Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs

Urban Black and Caribbean Canadian Community Learning Resource Network Project

FINAL REPORT

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Human Resources
Development
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C C M A

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Executive Summary

NOTE: For the purpose of public recognition and marketability, the resources associated with this project are known cumulatively as the Urban Black Community Learning Network (UBCLN).

The Urban Black Community Learning Network is designed and implemented to provide assistance and resources to the Black and Caribbean Canadian community. In doing so it grants access to an international audience on the global information network. The project is an undertaking of the Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs (CCMA), Human Resources Development Canada (Office of Learning Technologies) and various individuals and organizations in the community.

After conducting a feasibility study on the project, the CCMA began the initiation and implementation of the project plan. Today's computer driven environment, technological advances and greater access to the internet provides marginalized members of the Black and Caribbean Canadian community with the opportunity to communicate with each other, research specific subject matter, conduct business, or simply exchange information and ideas. The community itself must come to embrace the technological culture and develop the skill set and capacity to compete in the connected global marketplace.

In order to ensure the continual development and progression of the UBCLN, a specific strategy has been developed that directs the evolution of the site. Four key areas have been identified and with emphasis provide a planning tool for research and development.

Specifically, these key areas are:

- Information Sharing and Communication;

- Black Community Development;

- Technology and Tools;

- Marketing and Sustainability.

By following this planned structure, identifiable outcomes have emerged as the UBCLN has been implemented. In depth research and planning has prepared the CCMA for the challenge. A working committee has been established to provide expertise for the development, tools and technological applications have been explored, valuable resources have been accumulated, learning workshops have been held and the UBCLN has been promoted to build public recognition.

In addition, partnerships have been established, with which the creation of a valuable resource network would not be possible. These partnerships are made up of government departments, the private sector, professional organizations, educational institutions, research institutions and non-governmental organizations. Directly and indirectly, these partnerships have made the project possible and have allowed the CCMA to produce a resource base that is of tremendous value to local and international communities.

The value of the UBCLN would be minimal without recognition and participation by end users who gain value from the resources offered. The CCMA has undertaken a variety of community outreach initiatives designed to provide insight into learning initiatives, a path to technological capacity building, promotion of the UBCLN and evaluation of the site's accessibility and the resources available.

Through these initiatives and knowledge building on behalf of the CCMA, many of the challenges associated with a technologically advanced and user friendly online resource network have been overcome. Specifically:

- CCMA awareness of the technological capabilities required has been built and continues to expand allowing for a more secure site structure;

- Promotion of the specific UBCLN resources is increasing recognition and user awareness;

- Research remains continual to ensure that the site is useful and current;

- Emphasis has been placed on CCMA contact points to allow accurate and relevant feedback from UBCLN users.

These implemented activities, statistical data evaluation and direct feedback from UBCLN users has provided the means by which the site could progress and gain additional recognition.

A collection of overall and sample statistics provides the CCMA with current and accurate data for site evaluation. General visitor analysis indicates that the site is gaining recognition and proving to be a valuable tool to a wide variety of individuals and organizations. For instance, since the inception of the UBCLN, 30 602 visitors were recorded with a daily average of 3 327. Also, following anticipated patterns, the most frequent use of the site comes during the business and school week. Being relatively new, the site generates a large number of first time visitors, however the number of repeat visits is increasing with selected users visiting the site ten times or more. Geographic data has also been studied indicating the reach of the resources on the global information super highway. The majority of UBCLN visitors originate within North America, however, users have been identified throughout the world. In addition to this information gathering, specific insights have been gained into the documents and resources that are deemed most valuable. From a sample period between November 30, 2002 and December 11, 2002, 3619 documents were viewed by visitors to the site. Among the many resources accessed, highly popular resources include Black and Caribbean Canadian links such as *Important Events in Canadian Black History, Commonwealth Caribbean Culture and Heritage, Immigrant Aid Agencies, Black and Caribbean Presence in Canada, Bibliography of Learning Resource Material* and *International Cooperation.* The statistics gathered on the UBCLN show a high level of interest in the site and the resources offered and this continues to grow as the site gains additional acceptance and recognition.

Primary data, direct from users, has also been gathered as an evaluation tool. Specific

evaluation criteria is used by the CCMA in accumulating user responses (See Appendix 1

- Evaluation Survey). Direct contact links available throughout the UBCLN also

provides users with accessible channels to voice suggestions and opinions. The specific

feedback accumulated has allowed for continual refinement and in turn progression of the

UBCLN resources. The direct primary evaluation has identified key indicators of the

network's success. Among these key indicators are:

- Cumulatively, 67% of the popularity responses received indicate that the most
  popular resources include *Black and Caribbean Canadian Presence in Canada,*
  Commonwealth Caribbean Culture and Heritage and *Caribbean Canadian*
  Community Links;

- 77% of respondents attest to the site's accessibility and ease of navigation;

- Above average responses were received with respect to visual attractiveness, ease
  of browsing and overall layout;

- Indications are that additional resources are required to maintain the progression
  of the site.

The combination of primary and secondary data feedback ensures that the progression of

the UBCLN will continue to move in a positive direction and become increasingly

valuable for end users.

By following closely to the initial strategy, maintaining the goals of the project and utilizing the evaluation tools available, the UBCLN continues to grow and improve. Rapid technological advancements make it necessary for the UBCLN to continue its progression. Through input from users, continual support from partners and project participants as well as additional outreach, the learning resource network will continue to be a valuable tool and stimulate development in the Black and Caribbean Canadian community.

