Preservation of Digitized Canadian Multicultural Heritage

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Overview of Presentation

- The Multicultural Canada Project
  - Origin, goal, activities & expected outcomes
- The Issue of digital preservation
  - Funding agency's guidelines
  - The preservation environment for the project
  - A major concern
- Conclusions

The Multicultural Canada Project

Documenting and Exploring Multicultural Canada

- Multiculturalism in Canada
- First country to adopt official multiculturalism in the world
- Constitutional recognition in *Canadian Charter of Rights and Freedoms* (*Constitution Act 1982)* : "This Charter shall be interpreted in a manner consistent with the preservation and enhancement of the multicultural heritage of Canadians."
- Desire to hear voice from different cultural groups
- Efforts to promote greater learning, understanding and communication amongst and within the cultural groups

The Multicultural Canada Project

- Background

  – Seldom available beyond the walls of the institution or owner
  – Fragile documents; limited access; no index
  – Important for cultural research purposes

- Organizations
  – Principal funding recipient: Simon Fraser University (SFU) Library
  – Seven country-wide partners: U of Toronto, U of Calgary, U of Victoria, Vancouver Public Library, Multicultural History Society of Ontario, Education Dept of SFU, and Lyndhurst Elementary School.

- Funding agency
  – Department of Canadian Heritage, Canadian Cultural Online (CCO) program
    http://www.pch.gc.ca/index_e.cfm

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The Multicultural Canada Project

- Goals
  - Provide online access to eleven cultural collections that document a variety of ethnic groups, including Chinese, Ukrainian, German, Hungarian, Vietnamese, Indo-Canadian and Doukhobor
  - Develop educational materials and teaching tools in an innovative way

- Facilities
  - SFU Digitization Centre
  - Other partners

The Multicultural Canada Project

- **Major activities**
  - Digitization; OCR; descriptive metadata creation; copyright management; construction of interactive learning materials; database design.

- **Expected outcomes**
  - A website presenting the digitized collections
  - Online learning materials for classroom and student projects.

The high demand for access entails preservation of these digitized materials for as long as they are needed

An issue for the project

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The Issue of Digital Preservation

- Agreement b/w CCO and the project
  - CCO encourages preservation of the digital material it helps create:
    - Long-term preservation strategies maximize the investments made today
    - Preserving the online presence maintains a record of the evolution of our online culture
  - It does not specify preservation responsibilities or requirements

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The Issue of Digital Preservation

- Relationship b/w access and long-term preservation in CCO guidelines:
  - Explicit access
    - "Content created, digitized and developed through CCO-funded projects must be made available to all Canadians regardless of geographic or technical boundaries, or disabilities." (CCO principle)

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The Issue of Digital Preservation

- Relationship b/w access and long-term preservation in CCO guidelines:
  - Implicit long-term preservation
    - Descriptive metadata vs. preservation metadata
    - Document the designs and structures of the databases for the purpose of "facilitating possible migrations, data recovery and preservation."
    - "obtain non-exclusive licences from the relevant copyright owner, authorizing the reproduction and, where necessary, any other action relating to digitized content necessary for the preservation and conservation of this digitized content."

The Issue of Digital Preservation

- SFU as the principal recipient
  - Providing a centralized repository for the digitized copies and hosting the access website

- Preservation environment at the SFU library
  - Adopt "Private LOCKSS Networks": COPPUL(Council of Prairie and Pacific University Libraries) LOCKSS Preservation Task Group
    - » ?
  - Digital preservation policy will be developed in the near future

The major concern

The Issue of Digital Preservation

An institutional preservation policy addresses:

- Rationales for making digital preservation become a part of the organization's normal business activities
- Goals of the organization towards digital preservation
- Roles and responsibilities respecting digital preservation
- Resources allocation
- Requirements of establishing business procedures for individual preservation endeavors
- Evaluation criteria for the outcomes of preservation

The Issue of Digital Preservation

A policy for the project in compliance with the institutional policy:

- Sets up the goals of the preservation efforts

- Specifies Roles and responsibilities among partners

- Determines guidelines/standards and/or best practices to follow

The Issue of Digital Preservation

A policy for the project (cont):

- Establish business procedures, including
    - Identify digital materials for preservation
    - Establish preservation strategies for identified digital materials
    - Carrying out preservation activities
    - Creating preservation metadata
    - Managing rights
    - Monitoring technology trends
    - Secure financial and staffing commitment

The Issue of Digital Preservation

- Types of digitization products
  - Still images and digital audio files
- Accompanying born digital materials
  - Metadata, teaching materials and tools, text files, and a website
- Determination or adoption of preservation framework
  - LOCKSS vs. OAIS
- Selection of strategies
  - Refreshing; Migration; Snapshot and backup of web pages

Conclusions

- The project presents a fuller picture of Canada's multicultural heritage

- It strengthens the capacities of individual partners to carry out the project through incorporating intellectual and physical resources

- The Lack of a mature institution-wide digital preservation policy reflects the current status of digital preservation

Conclusions

- Digital preservation is essentially about preserving access over time. Only by taking a proactive attitude and approach toward the issues and challenges imposed by digital preservation, can long-term, sustainable and uninterrupted access be assured.

- The Multicultural Canada Project will give a great opportunity for participating partners to establish preservation policies and procedures.

- Experience gained from accomplishing the project with considerations for long-term preservation will serve as valuable input for funding agencies' to advance their policies, guidance, and practice.

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Thank You!

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