



Overview of Library Services in the English-speaking Caribbean - Management, Innovative Services and Resource Sharing

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Abstract:

The origins of public and academic libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean can be traced historically to the 19th century. The work of the early pioneers in providing leadership and managing these early structures laid the foundation for what can now be described as well developed and defined library systems. Present day library administrators - successors of these pioneers - with the support of a dedicated group of information professionals have drawn on these early successes to meet the challenges and demands of a 21st century information environment. This paper demonstrates how public and academic libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean have turned these challenges into unique opportunities and reaped the immediate benefits. It illustrates how information professionals in the region have opted for the right choices in three major areas (1) effectively managing eclectic collections ranging from traditional print to newly emerging electronic and digital formats (2) providing innovative and improved facilities, products and services and (3) steadfastly forging new alliances to maximize efficient use of limited resources. In an era of unprecedented change Caribbean librarians have shown that they are on the right path for developing and maintaining sustainable libraries in the 21st century.

Introduction

A working definition of the English-speaking or British Caribbean

The term *Caribbean*, if applied in its widest geographic context, is said to describe all the lands washed by the Caribbean Sea and the Gulf of Mexico. In a region so geographically dispersed, and demographically diverse, with countries strongly influenced and shaped by different historical, political, and cultural affiliations, library development patterns could at best, be described as uneven. Thus, it would be very difficult for any one author, given the

constraint of time, to provide a comprehensive overview of library services in the entire region. Given this limitation, this paper is restricted to a discussion of public and academic libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean.

The English-speaking or British Caribbean is defined as all of those countries that were formerly colonies of Great Britain. This disparate group includes the island states of Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, Barbados, the Bahamas, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Jamaica, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia, Saint Vincent and the Grenadines, Trinidad and Tobago, the Turks and Caicos Islands, and the mainland territories of Belize and Guyana. Many of these countries have now become full-fledged independent states or have attained some form of limited self-government with continued affiliations to Great Britain.¹

Although library and information services in these countries have followed varying growth patterns, one consistent theme evident in the majority of scholarly publications on Caribbean libraries has been a somewhat narrow focus on what have been identified as 'well developed' library and information services in countries such as Barbados, Belize, the Bahamas, Guyana, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. A similar thread is evident throughout this paper's discourse.

Library development in the smaller islands (so defined given their size geographically and demographically smaller populations) such as Anguilla, Antigua and Barbuda, the British Virgin Islands, the Cayman Islands, Dominica, Grenada, Montserrat, Saint Kitts and Nevis, Saint Lucia and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines has been perceived as being somewhat sporadic, hampered by limited resources and severely impacted by natural disasters as was the case of volcanic eruptions in Montserrat (dormant until the early 1990s) and the widespread destruction caused by hurricane Tomas in Saint Lucia in October 2010. It is worth noting however, that in recent years the pace of library development in these territories has been steadily progressive under the guidance and leadership of a group of committed library administrators, ably supported by a team of dedicated information professionals as they attempt to meet the challenges and demands of the 21st century.

Caribbean libraries and their response to 21st century challenges

The challenges and demands of the 21st century are not unique to Caribbean libraries, they also affect libraries in other parts of the developing and developed world: a prolonged economic recession characterized by major budget cuts and shrinking resources; the unprecedented growth of information and communication technologies (ICTs); the multitude of formats now available for storing and retrieving information; the necessity of retraining staff and reorganizing workflows as new technologies are integrated into library services; and the unified mandate issued by top-level library administrators to deliver innovative services to increasingly technologically-savvy patrons.

As will be demonstrated in the ensuing sections using live library examples, the collective response of libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean to these challenges has been proactive and positive, and the strategic measures implemented have been very successful. This success can be attributed in part, to a solid historical past influenced and shaped by contributions from early library pioneers, as well as the financial assistance received from international funding agencies such as the Carnegie Corporation and the British Council.

Library and information professionals in the region have utilized this solid foundation to good effect to influence and direct the growth of modern public and academic libraries as they exist today. In an era of unprecedented change and myriad options, they have opted to embrace the challenges faced and make the right choices as they attempt to effectively manage library collections, integrate innovative technologies into library services and develop strategic alliances to share scarce resources. By utilizing these methods, they are ensuring their viability and continued existence and adroitly steering clear of the common pitfalls faced by peer institutions.