1.0   Urban Black and Caribbean Canadian Community Learning Resource Network Project

NOTE: For the purpose of public recognition and marketability, the resources associated with this project are known cumulatively as the Urban Black Community Learning Network (UBCLN).

1.1 Background and Project Description

The Urban Black Community Learning Network, UBCLN, is a technologically focused outreach project aimed primarily at assisting marginalized members of the community. The overall purpose of the project is and has been to advance awareness of technology tools and their application as a strategy for social, economic and learning development. The project is sponsored by the Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs (CCMA) with funding support from Human Resources Development Canada (Office of Learning Technologies). In undertaking this project, the CCMA recognizes that the rapid emergence of the information highway presents a unique and important opportunity for Black and Caribbean-Canadian community members to enhance much needed economic and social development.

In August, 2001, the CCMA concluded a contribution agreement with the Office of Learning Technologies to develop the Urban Black Community Learning Network. Prior to the signing of the contribution agreement, CCMA had earlier signed another contribution agreement to undertake an assessment and report on the feasibility of developing a Learning Network.

At that time, it was determined that access for Black and Caribbean Canadian people to the information highway coupled with appropriate skills enhancement can provide community members with the opportunity to communicate with each other, conduct business, or simply exchange information and ideas. Previous attempts to build and sustain a national organization have failed. However, with advances in technology and technological accessibility, there is the possibility of success to build a national communication infrastructure network for the Black and Caribbean Canadian community.

Information technology is vital to the well being of community members. The quality of education, efficiency of social systems, and development of employment and economic infrastructure have all been affected by the products and services provided through information technology. The Black and Caribbean Canadian community must establish an information culture, one which values innovation, fosters networking and information sharing and applies new knowledge and development opportunities in the global marketplace. Community participants must acquire the skills to keep up with and manage the ever-increasing growth of information technology. The building and sustenance of an information technology culture must serve all segments of the community with a focus on youth, entrepreneurs, educators and women.

Awareness of the importance of information technology must stimulate interest and choices, so that future career and employment opportunities remain open and access to community resources remains accessible.

1.2 Goals and Objectives

The goal of the project is to address the information and learning technology needs of Black and Caribbean Canadian families residing in urban centers by promoting and encouraging the use of technology tools and to create sustainable opportunities to improve their quality of life.

In order to achieve this goal, specific objectives have been instituted which have and will continue to ensure the progression of the UBCLN. These objectives include:

- To develop and sustain an accessible and interactive learning and information infrastructure the links the Black and Caribbean Canadian community to mainstream learning institutions and learners in Canada through technological applications;

- To facilitate the development of and support for a trained volunteer learning technology corps that will be responsible to the needs of the new learning technology enthusiasts who are at the functional level of technological skills;

- To facilitate partnership between the Black and Caribbean community learners and other key groups involved or interested in life long and educational networking;

- To identify and share community development experiences, including needs, challenges, successes, outcomes and community impacts.

Working towards these objectives and the overall project goal, the CCMA has created and continues to sustain an online electronic resource centre with concentration on the Black and Caribbean Canadian community and the Commonwealth Caribbean. Among the resources, the UBCLN will help identify and share best practices, community development experiences, community needs, challenges, successes, developmental outcomes and community impacts.

The strategy of the project is to define and sustain a partnership with the community, government agencies and supporting institutions. The following four areas are critical to the strategy. Through the focus and development of each of these areas, objectives have been given a direct path that provides specific direction for the progression of the resource network.

1. **Information Sharing and Communication** – An online interactive virtual resource centre on Canadian Black history and diversity issues for access by learners and learning institutions. Included is research and select relevant articles on Black history and family issues; selected project reports, fact sheets, information kits, research reports, discussion and policy papers, conference proceedings and workshop reports, funded project abstracts, summary of community activities, etc. Also, to make available a directory of interested stakeholders and partnering institutions to improve accessibility to information and resources that will assist in the initiation and sustainability of community based developments

2. **Black Community Development** – A networking channel for individuals and organizations in the Black and Caribbean Canadian community to make positive changes in their communities by increasing access to electronic communication tools and strategies. Increased is the opportunity and access to create and sustain dialogue and discussion on policy and legislative issues affecting the Black and Caribbean Canadian community, encouraging community members to increase their participation in national public affairs issues and using new electronic communications tools and strategies.

3. **Technology and Tools** – Activities to encourage wider use of computer electronic networking within the marginalized sector of the black community. Provide local access to communications equipment, training and the use of computer applications and resources. Organize technology skills enhancement workshops that support labor market opportunities, literacy, life-long learning and entrepreneurial development.

4. **Marketing and Sustainability** - A marketing and promotional plan to attract and sustain new members to the network. Partnering institutions, businesses, government agencies and the non-governmental sector will be invited to become members and at the same time encouraged to become financial contributors.

1.3 Project Outcomes

As the UBCLN has progressed, project outcomes follow closely to the specific objectives set in the initial project strategy and overall project objectives. The strategic groundwork provided a basis for the continual growth, development and clear focus of the site.

As the site gains in popularity and use, the beneficial outcomes continue to escalate. To date, project outcomes that have been realized, in accordance with planning and expectations, include the following key activities.

