



Western  Libraries

Annual Report | 2021/22

A Message from Catherine

If I were to choose a word to describe the 2021/22 academic year it would be “transition”. It was the second full year of the COVID-19 pandemic and Western Libraries, alongside the rest of campus, was charged with navigating the return to in-person learning, teaching and research. I am tremendously proud of the hard work, resourcefulness and resilience that the staff have shown throughout this time.

The annual report to Senate provides a great opportunity to highlight the vital role Western Libraries plays in the student experience and in stimulating research and scholarship. This is illustrated in the stories about initiatives advancing Open Access publishing, the power of geospatial data services, and a new Pickup Anywhere service that connects students, staff and faculty with over 25 million items from universities across Ontario.

The Weldon Revitalization Project and the unveiling of the new Learning Commons supports Western’s strategic growth, advances student success, and fosters community and belonging. And our commitment to experiential learning and peer-to-peer support present a snapshot of other ways we enrich the student experience.

The ongoing work and deep commitment to decolonize library curriculum and collections is answering Western’s call to advance reconciliation with Indigenous communities and create a more equitable and inclusive campus.



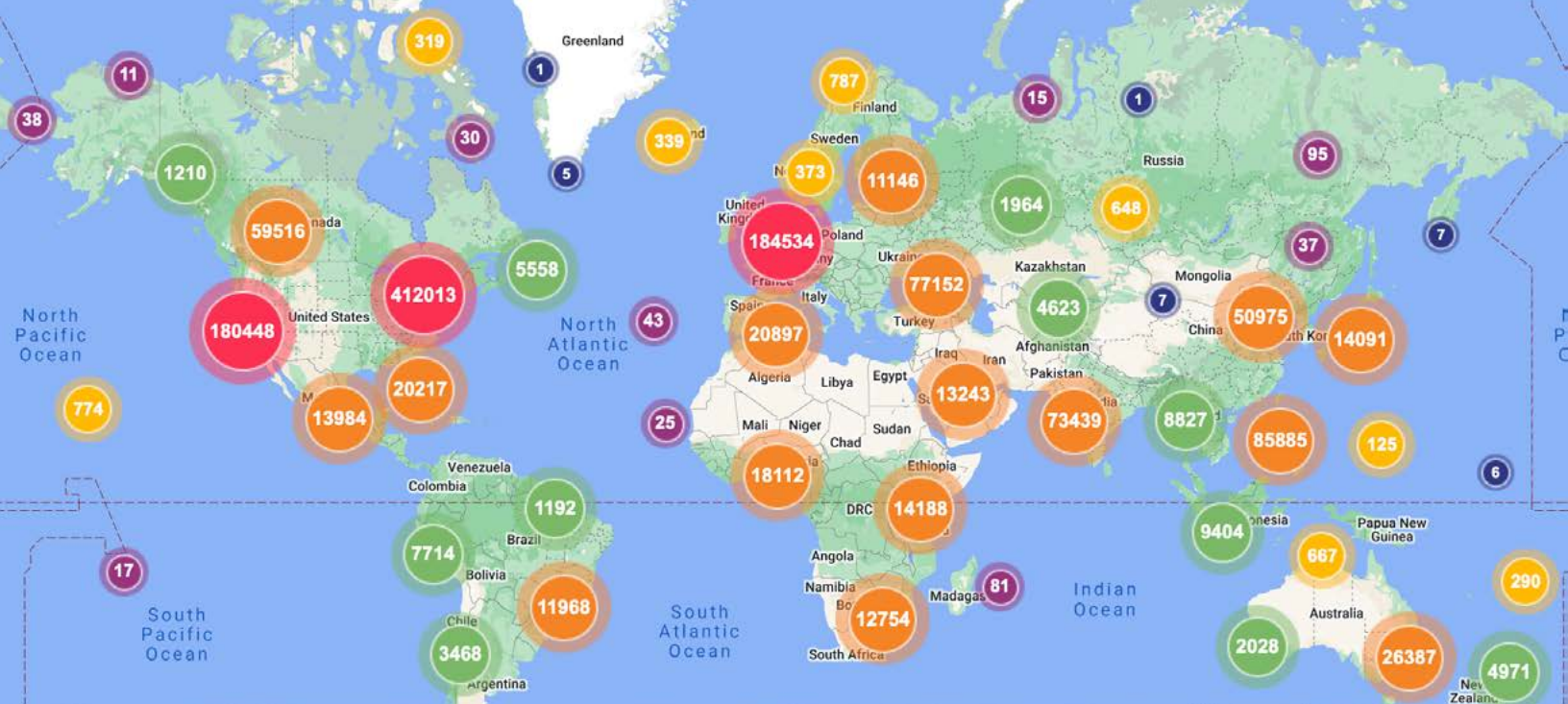
In response to [Towards Western at 150](#), the University’s bold new strategic plan, Western Libraries engaged in an inclusive strategic planning process. This report closes with a window into Western Libraries new strategic directions. The plan, [Forward Together](#), reveals how Western Libraries’ is a key partner in the realization of Western’s strategic directions.

Please enjoy this reflection of the 2021/22 academic year and the opportunity to hear from and learn more about the people behind the stories. This annual report is a celebration of their work and its impact at Western.

Catherine Steeves
Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian

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⤵ Downloads on Scholarship@Western from May 2021 to April 2022 spans 25,000 institutions across the world.

Open to a Better Way

Western Libraries is committed to supporting a publishing landscape that is scholar-led and community-driven. We do our utmost to advance open publishing and continue to support multiple pathways to Open. Unfortunately, at this point in the transformation to a sustainable, open scholarly publishing model, commercial publishers have co-opted the [Open Access](#) (OA) movement at the expense of individual scholars and public research institutions like Western. In the continual work and negotiations that we must do with major publishers we push for the adoption of Open Access principles and publication models that remove barriers to access. Here's a look back at all we've achieved this year.

Scholarship@Western

"Western is motivated to serve not only individual disciplines but also the public good – by advancing knowledge and sharing it," reads [Towards Western at 150](#), Western's strategic plan. [Scholarship@Western](#) (S@W), Western's institutional repository,

is Western Libraries' answer to the call to share important ideas and discoveries happening at Western with others around the world. Since its launch in 2008, items in S@W have been downloaded over 11 million times and the repository currently contains 39,881 total papers. When we talk about the impact of S@W this year, the numbers say it all:

- 1,387,154 full text downloads
- 3,975 media streams
- 5,498 records added
- 740 electronic thesis and dissertations published
- 470 digitized theses added
- 17 new collections created
- 7 new e-books published
- Users from 25,042 institutions and 226 countries downloaded works

If you have not done so already, check out the [map of live readership activity](#) on the S@W homepage to see Western's global research impact unfold before your eyes.

Open Journal Publishing

Western Libraries has supported OA scholarly journal publishing for nearly fifteen years. We provide support in the set-up and continued maintenance of journals, as well as guidance in editorial policies and practices. We facilitate indexing and dissemination of journal content to increase its visibility and discoverability and to validate standard identifiers for the publication and its content. In the past year we provided 126 consultations to faculty and student journal teams. As of April 30, we host 34 active journals that have published a combined 41 issues and 285 articles. Across all published issues of all journals, articles were downloaded or viewed 500,295 times.

For librarian Emily Carlisle-Johnston, working with journal editors is rewarding.

"To see their journals thrive and know that commercial publishers aren't profiting from

their labour is meaningful for me and for them. In Canada, academic libraries play a key role in supporting the majority of OA journals that don't charge fees to authors, and I'm proud that Western Libraries is part of that," said Carlisle-Johnston.

Open Data Publishing

Data sharing is fundamental to data management and the Tri-Agencies will identify an initial set of funding opportunities that will be subject to a research data management plan requirement in spring of 2023. While data sharing as a component of a data management plan is not always appropriate, applications that, where appropriate, include data sharing will be more likely to receive funding.

"It's also strongly encouraged by some journals, particularly in disciplines such as biology and economics, where data often accompanies publications for the purpose of replicability," said data librarian Kristi Thompson. "We expect data sharing to become an increasingly expected and established practice among researchers."





