Research on ICT with Aboriginal Communities

Report of the founding RICTA Meeting

March 11, 2005

This report documents the first meeting of the RICTA cluster – Research on Information and Communication Technologies with Aboriginal Communities - held on March 11, 2005 in Balmertown, Ontario plus 10 other locations in Canada via videoconference and also BREEZE chat on the Web.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

CONTACT INFORMATION

The RICTA website: www.ricta.ca contains the latest contact information for all the RICTA members, along with information about joining RICTA.

For further information about RICTA, contact:

Susan O'Donnell
Adjunct Professor, Sociology
University of New Brunswick
Research Officer, National Research Council
Institute for Information Technology
46 Dineen Drive
Fredericton, NB E3B 9W4
Tel: 506-444-0374
Fax: 506-444-6114
Susan.ODonnell@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca

Brian Walmark
Policy Analyst and Research Director
Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research
Institute
135 Syndicate Avenue, Suite 405
Thunder Bay, ON P7C3V6
Tel: 877-737-5638 extension 51261
Fax: 807-345-7882
brianwalmark@knet.ca

REPORT PRODUCTION, DESIGN AND PUBLICATION

This report was produced by Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) in Balmertown and Thunder Bay and designed by Knet Services in Sioux Lookout, Ontario, with additional contributions and editorial support from RICTA members.

The RICTA website: www.ricta.ca contains a pdf copy of this report and more resources related to the first RICTA meeting.

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Introduction

Research on Information and Communication Technologies (ICT) with Aboriginal Communities (RICTA) is a national research cluster formed in September 2004. The main objectives of RICTA are to:

• Conduct collaborative research networking in a spirit of respect, sharing, inclusion, consensus and commitment

• Make Canada an international leader in research on ICT with Aboriginal communities

• Foster opportunities for research training and mentoring

RICTA is a space where university academics, government and community researchers, funders, policy-makers and Aboriginal community representatives can work with Aboriginal communities to learn how ICT has been adopted and adapted to address historic and contemporary challenges faced by people living in Aboriginal communities, in particular remote and isolated communities.

RICTA is a place where its members can engage in dialogue with Aboriginal community members and develop better ways to conduct research with Aboriginal communities that are becoming leaders in connectivity and telecommunications.

RICTA evolved from the recognition that additional attention could be focused on the advancements made by First Nations, Inuit and other Aboriginal communities in connectivity and telecommunications, especially in remote and isolated communities in Canada's far north. And, in order to better understand how this development occurred, it was necessary to not only work with community members but also put community needs and objectives at the centre of any research activity.

The first RICTA meeting was held on March 11, 2005 in Balmertown, Ontario, with videoconference nodes and sites in 10 other locations in three time zones and a BREEZE chat facility on the web.

RICTA is one of 31 projects funded by the Social Sciences and Research Council's (SSHRC) Strategic Research Clusters Design Grants in 2004-2005. The $30,000 SSHRC grant provided the funds (travel, accommodation, chartered flights, technical and editorial support) for the first RICTA meeting.

The RICTA website: www.ricta.ca contains more information about RICTA as well as the following resources related to the first RICTA meeting:

• A pdf copy of this report
• A pdf copy of the BREEZE chat accompanying the first RICTA meeting
• Links to the webstreaming archives of the meeting

MEETING SUMMARY AND WAYS FORWARD

The RICTA founding meeting in Balmertown, Ontario was hosted by Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO), one of six tribal councils serving First Nations in Ontario's far north. KO created the Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute (KORI), its own research institute, in response to growing interest by the research community in Knet Services, the tribal council's ICT and telecommunications department. The KO Chiefs wanted to ensure that the communities, traditionally the objects of study, would become full partners in participatory learning projects. By doing so, local interests and knowledge would be protected from exploitation and communities would play a central role in any future study on ICT and other areas of interest. To achieve this, KORI would build bridges with the university community, conduct community-based research and promote capacity-building initiatives that would generate research interest and expertise at the community level.

On March 10, 2005, one day prior to the founding meeting, 10 RICTA members traveled to Deer Lake First Nation, a remote and isolated community near the Manitoba-Ontario border approximately an hour by air northwest of Winnipeg. During the community visit, RICTA members were given briefings how ICT are creating opportunities for Deer Lake in education, health and economic development.