- Initial planning concentrated on developing the administrative and operational structure of the project which included creating a project financial structure, meeting with various organizations to discuss the project; identifying volunteers and other personnel that can contribute to the project in a variety of ways to ensure its success.

- A Planning and development committee of interested stakeholders was created to provide technical and other advice for the development of the Network.

- Strategic planning was implemented to identify and develop suitable tools for the development of the learning network. Investigated were host and domain responsibilities; utilization of appropriate software applications and other technical designs to ensure the network functions in a very reliable manner as an easily accessible website.

- Several research activities were conducted and continue to identify and catalogue various resource materials; compiled bibliographies; listings and other relevant materials that have become part of the virtual resource centre.

- Three skills learning workshops have been held. In April, one was conducted with youth in Winnipeg and the other two in Ontario.

- An electronic forum has been studied, created and implemented to provide opportunities for organizations, individuals and other community stakeholders to interact with each other through electronic communications, community meetings, information sharing and other activities which enhance community cooperation, learning and sustainable development.

- Information and resources have been added for community residents, to help them identify and plan information technology programs and life-long learning initiatives.

- An open channel for comments and opinions provided by the UBCLN has enhanced the target community's role in national public policy issues and through the CCMA a voice for their ideas and opinions has been established.

- Skills learning workshops have been organized and held during the summer of 2002.

- A great deal of time and effort has been spent on promoting the project as it is an area of community development in Canada that is not very well known. An information kit and brochure was developed and circulated that sought to explain in detail the objectives and goals of the project. Press releases were prepared and circulated to various media outlets.

- Progress reports with appropriate financial expenditure and management information have been submitted and accepted by the Office of Learning Technologies.

The growth and impact of the UBCLN website and policy forum room continues as the site reaches far and wide. It has become a global resource and information channel that links the Black and Caribbean Canadian community to each other and to an international audience.

1.4 Project Partners and Participants

The challenge of building an information culture within the community is a complex task and should not be left to one interest group, organization or professional sector of the community. A broad range of partnership is required. These partners include government, private sector, professional organizations, educational institutions, research institutions and non-governmental organizations.

With the foresight and assistance of Human Resources Development Canada (Office of Learning Technologies), the UBCLN has progressed from planning to reality. The continued growth and sustainability relies on the continued support of individuals and organizations within the Black and Caribbean Canadian community as well as stakeholders far and wide that benefit from the information and resources now available.

As awareness of the UBCLN spreads through the local, national and international communities, the reach and impact of the project fosters its continual growth. Enhancements originate from the input of partners who become participants and stakeholders, making the UBCLN more versatile, useful and appealing to all who would use it.

Through the sharing of time, expertise and financial contribution, the site and the resources included have been made available to the individuals and organizations locally, nationally and throughout the world.

Specific and Direct Participants of the Urban Black Community Learning Network include:

- Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs;

- West Indian Social and Cultural Society;

- Markham African Caribbean Association;

- Black Historical Society of British Columbia;

- Human Resources Development Canada;

- Communities and other interested organizations are continually being solicited to become partners and direct participants in the UBCLN progression;

Other local and national organizations have also assisted in helping to overcome the challenges faced during the creation and progression of the UBCLN.

Meetings and consultations have provided the CCMA with additional insight into the pathways and obstacles involved in the development of an extensive resource network

Indirect participants can be considered as users and visitors to the site. Considerable contributions have been made by these participants as well. As overall end users, site visitors are taking advantage of the information resources and providing valuable input that has and is determining the value and continual progression of the site. Primary and secondary data accumulated by these end users allows the site to be a living entity, continually growing and adjusting to the individuals and communities for which it is intended to serve.

The CCMA greatly appreciates the contribution of everyone involved.

2.0 Urban Black Community Learning Network Community Outreach

Canada's Black and Caribbean Canadian community is very diverse and spread out geographically across Canada. This being the reality, it poses a challenge to project organizers regarding the outreach methods that will be applied to engage potential project participants. As the project was being implemented, and in our quest for community participation, we were confronted with many obstacles and had to devise innovative and alternate means to engage community residents who would later benefit from the project.

At the initial outset, the CCMA, project partners and participants quickly discovered that that there was no organized network of community development practitioners in most of the scattered Black and Caribbean Canadian communities across the nation. This limited access to an existing network therefore led us to move from an institutional to an individual approach.

In the Province of Manitoba, youth participants had the opportunity to participate in a one day outreach workshop which addressed issues such as the digital divide; the importance of technology in enhancing career development and most importantly, the role of the CCMA Urban Black Community Learning Network (UBCLN) in facilitating such opportunities.

In British Columbia, a local community facilitator brought together a group of potential users from the educational and teaching community to share information about the UBCLN, its resources and the availability of a wide variety of material about the history of the Black community in Canada. It was important to address the cultural diversity issue within the context of electronic communications and how these tools can be utilized to raise awareness and understanding about racial issues in Canada.

In Ontario, the approach was much different. Community residents in Ontario have greater access to electronic technology tools and greater support for learning assistance within their families. Two specific groups were identified for participation. Using a local information session, the CCMA and UBCLN volunteers were able to encourage feedback and participation. The first group consisted of self employed individuals who were interested in the benefits of the internet and generally, the ownership of electronic resources that could contribute to the improvement of their businesses. They were given the opportunity to learn about the use of software, communication strategies and the appropriate application of various tools to communicate. Some were quite interested in using electronic media for communicating to their relatives and children who still live in the Caribbean. Other exploratory areas of interest dealt with government and issues of filing tax returns and other governmental documents related to the management and sustainability of their businesses.

