

Report on Activities Funded by the Alberta Law Foundation

April 2005—March 2006

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"We need to ensure that the citizenry is well-informed if we're to maintain a justice system that is legitimate, responsive, and effective."

Lois Gander

Director's Message

This report covers the Alberta Law Foundation funded activities of the Legal Studies Program from April 1, 2005 to March 31, 2006. Information about our other activities is available in the *Annual Report 2005/06*.

Without the continuing support of the Alberta Law Foundation, our work would not be possible. We are truly grateful for

ALF's core support of both the LSP and the Access to Justice Network.

I thank our staff, contractors, and volunteers who successfully took on new challenges and reached new heights again this year.

Lois E Gander
Professor and Director

30 Years of Legal Studies and LawNow

A celebration of 30 years of public legal education was held on November 25, 2005 at the Timms Centre for the Arts.

At the event, Professor and Director Lois Gander was awarded the Alberta Centennial Medal for outstanding achievements in the community.



San San Sy (past Associate Director of the LSP) was awarded the Sandra Garvie Memorial Award of Merit. The award is presented to people with vision, dedication, creativity, and sensitivity, who have distinguished themselves in the field of public legal education. Earlier in the fall, she also received the Alberta Centennial Medal.

Displays highlighting Resource News/LawNow, community engagement activities, research, innovation and invention, and Legal Resource Centre/Legal Studies Program were created for the event.

Congratulatory remarks were made by Dr Katy

Campbell (Associate Dean, Faculty of Extension), Peter Freeman, QC, David Aucoin (Executive Director, Alberta Law Foundation), Dr Lynn Penrod (Special Advisor to the President, University of Alberta), Dr Randy Petruk (Executive Director, Policy Secretariat, Alberta Justice), The Honourable Allan Wachowich (Chief Justice, Court of Queen's Bench), and Senator Grant Mitchell.

Personal letters of congratulations were received from Prime Minister Paul Martin and Deputy Prime Minister Anne McLellan.

Long-service plaques were presented to the following staff who have been with the Legal Studies Program for over 10 years: Lesley Conley, Stephanie Hawrylak, Teresa Mitchell, and Shannon Thomas.



Executive Summary

This year, the Legal Studies Program continued to focus most, but not all, of its resources on developing web-based public legal education resources and services. Through its range of activities, the LSP had over 1 million contacts with individuals looking for legal information and with intermediaries who turn to the Program for assistance in doing their work.

As the following statistics demonstrate, the Internet provides an efficient way of reaching people. What is less obvious is that it is often the only way of reaching people who are disadvantaged by virtue of geographic or other forms of isolation.

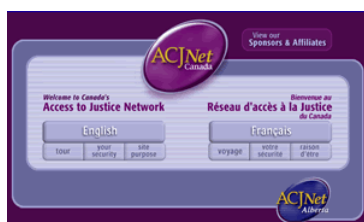
Web-based resources are also a way of spreading knowledge about the theory and practice of public legal education in Canada. As a result of our Theory and Practice of PLE in Canada website, we were approached by a graduating law student from the University of Idaho who made a successful application for a Fulbright Scholar Program's Pre-Doctoral Fellowship to enable him to spend the upcoming year studying with the LSP. His research will position him to provide leadership in the development of PLE services in the United States, and to make a significant contribution to our own understanding of PLE's contribution to access to justice in Canada.



www.plecanada.org

✓ **ACJNet experienced over 555,000 user sessions with 1.6 million pages downloaded**

- Over 10,000 records maintained in the database
- 1,353 news items posted
- 2,000 poll participants
- 300 new links added



✓ **Canadian Legal FAQs users downloaded over 1 million pages**

- 80 new FAQs added

✓ **Abuse of Older Adults FAQs booklets revised and reprinted**

✓ **700 reference / referral questions answered**

✓ **Staff presentations and training sessions served over 200 intermediaries**

✓ **582,800 user sessions on Canadian Legal FAQs, RoseNet, VIOLET, OakNet, Legal Studies Program, and Not-for-Profit & Charity Law websites**

- Almost 1.6 million pages downloaded
- Over 3,000 pages of law-related information online

“Over its thirty years, the Centre has gone through a variety of changes and challenges; in 1989, the Centre changed its name to the Legal Studies Program and launched new initiatives. In 1994, about the time of the birth of the Internet, the Program adapted its delivery formats to the new technologies, and began the Access to Justice Network project which would result in the first major electronic portal for the Canadian public.

