

Learning Commons@Ryerson: One Stop Shopping for Student Success



This fall, a new website brings together the combined expertise of the [Library](#), [Student Learning Support](#) and [Computing and Communication Services](#). [The Learning Commons @ Ryerson](#), an initiative of the Ronald D. Besse Information and Learning Commons* brings together services and expertise – online – to support students in their learning, writing, research, numeracy and use of technology. It provides learning resources such as tutorials, time management tools, workshop information and booking platforms, research guides, peer-support environments and live online help services.

*The Ronald D. Besse Information and Learning Commons, located on the 2nd floor of the Library, includes service points for Reference and Help Services; Technology Assistance; The Writing Centre; Geospatial, Map and Data Centre; English Language Support; and a selection of peer support services. The Math Assistance Centre is located on the 5th floor.



EllisDon Awarded Contract to Build New Student Learning Centre

[EllisDon](#) has been awarded the contract to build Ryerson's new [Student Learning Centre](#). As the construction manager for the project, EllisDon is expected to begin construction early in the new year, with an estimated date of completion for the winter of 2014. For more information, [click here](#).



From The Chief Librarian
MADELEINE LEFEBVRE

As the new year approaches, seeing our users fill the floors of the library once again is a reminder of how central the library is to developing a sense of community on campus. As the university continues to lead in innovation and research, it is more important than ever to create a positive space to support the diverse population of students and researchers at Ryerson.

Our staff reflects the diversity seen daily on campus. In fact, many users may be unaware that they can receive library services in a variety of languages, including Cantonese, Mandarin, Greek, French, German, Amharic, Italian, Polish, Portuguese, Russian, Slovak and Spanish.

In the context of campus-wide initiatives to support diversity, the library strives to create a welcoming space for all Ryerson students, faculty and staff. We pride ourselves on recognizing and responding to user needs and feedback. This is evident in the variety of library services available, many of which would not be possible without collaborations between the library and various departments across the university.

Strong partnerships with the Access Centre ensure that our students have equitable access to the library's services and resources. The library has designated staff with expertise in the Accessibility for Ontarians with Disabilities Act (AODA) and shows a deep commitment to working with these users to ensure they have the necessary tools to complete their education and research.

The library has demonstrated continued excellence in evaluating and providing services for users with disabilities. This would not be possible without the development of valued partnerships with departments on campus who also share a vision of a positive and barrier-free space. The Access Centre's physical presence in the library reinforces the significance of these collaborations.

In addition to the services provided, the library's collection is supporting diversity-related research at Ryerson. Groups like the Diversity Institute in Management and Technology are advancing research about gender and diversity issues in the workplace.

With a reputation for attracting a diverse group of innovators from all over the world in a variety of research fields, Ryerson counts on its key services across the university to support such research. The library is among the core services that are supporting Ryerson's role as an innovative university in the digital age.

In a recent address to the Economic Club of Canada, Ryerson President Sheldon Levy spoke about innovation and the importance of connecting, teaching and supporting researchers in the context of the Digital Media Zone and the diverse population served by the DMZ.

The library has been a strong partner in achieving these goals. Our collections and services echo the commitment to supporting its diverse population and have contributed to building Ryerson's reputation as a leading innovative university.

Through continued collaboration and communication with our stakeholders and users, the Ryerson Library will provide a solid foundation for the university's role as a successful and diverse research institution of the future.

The library is among the core services that are supporting Ryerson's role as an innovative university in the digital age.



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Learning Commons Open House

On October 26, the Ronald D. Besse Information and Learning Commons hosted its third annual Open House from 1-3 p.m. The Commons used the Open House to launch its new website. Students visited 'zones' throughout the Commons to learn more about its services: Accessibility Services; Interactive Zone; Geospatial, Map and Data Centre; Writing Centre; Math Assistance Centre; Open Access Zone; Reference & Research Desk; IT Support Desk; Graduate Student Zone; Learning Success Centre; and the TRSM Help Desk. Refreshments were served and students were able to enter a draw for an iPad2. Third-year chemistry student Mihailo Aleksandric was the lucky winner!

Thanks to all involved for another successful Open House!

Ares in Blackboard – A Tale of Two Systems

In May, the Library launched a new initiative linking course readings with Blackboard. Ares, a system designed for reserves and copyright control, was integrated with the university's course management system, replacing Blackboard's own eReserves module that was used for the last six years, but was inadequate in meeting new demands.

SOME ASTOUNDING STATISTICS

The full implementation of Ares in the fall term witnessed an astounding growth in usage. The system was accessed over 24,000 times in September alone. Almost 280 faculty and instructors requested document links for the fall courses, compared with 140 in the entire year of 2010/11. The number of links and scanned documents (over 4,500) created in Ares is more than double the 2,000 requests in last fall. For the first time, faculty and instructors are able to create and manage course readings themselves, and 45 have taken the lead to experiment with this option.