RICTA members participated in two videoconferences during the Deer Lake visit. The first provided RICTA members with a demonstration of how KiHS, KO's Internet High School, a secondary school alternative for young people who wish to remain in their communities for Grades Nine and Ten. The videoconference included students, teachers and administrators from KiHS classrooms in Fort William and Weagamow First Nations. The second videoconference linked RICTA members with the political and technical leadership of the Prince Albert Tribal Council in Saskatchewan. The Grand Chief invited RICTA to Saskatchewan to further its work and offered to host the next meeting of the RICTA Cluster. RICTA members were also given a tour of the Deer Lake Telehealth Station and a "hands on" demonstration of the central role of the Community Telehealth Technician (CTC).

During the founding meeting of RICTA in Balmertown, on March 11, 2005, university and government researchers, graduate students, government funders and policy-makers, and First Nations community leaders in education, health, culture, governance, economic development and ICT development met to discuss new ways of learning and doing research with Aboriginal communities.

The 15 RICTA members who traveled from across Canada and the United States to the meeting in Balmertown were joined via videoconference with participants across three time zones - in Fredericton, Ottawa, Toronto, Guelph, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Sioux Lookout, Six Nations, Akwesasne, and Sandy Lake First Nation. In addition, four additional people participated in the discussions using the Breeze Platform and Streaming Video. In total, 53 people participated in the founding RICTA meeting either in person or via one of several telecommunication applications.

The RICTA meeting was divided into two sessions. The morning session included presentations by First Nations community leaders in various fields about how ICT are changing the lives of people in Aboriginal communities. In addition to identifying challenges and opportunities for ICT in Aboriginal communities, they identified research needs and concerns about traditional research approaches to data gathering at the community level. All community members agreed that fundamental change must happen if academics and other researchers are going to continue to enjoy access to Aboriginal communities, particularly in remote and isolated areas.

The afternoon session included presentations about an Aboriginal dialogue on research and new funding sources for research by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council, a survey of ICT in the developing world and Alaska, and a review of conducting research in academia and the challenges posed by the university establishment in respecting the work of community-based researchers.

Following the presentations, RICTA members participated in breakout sessions to discuss what had been learned from the day and how RICTA could move forward. RICTA members in Ottawa, Fredericton, Toronto and Guelph participated in these sessions via videoconference.

Following the breakout sessions, each group reported on their discussions. The major themes included:

- RICTA should focus its resources to build community bridges. People in university and Aboriginal communities must build bridges to better understand each other. There is critical knowledge in communities that needs to be respected and brought forth. Much more discussion is required between the communities and academic researchers. RICTA has a primary role to establish and develop relationships between university academics and community members. RICTA should focus on development of friendships, relationships and dialogue with the community members. Both groups seem to understand what the priorities are and what changes must take place. More opportunities to talk are required to deepen the work that has taken place today. It is the responsibility of the academic community to make the "first move" to initiate collaboration to develop the relationship more fully.

- RICTA should work with KORI and Aboriginal communities to develop a set of principles for research on ICT with Aboriginal communities. One principle will be the requirement that capacity building takes place in the communities so that people in the communities can conduct their own research. Another principle is that communities cannot be left out of the pre-planning and planning processes. Other principles will include ethical protocols for research on ICT with Aboriginal communities and engagement in the research collaboration

process, including dialogue on who owns the data and what is done with it.

- RICTA should assist with the development and training of research teams in the communities to include elders, youth, grandmothers, women and other Aboriginal community members. Aboriginal Elders should be invited to participate in future RICTA meetings. More support should be given to youth (both students and non-students), mature women and others not traditionally involved in research. In addition to working with community leadership, RICTA should reach out to non-political groups within the communities.

- RICTA should develop a series of online tools and resources to assist researchers and community members. These include: an inventory of relevant and existing ICT research and community ICT projects, a facility for sharing successful grant applications, an online resource or tutorial for the research community, a database of experts including community researchers and community leaders in education, health, community development and culture, and a portal for research protocols. Knet Services has offered to share the Moodle Learning Environment for the use of RICTA members to promote its work. RICTA should promote the RICTA website and link it to other research websites.

