

Project:
Organic Digital Information Initiative
Project no: I-147

Prepared and delivered by:



September 25th 2013

I-147 Project Description:

Since establishing in 1975, COG has built an impressive and diverse collection of information, publications, articles and research on organic food, farming, gardening and cultivation. It has always been COG's mission to make these informative resources easily available to the public through both a free lending library and through production of its magazine, *The Canadian Organic Grower (TCOG)*. In keeping with this mission, COG realized that new digital and web-based pursuits were needed to increase the availability of these valuable and unique Canadian resources for our members and the general public. This included:

- 1) The development of an online platform for TCOG magazine where digitized articles and content could be accessed and;
- 2) The development of an Organic Library Interface that would allow for easy book requests, a modern display of library catalogue materials, and effective management for our volunteer librarians.

Project Results:

1) Bringing TCOG Magazine and Article content Online

This portion of the project was completed as planned by Irene Hawkings under the supervision of Beth McMahon, COG's past Executive Director. Using modern web platform technology, Irene successfully developed a visually appealing, and well structured website for The Canadian Organic Grower Magazine [www.magazine.cog.ca], as displayed in Figure 1. Popular past articles were digitized and uploaded to the website and made available to the public free of charge as seen in Figure 2.



Figure 1. The Canadian Organic Grower Magazine Homepage









	
<p>Apr ↑</p> <p>HEIRLOOM TOMATOES Posted by Dan Jansen · Leave a Comment</p> <p>Dan Jansen "Only two things that money can't buy—that's true: love and heirloom tomatoes!" I'm certain the author of those famous lyrics was referring to heirloom tomatoes and not hybrid ones. As far as I'm concerned, hybrids are just</p> <p>Twitter +1</p>	<p>Feb ↑</p> <p>HOW TO GROW HOPS Posted by Canadian Organic Growers · Leave a Comment</p> <p>Hard Core Across Canada, several home-scale growers are trying their hand at growing hops. The initial but growing trend follows the recent increase in demand for local and sustainable agriculture, combined with a spike in hop prices in 2012. I</p> <p>Twitter +1</p>
	
<p>Feb ↑</p> <p>GETTING THE BODY READY FOR Posted by Amy Slater · Leave a Comment</p> <p>Amy Slater As a small-scale market gardener, my most important piece of equipment is my body. My muscles can replace much of the work my equipment and tools do for me, but those same tools cannot replace the daily work done by</p> <p>Twitter +1</p>	<p>Feb ↑</p> <p>RAISING PIGS ON ROTATIONAL Posted by Daniel Simonsen · Leave a Comment</p> <p>Daniel Simonsen A couple years ago, we added pigs to the mix of activities at Storm-Git cooperative farm. Before that, our commercial vegetable operation had us to help into market. Raising whole hog, but considering our limited animal</p> <p>Twitter +1</p>
	
<p>Feb ↑</p> <p>HUMANE HANDLING OF Posted by Jane Stanger · Leave a Comment</p> <p>Jane Stanger More often than not, people who work with animals enjoy the rewards of their relationships with them. Whether it is the daily milking of dairy cows, watching calves play to better understand of their mother's needs, putting</p> <p>Twitter +1</p>	<p>Jul ↑</p> <p>SIGNALS FROM THE SOIL: Posted by Avi Segal · Leave a Comment</p> <p>There's an old adage: "The best fertilizer is a farmer's footsteps." Taken literally, this suggests that farmers need to get off their tractors and walk about their fields. At a broader level, this adage speaks of a farm in which the farmer and the</p> <p>Twitter +1</p>
	
<p>Jul ↑</p> <p>SUPER SALVE: MAKE YOUR Posted by Michelle Gammeter · Leave a Comment</p>	<p>Mar ↑</p> <p>ON A WING AND A PRAYER: Posted by Peter Sturgeon · Leave a Comment</p>

Figure 2. Past articles from TCOG now digitized and available on new magazine website.

