



Computers Behind Bars: Information Technology in Canadian Prison Libraries



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Introduction

Course Description

This project is the result of an independent study undertaken with the Faculty of Information and Media Studies (FIMS) at The University of Western Ontario (UWO). For academic credit, the resulting work must demonstrate the formation of sound opinions concerning selected aspects of library and information science, based on critical analysis of valid and reliable data. The purpose of the independent study is for the student to research, collect, organize, and analyze information on the accepted subject area. For a topic to be accepted as an independent study the subject must not be covered in the Master of Library and Information Science (MLIS) curriculum and have, the supervision of a regular MLIS faculty member. An individual study is not a means by which a student can study a subject that is not being offered during a particular term. While the content of an individual study may incorporate topics dealt with in other courses, it must differ significantly from any course currently listed in the MLIS calendar. The student should arrange to check in with the faculty member at pre-arranged times during the term to determine whether the work for the individual study is on track. The following is the results of one term of schoolwork at FIMS, UWO.

This independent study has been accepted as the equivalent of a course at the graduate level with the Faculty of Information Media Studies at The University of Western Ontario.

Its purpose is for the student to research, collect, organize, and analyze information on the accepted topic.

Focus of the Study

The focus of the study is upon the impact the increased popularity of electronic provision of information can have upon Canadian prison libraries. Gathered information is compared with the results Canadian policy regarding the provision of information to inmates. Analyzing the information helps to determine what impact the popularity of electronic provision of information may have on prison libraries. The analysis of the collected facts can provide insight in order to help prison librarians deal with the increasing popularity of electronic provision of information in relation to legislative guidelines for access to information for inmates.

The focus of this independent study is on the exponential rate of popularity of computers and its relationship to prisoner access in Canadian prisons. The study is a compilation of collected data that related to correctional facilities.



Prison Libraries vs. Technology in Prisons

The two main functions of prison libraries are to serve as a resource in the inmates' navigation of the Canadian legal system and to serve as a support to the educational programs offered by or in the institution (for further information, refer to Appendix A). With the rise in popularity of the Internet, much of the legal information once provided in paper form is now more available in the popular electronic format. The legal information that inmates need are now stored mainly on CD-ROM or on Internet Websites. The rise in the federal government's focus on providing governmental information almost exclusively online is also a consideration. Providing computers and Internet access is an expensive and, possible, unlikely possibility. As a result, the prison librarian must find alternate means of providing reference services to library patrons. Just as much of the legal information in Canada is now likely to be provided in the electronic form, many of the distance education programs offered to inmates are likely electronic. Many of the Canadian educational institutions have made the transition to providing distance education in electronic form, mainly over the Internet. Once again, the prison librarian must find alternate means to support the educational services in prisons in order to meet the information needs of the library users.

The prison library is a unique part of the correctional institution by its ability to provide information for the inmates. The information needs of inmates cover specific areas:

1. Legal support materials.
2. Educational support materials.
3. Other needs, such as those offered by a public library.

The Difference between Federal and Provincial Institutions

As part of my independent study course with the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, I have undertaken a study of prison libraries and librarianship in Canada. There are significant differences between federal and provincial institutions (refer to the legislative section of this study). However, the focus of this study is on collecting information, not on examining the administrative situations between federal and provincial institutions. In most cases, the lengths of incarceration for inmates in provincial institutions are considerably shorter. According to the literature, longer sentences equal a greater need for training to re-enter society. Thus, it is assumed that the educational needs in federal institutions are different for those serving longer sentences.

Generally, federal correctional facilities have inmates who are serving longer sentences. Therefore, their need for educational support material is assumed to be higher.



Concentrating on Adult Services, Not Youth

To focus this study, subjects are limited to only adults, those citizens who are aged eighteen or greater. Canadian youths in correctional institutions are administered by separate legislation in most jurisdictions. For collecting statistical data, it is extremely difficult to collect information for youths due to special legislation protecting the identity of convicted youth criminals. Studying youth involves separate protocols that would expand the study beyond a manageable scope. Also, the informational needs of youths are assumed to be as different from adults as they are in the public library system. Therefore, this study only focuses on adult inmates in federal and provincial correctional facilities.

This study only focuses on adult inmates in federal and provincial correctional facilities.



This study focuses on the impact that the popularity of technology may have on libraries in adult correctional facilities.



Review of the Literature

Materials for Prison Librarians

During my literature review for this study (see Appendix A), I reviewed any publications relating to Canadian correctional facilities, prison libraries and librarians, and the studies that have been published. I discovered that almost no literature has been published relating to Canadian prison libraries, especially concerning studies. There also has been no research into the impact the popularity the computer has upon prison library service. Several articles did relate legislative controls over prison libraries but mainly in specific American states and in Great Britain. While Canada borrows their legal system from Great Britain, the British libraries in the penal system have greater financial and governmental support according to the literature. Further research into this phenomenon is needed since nothing has been published.

To help prison librarians, various handbooks and manuals have been published. Most contain recommended lists for the collection and represent the legal needs of prisoners. Computers are mentioned as a needed tool in libraries but due to the date of publications, almost no mentions are made of online information and courses. As a result, no guidance is available for the prison librarian to deal with the increase in need to provide informational services using computers, especially for Internet use.

Prison librarians have access to handbooks but none of them provide guidelines for providing Internet access to inmates.

