What are the B.C. Directories?

- Listings of names and addresses of inhabitants and businesses of a given community
- Cover all of BC, not just major towns
- Introductory essays describing communities – growth, development, population statistics, etc.
- Lists of government information: government officials, customs duties, postal rates, transportation routes, etc.
- Schools, newspapers, societies
- Advertisements
Why Digitize?

- High Demand/High Use: historians, genealogists, schoolchildren, students
- Scattered collections – no complete print collection in any one location; microfilm collections spotty
- Already microfilmed – therefore able to be scanned
- Remote use likely to be high
- ?? Aid to preservation

Decisions to be made

- Presentation of material: best format, ease of searching, speed of image loading, printing
- Issues: varying fonts, often handset - uneven baseline, illustrations, engravings, heavy black print
- Quality of microfilm – clarity of printing etc.
- Scanning – in-house or outside vendor?
- To OCR or not?

OCR (Optical Character Recognition)

Pros:
- Searching capability across years
- Searching complete text by keyword

Cons:
- Considerable clean-up owing to old-fashioned fonts; illustrations, fuzzy printing, coloured paper, etc.
- Potential for false hits – resulting from inadequate OCR process
- Expensive - need to employ & maintain a search engine

What we did…or did not do…

- Scanned by a vendor from microfilm
- Chose not to use a database
- Chose not to OCR
- Used instead a files based system geared for browsing
- Attached XMP data to each image file, generated alternate image formats for the web
Concluding Remarks

- Popular resource
- Good candidate for going online
- Next steps: 1902-1915 and beyond
- 1925 on - copyright considerations

http://www.vpl.ca/bccd/index.php