Public Library Services in the English-speaking Caribbean

Brief historical overview

Organized public library services in the English-speaking Caribbean were not evident until the 19th century. This organization came with the influx of financial assistance from international funding agencies such as the Carnegie Corporation and the British Council, the enactment of government legislations and the pioneering efforts of early library stalwarts. In these early years, most islands benefitted from what have been described as early subscription services: Antigua (1830), Barbados (1847), Trinidad and Tobago (1851), Jamaica (1879) and Saint Vincent and the Grenadines (1893).

Public libraries as they exist today in the countries of the English-speaking Caribbean all exhibit the basic tenets as outlined in the IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto adopted in 1994. Many libraries have crafted mission and vision statements modeled on the view of the “public library as a living force for education, culture and information, and as an essential agent for the fostering of peace and spiritual welfare through the minds of men and women.”² Public libraries have utilized this Manifesto to develop services which emphasize the public library role in society as a “local gateway to knowledge, [which] provides a basic condition for lifelong learning, independent decision- making and cultural development of the individual and social groups.”³

Management of collections - Public Libraries as de facto National Libraries

The foundation of any library’s history is the development of its major collections. For many libraries, major acquisitions - obtained through budgeted purchases, gifts and exchanges, or provenance by way of special collections - define their future outlook and determine their patrons’ perceptions of the services they offer. At the onset of drafting collection development policies, these libraries may attempt to re-create comprehensive collections similar to what was developed by the Ancient Library of Alexandria in Egypt. The latter has long been perceived as the prototype for modern day national libraries charged with acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published within and outside their countries’ borders. Although comprehensiveness may be the ideal, budgetary and other factors dictate that this is seldom achieved for libraries operating in a 21st century environment. It is not surprising therefore, that in the English-speaking Caribbean there is only one library which fits the profile of a true national library.⁴

The National Library of Jamaica (NLJ) located in the capital city Kingston, was established in 1979 under the Institute of Jamaica Act of 1978 and is devoted primarily to the collection, preservation, organization and provision of access to all materials relating to the national heritage. The passage of the Legal Deposit Act in 2002 legally mandated the NLJ to function as the principal legal depository for all publications produced within the country. Also

functioning as a modern day research library, NLJ is home to primary source materials covering all aspects of Caribbean life and society, with some materials originating from as early as the 1500s. This collection includes government documents, books, maps, manuscripts, newspapers, photographs, audio-visual materials, posters, calendars, prints, postcards and event programs. The manuscript collection contains unpublished materials of notable Jamaican figures such as Marcus Garvey, Donald Sangster and Norman Washington Manley.

In the absence of traditional national libraries, many public libraries have successfully combined both national and public library functions. These 'de facto national libraries' can be found in countries such as Belize and Trinidad and Tobago. In Belize, the Belize National Library Service and Information System (BNLSIS) established in 1935 as a free national public library service, now consists of two units, the National Library and the Public Library Service. The function of the former is primarily to act as a central depository and preserve Belize's documentary resources. The Public Library Service "is responsible for operating a national network of free community libraries serving a population of approximately 310,000 and offering programs to sustain development and enrich literacy such as summer reading programs, reading and story-telling contests, book reviews, library education, photocopy services, interlibrary lending, bibliographic search, and other cultural programs." This island wide service reflects a mission based on a strong commitment to the "promotion of an informed, aware and literate society that fosters ... national development and cultural heritage."⁵

Similarly, the National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS) in Trinidad and Tobago is also committed to providing "an international standard of service that delivers equitable access to information in all formats ... utilizing state-of-the-art technologies and facilities to support the developmental and recreational needs of Trinidad and Tobago."⁶ Established as a Statutory Authority under the NALIS Act, No. 18 of 1998 to administer the development and coordination of library and information services (including public, special and school libraries) in Trinidad and Tobago, NALIS operates out of its main headquarters at the National Library Building in the capital city, Port-of-Spain. To denote the building's architectural prominence and designation as a state-of-the art facility catering to the needs of 21st century library patrons, it is ideally juxtaposed between three historic landmarks. Within this building are housed the Public Library and Heritage Library Divisions.

