

## **Library and Archives Canada, University of Toronto Libraries, and Canadian Commission for UNESCO applaud addition of Marshall McLuhan documents to Memory of the World Register**

November 1, 2017, Toronto — It is with great enthusiasm that Library and Archives Canada (LAC), the University of Toronto Libraries (UTL), and the Canadian Commission for UNESCO (CCUNESCO) today welcomed news that the documentary heritage of Marshall McLuhan has been accepted for inclusion in the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO)'s prestigious Memory of the World Register.

The nomination for the inclusion of Marshall McLuhan's legacy into the Memory of the World Register was made jointly by LAC and UTL with the support of CCUNESCO. The documentary heritage that will become part of the Memory of the World is comprised of his archival collection preserved at LAC and his research library held at UTL. Dating from the time of McLuhan's undergraduate studies to his death, the documents include a wealth of correspondence and manuscripts of writings: books, articles, essays, and lectures.

A native of Edmonton and a longtime professor at the University of Toronto, Marshall McLuhan was a highly influential Canadian public intellectual and cultural theorist, as evidenced by expressions he introduced—"the global village" and "the medium is the message"—that are still part of the global communications lexicon to this day. Widely regarded as a "digital prophet" who among other things foresaw the advent of the Internet, the centennial of his birth in 2011 inspired dozens of events in at least 20 countries.

UNESCO's Memory of the World programme aims to raise awareness on the universal value, and the need to preserve and to give access to valuable archival and library holdings and other related items for posterity. According to UNESCO, the initiative helps safeguard the documentary heritage of humanity against collective amnesia, neglect, the ravages of time and climatic conditions, and willful and deliberate destruction. The Memory of the World also supports the stabilization of at-risk documentary heritage collections, and the enhancement of public access to and knowledge of these materials.

In 2018, the three above organizations plan on holding an event featuring a number of experts to discuss Marshall McLuhan's legacy, and how it has influenced the world we live in.

### **Quotes**

"Marshall McLuhan's library, collected over his lifetime of scholarship, reflects his interdisciplinary zeal as he sought out publications from all fields, academic or otherwise. Inscription in the Memory of the World Register recognizes the global significance of McLuhan and the library, which will be preserved in perpetuity by the University of Toronto Libraries."

*- Larry Alford, Chief Librarian, University of Toronto Libraries*

"I am very pleased that that for the first time, documents preserved by Library and Archives Canada have been recognized by UNESCO's Memory of the World. Until now, only four Canadian entries had been admitted to the global registry. The fact that the treasured documentary heritage of Marshall

McLuhan is held jointly by LAC and UTL vividly illustrates the close ties between these two institutions that are essential actors in the Canadian documentary heritage field.”

– *Dr. Guy Berthiaume, Librarian and Archivist of Canada*

“This addition to the registry is particularly satisfying for us given that Marshall McLuhan’s work has been used time and time again by UNESCO in order to further our understanding of the impact of media on our societies. McLuhan also took an interest in the relationship between what he first referred to as *pop culture* and matters of identity, one that today has become more readily measurable, and that appears more relevant than ever in the era of *fake news*.”

- *Dr. Christina Cameron, President, Canadian Commission for UNESCO*

## Quick Facts

- The Marshall McLuhan archival collection is preserved by LAC, and his research library is held at UTL’s Thomas Fisher Rare Book Library. The two collections are interlinked.
- Marshall McLuhan’s personal archive and library comprise approximately 50 metres of archival documents in multiple media and 6,000 published items (mainly books), many heavily annotated in his hand.
- In over half a century after their publication, Marshall McLuhan’s books have sold over one million copies and have been translated into at least 17 languages.

## Associated Links

[Marshall McLuhan on the LAC Website](#)

[Virtually Reconnecting Marshall McLuhan’s Archives and Library](#)

## Contacts

University of Toronto Libraries Media Relations  
Lani Krantz  
University of Toronto  
416-978-0100  
[media.relations@utoronto.ca](mailto:media.relations@utoronto.ca)

Library and Archives Canada Media Relations  
Richard Provencher  
Library and Archives Canada  
613-994-4589  
[bac.media.lac@canada.ca](mailto:bac.media.lac@canada.ca)

Canadian Commission for UNESCO Media Relations  
Angèle Cyr  
Senior Advisor, Public Affairs  
613-219-1119

### **About the University of Toronto Libraries**

The University of Toronto Libraries system is the largest academic library in Canada and is ranked sixth among peer institutions in North America. The system consists of 44 libraries located on three university campuses: St. George, Mississauga, and Scarborough. This array of college libraries, special collections, and specialized libraries and information centres supports the teaching and research requirements of 200 graduate programs, 50 professional programs, and about 700 undergraduate degree programs. In addition to more than 12 million print volumes in 341 languages, the library system currently provides access to millions of electronic resources in various forms and over 30,000 linear metres of archival material. More than 150,000 new print volumes are acquired each year. The Libraries' data centre houses more than 200 servers with a storage capacity of 1.5 petabytes.

### **About Library and Archives Canada**

The mandate of Library and Archives Canada is to preserve the documentary heritage of Canada for the benefit of present and future generations, and to be a source of enduring knowledge accessible to all, thereby contributing to the cultural, social and economic advancement of Canada. Library and Archives Canada also facilitates co-operation among communities involved in the acquisition, preservation and diffusion of knowledge, and serves as the continuing memory of the Government of Canada and its institutions. Stay connected with Library and Archives Canada on Twitter, Facebook, Flickr and YouTube.

### **About the Canadian Commission for UNESCO**

The Canadian Commission for UNESCO serves as a bridge between Canadians and the vital work of UNESCO—the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization. By promoting UNESCO values, priorities and programs in Canada and by bringing the voices of Canadian experts to the international stage, the Commission contributes to a peaceful, equitable and sustainable future that leaves no one behind. The Commission is a network of networks that facilitates cooperation in the fields of education, sciences, culture, communication and information to address some of the most complex challenges facing humanity.