

URBAN DISPLAYS AND CARTOGRAPHY – THE MONTRÉAL À LA CARTE PROJECT

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INTRODUCTION

Montréal à la Carte is a tool for disseminating spatial information, developed with private-sector partners and managed by the City of Montréal.

BIRTH OF THE PROJECT

Many factors led to the development of this idea, including the growing obligation for cities to gather, process and disseminate spatial information, for internal or external purposes.

The advent of geomatics in recent years had a great impact on the computerization of spatial data. Given the need to disseminate this information, the City of Montréal decided to work with private-sector partners to use these technological advances and improve the sharing of data among different kinds of systems, allowing much more powerful graphic applications.

The Internet has also multiplied the quantity of data exchanged, and even changed the nature of these data. This is a growing trend, and new applications are emerging every day. This means that cities are obliged to distribute cartographic information over the Internet to assist their citizens and other interested parties (tourists, investors, etc.).

APPROACH AND CONTENT

In this ocean of data, now accessible to vast number of people, it is essential that managers take a responsible approach to the presentation of content. The information must be graphically suitable and attractive, and offered in such a way as to correspond to users' perceptive skills and knowledge. This is the goal of *Montréal à la Carte*.

A series of computerized maps was developed, simply and efficiently illustrating the City's activities and services. Thanks to the multitude of distribution channels used (publication, posters, Internet, etc.), *Montréal à la Carte* encourages better access and greater public participation in the city's social, economic and community life.

It has also proved to be a powerful information and promotion tool for reaching tourists, and as such represents a symbol of openness and welcome for visitors.

SOURCE OF INFORMATION

Montréal à la Carte is essentially designed around the structure of Montréal's numbered road network. The system is managed jointly by the City's Public Works Department and Economic and Urban Development Department and the Montréal Urban Community. Activities and services in the urban environment are updated with specific data by all departments in the City administration, and all of them can also refer to it for their day-to-day operations.

APPLICATIONS

There are four different groups of applications, for dissemination purposes. They are:

- The Internet (Urban Navigator, institutional sites);
- By-products (tourist guide, promotional brochures, etc.);
- Thematic maps;
- Urban displays and posters.

RESULTS AND CONCLUSION

Montréal à la Carte has helped us standardize our cartographic tools. It has also meant a reduction in map production costs, since all municipal players are now working from the same base maps.

In future, we will be able to exchange even more spatial information among the different public-sector bodies (e.g. with other levels of government), between the public and private sectors (through partnerships or agreements) and with citizens.

It will also be possible to develop new applications, such as the IPSAT network (Public Information, Signage, Displays and Transactions system) now being set up in Montréal's underground city.