The Public Library Division provides efficient and reliable access to information, promotes literacy and administers outreach services via a network of branch libraries and book mobiles. The Heritage Library performs similar functions as that of the national library arm of the Belize National Library Service and Information System by serving as a national repository of valuable heritage materials for a culturally diverse population and as the legal depository for materials published in Trinidad and Tobago. Materials in NALIS' collections are extensive covering all subject areas, but with an emphasis on literature, history, arts and culture, and the social sciences and include books (print and electronic), periodicals, government publications, maps, newspapers, photographs and prints, stamps, calendars, pamphlets, and audio-visual materials. The Digital Library offers online access to special collections digitized because of their cultural and historical significance to Trinidad and Tobago.

In Guyana, unlike Belize and Trinidad and Tobago, where the model is that of a centralized public library network performing national library functions, the reverse holds true with the

National Library of Guyana providing a nationwide public library service. First established in 1909 as the Public Free Library with the help of a generous donation from philanthropist Andrew Carnegie, the National Library of Guyana was later formalized under the National Library Act of 1972 with delegated responsibilities for performing the functions of both a national and a public library. As the public library, its main function is to provide library materials and information for a diverse clientele through its main location in the capital city of Georgetown, a network of branches, bookmobile stops, deposit collections and services to prisons. Services include the loan of print and non-print materials (books, periodicals, toys, and audio-visual materials), access to the internet and the provision of reference and information services. As a national library it also serves as a legal depository for all publications produced in Guyana which are housed in the Legal Deposit Collection.

Innovative library services in Public Libraries

In a 21st century library environment characterized by constant change, the one easily identifiable challenge continually affecting libraries and other knowledge-based centers is this: how to harness and use information technology to provide core or traditional information services to a diverse clientele while simultaneously introducing new and innovative services. These innovative services must be relevant and accessible to diverse communities; emphasize the library's role as a center for life-long learning and self-development; underscore the social responsibilities of libraries in bridging cultural gaps; and promote libraries as enablers, providing information for decision and policy-making.⁷ Traditionally, libraries have led the way as innovators and early adopters, especially in areas where technology is required to facilitate the process of supplanting traditional library services with inventive and proactive services designed to reach patrons in what are perceived as non-traditional library spaces.

The Jamaica Public Library Service (JLS) is an example of one such service. Established in 1948 through the joint efforts of the British Council and the government of Jamaica, this service has gained recognition in developing what is arguably the most comprehensive and intricately well planned network of public and school library services in the English-speaking Caribbean. Managed centrally from headquarters in the capital city Kingston, Jamaica, JLS has service points in thirteen parishes, and holds administrative responsibility for one hundred and twenty-four (124) public libraries, nine hundred and twenty-six (926) school libraries and four hundred and eleven (411) mobile libraries throughout the island.⁸ Services offered include reference and research, book requests and reservations, loans (including interlibrary loans), referrals, professional and technical assistance, current awareness and community information services, internet services, outreach programs, and services for the visually impaired.

Within this de-centralized infrastructure, JLS has already set sights on a vision for 2016 to become a "well-resourced, well managed and technologically enhanced organization... providing universal access to information and knowledge which will result in an information literate society and a positive impact on national development."⁹ The National Reading Competition launched in 1988 to commemorate the 40th anniversary celebrations, is now organized annually throughout the island for all age groups and can be viewed as a model service and of value to other public libraries seeking a program which encourages reading, develops reading skills, cultivates an appreciation of books and fosters continuing education in adults.¹⁰

In Trinidad and Tobago, NALIS' library services for the blind and print disabled is synonymous with independence, progress, development and empowerment and is ranked highly among similar services offered in other parts of the world. This too, can be utilized as a model for other libraries wishing to promote an innovative service to a specific target group. The assistive technology employed in providing these services within the Public and Heritage Library Divisions includes the JAWS (Job Access with Speech) voice synthesizer, Magic Professional Screen Magnifier for those with low vision, the Braille Embosser which translates text to Braille and printed material, and the Poet OCR reading machine for reading documents to the visually challenged.¹¹ NALIS has been at the forefront of offering consultation on the use of these services to a number of libraries throughout the Caribbean, and has the distinction of being awarded the Prime Minister's Innovating Service for Excellence- the Social Inclusion Award in 2004.

