

A Sneak Peek: Repurposing Digital Assets for Relevant Educational Purposes with the Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology & Ethnology and the Treaty 8 Tribal Association

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The Simon Fraser University Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology (SFU MAE) has partnered with the Treaty 8 Tribal Association (T8TA) and the Tse'K'wa (the Charlie Lake Cave site) Heritage Society (THS) for an exciting collaborative digitization and education project. The project consists of repurposing original digital assets; digital assets are images, multimedia, and text files in digital format. In this case, we are including two webpages from the original SFU MAE website and combining them with a new online exhibit of the Tse'K'wa Collection. This collection is made up of over 1000 lithic artifacts recently acquired by the SFU MAE from a farmer in the Peace River region for the purpose of organizing and cataloguing, before repositing the collection with the Tse'K'wa Interpretive Centre near Fort St John. From these resources, interactive educational modules will be created to illustrate that digital assets can be edited and repurposed for continued use. The project will provide updated resources for educators, students, and heritage workers and create a unique educational resource for First Nations in Northeastern British Columbia. We believe that repurposing of older digital assets that still touch on important aspects of history are helpful to future generations and interactive education. They extend the availability of primary sources in the form of objects and photos to encourage First Nations students and researchers in the writing of their histories in their own voices. It is the important connection

with T8TA and the THS that has allowed this project to progress in a responsible and respectful manner.

Several aspects of this project are already underway, such as: releasing the new SFU MAE website to the public to replace the original from the 1990s and archiving three of the original webpages created in 1993. These heritage pages were among the first web pages to be published by a museum, anywhere, during the first years of the web. The *Charlie Lake Cave* webpage, written by John Breffitt, and the *Journey to a New Land* website, an award-winning website created by the SFU MAE as part of an investment from the Virtual Museum of Canada, will be repurposed. The *Charlie Lake Cave* webpages examine the archaeological site of Charlie Lake Cave in Northeastern B.C. *Journey to a New Land* is an interactive website that focuses on the peopling of North America. These two digital assets are integral to this project because they demonstrate not only how museums can archive webpages for historical record-keeping but also how they can be utilized for present-day informative purposes, such as the history of First Nations in B.C. Complementing the archived site will be a new online exhibit of the Tse'K'wa Collection, developed in collaboration with the T8TA and THS.

We are creating an interactive and engaging new resource available on the revised SFU MAE website. We are making primary sources of site, excavation, and artifact photos from both the Tse'K'wa Collection and Charlie Lake site available and creating new games for different school grades which will integrate easily with our website platform. The elements of the games will reflect the three main facets of the

project: The *Charlie Lake Cave* webpage, the *Journey to a New Land* website, and the new Tse'K'wa Collection online exhibit.

This is a work in progress and is planned in accordance with SFU web capacity and capabilities, as well as the existing accessible technologies that work in rural northern BC schools and communities. Because our museum website is contained within SFU's wider website-building platform, we are using their program and must adapt and create our education modules to work within this system. These are digital compromises many institutions must plan for and resourcefully work within!

The majority of this project is volunteer driven by Research Associates (RAs) at the SFU MAE. The Research Associate program is a great way to not only acquire but also refresh museum skills; it allows for the individual development of projects throughout the museum. The SFU MAE is always looking for new RAs to help add their creative spirits and unique perspectives to the museum! Of the RAs on this project, Denee Renouf has been organizing the new website and archiving the original webpages. Mandy Nilson is busy creating the Tse'K'wa Collection online exhibit. She is currently selecting and photographing diagnostic artifacts. Kristen McLaughlin is researching curriculum and planning education modules. This planning must take into account the website platform and its capabilities. Karen Aird is the T8TA and THS representative, who is voluntarily guiding all aspects of this project. Dr. Barbara Winter has 20+ years' experience creating digital assets, including award winning websites, which allows her to give invaluable oversight to this project. The rest of the spring and summer 2016 will consist of research, finishing the archiving process, writing, and testing our education modules and games. We will also be writing a technical 'how-to' paper for publication. This will be a resource for anyone wanting to pursue a similar project.

This is a keystone project in the collaborative efforts between the Treaty 8 Tribal Association and Simon Fraser University's Museum of Archaeology and

Ethnology. This project recognizes the value of primary sources in First Nations historical and archaeological research and interpretation. By preserving digital access to original documents and assets and expanding the primary sources available to searches on the web in a form that is accessible to First Nations youth and university students in northern BC, we believe this demonstrates how museums can repurpose archived material for continued, relevant engagement with First Nations, communities, and researchers.

Author Biographies:

Dr. Barbara Winter is the Director of the SFU Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology. She has 20+ years of web design and museum management.

Karen Aird is the Cultural Heritage Advisor from the Treaty 8 Tribal Association and the Tse'K'wa Heritage Society archaeologist, with significant technical writing experience and educational program development.

Mandy Nilson is the Project Manager and Archival Research Associate at the SFU MAE. She is a fifth year English/Humanities Major with an extended minor in Archaeology at SFU. She specializes in turning analog formats into digital and taking museum-quality photos.

Kristen McLaughlin is the Policy/Protocol Research Associate at the SFU MAE, revising and updating all policies and procedures for the museum. She is a recent graduate in archaeology from SFU with a Cultural Resource Management certificate.

Denee Renouf is the Website and Social Media Research Associate at the MAE. She creates website content and guides SFU MAE's social media presence. She is a recent graduate in archaeology graduate from SFU with a minor in First Nations Studies and a certificate in Cultural Resource Management.