Issues Covered by Publications

During the literature review, I was able to find the following key issues covered by the publications:

- The importance of prison libraries for rehabilitation:
 - Prisoners have often written testimonials about the impact prison libraries have made on their lives
- Libraries as a service
 - The British tradition of extensive collections that include, in addition to legal and educational materials, entertainment materials



- The similarities and differences between prison libraries and public libraries
- Innovative services for prisoners, often connected to local libraries, school boards, or colleges
- Prisoners need access to legal information, especially in relation to researching their appeals
- Prisoners need access to legal information related to their case, especially in relation to parole boards
- Prisoners need information to engage educational courses and independent learning
- The workplace of the prison librarian
 - Prison librarians can deal with a wide range of safety issues depending on the level of the correctional facility (i.e. Low, Medium, or Maximum Security)
 - The importance of prison librarians in the prison community, specifically as someone who is neither a guard nor another inmate
- The research done on prisons and prison management
 - Policies guiding the management of correctional facilities, specifically Canadian
 - The innovative libraries being operated in European prison libraries
 - The diversity between American states on the quality and availability of prison libraries
 - The high levels of illiteracy in the prison population
 - The high levels of prisoners with educational levels far below local averages

The most often cited and recommended publication for prison librarians is the ALA manual, *Library Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 1992*. As indicated in the title, the publication dates from 1992 and makes no mention of computers and computer-based information services. *Library Standards* does recommend that the prison librarian should endeavor to provide the same services the inmate would normally receive at a public library, within the constraints of the facility.

Publications often focus on the rehabilitative nature of prison libraries.

Publications demonstrate the broad range between British, American, European, and Canadian policies for operating correctional facilities.

The high levels of illiteracy in the prison population.

The most comprehensive set of guidelines for prison librarians is the ALA publication, *Library Standards for Adult Correctional Institutions, 1992*.



Issues Not Covered by Publications

According to the literature review, researchers and writers have not discussed the exponential increase in technology and its impact on the prison library. Very little has been published about Canadian prison libraries and librarians. In addition, nothing has been written to address the appropriate guidelines for prison libraries and telecommunications for the future.

The Connection between Computers and Prison Libraries

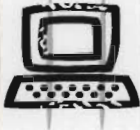
The computer has become such an essential tool for communications. In the future, computers may be one of the most controversial issues for prison libraries. In some jurisdictions, even the existence of a prison library is controversial. Thus, Canada needs to develop its own guidelines to ensure that all citizens have their rights according to the *Access to Information Act* (see section 6, i).

It is foreseeable that in the future, there will be inmates in Canadian prisons whose sentences will include restrictions on the use of computers and its associated technologies. Rules and restrictions are in place in public libraries to deal with computer use of patrons. In the prison library setting, not only will the librarian need to monitor the equality of access for inmates but the appropriate use of computers. While public librarians monitor the appropriate use of computers by the public, in the prison setting the librarian must justify decisions to the institutions' administrative staff instead of the chief librarian. Eventually prison librarians could become another guard, separating the prisoner from society. Policy must be developed to outline proper procedures for prison librarians to deal with security issues. Computers are often the main electronic portal to the outside world. As such, prison librarians must be aware of the possibilities and problems to providing access to electronic information. Prison administrators will need to consider several issues associated with computers:

- How to monitor computer use
- Accessibility to telecommunications, like e-mail
- The use of Intranets

When offering computer services to prisoners, correctional institutions must be aware of security issues connected.

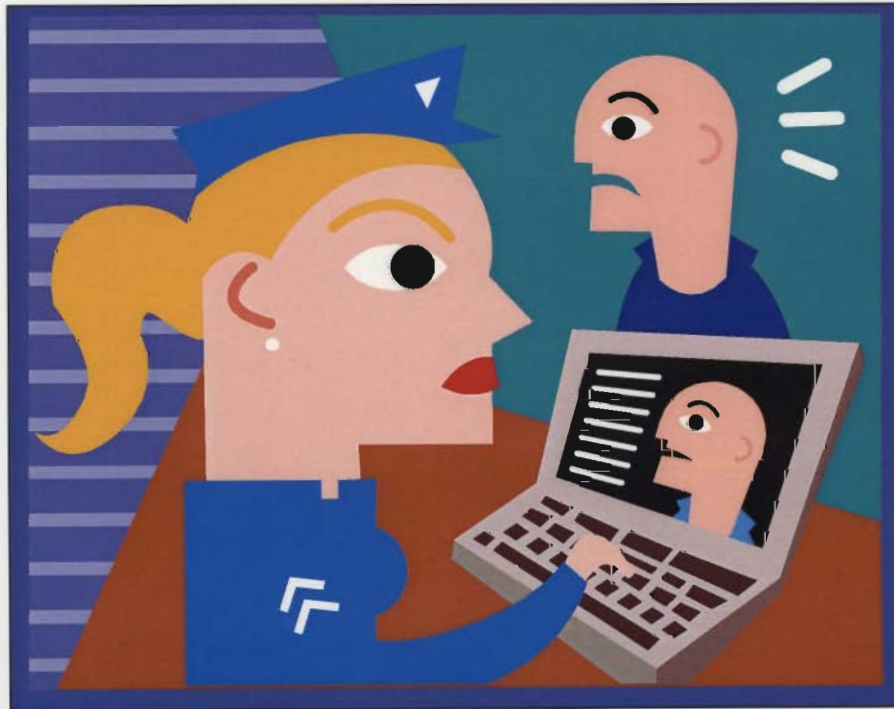
Policies must be developed for the use of computers in terms of the Internet, Intranets, Firewalls, E-mails, and Security.



- The use of Firewalls
- The use of programs to monitor what prisoners view on the World Wide Web

Despite the many problems computers can generate, there is no doubt that computer, and Internet access in prisons, can provide benefits. For example, with a computer, a prisoner is able to take a wider range of educational programs that were not available before. In addition, software may be developed to help the average citizen to be their own lawyer which prisoners will want to use for their situation. In some cases, particular information is only available on the Internet and the prison librarian needs to create solutions to the problem. Just as public libraries have become the public institution to provide computers to the average citizen, prison libraries will no doubt be the part of the prison to provide computers to inmates.