- RICTA should review the contributions of the community members at the RICTA meeting and identify research projects that build on these views and needs. It is critical to bring all these perspectives into focus.

- RICTA has created new possibilities and opportunities for innovative research. To fully benefit, RICTA should recommend changes to the ways universities reward and promote research faculty within the university institution.

- RICTA should to continue to build relationships with other academic, government and private partners in order to help the cluster and research agenda grow.

- RICTA should encourage funding agencies to change their policies to encourage community-based research and to consider becoming full partners rather than just a funding source.

- RICTA should encourage policy-makers to promote policy alternatives that will assist with the development of research capacity in Aboriginal communities.

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RICTA TOURS DEER LAKE FIRST NATION

By Rick Garrick

From the coed outhouse at the airport to the spanking brand-new, broadband-connected community schools, the fly-in remote community of Deer Lake First Nation is a community of stark contrasts.

"Amazing, invigorating, and stimulating," were among the comments expressed about Deer Lake's use of ICT as a group of 10 RICTA (Research on ICT with Aboriginal Communities) members, visiting from across Canada and the United States, toured the Oji-Cree community on the afternoon of March 10.

"Probably half the community" is currently using ICT (information and communication technologies) on a regular basis, estimated tour-guide Darrell Ostamas. "The kids use it in the school," he said, "and the community has it in their homes."

Many of the RICTA members were also surprised to learn that over 200 computers are set up throughout the community of about 1,000 people.

Ostamas shared that information during RICTA's tour of the current E-Centre, which included videoconference sessions with KiHS (Keewaytinook Okimakanak Internet High School) teachers and students in Weagamow and Fort William First Nations as well as KiHS principal Darrin Potter at K-Net's hub in Balmertown.

"The school itself has over 100 computers," Ostamas said, noting the community's new school just opened in January. "Some people use ICT to do their work, (others) use it as they like."

The three-hour visit to Deer Lake, which preluded RICTA's scheduled 2005 meeting in Balmertown on March 11 and also included a tour of the Telehealth centre and a bus tour past the new school and an almost finished new E-Centre, was attended by Susan O'Donnell, National Research Council and University of New Brunswick; Brian Walmark, Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute; Jill Finley, Understanding the Strengths of Indigenous Communities (USIC), York University; Heather E. Hudson, Telecommunications Management and Policy Program, School of Business and

Management, University of San Francisco; Rob Mastin, Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada; Sylvia S. Barton, Nursing Program, University of Northern British Columbia; Nadia Caidi, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto; Jonathan Corbett, Department of Geography, University of Victoria; Teresa Ritter, Joint Graduate Programme in Communication & Culture, York & Ryerson Universities; and Adam Fiser, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto. Rob Mastin believes that visiting the communities he works with will enable him "to be better able to understand the situation the people themselves face."

"It's pretty evident that they don't have many of the resources that we in the south have," he said. "But they have put a priority on learning. There is evidence that a lot of people of all ages are learning and proud to show they can use modern technology to learn more." Mastin was happy to see the brand-new "culturally designed" school and the use of ICT in the Telehealth centre, and he plans to share his newly gained knowledge with his colleagues in Ottawa and to enable a session with people involved in policy decisions within his department as well as in Indian and Northern Affairs Canada and Heritage Canada.

"It shows that once a community and the people in that community realize the benefits of technology, they will seek out ways to use it," he said. "Just like they pushed forward with Telehealth."

During RICTA's visit to the Telehealth centre, Anita Meekis, Deer Lake's Telehealth coordinator, demonstrated the patient exam camera while examining one of the RICTA member's hockey scars and tour-guide Stewart Meekis' ear as Telehealth regional coordinator Donna Williams, K-Net manager Brian Beaton, and a group of Prince Albert Grand Council representatives from Saskatchewan looked on through videoconference from K-Net's hub in Balmertown.

Williams explained that Telehealth fulfills a role in the communities because some patients face a one-year waiting list to access appointments in Thunder Bay while the Telehealth waiting list is much shorter.

