



MEDIA RELEASE

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Beta of BC E-book Library Live Today at British Columbia Libraries

Vancouver – May 12, 2010 – *BC Books Online*, a unique and unprecedented e-book collection, is up and running as of today at public and educational libraries throughout British Columbia. (full list of libraries below)

In 2007, a consortium of library organizations and publishers came together to initiate a project to deliver a digital collection of BC published books to the entire province. Building on the vision of the Libraries Without Walls strategic planning document initiated by Premier Gordon Campbell in 2004, *BC Books Online* supports equitable access to all British Columbians through Internet technologies and collaboration among libraries and the private sector.

The resulting collection, a one year beta of which was launched today, consists of a broad range of non-fiction titles from BC publishers that engage us and reflect who we are as British Columbians. The collection focuses on the genres of history, natural history, Aboriginal culture, arts and culture, political commentary, biography and autobiography, urban issues, the environment, and other contemporary issues that concern the people of this province. Publishers intend to add to the collection on an annual basis.

“The staff and users of British Columbia libraries are delighted that BC books are now properly represented in the increasingly important world of digital content. *BC Books Online* is a crucial first step in ensuring that students and general readers of all ages have Internet access to the books that best represent our province: its history, peoples, nature, and culture,” says City Librarian, Paul Whitney (Vancouver Public Library).

BC Books Online marks the first-ever collaboration between publishers and libraries with the objective to deliver digital content to an entire province. The collection will provide enormous added value for students in primary and secondary schools, researchers at the university level, and the general public. Users will be able to access the entire collection through library portals from home, work, and school, and from anywhere in the world. The books will be fully searchable across the collection. As well, users will be able to bookmark, highlight text, cut and paste, copy, and print a limited amount of the content. Unlimited access will allow the books in the collection to be used without checkout or library processing.

"As educators we understand the value and importance of resources that reflect the experiences of our students. This forward-thinking project will further enhance school library collections by providing BC materials in a range of subject matter that can be accessed online both from the school itself or from the student's home. The digital world is our new reality and BC is at the forefront in providing good, regionally developed materials," says Judy Dallas, executive director, Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium.

The consortium, with the help of the service provider, Gibson Publishing Connections, has been assembling the collection over the past years. The beta of the collection is available to the public for one year thanks to a generous grant from the Irving K. Barber Learning Centre and the University of British Columbia library, and with funding from Simon Fraser University and the Vancouver Public Library. Also,

publishers and authors have donated 650 titles in the *BC Books Online* collection to British Columbians for one year.

"Working together, our librarians and publishers are bringing a collection of riches created by British Columbian authors to people in every corner of the province. The *BC Books Online* project is an inspired way of combining technology with the great legacy of reading our own stories and exploring our own history," says consortium publishers' representative Peter Milroy, director of University of British Columbia Press.

The *BC Books Online* consortium is seeking funding to deliver the collection, in perpetuity, to all libraries in British Columbia in 2012. The financing of the project will flow through the BC Library Association, a registered charitable organization capable of providing full auditing and accountability as well as charitable receipts.

In 2004, when Libraries Without Walls was launched, the Premier stated that it represented his government's desire for a "shared commitment to create communities open to new ideas, where learning and personal development are at the heart of all our endeavours." *BC Books Online* takes a significant step toward realizing this achievable objective.

Libraries running *BC Books Online*:

- Central Okanagan School District #23
- College of New Caledonia
- Nanaimo School District #68
- North Island College
- Prince George Public Library
- Prince George School District #57
- Richmond Public Library
- Simon Fraser University
- University of British Columbia
- University of Northern BC
- Vancouver Island Regional Library
- Vancouver Public Library

Participating Publishers:

- Anvil Press
- Arsenal Pulp Press
- Brindle & Glass
- Douglas & McIntyre
- Greystone Books
- Hedgerow Press
- Heritage House Publishing
- New Society Publishers
- New Star Books
- Orca Book Publishers
- Pacific Educational Press
- Rocky Mountain Books
- Ronsdale Press
- Talonbooks
- Theytus Books
- Touchwood Editions
- University of British Columbia Press

The Consortium:

- The Association of Book Publishers of BC: www.books.bc.ca
- BC Electronic Library Network: www.eln.bc.ca
- BC Libraries: www.bclibraries.ca
- The British Columbia Library Association: www.bcla.bc.ca
- Educational Resource Acquisition Consortium: www.bcerac.ca

More information about the project can be found at: www.bcbooksonline.ca

And, a list of titles currently available in the beta of *BC Books Online* at: www.canadianelectroniclibrary.ca/collateral/BCBooksOnline.xls

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