As seen in Figure 3, The Fall 2012 Issue of TCOG was also released for the first time in electronic format and circulated to COG members, subscribers and affiliates. The magazine is now published in both digital and print format.



Figure 3. Digital version of Fall 2012 Issue of TCOG Magazine

It is important to note that the COG magazine is run entirely by volunteers and has more than 30 years of publishing history. With this new digital interface, thanks to the OSDP, COG's capacity has substantially increased to distribute of technical, farmer-to-farmer articles written on Canadian organic farm and business management. Furthermore, providing free online Canadian information is very important to support a new generation of growers (many, who don't come from farming backgrounds).

Since the launch of the online magazine platform and digital issues of TCOG we have seen a steady increase in the number of visitors to the magazine.cog.ca website as seen in Figure 4. Our daily average website visit has jumped from 12 visits/day in October 2012 to a maximum of 198 visits/day in May 2013 which coincides appropriately with the release of the spring issue of our magazine.

Summary by Month										
Month	Daily Avg				Monthly Totals					
	Hits	Files	Pages	Visits	Sites	KBytes	Visits	Pages	Files	Hits
Sep 2013	1896	1166	368	118	1105	2068215	1541	4793	15169	24656
Aug 2013	1540	1075	325	128	3134	3944248	3982	10097	33341	47764
Jul 2013	1689	1420	456	158	4848	3077719	4920	14140	44037	52379
Jun 2013	1366	1153	424	177	4571	2732858	5325	12746	34603	40993
May 2013	1599	1344	465	198	5365	3023433	6156	14428	41683	49580
Apr 2013	1557	1356	422	171	2156	1998891	5136	12660	40687	46720
Mar 2013	818	679	248	71	803	1027160	2230	7697	21055	25372
Feb 2013	986	792	97	34	640	963473	956	2739	22198	27630
Jan 2013	440	335	78	14	278	606280	461	2421	10413	13653
Dec 2012	137	110	40	14	125	211003	443	1258	3440	4270
Nov 2012	459	405	30	18	228	778144	554	925	12174	13778
Oct 2012	145	93	15	12	115	177379	374	476	2887	4496
Totals						20608803	32078	84380	281687	351291

Figure 4. The Canadian Organic Grower magazine website monthly and daily user statistics from October 2012 to mid September 2013.

Comments on the magazine website have been a challenge to moderate. Despite installing a number of security features, our volunteer website moderator was being overwhelmed by spam comments. At this time, we have only enabled comments on new articles for a brief period of time in order to control the influx of spam. Nevertheless, the genuine comments received on articles have been positive and engaging.

As part of our Performance Plan, an annual Magazine Survey has been developed that will gauge the satisfaction of our website users and e-magazine subscribers, determine if they are sharing the information, and collect data on their background and interest in organics. This survey will be circulated following the Fall 2013 Issue of our e-magazine (to be released in October); a copy of the survey has been included in Appendix B of this report. Information collected in this survey will be used to improve the magazine website and digital while gathering information about our readership so we can identify which demographics we can better serve.

2) Developing the Organic Library Interface

This portion of the project presented more challenges than expected, and included more voluntary and staff efforts to troubleshoot unexpected technical obstacles. COG's original library site was first developed in 2005 using low-tech open source software called Open Biblio. Because this platform was both dated and presented many limitations for library patrons and Volunteer librarians, COG hired a consultant to build a library interface using the plugin Weblibrarian. Unfortunately, this new software proved difficult to work with, had less customization options than first thought, had many unresolved software glitches and, as we later learned, was generally incompatible with our current web content management system. Further compounding the problem was the inability to export the current library catalogue from Open Biblio to the Weblibrarian software. Together, the consultant, COG staff and volunteers spent hundreds of hours attempting to troubleshoot these problems, but were unable to find cost-effective solutions to the number of issues encountered. As a result this portion of the project was significantly delayed.