For public library services in other countries in the English-speaking Caribbean, the key to developing innovative services lies in their ability to form strategic alliances with peer libraries to share, preserve and provide online access to unique resources. The Digital Library of the Caribbean (dLOC) was developed on such a collaborative platform. Described as a regional cooperative digital library that houses resources from and about the Caribbean and circum-Caribbean, dLOC provides access to digitized versions of cultural, historical and research materials currently held in archives, libraries, and private collections.¹² Library partners include the Belize National Library Service and Information System, and the National Library of Jamaica. The amount of open access content available through dLOC surpasses many commercial Caribbean collections and includes newspapers, official documents, ecological and economic data, maps, histories, travel accounts, literature, poetry, musical expressions, and artifacts. As with other digitization projects, the goal in developing such a repository is to ensure that these research materials are preserved and accessible online to current and future researchers.

There have been attempts by public and national libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean to attract a new type of patron, Web 2.0 patrons who are harvesting the benefits of the Web 2.0 revolution by their frequent visits and addition of content to social networking websites. These attempts have enjoyed some measure of success as library services have been seamlessly integrated into these social spaces. For example, The National Library of Jamaica maintains a Facebook page to provide historical information about the library, its collections and current events.¹³ NALIS provides similar information on its Facebook page, encourages feedback on the NALIS Blog, provides regular updates via postings on Twitter and hosts a series of videos on a YouTube channel.¹⁴

Academic Libraries

Brief historical overview

The history of academic libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean is closely aligned to the development of their parent institutions - regional universities. The University of the West Indies (UWI) is regarded as one of the earliest autonomous institutions of higher learning in the region. Established in 1948, UWI has shown over the years a strong commitment to the economic, social, political and cultural development of the fifteen countries it currently serves in the English-speaking Caribbean through teaching, research and innovation. The University of the West Indies has been steadfast in its obligation to build academic libraries to support over 800 program offerings at its four campuses in Cave Hill (Barbados), Mona

(Jamaica), St. Augustine (Trinidad and Tobago) and its most recent addition the Open Campus (launched in June 2008). The Main Library at the UWI Mona campus was built in 1952, this was followed by the Main Library at Cave Hill in 1963, and the Main Library in St. Augustine (recently renamed the Alma Jordan Library in recognition of the pioneering work of its first Campus Librarian) was opened in 1969. Similarly, The University of Guyana Library and the College of the Bahamas Library were built in 1963 and 1964 respectively, the same year as their parent institutions.

Management of collections

The academic libraries at these Caribbean campuses are considered the intellectual hub of the academic communities they serve, devoted to developing core collections to support the teaching, learning and research activities of their respective faculties and specialized schools. For example, the Main Library at the UWI campus in Mona, Jamaica houses collections in the Arts and Humanities, Education, Law and Social Sciences. At the College of the Bahamas Library, collections are coalesced around subject areas to support professions such as law, nursing, culinary/hospitality and tourism. The University of Guyana Library provides support for broad disciplines such as Technology, Agriculture and Forestry and Health, Natural and Social Sciences.

Recognizing the importance of and need to preserve and provide access to unique research collections which are relevant to present and future researchers in the local and international academic communities, all libraries have aggressively sought to develop special collections of Caribbeana, so designated because they capture the historical, political, cultural and socio-economic framework of Caribbean societies. At the Main Library UWI Mona campus, specialized collections include the West Indies and University Collections of rare books, pamphlets, literary manuscripts of West Indian authors, microform, photographs, newspaper clippings, and university publications.

The Alma Jordan Library at UWI St. Augustine Campus has the distinction of housing two collections, the Eric Williams Memorial Collection and the Derek Walcott Collection which have been named to the UNESCO Memory of the World Register in recognition of their value to the international community. The former collection consists of approximately 7,000 items - books, papers and memorabilia - of the late Dr. Eric Williams, former Prime Minister of Trinidad and Tobago.

The Special Collections unit at the Main Library, UWI Cave Hill campus also provides access to the memorabilia and papers of notable Caribbean women political figures Dame Ruth Nita Barrow (recently added to UNESCO's Memory of the World Register) and Dame Mary Eugenia Charles as well as unique historical and contemporary material on the Caribbean.