The next group of participants could best be described as community residents with little or no knowledge about information technology tools. The strategy was to develop a public participation approach in which adult learning methods were applied. The group was introduced to the world of communications, available tools and how these tools are being used to improve learning and understanding between different cultures. Various printed articles on information technology were provided to participants. Another important matter dealt with information and specification with regard to technology tools. Participants were interested in learning about the hardware, speed, connectivity, etc.

Although methods vary, the purpose of specific community outreach remains constant. The growth and success of the UBCLN will follow the increasing number of individuals and organizations that are aware of the online resources available. As the CCMA continues outreach initiatives, the direct impact of the UBCLN can be seen and felt.

3.0 Urban Black Community Learning Network Project Evaluation

3.1 Project Planning and Implementation – Overcoming Challenges

The globalization of information will widen the already digital divide gap between the advantaged and the marginalized in Canada. It will further distance the information elite from the Black and Caribbean Canadian community and it will limit traditional social and economic development efforts.

The Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs technology workshop of February, 1999 recognized that the Black and Caribbean Canadian community can apply information and communication technologies in a community focused capacity to counter this trend. In turn, the community will be in a better position to take advantage of the new forms of social organizations and economic activity that the transformation to an information society will bring.

The current initiative calls for the national community to develop a national information and communication infrastructure and ensure it is linked to mainstream Canada for the sharing of knowledge and success. Such an opportunity aimed directly at the Black and Caribbean Canadian Community with initiate the mobilization and capacity building of this demographic in the rapidly changing and advancing information super highway.

Planning the development of the Urban Black Community Learning Network (UBCLN) was undertaken as an extensive process so that the end result would be a tool that has a worthwhile impact on the Black and Caribbean Canadian community as well as on all site visitors both locally and internationally. A specific description of project planning initiatives and the resulting project activities can be seen in *Section 1.1,* entitled *Background and Project Description*.

In developing the UBCLN, the CCMA has identified suitable and sustainable partners and participants including government agencies, corporations, educational institutions and other interested stakeholders to support an action-oriented agenda addressing the digital divide. A detailed listing of these partners and participants can be found in *Section 1.4,* entitled *Project Partners and Participants*. The project is designed to have the critical mass to create momentum, to demonstrate successes in different cultural and socio-economic environments and to overcome difficulties encountered when developing and using such resources. The project is also striving for the longevity to sustain and build upon the initial infrastructure and provide the opportunity of improving the developmental prospects of the marginalized individuals and sectors. It is with the support and contribution of these partners and participants that the CCMA has identified the path and taken the steps necessary to launch the network.

Throughout the planning, development and implementation of the UBCLN and with the site's continual progression, a variety of challenges have become apparent.

These challenges have been faced, evaluated and overcome by the CCMA. The following challenges were encountered and overcome at various stages (an indication of how challenges were overcome and not intended to be inclusive).

- Increasing internal awareness of website planning, development and implementation. Specifically with respect to the initiation of correct domain registration, software and server requirements as well as hosting and maintenance services. This was overcome by drawing on a number of sources both in the local community and beyond. It was determined that Bell Canada could provide the appropriate space and server requirements to store and transmit the site while also providing the necessary communication and email requirements. The appropriate domain was secured for the CCMA main site and UBCLN so that any confusion with regard to the site location would be minimized. Research was conducted to determine the availability and expertise of site designers. After evaluating various sources, Vincent Consulting began the design of the general template for the site with assistance from the CCMA.

- Ensuring that the UBCLN reaches into homes and organizations with resources that can be of benefit to a wide range of information and connectivity requirements. In an attempt to overcome this challenge, extensive promotion of the site has been undertaken to increase awareness and information sharing.

- Securing the continual research, development and refining of the site to ensure it is relevant, current and valuable to the individuals and overall communities served. The CCMA has continued intake of feedback relating to the accessibility and usefulness of the site. This feedback has generated the continual refinement of the resources based on user interests and requirements.

- Identifying representation was necessary for the UBCLN to allow for recognition of the network and differentiation from the CCMA in general. A specific UBCLN logo was developed which accurately identifies the site (see Figure 3.1-1). Also at this point the name of the network was reduced from the Urban Black and Caribbean Canadian Community Learning Project to the *Urban Black Community Learning Network*. The purpose behind this revision was to provide a more user friendly title and a more marketable product.

Figure 3.1-1 Urban Black Community Learning Network Logo

- Ensuring that the site contained a variety of links for contacting the CCMA at various different points.

For email, feedback, technical inquiries, contact info, community organization
additions, discussion forum comments, etc. This was overcome by identifying
the necessary categories, creating separate accounts and points of entry,
ensuring the contact points were easily identifiable and that data accumulated
was recognized and stored appropriately.

- Maintaining security and site integrity became an issue especially with regard
  to the discussion forum. At one point, the forum was completely erased from
  the site. Through increased precautions and user identifications, the strength
  of the forum has improved.

