

# *Canada In The Making* Phase II: **Evaluation Report**

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# ***Canada In The Making Phase II: Executive Summary***

## **A Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM) Project**

### **Introduction**

The Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM) is developing educational Web sites to facilitate use of the Early Canadiana Online (ECO) database of early Canadian texts by primary, intermediate and secondary students in Canada. *Canada In The Making* (CITM) Phase II represents the latest work toward this goal.

### **Purpose of the Evaluation**

This evaluation was conducted using qualitative and quantitative methods to gather feedback from educators and students on the revised CITM site and to improve the CITM Web site based on this feedback. Areas of interest included the effectiveness and relevance of the CITM Phase II Web site content, including a comparison with the earlier version; any flaws or errors in content, design and structure of the CITM site; and suggestions for future areas of development.

### **Summary of Results**

Overall, with all rated elements weighted equally, the site was rated at 72%. This represents an improvement from Phase I, which rated 63%. Scores were consistent, with standard deviation showing that 67% of students scored each item within one point of the average.

Content was found to be nominally relevant to the students participating in the evaluation, but very relevant other areas of the Ontario curriculum. A review of the curricula across Canada showed that the site content has links to all provincial curricula. Teachers were pleased by easy access to primary sources. This was significant improvement over CITM Phase I.

Aesthetics and readability rated well, with students and teachers generally approving of the design and layout and finding the text appropriate to their level. Some minor suggestions for improvement were made. This was also a significant improvement over CITM Phase I.

Usability was rated marginally higher, with the average score being lowered significantly by problems accessing texts from the ECO database. Navigation and information-finding tools were rated well.

Interest did not increase significantly, due primarily to the lack of a strong curriculum connection between the site and the activity with the work the students were doing. This was limited by the schools and classes available for testing the site. Teachers rated student engagement as high, however, and indicated that they would recommend the site strongly to colleagues.

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The evaluation found that students and teachers welcomed the improved Web site as an added resource. Based on curriculum and concepts, content was rated as most appropriate for grades 11 and 12.

It is recommended that the content of Phase II be amended to address shortcomings identified by the evaluation. It is also recommended that the content of the CITM site be further expanded. The area most identified for growth, and best fitting the content of the ECO database, is Aboriginal history.

Finally, it is recommended that the evaluation for the next phase of the CITM site, should it occur, be modified to better suit the timetable of the school year. This may require a delay in the evaluation or a modification of the methods used.

# ***Canada In The Making Phase II: Evaluation Report***

## **A Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM) Project**

### **Introduction**

The Canadian Institute for Historical Microreproductions (CIHM) hopes to develop high-quality online educational resources that can be used across the country. An evaluation of the new content developed for the *Canada In The Making* (CITM) Web site provided the opportunity to gather feedback from educators and students and to improve CIHM resources based on this feedback. For the purposes of this evaluation, content developed in 2001/2002 is referred to as CITM Phase I and content developed in 2002/2003 is referred to as CITM Phase II. The Web site is based on the Government Documents (Gov Docs) collection on the CIHM Web site, Early Canadiana Online (ECO), and uses those documents to help fulfill Canadian curriculum requirements.

### **Purpose of the Evaluation**

The purpose of this formative evaluation is to:

1. To gather qualitative and quantitative data on the effectiveness and relevance of the new CITM Web site content, including a comparison with the earlier version.
2. To identify any flaws or errors in content, design and structure of the CITM site, and use this information to make improvements and eliminate those errors.
3. To solicit suggestions for future areas of development.

### **Limitations of the Evaluation**

This evaluation was conducted over a limited time period (one month), with a small group of students. Only four teachers were surveyed and interviewed. All were positive about the site; however, it should be noted that there are limited Canadian resources for history on the Internet and that their enthusiasm may reflect this fact.

In addition, the study was conducted in an urban setting, with relatively plentiful – if older) – computer resources available to teachers (including high-speed Internet connections). These advantages may not be shared in all regions of Canada, although according to SchoolNet (2000), access is steadily improving.

Thus, while it is possible to extrapolate the results of the results of this evaluation to the general educational population, it would not have statistical validity. Rather, the value of this study was to:

- identify some ways the site can be used, and by what ages/grades,
- gather the impressions of a group of students and teachers who represent a range of environments and experience, and
- gather suggestions for improvement and future development.

## **Evaluation Focus**

### **CITM Phase II: History and Description**

CITM Phase II is was initiated in September 2002 to improve on Phase I, which was evaluated and reported on in the Assessment and Evaluation of CIHM Educational Resources (2002). Improvements and suggestions suggested in this evaluation were intended to be implemented, where possible and feasible.

CITM is an educational Web site targeting secondary school students (and their teachers), with secondary audiences including intermediate students/teachers and undergraduate students/professors. It contains narrative texts integrating primary source materials from the ECO database into explanatory narratives based on themes in Canadian history (as determined by an analysis of Canadian curricula – see **Appendix A**). The major theme in the 2002/2003 fiscal year was the history of the Canadian Constitution. Other features:

- Seven minor themes, including historical topics such as “The Deportation of the Acadians”, historical/political topics such as “Responsible Government” and legal/civics topics such as “The Written and Unwritten Constitution”.
- Integrated links on major and minor themes to primary sources from the ECO database, along with explanations and summaries of these texts.
- Maps and images to illustrate texts.
- Links to external Web sites containing supplementary information.
- Reference materials (glossary, biographies, site use instructions).
- Teachers’ Resources, including 15 lessons and activities pages.
- A Site Map, list of Maps and Images, and Site Index.

