



Knowledge Ontario

Knowledge Ontario at a Glance

Knowledge Ontario's services provide all libraries with equal access to a core suite of on line learning resources and tools that connect communities, create innovative discovery spaces, offer virtual reference and research help, and support life long learning. To date, KO has received three one-time grants, the last in March 2008. Without additional funding in spring 2010, we will not be able to continue to offer these services in future years.

The annual cost of providing Knowledge Ontario's services across the province is roughly \$4 million/year. A summary description of these programs and services and their share of the total 2009-10 budget is provided below. Central administration, infrastructure, operating and governance functions combined account for 8% of the budget.

Knowledge Ontario offers digital services through five projects, all offered through Ontario public libraries: Ask, Connect, Learn, Our and Resource Ontario.

Ask Ontario

Ask Ontario offers services to connect Ontarians with web-based, live, personalized research consulting services in a wide range of subject areas. (10% of total budget)



online research help

aide à la recherche en ligne

askON is the brand name for Ask Ontario's real-time chat research service. People use instant messaging to chat in real-time with expert library staff who can help find relevant and authoritative information, answer questions, deliver articles and improve the public's research and web searching skills. Since its launch in January 2008, **askON** has expanded to service more than 60 Ontario communities.

35 + public library communities and **20 +** post-secondary communities will deliver virtual reference services to more than **25,000** library patrons in 2009

44 hours/week service in the public library sector (M-Th 1pm-8pm; Fr-Sun 1pm-5pm) including **29** hours per week in the French language

600 + librarians currently trained to offer askON real-time chat reference services around the province; **500 +** transcripts are analyzed each year in improve service quality and to identify training needs and opportunities.

Ask Ontario extends the capacity of many medium and smaller libraries to provide high quality reference and research support to people in rural, isolated and northern communities, as well as to First Nations and francophone populations.

Resource Ontario

Resource Ontario's online databases (CEDROM Eureka, Canadian Points of View, Teen Health and Wellness, Student Reference Centre (Canadian Edition)) plus current Gale databases provide a core suite of digital learning resources to every library, learning institution, student and adult learner in Ontario (66% of total budget)

Knowledge Ontario renews database licenses for sequential two year terms. All library sectors, including public libraries are consulted on priority acquisitions as part of each cycle. Collectively, these databases provide Ontarians with free, open and reliable access to essential information and learning resources through their local libraries. Licensing is in place for all databases until December 2010.

32 - 35 million searches have been performed against the various databases in each of the last two years

Improvements in training and search interfaces has resulted in a projected doubling of **full text retrieved documents from 11.3 million in 2008 to 24 million in 2009.**

Public libraries account for roughly **40 per cent of search activities** and through the combined efforts of KO, the vendors and SOLS/OLS-N, the proportion of public libraries registered and using the databases has increased to more than **90 per cent**

The majority of public libraries, school boards and colleges secure access to thousands of online electronic resources they could never have licensed on their own and at a fraction of the cost of licensing them through small consortia or individual institutions. **The projected savings province-wide across all library sectors by 2010 will exceed \$6.5 million. The public library share of those savings is just under \$3 million.**

These resources are an indispensable tool in responding to the research and knowledge needs of students and adult learners. Without them, many communities would lack access to on line learning resources that others take for granted.

The provincial reach of these online databases provides the opportunity to compile and share best practices and lists of best resources for use in building curriculum supports and province-wide learning resources.

Our Ontario

Our Ontario provides both leading edge portal and toolkit technologies that enable anytime, anywhere discovery of tens of thousands of digital items of local history and culture about Ontario (10% of total budget)



About 50% of our 110 + digital toolkit partners and **220 +** of OurOntario.ca portal contributors are public libraries; a partnership with the OLSs will add another **30 +** toolkit partners by the summer of 2010.

Our Ontario's toolkit and portal technologies both simplify the process and greatly reduce the cost to participating organizations of planning, digitizing, hosting and providing access to their digital collections. **The projected savings through**

cost avoidance of using these services among toolkit partners alone is estimated at \$1.25 million.

In the last two years, there have been more than **6.8 million visits to the portal and hosted sites of toolkit partners.** Over the same period, there have been more than **20 million page views** on the portal and hosted sites.

300 + people have been trained on use of the toolkits since the start of 2008. Integration of robust social web 2.0 search features and a French version of OurOntario.ca was released in April 2009

Connect Ontario

Connect Ontario has completed work on a ground-breaking OPAC discovery service developed in partnership with BC Libraries and BiblioCommons (2% of total budget)

Through this partnership, KO is able to deliver a next generation online public access catalogue (OPAC) discovery layer and social networking space to public libraries meeting the certification standards. The BiblioCommons service is designed to transform and extend the library catalogue into a rich, highly interactive discovery experience where users can share reviews, build lists of favourites, create affinity groups and learning networks.

By the end of 2009 Knowledge Ontario anticipates **6 - 10 public libraries** will be signed on to offer this capability, with this number projected to increase to **35 - 40 public libraries** by the spring of 2010.

Through its charter subscriber agreement, Knowledge Ontario has secured significant benefits for qualifying public libraries. Those signing up by April 2010 will realize major savings:

- 1) waiving of any initial set-up and installation fee,**
 - 2) the ability to subscribe to the service at no additional cost through July 2011, and,**
 - 3) the ability to renew for up to an additional two years at a very competitive rate.**
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Learn Ontario

Learn Ontario's Atomic Learning pilot is evaluating how best to build Information & Communications Technologies into classroom lesson plans. Learn Ontario's 2009-10 plans also include the initial design and build of a prototype educational resources portal to bring together resources to support development 21st century digital literacies (4% of total budget)

Stage 2 includes **20 +** public libraries from across the province using the Atomic online tutorials to promote skills development for under and unemployed persons, training seniors and distance education students, digital literacy of library staff, community courses, answering tech questions

The educational resources portal will support greater library/school collaboration by bringing together in one easy to use discovery space a wealth of on line learning resources.