A collection of historical artifacts is arranged on a light-colored surface. On the left, a portion of a wooden chessboard with a checkered pattern and several chess pieces is visible. Below the chessboard, there are two ornate medals: one with a red ribbon and a white star, and another with a blue ribbon and a white star. A pair of gold-rimmed glasses with a thin wire bridge is positioned diagonally across the center. In the bottom left corner, a circular compass with a white face and black markings is visible.

*Shadows of Cybercolonialism
in the the State Hermitage
Museum, St. Petersburg,
Russia and the Louvre, Paris*

*Mary Leigh Morbey
Digital Museums:
Interdisciplinary Perspectives*



Cybercolonialism museum case studies

– Guiding research question:

How are ideological influences, cultural pressures and structural constraints originating in computing ideologies giving particular shape to theoretical, cultural and applied computing developments in the context of the Hermitage and the Louvre, and particularly in current World Wide Web representations of the museums?



Theoretical framing:

Contrasting notions of cybercolonialism, a colonizing of cultures by a diverse array of computing ideologies (Morbey, 2002), and cyberglobalization, a dynamic two-way relationship between global and local institutions to facilitate information and communication technologies (ICT) access (Friedman, 2000; Robertson, 1995)

Working assumption: non-neutrality of ICT (Bowers, 1988; Franklin, 1999; Morbey, 2000, 2002)



Working cybercolonialism description

- ◆ Cybercolonial discourses emerge from the concept of Discourse Analysis of Colonialism – Edward Said’s 1978 *Orientalism* – Said argues that the “orient” is constructed by Western discourses



- ◆ According to Said, these discourses sustain colonial relations in the “Other”
- ◆ “Other” that is constructed is relegated to primitive representation
- ◆ Representation dependent upon first world expertise and in need of being controlled



Cybercolonialism manifestation – new frontier myth

- The notion of new “frontier” is pervasive in the tradition of the US American western “frontier” myth
- Extension of civilized space into new territories
- American hegemony (control of “Other”) over the Internet is prominent in our cyberspatial imagery



Methodologies:

- ◆ A philosophical and theoretical inquiry into the concepts of cybercolonialism and cyberglobalization
- ◆ A historical delineation and analysis of the concepts
- ◆ Qualitative field research at the Hermitage and Louvre employing ethnographic observation and interview; re-circulation of interview as well as findings to interviewees



Hermitage case study *Findings ...*

Morbey, M.L. (2002) Cybercolonialism in the State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersburg, Russia: Does it Matter? *Proceedings of Electronic Imaging and Visual Arts 2002 Moscow Conference*, pp.45-52 (English version). Moscow: Ministry of Culture of the Russian Federation. Retrieved February 20, 2004 from http://www.evarussia.ru/eva2002/english/dok_652.html

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THE STATE HERMITAGE MUSEUM

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В самом центре Санкт-Петербурга, в пяти величественных зданиях, созданных в XVIII-XIX веках знаменитыми зодчими, разместился Государственный Эрмитаж. Ведущее место в этом неповторимом архитектурном ансамбле занимает Зимний дворец - резиденция русских царей, построенная в 1754-1762 годах по проекту Ф.Б. Растрелли.



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увеличенных
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QUICK SEARCH

HEADLINES

[Presentation of the joint Internet-project of the State Hermitage Museum and telecommunication holding Golden Telecom](#)

- ◆ [INFORMATION](#)
- ◆ [COLLECTION HIGHLIGHTS](#)
- ◆ [EXHIBITIONS](#)
- ◆ [HERMITAGE HISTORY](#)
- ◆ [CHILDREN & EDUCATION](#)
- ◆ [DIGITAL COLLECTION](#)

Situated in the centre of St Petersburg the State Hermitage Museum is housed in five magnificent buildings created by celebrated architects of the 18th to 19th century. The Winter Palace, formerly the residence of Russian Emperors which was constructed between 1754 and 1762 after a design of Bartolomeo Rastrelli, occupies an important place amongst the other constructions of the overall Museum ensemble.