Possibly the biggest security issue to providing computers to prisoners is keeping the prisoner-accessed computers from being able to interface with the institution's computers.



By providing computers and the Internet, will librarians turn into another security guard in the prison system?



The Information Needs of Prisoners

Legal Support Materials

In the literature, the greatest informational need of prisoners is the need for legal support materials for the following areas:

- Federal, Provincial, and Regional Legislation
- Cases
- Parole Board Guidelines
- Citizen Rights
- Contact information for Lawyers
- Marital and Children-related Legal Issues

In some prison libraries, the aforementioned issues are the only areas covered by the collection due to jurisdictional funding and support. Presently in Canada, most of the legal information available to Canadians is offered in both print and electronic format. However, it is more difficult to obtain the paper version and may require longer time periods and more money. The more difficult access to information for prisoners questions the government's ability to fulfill prisoners' rights as citizens. Much of the legal information in Canada is provided for free on the Internet. In addition, many of the services to provide legal information presently provide their service via CD-ROM. Only specific requests made to the legal providers may obtain the printed versions of the needed information. Hence, inmates need computers and Internet access to meet their legal needs as the world of information goes digital.

Educational Support Materials

While the library may not be the major source for educational programs, it is often the major support center in correctional institutions. With the explosion in the popularity of the Internet, many educational institutions have switched their programs to electronic-based learning. In addition, many educators will no longer accept schoolwork that has not been produced on the computer. Therefore, prisoners need access to computers, and in some cases, the Internet in order to obtain the education they need or want.

The legal information prisoners need cover the following areas:

1. Federal, Provincial, and Regional Legislation
2. Cases
3. Parole Board Guidelines
4. Citizen Rights
5. Contact information for lawyers
6. Marital and Children-related legal issues

Prisoners need computers to research, do their schoolwork, and, in some cases, take classes.



Other Needs

As evidenced by the literature, the informational needs of prisoners often reflects the needs of the general public. The prison librarian needs to be able to answer reference questions and material requests similar to the demands placed upon a public librarian. For example, an inmate is just as likely to ask for information related to a disease as a citizen not in prison. In some cases, it is cheaper and easier to access information on the World Wide Web. The computer has become a necessary tool for any librarian and, as such, the librarian needs access to a computer and the Internet.

Entertainment

Not all the informational needs of the prisoner are legally or educationally based. According to the literature, many prisoners claim that their ability to serve long prison sentences can be directly related to library materials and the diversions they provide. In Great Britain, parts of prison library collections are devoted to materials that are entertaining like fiction novels and newspapers. The computer, with associated software, can provide entertainment for inmates. For younger inmates, the computer is a familiar and everyday tool and they made demand access. However, providing entertainment through the library requires an assessment of the hierarchy of patrons' needs. Meeting the legal and educational needs of inmates should not be sacrificed to provide entertainment.

Prisoners may demand computers for its possibilities as a means for entertainment or communication with the outside world

Communication to the Outside World

Computers are popularly used for electronic mail. New admissions to correctional facilities may be interested in using computers to keep in contact with their lawyer, their family, and their friends. Women with children are especially likely to be interested in e-mail. Prison administrators may find monitoring e-mails easier than traditional mail or telephone calls yet there are no guidelines in place to approach such action. Policy must be developed for telecommunications as an extension of the policies governing mail and telephone use.



The Impact of the Computer on Library Services for Prisons

Providing Library Service

Similar to the public library, prison library patrons need to be aware that computer use is a privilege not a right. In fact, the role of the prison librarian may change from that of support staff to an extension of the security staff. After all, some prisoners may be inmates due to convictions of Internet crime. However, the actions of the few must not deter from the service to the many. Therefore, prison librarians must find the balance between providing library service in the new technological world.

Computers are a privilege, not a right. So what does this mean to a convicted criminal?

Security Issues

Almost certainly the biggest fear of the public for computers in prison libraries concern issues of security. The communities that surrounded prisons have always had to deal with issues of security due to their proximity to correctional institutions. However, with the rise in popularity of the Internet, the security of the entire online community can be affected by correctional institutions. Therefore, structures must be developed to monitor the use of computers in prisons by prisoners. Developed policy must define what 'reasonable' access and actions are in relation to computer usage by inmates.

A prison online adds to the security issues already faced by the online community.

The Perpetration of Crime

To prevent the perpetration of Internet crime, librarians and prison staff must be aware of computer-usage by inmates. Moreover, computer administrators must ensure that as part of the local area network (LAN), the information technology service of the institution is segregated from the inmate-accessed computers. The ability of the correctional institution to offer computers and Internet services will be directly

To offer Internet services to inmates, computers must be on a different server than the computers used by the prison administration.

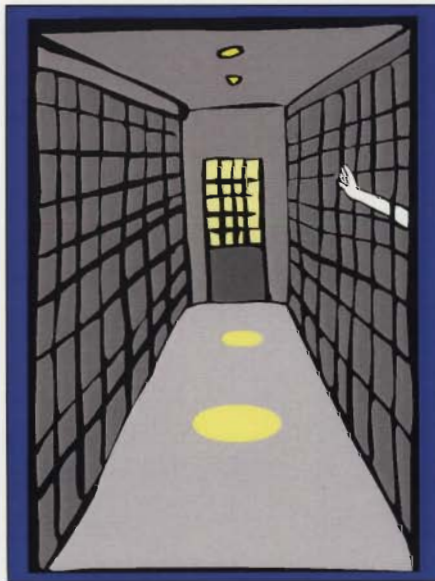


influenced by its size. The smaller the institution, the less likely it will be to be able to afford properly trained technology staff, the more likelihood there is for security breaches. Therefore, policy must be developed and put into effect to deal with such security issues.