The site content was developed by an educator with a background in history and edited/reviewed by prominent subject-matter experts at the Ph.D. level. Lessons and activities were developed in consultation with education professionals from the University of Ottawa. Design followed guidelines set by the Ministry of Canadian Heritage for sites that are funded through their grants programs.

## **Evaluation Questions**

General evaluation questions were:

1. Is the site content appropriate and relevant for the target audience?
2. Is the design of the site appropriate to the target audience?
3. Is the site easy to use?
4. Is the site appealing to students and teachers?
5. Are the activities appropriate, usable and useful to students and teachers?
6. How does Phase II compare to Phase I?

The first five questions are important as they all effect the likelihood that the site will be used by teachers and students in the target groups. They also determine how effective the Web site will be in helping students and teachers with their work.

## **Information Needed to Complete the Evaluation**

Information required to answer the questions were:

- An analysis of curriculum requirements for history, Canadian studies, law and civics from across Canada
- Survey feedback from students and teachers on various aspects of the site
- The results of student work from an assignment based on the Web site
- Observations of students and teachers interacting with the site
- Interview data from teachers
- Data from Assessment and Evaluation of CIHM Educational Resources (2002)

## **A Brief Overview of Evaluation Plan and Procedures**

The evaluation was conducted by a single evaluator with the help and cooperation of local school board officials, teachers and students. Once schools interested in participating in the evaluation were identified by board authorities, the evaluator contacted the schools and arranged interviews with grade 10 teachers. Teachers agreed to allow the evaluator access to classrooms, but due to their limitations on time, the original pre-post test evaluation model had to be discarded in favour of a post-test, survey and interviews.

The evaluator conducted the evaluation by introducing students to the site, then asking them to complete an assignment based on the site. The activity was structured for students just in the process of learning how to write formal essays. In one case, a short lesson on the difference between primary and secondary resources was required.

The evaluator observed the students completing the activity and made notes based on these observations. Following the activity, he distributed a survey to students and teachers and

collected the completed work. The work was analyzed for success. The evaluator also conducted interviews with teachers, including in-person and questions submitted by e-mail. Data was analyzed using standard statistical techniques.

For more details on the evaluation procedure and requirements, see **Appendix B**.

## Evaluation Results

### Summary of Survey Results

**Appendices C and D** show the complete survey results.

#### Students

Site		Activities Used in Evaluation	
Element Rated	Percent of Maximum Score Possible	Element Rated	Percent of Maximum Score Possible
Aesthetics	79 %		
Content	76 %	Content	76 %
Interest	71 %	Interest	60 %
Readability	74 %		
Usability	69 %	Usability	76 %

#### Teachers

Site		Activities Used in Evaluation	
Element Rated	Percent of Maximum Score Possible	Element Rated	Percent of Maximum Score Possible
Aesthetics	83 %		
Content	75 %	Content	72 %
Interest	79 %	Interest	75 %
Primary Sources	76 %		
Readability	79 %		
Usability	70 %	Usability	66 %

### Curriculum Relevance of Content

Content was found to be very relevant to the Ontario grade 7 and 8 curriculum. Grade 7 history curriculum covers the pre-Confederation period while grade 8 history curriculum covers the Confederation period. It was also relevant to several Ontario grade 11 and 12 courses in law, civics and history. It was only minimally linked to Ontario grade 10 history, which covers Canadian history in the 20<sup>th</sup> century.

It is important to note that as primary and secondary education is a provincial responsibility, with curriculum set by each province, Canadian history is studied at different times in different across Canada. A review of the curricula across Canada shows that the site content has links to all provincial curricula. **Appendix A** contains a summary of courses and curriculum links. CITM contains links to the curriculum outcomes for each course in all provinces and regions, where applicable.

## **Aesthetics**

Site: Students and teachers gave mixed reviews of the aesthetics of the site. Some would have preferred a more “dated” look, while others appreciated the look and feel of the site. Both felt that, in general, the site could have benefited from more graphical and multimedia elements. Teachers focused more on the content of the site. Compared with Phase I, Phase II was considered a large improvement, with the rating 16% higher by students and 31% higher by teachers. See **Appendix E** for a comparison of Phase I and II.

## **Content**

Site: Students and teachers rated the content as limited in relevance to the curriculum or their course. Teachers indicated, however, that the site was an excellent match for grade 12 courses in history, and a good match for grade 11 and 12 civics and law courses. One teacher noted that it was a strength of the site that it allowed access to different levels of information, allowing students to access the information most appropriate to their level. Ratings were higher on survey questions dealing with ease of comprehension and overall site value. Compared with Phase I, Phase II was considered a significant improvement by students, who rated it 9% higher. Teachers rated it the same, due the fact that it was not directly linked to their course. The teachers’ overall rating of the educational value of the site was 88%.

Activities: Students found the content of the activity generally useful and relevant to their studies, although they indicated that they had passed the point in the course when they would be working on such an activity (it was impossible to do another, as links between possible activities and the course syllabus were limited). Teachers echoed this. Compared with Phase I, Phase II was considered a large improvement by students, rating it 19% higher. Teachers did not rate it higher. This was again due to a lack of connection with the curriculum being covered at the time.

## **Interest**

Site: Students were marginally less interested than teachers in the site, but both rated it moderately high. It was clear that the lack of a firm connection between the site and the Ontario grade 10 curriculum adversely affected the ratings of both teachers and students. When asked about suitability for grade 12 students (which does have direct curriculum links), teachers were far more enthusiastic. All indicated that they would recommend it to a colleague. Compared

with Phase I, Phase II was considered a significant improvement by students, who rated it 12% higher. Teachers were equally interested in CITM Phase I as they had been with CITM Phase II.