⤵ Snapshot of real-time readership.

Luckily for researchers at Western, we have experts like Thompson who've been helping publish open data since 2018. Our data team provides support in organizing datasets and selecting file formats for preservation, and guidance on the publication of datasets. This year, the team provided 29 consultations, and published 17 data collections in Western's [data repository](#) hosted by the Ontario Council of University Libraries service, Borealis. Datasets covered a wide range of topics, including hyperglycemia, tornadoes, rats and COVID-19 infections in schools. Western's data collections were downloaded 1,213 times this year.

Open Educational Resources

The average postsecondary student textbook budget is between \$800 - \$1,000.¹ That is a big bill, especially if an instructor is only assigning a few relevant chapters in a book. If you are thinking, "There has to be a better way" — there is. [Open Educational Resources](#) (OER) are course materials that are openly available: they are available for free, can be re-shared and re-used in full, and can often be adapted to suit specific teaching needs due to the Creative Commons licenses that

they carry. Not only do OER make learning more equitable, they allow instructors the flexibility to swap in more local or meaningful examples and update content when there's been significant developments.

The research and scholarly communication librarians are on a mission to help instructors at Western embrace OER. They offer expertise with open licensing, support in locating and evaluating OER, and advice on managing workflows for the creation of OER. They also provide training and troubleshooting for OER publishing platforms, facilitate the dissemination of OER to increase its findability, and validate standard identifiers for published content. This year they provided 75 consultations to faculty and staff working on open educational projects.

In January, Western Libraries partnered with the Centre for Teaching and Learning and the Information Technology Resource Centre to launch Western's first [Open Educational Resources Grant and Support Program](#). The program provided funding and in-kind supports to five project teams to facilitate integration of OER into teaching at Western.

Our **Collections and Content**

Strategies team has negotiated Open Access publishing agreements with 12 major publishers. To learn more, turn to page 14.

¹ Financial Consumer Agency of Canada, "Budgeting for Student Life," Government of Canada, January 13, 2022, <https://www.canada.ca/en/financial-consumer-agency/services/budget-student-life.html#shr-pg0>.

Mapping 500-Year-Old Climate Change

It produced floods deep enough to carry away cattle, and winds powerful enough to sink flotillas. It generated heart-stopping deep freezes and weeks-long snowstorms.

Weather extremes were no picnic for Britons from the 1500s to the 1700s, a period historians have dubbed the “Little Ice Age.”

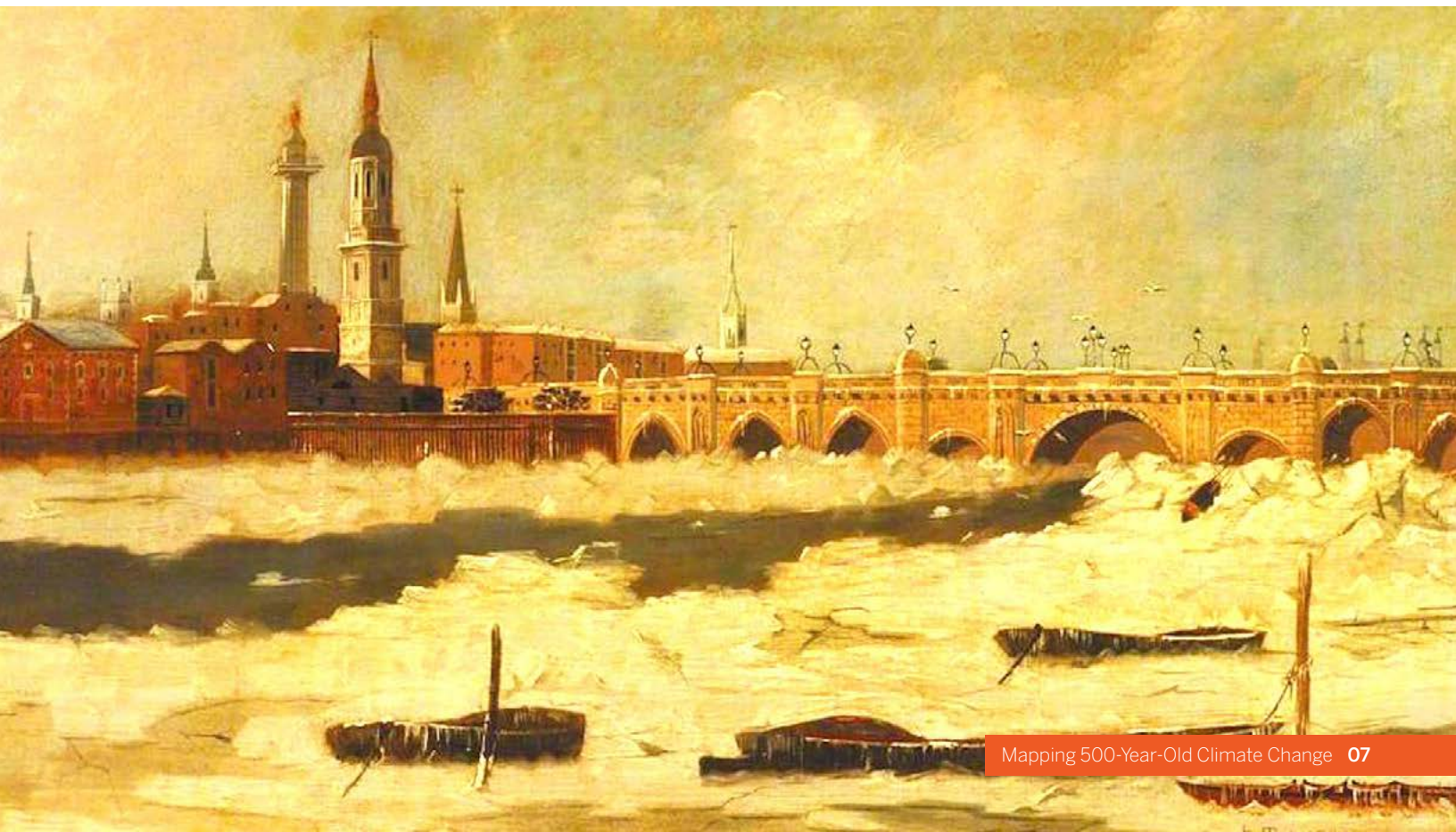
Weather was something one only experienced and did not measure – thermometers had not yet been invented and ‘tornado’ had not entered the lexicon – many climate particulars of those miserable days have been lost to time.

Now, Western researchers have pulled those details into the present by scouring historical narratives, such as diaries and political treatises, and pinpointed specifically what extreme weather events took place, when and where.

Those details are part of a new [geographic information system \(GIS\)-mapped database](#) full of primary-source stories that illuminate daily particulars and larger trends of extreme weather during the Little Ice Age in England.

“I wanted to get to this idea of how people relate to the weather, especially how we relate to weather

✧ London Bridge during the Frost of 1795-1796. Daniel Turner painting, City of London Corporation.



when it's not behaving like we're used to. Are there things that we can learn from it?" said literary historian [Madeline Bassnett](#), a Western professor in the department of English and Writing Studies and director of the project.

Identifying the effects of climate change on people and the environment 500 years ago could well presage how we are able, or unable, to manage similar experiences today: flooding or droughts that lead to crop loss, famines and economic collapse; unseasonably cold winters that freeze livestock where they stand; and howling storms that sink ships and shift the winds of geopolitical conflict.

"The material that we've been gathering is totally different from anything that's been gathered," said Bassnett, who noted she received a lot of early guidance from data librarian Kristi Thompson and map librarian Zack MacDonald.

