



Global Anabaptist Mennonite Encyclopedia Online

A Joint Project of
 Mennonite Historical Society of Canada
 Mennonite Brethren Historical Commission
 Mennonite Church USA Historical Committee
 Mennonite Central Committee
 Mennonite World Conference

<http://www.gameo.org/>

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Since our meeting in January, GAMEO has raised \$5000 for the multi-language project, and taken good strides in adding and updating smaller Mennonite conference articles in GAMEO. A beta DVD version of GAMEO circulated, but generated little response. No new regional groups have been formed, but there has been some significant individual activity in adding material to the encyclopedia.

Some Statistics

Below is a table showing comparable figures beginning in 2002 when we were still part of the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada website. (We became GAMEO in 2005.)

	Dec. 2002	Dec. 2004	Oct 2005	Dec. 2006	Jan 2008	Nov. 2008	Nov. 2009	October 2010
Visitors per Day	734	1,356	1,389	895	1,233	1,793	2,196	2,412
Bandwidth (Per Month in GB)					9.06	10.58	15.52	17.88
Articles in GAMEO	2,304	2,458	2,726	5,578	9,162	12,501	14,504	14,739

A few additional details from the weblog report for October 2010. We continue to receive a significant number of visitors from outside North America – Netherlands, Germany, France, Italy, Australia and Brazil in that order. 3.5% of the visits to our site were over 30 minutes; another 2.2% between 15 & 30 minutes; 78.5% were for less than 30 seconds (i.e. they didn't find what they were looking for).

The “top ten” articles for October 2010 were: 1) Louis XIV, King of France (1638-1715) (6263 views); 2) Calcutta (India) (741 views); 3) Paraguay (662 views); 4) Amish (625 views); 5) Ethridge, Tennessee, Old Order Amish Settlement (522 views); 6) Clement VII, Pope (1478-1534)(514 views); 7) Russia (493 views); 8) Yemen Arab Republic (483 views); 9) Münster Anabaptists (482 views); 10) Schleithem Confession (Anabaptist, 1527)(480 views). I have no explanation for some of the high rankings, though clearly articles featured on the “Welcome” page get a boost. I assume anomalies result from the functioning of the various search engines such as Google. If you have seen lists in earlier reports, you will note regular changes. “Biblical Understandings” has usually been high because the articles includes the symbols for male and female, but has now dropped off the charts.

Cleanup of Print *Mennonite Encyclopedia* Articles

I had begun going through the articles one by one to ensure all have been included (we've found a few "missing in action," as well as inserting cross-references that we did not initially include. I also began to add maps and updated some congregational names or closures where changes were evident. I am presently stalled near the beginning of the C's; this will be a long term project that I will probably not continue until after I've completed my book project on the history of Mennonites in Ontario.

New Content

Our current manner of counting articles (the number of files in the "Encyclopedia" folder of the database), does not distinguish between articles and "see reference" article stubs. However, I would estimate most of the increase since January has been new articles. The new articles have come both from areas where there are active regional editorial committees, as well as independent writers like Susan Huebert (Winnipeg; Helmut Huebert materials), Adalbert Goertz (biographies related to Colorado), Harlan Unrau (congregations related to Colorado) and Victor Wiebe (Saskatchewan related congregations and camps).

The article count does not indicate the number of updated articles in a particular time period. One of the significant additions to most North American conference articles has been a table of congregations currently affiliated with the conference, with links to congregational articles when these are available. This has been the work of our Associate Managing Editor, Richard Thiessen. He has also created basic articles on newer North American Mennonite conferences that were not included in the print volumes. In some cases his preliminary descriptive content has been superseded by content provided by a regional committee's work, e.g. the Alliance of Mennonite Evangelical Congregations.

Richard has also been systematically updating the country articles with information from the most recent Mennonite World Conference membership figures and from information included in MWC press releases.