Activities: Students were somewhat interested in the activity, although this was adversely affected by the lack of a real connection with the work in which they were currently engaged. Compared with Phase I, Phase II was considered an improvement by students. Teachers were slightly less interested in CITM Phase II than they had been with CITM Phase I. This is again due to the lack of a direct curriculum connection.

## **Primary Sources**

Site: Teachers rated the primary sources highly, and were impressed by the fact that they could link directly to the documents. Problems with accessing documents from the ECO data caused some delays and lowered ratings. One teacher noted that some of the primary sources were too long to be useful to grade 10 students, as they would get lost or be intimidated. This was the first time this item was rated, as there were very few links to primary sources in CITM Phase I.

It was noted by the evaluator that although the curriculum requires that students be exposed to primary sources as early as grade 6, some students were unaware of the difference between primary and secondary sources. None had used primary sources in their work before.

## **Readability**

Site: Both students and teachers rated the readability as high, although some students indicated that better use of images and shorter pages could make information easier to find. Reaction to the vocabulary was mixed, with some students indicating that they would have preferred to have more words linked to the glossary, and others very satisfied. Teachers rated the site reading level as appropriate for grade 10. Compared with Phase I, Phase II was considered a moderate improvement by students and a large improvement by teachers (18% improvement).

## **Usability**

Site: The score of this element was affected by problems accessing primary source documents in the ECO database. When all students attempted to download the same page from the database, many received error messages. It is not certain whether this reflects the capacity of the school computers, the Internet connection, or the capabilities of the ECO server. The score for the item measuring this aspect of usability was 67%.

Other areas of usability, such as navigation and layout, were rated higher. Some students commented that the length of the pages made it difficult to find information. It was noted that the menus linking to sections within each page were not easily recognized. Other students were very pleased with the ease of navigation and had no difficulties. This may reflect different levels

of student familiarity with online search strategies. Students were impressed by the reference and navigation tools available (glossary, biographies, site index and site map). Compared with Phase I, Phase II was considered a significant improvement by students and a large improvement by teachers (22% increase in rating).

Activities: The activity was negatively affected by difficulties accessing documents from the ECO database. Despite this, students completed the activity in the required time and expressed little difficulty in finding the information. A few indicated that they needed help. One teacher noted that lessons on the site only had links to printable versions from the first HTML page of each lesson plan, and not from work sheets or other pages. She suggested that such formats be available from every page.

Compared with Phase I, Phase II was considered an improvement by students, but was rated the same by teachers. As the activities were very different, however, this does indicate very much: the activity for Phase I was a simple information search (crossword) from HTML text, while the activity this year required access to ECO database images.

## **Overall Ratings**

Overall, with all rated categories weighted equally, the site was rated at 72%. This represents an improvement from Phase I, which rated 63%.

## **Student Work**

Activities were successfully completed, with almost all students finding the required pages in less than five minutes and completing the task in 20 minutes. Student work was evaluated for correctness and for the quality of the responses. 90% of students gave a response that was at least nominally correct. 11% of students sought information that exceeded the requirements of the activity. Of the students who did not have a correct response, some did not complete the activity, others accessed the wrong document from the ECO database, and the remainder did not interpret the question properly. This may due to the amount or quality of the guidance given for the questions.

Students usually made use of the document summaries where possible, only using the ECO document image when necessary. Students drew conclusions about the information based on previous learning as well as from the documents themselves.

As noted above, there were problems accessing documents from the ECO database. This resulted in delays and some frustration. See **Appendix F** for more on student work.

## **How Teachers Would Use the Site**

Teachers wanted to use this site as a class resource for research and essay writing, as well as for projects and presentations. They were interested in the access to primary source documents, which would enable them to engage students in higher level thinking skills (e.g., interpretation of documents, extrapolation of relevance of historical documents).

In a typical usage, students would be introduced to the site in a setting in which all could interact with the site, such as a computer lab. Once started on the activity, students could work individually at home or at school, or in small groups in the classroom.

## **Suggestions for Improvement and Future Content Development**

Students and teachers identified two areas for improvement:

- More colour, images and multimedia
- More fun activities

Students and teachers were able to provide some ideas for the future development of content on the ECO site. They included:

- Aboriginal history
- 20<sup>th</sup> century history
- A further deepening and broadening of resources already available

## **Conclusions and Recommendations**

The evaluation found that students and teachers welcomed the improved Web site as an added resource. The design and content was viewed as most appropriate for grades 11 and 12, or for gifted students at lower grades. Curricular relevance was rated lower than expected, although this was due primarily to the limited classes available for the evaluation.

Results of the survey indicate that the site was viewed positively. Scores were consistent, with standard deviation showing that 67% of students scored each item within one point of the average.

A comparison with CITM Phase I Web site (excluding the activity) shows significant improvement in several areas. Of the seven areas for improvement identified by teachers and students for Phase I, only two were repeated. The activity was rated the same. However, the activities were not equivalent in nature and the curriculum connections were weaker.

## **Strengths of CITM Phase II**

CITM Phase II rated very well in several categories:

- Integration of primary sources
- Easy navigation
- Appropriate reading level
- Access to different levels of information

## **Weaknesses of CITM Phase II**

The most prominent weakness was the difficulty accessing ECO documents from multiple computers. Other weaknesses:

- A need for more links to the glossary.
- A need for more prominent links to sections within each page.
- Links to different formats from all HTML pages for lesson plans (including work sheets, evaluation criteria and extension suggestions), not just the first page.

