

ARC-BC (FAQs)

- **What is ARC-BC?**

ARC-BC (Accessible Resource Centre – British Columbia) is a Ministry of Education funded provincial response to the increasing demand for digital or alternate format alternatives to print in BC classrooms. When open, educators in all school districts will be able to search this online repository or “digital library” to find and download alternate format resources related to the BC curriculum. Production and distribution of the alternate format materials will be centrally coordinated and duplication of effort in resource creation will hopefully be eliminated. The goal of ARC-BC is to provide BC educators with access to high-quality digital and alternate format materials for their students in a timely manner.

- **What types of alternate format materials will be available through ARC-BC?**

There will be a variety of alternate formats available based on the BC K-12 curriculum. Electronic versions of textbooks and novels in simple e-text (e.g..txt, .rtf), scanned formats (e.g..kes), as well as Braille and large print will be available. In some cases, publisher files, usually in .pdf, will also be available.

- **How are the alternate formats available through ARC-BC obtained?**

ARC-BC is both a service and a community. While production assistants will be involved in producing new titles and formats based on popular demand, the bulk of the materials will be submitted from school and district teams. As teams around the province create new alternate format materials, they will be encouraged to submit them to the repository.

- **Will anyone be able to access these materials?**

Due to copyright restrictions on most materials that will be available, access to the repository will be limited to those students with perceptual disabilities and the BC educators supporting these students. Perceptual disabilities include physical restrictions, visual impairments and comprehension disabilities.

- **How will these educators gain access to the repository?**

BC school districts can join the ARC-BC community through an application process. Once part of the community, any student with a perceptual disability or an educator supporting that student in the district, can apply for access to the ARC-BC alternate format collection. Access is granted by the individual school district's ARC-BC District Contact with each user requiring a unique username and password to log into the repository.

- **When will ARC-BC be available to districts?**

Eight school districts are involved in the ARC-BC Pilot Project and will begin accessing it in September 2008. All other school districts will be invited to join the ARC-BC community during the fall of 2008 with access beginning in January 2009.

- **What will districts require to be able to access ARC-BC?**

ARC-BC is a web based database that does not require any special installations. Districts will require the necessary network infrastructure to allow high speed internet access and the downloading of files by individual users in their district.

- **What training on ARC-BC is available?**

There will be a variety of training materials available through the ARC-BC website including print instructions, video demonstrations, and workshop packages. In addition, there will be face-to-face and online training available as budget and schedules permit.

- **What are the important issues for BC school districts interested in joining the ARC-BC community?**

- Network infrastructure – Will school teams be able to access the repository and download materials?
- Staff training – How will your district provide or support the training needed to utilize the ARC-BC materials and understand the copyright restrictions?
- Access – Who will be granted access to the repository and how will districts ensure that copyright restrictions are observed?

- **How will ARC-BC work with existing school district alternate format collections?**

Many school districts around the province already have small collections of alternate format materials that are available to students with perceptual disabilities. The goal of ARC-BC is to support these districts by becoming a larger, more centralized repository that will eliminate the need for districts to gather, manage and store their own collections. Registered ARC-BC users, as part of the ARC-BC community, will be encouraged to submit newly created alternate formats so they can be catalogued and searched by all users.

- **Will publisher electronic files be available through ARC-BC?**

ARC-BC is working with publishers of BC curricular materials to provide electronic versions of textbooks and novels. Individual publishers are encouraged to join the ARC-BC community as a way of providing accessible formats to those students who require them. Depending on the publisher, these files may be available through ARC-BC.

- **Will alternate formats of public domain works be available through ARC-BC?**

Some public domain materials may be available if they are used in the BC K-12 curriculum. However, through the search process, users will be directed to the public domain sites that contain these non-copyrighted alternate formats.

- **How will ARC-BC work with other Canadian alternate format producers?**

There are a number of alternate format producers in Canada, some working on K-12 materials, some working on post-secondary materials, and some specializing in materials for the visually impaired. These producers will be invited to join the ARC-BC community to allow sharing of materials between the different organizations.

- **Where can I find more information about ARC-BC?**

The ARC-BC website at www.arc-bc.org has more information as does the ARC-BC information page on the SET-BC website (www.setbc.org).

If you have specific questions about ARC-BC, please contact the ARC-BC team at arc@setbc.org or phone 604.261.9450.