

The background of the cover is a warm-toned, slightly blurred photograph. On the left, the corner of a laptop is visible, showing the keyboard area. On the right, a stack of four books is shown, with their spines facing the viewer. The books have different colored covers: yellow, red, white, and dark brown. The overall lighting is soft and golden, creating a professional and academic atmosphere.

LiRN

Legal Information and Resource Network

Annual Impact Report 2023

Executive Summary

2023 was a successful year for LiRN.

LiRN obtained a \$1.4 million grant from the Law Foundation of Ontario for a special, 2-year project aimed at increasing innovation and access to legal information.

The Innovation Sandbox stream of the project allows libraries to experiment with modern technologies, equipment, and service models. Several successful projects, run by LiRN and individual Associations, have been funded by this project.

The Equity of Access to Standard Library Collection stream allowed libraries to update their collections. Staff used the Core List developed by the Ontario Courthouse Libraries Association and their deep understanding of the needs of their user base to update their collection to a minimum standard. Titles are hitting shelves across the province, and a pilot for a new electronic resource will be coming soon.

Stats show that e-LiRN use is mostly growing. Practice Guidance increased by 11% and WestlawSource products by 12-14%. vLex showed a decrease in some metrics, but that indicates increased usage of its AI tool to make searching more effective with less need to download unnecessary documents. Quicklaw usage declined from last year, although still produced solid numbers.

Library usage showed big increases, with the caveat that the statistics collected in 2022 were less reliable. Even taking that into consideration, the library usage stats are impressive. The number of research and reference questions increased by 151%.

Our commitment to ensuring library staff competency continued, with 7 remote programs and a 1.5 day / 8 session conference delivered under our Learn with LiRN curriculum.

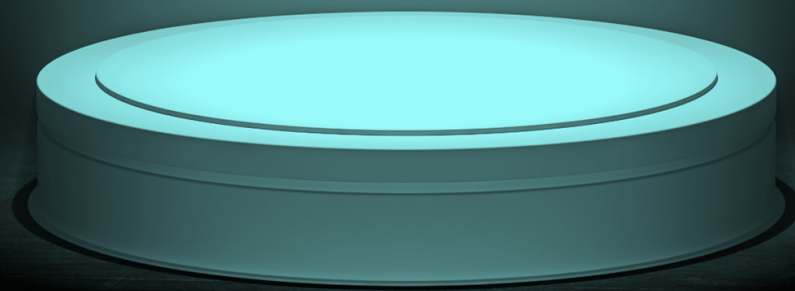
This year also saw LiRN provide updated role descriptions and salary bands that more closely reflect the work being done by library staff. Associations used those tools to do the challenging work of reviewing their staff members' job descriptions and salaries. LiRN included resulting requests to fund salary increases in its budget, which was approved by Convocation.

LiRN is working on several initiatives for 2024 and beyond, including:

- Implementing the results of the Key Network Processes project, a project that sought to identify ways in which the network could work even more effectively together.
- An updated budget submissions process and forms were launched in Q1 of 2024
- The Innovation and Equity of Access to Legal Resources Project continues
- An in-depth review of e-LiRN starting in 2025
- Creating a strategic plan for the next 5 years

Strategic Priority	Key Impacts
1 LiRN is focused on the needs of courthouse library users, both now and in the future	Secured advantageous pricing e-LiRN, a suite of electronic databases available in all courthouse libraries
2 LiRN supports libraries and librarians	Provided employer law associations with updated role descriptions and a salary matrix, developed with an external consultant, to assist them setting appropriate salaries for their library staff Continued to support library staff's professional development with our home-grown Learn with LiRN curriculum and conference Created a Collections Development and Maintenance Policy to assist library staff in making decisions about their collections
3 LiRN collaborates with others working to provide legal information and library service prioritizing trust and respect	Secured funding from the Law Foundation of Ontario for a 2-year project advancing innovation and equity of access to legal resources
4 LiRN makes evidence-based decisions	Worked with vendors to obtain and analyze data to make evidence-based decisions Transitioned data analyst role to full time Roving Librarian, allowing on-the-ground data collection from associations

Spotlight on ...