## **A Note on Curriculum**

The noted lack of connection to the grade 10 curriculum is not viewed as a weakness as this grade was not identified in the original curriculum survey as a target grade. Despite this, however, teachers were pleased that the content did cross into their subject. Thus, it can be argued that a link to curriculum was in fact discovered where none had been expected, making this an unexpected benefit.

In addition, this site was not developed for grade 10 (or even Ontario) alone. The content was viewed as appropriate for a variety of other courses in the Ontario school system. A cross-Canada curriculum review also establishes that the material addresses curriculum needs in various provinces at different times. Thus, the broad nature of this project should, in theory, meet most if not all Canadian curriculum requirements regarding the evolution and history of the Canadian Constitution.

## **A Note on the Evaluation**

The evaluation itself suffered somewhat as it was impossible to get the best class to test the resources, which would have been a grade 12 Canadian studies or history class. More lead time would have been required after the completion of the site for this to be arranged. Adding to the problem was the fact that the history classes most relevant to the site were held in the fall of 2002, before CITM Phase II was completed. Two possible solutions exist for this problem:

- Evaluation of a different nature (e.g.: focus groups).
- Evaluation in the following school year.

The advantage of the current nature of the evaluation is that it allows an easy comparison with previous years (which was why it was selected for this evaluation). Other methods, however, allow more flexibility in time and could result in the generation of more ideas and opinions.

## **Recommendations**

It is recommended that the content of Phase II be amended to address shortcomings identified above. Specifically:

- Navigation within pages should be more noticeable, perhaps by putting it within a table.
- More images should be added.
- More words should be linked to the glossary, and more terms added to the glossary.
- Links for printable formats should be added to lesson plan pages which currently lack them.
- The nature of the difficulties accessing the ECO documents should be investigated and corrected, if possible.

It is also recommended that the content of the CITM site be further expanded. The area most identified for growth, and best fitting the content of the ECO database, is Aboriginal history.

Finally, it is recommended that the evaluation for the next phase of the CITM site, should it occur, be:

- Of a different nature.
- Held at a later date.
- A combination of both (with focus groups during the same fiscal year as the project is developed and in-class evaluation the following year).

## References

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SchoolNet (2000). SchoolNet's On-line Connectivity Survey Final Report: April 2000. (Online: <[http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/Research\\_Papers/Research/SchoolNet\\_Research/Final\\_Survey\\_Report\\_2000\(English\).htm](http://www.schoolnet.ca/home/e/Research_Papers/Research/SchoolNet_Research/Final_Survey_Report_2000(English).htm)>, accessed March 18, 2003.).

## Appendix A: Patterns in Provincial Curricula

The analysis determined areas of commonality in curricula across Canada. In particular, the study of Canadian governance, law and history was covered in all provinces. The table below shows the curricular relevance of the CIHM Web site, *Canada In The Making*.

**Table of Curricular Relevance**

<b>Province</b>	<b>Social Studies Curriculum Area of Relevance</b>	<b>Grade</b>
Alberta	Social Studies Aboriginal Studies	Grade 10 Grade 11, 12
British Columbia Yukon	Social Studies Law	Grade 11 Grade 12
Manitoba	Canadian Studies Canadian Social and Political History	Grade 10 Grade 12
New Brunswick	Canadian 19 <sup>th</sup> and 20 <sup>th</sup> Century History	Grade 8, 12
Newfoundland and Labrador	Canadian Democracy, Canadian Law Canadian History 1759 to Present	Grade 11 Grade 12
NWT and Nunavut	Canadian History to 1912	Grade 9
Nova Scotia	Canadian History 1812 to Present Canadian and North American History	Grade 8 Grade 12
Ontario	Social Studies Aboriginal Studies Understanding Canadian Law Canadian and International Law Canada: History, Identity, and Culture	Grade 7, 8 Grade 10, 12 Grade 11 Grade 12 Grade 12
Prince Edward Island	Canadian History: 1814 to 1900 Canadian Studies Canadian Politics	Grade 8 Grade 10, 11 Grade 12
Quebec	History of Canada and Quebec	Secondary IV
Saskatchewan	Canadian History	Grade 12

In addition, there were regional trends. The four educational regions can be roughly defined as the Atlantic Provinces Education Foundation (including Newfoundland, PEI, Nova Scotia and New Brunswick), Ontario, Quebec, and the Western Canada Protocol for Collaboration in Basic Education (including British Columbia, Alberta, Saskatchewan, Manitoba and the Territories).

CITM contains links to the curriculum outcomes for each course in all provinces and regions, where applicable.

## **Appendix B: Evaluation Procedure**

### **General**

The evaluation was conducted by a single evaluator with the help and cooperation of local school board officials, teachers and students. After schools interested in participating in the evaluation were identified by board authorities, the evaluator contacted the schools and arranged interviews with grade 10 teachers. Teachers agreed to allow the evaluator access to classrooms, but due to limitations on time, the original pre-post test evaluation model had to be discarded in favour of a survey and interviews.

The work conducted was tied as closely as possible to the grade 10 Ontario curriculum. Specific learning expectations/outcomes/objectives are also identified in the teaching resources for the curriculum of the different provinces and regions in Canada.

The students had already covered the material covered by the site (and hence the evaluation). Teachers involved in the study chose the class activity primarily to introduce them to a new resource.

### **Data Required for the Evaluation**

Several sources of quantitative and qualitative data were required:

- Survey data measuring student and teacher impressions of the different aspects of the CITM Web site (i.e.: aesthetics, content value and relevance, interest, primary source usage, readability and usability). See the surveys and results in **Appendices C and D**.
- Interview data from teachers (see **Appendix E**).
- Data from the Assessment and Evaluation of CIHM Educational Resources (2002) (which evaluated CITM Phase I). See **Appendix E** for a summary.
- The results of student work (see **Appendix F**).
- An analysis of curriculum requirements for all Canadian provinces.

