



The Plight of Government Bookstores/Print Distribution

A Nova Scotia Example

Government Information Days

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Background and Current Situation

- Government bookstore is an offshoot of postal services
- November 2019, Legislative Counsel invited me to join a meeting with Government consultants about closing the Government Bookstore.
- Contract with Unisys is up and the renewal cost is prohibitive
- Government decides to close the bookstore – effective April 2021.



My Concerns

- Distribution system is broken
 - Rather than looking at fixing the system, the solution is to do away with it entirely and not look at alternatives
- Communications and Information Act requires the print distribution of certain documents:
 - Statutes, Journals, Royal Gazettes, etc.
- Access to government documents is a primary need in a democratic society
- Not everyone has Internet
- Some things are better read in paper
- There is no legal deposit in Nova Scotia and the Legislative Library has great difficulty ensuring that we receive what we need.



Environmental Scan

Completed November 2019

Province	Deposit	Bookstore	Print on Demand	eArchive
NL	Yes	Yes		Yes
NS	No	Yes		Yes
PE	No	Some Pubs		No
NB	Yes	No	Yes	Yes
QC	Yes	Yes		Yes
ON	Some	Yes		Yes
MB	Yes	Hub	Yes	Yes
SK	Yes	Hub		Yes
AB	Yes	Yes		Yes
BC	Yes	Yes		Yes



My Suggestions

- Print on demand, for a fee if necessary, by the Queen's Printer
 - Citizens will still have access to print documents if they want them
- Central publications hub on the Government website where citizens can view available documents
 - Currently publications are scattered across the site making them difficult to find
- Make the Legislative Library a legal depository for all government publications



Government's Response

- Create a bridge site from the Government home page that connects to the Legislature's statutes pages
- No need for print on demand
 - People can print from home
 - No response on legislation
- No need for central publications hub
 - “People will **Google** anyway”
- Legal deposit is beyond the scope of this project



In the 21st Century, do we need Government Bookstores/Distribution systems?

Yes	No
Not everyone has access to the Internet; Internet outages	Everything is on the Internet
Some material is still better read in print (Easier to scan multiple books than multiple web pages)	Citizens have not indicated that they require information in print
Accessibility – including assistive technologies	Cost (can be mitigated)
Is there such thing as a stable electronic archive?	Emphasis is now on self serve e.g. open data portals
Don't miss it until its gone	
Reinforces government entity responsibility and transparency	



My Question to you

- Are Government bookstores and distribution systems extinct or endangered and worth saving?



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