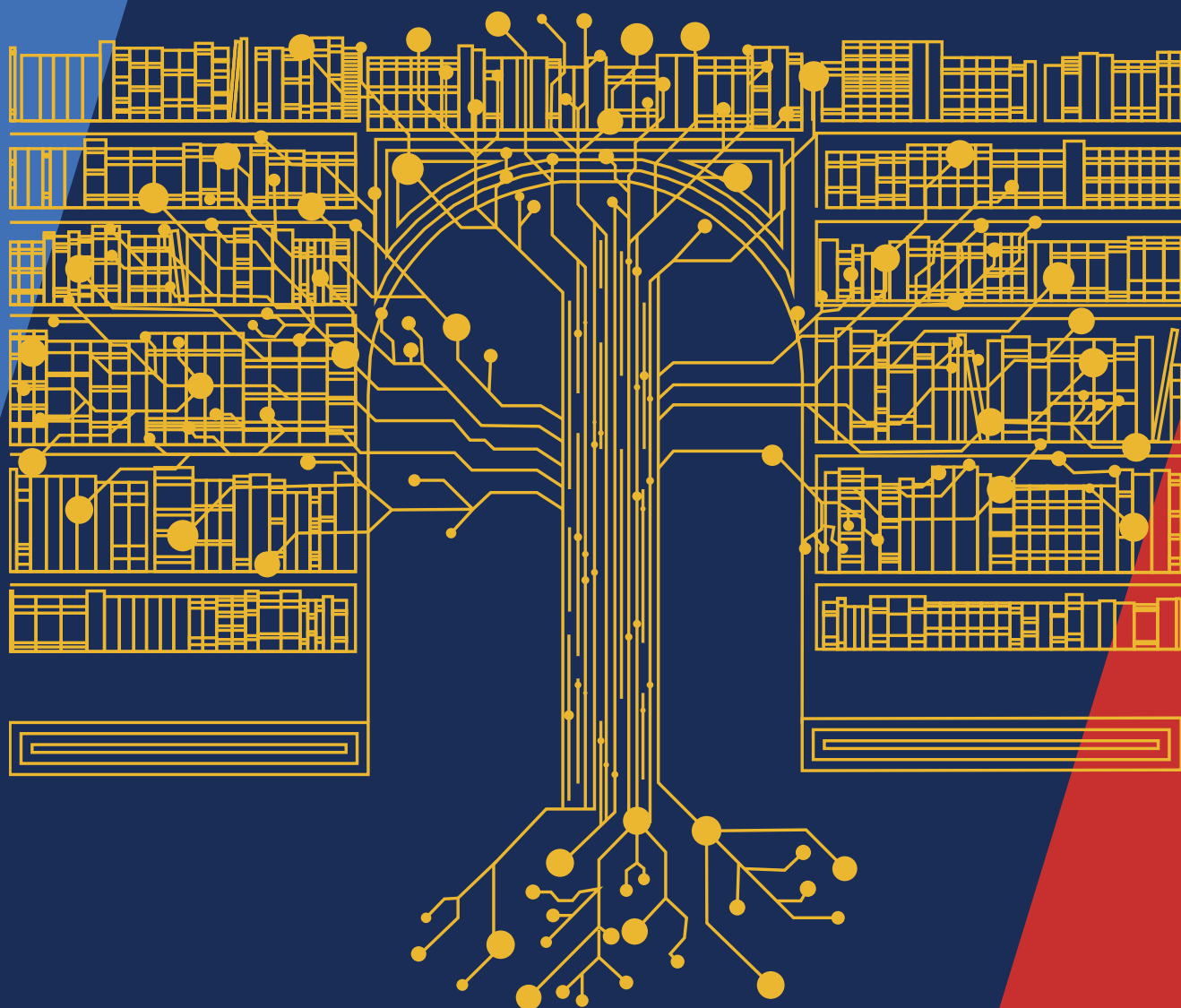


Fall 2023 | Volume 2

in CIRCULATION



University
of Victoria

LIBRARIES



in CIRCULATION

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Masthead photo: Mearns Centre for Learning – McPherson Library entrance. AR343-125.0200-1256.0209. University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives. **Illustration:** Cover painting for the exhibition catalogue *Plantae Occidentalis: 200 Years of Botanical Art in British Columbia* by Oluna Ceska. From the Oluna Ceska and Adolf Ceska fonds, SC677, University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives.

Opposite: Photo by Armando Tura

Back cover photo: Award-winning author and UVic alumnus David Day. Photo by Jennifer Wells. **Illustration:** British Admiralty Chart #1917 «Vancouver Island and the Gulf of Georgia», 1849. University of Victoria Libraries Special Collections and University Archives.

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NOTES FROM THE **FOURTH FLOOR**

Welcome to our second volume of *in CIRCULATION*. Included within are details of some of our many projects and partnerships which reflect the fact that libraries are primarily places of innovation and collaboration. No longer simply a repository for the products of research, the modern academic library supports every aspect of research creation, dissemination, and preservation and is integral to faculty, researcher, and student success across all disciplines.

The library navigates a higher education environment that continues to experience significant global change and disruption driven by multiple factors, the most salient of which is the transition to a digital knowledge

economy. Through our many local, regional, national, and international connections, we leverage expertise and infrastructure from a local to a global scale. Within rapidly shifting contexts full of ambiguity and necessitating much flexibility, academic libraries are often early adopters of technological advances. We are becoming hubs of interdisciplinary collaboration, acting as a catalyst for innovation.

Our long-standing and trusted role in enabling access to and preserving knowledge is enhanced by a focus on opening avenues to research, systems, and structures; engaging actively with stakeholders, including marginalized and under-represented

communities; and adopting sustainable and enduring approaches to core research and learning activities. As the university's academic commons, we bring researchers, students, and our communities together to solve problems, create new capacity, and explore new ways to work with one another for our shared benefit. As such the library is a platform for digital transformation, providing the physical and digital spaces, expertise, access to knowledge, and convening power to accelerate research and build intellectual community.

Jonathan Bengtson,
University Librarian

We acknowledge and respect the Lək'wəŋən (Songhees and Esquimalt) Peoples on whose traditional territory the university stands, and the Lək'wəŋən and WSÁNEĆ Peoples whose historical relationships with the land continue to this day.



