

## **Navigating the rapids : designing and managing a multicultural multimedia manuscript project**

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At the present time, the Rare Books and Special Collections Division has undertaken a major digital archival project which will, when completed, provide access to 28 rare fur trader diaries and other documents related to the fur trade, as well, which are part of the Division's manuscript collection. The fur trade is seminal to an understanding of the historical, cultural and economic development of modern Quebec and Canada. The title of the project is *In Search of Adventure: The History of the Fur Trade in the Canada's and the North West Company*. The project has received funding from the Government of Canada's Millennium Partnership Program and the Quebec Government's Ministry of Culture and Communication. Other partners in the project include the McCord Museum of Canadian History and the Université de Montréal. It is hoped that in the future other institutions will participate in the project.

To facilitate a better understanding of the fur trade documents, a multimedia web site will be created to offer users multiple access points to not only the primary documents, but other related materials as well. The scholarly framework will include a short history of the fur trade, the North West Company, maps, images related to the fur trade and the site will include information illustrating the structure of the fur trade, the cultural impact of the trade and information related to the cultural communities intimately involved in the trade: Native, Metis, French and Scottish.

Several issues have emerged during the planning stages of the project which are relevant to the design and management of the project, as a whole. The issues include: preserving the editorial integrity of the original documents, insuring that the site is an interactive multimedia web site, and finally, that the site reflect the complex multicultural nature of the fur trade and mirror the respective roles of the Native populations, the Metis people and the French and

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Scottish fur traders. Although today the fur trade is subject to attack from animal rights groups it is important to note that the fur trade served as the economic, historical and cultural foundation of modern Canada and Quebec.

For more information regarding this project please visit:

[adresses web 2008]: <http://digital.library.mcgill.ca/nwc/>  
<http://www.mcgill.ca/dcp/projects/all/>

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