

The Atlas of Québec on Internet: building a territory information network in the province of Québec (Canada)

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For the last five years, a team consisting of more than sixty researchers from all the universities of Quebec is working on a project to create the *Atlas du Québec et de ses régions*. This Atlas is already available and can be seen on Internet at the following address: <http://www.atlasduquebec.qc.ca>. The objectives of the Atlas go beyond creating maps that inventory land information. It is a multimedia cartography product built on the highway of information (Internet) towards a decentralized user-centered land management. Information networking is a crucial issue for organizations and socio-economic actors. As literature over development shows, information at global level (financial perspectives, global tendencies, markets, regulations), as well as at local level (demographic and social characteristics, human, physical, and economic resources, institutions and organizations, specific assets, quality of life, etc.) is very important for local actions involved in development projects. Information is recognized as a source of power, and usually is centrally elaborated even though when concerning local communities. There is a need for building territory information networks connecting local communities and sharing geographic information. This paper presents an experience in progress about the *Atlas of Québec and its regions*. From a geo-referenced database, the Atlas proposes maps of the Province at a general level at a scale of 1: 8 Mo. A second level of information analyses each of the 17 administrative regions (with treatment of data on a provincial basis). At a third level, each of these 17 regions will work on a local atlas, produced with local expertise. All data are reachable in peripheral regions not only for consulting but also for local use. After specialists from this portion of the territory complete their work, the data supporting regional information will go back to the Atlas Network. The *Atlas du Québec et de ses régions* is built on the Internet Network and has the objective to support analysis and depict the major tendencies driving the evolution of the Quebec

territory and provide a set of tools to those involved in the local planning and development. More than three thousands maps (supported by graphs, texts and tables) are already available.