UVic Libraries, Information Ecology & Climate Action

Information Ecosystems

Climate change is the most urgent issue of our time, and taking action on climate change depends on sustainable, open access to research and information. At the community level, this information might be guidelines for municipal recycling and compost, sustainable home gardening, and water conservation. It might also be information about governmental policies and corporate practices that help guide voters in choosing political representatives and consumers in choosing more eco-friendly companies to support. For activists, it might be information about organizations fighting for climate justice and how to get involved in their work. For researchers and policy makers, it might be data and scholarship on ice melt and sea level rise, soil erosion, drought, deforestation, and the rising number of climate refugees, information necessary for making evidence-based decisions to

reduce carbon emissions, transition to renewable energy, and build more climate-resilient communities.

In all these scenarios, academic libraries play a key role in providing access to resources and building communities. Reflecting the interconnectedness of the environmental ecosystems upon which we all depend, libraries are informational ecosystems that connect students, faculty, practitioners, and community members with each other and with the knowledge necessary for ensuring a sustainable future for the planet. At UVic Libraries, we preserve and provide access to a vast variety of collections with important ecological data, work with faculty members on climate research projects like the Mountain Legacy Project, and offer space for student-led activities in which young people can build community and learn about ways to contribute to climate action initiatives.

Seaweed and Mammals, Salmon and Squid: Research Data in Archival Collections

Environmental studies is a major priority area for our Special Collections and University Archives (SCUA), and materials in these collections are important sources of ecological memory. Collections include the archives of many prominent scientists who have taught at UVic, such as phycologist Alan Austin; naturalist and conservationist Ian McTaggart-Cowan; Derek Ellis, a biologist who researched salmon biology through underwater photography and studied the impact of mine tailings on marine ecosystem biodiversity; and W. Gordon Fields, Canada's leading researcher on squid.

These collections provide invaluable data for studying the effects of



climate change on various species and ecosystems. The [Alan Austin archives](#), for example, include the records of a major seaweed inventory project, which between 1972 and 1974 collected survey data on the vegetation of a significant part of the British Columbia coastline. This data serves as a benchmark against which coastal changes can be compared and measured.

Similarly, [McTaggart-Cowan's research](#), conducted over a seventy-five-year career, documents a period of unprecedented ecological change in the twentieth and early twenty-first centuries. In his field journals and photographs, held in SCUA, Cowan recorded in meticulous detail the species and landscapes of British Columbia, many of which are now lost or profoundly changed. In her biography of Cowan, *The Real Thing: The Natural History of Ian McTaggart Cowan*, Briony Penn states that “the journals are poignant reminders of what we have destroyed,” but they “also give us some sense of what could be restored should we have the inclination.” These records of ecological history document the effects of human-caused climate change and serve as powerful reminders of the stakes of inaction.

The Mountain Legacy Project

UVic Libraries not only preserves the research data of former faculty members; we also collaborate with current researchers on projects such as the [Mountain Legacy Project](#). Led by Dr. Eric Higgs, a professor in the School of Environmental Studies, the Mountain Legacy Project has been working since 1998 to document changes in the mountain landscapes of Western Canada by undertaking repeat photography of ecological sites originally captured in systematic phototopographic survey images taken from the late 1880s to the 1950s. These photographs, held in Library and Archives Canada, comprise the largest collection of systematic historical

mountain photographs in the world and—like the data in the Austin and McTaggart-Cowan archival collections—offer an invaluable baseline for tracking the effects of climate change over time.

Over the last twenty-five years, the Mountain Legacy Project has retaken thousands of these photographs, supplementing the existing collection with new data that helps to shed further light on the ways in which these ecosystems have changed. UVic Libraries helps the team store and share their data with the broader research community, working with them to deposit their collection of digital photographs in a [federated online data repository](#) for long-term preservation and ensuring that the

Detail from untitled artwork by Prakriti D. Raizada. Photo by Michael Lines.



“ Reflecting the interconnectedness of the environmental ecosystems upon which we all depend, libraries are informational ecosystems. ”

data is available for other researchers to access.

Geospatial Librarian daniel Brendle-Moczuk, from our Advanced Research Services unit, has been involved in the project in several capacities. Since 2010, he has been sourcing literature, photographs (especially aerial photographs), and other historical materials crucial for developing a holistic picture of the ecosystems under observation and understanding the ways that those ecosystems have changed over time as the snow and ice have receded, the tree lines have risen, and new species have replaced former ones. He has been one link in the chain, along with many others, supporting student assistants on the fundamental questions that researchers have when they first start out with the project.

Students walk through Mystic Vale as part of the Living With Climate Change initiative. Photo by Michael Lines.



Most recently, he has also been involved in data collection on the ground: in 2022, he joined the project team on an expedition to summit four mountain peaks, including Mount Alderson, during which the team took about fifty repeat photographs of the landscape. This new visual data will continue to improve our understanding of the changing ecosystem.

From Anxiety to Action: Living with Climate Change

Student engagement and leadership are essential in climate action work. In 2022, UVic Libraries hosted several events for [Living with Climate Change](#) (LWCC), a student-led event series dedicated to addressing climate anxiety by rethinking our collective relationship to climate change and finding creative, community-based approaches for living with it. The series provided a forum for participants to share their experiences of the emotional and psychological impact of climate change and to learn about the four pillars of effective climate action—mitigation, adaptation, community resilience, and societal transformation—with the goal of fostering community well-being and helping young people feel empowered to address the challenges of climate change.

Proposed by Dr. Thomas Heyd, a lecturer in the Department of Philosophy, and librarian Michael Lines, LWCC was initially funded by [UVic Libraries' Strategic Directions Impact Fund](#). It received additional financial support from the Office of Community-Engaged Learning, the

Pacific Institute for Climate Solutions (PICS), and CIFAL Victoria (an International Training Centre for Authorities and Leaders created in partnership with the United Nations Institute of Training and Research). Other UVic partners included the Centre for Global Studies, the Pacific Climate Impacts Consortium, the Department of Geography, the Faculty of Humanities, and the Faculty of Social Sciences, all of whom provided in-kind and promotional support for the project. Recognizing the importance of this topic to the entire community, LWCC also engaged with partners outside of UVic—St. Margaret's School and Claremont Secondary School—to include younger students in its work.