Innovation and Equity of Access to Legal
Information in Ontario Courthouse Libraries

Statistics: E-LiRN and Libraries

Learn with LiRN

Role Descriptions and Salary Matrix

Sneak Peek at 2024 and Beyond

Acknowledgements

Innovation and Equity of Access to Legal Information in Ontario Courthouse Libraries

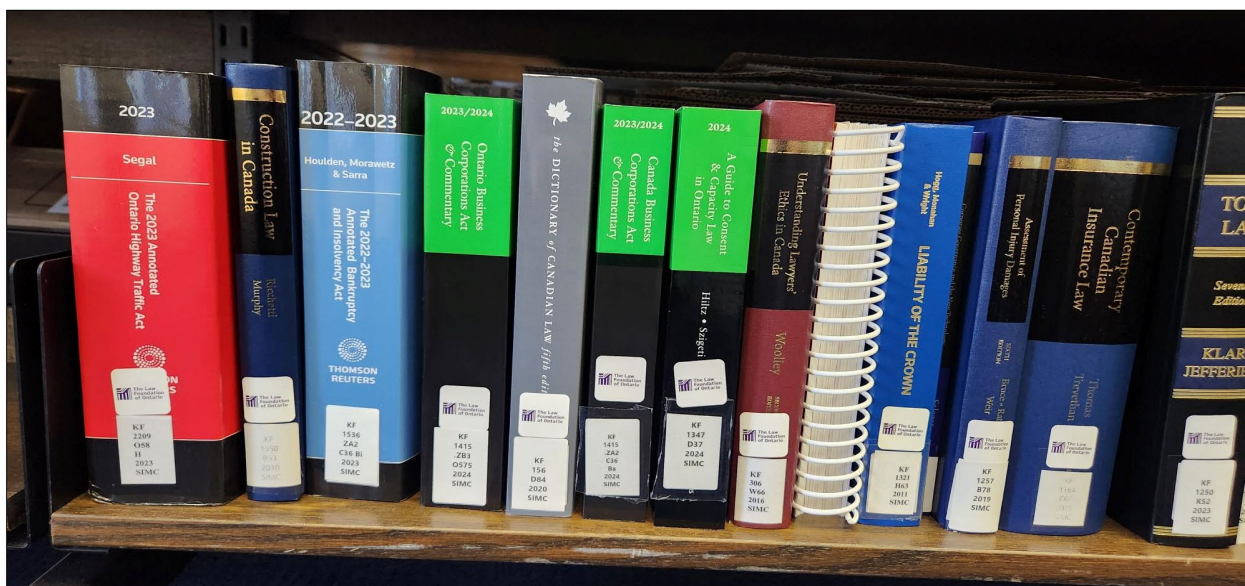
Innovation Sandbox

A selection of successful projects funded by this project are outlined below.

LibAnswers with LibChat	• Multi-platform communication system giving library users access to information through chat and a searchable FAQ / Knowledge Base. Project launch is planned for later this year.
Marketing Expert	• To help get the word out about central and individual association library initiatives. Project launch is planned for later this year.
Library Use Protocol	• Setting out basic expectations for behaviour in libraries.
Slow Zone	• Peel created a space for library users who need somewhere to manage overwhelm, nurse, pray, and more.
Digital Signage	• Piloted by Waterloo and soon to be implemented in other associations, the digital signage keeps library users up to date with important information.
Innovative Resources	• The TLA is piloting Pleadings, Motions, and Facta, which provides sample precedents, and IRIS (Insolvency and Restructuring Intelligent Search), an AI-powered searchable database focused on providing insolvency practitioners with comprehensive resources. Both are resources common in larger firms and often inaccessible to sole practitioners and small firms. • Various associations have been piloting Zoom booths to provide library users with a place for quiet and confidential meetings - a crucial resource that many practitioners would not otherwise have access to.

Equity of Access to Standard Library Collections

Titles acquired under this stream are hitting shelves across the province!



Looking forward to year two of this stream, we are looking at piloting an electronic resource that is currently available—remotely—to all lawyers in Alberta, Quebec, BC, Saskatchewan, and Manitoba. Stay tuned!



Electronic Resource Suite

e-LiRN Update

In 2022, we introduced e-LiRN, giving access to the below resources to all lawyers across Ontario.

Resource	Availability	
	2022/2023	2021
LexisNexis Practical Guidance	100%	25%
Westlaw CriminalSource	100%	14%
Westlaw FamilySource	100%	14%
Westlaw Estates and Trusts Source	100%	8%
vLex Essentials of Canadian Law (incl. Irwin Law)	100%	2%
vLex VINCENT AI Legal Research Assistant	100%	0%
Lexis Advance – Quicklaw	100%	100%
Hein Online (provided by the Great Library)	100%	100%
AccessCLE (provided by the LSO)	100%	100%

Usage Stats for New Electronic Resources

The statistics show that usage of e-LiRN resources increased in 2023 over 2022 with some exceptions. Details are outlined below.