3.2 Urban Black Community Learning Network Resource Analysis

In order to accurately track visitors to the site and evaluate site revisions and refinements,
data has been accumulated that represents the access and interests of visitors. While data
has been received throughout the growth of the site, a sample period of recent data is also
used to provide an indication of the site's success. Alongside the site's overall statistics,
recent sample data provides insightful information that incorporates current site revisions
and refinements.

3.2.1 General Visitor Data

Since the inception and launch of the revised Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs (CCMA) website and the Urban Black Community Learning Network (UBCLN) in particular, a large number of visitors have viewed the site to take advantage of the numerous links and information resources. These visits were recorded as a means of evaluating the development and progression of the resources available.

As a testament to the success of the site, since its launch and up to December 11, 2002, 30 602 hits were recorded with a daily average of 3 327 visitors. December, 2002 alone has seen a large number of visitors to the site. In fact, during the recording of these statistics, December 10, 2002 alone showed site use well above the daily average with a total of 5986 hits. By studying UBCLN use for the nine month period of existence, the most frequent use comes during the work week, 84% with levels dropping slightly on the weekend (see figure 3.2.1-1 for recent statistics from a sample period from Nov. 30, 2002 to December 11, 2002 and 3.2.1-2 for daily usage trends since the inception of the site). This trend follows with intended use of the site with individuals and community organizations using the resources during business and school hours.
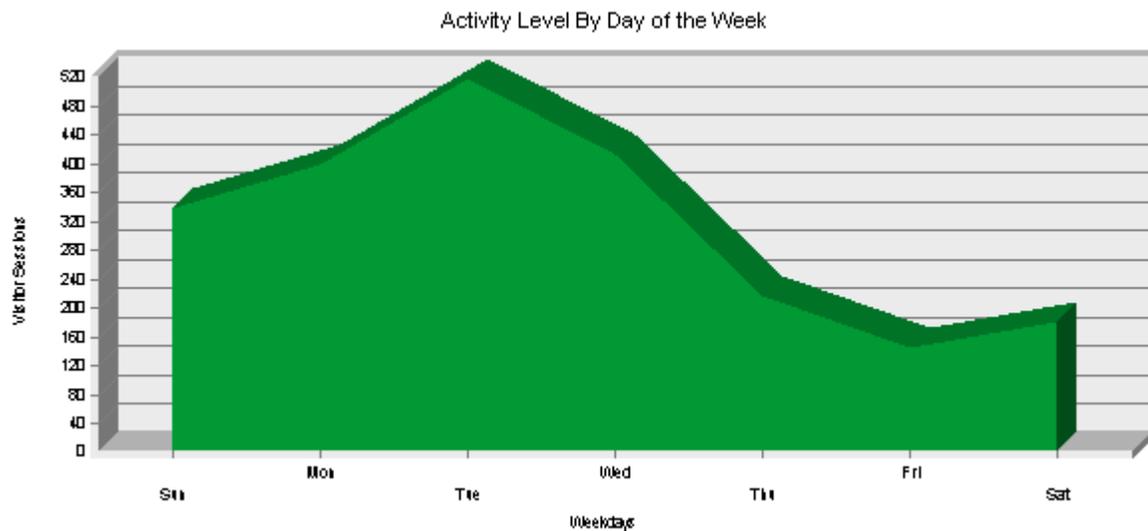
Figure 3.2.1-1 - Recent Daily Visitor Statistics From a Sample Period, Nov. 30, 2002 to

December 11, 2002

(Source - http://www.ccmacanada.org/stats/)
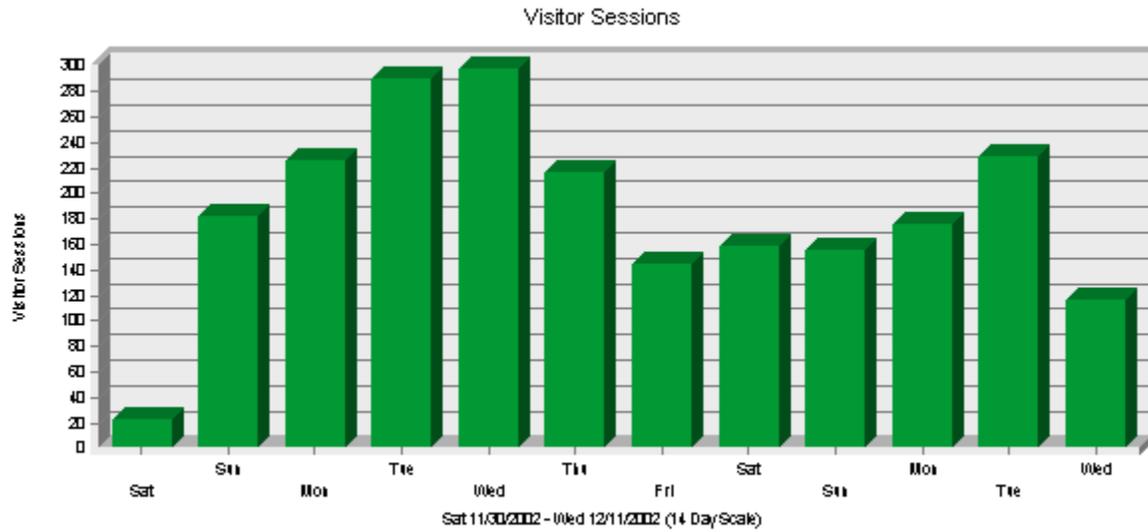
Figure 3.2.1-2 - Daily Visitor Usage Trends For the To Date Life of the Site

(Source - http://www.ccmacanada.org/stats/)

During the sample period visitor sessions, between November 30, 2002 and December 11, 2002, 893 individuals visited the site once and 256 visited repeatedly for a total of 1149 site visitors.

