

Minister of Industry
and Minister of State (Agriculture)



Ministre de l'Industrie
et ministre d'État (Agriculture)

Ottawa, Canada K1A 0H5

b.

JUL 23 2012



Mr. Paul Ainslie
Chair, Toronto Public Library Board
789 Yonge Street
Toronto, Ontario M4W 2G8

Dear Mr. Ainslie:

Thank you for your letter regarding the Community Access Program (CAP).

CAP was officially launched in 1995 when the Internet was in its infancy, and only 40 percent of Canadian households had a computer and approximately 10 percent of these had Internet access. It was evident that access to the Internet would be critical to Canada's future competitiveness. The objective of CAP was to encourage participation in the digital economy by providing access to computers and the Internet at public access points to ensure that Canadians could access the Internet. Over the past 17 years, CAP has contributed to bringing computer and Internet technologies to Canadians across the country, and has successfully achieved its objectives.

In contrast, by 2010, approximately 79 percent of Canadians had home Internet access. Today, with smart phones, many Canadians have access to the Internet in their hands.

As part of its regular fiscal planning process, the Government of Canada reviews all program expenditures, including CAP. In these challenging fiscal times, the government remains committed to prioritizing expenditures and returning to budget balance. Federal funding for CAP ended on March 31, 2012, as scheduled.

However, federal funding will continue to support youth internships at community Internet sites. This will provide young Canadians with the vital skills and work experience needed to make a successful transition to the workplace. Former CAP-supported sites will continue to be eligible for this funding.

Schools, libraries and not-for-profit learning organizations that require access to technology can continue to benefit from other federal initiatives, such as the Computers for Schools (CFS) Program. Free computers will still be available through CFS, which collects, repairs and refurbishes donated surplus computers from government and private sector sources, and distributes them to schools, public libraries and not-for-profit learning organizations throughout Canada. Like the CAP Youth Initiative, this program also provided valuable training in computers and technology. To learn more about CFS, please visit www.ic.gc.ca/eic/site/cfs-ope.nsf/eng/Home.

Canadians can also access government services through Service Canada, which was created in 2005 to improve the delivery of government programs and services to Canadians. It offers single-window access to a wide range of Government of Canada programs and services for citizens through more than 600 points of service located across the country, call centres and the Internet. To find locations in your area, please visit www.servicecanada.gc.ca/eng/about/index.shtml or call 1-800-O-CANADA.

The Government of Canada recognizes the importance of a nationally accessible digital infrastructure and views it as a crucial part of future efforts to ensure that Canada benefits from the global digital economy. In support of that, we have brought broadband access to nearly 218,000 households across Canada through the Broadband Canada: Connecting Rural Canadians program.

Once again, thank you for writing and please accept my best wishes.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in dark ink, appearing to read 'Christian Paradis', with a stylized, flowing script.

The Honourable Christian Paradis, P.C., M.P.