However, its approach is still multi-disciplinary; its involvement with the community still central to its method; its goals reworded, but not changed.”

Peter Freeman, QC

Access to Justice Network www.acjnet.org

User statistics:

- Over 9.4 million hits
- Almost 556,000 user sessions
- Over 1.6 million pages downloaded

“Toujours un grand plaisir de recevoir votre courriel. Votre site est non seulement fantastique mais il recèle des trésors. Bravo à toute l'équipe et ne lâchez pas. “

Michel Charlebois
(November 2005)

ACJNet is Canada's access to justice portal. It serves as a clearinghouse of electronic resources that address a myriad of legal and justice matters. It includes sub-portals dealing with resources of particular interest to Albertans and with those available in French. ACJNet Alberta is home to A-Link: Alberta's Legal Information Network, a directory of Alberta's PLE services. The Foundation provided \$135,000 to support ACJNet.

ACJNet hosted a practicum student from the School of Library and Information Studies at the University of Alberta from January—April 2006.

Content Development

ACJNet continued to grow with links to web resources, full-text documents, legal events, and news items of interest to Canadians added every month. Over 10,000 live records are now in the ACJNet database. Records added throughout the year included:

- 220 events
- 300 links
- 1,350 news items

A Public Legal Education section was added to each portal. Subsections include Organizations, Research, Resources, and Theory & Practice. Each contain content and links to key resources in the field of public legal education.

Broken links were fixed, with an emphasis on family violence-related websites.

The content management system was upgraded as part of our maintenance contract with Redengine. This upgrade allows for greater control over the administrative functions of the website and the ability to create new pages and site sections.

News and Features

Each day, news items were added to each ACJNet homepage (National, Alberta, and French). The 1,353 legal news items added this year were drawn from major media outlets, government news releases, and communiqués from a variety of public legal education organizations.

Every 5-7 days, a website contained in the database was featured on each of the National, French, and Alberta homepages. Feature site listings included a graphic, link, and information about the organization and its website.

Special topics were created to coincide with monthly polls, special events, and timely topics. For example, a special topic on the Federal Election was added to the National homepage. Other special topics included Restorative Justice Week, Family Violence Prevention Month, and International Women's Day.

“As a small non-profit organisation, we are particularly grateful to have our website featured on the ACJNet site. We are very impressed with the ACJNet website -- it will be useful to our research and work. “

Christopher L. Avery. Business & Human Rights Resource Centre (Aug '05)

User Interaction

Monthly polls were conducted on ACJNet National and Alberta—with almost 2,000 respondents! The most popular polls on the National site concerned the rights of the unborn to sue their mothers for injuries caused by car accidents and whether police officers should have Tasers. Popular polls on ACJNet Alberta included whether the government should hire special constables to enforce traffic laws and whether children as young as 12 should be allowed to work.

Top search topics included Criminal Law, Divorce, and Family Law.

Reference Service

Staff responded to over 700 email and telephone questions from the public. The most frequently requested topics were labour and employment law, divorce, family law wills and estates, criminal law, and landlord and tenant law.

Feature Site	Special Topics
 <p>Laws for Landlords in Alberta</p> <p>Are you considering becoming a landlord? Have you purchased a property and intend to rent it out?...</p> <p>View More</p>	<p>Family Law Act Internet Safety Landlord and Tenant (Alberta) Pharmacists Profession Regulation (poll) Same-Sex Marriage Youth Justice in Alberta</p>

Canadian Legal FAQs www.law-faqs.org

Canadian Legal FAQs is an evolving online encyclopedia of information dealing with legal topics of public interest. It is developed chiefly through special project funding and maintained through core funding from the Alberta Law Foundation.