She also noted that whenever a patient misses an appointment at one of the outside medical centres, even for a death in the family, they may face restrictions for future appointments, such as paying their own way for treatment, which takes at least three days, one day for travel to the medical centre, one day for the appointment, and another day to return home.

During RICTA's visit to the E-Centre, Sherry Crane, a KiHS student in Weagamow, presented Harnessing ICT in Weagamow, a slide show over videoconference.

"In the fall of 2002, Weagamow was introduced to broadband Internet services," Crane said, adding that Weagamow is now one of 13 communities across northwestern Ontario that can access up to 23 grade 9 and 10 courses from KiHS. "The people of Weagamow are seeing the benefits of ICT in the community everyday."

Darrin Potter explained that although the courses meet Ontario Ministry of Education guidelines, they "look a lot different from the Ministry profile" and are not just computer based.

"We try to build into our lessons an opportunity for the students to go to other work areas," he said, adding that the students have "quite a bit of interaction" with their teachers, who are located in each of the 13 communities.

He also explained that for many years, high school was a rite of passage for youth in the communities as they left home at 13, 14 or 15-years-of-age to attend high school in much bigger communities, such as Sioux Lookout or Thunder Bay.

Teresa Ritter explained that she has read about Telehealth and was excited to actually see the technology in action.

"What I saw was amazing," she said. "You get an inkling of how technological change allows people to flourish in the communities."

As far as technology is concerned, Ritter doesn't see much difference between what she sees in Deer Lake and Toronto.

"You can have everything you want and not have to sacrifice the essentials," she said, noting that it is up to RICTA to collaborate and develop some intuitive research projects that benefit the communities.

"This is a great opportunity. Hopefully we'll be setting an example; rather than using Aboriginal communities as an object of study, (we'll be) collaborating with the communities."

"People have to visit with each other face to face."

Geordi Kakepetum, executive director of Keewaytinook Okimakanak, explained that there has to be some input from the community, that research cannot just be directed from Toronto or Ottawa. "There have been a lot of things developed in the south," he said. "There has never been a time where we had a sense of ownership."

"We want to have a sense of ownership."

RICTA's objectives for the March 11 meeting are to identify the perspectives and points of view expressed by Aboriginal communities and nations with respect to the strengths, opportunities, restraints and barriers related to using ICT for their development; to develop the RICTA network infrastructure to support interactive engagement within the network, with Aboriginal communities, and with wider communities; and to develop ideas for research and the creation of new knowledge that relates to ICT in Aboriginal communities.

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1: BALMERTOWN (24 participants)

Northern Chiefs Staff

Geordi Kakepetum, Executive Director, Keewaytinook Okimakanak

Brian Beaton, Knet Services, Manager

Cheryl Bechard, Executive Secretary, Keewaytinook Okimakanak

Lars Dixon, Computer Technician, Keewaytinook Okimakanak

Cal Kenny, Multi-Media Technician, Knet Services

Cheryl Klassen, Keewaytinook Okimakanak Telehealth

Nancy Muller, Keewaytinook Okimakanak Telehealth

Darrin Potter, Keewatinook Internet High School Principal

Brian Walmark, Research Director, Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute

Donna Williams, Regional Telehealth Coordinator

RICTA Members and Guests

Sylvia S. Barton, Assistant Professor, Nursing Program, University of Northern British Columbia

Nadia Caidi, Assistant Professor, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto

W. Dean Care, Acting Dean & Associate Professor, Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba

Jonathan Corbett, SSHRC Post-Doctoral Fellow, Department of Geography, University of Victoria

Jill Finley, Project Director, Understanding the Strengths of Indigenous Communities (USIC), York University

Adam Fiser, PhD Candidate, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto

Rick Garrett, Wawatay News

Heather Hudson, Professor and Director, Telecommunications Management and Policy Program, School of Business and Management, University of San Francisco

Sandra G. Kouritzin, Associate Professor, Faculty of Education, Department of Curriculum, Learning and Teaching, University of Manitoba

Rob Mastin, Manager, Strategic Modernization, Office of Learning Technologies, Human Resources and Skills Development Canada