Editorial and Design Issues

One editorial issue remains from last year, and a couple more relate to some previous discussions the Management Board has had:

- 1) The B.C. regional committee encountered an issue that requires GAMEO to explicitly detail its "ownership" of articles published within GAMEO. The issue involved a case in which a writer resisted any editorial modifications to an article that the writer had submitted. Ultimately the article was not published. By the very nature of the online environment GAMEO needs to retain the right to make editorial changes and corrections to articles in GAMEO. In some cases articles may even be totally rewritten in future. Associate Managing Editor Richard Thiessen will draft language for a statement that will be included in all our templates, and that should be referenced in all article requests to authors.
- 2) A GAMEO author has suggested we should have a "Glossary" or "Introduction" page that would be aimed at those visitors who have no familiarity with Mennonites or Anabaptists. This intersects with the "Introduction to Mennonites" discussion we have had previously, but likely would be considerably shorter. It might be a combination of "how to use this site" with brief dictionary-type definitions of major terms.

This is a slightly different angle to our previous that I think merits consideration.

On the design side, there have been two modest changes, but some larger questions have emerged:

- 1) GAMEO is using a slightly different “style” for tables; we are changing tables with the older style as we happen to encounter the articles.
- 2) The word “index” has been added to the “encyclopedia” tab to make it more intuitive where to find the “A-Z” index.
- 3) It would probably be good to shift the “What’s New” link from the “Welcome” page to its own “tab” to the right of “Encyclopedia Index”
- 4) To reduce tab clutter, it might be appropriate to eliminate the “News” tab which has been seldom used. The “events” tab has had more frequent use and is read by GAMEO’s visitors.
- 5) If an “Introduction” or “Glossary” page is added, it could be a tab just to the right of “Welcome.”
- 6) The question has arisen again whether it is time to update the “look” of GAMEO. Our colors are somewhat tired, and the layout of the “welcome” page could perhaps be made friendlier.
- 7) This also brings back the question of GAMEO’s logo which is borrowed from the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada. To be cost effective, any design changes should be done in conjunction with technical upgrades to the system.

What is the Management Board’s thoughts on a modest GAMEO facelift? What is your response to the proposed “Introduction” or “Glossary” page. What about the “tab” changes? These issues can also be discussed with the Canadian editorial committee.

Technical Issues

Two technical issues mentioned in my last report have been addressed by PeaceWorks – a) the citation at the bottom of articles more closely follows current standards; and b) the encyclopedia A-Z index is now generated more quickly.

There has been a new release of Plone (version 4), the content management system used by GAMEO. GAMEO currently uses version 3.

Any significant design or technical changes to GAMEO that require changes to the Plone system should likely consider the option of moving to the new version which is claimed to be faster in operation and more intuitive to use.

Continuing Projects

We continued work on two initiatives:

- 1) **GAMEO on DVD.** We created a beta GAMEO DVD with printed instructions. I circulated perhaps 40 copies, but received no feedback, either positive or negative. We did not advertise the DVD at all, and I simply made the requisite copies on my computer. For PeaceWorks to create an undated version with no changes to the present design costs about \$500 per creation. If we want PeaceWorks to make the installation of the DVD to the computer more automated, the cost would be significantly more. Additional costs would be making copies from the master and any fancy packaging we would desire. This would probably range from \$3/copy to \$4/copy for 100 copies.

If we proceeded as GAMEO on DVD now exists, I would ask PeaceWorks to create an updated version probably at the end of December or early January, and would use that for our duplication. We could feature the release in our press release, hopefully not then not needing to purchase advertising.

Shall we ask PeaceWorks to create a new master and get 100 copies printed?

- 2) **Provision of additional languages in GAMEO.** As you may recall, several years ago one of our Canadian editors from Quebec expressed interest in mounting French-language documents on GAMEO. We received a quote from PeaceWorks in the area of \$15,000 to make GAMEO capable of handling multiple languages. This would mean that visitors to the GAMEO site could choose a language in which they would like to receive content, or they could choose to search all languages. This feature would not translate content, but would make it possible for a French editorial group to begin adding French-language content, a Spanish group to add Spanish-language content, German, Dutch, etc. These would become almost parallel projects to the English-language project, but contained within one website. Policies would need to be established to maintain some uniformity of style, to allow translation of articles into other languages and cross-use of images, maps, etc. The Global Anabaptist Wiki mentioned below uses this approach.