Innovative library services in Academic Libraries

The opportunities presented by the advances in information and communication technologies are not lost to academic libraries in the English-speaking Caribbean. In fact, integration of technologies into existing traditional type services is a common feature employed to support the research, teaching and learning missions of the parent university. These services include access to online public access catalogs, online subscription databases and digital collections, reference and research assistance, instructional services, current awareness services, interlibrary loans, exhibits, and internet access.

Leading-edge Web 2.0 technologies are also being offered with the expectation that these services will entice millennials and other tech-savvy users. For example, the Main Library at the College of the Bahamas created a library blog, as early as 2008, as a tool to improve open dialogue with patrons wishing to find out about library events and new resources and for these patrons to provide feedback on library services. Additionally, the search and discovery tool PRIMO implemented by the library, offers users a one-stop shopping single interface for satisfying their research needs by simultaneously searching all library resources - print and electronic book collection, media collection, subscription databases and authoritative internet resources.¹⁵

UWISpace, an institutional repository implemented and maintained collectively by the UWI Libraries and managed by UWI Digital Library Services Centre (DLSC) at the St. Augustine Campus in Trinidad and Tobago, provides a platform for the preservation and access of scholarly and intellectual output of the university community. This open access platform improves global visibility for a wide range of materials including original research, journal articles, digitized theses and dissertations, administrative documents, course notes and other teaching and learning materials.¹⁶

Academic and Public Libraries - Resource Sharing within the Caribbean community

In times of economic decline, resource sharing and the formation of strategic alliances can assist in the equitable acquisition of and access to resources and services. The Caribbean community thrives on such partnerships and can easily be characterized as a region where collaborative ventures have been viewed by stakeholders as the panacea to economic, political and cultural crises. Resource sharing has been successfully employed at the highest levels in government with the formation of regional organizations such as the Caribbean Community (CARICOM) and the Organization of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS).¹⁷ This spirit of collaboration has transcended to libraries and other institutions in the English-speaking Caribbean and is manifested in several ways. In Jamaica, the College Libraries Information Network (COLINET), established in November 1985, has played a critical role in developing and improving the status of libraries in tertiary education institutions, providing logistical support through consultations, continuing education, and promotion of library standards.

A unified integrated library system (ALEPH) is a feature of the UWI campus libraries in Barbados, Jamaica and Trinidad and Tobago. It is noteworthy that as a disparate group these libraries overcame the innumerable challenges encountered by most organizations when attempting to migrate and implement systems across geographically dispersed areas.

Library Associations at the local and regional levels have been instrumental in advancing the benefits of strategic partnerships, especially as this serves to promote librarianship as a profession, publicize continuing education opportunities, and strengthen existing infrastructures in libraries. At the local level, library associations have been active in Trinidad and Tobago (The Library Association of Trinidad and Tobago, LATT), Barbados (The Library Association of Barbados, LAB), and Jamaica (Library and Information Association of Jamaica, LIAJA). At the regional level, three library associations can be identified which play an integral role in attracting librarians and other information professionals from the wider Caribbean (including Dutch-, Spanish- and French-speaking Caribbean islands) to attend annual meetings, hold administrative offices, network with colleagues, and provide teaching, learning and publishing opportunities. The Association of

Caribbean, University, Research and Institutional Libraries “facilitates development and use of libraries, archives, and information services; strengthens the archival, library and information professions; and promotes cooperative activities.”¹⁸ The Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM) primary missions are “the control and dissemination of bibliographic information about all types of Latin American publications and the development of library collections of Latin Americana in support of educational research.”¹⁹ The Commonwealth Library Association (COMLA) seeks to strengthen and nurture professional activity in libraries throughout the Commonwealth.²⁰

Collaborative library education and training opportunities were evident as early as 1948 with the creation of the Eastern Caribbean Regional Library School in Trinidad and Tobago. This program was officially endorsed by the British Library Association and comprised correspondence courses and periods of internship. Formal education and training of library and informational professionals is currently being offered by the Department of Library and Information Studies (DLIS), located at the UWI Mona Campus in Jamaica. Established in 1971 with financial assistance from UNESCO, this library school offers a three-year undergraduate program, a one-year postgraduate Diploma, a master of Philosophy by thesis, and a Masters in Library Studies (MLS).²¹ DLIS’ outreach programs often involve collaboration with practicing library professionals and public and private organizations to offer lectures, seminars and workshops, or partnering with different library types throughout the region to host students for internships.

