British Columbia Library Association
Using the Internet for volunteer training

Context
The British Columbia Library Association (BCLA) has taken advantage of technology to provide training to volunteers despite time and financial constraints and the fact that some non-profit organizations are located in remote areas.

Project Description
Before the Internet, many non-profit organizations had few resources available to them for literacy work and volunteer training. The BCLA, a non-profit volunteer organization that initiates and coordinates projects to improve library services and information access in British Columbia, decided to use the Internet and create an on-line educational software program to train volunteers.

Using a federal government grant, the BCLA was able to develop an on-line training course for all libraries that belong to the Association. The one-year project began with a survey of librarians and continued with the development of the software and a Web site. The Association's evaluation of the course was positive. Recently, a number of libraries have expressed interest in the on-line course being offered as a seminar for credit. The second part of the evaluation will concern the impact on local libraries.

Successes/Challenges
According to librarian and project coordinator Ene Haabniit, the development process has been lengthy. A project of this type is successful as a result of close cooperation between the target public and the project leaders. The ideas and information provided by the committee members and librarians made an enormous contribution to the success of the course.

http://www.bcla.bc.ca

These best practices are an excellent way of sharing your experiences with other organizations in the voluntary sector. If you also have positive experiences on the use of technology in the voluntary sector, the IM-IT Secretariat will be pleased to post your stories. Please contact the IM/IT Secretariat by e-mail at imit@ic.gc.ca .