The LWCC team organized seven events, designed and led by its four student leaders, including an arts-based reflective workshop, an exhibition of climate change-related art and scholarly projects created by UVic students (installed on the main floor of the library for four weeks), and a roundtable with expert researchers and practitioners. In collaboration with CIFAL and the Department of Geography, the group also offered three course-based opportunities for students: a community-mapping event in the Mearns Centre for Learning – McPherson Library lobby, a storytelling luncheon with students from St. Margaret's School, and another community-mapping event on UVic campus that included students from Claremont Secondary School as participants. The last event of the series was a field trip to the SNIDŪĒĒ Resiliency Project, an ecological restoration project dedicated to revitalizing traditional food ecosystems on WSÁNEĆ land

and promoting Indigenous food sovereignty

LWCC brought together students, faculty, researchers, practitioners, and community members into the library to imagine ways of living with climate change within a framework of well-being and local collaboration and responsibility. The series was scheduled to coincide with the 27th Conference of the Parties to the United Nations Framework Convention on Climate Change (COP27), and it highlighted the importance of undertaking climate action in a local context in parallel with global efforts.

Partnering for Climate Action

Looking forward, the Libraries will continue to be a vital informational and social ecosystem for climate action as UVic continues to scale up its efforts to address the climate



UVic Geography students partnered with St. Margaret's private school students to host community mapping tables around campus, inviting participants to share climate change innovations, and explore the UN SDGs. Photo by Michael Lines.

emergency. In 2023, UVic was not only ranked first in Canada and third in the world for climate action by the *Times Higher Education* Impact Rankings; the university also announced the launch of Accelerating Community Energy Transformation (ACET), a national research initiative with over forty partners—led by UVic—dedicated to helping communities transition to renewable energy.

The United Nations Sustainable Development Goal #17, Partnerships for the Goals, emphasizes the fact that climate action is a collective effort, one that requires partnerships across disciplines, institutions, and communities. The Libraries, already a hub for interdisciplinary collaboration, will be a crucial partner in this work.

MAKING OUR LIBRARIES ACCESSIBLE

At UVic Libraries, we strive to create a welcoming space for all our patrons by providing a variety of [accessibility services](#).

We offer assistive technology rooms equipped with adjustable workstations and assistive software, including screen reading, speech recognition, and OCR software. Beginning in Fall 2023, we now offer scheduled one-on-one-orientations for the assistive tech. In addition, we have multiple types of workspaces that are designated as priority use for patrons with mobility needs. Both of our campus locations also have a respite room with a bed, chairs, and adjustable lighting.

We aim to reduce barriers to accessing our collections by providing library materials in alternate formats, such as machine-readable PDFs. Patrons can also choose a designate who can sign out, renew, or recall items on their behalf. We are also happy to retrieve books and provide research help.

More information about how to use these services can be found on our website. We are continuously updating our services and welcome feedback from patrons about anything we can do to assist them.



Our assistive technology rooms have multiple workstations for students, faculty, and staff to share. Photo by Talia Greene.

CELEBRATING RESEARCH SUCCESS

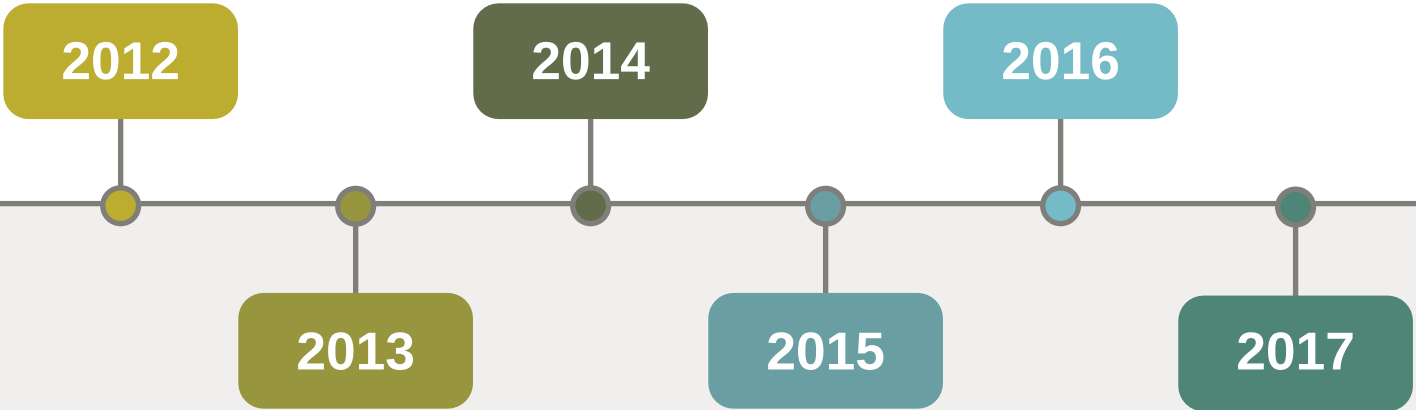
Looking Back over Ten Years of Research Grants at UVic Libraries



Christine Walde hired as Grants and Awards Librarian to support and enhance the research activities of UVic Libraries related to grant funding and awards.

Dr. Aaron Devor, founder of the [Transgender Archives](#), partners with the Libraries for a successful SSHRC Connections grant that will lay the foundations for the Moving Trans History Forward conference.

UVic Libraries' Grants Menu is launched with a suite of customizable library services that can be calculated as in-kind contributions for grant applications. The Menu is an immediate success and heralds a new dawn of successful partnerships.



UVic Libraries partners with Dr. Jordan Stanger-Ross on [Landscapes of Injustice](#), exploring the dispossession of Japanese Canadians.

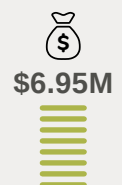
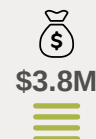
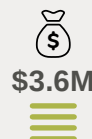
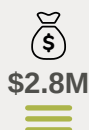
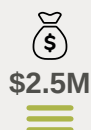
In Fall 2023, UVic Libraries hosts the *Broken Promises* exhibition, grounded in research by Stanger-Ross and his colleagues.

Associate Director of Special Collections Heather Dean becomes UVic's first librarian/archivist to receive SSHRC funding for "Unravelling the Code(x)," a speaker series and symposium.

UVic Libraries receives our first Young Canada Works grant. To date, UVic Libraries has employed 29 students and received \$743,884 in funding.

Humanities librarian Michael Lines is awarded an Internal Research Grant at UVic, a first for the Libraries, paving the way for subsequent internal awards.

UVic Libraries is a successful partner in the multi-institutional LINC grant application. The CFI grant is worth \$2M.



CUMULATIVE AMOUNT AWARDED BY YEAR

UVic Libraries is a key [partner in the research lifecycle](#) at UVic, and helps drive innovation. We provide vital research infrastructure to build strategic research partnerships. [Our services](#) include digital asset management, metadata consultation, open access publishing, and research data management, among others. As grant applicants, we build capacity as an organization and support our values while demonstrating library impact. Grants are more than money: they change our culture and act as a catalyst in the mutual transformation of our library, our institution, and our community.