As am overall picture of UBCLN statistics, while the total of individuals visiting the site once makes up 78% of unique visitors, 2.08 of the remaining percent are individuals who have used the site 10 times or more. The high percentage of one time visitors attests to the increasing popularity of the resources and the promotion of the site by the CCMA.

3.2.2 Geographic Data

The geographic region of the visitor is determined by the suffix of their domain name where the visitor is registered. With the site being relatively new, it is expected that the majority of visits come from within North America. However, individuals throughout the world have accessed the site proving true the idea of increasing communication links and an easily accessible global village. Specifically, 84% of visitors were located in North America, however notable exceptions were visitors originating from Western Europe and the Caribbean (see figure 3.2.2-1).

Figure 3.2.2-1 Overall UBCLN Visitors by Geographic Region

(Source - http://www.ccmacanada.org/stats/)
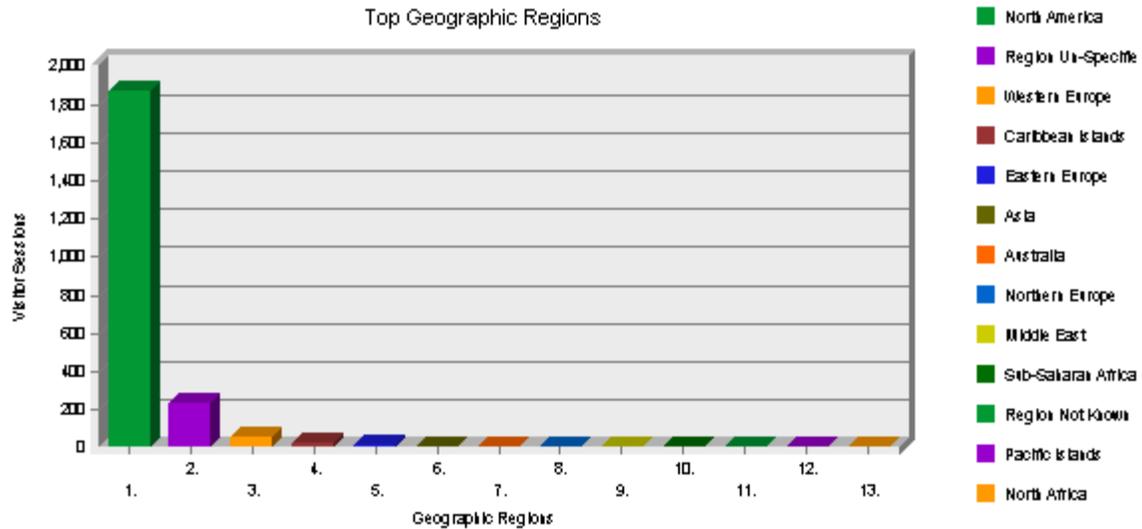
Again, as the popularity and recognition of the site continues to increase, global access is expected to increase as the site's resources are shared worldwide. Other capacity building initiatives undertaken by the CCMA will also improve the site's accessibility both locally and abroad.

3.2.3 Document and Resource Data

The use of the sites resources gives an idea of the usefulness of the site and the information available. With the progression of the site, as continual additions and refinements are included, the usefulness of documents and resources is becoming more and more apparent.

The latest statistics, from the sample period between November 30, 2002 and December 11, 2002, indicate that 3619 documents were viewed by visitors to the site. This information provides an indication that specific resources are being accessed and that the site is useful as well as visually appealing.

The usefulness of the site is further illustrated by the variety of documents accessed. With the 3619 documents making up 100% of resources accessed for the sample period, over 50 separate UBCLN resources accumulate to reach this total. Among these resources are specific Black and Caribbean Canadian links such as *Important Events in Canadian Black History, Commonwealth Caribbean Culture and Heritage, Immigrant Aid Agencies, Black and Caribbean Presence in Canada, Bibliography of Learning Resource Materials, International Cooperation,* etc.

Because access to the directories and resources is by means of the CCMA main page, a high degree of contacts have entered the site through these means. The top accessed directories and resources can be seen in addition to hits on the main page (See Figure 3.2.3-1)

Figure 3.2.3-1 - The top accessed directories and resources for the Sample Data Period,