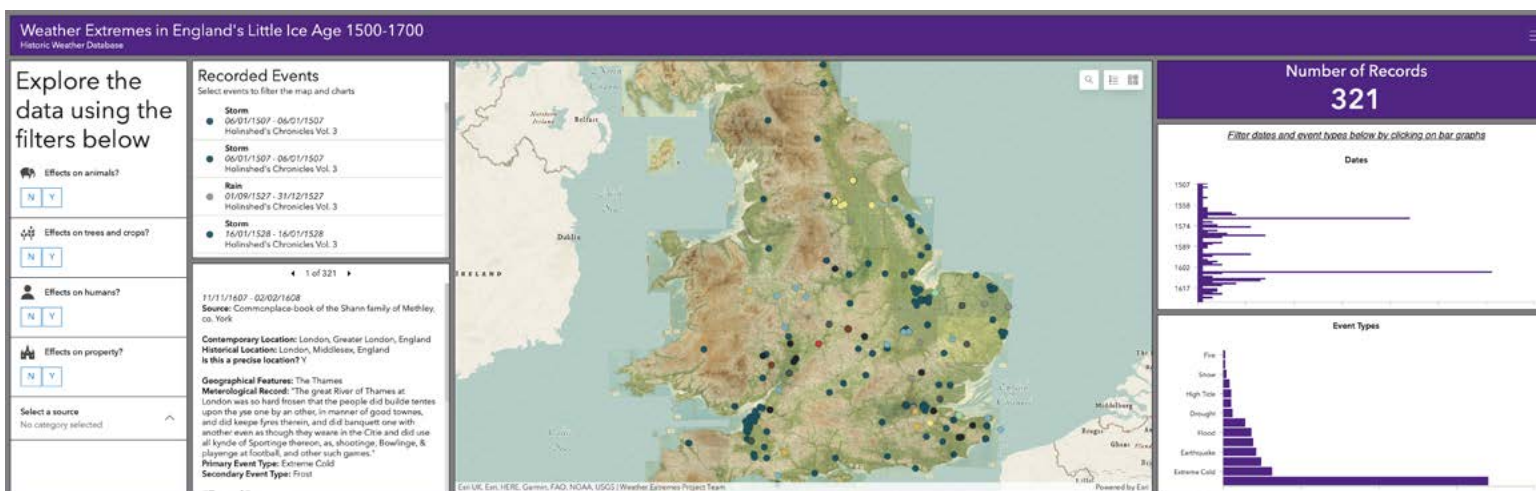
Third-year PhD student Daryl Wakunick scoured thousands of pages of contemporary

letters, diaries, pamphlets and volumes, including Holinshed's Chronicles of England, Scotland and Ireland, a 16th-century record of politics and literature.

"I looked for any mention of rain, sleet, snow, flood, earthquakes, even comets, and the context around it. And then we put it all into a spreadsheet, that turned into a database that became an interactive GIS map."

The effort also involved translating old locations into current place names for geo-referencing by Liz Sutherland, GIS specialist in the [Western Libraries Map and Data Centre](#).

"I got the fun part of the project," Sutherland said. "A spreadsheet is boring, even if it has really informative and exciting data in it. And so when I have the database, I get to make a map out of it. Then we can start to pick out trends and we can create a little chart showing the year-by-year distribution of the severe weather that we're observing."



↗ Interactive map and database showing extreme weather events, 1500-1700, in England.



⤴ GIS specialist Liz Sutherland

“All of a sudden, that becomes a tool that can be used by other researchers, not just in the arts and humanities but expanding beyond that.”

The tool is searchable by date, location, weather event and by impact on people, livestock, and natural built environment.

Some researchers with the Western-based [Northern Tornadoes Project](#) (for whom Sutherland is also the GIS specialist) have shown interest in the data. Bassnett noted literary historians, climate historians, geographers and environmental scientists can also glean information from it.

Biologists, for example, have been studying tree rings to learn something about the period. “But tree rings don’t tell you how fast the wind was blowing and they don’t give you context. They don’t tell you about how it felt to be in that extreme weather;”

Sutherland said. “I think there’s something to be said about combining the two sciences and seeing how that might impact people’s understanding of the climate at that time.”

Lessons from history

The causes of the Little Ice Age are not known for certain; however, climatologists contend it may have had its roots in reduced solar output, increased volcanic activity, or a shift in atmospheric high- and low-pressure circulation.

To Bassnett, though, a central lesson was that people living through it were forced to adapt to changing conditions.

“Maybe we can learn from the past and see what we can integrate today in terms of our own thinking and grappling with our future.”

– *This story was adapted from a [Western News story](#).*

The Research and Scholarly Communication team collaborates with researchers across campus to advance the creation, management, dissemination, and preservation of research and scholarship. They assist with Open Access publishing, GIS and statistical data, data management, researcher identifiers, research impact, and copyright.



More Than Words: Conscious Collecting

Academic libraries have a complicated past. As colonial institutions, they have historically – and in many ways continue to – contribute to ongoing oppression and white supremacy. Western Libraries is no exception. There are cultural, historical, social, linguistic, and intellectual biases in the collections. We aim to be a place that embraces and celebrates the differences and diversity of our students, staff and faculty and a library that creates space for underrepresented and historically marginalized voices and ways of knowing. We know that words are not enough – we need to act. Here is a look back at some of the actions we took this year to align our collections

activities with our commitment to equity, diversity, and inclusion.

The Path: Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada

When Frankie Young, assistant professor, Western Law, approached our Collections and Content Strategies (CCS) team about [The Path: Your Journey Through Indigenous Canada](#), she instantly piqued their interest. The five-module series aims to build cultural humility and understanding of the impacts of colonization on Indigenous Peoples in Canada.

While working to provide access for Young's courses, CCS consulted with the Office of Indigenous Initiatives (OII) to see if the resource would benefit campus Indigenization efforts more widely. Today, any Western student, staff or faculty member can access The Path and OII has listed it as one of the [12 Ways to Engage in Truth and Reconciliation at Western](#). So far 327 individuals have signed up for access to The Path and it is likely a lot more students have engaged with the content, thanks to faculty who have embedded the module in their OWL course sites.

The CCS team successfully negotiated with publishers to license the module so The Path can be offered in perpetuity. They are now turning their attention to other online learning modules to continue building capacity within staff, students and faculty in understanding Indigenous histories and contemporary realities.



A partnership with GoodMinds

In November, Christy Bressette, vice-provost and associate vice-president (Indigenous Initiatives), reached out to Western Libraries with an idea. The Chippewas of the Thames First Nation needed Indigenous-language reference materials and Bressette wondered if Western Libraries could help donate books purchased from the provider [GoodMinds](#). With the help of the CCS team, we were able to make the donation happen. More importantly, Bressette's request put a spotlight on GoodMinds as an Indigenous-owned and operated book provider.

"The fact that Chippewas of the Thames wanted books from GoodMinds signaled to us we could not only make the requested purchase but expand the partnership even further," said CCS librarian, Elizabeth Mantz.

GoodMinds is a small, First Nations family-owned distributor and publisher focused on Indigenous education resources for schools and libraries. They promote Indigenous authors, illustrators and translators.

Since the donation, the CCS team has partnered with GoodMinds to purchase nearly 1,000 titles. For Mantz this is just the start. "We need a more comprehensive way to grow our collection with more specialized, smaller publishers who feature traditionally marginalized voices," Mantz said. "We've been able to grow our Indigenous Collection through our regular means of acquisition but sometimes, small publishers get missed."



Mantz is currently looking into options to integrate new material from GoodMinds in a systematic manner.

Problematic language in the library catalogue

Growing more diverse, inclusive collections is important but it is not enough. Libraries must also think about how they provide access to and shine a light on materials in the larger collection. The Discovery, Description and Metadata (DDM) team is acutely aware of the problematic reality of academic library catalogues.

“Representation matters. As a cultural institution, we need to reflect on how we represent different peoples when we describe materials in our collection,” said Erin Johnson, acting head, DDM.

“It’s through these descriptions that students, staff and faculty access our resources. It’s important that we acknowledge that the standardized subject headings we apply organize knowledge within a colonial framework that continues the legacy of systemic racism in the library.”

Fixing catalogue records is complicated. With over 5.8 million items in the collection, the volume of records impacted is no small roadblock. There is also a delicate balance to strike between removing offensive, biased language and making sure attitudes and viewpoints are not erased from the historical record. There is a need to acknowledge the historic value of these terminologies while considering the needs and experiences of today’s students, staff and faculty.