Engineering librarian Aditi Gupta is awarded a Shastri Foundation grant to work with other engineering librarians in India. In 2021 Gupta receives a NSERC grant for her continuing work in anti-racism and anti-oppression teaching tools.

Education librarian Pia Russell is awarded a SSHRC Insight grant to create a digital library of historical BC textbooks; the project aims to reconcile the history of Indigenous people through decolonizing approaches to educational resources.

UVic Libraries receives funding from the annual BC Historical Digitization Program to digitize newspaper issues of the *Victoria Daily Times*. To date, the program has provided over \$150K in matching contributions toward digitization initiatives at UVic Libraries.

2018

2020

2022

2019

2021

2023

UVic Libraries partners with Dr. Nathan Lachowsky to archive and preserve the [oral histories of long-term HIV survivors](#) in [Vault](#), UVic's new digital asset management system. Today, Vault preserves over 4.49TB of materials.

Associate University Librarian - Reconciliation Ry Moran receives a UVic Strategic Impact Fund grant for the creation of [Taapwaywin](#), a podcast series that explores the intersections between truth, memory, power, and human rights.

Using the Grants Menu, UVic Libraries supports the [Climate Disaster Project](#) to help archive and preserve the oral histories of climate crisis survivors, reinforcing UVic Libraries' strategic commitments to the UN SDGs.



UVic Libraries, AI & Student Success

Christian Schmidt, Special Projects Librarian

The Emergence of Artificial Intelligence

In 1976, UVic offered a course called “Minds and Machines” that taught the fundamentals of artificial intelligence (AI). In the syllabus, Professor C. G. Morgan posed the question, “Could one build a machine which thinks, reasons, learns from experience, understands natural language, is creative, feels pain, or has emotions?”

It may surprise us that, almost fifty years ago, a UVic professor was already exploring an issue so topical now, but it was not even the first time that students at UVic were exposed to the subject of AI or its precursors. As early as 1968, courses covering machine learning (computers programmed to learn how to perform tasks they were not programmed to do) can be found in UVic’s academic calendar. Yet the possibility of machines that could think, reason, and learn—the notion of artificial

intelligence—may still have seemed a distant prospect, and outside of science fiction, AI was to remain the domain of highly specialized experts for many years to come.

For years AI has been part of our daily lives, although the technologies under the umbrella term *artificial intelligence* often perform subtly in the background of everyday applications such as search engines or media streaming services, frequently unrecognized by their users. However, since the release of a chatbot with the rather unremarkable name ChatGPT in late 2022, AI has become a topic of mainstream attention, now highly visible and accessible to the public. And it seems like it is here to stay.

AI in Higher Education

ChatGPT and other text-based generative AI tools like Google Bard or Microsoft Bing use large language

models, which are machine learning algorithms trained to analyze and learn from terabytes of text using a technology that mimics the human brain. They can generate sophisticated, plausible-sounding text on any given topic, in any language, and they can do so within seconds. In academic institutions around the world, these tools are stirring controversy as students, instructors, administrators, and library staff contend with the potential benefits and drawbacks of tools that, to use Professor Morgan’s phrasing, seem closer than ever before to thinking, learning, and understanding natural language. This latest manifestation of AI presents growing opportunities for users with learning disabilities such as dyslexia or dyscalculia, neurodiverse users, and users whose first language is not the one they study or work in. However, generative AI tools are also beset by serious shortcomings, notably the troubling tendency to sprinkle the text they generate with bogus information (referred to as

“hallucinations” by AI researchers), and other profound ethical, privacy, and copyright concerns related to their use.

These conflicting factors make it challenging for universities to navigate the impact of the ongoing AI revolution, and they are all grappling with the same questions: Should educators immunize assessments and exams to tools like ChatGPT? Or is it the responsibility of educational institutions to prepare future scholars and professionals for an environment where interactions with AI are inevitable? Can this moment serve as an opportunity for self-reflection, leading educators to revisit both the means and the meaning of education itself and to work toward providing novel learning and research environments that foster serendipity, interdisciplinarity, and inclusion? And how can institutions support students in this changing technological and intellectual environment?

Academic libraries can help find solutions, and UVic Libraries is playing an active role in helping the campus community critically engage with AI. In particular, we have been focusing on building AI literacy skills among faculty and students and on developing resources for the ethical use of AI technologies in faculty research and student work.