WHAT ARE THE POPULAR FEATURES?

For faculty – instant usage look up

Ares has the ability to look up student usage any time on the instructor web interface and the ease of selecting articles from a previous course and importing into a new course. In the old Blackboard reserve scenario, extra library programming was required to utilize the raw usage data supplied by DMP (Digital Media Projects Office). Instant look up by faculty or instructors was impossible.

For faculty – Select and import readings

Blackboard and Ares are two distinct systems linked by a "building block". Old readings in Blackboard cannot be automatically transferred into Ares as a package. However, once the Library re-builds a database in Ares by copying and pasting individual items from Blackboard, choosing articles from a previous course and importing into another course involves only a few clicks on the instructor web interface.

For students – Hot list and new readings alert

Students are able to personalize the course readings assigned by their instructors. At recent Ares workshops, students expressed interest in seeing how they could create personal tags to articles, group documents from multiple courses into a hot list and receive email notification when a new reading is added. They even asked if hot lists could be shared with classmates or kept for private research when they completed the courses.

For library staff – integrated copyright control

Instead of re-inputting copyright permissions data into a separate database like Access or Excel, Reserve Services staff can now archive the history and re-activate requests in the same system. Removing document links permitted for limited use was a chore. Now, once the end date of a document is entered, the system will automatically expire the link so that it will not show on the student screen but remain on the instructor page for renewal consideration. Given the recent changes in copyright and the benefit of using the Library's e-reserve service, it is important to have an efficient copyright management mechanism, which was absent in the old Blackboard system.

WHAT ARE THE NEW CHALLENGES?

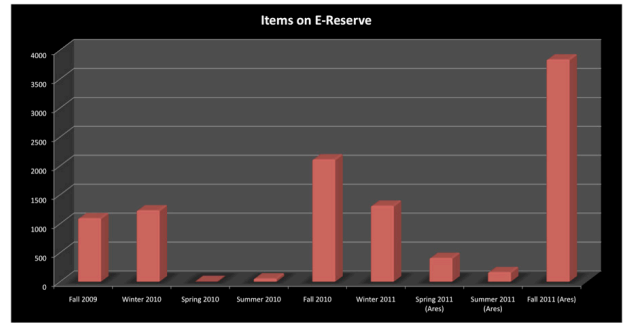
Limits of customization

Faculty members were fast to recommend enhancements, including a list by article title to the current alphabetical arrangement by journals. The "View this Item" tab was not prominent on the student interface. Some instructors preferred the old Blackboard's "folder" display to Ares use of "tags".

The web librarian was able to move the "View this item" to the top of the student screen, enlarge the font size and intensify the colour. Changing the order of display was possible for the individual item page but not the alphabetical journal arrangement. Nothing could be done to organize by sub-folders unless Ares considers the suggestion in future enhancement.

Course shell and multiple sections complication

It is not uncommon for course shells to be created close to the start of classes, leaving little time for Reserve staff to process course readings requests. Because Ares cannot create both class and course lists, Library staff had to invent a work-around by creating fake course shells in Ares. After receiving the real Blackboard course codes, staff transfer the pre-worked content.



Instructors in The G. Raymond Chang School of Continuing Education may be accustomed to migrating course content from a master file in Blackboard to corresponding sections. However, not all components within Blackboard can be moved over to Ares automatically. Instructors can either inform Reserve staff (reserve@ryerson.ca) and request records to be cloned or do it themselves from the instructor interface, using the importing function as described before.

LOOKING INTO THE FUTURE

Some local circumstances were unique at Ryerson in launching Ares. No other Ares institutions consulted had such a large continuing education program and the extent of complexities in creating teaching materials. Ryerson Library was one of the few Blackboard users in Canada to have adopted the eReserve module within Blackboard. Other institutions might have imported files or linked course readings from another system (such as the Library Catalogue).

Nevertheless, the dramatic increase in faculty-created course readings is a good sign. Other libraries reported an increase in faculty adoption, as much as 50% in the second year of operation. Reserves processing time was reduced after switching to the new system.