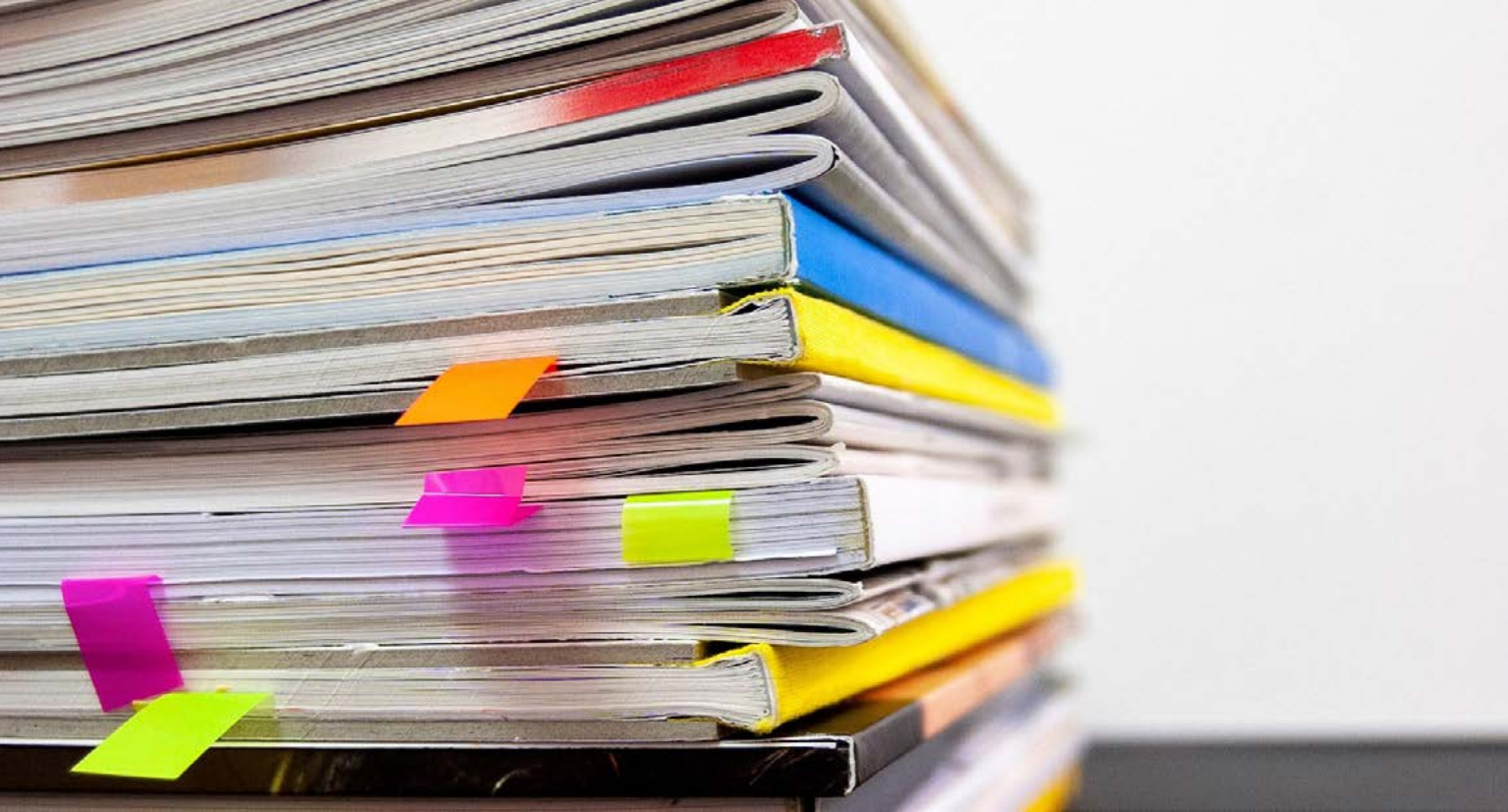


Over winter, members of the User Experience team collaborated with DDM to draft a [statement](#) that acknowledges the problematic language in the catalogue records. This statement is shared on the website. An acknowledgement is also being placed directly in catalogue records that contain harmful language. Anyone can report harmful language they find in the catalogue or on the website by emailing library@uwo.ca.

The DDM team has begun flagging harmful language in the catalogue. So far, they have tagged 193 records. Adding tags to records deemed problematic is a placeholder while progress is made toward more concrete solutions. Another approach the team is currently experimenting with is suppressing harmful language and indexing

alternative terminology in preparation to decolonize the catalogue.

This summary is just a snapshot of the steps Western Libraries has taken to improve collections and to help realize our commitment to advance equity, diversity and inclusion. We are only scratching the surface of what we need to change to truly decolonize, challenge white supremacy, and foster a sense of belonging and community. It's hard work. It's complicated. And we have to, and will, do better.



⤴ Photo by Bernd Klutsch of Unsplash.

Negotiated Publisher Agreements Make Research More Accessible

When professor Johanna Weststar's most recent research paper was done, reviewed, revised and accepted into her preferred academic journal, just one more question remained: Open Access or closed?

The publication fees to make her work Open Access would cost her \$5,000. However, her decision to publish openly was about much more than dollars-and-cents.

"If you want your work to have an impact, it has to be in the world beyond the academic world,"

said Weststar, a professor in the DAN Department of Management & Organizational Studies.

"Serving our own academic communities exclusively doesn't work for me. I'd rather have my work read freely by a lot of people who might find the research useful, than by a few people behind a paywall," she said.

It is also inequitable to limit scholarship and discovery – making Open Access available only to those researchers who can afford the article processing charges and to readers who can afford the journals' paywall fees, she said.

That is where [a series of new agreements between Western Libraries and the publishers of some major academic journals](#) has stepped up. The intention is to help change publishing norms that often limit published scholarship and readership to those who can pay.

The licences we have negotiated allow authors to publish with Open Access at no or at reduced cost.

One of the most important reasons for Open Access is accountability to the broader community, said John Doerksen, special advisor to the provost.

“Fundamentally, universities have an important role when it comes to the public good – and making the outcomes of research and discovery available to the public is part of our core mission,” Doerksen said.

In 2021 alone, one licencing deal saved 87 Western researchers more than \$200,000, said Shawn Hendrikx, associate librarian, collections and content strategies.

New agreements signed so far this year, with 12 families of academic journal publishers, mean