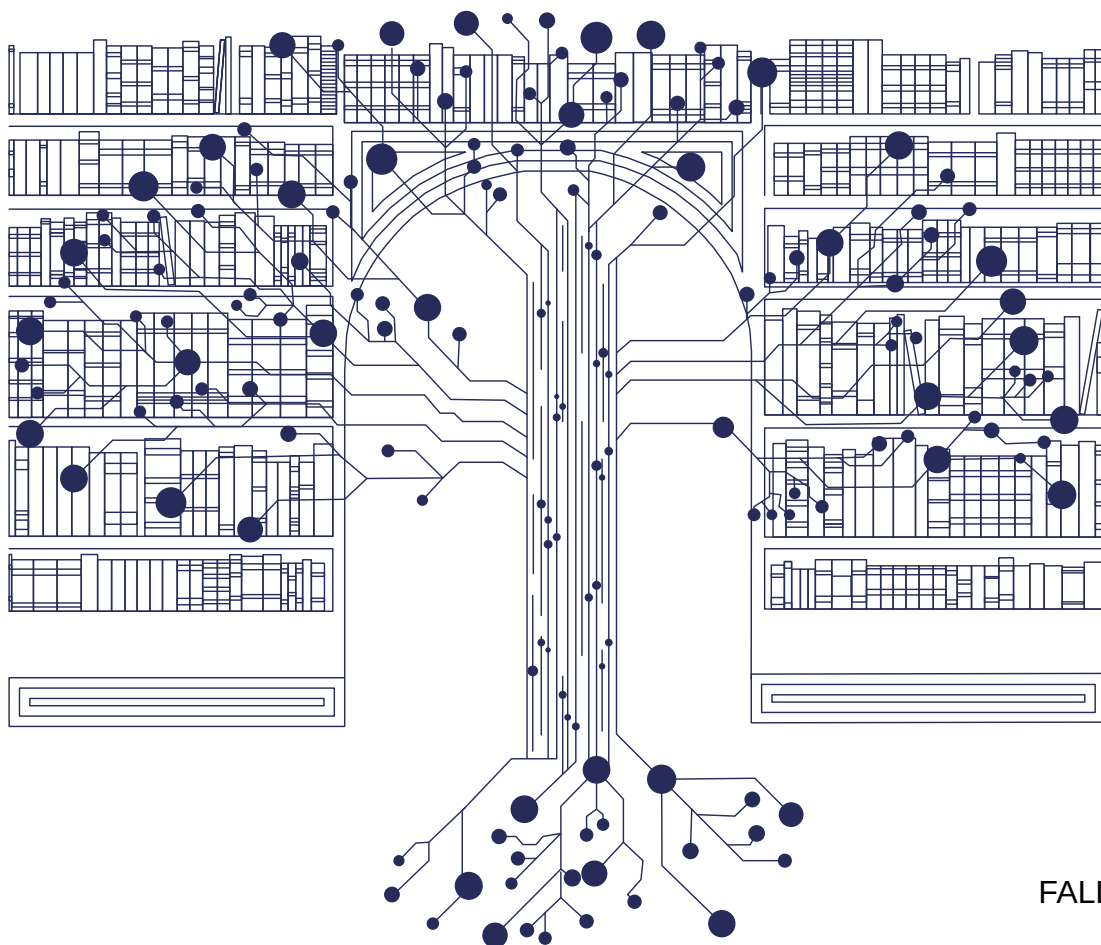
AI in Libraries

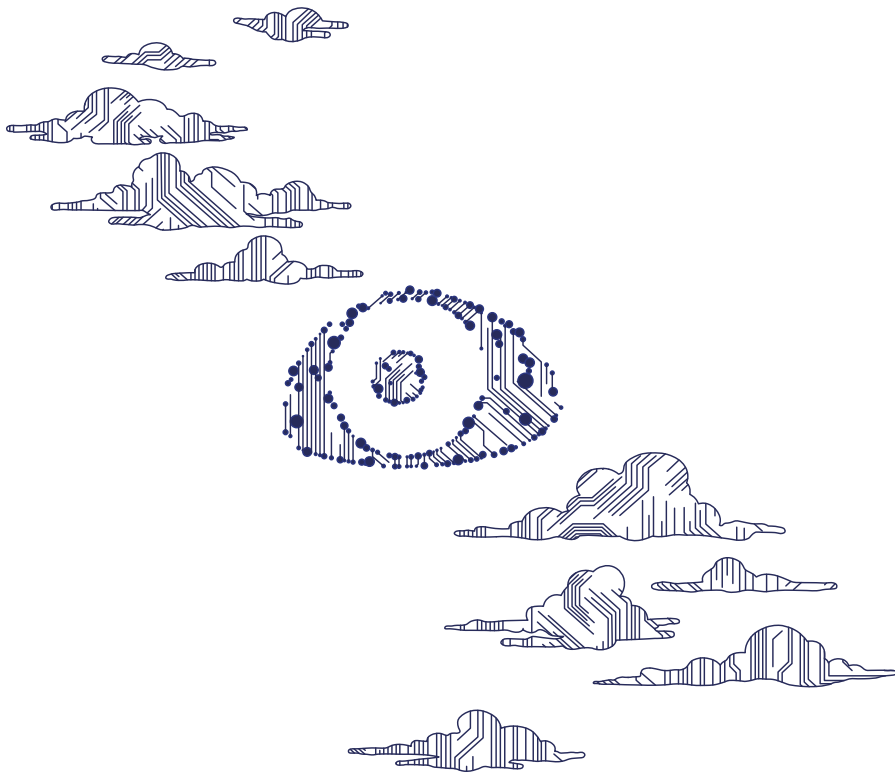
As early adopters of emerging technologies, libraries are well suited to engage with AI. As early as the 1960s, libraries were among the first to computerize their work and, to improve the efficiency of information retrieval, adopted electronic databases when they appeared shortly after. In the decades that followed, especially since the advent of the World Wide Web, libraries have contributed to the responsible use of new technologies in educational environments by making the teaching

of critical information and media literacy—and now AI literacy—one of their core missions.

The library profession has been addressing the need for critical AI literacy through the work of special interest groups such as the International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions’ Special Interest Group on AI and the American Library Association’s Artificial Intelligence and Machine Learning in Libraries Interest Group. The Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL) has published *The Rise of AI: Implications and Applications of Artificial Intelligence in Academic Libraries*, a book covering the matter widely, bringing together experts from all areas of the profession.

AI has also been a prominent theme at professional conferences. The 8th annual [Vancouver Island Library Staff Conference](#), co-hosted by





UVic Libraries in May, featured a well-attended conversational panel in which researchers, educators, and librarians from UVic and beyond discussed the future of higher education in the age of generative AI. UVic Libraries also took part in a similar panel discussion organized by BCcampus, where experts working in higher education from all across British Columbia delved into the disruptions caused by AI and the need for greater AI literacy.

In April 2023, UVic Libraries launched the Artificial Intelligence Literacy Task Group to respond to this need.

AI Literacy at UVic Libraries

One of the major areas of concern related to AI tools is their troubling tendency to “hallucinate”: to fabricate information and invent sources. It is inherent to all current text-based generative AI applications. For the non-expert user, there is no obvious pattern for when some of the information churned out by such a tool might be fabricated. Moreover, even experienced users find it almost impossible to determine whether the “training” of such generative AI—a procedure in which large text corpora are analyzed by the AI’s

algorithms to learn from them—has been performed in accordance with copyright law. And if such training is carried out using inaccurate or highly biased sources, and users accept thus-generated content as factual, an additional risk is that misleading, potentially harmful, discriminatory information will be further disseminated. Consequently, even if the information provided by the AI is not itself false, it may still be questionable.

Educating users in information literacy, defined by ACRL as “the set of skills needed to find, retrieve, analyze, and use information,” has always been one of the fundamental goals of academic libraries. Library staff have been teaching users how to search for, assess the credibility of, and cite sources for decades, which includes learning how to identify and navigate disinformation and misinformation (i.e., fake news) and how to find reliable information. Helping users develop AI literacy—the skills needed to evaluate the trustworthiness of information generated by AI tools and use AI-generated content responsibly—is an extension of that work, and the Libraries is taking several different approaches to promote awareness among our users.