Our initial applications to three foundations in 2009 resulted in only one positive response – the Showalter Foundation based in Kansas provided a grant of \$3,500 U.S. After the January 2010 meeting I applied to the Good Foundation, based in Ontario for \$8,000, and received a positive response in an unrestricted amount of \$5,000. I contacted John Thiesen about the funding for the translation of the H. G. Mannhardt book on Danzig Mennonites, but he was not aware of a potential funding source for GAMEO. Abe Dueck made informal contact with persons in Paraguay, but this did not extend to financial issues. This means we have about \$8500 towards the multi-language project, which would now be estimated to cost \$20,000.

There are other sites that “compete” with GAMEO, both in the type of content and in the presentation of materials in other languages. These include Global Anabaptist Wiki (<http://www.anabaptistwiki.org/>) based at Goshen with potential for English, German, Spanish and French; the *Mennonitisches Lexikon* (<http://www.mennlex.de/>) in German; MennoPedia (<http://www.mennoforum.net/mennopedia/>) in German, *Lexikon der Mennoniten in Paraguay* (<http://www.menonitica.org/lexikon/>) in German from Paraguay, and Mennonite Heritage Portrait (<http://www.mennoniteheritageportrait.ca/>) in Ontario, Canada.

If the multi-language project remains a priority for GAMEO, we need to identify some additional funding sources.

International Editorial Advisory Committee

After the January Management Board meeting I contacted John A. Lapp and received a good list of possible members for the committee. I circulated these names to the Management Board. There were some affirmations, but also additional suggestions, some cautions about the proposed North American members, some concerns about appointing only historians (instead of some theologians) and some suggestions that we seek wider counsel.

The exercise in identifying potential members of an Advisory Committee also raised practical questions about how the actual updating of articles would take place. Who identifies the articles that should be reviewed by the advisory committee? What is the process for deciding how to

update or rewrite a particular article? Will major articles have sections written from various geographical areas, or should we try for a synthesis. Does it depend on the nature of the article?

There are many articles that could be written on non-theological topics, such as “Mennonites in corrections,” “Mennonites in mental health,” “Mennonites in medicine,” etc. Should these be treated geographically or in one article? If treated geographically, how narrowly should they be broken down -- by continent or by country, or even state/province? Who decides?

Does GAMEO need multiple advisory committees? Historical and Theological? How do we move ahead on this item? Should this be referred to the Canadian Editorial Committee for discussion?

Canadian Editorial Committee

The Canadian Editorial Committee will be meeting in January 2011 in Saskatoon prior to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada annual meeting. It will be reviewing some templates, and will also be able to discuss any design and editorial issues we refer to it.

Regional Editorial Committees

There continue to be five active editorial committees related to GAMEO:

1. Manitoba—Chaired by Alf Redekopp; other members are Jim Suderman; Henry Fast; Ernest Braun and Bert Friesen. There is an informal relationship to the Manitoba society, with some discussion of making it more formal.
2. British Columbia—Chaired by David Giesbrecht; other members are Richard Thiessen and John J. Neufeld. It is not related to the provincial society.
3. Ontario – Chaired by Linda Huebert Hecht, other members are Sam Steiner, Fred Lichti, Peter Hamm and John Reimer. It is presently structured as a subcommittee of the Mennonite Historical Society of Ontario.
4. Lancaster – Chaired by Paul Zehr; other members are Darvin Martin, Dan Wenger, Steve Ness, John A. Lapp, Lois Ann Mast, Lloyd Weiler, Jonathan H. Martin, Steve Scott, Ray Hacker. Steve Ness serves as the formal link to the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society; meetings are held in their offices.
5. Eastern Pennsylvania (Harleysville)—Chaired by Forrest Moyer; other members are Ray Hacker and Rich Moyer. The group is loosely affiliated with the Mennonite Heritage Center at Harleysville, Pennsylvania and holds its meetings there. Forrest is on staff there.

Nurturing these committees and encouraging the start of new regional committees, both in the United States and Canada should continue to be a priority for GAMEO.

GAMEO’s Institutional Base

We approved taking a pro-active approach to Mennonite World Conference at the January meeting. I sent a letter to Larry Miller and John A. Lapp. MWC General Secretary Larry Miller acknowledged receipt of the letter, but did not respond to its substance. John Lapp was affirming, but said the “wrap up” meeting of the Global History Project would not take place until late 2011 at the earliest since the North American and Asian volumes were not yet published.

