

NEWSLETTER



The Valorisation-Recherche Québec (VRQ) *Villes Régions Monde* project:
an infrastructure for the dissemination and transfer of knowledge
on urban and regional governance

NUMBER 6

WEB SITE EDITION

WWW.VRM.CA - A New and Improved Formula

New content...

Villes Régions Monde, the inter-university urban and regional studies network, presents its new Internet/intranet site. Our network has undergone major changes this year, and our Web site reflects this fresh approach. First of all, the VRM network acquired a solid team of professionals in the areas of research, information technology and desktop publishing, who will now support the work of the professors and researchers involved in the network.

During the year, the team of professionals worked on developing tools to facilitate research, inspired by the suggestions and comments of our partners. Indeed, during its first year of operation the network set up a Partners Committee, a permanent structure for liaison with potential users of the results of the research and popularization activities. Whatever their working milieu—university, municipality, government department, municipal association or any other urban or regional organization—researchers will be able to use these tools to make their research work easier.

So, this year, we developed new thematic bibliographies, a directory of annotated Web sites of interest, and a database of current research in Québec. All these new tools will be available on databases so that users can extract the specific data they need.

Three new **thematic bibliographies** are currently in the works: one on the economic aspects of intra-metropolitan dynamics, another on social development indicators, and a third on urban infrastructures, especially multi-purpose underground networks.

The aim of the **Current Research Database** is to provide information on Québec research entities working in the field of urban and regional studies and related areas. The database includes a brief description of the various research groups and researchers, along with some of the projects they are working on.

The **Web Site Directory** lists a series of relevant sites along with a brief description and the Web site address for users wishing to access the site directly.

WWW.VRM.CA

VRM professors and researchers, assisted by our research professionals, are continuing to work on the production of dissemination and popularization **Works**. The following is a brief outline of the main works produced by the team over the past year. **Most are already available on the VRM Web site or will be available by January 2003.**

Thematic bibliography on intra-metropolitan economic dynamics. This bibliography of roughly 1500 titles covers various sub-themes, including employment, cities' economic specialization, the real estate market, economic development and regional planning and development.

The suburbs revisited This year, VRM was involved in its first experience in supporting the publication of a work. The work looks at the changes Québec suburbs have undergone in the past fifty years, from both an urban and demographic viewpoint (<http://www.vrm.ca/banlieue.asp>).

An additional popularization tool on disinfection by-products (DBPs) in drinking water: The design of interactive models. The aim of this project is to add a section of interactive modules for several DBP models described in the literature. By using these modules, the user will now be able to choose the model most closely applicable to his or her drinking water treatment system, in order to estimate and reduce DBP levels.

An information tool on drinking water supply systems in the new Quebec City. Targeted primarily to city managers, this tool is designed to make general information on these water supply systems more accessible. As with the interactive models used to evaluate DBPs, the results should appear on the GREPUL site, which is linked to the VRM Web site, by late autumn, 2002.

Methodological handbook on hedonic modeling. An excellent tool for optimizing the appraisal process that is central to the fiscality of urban areas, this approach can be used to determine the market value of a property on the basis of its physical features and neighbourhood and environmental factors. The aim of the handbook is to make this approach more user-friendly so as to encourage its use throughout Québec, especially by real estate appraisers and analysts.

Municipal reform in Montréal. To help Montrealers to more clearly understand the issues surrounding the municipal reform and the resulting changes, some Montréal community groups and researchers, brought together by the Université du

Québec à Montréal's Service aux collectivités, have developed a research project with the aim of providing unbiased information: 8 popularization texts have been produced (<http://www.vrm.ca/democratie.asp>).

Municipal and territorial reorganization in Québec: Impacts and issues for small municipalities. An analysis of the findings of a survey, addressed to the mayors and chief administrative officers of small Québec municipalities with a population of less than 2500, concerning the municipalities' needs in regard to local public services.

Metropolitan governance in North America: The current situation. Based on a study conducted by GRIM (Groupe de recherche sur l'innovation municipale), standardized information capsules were produced on about thirty U.S. and Canadian metropolitan areas that were the focus of various studies on regional and metropolitan governance (http://www.vrm.ca/grim_capsules.asp).

Culture in various North American metropolitan areas. Through information capsules, this project offers a glimpse of the cultural activities taking place in the 30 or so metropolitan areas studied by GRIM (<http://www.vrm.ca/cultures.asp>).

Transition committees: The Québec experience. The aim of this survey was to study transition committees as an institutional innovation: how they function, how they are organized, their relations with their milieu, etc. An information document on this initiative will soon be available on the VRM Web site.

The VRM team was involved in a number of scientific events of various kinds over the past year. Visitors to our Web site can consult event programs and, in some cases, the full text of papers presented at VRM-organized events, in the subsection **VRM Events** (see the **Events** section). Our new Web site also presents a **Calendar of Events** with monthly listings of seminars and symposiums on urban and regional studies.

Another major change is the grant received from **Fonds québécois de recherche sur la société et la culture** (FQRSC) in addition to the funding from Valorisation-Recherche Québec (VRQ). Along with the VRQ and VRM objectives of disseminating and popularizing research findings and promoting cooperative and collaborative research and training, the FQRSC funding will enable VRM to set up a new database management project focusing on regional dynamics in particular. This directory of databases and statistics from various

organizations will allow researchers planning new research projects to communicate with database managers, and to use existing data where available. The directory will be accessible through the VRM intranet site.

The FQRSC funding will also be used to strengthen the network of researchers and to set up new cooperative and collaborative research initiatives. The Internet/intranet site will make it possible to disseminate works by Québec researchers and specialized Québec scientific periodicals throughout North America and worldwide, and will encourage growing links with researchers from outside Québec.

... in a new format

Besides enriching the content on the Web site, we made major changes to the site's structure and presentation. At first, the main goal in rebuilding the site was to make it easier to access the content produced by VRM researchers and the VRM team of professionals. But we also took this opportunity to change the image of our Web site, by featuring a new, lighter presentation.

We emphasized a thematic approach to make it easier to search for content. The main themes highlighted are now more representative of the works produced by members of the network and their research in urban and regional studies. These themes will change and develop as new content is added to the Web site.

What's new on the site and current news items are now indicated on the home page, which will be especially helpful for frequent users.

We have developed a free intranet where registered members can have discussions and exchanges with other members of the network and personalize their search for information in the bibliographic databases, directories and other databases.

We are currently working on an English version of the Web site. The preliminary version is already on-line. In most cases, only the structural content was translated, with the works and directories only available in the language of origin. We expect to have a Spanish-language version of our Web site by the end of the 2002-2003 year.

In the coming year, you can expect to see new content on the VRM Web site added to meet your

needs, and a new, dynamic presentation that will constantly change to keep things interesting and make surfing easier. But tell us what you think: your contributions will continually enrich our Web site.

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU!

If you have any comments or suggestions, or news about your latest research activities (reports, publications, books, articles, seminars, symposiums or grants), please contact us at the following addresses:

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