Susan O'Donnell, Research Officer, e-Government / e-Citizen Group, National Research Council Institute for Information Technology

Ricardo Ramirez, Assistant Professor, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph

Teresa Ritter, Graduate Student, Joint Graduate Programme in Communication & Culture, York & Ryerson Universities

Jean-François Vachon, Research Assistant, Université du Québec à Chicoutimi

2: FREDERICTON (5 participants)

Cynthia Alexander, Associate Professor, Department of Political Science, Acadia University

Leigh Gillis, MA Candidate, Department of Education, University of New Brunswick

Bill McIver, Acting Group Leader, e-Government / e-Citizen Group, National Research Council Institute for Information Technology

Angela Nash, Project Coordinator, St. Mary's First Nation

Sonja Perley, Member of Tobique First Nation, Analyst, National Research Council Institute for Information Technology, MA Candidate, Department of Education, University of New Brunswick

3: AKWESASNE (2 participants)
Claude Pike, Grade Multimedia Class for Kanatokon SchoolMultimedia Teacher and
Peter Garrow, Director of the Akwesakne Board of Education

4: TORONTO (2 participants)
Karen Beitel, Associate, KTA Centre for Collaborative Government
Elise Chien, MA Candidate, Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto

5: GUELPH (1 participant)
George Ferreira, PhD Candidate, School of Environmental Design and Rural Development, University of Guelph

6: SIX NATIONS (3 participants)
Chris Bomberry, Computer and Network Technician, J.C. Hill School
Gary Joseph, Seven Seeds Television Network
Jeff Thomas, Six Nations Network Services

7: OTTAWA (6 participants)
Martin Brooks, Research Council Officer, Broadband Visual Communication Research Group, National Research Council Institute for Information Technology
Charles (Skip) Brooks, Consultant, Web Accessibility Office Industry Canada
Mary Francoli, PhD Candidate, Department of Political Science, University of Western Ontario
Craig McNaughton, Senior Program Officer, Strategic Programs and Joint Initiatives, Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC)
Prabir Neogi, Special Advisor, Electronic Commerce Branch, Industry Canada
Duncan Sanderson, Chargé de cours, programme STS Université, du Québec à Montréal

8: SAULT STE. MARIE (2 participants)
Chessa Syrette, Youth Initiative in Training worker, Batchewana Learning Centre
Elaine McDonagh, Education Director, Batchewana Learning Centre

9: THUNDER BAY (2 participants)
Wesley McKay, Research Assistant, Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute
Carl Seibel, Telecommunications Officer, FedNor, Industry Canada

10: SANDY LAKE FIRST NATION (1 participant)
Jesse Fiddler, Artist, Multimedia Consultant and Entrepreneur

11: SIOUX LOOKOUT (1 participant)
Dan Pellerin, Knet Services Network Manager

12: BREEZE CHAT ON THE WEB (4 new participants plus other participants above)
Heather Shand, Project Coordinator, Special Needs Opportunity Windows (SNOW), University of Toronto
R. Paul Nadjiwan
Scott Thompson, MA student, Lakehead University

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MEETING AGENDA

Times are Central Standard Time (CST)

9h	1. Morning prayer
9h05	2. Introductions and videoconference overview
9h15	3. Introduction to RICTA and Aboriginal community perspectives
9h30	4. Community circle
12h	Lunch
13h	5. Introduction to afternoon sessions
13h05	6. Presentation: Dialogue on Research and Aboriginal Peoples
13h35	7. Presentation: Historical and International Perspectives
14h05	8. Presentation: The Challenge of Conducting Research in an Academic Community
14h35	9. Small group discussions
15h45	10. Closing remarks

MEETING MINUTES

1. Morning prayer

Peter Campbell, Public Works Manager, Northern Chiefs Council, said the opening prayer to the RICTA meeting.

