# (GA) Slide 1: Is Your Public Library Accessible? : Find and Fix Barriers to Improve Community Access

* Saskatchewan Library Conference
* May 4, 2023
* 2:30 – 3:20 pm

# (GA) Slide 2: Land Acknowledgement

* Our presenters today come from across this land, living and working in what we now know as Canada. We respect and affirm the inherent and Treaty Rights of all Indigenous Peoples and will continue to honour the commitments to self-determination and sovereignty we have made to Indigenous Nations and Peoples.
* Today, we acknowledge that we present on the Treaty 6 Territory. The homeland of the Cree, Saulteaux, Dene, Dakota, Lakota, Nakota, and Métis Nations.

# (GA, RL, SJ) Slide 3: Our Presenters

* Geoffrey Allen, Director of Collections, RPL (Regina Public Library).
* Riane Lapaire, Braille and Accessibility Testing Coordinator, NNELS (National Network for Equitable Library Service).
* Simon Jaeger, Accessibility Consultant, NNELS (National Network for Equitable Library Service).

# (RL) Slide 4: Outline

* Overview of the Public Library Accessibility Resource Centre (PLARC) Project.
* User Perspective and Demonstrations.
* Participant Narratives.
* Findings of the “Is Your Public Library Accessible” Study.
* Breakout Group Discussions.

# (RL) Slide 5: Public Library Accessibility Resource Centre (PLARC) Project

* This collaborative project is funded by the Government of Canada, co-led by NNELS and CELA in partnership with eBOUND.
* The goal of the project is to create a consolidated resource centre focused on the education and training of library staff across the country on the importance of accessibility.

# (GA) Slide 6: Accessibility in Mainstream Public Library Services

* No one-size fits all solution (rural/urban, large/small etc.).
* Historically, accessibility has been done as part of a separate service or organization, distinct from library service to the general population (homebound services, CELA and NNELS).

# (GA) Slide 7: Accessibility in Mainstream Public Library Services (con’t)

* Accessibility is often an afterthought in the development and offering of the mainstream services of the library.
* Challenge is to envision new ways to provide inclusive, mainstream service for people with disabilities that has accessibility built into it.

# (GA) Slide 8: Diverse Disabilities

* Approximately one in every seven persons in Canada has a disability.

# (GA) Slide 9: Different Types of Disabilities

* Cognitive/Learning/Speech.
* Physical/Mobility.
* Blindness/Low Vision.
* Intellectual.
* Hearing.
* Mental Health.
* Invisible.

# (RL) Slide 10: PLARC project: Current Work

* Continued curation and creation of resources for AccessibleLibraries.ca / BibliosAccessibles.ca.
* There are now over 84 curated resources from organizations and websites.
* There are now 28 resources created by the project.
* Is Your Public Library Accessible study.
* Full report will be posted in the coming weeks.

# (SJ) Slide 11: User Perspective & Demonstrations

* Simon Jaeger – Accessibility Tester with NNELS.
* A patron of Vancouver Island Regional Library.
* Screen readers allow blind and visually impaired people to operate technology.
* Browsing library websites is the best way to independently discover information about a library for some users of the library.

# (SJ) Slide 12: Demo: Browsing the VIRL Website

Video embedded.

# (SJ) Slide 13: Social Media

* Social media apps are accessible, but content depends on the person posting it.
* Images are not accessible unless they have a text description (alt text).

# (SJ) Slide 14: Demo: VIRL Social Media Post

Video embedded.

# (SJ) Slide 15: Third-Party Resources

* Accessibility of third-party services is not guaranteed, but libraries should have information about which services are accessible.
* Some services claim to be accessible, but accessibility testing reveals that they are not.

# (SJ) Slide 16: Demo: Newspaper Page

Video embedded.

# (RL) Slide 17: About the Is Your Public Library Accessible? Study

* Collect, learn about, and value the public library experiences of people with all types of disabilities across Canada in order to help libraries create an accessible, inclusive, and welcoming space for all.
* Participants were asked to use their local public library and report back on their experiences.
* Surveys and focus groups were conducted between April 2022 – January 2023.

# (GA) Slide 18: Goals of the Study

* Based on patron experience with their library services, how accessible are Canadian public libraries?
* Do people with disabilities think that their libraries are accessible?
* What accessibility improvements still need to be made in public libraries?

# (RL) Slide 19: Personal Narratives

* The following personal narratives are composites of the experiences collected during the Is Your Public Library Accessible study.
* Everything in these narratives accurately reflect findings from the study.
* Names, pronouns, and locations have been removed to protect the identities of the study participants.

# (GA) Slide 20: Personal Narrative 1: Charlie

* “Accessible” parking spaces.
* Universal height checkouts.
* Accessibility plans and accommodations.
* Staff knowledge and training.
* Access to content.
* Physical library space and organization of that space.

# (RL) Slide 21: Personal Narrative 2: Amari

* Representation.
* Staff knowledge and training.
* Website accessibility.
* Metadata.
* Accessible reading content and platforms.