At this point, COG staff recruited a team of three talented volunteer web programmers to re-visit the original library software (software programmed in a language unfamiliar to our consultant) and performed the much needed website re-design, software updates, and component development and installations. These volunteers with coordination by COG staff successfully;

- upgraded the Open Biblio software,
- developed a modern library interface
- designed a custom library item check-out system (installation still in progress),
- linked cover photos to library items (when available),
- developed a mechanism to export the library catalogue,
- created tools for the librarian to track library usage statistics



We are very grateful for the hundreds of volunteer hours these web programmers donated to COG, and we plan to continue working with this team to maintain and continue improving to the library website.

Like our magazine, our library is entirely volunteer run, and through the completion of this project we have significantly reduced the volunteer workload while increasing the accessibility of our organic agriculture related materials to the public. These resources are available free of charge to anyone in Canada who can now request an item much faster and easier than before.

In terms of monitoring the library performance, our new software installations will allow for automatic tracking of library usage by month, book title, and collection. In the past, all of this was done manually using excel spreadsheets, so we're pleased to have software that will do this automatically for our librarians. In addition, a survey has been developed and will be sent to users after they check out their library items, to determine their overall satisfaction with the library, to identify how we can improve, to understand what background they have in organics, and to gauge their level of interest in learning about organic agriculture and related topics. This survey has only recently been circulated, so we're still waiting to collect enough responses before we can make any general conclusions about the satisfaction and demographics of our library patrons. We intend to use the survey results to help us improve the library system and to determine what new materials we should be adding to our collection. A copy of the survey can be found in Appendix C.

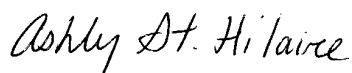
Additional Deliverables

After completing the digitization of The Canadian Organic Grower Magazine and articles, and developing the COG Lending Library Interface, COG staff and volunteer graphic designers created promotional materials that highlighted these new resources. This includes brochures and banner stands, which have been designed for use at public events by the COG National Staff and the volunteers at COG Chapters across Canada. An insert about the Lending Library was also added to our first Issue of the Bi-Annual Newsletter. Snapshots of the promotional materials can be seen in Appendix D of this report.

A complete Financial Report is included in Appendix A of this report.

Notice of Transmittal:

This is to confirm that the project (I-147 Organic Digital Information Initiative) was carried out in accordance with the terms of the OSDP Agreement and its Schedules.



Ashley St Hilaire
Director of Operations
Canadian Organic Growers

Appendix A. Project I-147 Financial Report as of September 25 2013

Table 1. Income Sources

Source	Budgeted Cash	Budgeted In-Kind	Actual Cash	Actual In-Kind
OSDP	\$17,165		\$17,165*	
COG	\$7,545	\$8,290	\$3,026	\$11,390
SUBTOTAL:	\$24,170	\$8,290	\$24,710	\$11,390
TOTAL:	\$33,000		\$31,581	

* \$10,000 advance already received from OSDP.

Table 2. Expenses

Expenses	Projected Cost		Actual Costs	
	Cash	In-kind	Cash	In-kind
Project Contract Staff for magazine research and library project interface	\$14,900		\$13,255	
Library Volunteers (Librarians and Web Programmers)		\$900		\$4,000
Physical Workspace		\$2,000		\$2,000
Magazine File Creation	\$2,500		\$0	
Volunteer Uploading Articles to Magazine Website		\$2,890		\$2,890
Software	\$1,300		\$164	
Promotional Materials	\$3,500		\$3,112	
Professional Guidance and Communications		\$2,500		\$2,500
Staff and Volunteer Training	\$240		\$240	
Administration & Financial Mgmt.	\$2,270		\$3,420	
Subtotal:	\$24,710	\$8,290	\$20,191	\$11,390
Total	\$33,000		\$31,581	

To my knowledge the information presented in this financial report is accurate as of September 25, 2013.