Public Support and Opposition

Support from the public for computers in prison libraries will relate to the ability for inmates to access legal and educational information, and have access to families. However, public opposition for computers directly relates to the societal debate over the prison as an institution of punishment versus rehabilitation. If a correctional institution is to rehabilitate its prisoners then inmates need to have the ability to work in a computer oriented society. Members of the public see computers as a luxury or privilege, as evidenced by the support for computer access in public libraries. The public may disagree with the availability of computers for prisoners based upon whether or not inmates 'deserve' to have computer access. Therefore, policy must be developed for the availability of computers for prison inmates to provide clear guidelines for librarians and members of the public.

The debate over prisons as institutions of rehabilitation or punishment relates directly to providing computers for prisoners. Do prisoners "deserve" computers?



To prepare prisoners to re-enter society, computers are needed. But will the public support computers in prison libraries? To answer this question, policy must make a clear distinction between the rehabilitative or punitive nature of prisons.



Applicable Legislation and Supervising Bodies

Federal

Title: **Access to Information Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.C. 1985, c. A-1

Subject: Access and Privacy

Applicable Segments:

According to the act, every person who is a Canadian citizen, or a permanent resident within the meaning of the Immigration Act, has a right to and shall, on request, be given access to any record under the control of a government institution. Any record requested under this Act must be produced, even if the record is from a machine-readable record. This covers all government institutions that are using computer hardware and software and technical expertise normally used by the government institution shall be deemed to be a record under the control of the government institution. [s. 4; 1992, c. 1, s. 144(F)]

The Correctional Service of Canada must follow the guidelines allowing access to information as outlined by the act. [Schedule I, Section 3]



Title: **Corrections and Conditional Release Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.C. 1992, c. 20

Subject: Corrections and Parole

Applicable Segments:

The statute prescribes the use by inmates, of publications, video and audio materials, films and computer programs. Therefore, prisoners are allowed to use computer programs but with no guidelines. In addition, the act states that offenders retain the rights and privileges of all members of society, except those rights and privileges that are necessarily removed or restricted as a consequence of the sentence. So, prisoners may use computers like they would



in everyday life but there are possibilities for restrictions. However, no restrictions are outlined. Also, an inmate in administrative segregation shall be given the same rights, privileges and conditions of confinement as the general inmate population. Except for those rights, privileges and conditions that cannot reasonably be given owing to limitations specific to the administrative segregation area, or security requirements. Thus, the nature of computer use must be defined as either a regular or irregular privilege.

Title: **Prisons and Reformatories Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.C. 1985, c. P-20

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

With the repealing of the Penitentiary Act, all areas previously covered by the older act are now covered by this act. Within the statute, the rights of prisoners, in relation to information, is outlined. Firstly, prisoners should be provided with relevant information, reasons for decisions and access to the review of decisions, in order to ensure a fair and understandable temporary absence process. Secondly, that the designated authority should provide for the timely exchange of relevant information with other participants in the criminal justice system and make information about temporary absence programs and policies available to prisoners, victims and the public.

Provincial

Alberta

Title: N/a

Bibliographic Information:

Subject:

Applicable Segments:

N/a

The *Access to Information Act* guarantees that all Canadian citizens have a right to governmental information. In addition, that the requested governmental agency may provide the requested material in an electronic format with no guarantees of a paper format.

The *Corrections and Conditional Release Act* states that inmates are allowed the use of computers but provides no guidelines to govern its use. No mention is made of Internet, Intranets, or electronic mail.

The Prisons and Reformatories Act states that prisoners have the right to be provided with information related to their sentence and possible parole in a timely fashion.

Both Alberta and Saskatchewan do not provide their Statutes and Regulations online for free like all other Canadian provinces.



British Columbia

Title: **Correction Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.B.C. 1996, Ch. 74

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

The majority of the statute deals with youth inmates. There is no discussion of the rights of prisoners, including education and libraries.

Manitoba

Title: **The Correctional Services Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.M. 1998, c.47, Ch C-230

Subject: Correctional Services

Applicable Segments:

Contained in the act there is an open-ended discussion of the monitoring capabilities of the institutions over the communications of inmates that can be applied to e-mail. There is also a mention of the *Freedom of Information and Protection of Privacy Act*.

New Brunswick

Title: **Corrections Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.N.B. 1999, Ch. C-26

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

This statute gives a significant amount of control over decision-making for inmates to the Director of Correctional Services. Hence, some of the policies may be operating but as internal documents. Within the act there is a mention of training and that regulations may be created for its administration.



Newfoundland and Labrador

Title: **Prisons Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.N. 1990, Ch. P-21

Subject: Penitentiary

Applicable Segments:

There is no discussion of rights for prisoners beyond the provision of medical treatment.

Nova Scotia

Title: **An Act Respecting Correctional Services and Facilities**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.N.S. 1995, c.7, s.16

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

The act deals specifically with the management of correctional facilities, especially staff relations, not inmate rights.



Northwest Territories

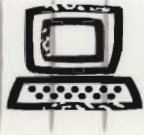
Title: **Corrections Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.N.W.T. 1988, Ch. C-22

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

While there was a section dealing with prisoners' rights, no mention was made of educational, computer, or library services.



Nunavut

Title: **Corrections Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.Nu. 1999, Revised from R.S.N.W.T. 1988

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

See the Northwest Territories since Nunavut adopted of all the legislative policies.

