



Board Meeting Recap - February 2010

The Board met for a full day in-person meeting on February 9th in Ottawa. They welcomed the new Chair, David Barnard, to his first meeting.

2010 - 2012 License Renewals - debriefing

Board reviewed a summary of the overall results of the renewals ([see News Release and Backgrounder](#)), which reflected strong levels of continuing participation by CRKN members as well as evidence of institutions being able to tailor their participation to better manage their commitments (i.e. several institutions stepped out of some agreements, but also joined other agreements for the first time).

The Board discussed at length several significant problems that were due in part to the volume of the renewals, in part to the complexity of unbundling the core license pricing following nine years of cost-sharing as a package, and in part to communications and process issues. The Board asked staff to provide a full analysis of these issues, and the Board reiterated its commitment to addressing problems.

NRT Planning Priorities for 2010

At its planning meeting January 28-29, NRT welcomed two new members: Peter Webster (designated by CAUL) and Carol Stephenson (designated by OCUL). NRT also thanked Faye Abrams for her "yeoman's service" to CRKN - Faye has been part of NRT since the beginning of CNSLP in 2000!

The NRT devoted time at the meeting to review its role and ways in which to strengthen communications and processes. Three areas of priority were brought forward to the Board for planning purposes:

1. License renewals: Two licenses are coming up for renewal in December 2010 - Elsevier ScienceDirect and SWETS ALPSP Learned Journal Collection. A workplan and associated timeline for these renewals are now in development to ensure that members can anticipate key dates well in advance and have opportunity for meaningful input and consultation. SWETS contract renewal is the "first wave" of the DCI project licenses that will be moving from the CFI-subsidized period to the sustainability (self-funded) period of the project.

2. **Focus on Canadian content:** NRT proposes to focus on key opportunities with Canadian content in English and French. NRC Research Press and expansion of the Erudit license were noted as high priorities.
3. **Partnerships:** NRT wants to continue advancing the goal of working with like-minded organizations to add value to what CRKN already does in licensing. Examples of opportunities are development of content prioritization tools (i.e. how to better manage "collection development" on a collective rather than institutional basis); continued work with CUCCIO on the CAF (see CAF Update below); and possible new products/services that add functionality or value to existing content or data sources.

DCI Update

The unbundling of the core licenses in 2010 - many years after the CFI funding for those original products terminated - demonstrated the complexity of moving from an environment where central funds are available, to an environment where ongoing costs for products are carried solely by the participants.

In planning for the DCI 3-year sustainability phase (period of self-funding required by CFI for a period of 3 years after CFI and provincial matching funds terminate), CRKN has the opportunity to apply its learnings to take action to avoid bigger problems in the future.

Staff is currently working at modeling some scenarios for the SWETS license, which is up for renewal in January 2011, so that NRT can analyze how the CRKN "research metric" used for setting members' contributions for the overall DCI project, compares with the costing model set by SWETS for the e-resource itself.

Based on this analysis, NRT will make further recommendations to the Board in April 2010 on the best course of action so as to avoid the problems that several members encountered with the major cost adjustments that were made with the recent core license unbundling.

With the modest funds remaining in the DCI content budget, CRKN is working on two projects to assist in digitization of SSH content at University of Toronto and University of Alberta. The U of T project is to digitize an international and out-of-copyright collection of monographs, and the U of A project is to digitize the Canadiana-owned Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions legacy microfiche collection.

Communications Outreach

The draft results of the Communications Outreach Member e-Survey were shared with the Board. This survey was conducted to strengthen CRKN's relationship with its Members by understanding the perceived benefits of membership, the level of satisfaction with current services, support for possible future services, areas for improvement and preferred forms of communication.

The survey was sent to 214 members, was open for participation from December 9th - January 8th and received a 53% response rate.

The e-survey delivered good Overall Satisfaction scores of 77%, with most respondents saying they were satisfied with the value they received from membership. They are less satisfied with communications, especially the timeliness surrounding the licensing process. Members also reported very high levels of satisfaction with Scholarly Content - for Relevance, Quality and Quantity.

The top three items for improvement were licensing related - collection of statistics and reports, tools to assess the financial impact of collection decisions, and earlier library involvement with changes and selections.

On the topic of communications, respondents prefer electronic methods, especially via LISTSERV and website. Online events were preferred over in-person, and paper communications ranked the lowest.

