Knowledge Ontario's Digital l

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Considerable research, thinking, and discussion has contributed to the exploration of the "classroom 2.0" and the needed restructuring of the educational experience for students that incorporates the digital literacy skill set. The discussion has percolated through all levels in education and reached a critical mass—even school boards are articulating the need to embrace digital literacy.

In May of this year, the Ontario Public School Boards' Association (OPSBA) released a 30-page report, *What If: Technology in the 21st Century Classroom*, to encourage more discussion about the integration of technology into the classroom, creating "stimulating school environments" for today's tech-savvy students. To view the full report, visit **www.opsba.org**. Embracing digital literacy means that teacher-librarians and classroom teachers must change the way they teach, structure learning activities, and choose resources. Access to high-quality digital resources and quality technical support for staff and students becomes a critical component of the twenty-first-century classroom.

Building access to these kinds of educational resources and providing dependable support is the focus of Knowledge Ontario. Listed as a key technology-based resource in Ontario's education sector by the OPSBA *What If: Technology in the 21st Century Classroom* report, Knowledge Ontario is a combination of projects—each providing a specific, unique approach to build and support digital literacy. Together, these projects can be a powerhouse supporting you and your students.

Canadian Points of View (CPOV) is one of many helpful online tools available to every school and public library in Ontario.

Knowledge Ontario projects include:

- Resource Ontario adds a rich array of online journals and databases, current and relevant information.
- Our Ontario is a primary source of digitized text, images, video and audio collections provided through the collaboration of a wide variety of museums, historical societies, public libraries, archives, and other content organizations.
- AskON provides online "chat" support, focusing on research needs and building critical thinking and research skills.
- LearnON (in the pilot phase until January 2010) provides technology tutorials to ensure that the software or applications on the site are accessible to digital newbies and tech-savvy users alike.

Not sure how to adequately use these phenomenal resources? Take a look at two examples:

Canadian Points of View Resource Helps Grade 8s Navigate a Bottled Water Controversy

"Water is an important resource that needs to be managed sustainably." So states one of the "big ideas" or enduring understandings of the Grade 8 Science and Technology unit on water systems. Linking this to the current hot topic in the school, the teacher decided to have her students conduct research on bottled water. Witnessing the teacher's dismay at the difficulty students were having getting to quality information on both sides of the issue, the school's teacher-librarian directed her to the new database on offer from Resource Ontario, EBSCO's *Canadian Points of View Reference Centre* (CPOV). This amazing resource provides context for students to differentiate fact from opinion, see both sides of controversial issues, and ask the deeper questions that will help them to formulate their own point of view. This is how it works:

On opening CPOV, one is presented with a spectrum of categories, from Aboriginal People to Women's Issues. Students can select a category and then drill down to related topics, all of them current and controversial. For each topic there is an overview, then point and counterpoint articles presenting both sides of the issue. Each article starts with a thesis and a summary, followed by a succinct presentation of the