For one, UVic Libraries is offering learning opportunities like public workshops and events to expand AI literacy within the community. The [University Librarian’s Lecture](#) in June 2023 presented a panel of international experts discussing the future of AI: Masud Khokhar, University Librarian and Keeper of the Brotherton Collection, University of Leeds, and Chair of Research Libraries UK; Elizabeth Denham, CBE, International Consultant - Data and Tech (Baker & McKenzie LLP), former UK Information Commissioner,

“ How can institutions support students in this changing technological and intellectual environment? ”

and former BC Information and Privacy Commissioner; Brewster Kahle, the visionary founder and digital librarian of the Internet Archive; and Dr. Michael Ridley, Librarian Emeritus, University of Guelph. The lecture explored the ways that AI is transforming the production and dissemination of information and had over seven hundred registrations for the in-person and online event.

We are also engaging in outreach efforts and collaborative initiatives across campus. The Libraries is participating in a campus-wide working group led by Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation (LTSI) to address the emergence of AI tools and develop recommendations for the UVic community. Librarians are also attending faculty meetings and departmental working groups to facilitate discussions about generative AI tools and their potential impact. These conversations provide basic knowledge about AI and allow participants to reflect on initial experiences, address concerns, and explore potential future scenarios where the Libraries can offer support. Since February 2023, over two hundred faculty members have participated in more than a dozen presentations and workshops delivered by library staff.

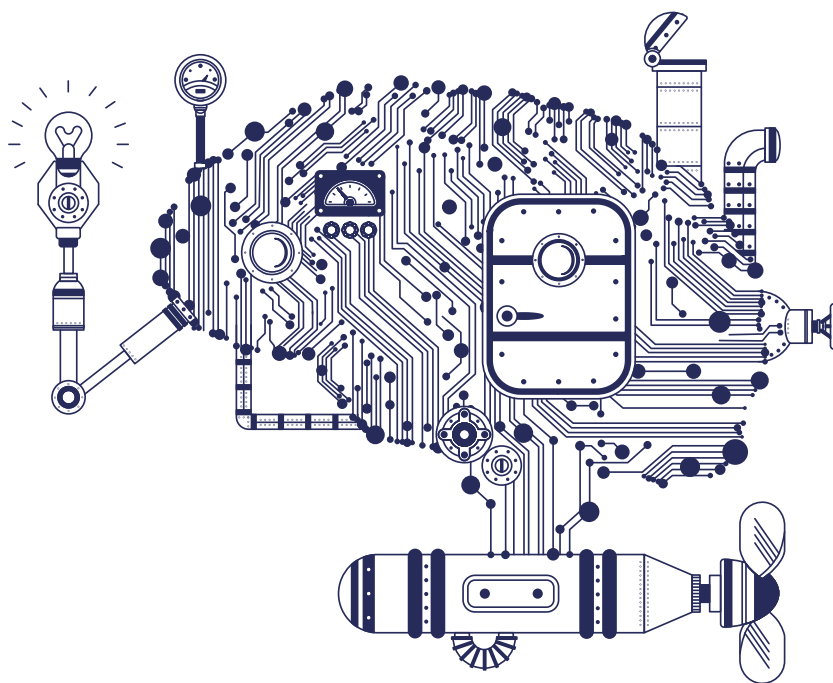
Finally, the Libraries is developing resources for students and faculty on the topic of academic integrity. We already provide guidance to students on how to avoid academic integrity violations by correctly integrating primary and secondary sources in their work, and resources such as the [“Scholarly Use of A.I. Tools”](#) learning guide outline principles of transparency and integrity for disclosing AI-generated content and practical guidelines for how to cite AI content and tools.

Student Success in the Dawning Age of “Minds and Machines”

Today’s manifestation of AI is moving ever closer to matching the vision of intelligent machines once articulated at UVic by Professor Morgan. To ensure student success in higher education, it will be crucial to equip these young learners with the skills to navigate an environment where AI is ubiquitous without falling into the pitfalls to academic integrity inherent in the technology. At the same time, our understanding of student success should extend beyond immediate achievement in the classroom and include preparing students for a professional or academic career in which fundamental AI literacy skills will be essential.

All stakeholders in the provision of post-secondary education should therefore seek to develop an understanding of how AI works and of its potential applications, both desired and undesired. They ought to be able to weigh the pros and cons of using AI and understand how to align its usage with rules of academic integrity. Finally, they may consider how learning, teaching, and testing are currently conducted in the post-secondary environment and make adjustments as needed.

University libraries, and UVic Libraries in particular, can be important trailblazers on this journey. They can be resourceful partners by providing a hub where information about AI and its application in academia can be aggregated and kept current for other stakeholders to access. They can also play an active role in teaching AI skills and thus contribute directly to student success, as they already do in so many other ways.



INDIGENOUS COLLECTIONS AND DECOLONIZATION AT UVIC LIBRARIES



Transforming Our Spaces, Outside and In

As part of UVic Libraries' commitment to reconciliation, we are working to decolonize our library spaces and the collections held within them. Some of the changes we are making are highly visible. For example, in the last few years we have installed the *Fearless Sisters Rising* mural in the fourth-floor stairwell and decals with the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada's ten principles of reconciliation and teachings, provided to the First Peoples House in consultation with local First Nations communities, on the front windows of Mearns Centre for Learning – McPherson Library. These are first steps in making Indigenous histories, cultures, and ways of knowing, especially those of the Ləkʷəŋən and WSÁNEĆ peoples, more visibly present in library spaces and on campus.

Equally important decolonization work is happening behind the scenes in the area of library collections, where we are working to better represent Indigenous knowledge and ways of knowing in support of research and learning at the university. Right now, three of our major priorities are 1) adding more Indigenous materials

and voices to our collections; 2) increasing the visibility and accessibility of Indigenous materials we have in our collections already; and 3) decolonizing description—that is, addressing the problematic ways that resources by and about Indigenous peoples have historically been described in library systems. We are building relationships with Indigenous communities to guide us in this work and ensure that we are following cultural protocols for access and description. We share here some of the outcomes of these initiatives so far.

Indigenous Archival Collections

As part of our efforts to increase Indigenous representation in our collections, Special Collections and University Archives has welcomed two new significant archival collections, the Dr. J. Wilton Littlechild archives and the Neil J. Sterritt archives.

DR. J. WILTON LITTLECHILD ARCHIVES

In August 2022, Special Collections received the personal archives of Dr. J. Wilton Littlechild, Cree Chief, lawyer, residential school Survivor, and commissioner of the Truth and

Reconciliation Commission, who has been a critical advocate for the rights of Indigenous Peoples in Canada and worldwide for over forty years.