The website contributes to our objective of providing legal and justice-related information to the public. Alberta Law Foundation funding supports the routine maintenance and hosting of the site, and the updating of content where possible. The development of content has been funded through the support of many additional funders.

The questions and answers can be accessed through a complete list of topics, by jurisdiction (Alberta or National), or by using the Search function.



There were approximately 80 existing FAQs revised during the year:

- 69 Abuse of Older Adults
- 2 Charter of Rights & Freedoms
- 1 Divorce
- 1 Labour
- 6 Travel

User statistics:

- Almost 3.5 million hits
- Over 300,000 user sessions
- Almost 1.1 million pages downloaded

FAQ Topics	Number
Abuse of Older Adults	69
Access to Information	10
Adoption Records in Alberta	14
Adult Interdependent Relationships	30
Charter of Rights & Freedoms	10
Commissioners for Oaths & Notaries Public	13
Constitution of Canada	5
Contracts and Consumer Information	5
Copyright	41
Criminal Code of Canada	38
Dependent Adults Act	31
Divorce	134
Family Law	3
Family Violence (includes PAFVA)	180
Freedom of Info & Protection of Privacy Act	0
Labour	103
Landlord and Tenant	103
Marriage	10
Non-Profit Organizations and Taxes	1
Real Estate	22
Renting a Place to Live	70
Sources of Legal Assistance in Alberta	3
Travel	94
Unions: History & Development	57
Wills and Estates	11
Youth	55
TOTALS	1,112

Content Development

There are now 1,112 FAQs on 25 topics.

Family Violence

www.violetnet.org,
rosenet-ca.org, oak-net.org

User statistics:

VIOLET

- 665,000 hits
- 185,000 page views
- 97,000 user sessions

OakNet

- 179,000 hits
- 54,000 page views
- 31,000 user sessions

RoseNet

- 232,000 hits
- 117,000 page views
- 60,000 user sessions

The Family Violence Suite

The Legal Studies Program has developed a suite of websites dealing with family violence. It also participates in collaborative projects that enhance the awareness and impact of those sites.

- VIOLET: Law and Abused Women
- RoseNet: Law and Abused Immigrant Women
- OakNet (Older Adult Knowledge Network): Abuse of Older Adults

The maintenance and upkeep of these sites is part of the core activity of LSP.

In 2005/06, several sections of these sites were updated to ensure accuracy of information. On VIOLET and RoseNet, the sections on Women's Shelters, Key Resources/ Agencies that Help Families Where there is Violence, and Legal Aid were updated. In addition, the section on Knowing Your Rights as a Sponsored Person was updated on RoseNet.

These FAQs were also made available on the Canadian Legal FAQs website.

Legal Studies is grateful to the Alberta Law Foundation for funding the reprinting of this booklet.

Collaborations

LSP partnered with Portage College, the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters, and Jean McBean, QC, to create curriculum material surrounding the legal portion of the college's new Women's Shelter Crisis Worker Program.

The Family Transition Place, located in Orangeville, Ontario, distributed information from the VIOLET website to their clients.



Elder Abuse FAQs Booklet

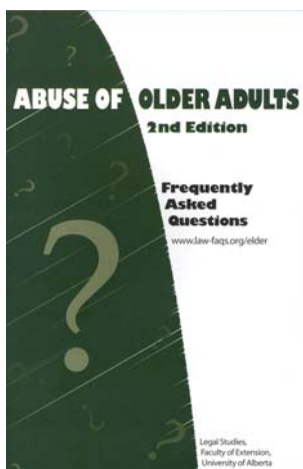
The *Abuse of Older Adults: Frequently Asked Questions* booklet was revised and reprinted.