### **Step-by-step Procedure**

1. Students were introduced to Phase II of Web site *Canada In The Making*. They were shown the features of the site and how material was organized. Observations were made while students and teachers navigated through the site.
2. The activity required students to locate primary source documents, read the documents (or their summaries), answer a question and draw conclusion requiring some judgment and reasoning. Students worked alone or in pairs for half a class period.
3. The researcher and the classroom teacher observed the students' interactions with the site during the activity and made notes on various issues, including students' interest, difficulties accessing pages, and how students found the required information.
4. Following completion of the activity, students and teachers were asked to rate the site using the survey questionnaire.
5. Student work was reviewed for quality and completion.
6. Teachers were interviewed in person and by e-mail to further comment on the site and to make comparisons with CITM Phase I.
7. Data was analyzed using standard statistical techniques to obtain an average score for different items and categories of items (e.g.: readability, aesthetics). A percentage rating of the maximum score possible was determined.
8. Data from the Assessment and Evaluation of CIHM Educational Resources (2002) (which evaluated CITM Phase I) was compared with the results of this evaluation.

It should be noted that the surveys used for this evaluation were improved and shortened based on feedback from the 2002 evaluation, and that student populations differed. As such, comparisons of data from the two evaluations cannot be taken too literally. However, they do suggest trends which are supported by qualitative data.

### **Schools Used**

Two schools were used to conduct the evaluations. One teacher outside the in-class study was also asked to evaluate the site using a modified questionnaire. Her responses have been included.

- The schools were in different socio-economic areas: one was urban, in a lower socio-economic area; the other was a new suburban school.

- The material covered is strongly linked to the mandatory grade 7 and 8 Ontario Curriculum (1998), strongly linked to Ontario grade 12 or OAC history courses, but limited in linkage to Ontario grade 10 history courses. This affected the motivation of the students, and to certain extent, teachers.
- The computers were mixed: some were relatively slow (200 MHz and higher), others were very new. All had a high-speed connection to the Internet.
- Students were familiar with computers, although not completely comfortable with them as research tools.

The teacher outside the in-class study completed an activity based on one of the lessons available on the site. This evaluation involved a short information-seeking activity using the site as a resource. The evaluator did not observe the work.

## Appendix C: Usability Survey Results for *Canada In The Making* Phase II:

### (Students Grade 10)

**Students Surveyed:** 47 students, in three classes (two schools)

#### Elements Rated:

Aesthetics:	A measure of student impressions of the attractiveness of the site and the manner in which graphical and textual elements work together.
Content:	A measure of student impressions of the quality of the information provided, including such elements as learning value and the usefulness of tools provided on the site (e.g., glossary).
Interest:	A measure of student interest in the subject.
Readability:	A measure of student impressions on the readability of text, including elements such as font size, vocabulary used, paragraph length, ease with information was found, and other visual elements that might have effect.
Usability:	A measure of student impressions of technical aspects of the site, including navigation, download time, and visual elements.

Selected comments include comments have been chosen on the following criteria:

- Make a point not obvious from the score of the item
- Make a constructive and useful point
- Reflect different points of view
- Are not repetitive

### Web Site

#### Content Value

1.	Did this site fit in with what you are learning in your class?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
2.	Was the site easy to read and understandable?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too easy or too hard? (if not easy)
3.	Did the primary sources you looked at fit in with your studies?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
4.	Was the site a valuable learning tool?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q1	3.870968	71.77419	0.921663
Q2	4.225806	80.64516	0.804557
Q3	3.903226	72.58065	0.943569
Q4	4.225806	80.64516	0.956022
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.056452</b>	<b>76.41129</b>	<b>0.913338</b>

**Comments:**

- “Awesome site! Just not what we are learning at the moment.”
- “It wasn’t really what we were learning, but I do believe the site would have been useful with WWI and WWII course.”
- “This is very efficient and informative for users.”
- “There was a lot of information – it will be very helpful for projects.”
- “The site is really useful...”

**Readability**

5.	Was the text easy to read – well spaced, good use of headings, etc?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
6.	Did design and images help readability?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too much or <b>not enough?</b> (if not readable)
7.	Was the vocabulary easy to understand?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q5	4.16129	79.03226	0.77875
Q6	3.677419	66.93548	0.979357
Q7	4	75	0.966092
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.946237</b>	<b>73.65591</b>	<b>0.92508</b>

**Comments:**

- “More pictures!”
- “It was very easy to read.”
- “Make it more appealing to a younger audience.”
- “Vocabulary a bit too difficult to understand.”
- “I liked best how the site is very well organized and easy to read.”
- “I liked that you have a summary for each subject [document?].”
- “It’s easy to understand. The words are at our level.”

## Usability/Design

8.	Was it easy for you to find the information you were looking for?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
9.	Did the site work well – no crashing, missing software, etc?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
10.	Were the formats for the text useful? (HTML, Word, PDF)	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
11.	Were the glossary, site map, timelines and indexes useful?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

### *Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q8	3.870968	71.77419	0.957146
Q9	3.129032	53.22581	1.05647
Q10	3.774194	69.35484	0.990275
Q11	4.290323	82.25806	0.782881
Total	<b>3.766129</b>	<b>69.15323</b>	<b>1.028922</b>

### Comments:

“Kept getting errors!”

“The glossary is VERY helpful because some words I didn’t understand.”

“I liked how it was easy to get to the next point. It was set up very well.”