Ashley St. Hilaire

Ashley St Hilaire
 Director of Operations
 COG National

Appendix B. The Canadian Organic Grower Magazine Survey

The Canadian Organic Grower Magazine Online Survey
Page One

1. Have you viewed the e-version of the The Canadian Organic Grower Magazine?

Yes

No

2. If you have viewed the e-version of TCOG:
How easy has it been for you to access and read the e-magazine?

Very Easy

Easy

Neutral

Difficult

Very Difficult

Not Applicable

3. If you have viewed the e-version of TCOG:
Have you ever shared an issue by email or otherwise with someone else?

Yes

No

4. Have you visited our website for The Canadian Organic Grower (TCOG) magazine, www.magazine.cog.ca? *

Yes

No

5. If you have visited the TCOG Magazine website:
What is your overall satisfaction with website content, including the quality and quantity of articles and book reviews.

- Very Satisfied
 - Satisfied
 - Neutral
 - Dissatisfied
 - Very Dissatisfied
 - Not Applicable
-

6. What is your background in Organics? (check any that apply)

- Organic Producer
 - Organic Processor
 - Organic Consumer
 - Organic Retailer
 - Organic Gardener
 - Organic Market Gardener
 - Organic Advocate
 - Just want to learn about Organics and other related topics
-

7. How useful has the TCOG Website or E-Magazine been in helping you learn more organic agriculture and related topics?

- Very Helpful
 - Helpful
 - Somewhat Helpful
 - Not Helpful
 - Not Applicable
-

8. Please leave any additional comments about the TCOG Magazine Website or E-TCOG? What do you like, what don't you like and how can we improve?

Appendix C. COG Lending Library Survey

COG Online Lending Library Survey
Page One

1. Is this your first time using the COG Online Lending Library?

Yes

No

2. Where did you first learn about the COG Lending Library?

Saw on COG Website

COG e-news

COG Magazine

Google Search

Referred by someone

I can't remember

3. Did you find what you were looking for in our online catalogue?

Yes

No

4. What other titles would you like to see added to our library?

5. If you notice an item is missing from our collection, would you be interested in donating it to the collection?

Yes

No

6. What is your background in Organics? (check any that apply)

- Organic Producer
- Organic Processor
- Organic Consumer
- Organic Retailer
- Organic Gardener
- Organic Market Gardener
- Organic Advocate
- Just want to learn about Organics and other related topics

7. How useful has the COG Lending Library been in helping you learn more organic agriculture and related topics?

- Very Helpful
- Helpful
- Somewhat Helpful
- Not Helpful

8. Do you have any additional comments about how we can improve the Online Lending Library?

**Appendix D. Project Promotional Materials
Brochure:**

The Canadian Organic Grower

The Canadian Organic Grower Magazine has been a staple in the homes and businesses of the organic community for over 30 years. In 2012 we released the magazine in electronic format and unveiled a new magazine website allowing us to reach even more readers!



Lending Library

The COG Online Lending Library is a proud achievement and unique resource we offer. It is the largest available collection in Canada on organic agriculture and related topics.



You can easily browse our library's e-catalogue and request items thanks to hundreds of hours spent by volunteers to build and manage this valuable resource. Check out the library catalogue online at cog.ca/library and borrow an item by mail today!

Funding for this project generously provided by:






**Growing Canada's
Organic Community!**

Newsletter :



Lending Library

Building our Online Lending Library has been a proud achievement in COG's history. Our library represents the largest available collections in Canada on organic agriculture and related topics. Last year we upgraded our library system which was a major undertaking. You can easily browse our online library catalogue and request items thanks to hundreds of hours spent by volunteers to build and manage this valuable resource.

Our collection has over 1500 items which include books, VHS tapes & DVDs, audio

recordings, articles and periodicals and these materials may be borrowed by anyone in Canada free of charge. We encourage you to check out the library catalogue online at cog.ca/library and borrow an item by mail today!

Looking to clear out your bookshelves? Noticed that were missing something from our catalogue? We're always looking for new materials for our library and appreciate donations of lightly used and new books from our COG Supporters. Help us continue to build this unique resource by donating to the library.

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Agri-Food Canada**

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Agroalimentaire Canada**