2. Introductions and videoconference overview

Brian Beaton explained the videoconference and BREEZE chat process and reviewed guidelines to ensure everyone is heard. In addition to the Balmertown meeting, participants were involved via videoconference from sites and communities across three time zones: Fredericton, Akwesasne, Toronto, Guelph, Six Nations, Ottawa, Sault Ste. Marie, Thunder Bay, Sandy Lake and Sioux Lookout. In Balmertown, Adam Fiser monitored the BREEZE chat, which was displayed for participants in Balmertown, Fredericton, Ottawa and Toronto and available to participants in other locations and to anyone on the web. Brian invited everyone to briefly introduce themselves.

3. Introduction to RICTA and Aboriginal Community Perspectives

Brian Walmark welcomed everyone at the meeting in Balmertown and those joining by videoconference. He described the visit of RICTA members to the fly-in community of Deer Lake the previous day, noting the growing interest in research on ICT with Aboriginal communities. Brian explained that in order to do successful research we must first establish very important perimeters when working with the communities. KORI (Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute) was established by the KO Chiefs because of the growing interest by researchers in ICT in the KO communities. The communities will be the driving force behind the KORI institute.

Participants in Fredericton noted the importance of doing research in full partnership with Aboriginal communities. RICTA will be sustainable only if there is a level of deep collaboration with communities. Research is taking place across the nation and there is an opportunity and an obligation to build relationships. A new development in research for indigenous communities needs to be addressed.

In Akwesasne, Claude Pike discussed bridging Aboriginal communities and research, expressing the hope that more integration between the communities will be achieved. A multi-media project was developed that his school would like to share with other communities. Peter Garrow discussed how the school is connecting education in action and research in action, and how the students are actively involved when working with ICT.

In Toronto, Elise Chien expressed her eagerness to learn from everyone's expertise.

In Guelph, George Ferreira described remoteness and what life is really like in the North. The needs of the communities are important for researchers to consider.

In Thunder Bay, Wesley McKay described how he has been working with Brian Walmark at KORI and has had the opportunity to do some research and see the positive impact of ICT on the communities. Carl Seibel introduced himself.

In Balmertown, Brian Walmark asked to hear the ideas of everyone at the table. He said that working with communities to conduct this kind of research will positively impact the communities. Heather Hudson said she was impressed by the KO Chiefs for showing a lot of vision in the development of KORI and that funders should be intrigued to follow-up on this project. Adam Fiser reported on two issues discussed by participants in the BREEZE chat room: media production and special needs. Brian Beaton congratulated everyone for making the effort to meet in Balmertown and congratulated the entire RICTA group for this opportunity to take the work and skills to the communities.

In Sioux Lookout, Dan Pellerin discussed how to continue to collect information that can be a learning point for people in the communities and how to make the accumulated information work for others. A variety of tools are available for this purpose. Our focus here today, he said, is how this meeting of the minds will help community members and provide wellness to their communities.

In Akwesasne, Claude Pike explained that they would have to disconnect shortly and would like to show a slide show submitted by a student concerning diabetes. After RICTA members and guests viewed the slide show, Brian Beaton thanked Claude and the student for the presentation.

4. Community Circle

Brian Beaton, the morning session chair, asked that Aboriginal community members respond to two questions:

• How can we begin to create local learning or research teams in Aboriginal communities to identify research needs and stimulate research demands from the ground up?

• If your community had researchers available to look at the following issues, what would be your priorities in each area: ICT and education, ICT and health and wellness, ICT and governance, ICT and language and culture, ICT and economic develoment?

In Sault Ste. Marie, Elaine McDonagh and Chessa Syrette of the Batchewana Learning Centre explained that ICT is having an impact on students and their learning. With the youth web site, they are hoping to keep up communications with youth, as they are able to reach out to everyone this way.

had a lot of experience with the Internet. A huge impact is noticed in the community when information is shared, especially among the youth.

In Sandy Lake First Nation, Jesse Fiddler discussed projects he has been working on in the past couple of months, such as training with the youth employment initiative. A few workshops were completed with a follow up. He is currently using software that has been very successful in delivering ICT training and is also beginning one-on-one training. Approximately 50 youth workers are involved with the training and it is going very well. ICT tools make it a lot easier to train people - Jesse explained that he does not have to travel as often to provide training.