Next steps:

1. Continue to increase awareness of e-LiRN with assistance from the marketing experts we are consulting with under Innovation and Equity of Access to Legal Information in Ontario Courthouse Libraries project (see above).
2. Assess the contents of e-LiRN to ensure that we have the most effective selection of legal resources in late 2024 / early 2025.



3. Work with vendors to obtain statistics that reveal not just how much the products are used, but what they are used for, giving us a better picture of the value each brings to users.
4. Evaluate the vLex Remote Access Pilot Project in 2025.

LexisNexis Practical Guidance

Year	Visits	Views
2022	5,494	5,481
2023	6,118	6,112
Increase / Decrease	11%	11%

Usage of Practical Guidance has increased by 11% from 2022. Usage is strong, especially for a new product and considering lingering foot traffic decreases following pandemic closures.

LexisAdvance QuickLaw

Year	#Document Access	Value of Transactions
2022	88,027	\$1,728,267
2023	79,818	\$1,565,358
Increase / Decrease	-9%	-9%

Usage of Lexis Advance QuickLaw has decreased by 9% from 2022. As mentioned above, we will be increasing marketing efforts in combination with assessing the contents of e-LiRN and the value brought by each resource, including QuickLaw. This is not a new product for the courthouse library network, having been centrally available for many years. Given the decrease, we will conduct a deep dive into whether it is still necessary.

WestlawSource Products

Year	Number of Transactions	Value of Transactions
2022	50,088	\$1,466,582
2023	56,256	\$1,668,745
Increase / Decrease	12%	14%

Usage of WestlawSource products (CriminalSource, FamilySource, and Estates and Trusts Source) increased over 2022. The number of transactions increased by 12% while the value of those transactions went up by 14%.

vLex Essentials of Canadian Law (incl. Irwin Law)

Year	Documents Viewed	Downloads	Searches	Remote Access Pilot Participants
2022	2,476	488	3,414	88
2023	2,078	262	3,639	119
Increase / Decrease	-16%	-46%	7%	35%

While the stats show a large decrease in downloads, in combination with the increase in searches it seems to indicate that individuals are using the resource at the library without needing to download materials. More importantly, it indicates that more individuals are using the AI assistant to help with the research. We continue to request metrics on usage of the AI assistant to help us in our upcoming assessment of the contents of e-LiRN.

Overall, we are pleased to see growth in e-LiRN usage. While there have been some decreases in use of QuickLaw, usage of this longstanding resource remains strong. Decreases in certain vLex metrics are not necessarily indicative of the success of the product.

Please note that we do not collect usage statistics for the resources provided by the Great Library (Hein Online) and the LSO (AccessCLE).

Library Use

The numbers show an incredible increase in usage. While some of this can be accounted for by a return to form after pandemic closures, we must also note that statistics collection from libraries became regularized during 2022 and we believe the 2023 paint a more accurate picture.

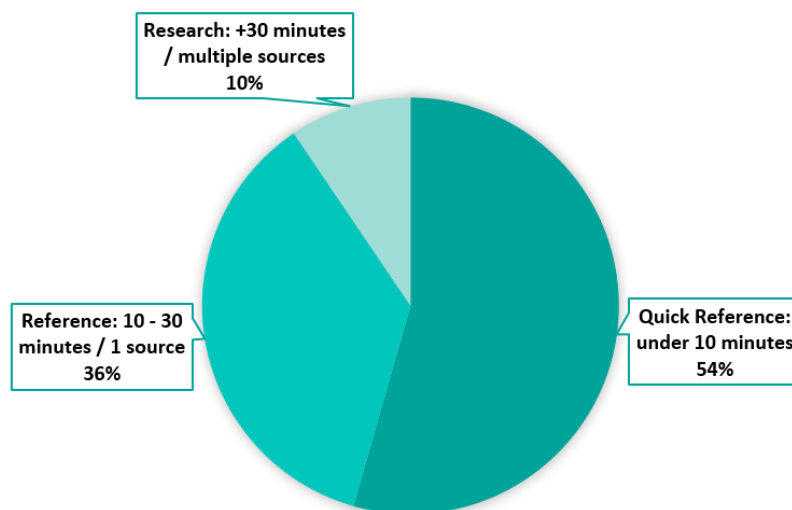
We are very pleased with the 2023 performance.

Collection Use

Year	Items Signed Out	Items Re-Shelved	Interlibrary Loans (sent & borrowed)
2022	4,600	12,000	460
2023	10,500	10,500	770
Increase / Decrease	128%	-12%	67%

Research and Reference

Year	Questions
2022	15,400
2023	38,674
Increase / Decrease	151%



The number of questions asked also increased dramatically over last year. The proportion questions requiring more in depth research to answer remained similar. Questions of mid-level complexity increased while quick reference decreased.