“Very slow and difficult to attain [obtain?] certain material.”

“If your system could be able to stay unlocked under heavy load, all missing links may be found.”

“It’s well organized, but as a person who gets somewhat discouraged from long text, the pages have a lot of info (which makes it hard for me to find [information?] in the lines.”

“There was a problem getting to some pages.”

“I think we could have had a better look at it if our computers weren’t so damaged.”

## Aesthetics

12.	Did you like the way the site looked?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
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### *Data Analysis*

Question	Mean		Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q12	<b>4.16129</b>	<b>3.16129</b>	<b>79.03226</b>	<b>0.820438</b>

### Comments:

“Boring colours.”

“Add pictures completely around the border.”

“Need a better background.”

“Would rather more contemporary colours such as beige and brown, to make it seem older, because it’s history.”

“The design is nice, catches the eye.”

“Not enough pictures.”

“It’s bland.”

“I liked how the design was appropriate for the theme (not too fancy) as well as the complementary colours.”

“I really liked the background for your site. It was really attractive.”

“Overall it’s great, but more pictures would make it more exciting.”

## Interest

#	Question	Score	Comments
13.	Was the site more interesting than other materials you use?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
14.	Did the site make you more interested in the subject?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
15.	Would you recommend the site to a fellow student?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

### *Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q13	3.83871	70.96774	0.934408
Q14	3.709677	67.74194	0.86385
Q15	3.935484	73.3871	0.89202
Total	<b>3.827957</b>	<b>70.69892</b>	<b>0.892282</b>

### Comments:

“Unless we were looking for information I would tell them about the site, but I don’t think we would go on it for fun.”

“Was very interesting, but could have used more on aboriginals.”

“It is interesting with the layout and keeps you ‘motivated’ to keep reading.”

“It could be useful for research.”

## Activity/Lesson

### Content

16.	Did the activity fit in with what you normally do in class?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
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17.	Was the activity at the right level for you?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too easy or too hard? (if relevant)
18.	Did you finish the work in the time you were given?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
19.	Was this a valuable learning activity?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q16	3.709677	67.74194	0.937854
Q17	4	75	1
Q18	4.387097	84.67742	0.760588
Q19	4.129032	78.22581	0.805892
<b>Total</b>	<b>16.22581</b>	<b>76.41129</b>	<b>0.904392</b>

**Comments:**

“I don’t think I learned anything that’s super important.”

“The activity would have been good, if we were studying the preconfederate and confederate [sic] years.”

“They didn’t really apply to what we were learning.”

**Usability**

20.	Were the worksheet instructions clear and easy to understand?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
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*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean		Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q20	<b>4.032258</b>	<b>3.032258</b>	<b>75.80645</b>	<b>0.982645</b>

**Comments:**

“I couldn’t understand what the question was asking, I had to ask the teacher.”

“Questions should have been more to the point, a long question with a short answer.”

“I think the questions are great, but if they were FUN activities people would get more into it.”

**Interest**

21.	Was the activity interesting?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
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*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q21	<b>3.419355</b>	<b>60.48387</b>	<b>0.992445</b>

**Comments:**

“Was okay, could have been more fun.”

**22. What Canadian educational content would you like to see developed on the CIHM site?**

“All areas covered.”

“WWI and WWII” (x6 comments)

“Aboriginals.”

“About the 50s and 60s. Also more interesting stories about the past.”

“More words that are defined.”

**Other comments:**

“I’m pleased to know about this site. I hope more information can come soon.”

“I am very appreciative that the organization took the time and energy to construct [this] site for users.”

“Overall it’s a really excellent site that has a lot of information. Well done.”

**Overall Data Results**

<b>OVERALL</b>		<b>SITE</b>		<b>ACTIVITY</b>	
mean	<b>3.926267</b>	mean	<b>3.91828</b>	mean	<b>3.946237</b>
percent	<b>73.15668</b>	percent	<b>72.95699</b>	percent	<b>73.65591</b>
SD	<b>0.946622</b>	SD	<b>0.943323</b>	SD	<b>0.957086</b>

**Appendix D:**  
**Usability Survey Results for *Canada In The Making* Phase II:**  
**(Teachers)**

**Teachers Surveyed:** 4

**Elements Rated:**

- Aesthetics:** A measure of teachers' impressions of the attractiveness of the site and the manner in which graphical and textual elements work together.
- Content:** A measure of teacher impressions of the quality of the information provided, including such elements as learning value and the usefulness of tools provided on the site (e.g., glossary).
- Interest:** A measure of the teachers' impression of student interest in the subject.
- Readability:** A measure of teachers' impressions on the readability of text, including elements such as font size, vocabulary used, paragraph length, ease with information was found, and other visual elements that might have effect.
- Usability:** A measure of teachers' impressions of technical aspects of the site, including navigation, download time, and visual elements. For lessons, it measures appropriateness for classroom.

Selected comments include comments have been chosen on the following criteria:

- Make a point not obvious from the score of the item
- Make a constructive and useful point
- Reflect different points of view
- Are not repetitive

**Web Site**

**Content Value**

1.	Is this material relevant to the curriculum for your class?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
2.	Was the level of the concepts appropriate for your students?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too easy or too hard? (if relevant)
3.	Was the reading level appropriate?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too easy or too hard? (if relevant)
4.	Do the pictures illustrate the text appropriately?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

5.	Was this site a valuable learning tool?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
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*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q1	4	75	0
Q2	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q3	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q4	4	75	0
Q5	4.5	87.5	0.57735
Total	<b>4</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0.458831</b>

**Comments:**

“Concepts appropriate for grade 12. Above the average Grade 10 level.”