In Six Nations, Chris Bomberry of J.C. Hill School said a lot of schools are involved with ICT. He explained that the main problem is funding, and he is currently working with INAC (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) to access the funding. Fibre is still being put into all five schools. Gary Joseph from Seven Seeds Television Network explained that for Six Nations, he has worked on Internet and video and HD production and building the first training centres in six First Nations. He will be bringing in professors to train community members to be technologists. Brian Beaton asked if this will be documented. Gary explained that he develops curriculum and classes and deals with students and technology but not with the research and documentation. Brian said that understanding the mpacts on the students is important.

In Fredericton, participants discussed the use of ICT in their First Nations. They would like to discuss how to share teaching resources from one school to another school. Angela Nash explained that St. Mary's First Nation is developing education tools, partnering with a local community college, and offering community-based programs. Students don't always want to leave the community. Some First Nations are more urban but still have community issues. Funding ICT programs is also an issue. Sonja Perley explained that Tobique First Nation is currently trying to locate funding resources. Although at the beginning stages, they are interested in how some of the other communities established their resources. Most First Nations in New Brunswick are remote communities.

In Balmertown, Darrin Potter explained that the main focus of KiHS, Keewaytinook Internet High School, is to keep the students in their communities. The speed that new technologies traveled in the North is amazing. Darrin explained that the technology has improved greatly and more people are speaking and practicing their languages. The KiHS program has a social and economic impact on the communities. The technology available in the communities is used to the fullest extent in KiHS. Brian Walmark suggested that RICTA has a role to assist First Nation organizations in accessing funding for connectivity and ICT applications by conducting research and publishing papers. He said for example that INAC (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada) is reluctant to fund connectivity and ICT applications. Yet, the Department is prepared to pay travel and accommodations to students to go south for school. Developing research papers to influence policy will make it easier for decision-makers to change policies and provide funding for the programs that communities need.

In Batchewana Bay, participants explained that education funding is all earmarked and therefore no funding is available for the communities. The communities do not have the resources to build ICT infrastructure. Currently, the community has a classroom but cannot achieve funding for a teacher because it did not fit into INAC's funding criteria.

In Balmertown, Donna Williams described the Telehealth demonstrations with Deer Lake and Wapakeka the previous day. Donna provided an overview of KO Telehealth, which is currently partnering with North Network, a provincial network in Ontario. She stressed the need to continue training and bringing education and support to the community health workers. She is also working with policy workers in Health Canada to oversee programs at the community level. Telehealth and videoconferencing is linking Telehealth coordinators in different communities. She discussed sharing the knowledge within the communities and beyond them as well as the need to link to organizations that will help with the training. The tribal council is a very good bridge between researchers and communities. The meeting today is a good step in creating frameworks and showcasing KO. Cheryl Klassen, who is working with Telehealth education and the health staff in the north to bring education in the communities, explained that Telehealth is addressing health problems in the communities and the use of technologies will improve health and wellness within the communities.

In Fredericton, Angela Nash described her experience with a recent research project – the outside researcher handed the St. Mary's community a 16-page survey that did not reflect the needs and perspectives of the community. The survey was made to fit the community and is now down to eight pages. Community participation is important – on this research project they hired someone from the community to do data collection so that community members are comfortable with the survey questions. Data collection on this project is not complete; they only have raw data. Privacy was an issue and everyone signed confidentiality forms. It is important to establish protocols to relinquish, provide or share the data with the community; community members do not want to be used as statistical data. First Nations want academic credit for their engagement in the research. In Balmertown, Brian Beaton discussed the Northern Ontario Medical School, noting that Orpah MacKenzie, who used to work for KO, is the Interim Director, Aboriginal Affairs at the Medical School. The Medical School provides training to students. A virtual campus was going to be formed but they used the funding to build two more buildings for the students in Thunder Bay. Brian Walmark explained that there are a great number of research opportunities, especially for the communities and RICTA itself. Our community members know what their challenges are, he said, and they can use this kind of research to help voice their desires. The first year medical students are placed in the communities where they learn about the communities, work with community members and they see for themselves the opportunities and challenges. The students will also be conducting their classes online where they will continue their education of diabetes, drugs, and so on. Adam Fiser reported that the BREEZE chat was focusing on the collection of data and what the research protocol would be.