# (SJ) Slide 22: The Patron Experience

* Findings were categorized into 6 key areas of accessibility barriers in the library:
  + Library Staff Knowledge & Training.
  + Physical & Digital Content.
  + Library Website & Catalogue.
  + Library Buildings & Spaces.
  + Library Programming.
  + Library Marketing & Communications.

# (SJ) Slide 23: Participant responses

The following slides will share direct quotes from the study participants as they pertain to 6 areas of library services.

# (SJ, GA) Slide 24: Library Staff Knowledge & Training

* “…sometimes, I feel uncomfortable accessing activities because I feel people are not ready to accept people with disabilities”.
* “When I approached a librarian about borrowing a Daisy Player, she pointed and told me to speak with the other librarian at the other desk, as she handled those requests.  Ideally, library staff should all have knowledge of these materials to assist anyone. I was disappointed that no staff approached me to assist me in locating audiobook titles”.

# (RL, SJ) Slide 25: Physical & Digital Content

* “In a perfect world, all books would be in all formats as soon as they are released and available at my fingertips when I go into a library to read them. I believe that more people who are blind, deafblind or partially sighted would enjoy libraries more”.
* “Scanning a DVD movie on a self-service station. No, this was not accessible, as using self-service stations to scan and borrow documents is difficult. For instance, one must place a DVD in its case right under an infrared beam. One must also push the document on a conveyor belt-like device”.

# (GA, RL,) Slide 26: Library Website & Catalogue

* “[The website is] too busy because of my vision loss. I have a hard time reading white font on a pale blue background, for example, or light blue font on a yellow background or, you know, those contrasts”.
* “Library website has a simple design but only provides basic information. It links/has downloadable PDFs which are not accessible. They don’t think that the accessibility principles have been considered, and the overall accessibility of the site is no more than 60%”.
* “My library experience has been accessible, since the online content is easy to find and compatible with my phone technology”.

# (SJ, GA, RL) Slide 27: Library Buildings & Spaces

* “The circulation areas are not clear and logical. There are some obstacles at the end of the aisles that are problematic. Finally, the computer stations are not entirely suitable for the visually impaired”.
* “Personally, I would like to see more labeling in Braille on shelves to enable a blind person to find a particular audio book or DVD; label DVD's so we can find them and then take them to an accessible machine that will allow me to check out my library materials independently”.
* “I wish that each library had "way Finding" technology to assist blind, deafblind and partially sighted patrons to travel independently”.

# (SJ, GA) Slide 28: Library Programming

* “I'd love to see more programming for people with disabilities... We have maybe one program, I think maybe. But they run programs like the Lego program, and I know a lot of our population would love to do a program like that”.
* Cultural activity - sewing workshop on site: “This workshop was not really adapted to the visually impaired. Maybe it was predictable with the theme and I should have chosen a simpler program, but I was curious.... I estimate the accessibility at about 40%”.

# (RK, SJ, GA) Slide 29: Library Marketing & Communications

* “I've been thinking. I imagine there may be more accessibility features at my library - they are just not promoted. Perhaps it's a matter of "if you build it they will come, just let them know about it!" (smile)”.
* “Even though I took a monthly newsletter home, the font is too small to read, but I plan to scan it and attempt to read it that way to find out about which programs I could participate in”.
* “It would be great if the library could send a newsletter featuring new services offered, including those related to accessibility”.

# (GA) Slide 30: Breakout Groups by Areas

1. Library Staff Knowledge & Training.
2. Physical & Digital Content.
3. Library Programming.
4. Library Marketing & Communications.

# (GA) Slide 31: Breakout

* Find a table of area of interest.
  + Try to divide yourself equally.
  + Even if it’s not your area of expertise, your insights will bring great value.
* Designate a spokesperson for your table who will share your group’s findings to the larger group at the end.
* Introduce yourselves briefly.
* There will be a person from either RPL or NNELS, or who will be near your breakout group to listen, learn, and be available to answer questions.

# (RL) Slide 32: Presentation items

* Scan the QR code to access all of our presentation slides, documents, handouts, questions, and more: https://accessiblelibraries.ca/library-conference/

# (RL) Slide 33: Questions for Discussion

* What are the things your library has done to reduce accessibility barriers in this area?
* What are the things you can do to make your library more accessible; both those things that are easy and doable and those that take more resources?
* What knowledge, connections, resources, and information do you need to solve some of these accessibility barriers?
* What are your experiences around accessibility in your own library (both good and bad) in the context of the key area of your table?

# (RL) Slide 34: IYPLA? Study Report

* For more information about the study, visit: Accessible Libraries Studies.
* Sign up for our mailing list and get notified when the study is posted: Mailing List.

# (RL) Slide 35: Questions

* Questions? Email us at info@AccessibleLibraries.ca.
* Follow us on social media:
  + Twitter: @BibliosAccess.
  + Facebook: AccessibleLibraries.ca / BibliosAccessibles.ca.
  + LinkedIn: Accessible Libraries ; Biblios Accessibles.

# (RL) Slide 36: Thank you!

* Come visit us at the CELA and NNELS booths at the exhibitor fair.