

Context

THE NEWSLETTER OF THE DALHOUSIE UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

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GIS Centre Opens On November 16, 2005



President Traves (right) receives a gift from James Boxall (left)

International GIS Day 2005 was kicked off appropriately at the Dalhousie Libraries with the official opening of the Dalhousie GIS Centre by University President Tom Traves. The Centre is the culmination of many years of concerted and cooperative efforts between the Dalhousie University Libraries and the campus at large.

The genesis of the GIS Centre lies in the 1995 launch of the “GIS in Libraries in Canada” project. From that small step came the growth of Geographic Information Systems services at Dalhousie, strategically positioned in the Killam Library Learning Commons. GIS services are connected administratively with the Map Collection (the largest in Eastern Canada) to form the Map and Geospatial Information Collection (MAGIC).

Since the creation of a GIS Services Office in the Learning Commons in 2001, Dalhousie has experienced an ever-increasing demand for GIS work, as can be

CONTENTS

GIS Centre Opens 1-2

New Public Services Librarians 3

Scopus4

A New Novanet 5

People 6

seen in the expansion of GIS courses and research. In response to campus needs, Vice-President Academic and Provost Dr. Sam Scully created an Ad Hoc Committee on GIS, co-chaired by the Centre's Director James Boxall and the Dean of Graduate Studies Dr. Jan Kwak. The Committee, which included representatives from every faculty, produced a report which in part suggested the creation of a GIS Centre, to be substantially supported by the Libraries, with a dedicated budget for infrastructure and outreach. The report was accepted by Vice President Scully.

Response To Increased Demand

Once established in 2004, the GIS Centre became wholly responsible for campus-wide GIS software and geospatial data. To support this increased mandate, a new staff member was hired and computing resources within the Centre and in UCIS expanded. The Centre now has three full-time staff and nine student interns. There are over 150 computers in the Dalhousie Libraries that are GIS functional, including five high-end workstations in the Killam Learning Commons, two in the Map Collection, and six in the GIS Centre.

Much More Than Maps

The Centre's mandate is to seek out and support research activities, as well as to provide advanced research support in areas ranging from project design and management to cartographic design and production and data analysis. GIS staff have professional experience in spatial analysis and cartography, and are involved in teaching on campus as well. In order to enhance teaching operations, a campus license has been created for online courses to supplement in-class work and the teaching done through the Centre. At the present time, the Centre is also involved in outreach programs with Vietnam, the Philippines and Indonesia. These programs are part of Dalhousie-based projects. They serve as an opportunity to enhance the role of the Centre and to increase collaboration with various researchers on campus, which is another part of the mandate outlined in the Vice President's GIS Report.

The Centre has been generously supported by a number of data and software suppliers, including Service Nova Scotia and Municipal Relations, as well as professional associations. ESRI Canada is the major corporate sponsor, providing the Centre with software licenses that allow it to offer GIS software to every lab,

staff or faculty computer on campus. ESRI has also very generously donated a scholarship and software bundle worth over \$35,000 for a GIS student. The Centre receives data from several government agencies, including Halifax Regional Municipality and Natural Resources Canada. It has been the support of these groups which has made the work of the Centre possible.



James Boxall, Director of the GIS Centre and Curator of the University Libraries Map Collection, is pleased with the high profile the GIS Centre has achieved at Dalhousie. "After many years of collaborative activities on and off campus, there was a clear need to ensure

the place of GIS in the Libraries," he states. "The GIS Centre exists for the entire Dalhousie community, and it was that community which saw the need for the Centre. Our efforts over the last decade were always directed at creating an environment in the Libraries where GIS could grow to serve the university." Boxall's own professional commitments extend far beyond the walls of the GIS office and the Killam Library. His research interests revolve around "geolibraries," and at the current moment he is working on developing, with colleagues in the US and Canada, a Digital Library for the Gulf of Maine. He is an Adjunct Professor for Dalhousie's School of Planning and School for Resource

and Environmental Studies, and is a Geography Instructor in the Department of Earth Sciences. Boxall was recently honoured by being named a Fellow of the Royal Geographical Society (with the Institute of British Geographers).

“The GIS Centre exists for the entire Dalhousie community.”

The location of the GIS Centre within the Libraries is unique in Canada. Most libraries offer access to data and software, as well as basic instruction, but the Dalhousie GIS Centre is pushing this envelope into a whole new service, research and teaching direction. The combination of licenses, data, hardware, staff, services, various types of outreach, and other features makes the Centre the largest of its kind in any library in Canada, and on par with most of those in other countries. Dalhousie University and the Dalhousie Libraries have created, in one decade, an innovative and exciting facility that seeks to help people explore the worlds they envision and express their ideas geographically.

