Les identités personnelles ou collectives se construisent certes au gré des circonstances, mais elles ont aussi besoin d'un socle sûr qui perdure à travers les siècles : des exemples européens récents nous en donnent la confirmation.

C'est pourquoi il nous semble que la politique suisse a moins été imposée par l'élite genevoise au peuple qu'on ne peut le penser, il existait certainement des prédispositions helvétiques fondées sur une mémoire collective propre à Genève.

La qualité d'un livre se mesure aux points d'interrogation et aux questions qu'il peut susciter chez un lecteur attentif : c'est pourquoi l'ouvrage d'Irène Herrmann suscite l'estime et l'admiration car il est solidement construit et étayé et nous force du même coup à prendre position face à des problèmes qui sont encore d'actualité.

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HESKETH, Bob, and Chris HACKETT — *Canada: Confederation to Present* [CD-ROM]. Edmonton: Chinook Multimedia, 2001.

Interactivity is the Holy Grail of history education, the so-far elusive presence drawing future students to study the past. But, as a rule, where interactivity is now found, history is not. Interactivity is currently epitomized by sophisticated computer simulation games and the free-wheeling World Wide Web, but legitimate scholarship is either absent altogether or, given the Web's notorious lack of an academic quality-control filter, buried in megabytes of misinformation from attractive but unreliable sources. Thus it may come as a relief that promoting Bob Hesketh and Chris Hackett's CD-ROM *Canada: Confederation to Present* as "An Interactive History of Canada" turns out to be something of a misnomer. While it is not really "interactive" in the full current sense of the word, it is nevertheless an authoritative and invaluable asset to history education.

Historians at the University of Alberta, Hesketh and Hackett began to talk seriously about creating a Canadian history CD-ROM in the mid-1990s. Discussions over coffee with their colleagues led to the establishment of an editorial board, chaired by Rod MacLeod and staffed by leading scholars such as Robert Bothwell, Jean-Claude Robert, and Margaret Conrad. They, in turn, solicited narrative histories and topical essays from academic historians across the country, texts that would serve as the base of the CD-ROM. A research, design, and technical team was assembled, and, with funding from the Terra Nova Initiative at Canadian Heritage, Telefilm Canada, and the University of Alberta, *Canada: Confederation to Present* was produced. Hesketh and Hackett built a business out of the process, and Chinook Multimedia, a developer of educational learning objects, CD-ROMs, and web sites, is now one of a very select number of academic research spin-off companies originating in the humanities.

Canada: Confederation to Present, Chinook's signature product, is constructed around five narratives, five related timelines, and 121 "Case Studies". Users can read Canadian history through the interpretive lenses of Natives, Society/Culture, Women, Politics/Economy, and Regional Dynamics, following cascading menus to

themes and then chronological histories. Selecting Society/Culture, for instance, yields themes including Science and Technology, Religion, Sports, Home Life, Work Life, Social Criticism, and Education. Choosing Religion brings the user to a chronological history written by University of Calgary historian David Marshall, which can be read through from the beginning or by sections: Preface, 1867–1918, 1918–1945, 1945–1967, and 1967–Conclusion.

Embedded in the chronological histories are links to relevant case studies, which can also be accessed through an index menu. In Marshall's history of post-Confederation religion, for instance, his observations about the changing religious composition of Canada due to immigration in the first decade of the twentieth century are supplemented with links to case studies including "Canadian Immigration Policy" by Reg Whitaker, "Migration to Canada: The International Context" by Dirk Hoerder, and "Canada's Changing Ethnic Mix from 1860 to the Present" by Valerie Knowles. Supporting the case studies and chronological history texts are photographs, cartoons, maps, charts, audio-visual excerpts, and transcriptions of primary documents, such as extracts from legislation, reports, and newspaper articles.

The CD-ROM comes equipped with a variety of tools that facilitate reading the texts (the Bookmarks function), assist in using the texts and media resources (the Presentation Builder, Notebook, and Compare Events functions), and facilitate assessment (the Progress function, which tracks a student's progress through the CD-ROM). Given the deep well of material on which users may draw, the most important tool is undoubtedly the search engine. Powerful and easy to use, the search tool is representative of the CD-ROM in general. Considerable effort went into the streamlined design of *Canada: Confederation to Present*, and the user is the beneficiary.