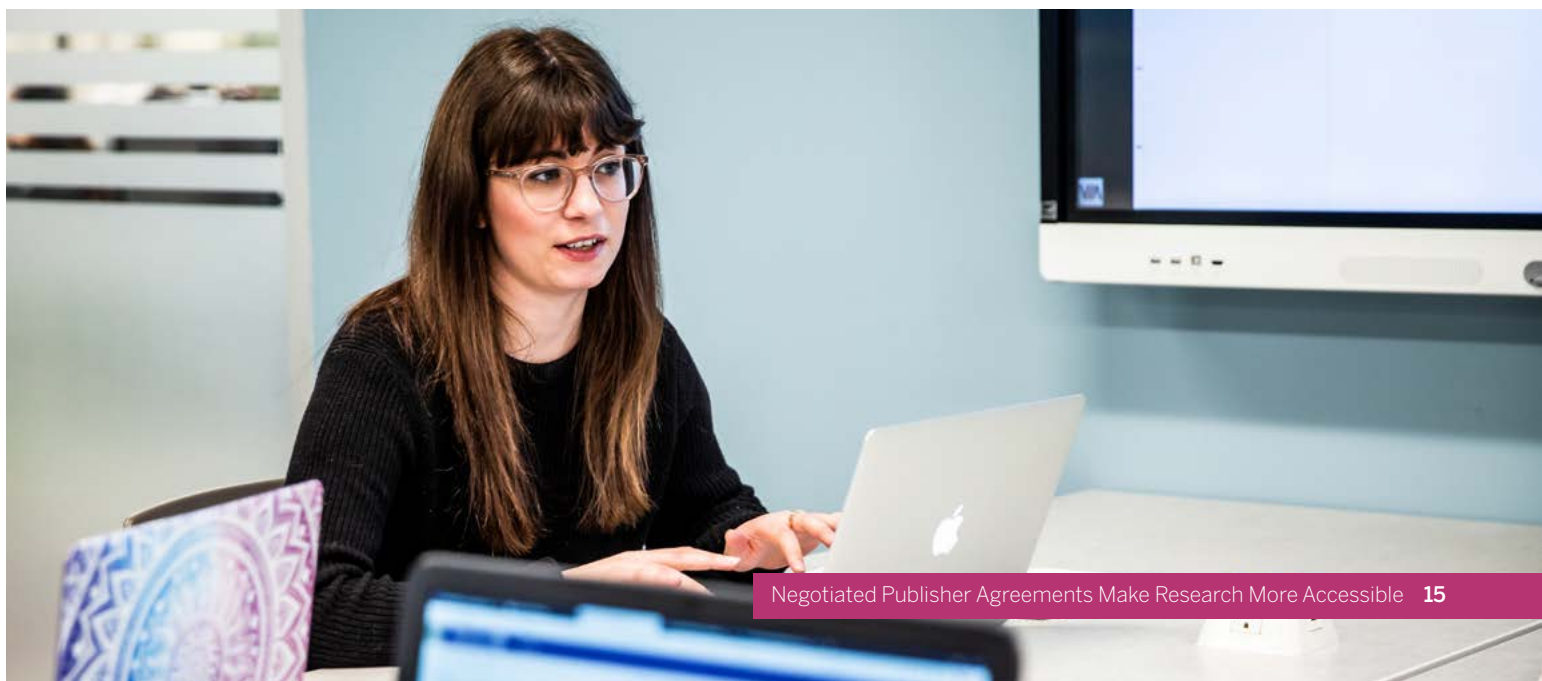
additional savings that could ultimately amount to saving millions of dollars in article-publishing fees.

“We’ve been supporting Open Access publishing for years and this is one way we’ve been able to help make it happen,” Hendrikx said.

Canada’s three major funding agencies – the Canadian Institutes of Health Research, Natural Sciences and Engineering Research Council and the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council – require authors to make their articles freely available within a year of publication, even if it is first published in a limited-access journal.

Open Access publishing is the best way to increase readership and citations – critically important to researchers who want to build their scholarly identity and advance scientific discovery, Hendrikx said

There is also currency in being more current: peer-reviewed research begins to have impact the moment it’s published, rather than with paywalled publications that make papers publicly accessible a year or more later.



The Western agreements are part of a larger national negotiation by the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN). President Alan Shepard was a key member of the [CRKN Stakeholder Alignment Group](#), advocating for the fair pricing and acceptable licensing terms of nationally negotiated journal packages.

“Canada has made great strides with this and now that the door is open, we’re going to have that discussion with every publisher,” said Hendrikx, who is a member of Western’s standing committee on Open Access.

Doerksen agreed: “This is part of a journey that will take many decades.”

Weststar’s two most recent papers analyze the impact on digital game developers of the trend towards games as a service instead of a one-

time product – [one paper in *Work, Impact and Society*](#) and [the other in *New Media and Society*](#).

Facilitated through the agreements between the journals and library staff, the process was “incredibly easy,” she said.

– *This story was adapted from a [Western News story](#).*

Collections Management, Discovery and Access is committed to providing seamless and convenient access to information to support research, scholarship, and teaching. They work with users to select and acquire materials to meet their changing needs and ensure thoughtful management and preservation of resources for future scholars.

Meet Jacqueline (Jax) Cato, collections and content strategy librarian. Jax joined Western Libraries in early 2022. She collects for the Law discipline and manages license negotiations for all the resources at Western Libraries to maximize the usability of Western’s purchased content. Her goal is to decrease the amount of print content we purchase in favour of electronic formats that are more ecological and accessible.

Jax is leading a team of staff through licence reading and interpretation for entry into the shared catalogue – skills that are essential when working with electronic resources.



Chant Book Dates Back to 1600

Archivists at Western Libraries have purchased and unboxed an elephant of a story – a hugely important volume of sacred vocal music that dates back to 1600.

The antiphoner, bound in calf leather and weighing 20 kilograms, is a trove of choral chants with early musical notations that mark Roman Catholic saint days throughout the year.

The one-of-a-kind book – requiring two people to carry it and dubbed an ‘elephant antiphoner’ because of its size – was first used in churches in

southern Spain in 1600 during the bishopric of Don Francisco de Reynoso, bishop of Cordova, said Deb Meert-Williston, special collections and rare books librarian, Archives and Special Collections.

“We purchased it from a rare-books shop in the U.S. It looked like a match to an antiphoner that we already had in our collection,” Meert-Williston said.

In fact, as they discovered when they unboxed it, this volume is much, much better, and most of its 199 sheepskin parchment pages remain intact.

✧ A giant and miniature antiphoner of choral chants dating back to 1600.



For medieval music scholar Kate Helsen, the antiphoner is less a frozen-in-time artifact than it is confirmation of a book well-used; and of music well-sung.

Each generation of chanters since medieval times has added its own colour to the pages: pencil marks to indicate a flat, for example, or the addition of modernized page numbers to supplement Roman numerals. In places where the original illuminated letters wore out, 19th-century Spanish monks replicated them, either well or inexpertly.

“I love how there is evidence of use throughout the centuries,” said Helsen, a professor at Western’s Don Wright Faculty of Music. “It’s got the fingerprints of 400 years of human beings having used it. You can see it was used as a tool, a living thing. It’s not a museum piece.”

The notation of the music, and the marks of musicians who read and chanted from its pages, make it a physical manifestation of time itself. “I love that these books keep living.”

History’s artwork

During its unboxing, Helsen discovered the chants are a series of “sanctorale” music – chants that mark fixed saint days in the Catholic church’s liturgical year (in contrast to “temporale” chants, which celebrate changing feast days such as Lent and Easter).

“This is a complete volume, running from January to December,” Helsen said. It even includes a contents page.

Meert-Williston is more fascinated by the physical art of rare and ancient books: the rich texture of vellum; the hint of follicles on the coarser side of the stretched animal skin, where scraping had not quite removed all the animal hair; the way the pages ripple from centuries’ cycles of humidity and dry weather.

She interprets entire stories of people and places in how a book is stitched and bound.

✧ The giant antiphoner’s leather binding with decorative metal knobs.



On this volume, decorative metal knobs, called “bosses” in the book business, are attached like bumpers to protect the cover from damage when opened on a table or when stored flat on a shelf.

While this antiphoner is of impressive mass and historical importance, an even older “baby” antiphoner, also newly acquired, is just as exciting to both researchers.

Unboxed at the same time as the Spanish antiphoner, the pocket-sized volume has original gold-paint illuminations and an original clasp.

A note on one page suggests it may have belonged to a French Cardinal in the 1400s.

“It’s beautiful,” Helsen said. “It’s for somebody who has status in the church. It’s been used but it’s also been kept very well.”

The little volume was a chance find by medieval scholar and English professor Jane Toswell, who spotted it as part of an online estate auction and knew its significance, Meert-Williston said.

Both the miniature and elephant antiphoners are available for scholars to view in Western Libraries [archives and special collections](#). They are also good candidates for digitization so they can be shared electronically with the world, Meert-Williston said.

– *This story was adapted from a [Western News story](#).*



✧ Dr. Kate Helsen inspects the miniature antiphoner donated by Dr. Jane Toswell.

The Archives and Special Collections team acquires, preserves and provides access to special collections and archives, including rare and unique materials in all formats, to support the teaching and research missions of the University. They also engage with and welcome use of the archives and special collections by members of the broader community.

Meet Rebecca Power, digitization projects assistant. Rebecca is one year into her two-year term with Western Libraries. She works closely with Archives and Special Collections to complete digitization projects. She has digitized over 1,000 [Fire Insurance Plans](#), 213 volumes, and 29 other print materials, totaling over 40,000 images and resulting in six new digital collections.

Her work is an essential part of the academic library. It not only protects fragile items by creating digital versions and allowing high-use items to be made available online for students and researchers; but shares the incredible and unique collections at Western Libraries with the world.