Topics:

- General Information
- Physical, Sexual, Emotional, and Financial Abuse
- Neglect and Self-Neglect
- Reporting Abuse
- Abuse as a Crime
- Going to Court
- Rights of Victims
- Protective and Restraining Orders
- Peace Bonds
- Wills
- Future Care and Future Asset Management
- Losing Decision-Making Power
- Consumer Fraud
- Abuse in Institutions

Family Violence Prevention Month

ACJNet Alberta displayed a Family Violence Prevention Month Special Topic from October 31 to December 31, 2005. The Special Topic included information on the awareness campaign, new publications and services, and links. Relevant links were compiled and added to ACJNet Alberta to remain in the database.



Not-for-Profit & Charity Law www.law-nonprofit.org

The Not-for-Profit & Charity Law website provides information on not-for-profit, non-profit, and charity management; liability; directors, volunteers, and employees; fund-raising law; and tax law.

Information is presented through the *LawNow* reprint series and Frequently Asked Questions (FAQs). Links to other sites and opportunities for discussion are also included.

In 2005/06, over 15 news items of interest to not-for-profit and charitable organizations were added. A News archive section was created. New links were added to the "Links"

and "Foundations with Websites" pages, and broken links were repaired.

The Not-for-Profit & Charity Law website includes over 85 pages of content.



User statistics:

- 363,000 hits
- 95,000 page views
- 47,000 user sessions

Theory and Practice of Public Legal Education In Canada www.plecanada.org



As one of Canada's oldest public legal education organizations, and the only one located within a university faculty, the Legal Studies Program has assumed a particular

mandate for carrying out research into the theory and practice of public legal education.

An important objective for the LSP is to provide leadership in the field of public legal education (PLE). A major initiative has been the Foundation-funded development of a website, online forum, and web-log (blog) for PLE providers, funders, and policy-makers. During the year, we continued to add links and documents to this site.

User statistics:

- 21,100 hits
- 9,200 page views
- 14,500 user sessions

Professional Development Activities

Associate Director

- PLEAC National/Networking Conferences
- Alberta Magazine Publishers Association Conference
- Faculty of Extension research refreshers

Web Librarian

- Trends in Internet use and information gathering
- School of Library and Information Studies professional development day
- Online surveys and online academic research
- Alberta Library Conference
- Fundraising opportunities for public legal organizations

Electronic Information Assistant

- Charities Use of Proceeds and Gaming Rules
- CRA Roadshow
- Adobe InDesign

Developer, Digital Strategies

- Problem Solving/Decision Making
- Visual Design for Print and Web
- Project Management
- Adobe InDesign

Office Staff

- Peoplesoft
- HTML and Web Design
- Governance 101

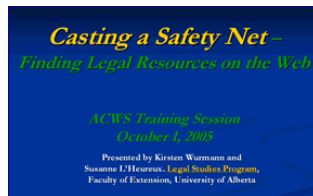


Presentations and Publications

Presentations

Wurmann, K. (April 2005). *How do you find (the defendant?) Helping patrons find legal information online*. Presentation to the Alberta Library Conference, Jasper, Alberta.

Wurmann, K and L'Heureux, S. (October 2005). *Casting a Safety Net - Finding Legal Resources on the Web*. Presentation at the Alberta Council of Women's Shelters Training Session.



Wurmann, K. (November 2005). *Alternative Librarianship: Life on the Outside*. Presentation to the Edmonton Chapter of the Canadian Association of Special Libraries, Edmonton, Alberta.

Wurmann, K. (February 2006). *Search Well and Be Wise - helping your students find legal information online*. Presentation to the Calgary City Teachers' Convention, Calgary, Alberta.

Wurmann, K. (March 2006). *Search Well and Be Wise - helping your students find legal information online*. Presentation to the Greater Edmonton Teachers' Convention, Edmonton, Alberta.

Wurmann, K. (March 2006). *Search Well and Be Wise - helping your students find legal information online*. Presentation to the Central East Alberta Teachers' Convention, Edmonton, Alberta.

