

**Twenty-third Session
Vienna, 28 March – 4 April 2006**

**Item 8 of the Provisional Agenda:
Activities relating to the Working Group on Toponymic
Data Files and Gazetteers**

Geographical Names of Canada Web site

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Gazetteers.**

Geographical Names of Canada Web site

The Geographical Names of Canada Web site has been in existence since August 1994. Managed by the Secretariat of the Geographical Names Board of Canada (GNBC), it has been through many changes in its content and its appearance, but has maintained its focus on Canada's toponyms, and the GNBC, the national naming authority.

The current format of the site reflects standards known as Common Look and Feel (CLF), which make use of standard layouts and elements, such as menu bars and buttons, to clearly identify official Government of Canada Web sites and to facilitate navigation and improve accessibility. On request, material can be provided in alternate formats for those using adaptive technologies. Teletype access is available for the hearing impaired. Material on the site is available in both of Canada's official languages, English and French.

The main site provides information on geographical names to the widest possible audience, and serves as a resource for Canadians and others. Those visiting the Web site represent a broad spectrum of users, from the public and private sectors, academia, and the general public. The site is used by those seeking a variety of information on:

- The correct spelling of names
- The location of a place or feature
- Toponyms associated with a place or event
- Naming policy and procedures
- History of names in Canada
- Links to related Web sites in Canada and around the world

One of the most popular features on the Web site is the name query, which allows users to search for a name anywhere in Canada. It is possible to do a simple search for all of Canada, or to narrow the search using various parameters, such as province or territory or feature type, if needed. The name search is popular with a broad spectrum of users, from the public and private sector and the general public. We have received feedback indicating that many people use the search weekly, or even daily, in their work or studies.

The Geographical Names of Canada Web site also contains a number of other valuable resources. There is information on the origin of various names in Canada, including those of the provinces and territories and their capital cities. A list of publications available from the GNBC Secretariat includes several which can be downloaded without cost in Portable Document Format (.pdf). Information for translators, such as a list of names which are official in both English and French and abbreviations of names of provinces and territories in both official languages, is also available on the site.

Plans for the future of the Web site include adding more information on the origin and history of names, and adding educational material such as quizzes, puzzles and learning activity modules. The name query tool will be replaced with another search utility, with incorporating newer technology, and adding enhanced mapping capability and increased functionality. In addition, *Canoma*, a geographical names magazine of the GNBC, formerly a printed paper publication, will become an online publication, with future issues available exclusively online.

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