Want to know more about GIS? Go to GIS.com at <http://www.gis.com/>, or explore GIS resources on the MAGIC website at <http://magic.library.dal.ca/>

Libraries Welcome New Public Services Librarians

The Dalhousie University Libraries are very pleased to announce that **Linda Bedwell** and **Dominic Silvio** have been appointed as Public Services librarians / Subject Specialists in the Reference and Research Services Department of the Killam Library. Linda's appointment began on September 6, 2005, and Dominic's appointment began on September 15, 2005.



Linda Bedwell has a Bachelor of Arts degree in Classics and History from St. Mary's University, partial completion of an MBA degree from St. Mary's University and an MLIS degree from Dalhousie, 2005. She worked at IMP Aerospace Ltd. from 1992-2001, in various capacities such as Technical Publications Editor and then as Contracts Administrator. She has worked as a Graduate Research Assistant on the History of the Book in Canada Project while in Library School, and as an Information Desk floater in various branches of the Halifax Public Libraries. As a subject specialist, Linda is responsible for Sociology and Social Work, Anthropology, Women's Studies and Education. She enjoys hiking, ballroom and swing dance lessons, and spending quality time with her dog, Friday.

Dominic Silvio has an Honours Bachelor of Arts degree in Environment and Resource Management from University of Toronto, a Diploma in Theology and a Diploma in Philosophy from St. Paul's Major Seminary in Sudan, and an MLIS degree from University of Western Ontario, 2005. Dominic has experience working in the University College Library and the Robarts Library, University of Toronto, in the Markham Public Libraries, and in the D.B. Weldon Library at the University of Western Ontario. Dominic Silvio is responsible for collections management in Political Science, International Development Studies and Black Canadian Studies.



Works in Progress: DUASC Digital Collections in Development

The following Dalhousie University Archives & Special Collections digital resources will be released in 2006:

The Sir Francis Bacon Collection

Featuring some of the Bacon Collection's most significant items, all of which were published in the 17th century.

The Buildings of Dalhousie University: An Illustrated History

Images, histories and a chronology of Dalhousie University's major buildings, from the original Dalhousie College of 1824 to the 2005 Kenneth C. Rowe Management Building.

The Donald Cameron MacKay Collection

A digital resource introducing the works of Nova Scotia artist, illustrator, printmaker and painter D. C. MacKay.

Historical Roots: Blacks in Nova Scotia

A unique web-based gateway to Dalhousie's contribution to the *Our Roots: Canada's Local Histories Online* project.

The Atlantic Symphony Orchestra Collection

Highlighting the historical records available for research use from the archives of the ASO.

SCOPUS

Hot New Database for Science Researchers

In the fall of 2005, the Dalhousie Libraries added a major new database to their collection: Scopus, which bills itself as “the world’s largest abstract and indexing database.”

Scopus is an interdisciplinary bibliographic “navigational tool” that contains primarily scientific, technical and medical records with a growing number of records from the social sciences. Scopus covers more than 14,000 peer-reviewed titles from 4,000 publishers and, having been developed by librarians and researchers, “is designed to bring you expert results even if you’re not an expert researcher.” You will easily and quickly find materials in the areas of:

- agricultural & biological sciences
- chemistry
- earth & environmental sciences
- economics, business & management
- engineering
- health
- life sciences
- mathematics
- physics
- psychology
- social sciences

Records in Scopus date back to the 1960s, and the database offers integrated web searching as well as seamless linking to full-text articles and library resources. But the greatest feature of Scopus is its sophisticated cited reference indexing. What this means is that the researcher can:

- browse the cited references of articles published from 1996 onwards and make connections across subject areas
- view all the citations that your document has received from other documents covered by Scopus
- set up a document citation alert to receive notice of new articles that cite a

particular document

- use ‘Related Documents’ to get a list of articles that share references with the document you are viewing

Having read this far, canny researchers may be asking themselves what the difference is between Scopus and Web of Science—both powerful citation databases covering similar subject areas (and both licensed for Dal users by the Dalhousie Libraries). Scopus has several key advantages over Web of Science. First, it includes the open access platform Scirus (also an Elsevier product), which means that it indexes webpage-based resources as well as published materials. Second, *Scopus* provides abstracts for a much larger percentage of their records (Web of Science does not create abstracts, it only includes them if they are present in the original documents). Finally, Scopus includes a direct link to open access articles and reports not only in the results list, but also when they are cited as references.

The disadvantages of Scopus in relation to Web of Science are in part due to the fact that it is a relatively new product. To date it covers approximately 27 million records dating back to the 1960s, while Web of Science covers a 60-year period and currently holds 40 million records. Web of Science has cited references for its entire database, while Scopus only has citations in about 10 million records. However, Scopus’ claim that it is the most comprehensive point of access for scientific, medical, technical and social science information does appear to be true—the same basic search done in Web of Science and Scopus brought up 5 times the number of hits in the latter database.