GAMEO should likely continue with our current primary relationship to the Mennonite Historical Society of Canada until we have a chance to discuss a possible relationship with MWC in more depth. This may well not happen until 2012.

GAMEO Sponsors

There are 23 sponsors listed on GAMEO's "Sponsors" page. These are donors who have given \$250 or more of support in the past year. These are primarily educational institutions (including two high schools) except for the Manitoba Mennonite Historical Society, the Lancaster Mennonite Historical Society, the Mennonite Heritage Centre in Winnipeg and the Mennonite Savings & Credit Union in Ontario. Two public university libraries are also included.

Richard Thiessen has been the primary contact person for the sponsorship program. This "subscription/sponsorship" approach has worked well for us in raising operating funds. He will be able to report on contacts made in this calendar year.

Can the Board help to identify additional financial institutions, foundations or heritage organizations that should be invited to participate? Should there be other changes to this program?

Policy Document(s)

Policy Document "Draft 5" from January 2010 is our current working document. Although we approved creation of an International Editorial Advisory Committee, this group has not yet been appointed. The Policy Document, all Management Board minutes, and all Managing Editor's reports since 1997/98 are posted on the GAMEO website on the "Editors" page (<http://www.gameo.org/tools-1>). This page is only accessible to those able to log on to the site. Any Management Board members who wish a user name and password may request one.

Managing Editor Appointment

My term as Managing Editor concludes the end of 2011, or just prior to our next meeting in January 2012 if we follow our present meeting pattern. I have deeply enjoyed my involvement with GAMEO the past 14 years, and am gratified by the positive reception GAMEO has received. However my energy for innovation and taking GAMEO to the next level is depleted, especially in light of my "other" assignment to write a history of Mennonites in Ontario which weighs on me significantly. I would be willing to continue as an Associate Managing Editor in 2012 if the Management Board and new Managing Editor would find this to be appropriate.

I urge the Management Board to expeditiously identify the next Managing Editor, and to also identify an additional associate managing editor in the U.S. to help to expand our visibility there. Associate Managing Editor Richard Thiessen is familiar with all aspects of the technical and editorial issues associated with GAMEO. The Management Board should give him every consideration for the role of Managing Editor if he is open to undertaking the role.

Editors

The number of editors who enter data directly into GAMEO is still quite limited. John D. Thiesen, Susan Hubert, Richard Lougheed, Alf Redekopp, Bert Friesen, Joe Springer and J.J. Neufeld are the only persons who have done this in addition to Richard Thiessen and myself. Several of these are currently inactive. This had not been a particular burden, since most writers have continued to forward content to one of the Managing Editors for uploading. At this time Alf Redekopp, John Thiesen and Joe Springer are the only editors to also have "Reviewer" status, which allows them to "publish" articles for public viewing, and to add images and maps to

GAMEO. Joe Springer, who is the curator of the Mennonite Historical Library at Goshen College, has used his role primarily for correcting errors noticed in the text.

Publicity

We had a press release after the completion of the *Mennonite Encyclopedia* upload, and received good coverage in the Mennonite press. I discussed the possibility of a press release related to GAMEO on DVD above.

How does the Management Board wish to address publicity this year?

Anabaptist Ethereal Library

The Anabaptist Ethereal Library continues with its core content of confessions of faith and denominational and inter-Mennonite statements. In January we discussed the variety of confessions in other languages that would be available to us through sources like Mennonite World Conference, though we did not make a clear decision to pursue obtaining them. Several items from the early 20th century were added last year. A number of “classic” Mennonite works are available through the Internet Archive (<http://www.archive.org/>), though these are mostly “out of copyright” items.

Should GAMEO actively pursue non-English confessions of faith?

Finances

The Mennonite Historical Society of Canada maintains a separate fund for GAMEO. Richard Thiessen as MHSC Treasurer manages the finances for GAMEO in the last year, and for this we are very grateful. He will report on GAMEO’s financial activity at our meetings. As noted above he also sends out the requests related to the Sponsors program.

He will bring a 2011 budget to the meeting. Last year’s budget included:

PeaceWorks:	\$5,000
Travel:	\$2,000
Software:	\$500
Contingency:	\$500
GAMEO on DVD: \$	\$500
Total	\$8500

Multilingual Project: \$20,000 (offset with donations)

Sam Steiner,
Managing Editor
1 November 2010