Ontario

Title: **Ministry of Correctional Services Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.O. 1996, c. 1 Schedule P

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

There is no discussion of the rights of adult prisoners but there is for youth inmates.
Several of the sections refer to Federal statutes.



Surprisingly, the more northern jurisdictions, not the most populated, are more likely to have legislation to deal with prisoner communication and education.

Prince Edward Island

Title: **Correctional Services Act**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.P.E.I. 1988, Cap. Q-1

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

There were no areas that dealt with computers, prisoners' rights, or managing prison libraries.



Quebec

Title: **An Act Respecting Correctional Services**

Bibliographic Information: R.S.P.Q. 2000, S-4.01

Subject: Correctional Services

Applicable Segments:

This statute is extensive and refers all the way back to British North America Act. However, no discussion is made of the rights of prisoners. Instead, there is a significant coverage dealing with the financial management of the institutions.

Saskatchewan

Title: N/a

Bibliographic Information:

Subject:

Applicable Segments:

N/a



Yukon Territory

Title: **Corrections Act**

Bibliographic Information: Corrections Act 1986, Ch. 36

Subject: Corrections Management

Applicable Segments:

The statute refers to the *Prisons and Reformatories Act* in addition to guaranteeing the educational access of prisoners. The act contains no discussion of the use of computers in prisons.



The Demographics of Canadian Prisons

Federal Institutions

The inmate population of federal institutions is far greater than the Canadian provinces (See Table 1 and Graph 1). Therefore, the best test situation for developing guidelines for computer use in prison libraries appears to be the federal correctional facilities.

Table 1: Inmate Population in Correctional Facilities by Jurisdiction

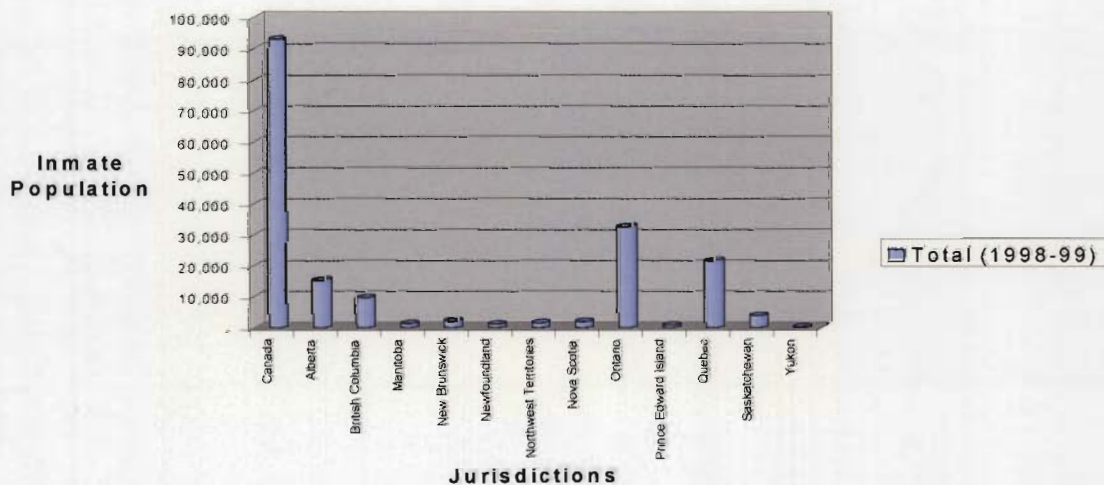
Jurisdiction	Total (1998-99)
Canada	93,045
Alberta	15,491
British Columbia	9,628
Manitoba	1,393
New Brunswick	2,273
Newfoundland	1,199
Northwest Territories	1,594
Nova Scotia	1,964
Ontario	32,815
Prince Edward Island	803
Quebec	21,735
Saskatchewan	3,850
Yukon	300

The top three provinces with the highest inmate population are as follows:

1. Ontario
2. Quebec
3. Alberta

The inmate population reflects the provincial population.

Graph 1: Total Inmate Population by Jurisdiction (1998-99)





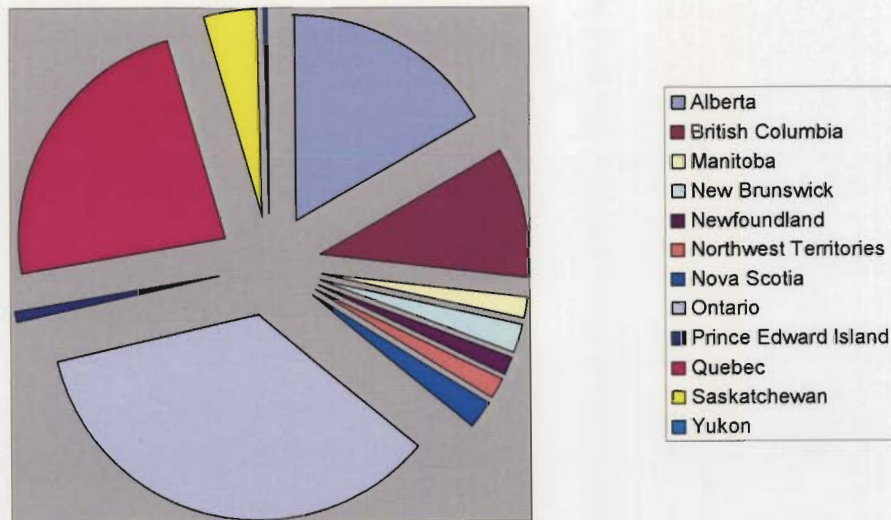
Provincial Institutions

After the development of guidelines for computer use in federal prisons, the provinces will be expected to develop their own policies. The inmate populations vary widely, reflecting the respective provinces' populations (see Graph 2). The provinces with the largest segment of the provincial inmate populations should be the first to develop policies:

- Ontario
- Quebec
- Alberta
- British Columbia

However, some provinces may already have legislative measures in place that can be expanded to cover the use of computers by prisoners.

