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Mr. Pierre Gamache
Director General, Published Heritage Branch
Library and Archives Canada
500 de la Cité Blvd.
Gatineau, Quebec J8T 0A7

Dear Mr. Gamache,

The Manitoba Association of Library Technicians (MALT) is writing in support of the Manitoba School Library Association (MSLA) in their position that subscriptions to the Online Computer Library Centre (OCLC) services similar to those being offered to small public and small post-secondary libraries need to be funded, and provided in support of school library services.

Manitoba Library Technicians as professionals, support the update of the Library and Archives Canada (LAC) AMICUS service to the OCLC management system. We are concerned to have been informed by MSLA, that school library services will not be included in subscription services being offered to public and post-secondary library services. AMICUS services have previously been provided openly. Failure to provide this continued service to the School Library sector seems an unreasonable oversight which will have many negative implications for school libraries, the students, and the communities they serve.

The implications for not funding OCLC subscriptions for Manitoba school library staffs include:

1. The loss of Z 39.50 access means records will not come directly into school Library Systems for editing. This impacts the workload of school library staff, taking time away from student engagement.
2. Records for Canadian publications not readily available from other sources will require creating original records. This results in less consistency in applying Canadian subject headings and contributes to varying quality in the records for Canadian content within the school library system.
3. Creating original records is very time-consuming adding to the workload of school library staff. This affects the quality of service libraries can provide to students, as well as carrying budgeting considerations necessitating increased school spending to provide the same level of service to students.
4. Rural and remote school libraries may not have trained staff able to create original records which decreases the accuracy of records, and as a result affects access to Canadian content for individuals in these communities.

5. Many Canadian titles will require original cataloguing with the discontinued access to the AMICUS service resulting in them becoming part of a cataloguing backlog. This affects student access to current Canadian content. It makes Canadian content less accessible in a timely manner and thus less relevant to serving the needs of students. In the year of Canada's 150th celebration and in general, it would be a great cultural disservice to see Canadian Publications held up in processing in comparison to international material for which records can be more readily obtained.
6. The loss of free access to Canadian publication records means books published with uniquely Canadian content will have less visibility affecting our Canadian publishing industry.

MALT additionally supports the position of MSLA that the library community has not been adequately informed on changes to the AMICUS service. This is an unfortunate oversight. MALT has followed up with the archival community in the province of Manitoba in regards to presentations they have received from LAC on the new OCLC service. These presentations make no mention of services for school libraries or lack of these services being provided, nor were school libraries awarded any such opportunities to engage or provide input in the changes being made to the AMICUS service. MALT urges LAC to fully inform the entire school library community through its national school library organization, Canadian School Libraries, as well as through the various provincial school library associations.

It is imperative that school libraries receive the same funding for CatExpress as covered by LAC for small public and academic libraries as soon as the service transition takes place. School libraries support the education of our future generations, and we want students to have full and timely access to all Canadian materials. This access supports Canadian creators, Canadian publishers, Canadian educators, and Canadian students. A reduction of service on this scale is a great disservice to all of the above, and foreseeably will have a negative impact on Canadian education and culture.

We thank you for your considered attention to this matter. MALT is confident Library and Archives Canada recognizes the merit in school libraries. We look forward to your response on this matter.

Sincerely,



MALT President Cassandra Page
On behalf of The Manitoba Association of Library Technicians