Access Scopus through the Libraries’ databases page and decide for yourself which one you prefer!

<http://www.library.dal.ca/databases/dbases.htm>



The New Novanet

Novanet has changed! On January 9th the Dalhousie Libraries, along with all of the institutions in the Novanet consortium, launched ALEPH, a brand new version of our Novanet catalogue.

The new Novanet is much more than a facelift—it is a whole new system. Over the last 15 months, Novanet staff and partners in the libraries have been working hard to migrate our data from one database system to a completely new one, tracking the hundreds of locations and codes which make it possible for you to find books, journals and government documents in the Novanet libraries.

Why would we undertake such a monumental task? Novanet had outgrown the capabilities of its previous system. ALEPH, an Ex Libris product, reduces data duplication and will be much faster than the old Novanet. In the old system, search result sets of more than 200 records could not be sorted (e.g., by publication date, author or title); the new Novanet has the capability to sort result sets of up to 1000 records. Users who log in to the new system may set some of their own display preferences, such as number of brief records per page and format. Novanet Express, a favourite service of Dalhousie Libraries users, is still part of the Novanet catalogue—look for the link “Novanet Express” in the location details of your book or journal. A new function, coming later in 2006, will allow users to set up customized journal alerting profiles.

As with any new system, there are bound to be a few ‘discoveries’ after implementation. The Novanet team is already looking toward their first review of the system interface and functionality during the summer of 2006. As always, we welcome comments and constructive criticism from our users!

<http://aleph1.novanet.ns.ca>

Outthere

Podcasting

Podcast: (*n.*) A non-music audio broadcast that has been converted to an MP3 file or other audio file format for playback in a digital music player or computer. A portmanteau of Apple’s “iPod” and “broadcasting.”

First popularised in 2004, podcasting is also a way of publishing audio files to the Internet, allowing users to subscribe to RSS feeds (news, sports, discussions etc.) and receive new files automatically. Podcasting does not require an iPod or iTunes; any digital audio player or computer with the appropriate “podcatching” software can play podcasts. The same technique can deliver video files.

Podcasting has caught on hugely in less than a year. By mid-June, 2005, a Google search for “‘how to’ +podcast” returned 1,260,000 hits. Podcasting’s initial appeal was to allow individuals to create their own “radio shows,” but the system is increasingly finding other uses, including:

- ▶ *a new outlet for commercial and public radio stations.* Dal’s own CKDU/FM offers podcasts of some its programs.
- ▶ *unofficial museum tours.* Museums are making their audio tours available as podcasts for download, and art students and professors are creating their own “unauthorized” and often more controversial narrations of famous art works.
- ▶ *education.* Dalhousie’s Academic Computing Services has been investigating podcasting and the use of iPod as a portable disk drive on campus computers.

People

Pam Chase-Mobus

Acting Head of Access Services
Sexton Design & Technology Library



Pam Chase-Mobus (yes, the Mobus is derived from the Moebius-strip Moebius) has a philosophy that characterizes her whole life: "Never stay in your comfort zone." Currently Acting Head of Access Services at the Sexton Library, Pam thrives on new challenges and, given the fact that she has been working since she was 15, has clearly risen to many successfully.

Pam has been at Dalhousie since she started with Versa Food Services in 1991, while studying Electronics and Business Equipment Technology at Community College. A work term at Xerox led to a

job at the Dal Printing Centre, which was followed by 6 years as a Circulation Clerk and systems support staff at the Killam Library. When the position of Assistant to the Head of Access Services came open at the Sexton in 2002, Pam was a shoe-in. The combination of public service and technical support comes naturally to her, and in her current position she also enjoys doing office and personnel management..

Pam found the move from the Killam to the Sexton a challenge in itself, mostly because the work environment in the smaller library is quite unique. "You really get to know people, to know what their needs are," she says. This makes for a highly efficient service ethic at the Circulation desk. "We're very, very proud of our customer service here," Pam states with a smile. "We enjoy working with each other, and communication is very good."

Other related duties for Pam currently include being on the Dalhousie Libraries Web Implementation Team, and working on the transition to ALEPH, our new library system. In her free time, Pam is a great motorbike buff, and can be found every summer weekend with her partner tearing up the roads on her Ninja 600 sport bike. "I'm pretty resilient," she says, "and I don't like to be idle!"

Did You Know...?

The Dalhousie Libraries offer a suite of **interactive online Information Literacy tutorials** which cover the basic information you need to do your library research. Most have a handout in pdf format outlining the key points of the tutorial. Find out how to:

- .. develop your research strategy
- .. search for materials effectively
- .. find resources via Novanet
- .. find journal articles
- .. search databases
- .. find Web resources
- .. research ethically (avoid plagiarism)

<http://infolit.library.dal.ca/tutorials/>