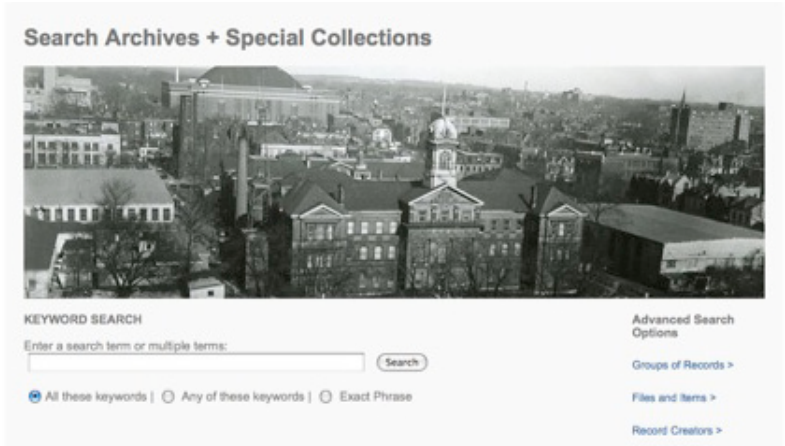
The new challenge for Reserve Services will be how to include the other component available in Ares – the link to the Library Catalogue, listing physical materials such as books, photocopies, videos and CDs so that the 'one-stop shopping' vision can be realized.



Search the Archives + Special Collections Online!

This October, the Library's [Archives + Special Collections](#) (A+SC) department launched a new web search for their collection records. The easy to use keyword search finds records that match any or all terms used, but advanced users can also customize their experience by browsing whole collections through the 'Groups of Records' option, searching for a single file or item on a topic using the 'Files and Items' search, or researching biographies and related person records through 'Record Creators'. A+SC staff members are working hard to improve your user experience, so feel free to contact us with questions or comments at specialcollections@ryerson.ca.

Visit www.ryerson.ca/archives and choose 'search database.'



Donations

The library accepted almost 300 titles from the estate of Graham D. Harley. Mr. Harley was an actor, director and professor. His collection was especially strong in eighteenth-century English literature, theatre and gay studies.

Awards

The Archives + Special Collections was awarded the [Special Joint 2011 Archives Association of Ontario \(AAO\) Institutional Award](#) with the Ryerson Gallery, awarded at the AAO Awards Banquet in Thunder Bay in June for "its innovative and imaginative archival contributions."

Staffing Changes

Cecile Farnum, communications and liaison librarian, is currently on leave – **Courtney Lundrigan** is acting on her behalf.

Kelly Dermody, coordinator of library services for persons with disabilities, is currently on leave – **Diane Michaud** is acting on her behalf.

The library recently welcomed **Ann Ludbrook** as the new copyright coordinator. Ann will be working closely with library staff, faculty and students to ensure compliance with copyright regulations.

Jen Ford has joined the library as the co-op library science student. Jen is currently studying in the Library and Information Science program at the University of Western Ontario.

Collection Services welcomed **Josephine Choi**. Josephine is currently working with the Electronic Resources Management team.

Joanna Beyersbergen has joined the library as a library development associate director. Joanna has come to the library from the Office of University Advancement.

Publications and Presentations

Naomi Eichenlaub, Laine Gabel, Dan Jakubek and **Graham McCarthy** co-presented "Project iPad: Integrating the iPad into Learning & Libraries" at the Ryerson Faculty Conference in May.

Naomi Eichenlaub, Laine Gabel, Dan Jakubek, Graham McCarthy and **Weina Wang** co-authored "Project iPad: Investigating Tablet Integration in Learning and Libraries at Ryerson University," which appeared in the September 2011 issue of *Computers in Libraries*.

Cecile Farnum co-authored "Can I Make A Suggestion? Your Library's Suggestion Box as an Assessment and Marketing Tool," which appeared in *Partnership: the Canadian Journal of Library and Information Practice and Research* vol. 6, no. 1 (2011).

Trina Grover presented "Cataloguing on the Edge: Emerging Standards for Bibliographic Data" at the Atlantic Provinces Library Association's conference in St. John's, NL.

Lei Jin and **Jay Wolofsky** co-presented a poster "Deconstructing Journal Ranks" at the Ryerson Faculty Conference in May.

Val Lem and **Beth Knazook** co-presented "The Library as Partner in Digital Humanities Scholarship" at the TRY Conference in May.

Courtney Lundrigan presented "Exploring the Benefits of Collaboration in Extending Access to Library Research Services: an Experience in Developing Online Tutorials at Ryerson University" at the Atlantic Provinces Library Association's conference in St. John's, NL.

Courtney Lundrigan co-presented "How Every Library can use Web GIS" at the Ontario Association of Library Technicians/ Association des bibliotechniciens de l'Ontario, OALT/ABO's 38th Annual Conference in Ottawa, ON.

Madeleine Lefebvre was keynote speaker at the November 2011 Conference of the Canadian Association of Fine Arts Deans on the theme "Creativity and Learning Space."

Want to keep up-to-date on what new books in your subject area have recently arrived in the Library? Check out the [NEW TO THE COLLECTION](#) application on the Library website!



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