Graph 2: Total Inmate Population, Provinces Only (1998-99)

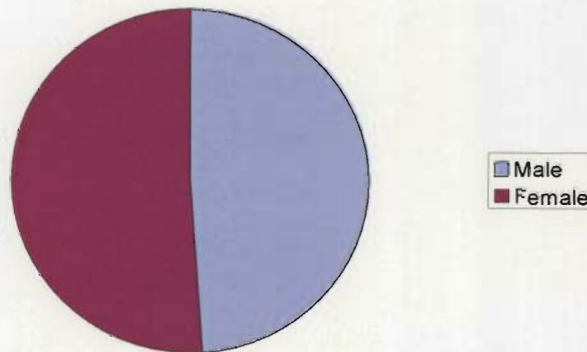




Women in Prison

The Canadian population has a higher percentage of females than males (see Graph 3) while the prison population of females is significantly less than males (see Table 2 and Graph 4).

Graph 3: Canadian Population by Gender (1996 to 1998 Estimates)



By a small margin, there are more women than men in the Canadian population.

By a very large margin, there are more men than women in the Canadian prison population.

Due to the large difference between the population of male and female inmates, there are possibilities for the differences in services offered for inmates based upon their gender. Less inmates means less money allotted. Less money for correctional facilities means less programs and services offered to inmates. Libraries are often the first part of any prison budget cut, as evidenced by the literature review. Therefore, it is assumed that many all-women correctional facilities may either not have a library or have a very small resource center. Therefore, any development of policy must taken into consideration the population size of the facility to prevent the possibility of women not having the same access to computers as their male counterparts.

Some provinces have a higher rate of female admissions to correctional institutions (see Table 2). The jurisdictional differences is an unexpected result of this study and it recommended that further research be done to explain the phenomenon and its impact on information needs. Since there are fewer institutions for women, many incarcerated are relocated at a far greater distance than men and this may have an affect on the library needs of inmates.



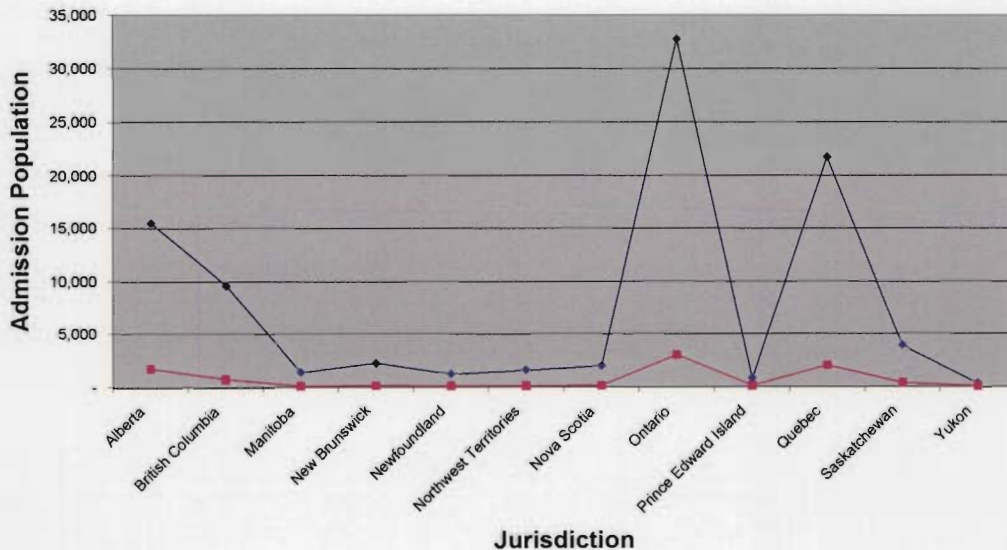
Table 2: The Number of Females Admitted based upon the % of Admissions that are female in Canadian Correctional Institutions, by Jurisdiction

Jurisdiction	Total Sentenced Admissions (1998-99)	Number of Females Admitted (1998-99)	% of Admissions That are Female
Alberta	15,491	1,704	11
British Columbia	9,628	674	7
Manitoba	1,393	84	6
New Brunswick	2,273	91	4
Newfoundland	1,199	72	6
Northwest Territories	1,594	64	4
Nova Scotia	1,964	98	5
Ontario	32,815	2,953	9
Prince Edward Island	803	64	8
Quebec	21,735	1,956	9
Saskatchewan	3,850	347	9
Yukon	300	24	8

The jurisdictions with the highest percentage of female admissions are not necessarily those with the highest percentage of the Canadian population:

1. Alberta
2. Ontario/Quebec/Saskatchewan
3. Yukon

Graph A4: Comparison Between Admissions of Female Inmates to General Admissions (1998-99)



Total Population of Prison Admissions
% Of Admissions that are Female



Prisoners and Library Use

As demonstrated by the data, there are more inmates in federal correctional facilities than any of the provinces. In addition, the three provinces with the most incarcerated are Ontario, Quebec, and Alberta. Therefore, if the aforementioned governments develop legislation to govern computer use in prison libraries, then the majority of Canadian inmates are served. Certainly, there are vast differences in the governments and institutions between provinces. While the federal legislation can set guidelines, it is up to each province to develop their own policies to fit their particular situations.

