



The Arctic Institute of North America presents the
2015–2016

Arctic Speaker Series

Science and Survival at Fort Conger: A Virtual Exhibition of 19th Century Polar Exploration

Who: Peter Dawson | **Date:** Wednesday, March 16, 2016 | **Time:** 4:00 – 5:00 pm | **Location:** University of Calgary; Engineering A 101



The recent discovery of HMS Erebus, one of two ships lost during the ill-fated Franklin Expedition, suggests that Canada's polar heritage is of great interest to politicians, as well as the public at large. However, polar heritage sites of national and international significance are generally far too remote to be experienced first-hand. This is a problem, given that heritage agencies such as Parks

Canada rely heavily on visitor experience to communicate key messages explaining why it is necessary to commemorate, memorialize and protect Canada's polar heritage. Virtual exhibits involving computer reconstructions of heritage sites, as they would have appeared at the time of their occupation, may offer partial solutions. In this talk, Dr. Dawson provides an overview of an online exhibit recently completed for the Virtual Museum of Canada which focuses on Fort Conger, a polar heritage site located in Quttinirpaaq, National Park, Ellesmere Island. Dr. Dawson explains the challenges of creating photorealistic reconstructions of Fort Conger's buildings, scientific instruments, and expedition ships using archival and archaeological data. He also discusses how these virtual objects were used to create games and other interactive experiences that highlight the significant historic events that occurred at the site, including the beginnings of polar science, and the race to the North Pole.

Biography: Dr. Peter Dawson is a professor in the Department of Anthropology & Archaeology and a research associate at AINA. He received his BA and M.A at the University of Toronto, and his PhD from the University of Calgary in 1998. Dr. Dawson has conducted archaeological and ethnographic research in various regions of the Canadian arctic for over two decades. His research interests are varied and include the digital preservation of heritage at risk, and the computer modeling of archaeological data.

This event is **free and open to the public**

There will be a reception in the AINA offices (ES-1040) immediately following the presentation

For the full speaker series schedule, please visit the website.

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