Publications

Wurmann, K. (2006). *Home sweet home - a new web resource about landlord and tenant law in Alberta*. Letter of the LAA, Issue Number 150, Spring 2006.

Parish, L. (2006). *Abuse of Older Adults Frequently Asked Questions booklet—2nd edition*. January 2006.

**Search Well and Be Wise:
helping your students find legal
information online**

Administration and Service Provision

LSP Website statistics:

- 469,000 hits
- 45,300 page views
- 74,800 user sessions

Administrative activities included:

- Financial planning, monitoring and reporting
- Day-to-day office operations (telephone, supplies, etc)
- Human resource functions (recruitment, evaluations, support)
- Development of staff development and training plans
- Communications and promotions
- File management and retention
- Attendance at provincial and federal meetings
- Committee work for Public Legal Education Network of Alberta (PLENA)
- Board and committee work for the Greater Edmonton Library Association

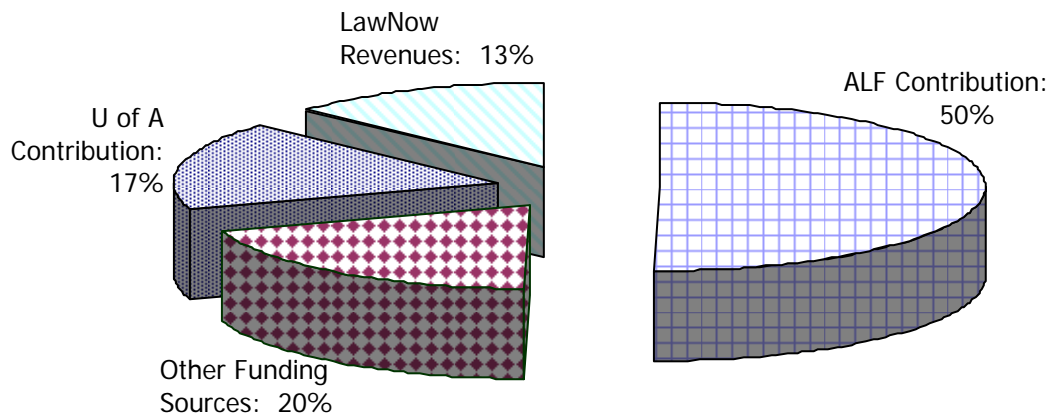
- Board and committee work for the Public Legal Education Association of Canada (PLEAC)

The official files **Archive Project** continued with the preparation of 7 boxes of files for placement in the University of Alberta Archives.

The **LSP website** was kept up-to-date and links checked regularly. Over 55 news items were added to the LSP homepage over the year.

12 **electronic mailing lists** (listservs) were managed in 2005/06, 11 of which used Mailman and 1 used MyMailout online software.

Financial Summary



Details about projects funded by other funders are available in the Program's Annual Report 2005/06.

Activities Funded by Other Sources

Alberta Real Estate Foundation

- Residential Tenancies Legal information Project
- Alberta Residential Tenancies Advisory Committee

Alberta Government Services

- Residential Tenancies FAQs
- Information-Seeking Behaviours of Immigrants in Alberta

Alberta Justice—Justice Policy Advisory Committee

- Public Confidence in the Justice system

LawNow

- Advertising
- Subscriptions

The Muttart Foundation

- LawNow
- Board Development Workbooks

University of Alberta

- Civil Justice System and the Public
- Public Legal Education Association of Canada

Website Maintenance

- Student Legal Services of Edmonton
- Law Foundation of British Columbia
- Alberta Law Foundation

The Public Confidence in the Justice System committee will submit a report to the Minister of Justice and the Solicitor General in June.

Expected recommendations include more research regarding the nature and extent of public discontent, effective law-related education in schools, encouraging more volunteerism of the public within the justice system, and greater communication within the system regarding issues of public confidence.

Contact Information

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