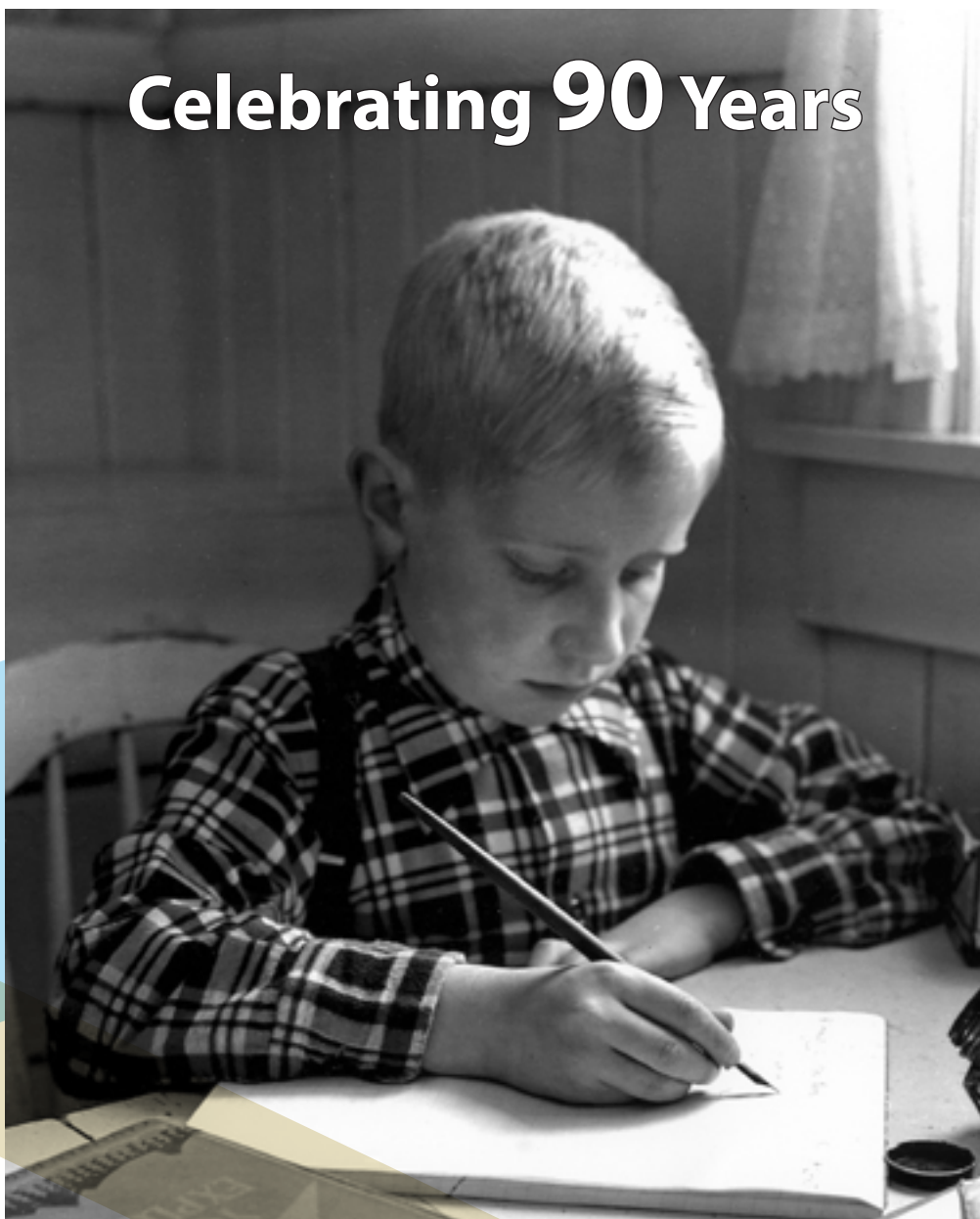


# What's New

November 2009

## Celebrating 90 Years



This year, Open School BC celebrates ninety years as the leader in distributed learning programs for the Province of British Columbia. Our roots are deep and ever changing.

In 1919, the then, Department of Education created the first ever Correspondence Branch offered a curriculum to elementary students that did not have access to a traditional schoolroom. This was the first of its kind in Canada and second only to Australia's in the whole world. Initially available only to children living in rural areas, the program grew to include children with

disabilities, under-educated adults and new immigrants.

Although the service remained the same, we went through a series of name changes beginning in the late 60s, which included the Learning Resource Branch, Technology and Distance Education Branch, the Education Technology Centre, and in 1998, the newly formed Open Learning Agency. It was during our tenure within the later, that we adopted our current name, Open School BC. We also were *fostered* in a number of different Government Ministries such as

Education, Agriculture and Fisheries, and now, Citizens Services.

This was also a period of significant technological advancements: moving from manual to electric typewriters, to word processors on personal computers, to professional desktop publishing. With the emergence of the Internet, distributed learning began to change dramatically, and so did our organization as we began developing online courses.

In 2003 the Ministry of Education determined that it would no longer fund the development of educational resources for distributed learning and so found a new home with the Queen's Printer. As part of this division, we operate as a cost recovery organization, working with the various school districts and Distributed Learning Schools both as partners and clients to develop resources and offer online services. This helps us to maintain our focus on content development and to recognize the importance of customer service.

Today we offer over 3,000 resources to the K-12 school system and host the premier learning management system for the Province. Our content development team insures that our courses and resources are compliant with all learning outcomes mandated by the Ministry of Education's IRPs as well as to include a diversity of interactive multimedia. We continue to offer both print and online resources for our users.





**Today we offer over 3,000 resources to Teachers, Students and Parents in the K-12 School System and in Distance Education as well as host premier learning management system for the Province of British Columbia.**

**N**ot satisfied to merely host the industry leading LMS (learning management system), our tech group developed a database to hold student data and an *On-line Admin Tool* to help with the management of students, classes

and their information. This year they released their new Reports Centre that amalgamates all this information into one convenient area and makes report cards and 1701's a breeze!

**W**e are a small staff of 22 which includes:

Project Managers, experienced BC teachers who coordinate the development of a course and work with other teachers, instructional designers, writers and artists to develop the resource content.

Production Technicians, who produce the courses, create graphics and work with the images to publish both print and online courses.

Systems Experts, who manage our servers, work with our partners and clients finding solutions and develop new applications for online learning.

And, of course, there is the management team to bring it all together and keep it moving forward.

**M**ost recently, Open School BC has taken these skills and applied them to a number of public sector online training programs. In our drive to grow and maintain our leadership in the distributed learning field, we have embraced projects as diverse as the Local Assistant to the Fire Commissioner to the Provincial Capital Commission to FOODSAFE Online. If your organization has a need for an online training program, I would be happy to elaborate on our services. Of course we always remember and continue our work in the K-12 area, releasing new or updated courses every year.

**A**s it is with every story, there are many details left out in order to keep this story brief and entertaining. Next month I will have some exciting news to share with you on new resources and material that we're developing to deliver to you in 2010.



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