“An excellent resource offering something for students at different levels. Also useful in law and civics courses.”

“There needs to be more Canadian content like this.”

“The content isn’t exactly matched to the Ontario curriculum. I can’t speak for other curriculum, though.”

**Primary Sources**

6.	Were the primary sources relevant to the curriculum for your class?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
7.	Were the primary sources appropriate for your students?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too easy or too hard? (if relevant)
8.	Was the reading level appropriate?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too easy or too hard? (if relevant)
9.	Do you think these primary sources enriched student learning?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q6	4.5	87.5	0.57735
Q7	3.5	62.5	0.57735
Q8	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q9	4.5	87.5	0.57735
Total	<b>4.0625</b>	<b>76.5625</b>	<b>0.680074</b>

**Comments:**

“Summaries were good – at students’ level [grade 10].”

“Some were too long to be useful. Students would have to be guided.”

“Students haven’t been introduced to primary sources before.”

## Readability

10.	Was the text easy to read – well spaced, good use of headings, etc?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
11.	Did visual elements (design and images) help readability?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too much or not enough? (if relevant)
12.	Was the vocabulary appropriate?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

### *Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q10	4.5	87.5	0.57735
Q11	4	75	0
Q12	4	75	0
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.166667</b>	<b>79.16667</b>	<b>0.389249</b>

### Comments:

“Good design. The vocabulary was well linked to the glossary.”

“The texts were a bit long for Grade 10 students.”

## Usability

13.	Was the navigation easy to understand?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
14.	Was it easy for students to find the information they were looking for?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
15.	Were the glossary, site map, timelines and indexes useful?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
16.	Did the site work well – no crashing, missing software, etc?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
17.	Were the formats for the text useful? (HTML, Word, PDF)	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

### *Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q13	4	75	0.816497
Q14	3.75	68.75	0.957427
Q15	4.5	87.5	0.57735
Q16	3.25	56.25	1.707825
Q17	3.5	62.5	1
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.8</b>	<b>70</b>	<b>1.056309</b>

**Comments:**

“Glitches – system errors – sometimes frustrating.”

“The glossary and biographies were great. It made sense to link to outside sources.”

“The main site was fine, but some primary sources were hard to load when all the students were on the computer.”

“Good amount of information, organized well.”

**Aesthetics**

18.	Did you like the way the site looked?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
19.	Did the students seem to like the way the site looked?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
20.	Did the images enhance the site?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q18	4.75	93.75	0.5
Q19	4	75	0
Q20	4.25	81.25	0.5
Total	<b>4.333333</b>	<b>83.33333</b>	<b>0.492366</b>

**Comments:**

“A good design. Makes finding information easy.”

“A bit crowded. Hard to find the exact link you needed.”

“More images would improve the site.”

“Good design or the purpose.”

**Interest**

#	Question	Score	Comments
21.	Was the site more interesting to students than other materials?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
22.	Did it make students more interested in the subject?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
23.	Would you recommend the site to a colleague?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q21	4.25	81.25	0.957427
Q22	4	75	0
Q23	4.75	93.75	0.5
<b>Total</b>	<b>4.333333</b>	<b>83.33333</b>	<b>0.651339</b>

**Comments:**

“Students were engaged. Some drew links to civics courses.”

“This will interest them when they need information for a project.”

## Lessons and Teaching Strategies

**Content Value**

24.	Were the activities curriculum-relevant?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
25.	Was the activity appropriate for students?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too easy or too hard? (if relevant)
26.	Were the suggestions for assessment useful and appropriate?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
27.	Was the homework/extension activity useful?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
28.	Did students finish the work in the time they were given?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
29.	Was this a valuable learning activity?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

*Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q24	4	75	0.816497
Q25	4	75	0.816497
Q26	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q27	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q28	4	75	1.154701
Q29	4	75	0.816497
<b>Total</b>	<b>3.916667</b>	<b>71.875</b>	<b>0.717282</b>

**Comments:**

“We had passed this point in the course.”

“I would use ideas from the lesson plans, but not the plans themselves.”

“A good range of activities.”

## Usability

30.	Did the nature of the activities reflect classroom practices?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
31.	Were the expectations identified appropriate and useful?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
32.	Was the level of detail in the guideline appropriate?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	Too much or too little? (if relevant)
33.	Were the worksheet instructions clear and easy to understand?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	

### *Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q30	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q31	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q32	3.75	68.75	0.5
Q33	3.25	56.25	0.5
Total	<b>3.625</b>	<b>65.625</b>	<b>0.5</b>

### Comments:

“Printable worksheets were hard to find – are there any?”

“Useful as a starting point.”

## Interest

34.	Were students engaged by the activity?	Not at all = 1 2 3 4 5 = Very	
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### *Data Analysis*

Question	Mean	Percent of Max	Standard Deviation
Q34	<b>4</b>	<b>75</b>	<b>0.816497</b>

### Comments:

“It would be helpful to have fun activities for this age group [grade 10].”

## 35. What Canadian educational content would you like to see developed on the CIHM site?

Aboriginal history (x2)

20<sup>th</sup> century history

## Overall Data Results

<b>OVERALL</b>		<b>SITE</b>		<b>ACTIVITY</b>	
<b>mean</b>	<b>3.992647</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>4.261364</b>	<b>mean</b>	<b>3.818182</b>
<b>percent</b>	<b>74.81618</b>	<b>percent</b>	<b>81.53409</b>	<b>percent</b>	<b>70.45455</b>
<b>SD</b>	<b>0.693849</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>0.699037</b>	<b>SD</b>	<b>0.656726</b>

**Appendix E:**  
**A Comparison between *Canada In The Making* Phase I and II**  
**(Teachers)**

This comparison was conducted to see if the site had improved in eyes of users, what areas showed the most improvement, and what areas still need more improvement.

