



## Tracebook heritage social media network: A backgrounder

### What is Tracebook?

“Tracebook” is a social media concept designed to connect heritage sites, groups, visitor centres and other partner organizations to create an online community with global reach. It uses the same formula that makes Facebook a contemporary sensation to help bring history to life while promoting present-day events.

### Who is behind the project?

The Tracebook social media network is a joint initiative of Hauka Creative Communications, Barkerville Historic Town and the New Pathways to Gold Society. Current partners include the District of Wells and the R.E. Living History Society.

### How does it work?

Tracebook harnesses the social media power of Facebook to link partner organizations together, draw in potential visitors and raise the profile of heritage tourism operators in B.C. The project has two main components: **The Core** and the **Connected Web**.

**The Core** is the central hub around which the social media community revolves. Think of it as a main gate to a vast heritage fair taking place all over the province. It features a main page that will be hosted by a historic character from the Cariboo Gold Rush period. Just like a Facebook page, the "Historic Host" will have a profile, a wall for people to post on, photo galleries and other components. The twist is, the Historic Host will be virtually alive, not a dead personality from the past. Hauka Creative Communications (HCC) and Barkerville Historic Town (BHT) will animate the Historic Host with comments, links and the like to bring the past to life. You can find the Core page at <http://www.facebook.com/pages/Tracebook-Core/202653959769973>.

And like a giant heritage fair, the Tracebook Core will also animate both the central hub and partner sites and pages (the Historic Host's "friends") with both "Virtual Friends" and live programming. The Virtual Friends are historic characters that will be moving along B.C.'s historic Gold Rush Trails network during the spring and summer of 2011. They'll post comments, poke the Historic Host and all the things live friends do on Facebook. They'll be the virtual equivalents of the characters in the New Pathways to Gold Society's *Chasing the Golden Butterfly* passport program, only their adventures will be web-based, not print-based.

On their journeys, these characters will pass through every partner site and page, interacting with any virtual characters set up by members of our social media community. The difference will be some of the comments, events, etc. will be from the past while other content will be present-day. This potent mix of past and present will help bring the history of B.C. alive and promote a events and programs all over the province. The content for this part of the project will be provided for by HCC and BHT in partnership with the New Pathways to Gold Society. You'll find the core Tracebook page by searching Facebook for "Tracebook core." For a guide to a Tracebook page, go to the **Tracebook Page Primer** in Appendix A.

**The Live Programming** aspect of the Tracebook Core will focus on the 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the 1861 Gold Rush Pack Trail to Barkerville. The District of Wells and Barkerville Historic Town have a season of exciting events planned to promote this newly-refurbished trail's colourful past, including a recreation of the cutting of the original trail, slated for the first week of August. This colourful and lively re-enactment will be staged during the first week of August by members of the R.E. Living History Society, who will make the 40-kilometre trek between Keithley Creek and Barkerville on horseback. The group will be posting their adventures on their own pages as well as that of the Tracebook Core and videos will be uploaded to YouTube and provided to other media. It promises to be a high-spirited and high-profile event.

This content/animation will be available to Tracebook partners -- and this is where you come in.

**The Connected Web:** We're asking partners to create a Tracebook page for a character from their site, community or area of interest. Set up a page, post your character's profile and then you can friend the Tracebook Core page host and other characters. Send your events along, comment on Core content and connect with other sites and individuals. This will create a web that will not only connect you to other heritage tourism partners, but a huge potential audience of travellers who use Facebook and surf the 'net.

## **How do I set up a Tracebook page?**

It's as easy as 1, 2, 3...

**Step One:** Set up a Facebook account for your Historic Character. Using Facebook's "create a page" function, chose the "Fan Page" and then just fill in the blanks, post a photo and you're set.

**Step Two:** Send out a Friends request to the Tracebook Core Historic Host and other partner sites. Make sure your character "likes" the Core page. Now you're part of the connected web.

**Step Three:** Post your event info on your wall and those of your friends. Send links, recommend videos, comment -- just like a Facebook page. Encourage members of your organization or group to friend your Historic Character and other characters in the Connected Web. It's that simple...

## What does it cost?

Aside from the time it takes you to set up your page and keep it fresh, there is no cost (provided you're already on the Internet). The cost of the Core programming is provided by the Barkerville Historic Town, the New Pathways to Gold Society and the District of Wells.

## What are the project goals?

Working with groups like yours, we hope to achieve a short-term goal this tourist season and develop a long-term goal over the course of the next year.

**The short-term goal** is to link every heritage site in B.C. together with visitor centres, museums, arts and culture groups and other partners in the **Connected Web**.