November 30, 2002 to December 11, 2002

(Source - http://www.ccmacanada.org/stats/)
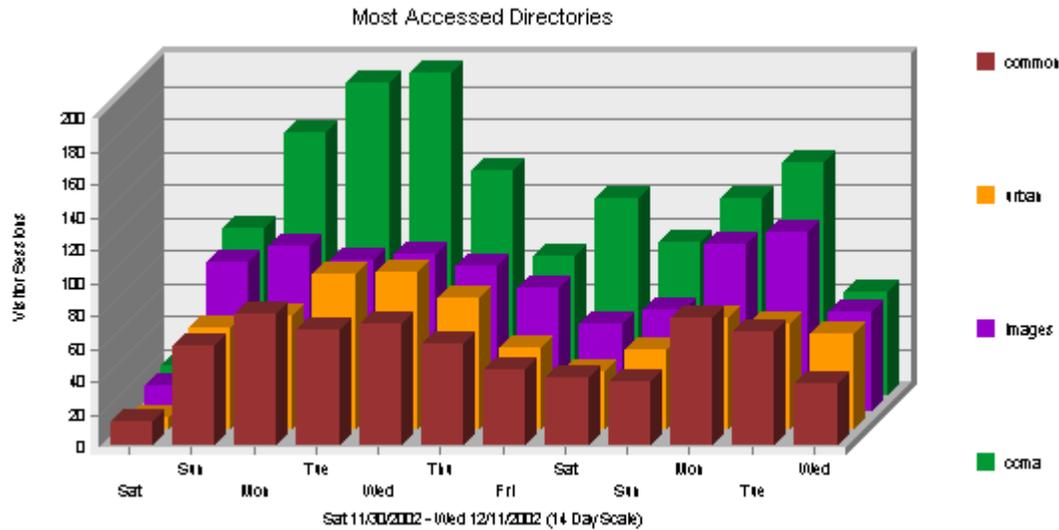
This information is useful in determining specific interest in the site and for evaluation

purposes when refining the site to peak community interest and usefulness. By

determining the primary areas of interest, the progression of the site and its resources can

be tailored to specific user requirements.

Direct file downloads can also be noted as the resources being used for multiple purposes

by individuals and organizations accessing the site. Downloaded files indicate the type of

resources that are kept and stored by users outside of visiting the site.

The top downloaded resources for the sample period include information relevant locally and abroad including data on Trade and Development, Education, Black and Caribbean Canadian History, etc. (See Figure 3.2.3-2).

Figure 3.2.3-2 - The Top Downloaded Resources For The Sample Period, November 30, 2002 to December 11, 2002

(Source - http://www.ccmacanada.org/stats/)
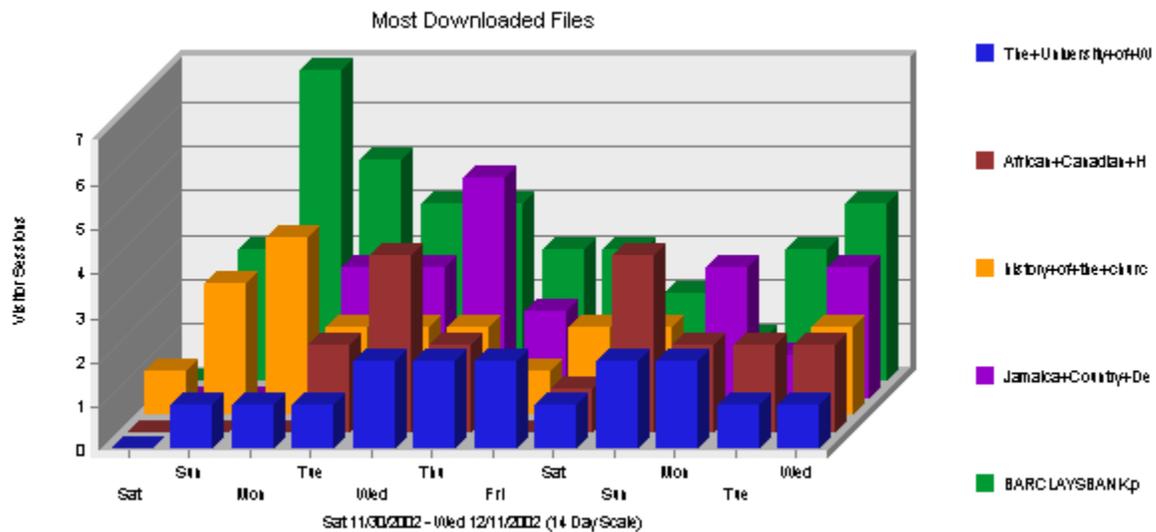
The recent statistics gathered on the UBCLN show a high level of interest in the site and the resources offered. Since the site began, the level of interest has been consistent and increasing with continual refinements and revisions. As we proceed, the intention of the CCMA is for the site to grow in popularity, accessibility and usefulness.

3.3 Primary Data Analysis

Accompanying the statistical data relating to the Urban Black Community Learning Network, primary data gathering initiatives have also enabled the evaluation and refinement of the site. The CCMA has implemented specific evaluation criteria when taking feedback and input from visitors to the UBCLN (See Evaluation Survey, Appendix 1). A Contact Us form was also implemented at the initiation of the site as an alternative means of collecting primary data from UBCLN users.

The data gathered from evaluation participants has allowed for the continual progression of the UBCLN, the general CCMA site and the resources offered. In addition to the secondary data analysis given in section 3.2, the primary feedback has proved to be a valuable tool in the site's development giving specific comments and suggestions.

Participants include individuals and organizations throughout Canada and at a variety of points along the information superhighway. As Executive Director of the CCMA, Ian Francis has visited different regions to promote the site and gather input into the sites development. Included in this data gathering are workshops in Ontario, Quebec and Manitoba in particular where the Black and Caribbean Community has a strong presence in the local economies. Reports on each of these activities can be found on the CCMA website under CCMA Activities,

http://www.ccmacanada.org/ccma/whatsnew/CCMA_Activities/default.htm.

Also, a promotional electronic mailing to Western Canada has generated additional interest in the site (For more detailed information on primary data gathering and direct promotional initiatives, see *Section 2.0*, entitled *Community Outreach*).

