



Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online

A Joint Project of
Mennonite Historical Society of Canada
Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission
Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee
<http://gameo.org/>

Administrative Committee

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Report to the GAMEO Board

1 December 2005

The most important decision of the past year was to add two partners to the Canadian Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (CMEO) project, and to transform it into a Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online (GAMEO). The addition of the Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission and the Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee are landmark decisions. We are currently in discussion with two other potential partners. This is a very exciting time for the GAMEO project.

Hopefully the GAMEO website will be up and running by the time of our annual meeting. Jason Hildebrandt of PeaceWorks Computer Consulting, based in Winnipeg, has work on the division of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada website into two portions. Only minor changes in design were made at this time, with the hope that more design decisions moving forward would be made at this meeting.

During the past year (through October 31) we have added 249 articles to the Encyclopedia. The largest portion of the additions came from volume 5 of the print *Mennonite* Encyclopedia, and biographies submitted by the BC committee. In addition 12 articles were extensively revised or completely replaced, and a number of articles were slightly modified, e.g. new pastor in the congregation.

A JavaScript driven “How to cite this article” was added to the bottom of each encyclopedia article. It includes the full name of the author(s), date of writing or last major modification, date the article was viewed by the visitor, and the web address of the article.

Slight modifications were made to the bibliography template to make them more useful for family historians. These included birth and death dates for the parents of the biographical subject and his/her spouse when this is available. This has not been applied retrospectively.

Some Statistics

Below is a table showing comparable figures since web statistics began to be kept in April 2000. New weblog software was installed in August 2005. Thus our statistics this year begin in September. One feature of the more advanced software is to separate out hits by web crawlers (like Google) since they are not “hits” seen by an individual. Thus some comparisons are not completely accurate. Updated figures will be provided at our December meeting.

	Dec. 2000	Dec. 2001	Dec. 2002	Dec. 2003	Dec. 2004	Oct. 2005
Hits per Day	1,786	2,920	4,215	12,506	18,461	27,296
Visitors per Day	524	657	734	1,026	1,356	1,389
Page Views per Day		2,215	3,072	4,030	6,454	8,281
Articles in GAMEO	2,216	2,239	2,304	2,371	2,458	2,707

Some additional interesting details are available from the web statistical report. Three percent of visits to our site are for over 30 minutes. That strikes me as actually very good. On the other hand, 77% are for less than 30 seconds, which means they looked and didn't find what they were looking for.

The "top ten" articles are: 1) Amish; 2) Conestoga Wagon; 3) Furniture and Woodworking; 4) Amish Mennonites; 5) Folk medicine, Amish and Swiss Pennsylvania-German; 6) Socialization; 7) Menno Simons; 8) Dress; 9) Old Order Amish; 10) Anabaptism. The list is somewhat different than earlier years; I suspect this is because we began recording at the beginning of the academic year.

The top search phrases were Conestoga wagon, Menno Simons, Mennonites, Agents of Socialization, Amish, and Anabaptism.

GAMEO Governance

A new governance structure is being recommended to the partners in GAMEO. It recommends formation of an administrative group that consists of the managing editor and one representative of each of the partner organizations. The administrative group is responsible for policy, publicity and promotion, funding and structural organization of the encyclopedia. The partners are responsible for the cost of sending persons to the administrative group meetings.

The question of how GAMEO financial record-keeping should best be handled has not yet been settled – should this remain with the partner organizations, or should GAMEO establish its own bank account. Notions of incorporation and charitable status have not been discussed.

With the exception of the Hutterites, we have not discussed the addition of other denominational partners, e.g. Brethren in Christ, Church of the Brethren.

The administrative group has assumed fundraising will be required for two staff positions: one for administration, publicity and fundraising, and the second for basic editorial management – uploading articles, coordinating correspondence, follow-up on articles, etc. Neither position would necessarily be full time initially. Priority needs to be given to the first position; Sam Steiner has volunteered one day a week for the second task through December 2008. Some funding initiatives are underway, but they tend to be quite project based.

The Administrative Group has agreed the encyclopedia should continue to be freely available on the web. We will explore making it possible for visitors to make online donations to the site.

The administrative group has agreed GAMEO cannot move from an HTML format to an XML structure at this time because of financial limitations.

“A reliable source of information on Anabaptist-related history and theology”

Vision Statement

The Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online provides reliable English-language information on Anabaptist-related congregations, denominations, conferences, institutions and leaders, as well as historical and theological topics. Secular subject articles from an Anabaptist perspective and full-text source documents are also included. No fee is charged for Internet access to the Encyclopedia.

Editorial Committees

The Administrative Group envisioned two nationally-based editorial committees at this time. Each can work independently on solicitation and editing of articles where content clearly located within one country. There will need to be a mechanism for assigning articles for persons, institutions, and historical/theological topics that transcend national boundaries. There would also need to be a joint mechanism for “Ethereal Library” content guidelines, new article templates or changes to existing templates, and changes to the editorial stylesheet.

The U.S. committee is responsible for the scanning of volumes 1 & 2 of the print *Mennonite Encyclopedia*; the Canadian committee is responsible for volumes 3 & 4. The managing editor is looking after volume 5.

Presently the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada pays the travel costs of the Canadian editorial group for its annual meeting, usually linked to the MHSC’s meeting. The U.S. editorial committee and the U.S. partners will need to determine ways to best facilitate the work of the committee. Are there natural places/times for the committee to meet, e.g. at denominational or academic meetings? Are there regional ways for the committee to work?

Sam Steiner,
Managing Editor