Rebecca's work is her passion. She loves rare books, Open Access, and digital humanities. She hopes to see this role made permanent so that more (and larger) projects can be undertaken, and Western's digital collections can grow. Her dream is to be a part of a team that makes Western a digitization powerhouse.



Meet Lisa Lawlis, assistant archivist. Lisa joined the Archives and Special Collections team in March of 2022. Lisa is responsible for the Business Holdings and she's excited to create new opportunities for business archival records to be used for research and teaching.

Lisa provides researchers with reference services, digitizes audio-visual records, and works on arrangement, digital preservation, description and conservation. She also manages collections of archived web content using the [Archive-It tool](#). Lisa is passionate about preservation of born digital records and looks forward to working on the preservation of digital formats that are at risk of obsolescence.

Student Knowledge Key to Decolonizing Curriculum

Decolonizing curriculum and teaching requires educators to reconsider student-teacher relationships. To begin to dismantle colonial power structures in education, critical theorists tell us we must reflect on how our classrooms recognize the inherent value and unique knowledge of each student.

The Teaching and Learning team took this lesson to heart in 2021 when revising the library's information literacy curriculum. Led by curriculum librarian Heather Campbell, the team was joined by six undergraduate and six graduate students to decolonize the library's learning outcomes.

Mirroring other students-as-partner programs at Western, the students participated in a training session, a curriculum retreat, and a detailed feedback process. "The students' contributions to the library's final set of learning outcomes are immeasurable," said Campbell. "We need student partners for all future curriculum work."

The most significant student contribution to the new [library curriculum](#) is the first learning outcome, knowledge justice. Also known as cognitive justice or epistemic justice, the outcome asks learners to "respectfully explore diverse forms of knowledge, accepting that knowledge can come





in many forms,” including spiritual, scientific, land-based, and creative.

While librarians – like all academics– need to decolonize their work, it was partnering with students that helped the team see knowledge justice as the pivot point of the library’s new curriculum. “One of our undergraduate partners said they didn’t consider themselves knowledgeable. That they’re ‘only a student’ and the ‘only ideas they’re told to trust come from professors.’ That hit me hard, and that students’ transformation throughout the decolonization project has stuck with me,” said Campbell. By the end of the project, Campbell observed the students were challenging us to re-think our approach to teaching and naming their family’s cultural traditions as one form of knowledge.

Many other student partners appreciated this element of the new library curriculum as well.

One graduate student in Health Studies said: “It’s critical that undergraduate students be introduced to the term ‘epistemology’ and understand how to integrate other worldviews into their personal views and practices.” Another student in Psychology shared, “It’s so valuable that this curriculum promotes things like ‘new forms of knowledge’ and ‘positionality.’ I think these are needed so that students are not kept in the ‘scholarly knowledge is superior bubble.’”

For next steps, the Teaching and Learning team are reflecting on how best to decolonize their teaching. Student partners shared critical but important advice.

“I think creating some sort of librarian-faculty-student triad partnership is essential – and even more meaningful than simply librarians partnering with faculty. Including student voices means assignment and curriculum changes won’t be

meaningless to the students who complete them. I think each party brings something valuable to the table,” said a student from the Faculty of Information and Media Studies.

Campbell agrees: “This curriculum decolonization experience has the Teaching and Learning team rethinking who we consider ‘learners’. We have so much to learn from our students. And it’s only with elevating their lived experience into our curriculum that, I think, we’ll start to enact knowledge justice at Western.”

The Teaching and Learning team creates learning experiences that empower students to become successful graduates who are information literate and able to achieve their full potential as global citizens and leaders.



Meet Jason Dyck, teaching and learning librarian. Jason is responsible for teaching Arts and Humanities students about research. He offers in-class instruction, designs educational materials, creates research guides, offers individual consultations, and hosts workshops on Zotero, a reference management tool. Since joining Western Libraries in 2020, Jason has been the chair of the [Western Libraries Undergraduate Research Awards](#). Following the new [library curriculum](#), he is currently creating research guides that highlight the history and literature of marginalized groups.

For Jason, research “is an intellectual journey of self-discovery, one in which searching is a creative art deeply informed by critical thinking.” His [publications](#) focus on sacred history, libraries, and archives in the early modern Spanish world. His transcription work provides students and scholars with access to critical editions of seventeenth-century Mexican manuscripts that highlight the complex interactions between missionaries and Indigenous Peoples in colonial contexts.



Introducing Pickup Anywhere

Western students, faculty, and staff can now access books from 16 university libraries across Ontario – that’s over 25 million items!

With Pickup Anywhere, you can walk in to any partner library and borrow a book from the shelves using your Western ONECard. Items from partner collections can also be requested online and picked up at any of our five libraries, Western’s Affiliated University College Libraries, or sent to another participating university library for pick up. The same goes for returns – you can drop off books at any partner library.

“This is a great service that we’ve been eagerly waiting to launch. With COVID-19 restrictions

easing at most Ontario Universities, Western students and faculty studying and working in other parts of the province will now have seamless access to print resources,” said Crystal Mills, user services manager at Western Libraries.

[The catalogue](#), is your one-stop shop for finding and requesting books from across Ontario. It’s a welcome upgrade from the multi-step interlibrary loan process.

“Services such as Pickup Anywhere represent the future of shared collections in libraries. We know there is still demand for print resources, and our shared platform allows us to maximize access while increasing convenience,” said Mills.



The expanded access is the next step for the Ontario Council of University Libraries (OCUL) Collaborative Futures initiative that launched in December 2019. The list of participating libraries has grown year over year to include the following OCUL member institutions:

- Algoma University
- Brock University
- Carleton University
- University of Guelph
- Lakehead University
- Laurentian University
- Nipissing University
- University of Ontario Institute of Technology
- University of Ottawa
- Queen's University
- Trent University
- University of Waterloo
- Western University
- Wilfrid Laurier University
- University of Windsor
- York University

As membership grows, so too will the collections you can access. In a world where more and more of us are working and studying remotely, we hope Pickup Anywhere will make it easier to get the materials you need.

User Services designs and delivers a suite of virtual and in-person library services that support the teaching, learning, and research goals of the Western community. The team continually studies and assesses user behaviours, needs and interactions to design services that deliver an optimal user experience.

BY THE NUMBERS



COLLECTIONS AND USE

5,840,369 total items – Includes digital and physical books, journals, and other materials.

217,574 active serial subscriptions – Includes physical and digital journal, newspaper, and magazine subscriptions, representing over **300 million** articles.

764,064 other materials – Includes scores, audio, video, maps, special collections, theses and dissertations.

3,922,025 e-journal views.

1,607,024 database searches.

461,060 e-book views.

43,164 multimedia streams.

1,329,084 catalogue searches.

40,767 physical items checked out.



COURSE READINGS

14,358 items available through Course Readings.

335,744 uses of digital Course Readings materials.

INTERLIBRARY LOANS (ILL)

8,241 requests fulfilled for partner libraries.

7,250 requests fulfilled by partner libraries for Western researchers.



www.lib.uwo.ca

WEBSITE

1,103,011 unique visits to the library website.

RESEARCH SUPPORT AND INSTRUCTION

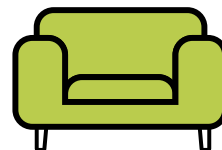


6,892 questions answered by chat and email.

1,261 questions answered at the Info Desk.

1,729 in-depth consultations for **3,072** students, faculty, and staff.

238 instruction sessions and workshops for **8,467** students, faculty, and staff.



LIBRARY SPACES

Over **4,500** seats in open study spaces.

Over **300** seats added in The D.B. Weldon Library Learning Commons.

The **User Experience team** supports evidence-based decisions about the library, keeping user perspectives and observed behaviours at the forefront when it comes to the design and development of library spaces and services.

Meet Kristin Kerbavaz, assessment librarian. Kristin joined Western Libraries in February of 2021. As a member of the User Experience team, Kristin conducts user research to help improve library services and spaces. In the past year, she was part of the team that developed the new strategic plan, Forward Together. Kristin is most excited about the new plan's focus on user outcomes. "Focusing in on the impact we want to have helps us ground our plan in what really matters – our users," said Kristin.

