Culture in the Digital Age -
Culture.ca, a Canadian Experience

Mostafa ZOMMO, Director General, eServices

- PNC Conference, November 1, 2005-
Canadians and the Internet explosion

- 500% growth in 5 years in domains registered to Canadians citizens and businesses (470,000 in 2000, 2.6 million in 2005).
- 95% of Canadians under age 25 use the Internet, compared to 35% of those aged 65 and over.
- 3 in 4 Canadians have used the Internet recently.
- 3 out of 4 households own at least one PC.
- 72% of households have home Internet access.
- Half of all Canadian households have high speed Internet access.

Sources: EKOS 2004/5 Study, Rethinking the Information Highway + Canadian Internet Registration Authority
Engaging Canada in the global internet landscape – two strategic Prime Ministerial commitments in 1999:

- Canada will be the most connected nation and all its key products and services will be offered on-line.

  **Government On-Line Strategy (GOL)**

- The Government will bring Canadian culture into the digital age (and) increase support for the use of new media.

  **Canadian Cultural Online Strategy**

**CULTURE.CA**
Canadian Government On-Line (GOL)

Achievements:

- In 2005, 34 federal departments and agencies provide 130+ on-line services used by Canadians.
- Regular Internet users: 63% (percent of population).
- Regular Internet users who have used e-Government: 79%.
- Canada’s e-Government program ranks as number 1 in the world for the 4th year in a row. (Source: e-Government Leadership: High Performance, Maximum, Accenture study.)
Canadian Culture Online Strategy (CCO)

Strategic investments in the digitization of cultural content:

- Government of Canada annually invests $60 million to support Canadian culture on-line – of which $32+ million go into content creation.
- Since 2000, CCO has supported the creation of some 1600 new cultural web and new media projects.

Particular emphasis on the creation and promotion:

- For Young Canadians / e-Learning – 1000+ learning resources have been produced
- Of French-language content – Over 80% of content is created in French (in order to increase the 3% of French content currently on the Web)

Source: CCO Branch, PCH 2005
Culture.ca, Canada’s Cultural Gateway

Explore, find and share the creativity and diversity of Canadian culture on-line.
Canadian national cultural portal

- A collaborative initiative of the Department of Canadian Heritage
  - part of the Canadian Culture Online Strategy
  - in partnership with institutions from the public and private sectors.

- A unique gateway designed to showcase the best of Canadian culture on-line since 2003.

- A user-centric interface providing access to 15 000+ quality Canadian cultural Web sites.

- An opportunity for Canadian cultural stakeholders to increase the visibility of their on-line content.

- An advanced search engine encompassing more than 1,5 million on-line resources (Webinator by Thunderstone).
Culture.ca - Content
Explore - Find - Share

Partners
Collaborative & involves public and private sectors (100+ organizations)

Collections
List and feature 15,000+ quality Canadian cultural Web sites (Catalogued in partnership with Library and Archives Canada)

Showcases
In-depth features created with stakeholders from cultural sector on popular Canadian cultural topics

Perspectives
Canadians views on cultural life

News
Cultural news feeds in collaboration with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation / Société Radio-Canada

Archives
Multimedia capsules in collaboration with the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation / Société Radio-Canada and the National Film Board / Office national du film

Encyclopedia
Exclusive access to records of Canadian Encyclopedia Online

Youth
Canadian culture on-line for Kids
Engaging Canadians

**Target Audience:**
- All Canadians, plus youth, diverse and Aboriginal communities
- Initial focus on influential 25-49 segment
- Kids’ Zone targets 9-12 age group & teachers

**User Traffic:**
- 5.7 million visits since launch
- Visitors from more than 150 countries

**Citizen Engagement:**
- Over 5,000 comments and perspectives annually from users
- 60% of feedback constitute link suggestions
- On-line surveys and usability testing supporting development (twice per year)
- Bi-monthly subscriber-based e-Newsletter
Culture.ca, Canada’s Cultural Gateway: Visit Objectives and Achievement

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*To Date: 1,800,000

*Achievement of FY 2005/06 is estimated based on Webtrends, October 2005
User survey and testing: highlights

Culture.ca is reaching Canadians in homes, schools and places of work

- Survey respondents indicated that they were using Culture.ca for entertainment (59%), school assignment (23%) and work (18%). (Canadian survey Feb/Mar 2005)

Culture.ca visitors highly appreciate the gateway

- Almost all visitors liked their experience on Culture.ca (87%) and the majority indicated they would recommend it (80%) to friends, colleagues or family. (Canadian survey Feb/Mar 2005)

Partnering adds credibility

- Participants noted that the participation of private and public sector partners adds credibility to the site. (Qualitative Web site evaluation Dec 2004)

A need to be more dynamic and visually engaging

- There were strong expectations that a Web site designed to provide access to cultural information, resources and collections be dynamic and visually engaging. (Qualitative Web site evaluation Dec 2004)
Two years later... portal evolution

1. Transform from a “thin film” information gateway to a deep content and service cultural portal:
   - Improve Web site end-user experience = more interactive
   - Implement improvements that support operational control & efficiency = more dynamic
   - Create an environment that supports marketing objectives = more user engagement

2. Shift from being exclusively a portal to more of a content-brand distributed through a variety of devices (e.g. wireless, location-aware technologies, Vancouver 2006 trials).
From national to international...

- National culturals portals have exploded in virtual global space
- Little is known about these new public venues, their management practices or their implications on cultural policy
- First international online survey: 370 portals identified of which 80 responded, March 2005
- New, innovative informal network of cultural portal authorities created (First International Roundtable event, hosted by Canada, Expo2005, Aichi, Japan)
- 20 participating portals from all continents at Roundtable, and UNESCO
- A new, emerging ‘portal of portals’ already on-line: www.culturemondo.org
**welcome**

Culture.mondo is an informal network that encourages and facilitates communication amongst experts responsible for creating, developing, and maintaining cultural portals worldwide. The Culture.mondo Web site provides a gateway to cultural portals and a repository of resources and research.

**bienvenue**

Culture.mondo est un réseau non officiel qui vise à encourager et à faciliter la communication entre les responsables de la création, du développement et de la mise à jour de portails culturels partout dans le monde. Culture.mondo sert de passerelle aux portails culturels et de centre d’expertise en matière de ressources et de recherches.
Current initiatives:

• Conduct a second survey with further reach.
• Explore with European Union (EU), Organization of American States (OAS) and UNESCO, a vision of a global cultural portal.
• Hold a second International Roundtable in 2006.

Expanding the network:

• Increase participation from cultural portals in all world regions, sharing expertise and experience.
• Seek involvement and advice on identifying portals from the Pacific Rim.
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