This shows increasing reliance on library staff for complex assistance.

Training delivered by library staff = increased competency of library users



- ✓ Nearly **600 library users** benefited from spontaneous, hands-on individual training
- ✓ Library staff spent **100 hours developing training material**
- ✓ **Over 22 hours** of formal training on how to use the library and its resources were delivered to over **600 library users**



CPD*

- ✓ **Close to 600 hours of CPD replays** provided to **619 attendees**
- ✓ **35** original CPD sessions designed and provided to **1,300+ attendees** - that's nearly **80 hours of content**.

*Please note that many Law Associations provide additional CPD training that is not funded by LiRN—providing their members with a valuable benefit that increases competency.

Numbers cannot tell the full story. Here is a sample of the impact library staff and resources have on courthouse library users.

Your stellar efforts are greatly appreciated by those of us in the practice of law in our area.

I truly appreciate your efforts!

Thank you for your usual GREAT work!!!

"WOW. As usual, you come thru immediately."

I love this library. I love coming here, you're always so helpful.

Our receptionist gave me the materials which you dropped off yesterday – thank you very very much! I love the "Family Law Litigation" book!! It makes everything so simple!!!

Boy you guys come as advertised. Those are exactly what I need to read. Thanks so much.

My [library levy] is well spent as a separate line item ... 😊

Thank you for your help. Your assistance always exceeds expectations.

Thanks very much for this! I mean you were the expert on search terms. I really, really hate research. Argh. Thanks again. I mean it. You've been very helpful.

As I was reflecting on 2023, both of you instantly came to mind as people who played an integral part in my year. Thank you for supporting me since day 1 of my articles and making the library feel like a second home for the four months our firm had renos. I can confidently say the start to my articles wouldn't have felt the same if it weren't for you two, so thank you times infinity.

You're the best!! Thanks so much.

Learn with LiRN

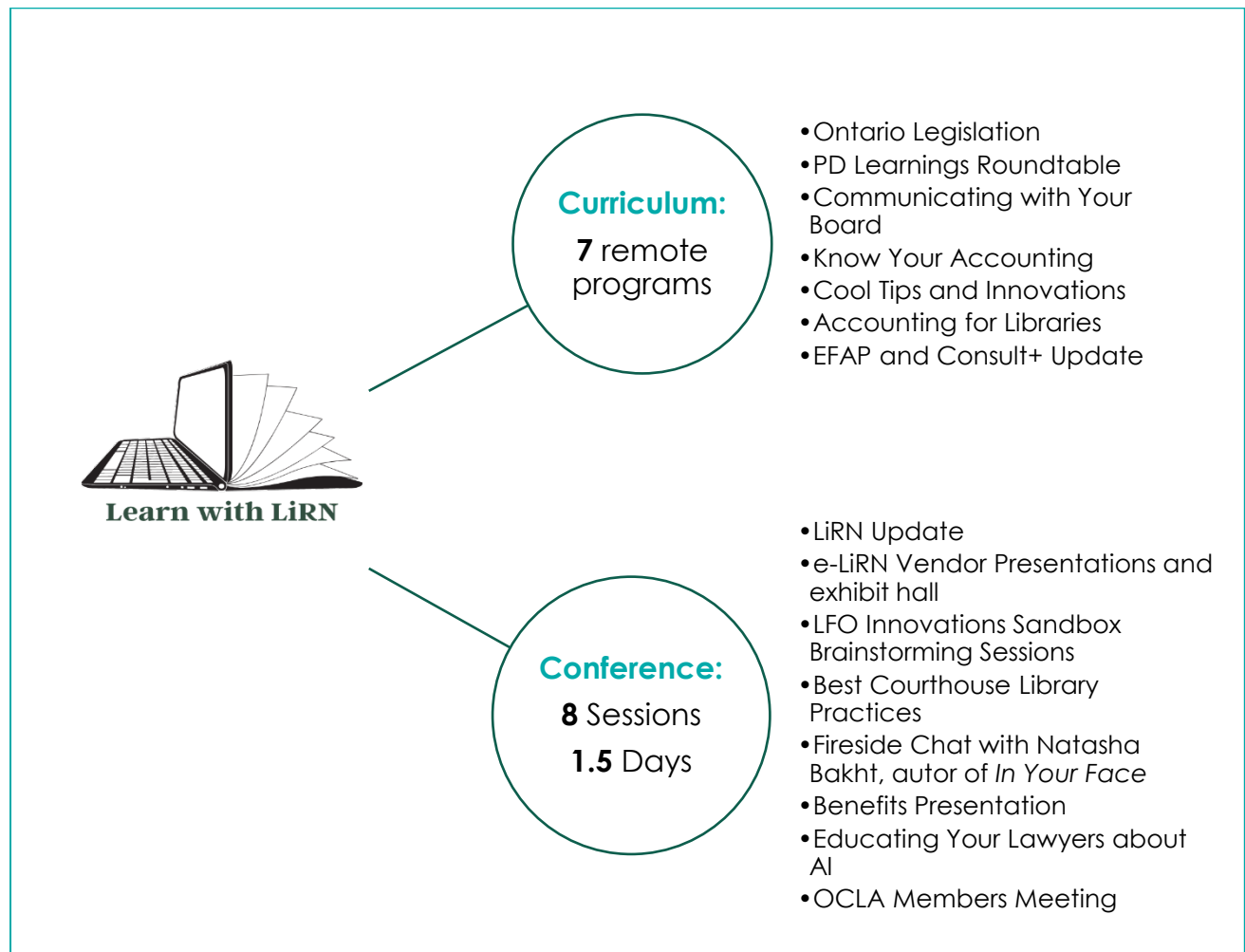
Continuing professional development for librarians is a must. The resources and information available to lawyers is continuously growing. A law librarian's job is to guide users through fields of chaff to find wheat.

