

Developing A Geocollaboratory For Indigenous Tourism Research

Blangy, Sylvie¹, Holly Donohoe², Scott Mitchell³

Collaboratories have been defined as centers without walls, virtual places where research teams can undertake collaborative research. As part of the Aboriginal Tourism Network (ABORINET) project, we have been developing a geocollaboratory to support research on Indigenous tourism around the world. Indigenous communities are culturally distinct and remotely located and these conditions present significant geographic constraints and a set of socio-cultural challenges when conducting research on issues affecting these communities. Therefore, the geocollaboratory development and implementation focused on: (1) the specific goal of enabling collaboration between non-Indigenous researchers and Indigenous peoples on issues related to Indigenous tourism planning and management, and (2) the general issue of enabling the sharing of differing knowledge and management approaches (i.e. traditional ecological knowledge) amongst research and Indigenous communities. The primary goal of ABORINET is to develop a multi-scale and multi-method data collection and analysis protocol for better understanding Indigenous tourism in a way that supports multi-site and longitudinal comparisons, for connecting Indigenous communities across the world, and for sharing the results in ways that are meaningful to tourism stakeholders within and beyond Indigenous communities. This paper introduces the research effort, describes the conceptual framework within which the geocollaboratory is being developed, it outlines the process and the lessons learned in the development stages with specific attention afforded the geographical nature of the collaboratory, and the limitations of Internet-based collaboratory research are identified. Recommendations for mitigating potential limitations and challenges are proposed and future research opportunities are identified.

¹Chaire de Tourisme, UQAM, Université du Québec à Montréal, ²Department of Tourism, Recreation and Sport Management, University of Florida, ³Department of Geography and Environmental Studies, Carleton University
