

Illume Actions & Achievements 2025: Illuminating Library Collections Across B.C. and the Yukon

Well-loved and widely used across the province, the Illume interlibrary loan (ILL) service gives patrons access to collections beyond their local library. By collaboratively participating in Illume, 104 public and post-secondary libraries benefit from shared infrastructure, cost-savings, and centralized support.

In 2025, Illume completed a major server upgrade, rolled-out enhancements to improve efficiencies for the system and individual users, and set the stage for an upcoming software review.

Accomplishments



Figure 1: Photo of Vancouver Community College Welcome Day

Building Service Resiliency

In May, Illume successfully migrated to new server infrastructure to improve the stability and security of the service. With assistance from the vendor Auto-Graphics and Simon Fraser University IT, the Illume Support Centre thoroughly prepared and tested the system leading up to the migration, ensuring a seamless transition for libraries and patrons. In addition to improved security and stability, the upgrade will make it easier for Illume to grow and implement software enhancements for years to come. Following the migration,

the Support Centre onboarded a new librarian to increase capacity and further develop expertise in resource sharing and Illume optimization.

Illume supported libraries through the Canada Post labour action, which temporarily interrupted interlibrary loans in the province. The Support Centre developed and shared workflow tips and best practices to help libraries respond and keep patrons informed. After the strike ended, libraries were provided with recommendations for reopening.

Optimizing the Provincial ILL System

Working closely with participating libraries and Auto-Graphics, the Support Centre improved automation to create more efficient workflows for library staff and faster turnaround times for patrons:

- **Live Shelf Status:** Helped multiple libraries launch the Live Shelf Status (LSS) feature and communicated an Illume-requested vendor upgrade so libraries can easily update the status of items (i.e., available, checked out) in bulk. Live Shelf Status streamlines interlibrary loan processes by automatically checking if an item is available, making it easier for staff to focus on available items only and provide faster loans to patrons.
- **NCIP Pilot:** Continued the NCIP pilot project and supported Prince George Public Library as an early adopter that launched initial NCIP integration in January and Patron-initiated NCIP authentication and requesting in September. NCIP enables seamless communication between a library's interlibrary loan and ILS systems, reducing manual processing time for staff and ensuring faster access to requested items for patrons.
- **Patron-initiated ILLs:** Provided ongoing troubleshooting, support, and training to libraries that were interested in activating or updating their patron-initiated ILLs. A popular feature, patron-initiated ILLs give patrons the ability to search, find, and request items directly from Illume.

Chris Field, Manager of Collections and Technology at Prince George Public Library, said:

“We are grateful to the team at the Illume Support Centre for facilitating our participation in the NCIP pilot project. The new connection between Illume and our ILS boosted the efficiency of our interlibrary loan workflow and greatly improved the overall experience for our patrons.”



Figure 2: Photo of Camosun College Library

Laying the Foundation for a Software Review

In preparation for a software review, Illume developed a project plan and began gathering information to better understand the current resource sharing landscape in the province:

- **Environmental Scan:** Partnered with Public Libraries Branch (Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs) to initiate an environmental scan of provincial resource sharing opportunities, trends, and strategic directions. As a first step, the Support Centre worked with Public Libraries Branch to map out the project and position post-secondary and public libraries to make informed, collaborative decisions about the future of Illume's infrastructure.
- **Supporting Interoperability:** Hosted a well-attended watercooler session and consulted with non-SHAREit Illume libraries that use alternate software to better understand their current needs, workflows, and upcoming plans. Offered SHAREit-Alma integration testing for post-secondary libraries and developed documentation, in collaboration with other consortia, to support interoperability in the future.

2025 Numbers at a Glance

- **\$1.66 Million Saved Through Collaboration:** Illume's shared technology and centralized support helps participating libraries save money.
- **104 Libraries Are Connected:** Libraries of all sizes collaborate to share materials and improve the interlibrary loan experience for readers and library staff alike.
- **10 Million + Items Available:** Patrons can search for what they need or discover something new via Illume's impressive union database and live catalogue search targets.
- **78,000 Interlibrary Loan Requests Fulfilled:** Each year, thousands of books, DVDs, articles, and more are delivered to patrons via their local library and inboxes.
- **680 Support Cases Resolved:** The Illume Support Centre, hosted and staffed by BC ELN, provides hands-on help to all Illume libraries.
- **61 Individual Training Sessions Delivered to Illume Libraries:** These convenient training sessions were provided to library staff via online, telephone, and email methods.
 - 11 post-secondary libraries attended a group training session on Illume OpenILL & Desktop Delivery
 - 11 post-secondary and public libraries and BC Libraries Cooperative staff attended an Illume NCIP Workflow Demonstration

On the Horizon: 2026 Priorities

- Conduct an environmental scan to identify opportunities, trends, and strategic directions related to resource sharing in B.C. and beyond.
- Together with Public Libraries Branch, conduct a needs assessment of the B.C. post-secondary and public library sector to better understand current and future resource sharing needs.
- Continue supporting and advocating for SHAREit interoperability with other systems to strengthen the provincial resource sharing network.
- Implement NCIP for additional post-secondary and public libraries, as requested, to improve workflows for library staff and wait-times for patrons.

Essential Partners

- **The BC Electronic Library Network** hosts and staffs the Illume Support Centre and negotiates contracts that support both public and post-secondary libraries.
- **Public Libraries Branch**, Ministry of Housing and Municipal Affairs funding ensures all B.C. public libraries have equitable access to Illume.
- **Simon Fraser University IT Services** provides local, state-of-the-art cloud hosting for the Canadian Illume server.
- **Public Library InterLINK** provides funding for Canadian hosting of Illume.
- **Auto-Graphics Inc.** is the provider of Illume's interlibrary loan SHAREit management system, which hosts the BC Union Catalogue (the combined library catalogue of participating B.C. and Yukon public and post-secondary libraries).