His archives (which run approximately eighteen metres/sixty feet) date from the 1970s to the 2020s and comprise one of the largest collections of international Indigenous law materials in the world. Much of this material relates to Littlechild's work drafting the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), including his digitized speeches to the United Nations, as well as other materials on treaty rights and the Meech Lake Accord.

Since the arrival of the archives at UVic Libraries, library staff, with the assistance of Young Canada Works interns, have begun working on processing, arranging, and describing the materials. Future work includes possibly digitizing records from the collection and creating displays and exhibitions to share this material with communities.

NEIL J. STERRITT ARCHIVES

In 2022, we also signed a stewardship agreement with the family of Neil J. Sterritt, a member of the Gitksan Nation who served as president of the

“ [The Littlechild archives] comprise one of the largest collections of international Indigenous law materials in the world. ”

Gitxsan-Wet’suwet’en Tribal Council from 1981 to 1987.

The archives are approximately twelve metres (forty feet) and contain a mixture of paper-based and digital materials (including personal writings, research, oral history, and maps) from the mid-1970s to the mid-2010s, many of which relate to Sterritt’s key role in the successful land title case *Delgamuukw v. British Columbia*, a landmark case for Indigenous rights in Canada. The archives also include items such as Sterritt’s personal notebooks, which contain important cultural knowledge that may not be appropriate to share outside of the Gitxsan community. Our stewardship agreement with the Sterritt family, therefore, recognizes Indigenous legal orders and commits to working with the family to

determine different levels of access to the materials, with certain materials accessible only to the family and members of the Gitxsan Nation. The stewardship agreement will ensure the preservation of these important materials—including the digitization of oral histories on audio cassettes and the preservation of other at-risk formats—for future generations in a way that respects the laws and ways of knowing of the Gitxsan Nation.

Once the processing, arrangement, and description of both the Littlechild archives and the Sterritt archives are complete, the Libraries will host ceremonies to acknowledge the importance of each collection and pay tribute to the lives and revolutionary work of Dr. J. Wilton Littlechild and Neil J. Sterritt.

The Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) Transcripts

In a complementary initiative to foreground Indigenous voices in our collections, the Libraries has made physical copies of all the transcripts from the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP) available in the Diana M. Priestly Law Library. While the transcripts and the five-volume [Report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples](#) are currently available through an online database, the Libraries determined that printing the transcripts, binding them, and shelving them as physical resources would make this vital resource more visible and accessible to users.

The transcripts contain stories about Indigenous communities from the communities themselves, providing an invaluable source of knowledge that deeply enriches the existing collection. The sixty-seven volumes of RCAP transcripts (approximately forty-eight thousand pages), organized by geographic region, are shelved on the second floor of the Law Library, available for anyone to consult.

Decolonizing Description

Our Decolonizing Description Task Group is working to improve representation of Indigenous subjects and communities in our collections by revising the terms used to describe materials by and about Indigenous Peoples. Cultural heritage institutions such as libraries rely on standardized vocabularies to describe what



Commemoration event for the *Fearless Sisters Rising* mural in June 2023 in the stairwell of the Mearns Centre for Learning - McPherson Library. Photos by Chantal Adams.

resources in our collections are about. Using standardized terms called *subject headings* to identify the subjects of resources makes it easier for users to search and find what they are looking for.

However, the terms in the standard vocabulary used by UVic Libraries and libraries around the world—the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH)—were first created in the early twentieth century, and many of them are outdated and offensive. The terms used to describe Indigenous peoples are unacceptable and harmful, reflecting colonial prejudices and not the reality of Indigenous peoples’ experiences and ways of knowing. Subject headings such as “Indians of North America,” “Indians of South America,” and other headings with similar language all require revision, and UVic Libraries has been working to update its subject headings accordingly.

PRINCIPLES FOR DESCRIBING INDIGENOUS RESOURCES

As part of its work to decolonize our practices for describing resources by and about Indigenous Peoples, UVic Libraries follows six principles.

These are principles informed by UNDRIP, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations’ [Truth and Reconciliation Report and Recommendations](#), the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation’s [What We Have Learned: Principles of Truth and Reconciliation](#), the Steering Committee on Canada’s Archives’ [Reconciliation Framework: The Response to the Report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Task-force](#), and the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access, and possession (known as OCAP®).

1. Descriptive metadata will reflect the diversity of Indigenous Peoples. It will be specific and comprehensive in its description.
2. Descriptive metadata for Indigenous communities, places, and persons will be expressed in the language, script, and terminology as specified by the community or person.
3. The descriptive metadata process will respect and reflect the ongoing rights of Indigenous Peoples to revitalize, maintain, and protect past, present, and future manifestations of their culture.
4. Descriptive metadata changes

will be made in engagement with Indigenous Peoples and their representative institutions.

5. Descriptive metadata will align with the First Nations principles of OCAP®, particularly Indigenous Peoples’ Ownership and Control over their cultural knowledge, data, information, and research and information processes that impact them.

6. Descriptive metadata will, whenever possible, attempt to maintain descriptions that reflect original biased descriptions and outdated recorded racist terminology to acknowledge past professional complicity in colonial practices.

SUBJECT HEADING CHANGES

So far, we have replaced the subject heading “Indians of North America” with “Indigenous peoples--North America.” In cases where the subject heading had a more specific geographical location included (e.g., “Indians of North America--British Columbia”), that geographical location has been retained (e.g., “Indigenous peoples--North America--British Columbia”). To acknowledge with transparency our past institutional usage of the term, the former headings have not been deleted entirely from the catalogue records of relevant resources; rather, they have been moved to a different part of the record, where they are accompanied by the note “Heading retained by UVic Libraries for historical purposes.” This phase of revising Indigenous subject headings is complete, with routine updates planned.

The next phases of this work will focus on replacing other topical subject headings that include the word

Wilton Littlechild at the United Nations NGO Conference in Geneva, Switzerland, 1998.
Photo by Beatrice Weyrich.





The Littlechild archives include a diverse collection of local and international documentation and print resources, available for research, teaching, and learning. *Photo by Armando Tura.*

“Indian” (e.g., “Indian art”) with more appropriate terms, as well as closely examining the terms used to describe specific Indigenous communities. The terms in LCSH are often ones that were imposed upon Indigenous communities by colonial institutions and do not accurately reflect the names that communities use for themselves. UVic Libraries is committed to editing these subject headings so that they align with how communities wish to self-represent. As part of this effort, we are creating an online public database to list preferred names for First Nations and other Indigenous communities, which will be available to all staff describing resources and to the broader public.

