

## **What's app? Combining historical materials and new technology in the pursuit of language**

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In an era of technology and information sharing, little research relies on previously collected data. A strong counter-example is the Origins of New Zealand English (ONZE) Project, which began with the acquisition of recordings made in 1946-1948 by the New Zealand Broadcasting Service (Gordon et al. 2004). In addition to those historical recordings, ONZE now includes the Intermediate Archive and the Canterbury Corpus. The latter is a monitor corpus, with data collected on a yearly basis. ONZE thus covers the whole of the history of New Zealand English, enabling key theoretical insights into dialect formation and evolution (e.g. Trudgill 2004; Hay & Schreier 2004; Hay & Sudbury 2005; Langstrof 2006). ONZE provides a key model for joint diachronic and synchronic research, and yet few projects replicate its structure and design.

This poster presents an overview of a new project, modeled on ONZE. The research site is Victoria, Canada. Because much settlement predates recording technologies, no variety of Canadian English has been traced throughout its history. The existence of large audio collections in the UVic Archives and the Archives of the Royal BC Museum, however, enable analysis of how early Victoria settlers and their descendants spoke. Colonization began in earnest in 1849; the city was incorporated in 1862. The historical recordings used this project date from 1960 and include a number of elderly speakers. The materials thus provide a window to Victoria English that spans the late 1800s to the 1950s. These data are supplemented by extensive written records from the local paper, the *British/Daily Colonist*, 1858-1980.

To complete the diachronic trajectory of English in Victoria, the archival evidence is being synthesized with contemporary, synchronic data. A random, stratified sample of 140 native Victorians is under construction. The field methodology for this aspect of the project employs cutting edge technology. Field recordings are made using 4th generation Apple iPod Touches, using a professional sound recording app and external microphones. To allow cross-Canada comparability, the word list from Boberg (2008) —which was purpose designed for the Canadian context— is included in the interview protocol. Crucially, a custom app has been designed for this aspect of the Victoria project: The 182 words are automatically randomized at each presentation, and to eliminate the possibility of 'list readings', each word appears individually for a set interval. When running, the app window includes a sound monitor, allowing the field worker to visually gauge sound quality and make any necessary adjustments depending on sound pressure conditions. Planned additional features for this app include font size adjustments and interval adjustments (for readers of different ages, abilities, etc.). The word list recordings are given unique identifiers and exported via iTunes. This custom app, tentatively labeled *iSLR Field Recorder™*, will be demonstrated on site at the poster presentation; once complete, it will be made available to the research community.