These tools are designed to facilitate use of *Canada: Confederation to Present*, but only within the confines of the CD-ROM. Basic functions that afford manipulation of the content outside the CD-ROM, such as printing or cutting and pasting, are limited, if they exist at all. The case studies can be printed from the companion web site, but the narrative histories cannot. No images are reproduced in the printed version — the reader is left with 15 pages of densely packed text. Users who wish to cut or paste words or images into PowerPoint or other applications have to settle instead for typing notes in the Notebook or transporting images or other media resources into the Presentation Builder. This is not the Web, where users can "borrow" content at will, but what users of this CD-ROM lose in freedom, they gain in reliability.

Hesketh and Haskett have given us a first-rate compendium of contemporary Canadian academic history. *Canada: Confederation to Present* reflects the richness of our historiography by providing users with multiple post-Confederation narratives focused on Aboriginal peoples, culture, women, politics and economics, and region: readers can examine an event or period from several perspectives, and even use the Compare Events function to read texts in parallel. The CD-ROM also reflects the breadth of today's post-Confederation history: the case studies and narrative histories are the work of over 100 scholars and total 1.75 million words. If Hesketh and Hackett's digital history had appeared in book form, it would have been a multi-volume boxed set, and bookshelves nation-wide would have been reorganized and reinforced to hold them all.

Despite its format, however, Hesketh and Hackett's CD-ROM ultimately reflects the traditional approach of Canadian historians, namely our marriage to print forms. In history, a discipline that has always begun and ended with words on paper — whether researching original documents, reading findings at conferences, or publishing conclusions in journals or books — computer technologies have been used to preserve our textual culture. For most of us, the computer has become an enhanced word processor, and related technologies such as CD-ROMs and the World Wide Web have been used as electronic scholarly journals and archives. These uses of technology have no doubt enhanced the communication and teaching of history (Hesketh and Hackett's CD-ROM, for instance, has given students one-stop access to historiography that might otherwise have been spread over several publications), but they have still essentially involved the transfer of existing materials and skills of the discipline from paper to screen.

Historian John Lutz, in an article published in these pages in 2001, called on historians to explore other ways in which computers might be used for communication and teaching ("Riding the Horseless Carriage to the Computer Revolution: Teaching History in the Twenty-first Century", *Histoire sociale/Social History*, vol. 34, no. 2 [2001], pp. 427–436). With historian Ruth Sandwell and others, Lutz is drawing upon gaming metaphors to build web-based Canadian history mysteries. In an entirely different vein, John Bonnett, a historian at the National Research Council, has been using virtual 3-D computer reconstructions to illustrate the challenges of creating coherent explanations of the past. Digital environments come with their own set of properties, and scholars are only beginning to draw upon these to create interactive histories. Hesketh and Hackett have shown how computer technologies can artfully blend the familiar form of print with the novel form of the CD-ROM to communicate a vast quantity of contemporary scholarship, and in so doing have challenged the rest of us to consider new ways in which computer technologies might be used to teach Canadian history.

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HOE, Ban Seng — *Enduring Hardship: The Chinese Laundry in Canada.* Gatineau, QC: Canadian Museum of Civilization, 2003. Pp. iv, 86.

For most of the twentieth century, every Canadian city and town of any size had at least one Chinese laundry. In an era before automatic washers and electric irons, Chinese hand laundries provided relatively inexpensive laundry services to working and middle-class families, especially for fussy items like starched collars or nurse's caps. Despite their presence as an integral part of the urban landscape, only with the publication of Hoe Ban Seng's *Enduring Hardship* by the Canadian Museum of Civilization are the lives of quiet desperation lived within them well documented.

In October 2000 "Enduring Hardship: Chinese Hand Laundry" opened as one of the permanent exhibits of the Canada Hall, the walkthrough of Canadian history at