



HALTON HILLS PUBLIC LIBRARY

PRESS RELEASE

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For immediate release

OurOntario.ca: An Award-Winning Story

The Halton Hills Public Library is very pleased to announce that the OurOntario.ca project, on which Library staff member Walter Lewis served as the Technical Lead, is the recipient of the 2008 *Ontario Library and Information Technology Association Award for Technological Innovation*. Walter Lewis, the Manager of Library Systems and Technical Services, was seconded by the province in 2006 to begin work on this ground-breaking project. It involved the creation of a web portal, which acts as a single point of access to digital collections about and throughout Ontario.

OurOntario.ca is a collaborative project, with contributions from many partners having an interest in preserving and celebrating our cultural heritage. Users can discover digitized collections held in libraries, archives, museums, historical societies, galleries, and more. It is designed to help Ontarians of all ages discover the extraordinary stories contained within these collections, simply by using their computer.

These collections are as varied as the contributing partners. Users can find and interact with text-based resources including government documents from the Legislative Assembly of Ontario, in addition to a wide range of photographs, maps, audio and video resources. The 'one-stop' site makes finding resources quick and easy (no need to search separate websites), and the results are truly fascinating, especially for local history and genealogy buffs.

OurOntario.ca is a very innovative product, offering a service that was previously not available anywhere in Ontario. In fact, the product has been so successful that it has now been adopted by Alouette Canada—the national initiative to provide access to digital content from Canadian organizations collecting historical and cultural material. The partnership with Alouette Canada now allows for the delivery of Ontario content from across Canada.

As noted by the Award Committee:

Its ambitious scope (reaching across Canada to assemble digital objects pertinent to Ontarians) is without peer in the province. Its foundation of open source technology and contributions back to the library technology community set a standard of open collaboration to which it can only be hoped other projects will aspire in the future... All of the committee were impressed with the talent and expertise that were required to bring about this useful and much-needed tool.

Here at the Halton Hills Public Library, we are grateful to have such a skilled visionary on staff, who is a credit to our organization and to the profession of librarianship. Through his work, Walter has made it easy to “explore your story”.

Walter Lewis will be demonstrating the features of OurOntario.ca to Town Council at their meeting on Monday, April 7, 2008. You can also try it yourself at:

www.ourontario.ca

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