Population and Support for Prison Libraries

The literature demonstrates a strong connection between financial support for correctional institutions and the availability of prisons. In richer regions, there is greater financial for inmate programs and services. In addition, each province has its own history for providing education and training for its inmates which affects the support for prison libraries. Some areas have developed relationships between prisons and local libraries and educational institutions to provide library services to inmates. Furthermore, in each province, and federally, there are different concepts of rehabilitation that affect prison library support. Therefore, further study into the governmental and local support for prison libraries must be studied to propose policy.



While the federal legislation can set guidelines, it is up to each province to develop their own policies to fit their particular situations.



Conclusion

Consolidation of Study

For the completion of my independent study, I researched, collected, organized, and analyzed information on the topic of computer use in Canadian prison libraries. By focusing on adult inmates, not youth, I was able to narrow my focus. In the literature review, I discovered that publications cover several topics for prison libraries and prison libraries but not from the perspective of modern use of computers and its impact. The informational needs of prisons relate to the increased popularity of computers. It was found that computers are required to meet the information needs of prisoners. In some cases computer use is the only option. The impact computer use on prison libraries will be in the security issues involved in administration and policing. Neither the federal government nor the provinces have developed legislation to deal with the appropriate use of computers by inmates. The inmate population of Canadian is predominantly male; consequently the policy must ensure the right for women to access computers despite the smaller population of female inmates and size of institutions. The computer is a basic tool in the providing of information and education for citizens. Therefore, policy is needed to deal with the various issues associated with computer use in Canadian prisons.

Anticipated Policy Issues

Based upon Elfreda A. Chatman's work *A theory of life in the Round* (JASIS 50 (3): 207-217, 1999), and the collection of this study's information, it is possible to conduct further study. With further study, I hope to gain some insight concerning how prison librarians are dealing with the changes the electronic world has had upon the provision of information to their patrons:

1. Beyond the request for legal information and educational assistance, what other information needs does a prison librarian need to meet?
2. What ethical and legal concerns does the prison librarian need to contend with inside a prison setting?
3. What strategies have prison librarians employed to continue to provide service to their users within the rising popularity of information being provided by electronic means?



4. What, if any, differences can be found in the information needs and preferences between genders, social, and cultural groups within the Canadian inmate population?

With the collected information, I hope to be able to, in the future, study the provision of information to inmates in the areas of legal information needs, supporting educational programs, and any other provision of information to inmates according to their preferences.

The development of policy for the use of computers in prison libraries must cover several issues:

- **Technological Issues**
 - Computers as tools for librarians and library patrons
 - Guidelines for placing restrictions on usage
- **Social Issues**
 - Training and educational use of computers
 - Computers, regular or irregular privilege in prisons?
 - Librarians as enforcers of institutional policies
 - Future possible prison sentences that concern computer use or lack thereof
- **Seeking and Providing Access To Computers and Information Issues**
 - The right to access for electronic data for prisoners based upon their citizenship
 - Governmental
 - Regular information needs
 - Timely access and delivery
 - Confined inmates use of computers in comparison to general prison population
 - Internet, Intranet, E-mail use, administration, and supervision





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Appendix B: Proposed Further Research

RESEARCH PROJECT TITLE: A Preliminary Study of Prison Libraries and Librarianship in Canada: Seeking to Understand the Information Needs and Preferences of the Inmate Population within the Electronic World.

SHORT DESCRIPTIVE TITLE: A Preliminary study of Prison Libraries and Librarianship in Canada

METHOD OVERVIEW:

While the main focus of the independent study is on policy from the federal and provincial governments, the researcher wish to gain insight into the daily workday of prison librarians in Canada. Therefore, the researcher proposes to conduct interviews with prison librarians and prison inmates.

An unstructured interview will be used since this is a preliminary study into the work of the prison librarian in Canada. Participants will be encouraged to discuss their experiences with prison libraries from their personal perspectives. The researcher shall keep participants on track in terms of the research focus. However the researcher wish to keep the interview open as to allow for the possibilities of the introduction of new subject areas the researcher may not have previously encountered or considered. A grounded theory approach will help to determine what impact the popularity of information in the electronic format has had on prison libraries and librarianship.

All interviews will be transcribed by the researcher and will be analyzed into three areas of analysis. The data will be organized by the provision of information to inmates into the areas of legal information needs, supporting educational programs, and any other provision of information to inmates according to their preferences. The organized information will then be compared with the results gained from examining Canadian policy regarding the provision of information to inmates. Also, the analysis will help to determine what impact the popularity of electronic provision of information has had on prison libraries.



It is hoped that the insights provided by this study will help prison librarians deal with the increasing popularity of electronic provision of information while maintaining the institutional guidelines regarding access to information for inmates.

Number of subjects per study session: approximately 15 to 20, to a maximum of 40

Sources: Any Federal or Provincial correctional institution, preferably with a librarian on staff and educational programs.

Compensation: None

Place where research is carried out: Due to the incarcerated nature of the research population, all interviews will take place in the prison setting. Hopefully it will be possible to have access to a secluded work area in order to keep all interviews private from other inmates. The institutional supervisor, including the presence and proximity of security personnel, will determine the privacy of the interview setting.

SUBJECTS:

Subject Recruitment: Participants will be recruited through the most appropriate method in consultation with the librarian.

Describe the subjects to be included in the study and any exclusion criteria: With the exception of the prison librarian, all subjects will be inmates of the prison institution. However, input will be accepted but not pursued from other institutional staff. Since the research population is in a federal facility, their terms of incarceration are generally longer than those held in provincial facilities. Thus, it is assumed there will be more demand for educational services. No exclusion will be made upon the reason for the inmates' incarceration and will not be asked of the participants but voluntary provision of such information will be accepted in the interviews.