**The long-term goal** is the creation of a series of **Virtual Gold Rush Trails** throughout British Columbia and the United States to encourage travellers from all over North America to explore the communities and heritage tourism experiences along the historic trails used by gold seekers in the U.S. West, Alaska and Yukon rushes. These virtual trails will use the same Tracebook model to show the connections between B.C., the U.S. and the Yukon to motivate tourists to follow in the footsteps of characters like Wyatt Earp (who spent some time in Barkerville after the shootout at the O.K. Corral). Each route will have its own page featuring one of the trails that ended up (at least initially) in Barkerville. Each route will be hosted by a historic character who figured prominently in events along that trail during the gold rush era (or other periods – we're open to all sorts of ideas). We envision three main routes:

**North To Alaska:** Takes in Seattle, Victoria, Vancouver, B.C.'s north coast and on to Alaska.

**Strange Tales Are Told:** Starting in Barkerville, taking in Cassiar, Northern B.C. along the Alaska Highway, then into the Yukon at Watson Lake and all the way to Whitehorse.

**The Great Gold Rush Route:** Incorporates the Oregon Trail and runs from the U.S. Midwest to San Francisco then up the coast to Seattle, where it branches in two: The Coastal Route goes up through Victoria to the Mainland and up the Fraser-Thompson Rivers Corridor to Barkerville. The Interior Route goes through Eastern Washington State, up through the Okanagan and into the Thompson via the traditional First Nations/Fur Trade route before reaching Barkerville.

A possible **Silver Trail Route** would follow the silver strikes across the U.S. Midwest and into the Kootenays. It could either stand alone or be incorporated into the Great Gold Rush Route.

Tracebook will show contemporary travellers how they can follow in the footsteps of these famous figures along a "new pathway to gold" that has just as much excitement and reward as the old gold rush trail. The "gold" of course is the heritage tourism, First Nations experience and recreation opportunities along the new pathway. We hope this summer we'll be able to gather a lot of the connections and stories that will enable us to launch these virtual routes next year.

## What's the deadline?

You can join the Connected Web at any time. HCC and BHT hope to launch the Core by the middle of July.

## Where can I get more information?

For more information, you can contact:  
Don Hauka, Director, Hauka Creative Communications  
ddclauka@shaw.ca or 604-524-1884

Or:

James Douglas, Manager, Visitor Experiences and Public Relations,  
Barkerville Historic Town: 1-888-994, ext. 41  
james.douglas@barkerville.ca

## Thanks to our partners:



## Appendix A: The Tracebook Page Primer

A handy guide to all the elements on a standard Tracebook page.

**Left-hand column:** Basically the “Edit My Profile” page ala Facebook. Each route would feature a specific historic character. Like a Facebook page, this column contains the following elements:

- Friends of the character, both historic friends that are chosen by the writer of that particular route and real folks who join up and want to befriend such characters as Wyatt Earp, etc.
- Historic events along the trail: these can include incidents that happened to the route character or be used to mark significant historic dates anywhere along the trail (like the Shootout at the OK Corral, 150<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the first cattle drive to reach Barkerville, etc.)
- Invitations: These can either be historic (absolutely authentic or perhaps a bit tongue-in-cheek like “Ike Clanton – coffee at Camillus Fly’s photography studio, 3:00 p.m.”) or contemporary (Billy Barker invites you to tea at Wake Up Jake’s) and can be updated daily.
- Photo Galleries: A place for link to both historic and contemporary photographs from along the route.
- At the very bottom of this column, links to the other routes could be added, like the “North to Alaska” route or the “Strange Tales Are Told” Yukon Route.

The mix of historic and contemporary content will encourage visitors to the site to check in daily and befriend route characters, adding a dynamic element to what would otherwise be a static page.

**Center column:** The News Feed, again ala Facebook but journal entries from our route characters scattered throughout as well as posts from their Friends (historic and contemporary). The idea is to show the character’s progress along the trail and to have friends in various communities along the route encourage him/her.

This column can also be used to invite visitors to the site to befriend a route character and share information about their community: for instance, do they have a story about Wyatt Earp in their town? The idea is to get an exchange of stories going. It may be that contributors are asked to write everything in present-tense if that works.

**Right-hand Column:** The events/links column. Facebook uses this for sponsor ads, etc. On Tracebook, community events, festivals, etc. from along the route can be featured. Unlike the

events on the left-hand column, these events will be contemporary. The column will also feature lots of links to historic sites, museums, visitor centres and sponsors.

**Mobile Components:** The content would be ideal for downloading onto mobile phones and other personal electronic devices. The Heritage Tourism Alliance of B.C. is currently developing a pilot project using this delivery platform and there may be a synergy there.

**Launch Date:** Currently slated for mid-July, 2011.

**Potential Funders:** It's suggested that the gold and silver mines along the routes could help finance the second phase of the project. Other funds may be available under the new technologies funding envelopes at the provincial and federal levels.

## **Summary**

The blend of contemporary social networking and historic recreation makes the Tracebook concept a potentially powerful promotional tool for heritage sites, businesses and other stakeholders along the proposed routes. By showing the Big Picture of the Gold Migrations, it will encourage visitors from key markets in the U.S. and Canada to rediscover the "new pathway to gold." Done with a sense of humour, adventure and the right tone, it could also be a tremendous educational experience.