Looking Back and Looking Forward

We are fortunate to have access to sources like the Littlechild and Sterritt collections and the RCAP transcripts, which demonstrate the decades of work behind the principles that guide us in our decolonizing efforts today. As we continue the process of transforming our collections and practices in ways that uphold the rights of Indigenous Peoples to the preservation, transmission, protection, and accurate representation of their cultural heritage (as enshrined in articles 11, 13, 15, and 31 of UNDRIP), we simultaneously work to recognize and uphold the legacies and voices of the Indigenous communities and individuals whose contributions to the field of Indigenous rights allow all of us to undertake this work in a good way. Processing these collections while we are still in the early stages of our decolonizing efforts reminds us that while we are just beginning our journey, we can draw on a wealth of knowledge and experience from those who have long been engaged in this work.



THESIS WRITERS' INTENSIVE

Twice a year, UVic Libraries collaborates with the Faculty of Graduate Studies, the Centre for Academic Communication, Learning and Teaching Support and Innovation, and Counselling to offer the [Thesis Writers' Intensive](#) (TWI), a three-day program for graduate students across disciplines to work on their thesis, dissertation, or graduate project. During this time, participants work alongside other graduate students in a distraction-free environment and receive support with writing, time management, stress reduction, mindfulness, copyright issues, and citation management. The TWI also provides lunch and coffee for the participants and hosts guest speakers.

In June 2023, twenty-eight students, from sixteen different departments, participated in the TWI. Students reported that the TWI provided a motivating, supportive environment that helped with their productivity and offered an opportunity for them to connect with peers. Students also shared suggestions for how the TWI could be even more helpful in the future, including extending the program by offering supported writing groups throughout the year and connecting the TWI with other UVic resources for graduate student writing. We hope to continue expanding the TWI, a much-needed support for UVic graduate students, in the coming years.

Newsworthy



University Librarian Jonathan Bengtson.
Photo by Beth Doman.

UNIVERSITY LIBRARIAN JONATHAN BENGTON ELECTED AS FELLOW OF THE ROYAL SOCIETY OF CANADA

The Royal Society of Canada (RSC) has elected University Librarian Jonathan Bengtson as a Fellow, the country's highest academic honour.

Bengtson's impact has led to transformative changes in the profession and practice of librarianship—including advances in open access to knowledge and data, pioneering digitization initiatives, and building national publishing and preservation infrastructure. Among numerous equity, diversity and inclusion initiatives, he established Canada's first Associate University Librarian for Reconciliation.

During more than twenty-five years of international leadership, Bengtson has helped position academic libraries and library organizations as integral partners in research and learning during a time of profound change with the shift from analogue to digital-based knowledge systems. Founder of the international, peer-reviewed journal [*KULA: Knowledge Creation, Dissemination, and Preservation Studies*](#), Bengtson's work largely focuses on the intersections of knowledge production and technological change.

From left to right: Evelyn Feldman, Acquisitions and Electronic Resources Librarian; Caitlin Keenan, Web Integration Librarian; Courtney Lundrigan, Head, Engagement and Learning; Sarah Miller, Law Librarian and Indigenous Studies Librarian. *Photo by Armando Tura.*

WELCOME, NEW LIBRARIANS!

This year we welcomed a number of new librarians to Uvic Libraries.

In August, we saw the return of Law Librarian Sarah Miller, who had worked previously in a limited term position at the Libraries. Sarah provides learning and research assistance, collection development, and embedded course instruction and curriculum engagement in the Faculty of Law.

Following Miller's arrival, we welcomed Web Integration Librarian Caitlin Keenan, who plays a key role in the ongoing design and implementation of Uvic Libraries' digital presence that enhances our role in furthering academic research, student success, community engagement, and university reputation.

At the beginning of the autumn term we also welcomed Courtney Lundrigan, Head, Engagement and Learning. Courtney provides collaborative leadership for library initiatives related to student academic success.

Evelyn Feldman, Acquisitions and Electronic Resources Librarian, arrived at Uvic Libraries in September and provides fiscal oversight and leadership in the acquisition of research materials including the management, organization, integration, and discovery of electronic resources.



ACCLAIMED JOURNALIST DAVE OBEЕ NAMED UVIC LIBRARIES HONORARY LIBRARIAN AND ARCHIVIST



Uvic Libraries 2023 Honorary Librarian and Archivist recipient Dave Obee. *Photo by Geoff Howe.*

At the eighth annual Vancouver Island Library Staff Conference, University Librarian Jonathan Bengtson presented the Uvic Libraries' [Honorary Librarian and Archivist award](#) to Dave Obee, acclaimed genealogist, distinguished writer, and editor and publisher of the *Times Colonist* daily newspaper. In addition to being a journalist since 1972, Obee has written a dozen books on genealogy and local history and made hundreds of presentations at genealogical conferences and seminars. His highly acclaimed book, *The Library Book: A History of Service to British Columbia*, is a comprehensive look at library service and development over the past two centuries.

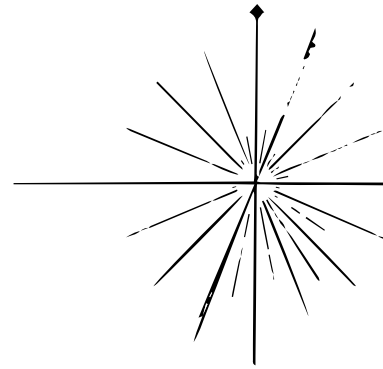
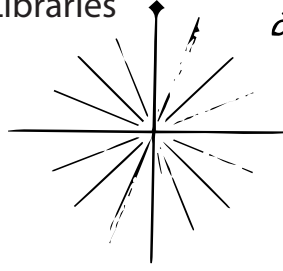
Launched in 2022, when Uvic Chancellor Emerita Shelagh Rogers was the inaugural recipient, this designation signifies our commitment to honoring extraordinary individuals who possess ways of knowing and being that reflect the competencies and values of librarianship and archival studies.



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Libraries



UVIC LIBRARIES COMMUNITY CARDS



Join award-winning author and UVic alumnus David Day in acquiring a UVic Libraries [community card](#). Benefits include:

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- Borrowing privileges for books and music
- On-site access to the Libraries' digital collections
- Interlibrary Loan access
- Opportunities to view rotating exhibits from our special collections and university art collections
- Knowledgeable subject librarians and staff to help you