◆ [Virtual Tour](#)



◆ [Zoom View Gallery](#)



◆ [Virtual Exhibitions](#)



Findings... Hermitage website (three particular findings): 1) Representations

- ◆ First Hermitage Russian-created site, mid-1990s and with errors
- ◆ Second and current site, IBM based, server outside Atlanta, Ga, re-organized structure and technological framework from IBM, content from Hermitage ... new framework brings new content and drives content; a de- and re-colonizing of the website by IBM



Findings ... 2) IBM exploitation of relationships with Hermitage

- ◆ Initial relationship set up by Rebecca Kerr of IBM ... took a long time for IBM needed to make money
- ◆ *Tension*: Hermitage needed technology and expertise provided by IBM; could not afford it, hence giving into IBM's goals, quality, demand for American English rather than British English
- ◆ IBM e-business

File Edit View Go Bookmarks Tools Window Help

http://www.hermitagemuseum.org/ Go Search

Mail AIM Home My Netscape Search Shop@Netsc... Bookmarks

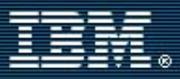
The State Hermitage Museum, St. Petersb...



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Findings ... 3) Representations and relationships in terms of reciprocity and cybercolonialism

- ◆ Within interviews, some moments of reciprocity (cyberglobalization)
- ◆ IBM cybercolonializing: 1) subtle shaping of structure and ideology underlying website; 2) changes from IBM-imported ICT and website design have altered how personnel think about experiencing the museum ... (IBM commoditication?)



A core and unresolved problem:
Tension and convergence of
IBM's philanthropy and
expansion of its e-business

A collection of historical artifacts is arranged on a light-colored surface. On the left, there is a blue and brown checkered board with several small, round, gold-colored pieces. Below the board are two ornate medals: one with a red ribbon and a white star, and another with a blue ribbon and a white star. A pair of gold-rimmed glasses with thin temples is positioned diagonally across the center. In the bottom left corner, there is a circular compass with a white face and black markings. The background is a plain, light-colored surface.

A Case Study of the Louvre Museum, Paris

*The emerging new
Louvre website*

Palais et musée

- Histoire du Louvre
- Collections
- Visite virtuelle
- Actualité

Activités

- Expositions temporaires
- Auditorium
- Visites-conférences et ateliers

Informations

- Mode d'emploi
- Boîtes aux lettres
- Publications et bases de données

- **Vente de billets**
- **Louvre.edu**
- **Boutique électronique**

Musique filmée : Verdi et ses légendes



Bienvenue au musée du Louvre

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Filmed Music: Verdi and his legends



Welcome to the Louvre Museum

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Español
日本語

Server
Survey
Acknowledgements

Partners
and mirror sites
Press Office



In the beginning ...

- ◆ Case study commenced July 2003 and continues with a Louvre invitation to document the emergence of new website conceptualization and Nov. 2004 launch
- ◆ All sectors of museum engaged with website
- ◆ Napoleonic law allows only 100% philanthropic participation ... towards cyberglobalization???
- ◆ Emerging museum networks



Contrast of the Hermitage “older industrial” IBM model with an emphasis on its e-business, a cybercolonialization (Russian weak third world economy), and the Louvre, with its emerging Internet communications model engaging and interrelating all sectors of the museum in the new website conceptualization emerging November 2004

A collection of military medals and a pair of glasses are arranged on a light-colored, textured surface. On the left, a blue ribbon with a circular emblem is attached to a silver star-shaped medal. Below it is another silver star-shaped medal with a red center. A red ribbon with a circular emblem is also visible. A pair of gold-rimmed glasses with thin temples is positioned in the center. In the bottom left corner, a circular compass is partially visible. The text "Thank you ..." is written in a black, italicized serif font on the right side of the image.

Thank you ...