This spring, Kristin will lead the team implementing and analyzing the LibQual+ service survey. "LibQual+ is exciting because we get to hear from thousands of library users across campus. It's the biggest single source of feedback we have, and I can't wait to hear what folks have to say!"





Welcome to the Weldon Learning Commons

Goodbye drywall, hello wide open spaces. The D.B. Weldon Library's new two-storey student Learning Commons opened in January. While construction crews continued to work on remaining design elements, for the first time, students were able to put the new space to good use. Studiers from all over campus came in droves to hit the books for the April exam period, making full use of the new group study spaces and white boards.

"Between interruptions to building access due to COVID and ongoing construction, we've missed seeing our students gather in the library. It's been a great treat not just to welcome them back, but to

welcome them back to such a bright, beautiful space," said Jennifer Robinson, deputy chief librarian.

Even without the finishing touches, the transformation is quite striking. The space is lighter, brighter, and more open, filled with furniture students told us would make for a more productive and enjoyable study environment.

Haven't been by to see the Learning Commons? Allow us to take you on a virtual tour of the space.

Light up your life

The open floor plan, glass walls, and new windows have truly transformed the space allowing natural light to filter throughout.

Weldon's Brutalist charm is on full display thanks to new globe lighting that accentuates the distinct waffled ceiling in the main hall. New flooring also helps lighten the space.

Flair and function

Never underestimate the impact of functional, beautiful furnishings to tie a space together. The new furniture in the Learning Commons is modern, stylish, and adds a fun pop of colour. But for our students, furniture is so much more than just aesthetics. Thanks to their feedback, we have included a wide variety of furniture options to study, connect, and collaborate. Come see – or sit – for yourself.



Mezzanine dreams

What was once staff offices is now a new student space increasing the number and types of study seats in Weldon. It includes five new bookable group study rooms equipped with technology to seamlessly screen share from all devices.

Students wanted more power outlets and we are making good on that promise. The colourful carpet doesn't just warm up the space, it's hiding a new in-floor power system featuring easy to reach power outlets at table height to keep everyone charged up.

Bath-room for all

Washrooms on the main floor and mezzanine have been expanded and updated. All washrooms are gender inclusive with accessible options. Gender-



specific washrooms continue to be available on the upper floors of Weldon.

What's next?

Crews continue to work on finishing touches to the Learning Commons, and two adjacent wings on the main floor. These areas will provide enhanced study space and additional public computers as well as receive their own rejuvenation to match the new finishes and furnishings. We hope to welcome you to these new spaces this winter.

The User Experience team performed a space assessment study during the April exam period to determine how the Learning Commons was being used and to identify ways to enhance the space. In the fall, the team will survey students to

identify space needs that are not being met. They will use the findings from the study and survey to recommend improvements and inform the next phases of the renovation. Watch our website for more information about Phase 2 of the Weldon Revitalization including ways you can share feedback on what comes next.

Despite construction interruptions and capacity restrictions, we welcomed **309,553** visitors to The D.B. Weldon Library this year.



Peers Helping Peers

They can be found helping students, staff and faculty at the Info Desk, shelving books, participating in collections projects, starring in social media posts, and supporting any number of key services. Who are these stars of the library team? Students, of course.

Our student Casual Assistants (CAs) join us from all over campus. From nursing students, to geography majors, to graduate students from all faculties, our CA team brings a wide range of academic experience to their positions at Western Libraries. Some join us seeking library experience, while others seek the flexibility that comes from having a job on campus that will accommodate

their class schedule. When asked why they enjoy working for Western Libraries, CAs said they loved the variety of the work, getting to help other students, and all the new things they learned about Western Libraries.

Many CAs return to their library job each September until they graduate. Some stick around longer. Sara Poulin, library assistant in User Services, and CA lead at The D.B. Weldon Library (Weldon), was a CA for nearly six years before she joined Western Libraries full time in 2020. Now, she gets to welcome new CAs to the team and help them create the experiences she enjoyed as a student.



i Info



“As a CA, you get to show other students how easy it is to use the library. I think they’re less intimidated when they are speaking with a peer. It’s rewarding work, it feels really impactful,” said Poulin.

This year, CAs at the C.B. “Bud” Johnston Business Library continued their work scanning the Canadian Annual Reports print collection while CAs at the Allyn and Betty Taylor Library and the Music Library scanned historical graduate theses and Don Wright Faculty of Music concert programs to add to the [Scholarship@Western](#) Institutional Repository. CAs at the John and Dotsa Bitove Family Law Library helped to reorganize materials

in the Reading Room and Upper Stacks to create a new reserves section, while Weldon CAs shifted collections into new compact shelving. Together, these projects, among many others completed by our CA team, are making our collections more accessible and widely available for our students, staff and faculty.

The day-to-day work of Western Libraries would be impossible without our CA team. We are grateful for everything they do to support Western Libraries. They enrich the library experience and we are lucky to have them.

Adventures in Experiential Learning

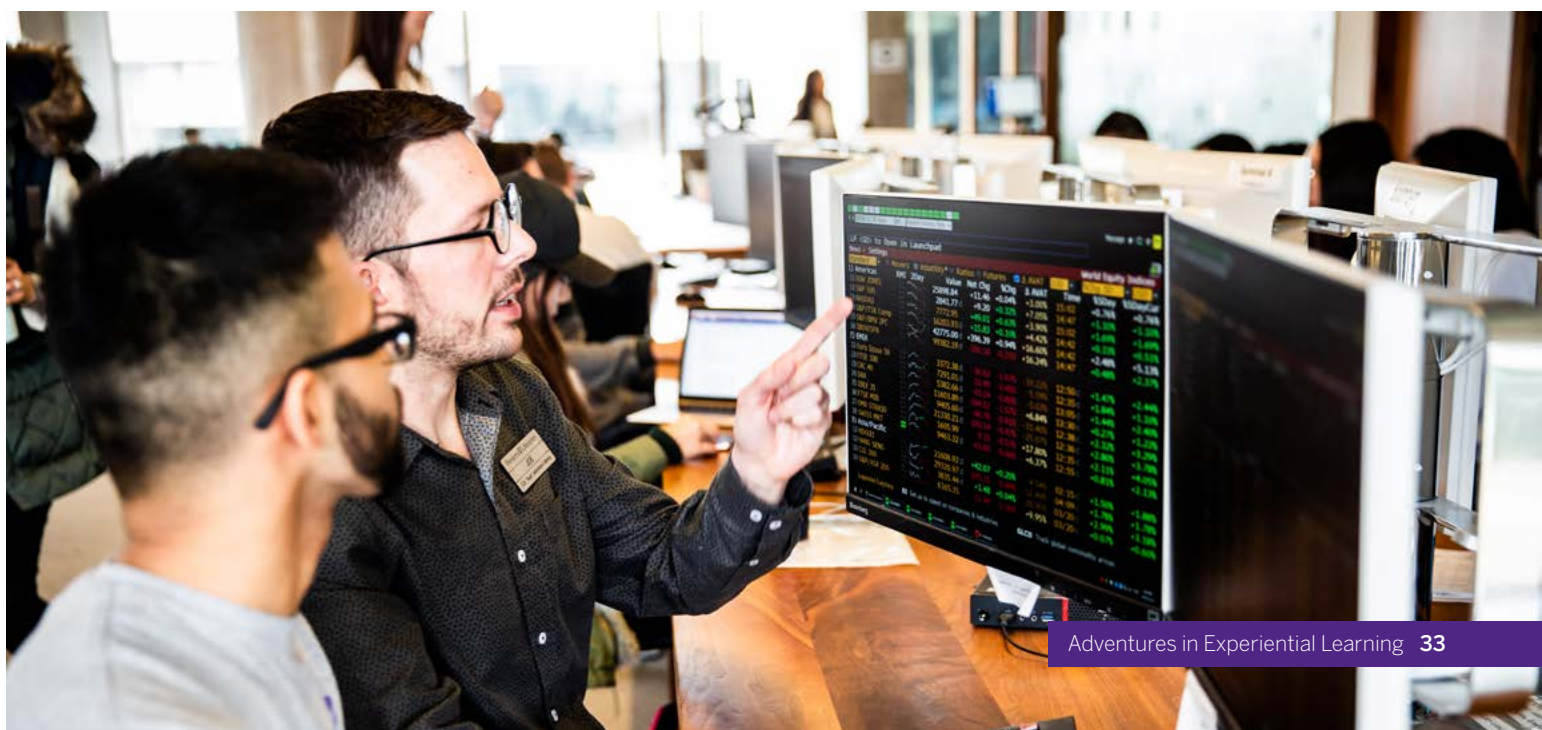


“ Allison Loveridge – Collections and Content Strategies co-op student

During my co-op with the Collections and Content Strategies (CCS) team, I worked on three major projects: evaluating individual serial subscriptions, a large-scale serial fund code audit, and the update of Western Libraries' collection management policies.