There is a lot of information and data to stay current on to be effective.

LiRN has supplemented external learning opportunities with a home-grown, Zoom-based professional development curriculum – designed and delivered by staff for staff. The curriculum culminates in an annual in-person conference.

A TRAINED LIBRARIAN IS A POWERFUL SEARCH ENGINE WITH A HEART.

Sarah McIntyre, Author & Illustrator



Role Descriptions and Salary Matrix

In 2022, LiRN consulted with Associations, shareholders, and library staff to develop an updated role description matrix. Using these updated role descriptions, an external HR consultant developed salary bands.

LiRN does not employ library staff—the Associations are the employer—but undertook this process centrally for the sake of efficiency. The resulting role descriptions and salary bands made available to Associations in late 2022.

Many Associations used these tools to do the challenging work of reviewing their staff members' job descriptions and salaries, and requested funding to provide salary increases. LiRN included these requests in its budget and presented the context to the Law Society, which approved LiRN's budget.

It was the first-time salary bands have been revisited centrally since 2011.

The previous centralized salary bands related to job descriptions that no longer accurately describe what many library staff are currently performing—particularly with respect to individuals running local or smaller area libraries. These employees were known as Library Assistants and their role historically consisted largely of administrative work. For example, while they collected and reviewed promotional literature, acquisitions decisions were made by the Association board. They were only expected to answer simple reference and directional questions.

Today, many of the staff members in roles previously classified as Library Assistants are making collection decisions, managing vendors for both print and electronic products as well as negotiating suitable contracts for online resources for their member's needs, and answering more advanced client research questions using their trained expertise using online resources. This is particularly true with the advent of e-LiRN.

The result has been an increased level of service provided to library users across the province. After obtaining these tools, Associations were able to effectively make the case for library staff salaries that reflect this.

Sneak Peek at 2024 and Beyond

Key Network Processes Project

- Consultations with stakeholders to identify areas of improvement completed and project identification and prioritization for 2024 and beyond underway

Updated Budget Submissions Process and Forms

- Streamlined process and updated forms launched in Q1 of 2024

Continuation of the Innovation and Equity of Access to Legal Resources Project

- Centralized Innovation Projects underway in 2024 and upcoming in 2025
- Electronic resource pilot coming 2024 and 2025

e-LiRN Review

- Deep dive into use, value, and effectiveness of e-LiRN line up starting in 2024

Updated Strategic Plan

- LiRN's initial five year plan was approved in Q2 of 2021 and we are preparing to create a strategic plan for the next 5 years will begin soon, including a planned user needs survey

Acknowledgements

LiRN extends its appreciation to:

- Library staff, for working tirelessly to provide excellent service to users across the province.
- Our shareholders, the Law Society of Ontario, the Federation of Ontario Law Associations, and the Toronto Lawyer's Association, for working with us to create a modern library network
- Law Associations, for operating courthouse libraries and giving their time and thoughtful participation in consultations to help create a more modern network
- The Law Foundation of Ontario for funding the Innovation and Equity of Access to Legal Resources Project
- Our vendors, for working with us to promote the resources available in across Ontario
- And the lawyers of Ontario, who fund the network, for using the resources and services to benefit themselves and their clients

THANK YOU!