(Source of data for CITM Phase I: Assessment and Evaluation of CIHM Educational Resources (2002))

**Survey: Web Site**

	Percent of Maximum Score Possible			
	Students		Teachers	
	CITM Phase I	CITM Phase II	CITM Phase I	CITM Phase II
Aesthetics	62 %	79 %	52 %	83 %
Content	67 %	76 %	75 %	75 %
Interest	59 %	71 %	79 %	79 %
Primary Sources	not rated	not rated	not rated	76 %
Readability	69 %	74 %	61 %	79 %
Usability	60 %	69 %	48 %	70 %

**Survey: Activities Conducted**

	Percent of Maximum Score Possible			
	Students		Teachers	
	CITM Phase I	CITM Phase II	CITM Phase I	CITM Phase II
Aesthetics	71 %	not rated	56 %	not rated
Content	57 %	76 %	72 %	72 %
Interest	54 %	60 %	79 %	75 %
Readability	87 %	not rated	81 %	not rated
Usability	62 %	76 %	67 %	66 %

## Supplementary Interview Questions

Teachers were asked to compare the old version of CITM with CITM Phase II. The questions follow:

1. Which do you prefer? Why?

All teachers that replied indicated that they preferred the new site. Reasons given”

- Design more engaging
- More useful and greater depth to information
- More links to curriculum
- Better links to primary source documents

2. Which seems more useful to you as a history teacher?

All teachers preferred the new site. Reasons given:

- More links to curriculum
- More useful for projects
- An excellent resource for grade 12 courses
- Old site lacks focus. Resources have no value that can't be found in a textbook.
- Impressed by level of information and fact that the site had been reviewed by a subject expert.

3. Based on reading level, layout and concepts, what do you think is the appropriate student age level for using these sites?

Old CITM: no consensus – grades 9 to 12

- There was difficulty identifying a grade for this material. Teachers asked what level it had been designed for, as they could not identify one themselves.

New CITM: consensus - grades 11 and 12

- This was largely based on the structure of curriculum in Ontario, which covers 19<sup>th</sup> century history at earlier grades, 20<sup>th</sup> century history in grade 10 and in-depth Canadian history in grade 12.
- Links were drawn to law and civics courses.

4. In the “teacher’s resources” section of the new site, do the direct links to curriculum expectations contain information that is useful to you as a teacher?

Teachers appreciated the direct links to curriculum, although they weren't directly applicable to them.

### **Areas for Improvement Identified for CITM Phase I**

Students and teachers identified several areas for improvement:

- More colour, images and multimedia
- More fun activities and interactivity
- Present the content in a Web-friendly manner: use of headings, bullet points, links, less dense text
- More biographies of important historical figures, and more of information about them
- A site map
- More links to other sites for information
- Make the glossary a main option

### **Areas for Improvement Identified for CITM Phase I**

Students and teachers identified several areas for improvement:

- More colour, images and multimedia
- More fun activities and interactivity
- A need for more links to the glossary
- A need for more prominent links to sections within each page
- Links to different formats from all HTML pages for lesson plans (including work sheets, evaluation criteria and extension suggestions), not just the first page.

## **Appendix F: Student Activity: Findings**

Students were given one or two questions to answer (depending on time limitations). The activity was tightly structured due to time limitations and the lack of student familiarity with the site.

### **Questions Asked**

#### **1. The Imperial Conference**

- Go to **1867 - 1931 (1)** on the menu bar of the Constitutional history section, and look for **Growing Independence from Britain** section.
- Open the document in the ECO database. Advance the pages until you get to page 708.

At the bottom of the page, what do you think the first sentence under the heading *Full Powers* means?

#### **2. The Statute of Westminster, 1931**

- Go to **1931-1982** on the menu bar of the Constitutional history section.
- Find the link for the *Statute of Westminster*.

Which of the articles (sections) in this statute do you think meant the most for the independence of Canada from Britain? Why?

### **Sample Responses (Excerpts)**

Question 1:

“The last sentence expresses that they have powers to create treaties.”

“The colonies plenipotentiaries have full powers to make treaties. This means they don’t have to go through Britain any more.”

“[It means that] the governments [in the] empire contemplating the negotiation of a treaty should give due consideration to its possible effect upon other governments [in the Empire].”

Question 2:

“Section 4: British laws no longer apply to the Dominions. This article in the statute meant the most independence of Canada from Britain because Canada no longer had to follow British laws and was free to develop new laws.”

“Section 2 meant the most for the independence of Canada from Britain because it states that the British Parliament can no longer nullify laws in the Dominions. It makes Canada almost completely independent.”

“Section 2 – repeals the Colonial Laws Validity Act, 1865: British Parliament can no longer nullify laws in the dominions.”

For question two, responses were evenly split between section 2 and section 4 of the Statute of Westminster as the most important for Canada’s independence. Only a few students chose more than one article.

### Evaluation of Student Responses

#### Question 1

<b>Incorrect/ incomplete response</b>	<b>Correct response, no judgment</b>	<b>Correct response, made judgment about document</b>	<b>Correct response, made judgment using experience from previous knowledge</b>
10%	17%	60%	13%

#### Question 2

<b>Incorrect/ incomplete response</b>	<b>Correct response, no judgment</b>	<b>Correct response, made judgment about document</b>	<b>Correct response, suggested more than one article and made judgment</b>
12%	15%	65%	8%