Specifically, a group of Vancouver based educational institutions have become aware of the UBCLN and resources offered. Contacts such as these have built the UBCLN into a valuable tool throughout the diverse Canadian minority community.

The evaluation criteria, given in Appendix 1, has generated specific feedback related to the site's development and continual progression. The data accumulated has been and continues to be key criteria by which the site is evaluated and continually updated.

Specific feedback has generated attention to the following key indicators of the UBCLN's success:

- The most valuable features identified incorporate many of the resources available with *Black and Caribbean Canadian Presence in Canada*, *Commonwealth Caribbean Culture and Heritage* and *Caribbean Canadian Community Links* accumulating to 67% of the responses received;

- 77% of respondents indicated that the site was easy to understand and that titles accurately reflected user expectations;

- *Visual attractiveness, ease of browsing* and *overall layout* were reported by the majority of respondents as being above average with *information content* being an area that requires concentration and addition;

- Reported suggestions for the site varied with some degree of interest in a greater concentration of specific social development issues and action measures;

- 55% of individuals reported as having found the site through an internet search engine with others learning of the UBCLN through the CCMA site, personal referrals and other avenues.

This first hand information provides a direct personal account of user ideas and opinions. As indicated and following the idea of continual site evaluation and refinement, direct feedback from UBCLN users is taken into account when determining future actions and implementations for the site.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

In line with the activities and initiatives intended for the Urban Black Community Learning Network (UBCLN) and the input and data evaluation from partners and project participants, the network has been developed and implemented and continues to progress.

Specific identifiable resources planned and included in the development of the UBCLN include:

- The establishment of a UBCLN working committee;

- Ongoing Research and development of resource materials;

- Workshops and information sessions have been held;

- An extensive resource database has been identified and continually updated including an online bibliography of print and electronic resources relating to Black and Caribbean Canadian history and culture;

- A national listing of Black and Caribbean Canadian community organizations has been initiated and continues to grow;

- A channel for public opinion has been instituted for open discussion on community related issues and public policy;

- A learning resource manual about basic technology skills has been developed to assist with skill development;

- An open community discussion forum has been developed for public discussion on specific topics of interest that have a direct effect on the local and international communities;

- The development of an educational CD Rom has been initiated for distribution;

- Promotion and awareness campaigns have begun to build awareness and accessibility of the UBCLN.

These project outcomes are tangible resources that the UBCLN provides. The intangible factors should also be considered as the site provides a single location with materials that can be easily accessed and used for varying purposes.

The overall goal of the UBCLN remains constant and the network focuses on promoting information sharing and technological initiatives among the Black and Caribbean Canadian community. Supplemental promotion and community outreach is building the awareness of the UBCLN and resources available. This increase in popularity is reciprocated in the progression and usefulness of the site.

Furthermore, the rapid pace of the technological revolution requires that the UBCLN continues to maintain its progression. The continuation of cooperation and support from project partners and participants will help to ensure the integrity of the site.

Based on evaluation measures, both primary and secondary, continuous attention is needed with regard to the clarity and navigation of the resources. Also, continual research and development is required to build the resource base and in turn the overall usefulness of the site.

Additional promotion, outreach, marketing, technology workshops and capacity building programs will provide the desired growth and recognition of the UBCLN and resources. With continual progression, the UBCLN can continue on its path of success and open new doors into Black and Caribbean Canadian community development.

APPENDIX 1

Urban Black Community Learning Network
User Evaluation Survey

We want to hear from you.

The Canadian Centre on Minority Affairs is dedicated to providing accurate and relevant information and resources to the Black and Caribbean Canadian community. We are currently evaluating our Urban Black Community Learning Network (UBCLN) website http://www.ccmacanada.org/urban/default.htm. In order to better serve our visitors, please answer the following questions about why you visit the website and what you think about it. This survey will take about 3-5 minutes to complete. All of your responses will be kept confidential.

1. What feature(s) of the UBCLN website do you consider most beneficial? (place an x in all that apply). Click to follow the site links listed.

	Black & Caribbean Presence in Canada
	Commonwealth Caribbean Culture & Heritage
	Black Presence in Europe
	Black and Caribbean Canadian Community Resources
	Commonwealth Caribbean Affairs
	Entrepreneurship
	Technology & Tools
	Volunteer Sector Resources
	Speakers Bureau
	Let's Chat!! – Discussion Forum

2. Did the titles of the categories or topics accurately reflect what you expected to find? (place an x in the box that applies)

	Yes
	No
	Some confusion

Comment in the box below.

3. Please rate the following website features from 0- 5 with 0 being poor and 5 being excellent. (place an x in the appropriate box)

	1	2	3	4	5
Information content					
Visual attractiveness					
Ease of browsing					
Overall layout					

4. What do you like best about the new site?
Please comment in the box below.

5. Please describe any suggestions you have about the site.
Please comment in the box below.

6. How did you get to this web site today?

	Through a web search engine
	Through a colleague or a friend
	Through community web sites
	Through links within the Government of Canada
	Other (please specify in the box below)

Other:

7. Would you recommend this site to others? (place an x in the box that applies)

	Yes
	No
	Not sure

 Please save the changes that you have made in completing this evaluation and email to
info@ccmacanada.org on or before on or before December 6, 2002.

Thank you for taking the time to help us, at the CCMA provide a better and more
valuable online resource centre.