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**Toponymic websites**

### **Pronunciation on geographical names websites in Canada**

Submitted by Canada\*\*

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## PRONUNCIATION ON GEOGRAPHICAL NAMES WEB SITES IN CANADA

In UNGEGN Working Paper No. 37a, it was pointed out that having pronunciation on a Web site comes with some costs. Those include paying: the person providing the pronunciations, a translator, any travel costs for getting the speaker or the translator to where the work will be recorded, and Web page design and layout costs. The age of the speaker, e.g., how easy is it to hear the voice, and possible multiple pronunciations of a name are also factors that might have an effect on cost.

On the other side of the scale, one also has to consider what advantages there might be in having pronunciations on a Web site. Is this a way of reaching a wider audience, such as non-Aboriginal speakers, than the speakers of a small group? Will having pronunciations encourage non-Aboriginal speakers to use Aboriginal names? Perhaps this might encourage the youth of an Aboriginal group to learn how to say things in their own language or to retain their knowledge of the language. Certainly, having pronunciation on a Web site may help to retain cultural and historical information about Aboriginal names.

Three of Canada's provincial/territorial jurisdictions - British Columbia, Yukon, and Northwest Territories - have Web sites that provide pronunciations for a limited number of names in various Aboriginal languages. Most Web sites have links to enable one to download any plug-in required to hear the pronunciations.

*Nisga'a Names, Nisga'a Lands*, part of the British Columbia Web site, is found at ([http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/bcnames/g2\\_nl.htm](http://ilmbwww.gov.bc.ca/bcnames/g2_nl.htm)). By clicking on a part of the overview map, you will be brought to a portion of it showing various Nisga'a names. Then click on one of the names.

The current Geographical Names Board of Canada member for Northwest Territories is also the Territorial Archaeologist. He works at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Centre. The Web site of this institution has two online exhibits using pronunciations. *Lessons from the Land: a cultural journey through the Northwest Territories – İdaà Trail* (<http://www.lessonsfromtheland.ca/>) and *The Inuvialuit Place Name Virtual Exhibit* (<http://pwnhc.learnnet.nt.ca/inuvialuit/>) provide information in Dogrib and Inuvialuktun respectively, as well as English and French. Click on the language you wish in the Web site you visit and then follow the instructions given there in order to hear the names in the Aboriginal language on that Web site.

The Yukon Geographical Place Names Board's Web site at ([http://www.yukonplacenames.ca/YGPNB\\_flash.html](http://www.yukonplacenames.ca/YGPNB_flash.html)) has a limited number of names with pronunciations available.

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