Conclusion

As can be seen from the foregoing discussion, the origins of public and academic libraries in the English –speaking Caribbean can be traced historically to the 19th century. The work of the early pioneers in providing leadership and managing these early structures, petitioning for funding from international agencies, and crafting policies with an eye on the future, laid the foundation for what can now be described as well developed and defined library systems. Present day library administrators – successors of these early pioneers - with the support of a dedicated group of information professionals have relied on, and in some instances, are inexorably tied to these early historical influences. Administrators have drawn on these early successes to meet the challenges and demands of a 21st century information environment.

As shown by way of live examples of public and academic library systems in the region, Caribbean librarians have turned these challenges into unique opportunities and reaped the immediate benefits. They have made the right, and seemingly obvious choice, to effectively manage an eclectic mix of collections ranging from traditional print, non-print and audiovisual materials to newly emerging electronic and digital formats; to become more creative in providing innovative and improved facilities, products and services; and to steadfastly forge new alliances to maximize efficient use of limited resources. In an era of unprecedented change, following this path is the right option for developing and maintaining sustainable Caribbean libraries in the 21st century.

Notes

1. Cheryl Ann Peltier-Davis et al., "Caribbean Libraries," in *International Dictionary of Library Histories*, ed. David H. Stam (Chicago: Fitzroy Dearborn Publishers, 2001), 31.
2. "IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994," accessed May 2, 2011, <http://archive.ifla.org/VII/s8/unesco/eng.htm>.
3. "IFLA/UNESCO Public Library Manifesto 1994."
4. A true national library as defined by UNESCO: Libraries which, irrespective of their title, are responsible for acquiring and conserving copies of all significant publications published in the country and functioning as a 'deposit' library, whether by law or under other arrangements. They will also normally perform some of the following functions: produce a national bibliography; hold and keep up to date a large and representative collection of foreign literature, including books about the country; act as a national bibliographical information centre; compile union catalogues; publish the retrospective national bibliography. Source: Guy Sylvestre, "Guidelines for National Libraries," accessed May 2, 2011, <http://unesdoc.unesco.org/images/0007/000761/076173eb.pdf>.
5. "Belize National Library Service and Information System (BNLSIS): History," accessed May 2, 2011, <http://www.nlsbze.bz/history.html>.
6. Annette Wallace, "Country Report - Public Libraries in Trinidad and Tobago" (paper presented at the IFLA/UNESCO/NALIS Seminar on School and Public Library Manifestos and Guidelines), accessed May 3, 2011, <http://www.nalis.gov.tt/IFLA/trinidad.htm>.
7. Cheryl Ann Peltier-Davis and Shamin Renwick, eds., *Caribbean Libraries in the 21st Century: Changes, Challenges and Choices* (New Jersey: Information Today, 2007), xx.
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10. "Jamaica Library Service: National Reading Competition 2011," accessed May 3, 2011, http://www.jls.gov.jm/Prg_read_comp_ov2011.html.
11. Annette Wallace, "Out of the Darkness: Library Services for the Blind and Print Disabled in Trinidad and Tobago," in *Caribbean Libraries in the 21st Century: Changes, Challenges and Choices*, eds. Cheryl Ann Peltier-Davis and Shamin Renwick (New Jersey: Information Today, 2007), 136-137.
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14. "National Library and Information System Authority (NALIS)," accessed May 5, 2011, <http://www2.nalis.gov.tt>.
15. "The College of the Bahamas: Libraries & Instructional Media Services (LIMS)," accessed May 5, 2011, <http://www.cob.edu.bs/Library/index.php>.
16. "UWISpace," accessed May 5, 2011, <http://uwispace.sta.uwi.edu/dspace>.
17. The Caribbean Community (CARICOM) established in 1973, is an organization of Caribbean nations and dependencies. The main goals of this organization are to promote economic integration and cooperation among its members; to ensure that the benefits of integration are equitably shared; and to coordinate foreign policy. The

Organisation of Eastern Caribbean States (OECS), created in 1981, is an inter-governmental organization dedicated to economic harmonization and integration, protection of human and legal rights, and the encouragement of good governance between countries and dependencies in the Eastern Caribbean.

18. "ACURILNET," accessed May 6, 2011,
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