The final report of this Communications Outreach will be prepared for broad distribution in March 2010. The results will be integrated into several activities including the Strategic plan, the Value, Influence, Trends and Leadership (VITaL) Task Group for organizational impact measurement, the risk management framework, the budget, and of course the Communications plan.

Attention is already being paid to areas that need improvement. You may have noticed an increased level of communications starting in 2010 with the launch of the Newsbrief, as well as the action taken by the Negotiations Resource Team to begin a pilot project for serial title management.

2010 - 2012 Strategic Plan

A framework for the strategic plan was presented to the Board for discussion and confirmation. The Board agreed that building on the three pillars in the 2007 - 2009 Strategic Plan would afford a smooth continuum upon which to continue planning and measurement exercises. The Communications outreach feedback provides support for CRKN's overall mission vision and values, and also supports specific activities within the three strategic directions:

- Managing our Products and Services
- Enhancing our Community
- Focusing our Organization

The draft plan will be circulated for member input in March in conjunction with the release of the Communications Outreach Report so that members have the opportunity to provide informed feedback on how CRKN's strategic direction is set. See the [2007 - 2009 Strategic Plan](#).

Financial Report and Recommendations

CRKN is tracking ahead of forecast in its income statement. Invoicing is well underway for the 15 renewed contracts.

In anticipation of the implementation of Ontario and BC Harmonized Sales Tax on July 1, 2010, staff has been following developments closely and receiving expert advice from sources such as Deloitte with regard to how CRKN will have to treat transactions, and what impact this will have on member universities.

The Board approved a specialized consultation with Deloitte to ensure that CRKN complies with all requirements. Implications for members are still emerging as key pieces of regulation in the different provincial jurisdictions are finalized. CRKN will share the findings of its consultation with members as soon as possible once full implications are known.

The 2010-2011 budget is being prepared for Board review at the April meeting. Meanwhile a number of directions and principles are being followed in drafting the new budget. For example, CRKN will use a conservative projection of interest income in order to transition away from reliance on the income to fund operations. And, CRKN will carry out its budgeting over a multi-year time horizon in order to align with the strategic plan and project priorities.

Expanded Mandate for Nominating Committee Initiates Governance Committee

Over the last year, the Board has focused efforts in strengthening CRKN governance. For example, Terms of Reference have been developed for individual Board members including a Code of Conduct; and policies for holding meetings without management (in camera sessions) have been drawn up as a routine part of Board deliberations.

At the February meeting, the Board continued these important developments by approving an expanded mandate for the Nominating Committee, essentially bringing together several functions that are central to ensuring that CRKN continues to be governed with vision and excellence. These responsibilities include:

1. Orientation program(s) for new Directors
2. Ongoing Board education, and updating with respect to best governance practices
3. Succession planning
4. Board and committee evaluation

Greg Kealey (VP Research, University of New Brunswick) was asked to transition his role as Chair of the Nominating Committee to the Governance Committee. See [Terms of Reference](#).

Canadian Access Federation (CAF) Update

The Board heard from Sean Reynolds, CIO at Queen's University, who is a Board member of the Canadian University Council of Chief Information Officers (CUCCIO). Over the past year, CRKN has collaborated with CUCCIO on the development of CAF, an initiative that is of mutual interest and benefit to the university library, information technology, and researcher/learner communities.

The CAF coordinates the relationship between identity providers (such as universities) and service providers (such as databases at a publisher site), resulting in agreements between providers and the CAF rather than bilateral agreements between each and every provider. For CRKN, a federated approach to access management would provide members with a more granular, secure, integrated, and scalable way to handle user authentication and authorization. For CUCCIO, CRKN's involvement will help engage a key group of service providers (publishers and other content providers) as well as a range of participating institutions.

In April 2009 CUCCIO submitted a funding application to CANARIE to develop a longer-term business plan for the CAF. This application was formally supported by CRKN, and following the funding award from CANARIE, CRKN Executive Director D. deBruijn participated on the CAF Futures Study Steering Committee which has overseen development of the business plan and recommendations to CANARIE. Discussions are underway with CANARIE regarding how evolving access management services may best be supported at the national level.

The Board approved the Executive Committee's recommendation that CRKN become a member of the CAF as an Identity Provider. It should be noted that this membership is for CRKN alone, not on behalf of the 73 member institutions.