**Land Title Searching in Maple Ridge**

Research Report

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Land Title & Government Records Cluster

Landscapes of Injustice Project

University of Victoria

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Note: This is a document for practical use in the field, prepared by field researchers. It has not been proofread or copyedited as a research output.

### Data Checking Results

In June, we completed data checking. Ten percent of titles (88 titles total) were re-searched and entered in the Check Database, and the entries were compared with the Live Database.

The majority of “errors” identified during data checking were inconsistencies between the live and check database, but these differences do not necessarily indicate that information was incorrect. In most cases, these inconsistencies were caused by looking at an isolated property/owner/lawyer during the data checking; the information recorded in the check database did not match the live database, but the live database contained the same information in the notes field (which was not checked). In some cases, errors would have corrected themselves if we continued tracing a title (for example, the “Next Title” field). Some cases were due to human error.

#### Title Errors

Consideration errors (6% of titles had errors)

1. Human error. This was only the case for one title. The mistake was in the check db.
2. New protocols regarding the use of applications. The applications contained a market value, but no consideration. See above for information on Applications and Transfers.

Next title (16% of titles had errors)

1. Illegibility. This was by far the main culprit. However, these cases will resolve themselves in the real db by the natural process of elimination; incorrect traces reveal themselves because properties on incorrect traces do not match previous titles.
2. Human error. In one case was human error the cause of an incorrect subsequent title. In this case, the check db contained only two of three correct subsequent titles; the third was written separately from the other two on the document.

Dates (8% of titles had errors)

1. Human error in the form of typos or incorrect date choice. These issues have been fixed in the db.

#### Lawyer and Owner Errors

Errors in the Lawyers and Owners fields were the most common, with 44% of titles having Owner field errors, 47% having Seller field errors, and 44% having Lawyer field errors.

1. Inconsistencies introduced by only looking at one title in isolation
	1. If there was a discrepancy in name or address of the owners, most of the time it would be explained that there was different information between titles/transfers in the owner notes in the live database. This is the single biggest cause of inconsistencies in the owners field, and explains why approximately half of owner entries were erroneous/inconsistent: we only data checked half of the titles each owner was associated with.
2. Protocol issues
	1. Slight differences in writing street names: "41st St" vs. "41 St"; “Twelfth St” vs. “12th St.” This has been resolved.
	2. Slight differences in inputting lawyers when there is both an institution name and a person's name. This has been resolved.
	3. Lack of protocol for inputting RP cases up until June.
3. Differences in major institution names and information
	1. In the real database, we only made a new entry for major institutions (such as the VLA) when we had a title with significantly different information on them (eg. a different address or person associated with it), so that the title notes entry would not become cumbersome. We did not make a new entry, for instance, for "The Secretary of State" versus "The Honourable Secretary of State", because we know it is the same thing. However, in the check database, we just put it in as we saw it.
4. Differing information for prolific lawyers (eg. Hal Menzies and Geo. C. Crux)
	1. Similar to the discrepancies in the major institution names and information.
	2. There are several lawyers who were involved in a lot of transactions. Unfortunately, the information changes for them between transfers, often in ways that are clearly non-meaningful (such as Haney vs. Port Haney when the rest of the information is identical). In the real database, we have been making new entries for them for meaningful changes (eg. new address, Hal Menzies vs. Halbert Menzies), but have not been making note, for instance, of the varying legibility of Geo. C. Crux's address which appears on every single empty pocket of Japanese-Canadian-owned properties. In the check database, we put it in as we saw it on the selected title.
5. Title Searcher mistakes
	1. In one case, first and surnames were mixed up in the check database, but the live database was correct.
	2. In two cases, there were typos.
6. Document illegibility
	1. There are a couple cases where there was a discrepancy in spelling for an owner entry, but it was clear that it was hard to read in that particular instance, and would have likely been cleared up by seeing the next or previous title. Eg. Lence vs. Lenore,Olav vs. Clav.

#### Property Errors

24% of titles had Property field errors.Of the 19 properties errors, these errors can be classified as follows:

1. 3 titles with property issues due to information added or removed over time (such acreage)
2. 11 titles with property issues due to human error, including incorrect data entry (4), linking errors (2), and general misunderstanding of a property description (5)
3. 4 titles with property issue due to protocol confusion (2 with regards to including both a sketch and a plan in the property description; 2 with additional information listed on the transfer vs the title)
4. 1 title with no property issue (the correct information was in the notes, as per the protocol)

#### Suggestions for Future Data Checking

1. It would be useful for Title Searchers to track a title for more than one round. Rather than have a random sample of 10% of titles, Title Searchers could take a random sample of 3-5% of titles and search those titles through two or three rounds. This would decrease the error rates of Next Title, Owner, Seller and Property fields, which are over exaggerated by the current data checking system.
2. In addition or as an alternative to re-searching titles to data check, it would be useful if Title Searchers could use the Database to run reports or create spreadsheets for a series of titles. An ideal report would list all titles that have been linked together through the drop-down “Preceding titles” and “Related titles (newer)” fields. The report could include Dates, Consideration Value, Properties, and Owners, among other fields. Title Searchers could confirm that the correct Properties, Owners, and Sellers were linked, which is especially valuable in cases where there are multiple entries for people with the same name.Title Searchers could also confirm that dates and consideration values are within a reasonable range (for example, it would be rare for a title from the 1930s to have a consideration of $40,000; this would likely be an error). This would allow Title Searchers to catch errors that the current data checking system fails to recognize, including the correct linking of preceding and newer titles and the consistent linking of owners and sellers.