Risks and benefits: There are no known physical or psychological risks associated with this form of research. It is hoped that the results from this research will aid in the understanding of the information needs and preferences of the Canadian prison population. No deception will be used in this study. While



anonymity cannot be fully guaranteed if the sample is too small, it is important to employ the following steps to ensure the maximum protection for participants.

- Unless participants volunteer the information, no questions will be asked regarding the reason for the person's incarceration.
- Actual names, legal situations, and other identifying particulars will not be discussed in the research. Pseudonyms will be employed and wherever possible, the identities of participants will be disguised.
- Participants will be asked if they would like to supply their own pseudonyms
- The researcher should transcribe all interviews.
- All transcripts, electronic records, audiotapes, and consent forms will remain in the researcher's possession and will be stored in a locked filing cabinet up to two years after the completion of the study.
- Upon the completion of the independent study, the researcher shall destroy or erase audiotapes and any link between the pseudonyms and the actual names of the participants.
- As part of the transcript, the researcher should record the location and proximity of security personnel

Subject Information and Informed Consent: Potential participants will be informed in writing of the nature and purpose of the study, and that the research is a part of an academic study. Potential participants will be further informed that:

- Deception will not be used
- Participation is completely voluntary
- They have the right to withdraw from the study at any time, for any reason, without jeopardizing their situation in the institution and information already provided will be destroyed if requested
- There are no known psychological or physical risks associated with this type of research
- Results, including quotations from transcripts, may be published in books or journals, or disseminated through other means
- All transcripts, audiotapes, and consent forms will be held confidential, and such documentation will not be shared with the institution
- There will be no financial remuneration for participation
- The researcher has no influence upon any desired changes in the prison library or in the institution as a whole



Participants will be required to sign a consent form in which 1) they indicate they have read and understood the letter of information, 2) answers to all their questions have been satisfactorily answered, and 3) they agree to participate in an interview.



Interview Questions

A Preliminary Study of Prison Libraries and Librarianship in Canada: Seeking to Understand the Information Needs and Preferences of the Inmate Population within the Electronic World.

ORGANIZATION TO UNSTRUCTURED INTERVIEW

Situational

Have you used the prison library?

If so, how frequently do you use the library?

If not, why do you not use the library?

Educational

Are you presently or have you taken any classes or training while in prison?

Do you or did you use the prison library to help with your studies?

What resources do you or have you used?

Can you give examples of when you used the prison library for your studies?

Legal

Do you or have you used the prison library to find legal information?

What type of legal information are you or have you looked for?

How do you plan to use or how have you used the legal information?

Do you seek legal information to work independently from or with your legal counsel?

In what resources did you find the legal information you were seeking?

Preferences

Have you used the prison library to seek information other than educational or legal?

What information did you seek and/or use?

What resources did you use?

What would you prefer the prison library provide that it does not presently?

Do you think such preference(s) for a prison library to be a reasonable request?



Letter of Information

A Preliminary Study of Prison Libraries and Librarianship in Canada: Seeking to Understand the Information Needs and Preferences of the Inmate Population within the Electronic World.

AN INFORMATION SHEET FOR PROSPECTIVE PARTICIPANTS

Purpose

It is hoped that the insights provided by this study will help prison librarians and inmates deal with the increasing popularity of the electronic provision of information.

Procedures

The prison librarian of the institution and inmates will be interviewed about their information needs and preferences. The unstructured interviews will be tape-recorded. Copies will not be made available to the institution and will only be used by the researcher.

Risks and Benefits

There are no known physical or psychological risks associated with this form of research. It is hoped that the results from this research will aid in the understanding of the information needs and preferences of the Canadian prison population.

Voluntary Participation

Participation in this study is completely voluntary. Participants may refuse to participate or withdraw at any time for any reason with no repercussions and any information already provided may be destroyed, if requested.

Confidentiality

The identity of all participants will be kept strictly confidential. Pseudonyms and position titles will be used in reports and publications resulting from this study. Further, quotations from transcripts may be published in books or journals, or circulated by other means. Any identifying information in these quotations will either be removed or referred to pseudonymously to ensure anonymity. All transcripts, audiotapes, consent forms, any other records with identifying information will remain in the possession of the researcher and will be held in a locked filing cabinet. All audiotapes will be destroyed or erased upon completion of the study along with any connection between the pseudonyms and actual names of the participants. Copies of the interview tapes and transcripts will not be provided to the institution.

Other Information

There will be no financial remuneration for participation. This study has been reviewed by, and received ethics clearance through, the Faculty of Information and Media Studies, the University of Western Ontario.

Further Inquiries

If you have any further questions, please contact

(INSERT CONTACT INFORMATION HERE)

Or use the self-addressed stamped envelope attached to this information sheet



Consent Form

A Preliminary Study of Prison Libraries and Librarianship in Canada: Seeking to Understand the Information Needs and Preferences of the Inmate Population within the Electronic World.

PARTICIPANT CONSENT FORM

PARTICIPANT'S NAME: -

As a participant in the study, "A Preliminary Study of Prison Libraries and Librarianship in Canada," I have read the letter of information, had all my questions answered to my satisfaction, and understand the general nature, purpose, and procedures of the study as explained to me by the researcher.

I understand that the data resulting from my participation in this study will not identify me in any way.

I also understand that I may withdraw from the study at any time for any reason and that my permission will be required to use any gathered information up until the time that I withdraw.

I hereby give my permission:

1. to be interviewed; and,
2. for the educational and research use (including publication) of anonymized data, including portions of transcripts, field notes based on observations, and notes kept after the interview.

Participant's signature

Researcher's signature

Date