Reviewing, assessing and evaluating library resources taught me how to develop and manage collections. I also learned how to interpret and understand the licence agreements that accompany serial subscriptions.

After graduating from Western's MLIS program, I accepted a permanent position with the Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) as a licensing and member services officer. It is without question that the experience I gained at Western Libraries prepared me to excel at my current role with the CRKN. I am forever grateful for everything I learned while working with the amazing people on the CCS team.





““ Naoise Dunne – Archives and Special Collections co-op student

During my co-op, I focused on two main projects: the preservation of the Ron Nelson digitized photographic collection and big picture planning for digital preservation with my supervisor, Leanne Olson, digitization and digital preservation librarian. It was rewarding to collaborate with the Archives and Special Collections (ASC) team and contribute to future policies and research.

I also attended the Association of Canadian Archivists virtual conference, participated in archives outreach programs, completed a Learn to Teach course, volunteered for Ask a Librarian chat support, and participated in professional development co-op sessions.

I use the skills I gained from my co-op and the advice I received from the ASC team in my current work as an archivist with the City of Toronto Archives. I am thankful for Leanne’s mentorship in the area of digital preservation.

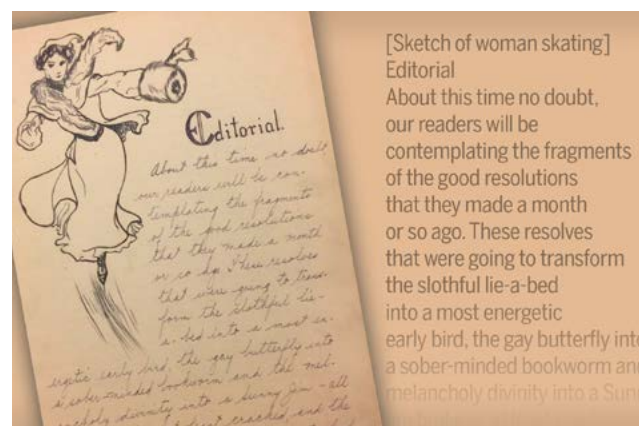


Western Libraries understands the importance of experiential learning and we are committed to providing meaningful opportunities for students to develop their skills and strengthen their employability. We are grateful for the fresh ideas and modern skills our students bring to the table and for the many meaningful contributions they make to our organization.

Connections and Community

Transcribe-a-thon

Folks from across Western and the community joined the Archives and Special Collections team virtually to transcribe handwritten manuscripts and other documents using our new transcription software, From the Page. Transcription helps provide truthful representation of content and makes it easier for readers to comprehend. Attendees can find digital copies of the work they transcribed using [From the Page](#), a feature that was particularly handy when COVID-19 protocols limited access to research materials.



GIS Days

What began as a one-day yearly event at Western has transformed into a week's worth of lightning talks, demos, and tutorials centred around Geographic Information Systems (GIS). The event brought together collaborators from universities and industry across Ontario. Approximately 400 people joined from over 28 countries to celebrate the science of where.



Medieval Manuscripts Drop-In Exhibit

Students, faculty, and researchers stopped by the Weldon Reading Room to view the Medieval Manuscripts collection and get up close and personal with a manuscript dating all the way back to the 12th century.

Guests also received a lesson on how to sing Medieval-style from Kate Helsen, assistant professor in the Don Wright Faculty of Music, who beautifully brought to life the music on the page.



Hidden Stories: Books Along the Silk Roads

Three medieval manuscripts from our Special Collections went on exhibit at the Aga Khan Museum in Toronto from October 2021 to February 2022 as part of a fascinating [exhibit exploring life along one of history's most important trade networks](#).



The History of Medicine

This celebration of Western's impact in global medicine is now a [virtual exhibit](#). It includes correspondence, certificates and pictures that offer insight into the lives of medical students and doctors at Western in the late-nineteenth and early-twentieth centuries.



London City Hall 50th Anniversary

London's City Hall celebrated its 50th anniversary on Sept. 22, 2021 with [an exhibit on the history, architecture, people, events and stories](#) associated with the prominent building. Our Archives and Special Collections team lent material from the Margaret Fullerton fonds to feature in the exhibit. Fullerton was a municipal politician and London's first female city councillor.





The Future of Western Libraries

What is your ideal library experience at Western? That is not an easy question to answer. So tough, in fact, it has taken 677 students, 86 faculty members, 68 campus partners, 45 community partners, and 77 library staff members to come close to defining it. This great variety of perspectives has helped shape [Forward Together](#), Western Libraries 2022-2028 Strategic Plan.

The last plan was created in 2015 and the world has changed significantly since then. Western

is evolving to meet the world's challenges and work towards a more prosperous, just, and inclusive society. The University's bold plan is captured in *Towards Western at 150*. It offers an inspiring vision of greater impact and growth, and positions Western Libraries as foundational for all of Western's research, scholarship and creative activities.¹

Forward Together culminates six months of engagement and reflects the insights and

1 *Towards Western at 150: Western University Strategic Plan* (London, Ontario: Western University Strategic Plan Steering Committee, 2021), 8.

contributions of many different members of our campus community and beyond. It identifies eight strategic priorities:

1. Catalyze research, scholarship, and creative activity.
2. Foster the development of library research skills, knowledge, and values.
3. Enhance the student experience.
4. Partner to create an inclusive library that values Indigenous peoples, perspectives, and ways of knowing.
5. Collaboratively advance equity, inclusion, and diversity, and foster belonging and community at Western Libraries.
6. Expand our services and outreach to local and global communities.
7. Foster environmental stewardship.
8. Support Western's strategic growth.

These strategic priorities – and the goals and outcomes associated with them – set a path for our contribution to [Towards Western at 150](#). “The title *Forward Together* represents the importance and centrality of inclusion, community, teamwork and collaboration to the plan and our future,” said Catherine Steeves, vice-provost and chief librarian.

Those same values drove the planning process. Anchored in relationship between people, ideas, themes, and systems, we provided opportunities for all voices to be heard. We offered a variety of ways to share insights and ideas, such as surveys, reflective practice, and focus groups. Our research and stakeholder input were brought together in a comprehensive Discovery Report. A Strategic Planning Summit, open to all Western Libraries staff and members of the campus and London community, was held to reflect on the Discovery Report. Through the Summit dialogue, focus shifted from individual to collective ideas, from the ‘I’ to the ‘we’, and the strategic priorities for the work emerged.

“As we work together and engage as a community to advance student success, enrich the student experience, stimulate research and foster creativity, Western Libraries will continue the dialogue and welcome a diversity of perspectives and ideas about how we may best realize these strategies and desired outcomes,” Steeves said.

The future for libraries at Western looks bright.





Contributions

Articles written by, or adapted from, Heather Campbell, Sara Poulin, Western News. Photographs by Carter Geidlinger, Paul Mayne, Rayanne Tipert, and Tom Cochrane. Design by Carter Geidlinger.



Western Libraries

Office of the Vice-Provost & Chief Librarian
Western University, London, Ontario N6A 3K7
May 2021 - April 2022
Produced November 2022