A Year-end Message from Judith Maxwell

Friday, December 26, 2003 – Greetings to all our *e-network* Friends. You continue to be an important part of what CPRN is all about. And it is a special treat when one of us gets to meet a group of *e-network* Friends at a conference, as has happened recently for Jane Jenson in Trois-Rivieres and for me in Vancouver.

This has been an amazing year of growth for CPRN.

- Subscribers to *e-network* increased by 700 to more than 5,000
- Visitors to our Web site rose to 545,000, up 40% over last year.
- Downloads of our publications soared 33% to 620,000.
- Media citations continue at a strong pace (though we always strive for more).

I thought this would be a good time to share with you our plans for the coming year, as we have launched important new research programs in all four Networks:

Our Vulnerable Workers series is now well underway, with several papers to come in the next year, though we are still looking for funding for a study on compliance with employment standards, and for the final synthesis paper that will tie together this research series. Judging from the media and popular reaction to the first paper we published in November, we have chosen a subject that touches the daily lives of too many Canadians.

The research leading up to A 21st Century Social Architecture – a major re-think of social policy principles – will produce four great papers in the next two months, with another group of four planned for the Spring. This is important work that we hope will be taken up by the new federal administration and by provinces as they rethink Canada's approach to social policy and enter a new era of negotiations and collaboration.

In January, you will receive the first paper in our series on Accountability for Health Care in Canada. That paper will be followed by others examining accountability regimes in the provinces and territories, and assessing four different mechanisms to achieve the kind of accountability Canadians have told us they expect of their health care system. The research will examine, in turn, the role of citizen engagement, performance indicators and public reporting, legal approaches, and governance. Our hope is that the results will contribute to moving the ball forward in this critical area of health care reform.

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In the Public Involvement Network, we are very encouraged by the results of the follow up survey with participants in the *Citizens' Dialogue on Canada's Future*, which we released in November. It shows continued enthusiasm for the process and significant ongoing gains in civic participation on the part of participants – an indication of the contribution engagement can make to revitalizing our democratic practice. We are now working hard to launch two new citizen dialogues to go into the field this winter. Both reports will be out by mid-year. We are also exploring new avenues at the federal and provincial levels to strengthen citizen participation in the democratic process.

A busy, but very exciting agenda.

I want to say a special thanks to all those who have taken part in CPRN activities over the past year. We thrive on that collaboration, and we take all your feedback about the Web site and about the research seriously. We will soon be asking you to provide feedback to the external review team now conducting a formal evaluation of CPRN's work since March 1999.

We wish you all good health and prosperity in 2004. Pray that you will have time to count blessings at this holiday time. And wish you every success in your own endeavours. Meanwhile, stay tuned for more from CPRN.

Best wishes,

Judith Maxwell

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