith, Janine Schmidt and Janet Blachford.



Mario Biagioli (pictured below at right with Professor Nicholas Dew) delivered the the D. Lorne Gales Lecture in the History of Science Lecture presented by the Mossman Endowment. In an informative and entertaining lecture, Professor Biagioli discussed how environmental imagery reconceptualizes intellectual property and showed how one of the foundational texts of copyright law – Edward Young's 1759 *Conjectures on Original Composition* – cannot maintain the very dichotomy it sets out to establish between nature and society, and ends up casting the author, literally, as a vegetable. To view the lecture go to: <http://bcooltv.mcgill.ca/Viewer2/?RecordingID=39078>.