In Sandy Lake First Nation, Jesse Fiddler said he is preparing online material that pertains to what is happening in the community in regards to Telehealth. Jesse said that the research and all the information seems to be only relevant to Universities, governments and so on. He asked how we can make information and data relevant to the communities and especially to the elders. Jesse needs to know how to approach an elder with this type of information and would like to know who does this benefit. Brian explained that the elders will be the primary users of these tools.

Participants in Balmertown and Thunder Bay discussed how KO Telehealth has been working with Health Canada to review the policy of paying people to fly out of the communities for health care. It is expected that 20 percent will use the technology rather than flying out which will save Health Canada in the long run and result in improved access to health. Policy-makers need to see a total picture of the value rather than just the dollars and cents. Carl Seibel explained that information belonging to community (such as who is flying out for health care) will not be released to the government and requires a Band Council resolution to release this information. Brian Beaton explained that Carl Seibel has been investigating the purchasing of telemedicine suites.

In Six Nations, a participant from the private sector stressed that infrastructure is important for the north and this should be the focus of policy and research on ICT with Aboriginal communities. Without adequate infrastructure, the ICT hardware and software will not perform to the level needed. Partnerships are required to build the infrastructure. The communities need to develop partnerships with Native and non-Native organizations. Chris Bomberry explained that they have been building the infrastructure for the last few years. Six Nations will not be using the network to its full potential at least until the other five schools are connected.

In Thunder Bay, Carl Seibel explained that the Six Nations development is a great model and that northern communities have been using that same model. There have been significant investments in this infrastructure already but there is room for improvement. FedNor only works in Northern Ontario and has invested 15 percent of its budget to build this infrastructure.

In Ottawa, Skip Brooks described his work on a project in Saskatchewan, stressing the importance of starting off with a Band Council resolution. A first step is identifying who the public sector stakeholders are and involving people in the community. He suggested that researchers and project developers should take into account that approximately 38 percent of Aboriginal people have disabilities. The government has not contended with this and it will eventually cost a lot of money in the future.

In Sandy Lake First Nation, Jesse Fiddler described how he is currently trying to get Sandy Lake connected to the rest of the community by broadband and developing infrastructure within the

community. He is working with local band members to develop a strategy. Some of the youth workers are developing cultural content such as obtaining stories and preserving them using video, audiotapes, and recording of interviews. Jesse explained that he worked for Knet for about 10 years and developed many websites for Knet. Recently, Jesse moved back home to Sandy Lake. The infrastructure in Sandy Lake allows him to participate in meetings using IP phones and a computer with an Internet connection from both his home and office.

In Sioux Lookout, Dan Pellerin discussed the economic side of things and work in the communities in regards to the network. Knet gave the network to the community with a cost of bringing the connection into the community, which is a common link. Then the community resells the service to the community members. Dan explained that Knet wanted to secure transponder space to provide equivalent pricing so that the community can then provide equivalent pricing to community members. The people managing the network try to keep everything simple when providing service to communities. Knet assumed the role of negotiating with different service providers for the communities and then entering into service level agreements. Some communities who resell the service are able to make a surplus of funding that will help in different areas of economic development. This service ensures that the people running the cable plant are working hard to provide good service to the community members so that they are paid for their services. On the business side, Knet has purchased Internet feeds in bulk directly from Toronto in order to keep the costs down. The other services on the network such as videoconferencing and the video bridge are used by third parties as well.

In Six Nations, Chris Bomberry said his community is one of the most progressive reserves in Canada. However, he added it is lagging behind in the development and usage of ICTs.The infrastructure was not there two years ago and is currently still being built. A wireless system was brought in first.

In Thunder Bay, Wesley McKay discussed research to be held within the communities. A discussion should be held online concerning research methods and having community members participate in the research. An Elders Counsel should be considered. He said we have to find a way to bridge the gap for the elders in regards to using the technology. Wesley is working with the young people to become engaged with some of the research work. There is a need to identify key people in the communities who are interested in this work.

In Sandy Lake, Jesse Fiddler agreed that it is important to keep our languages and culture alive by

using these technologies. There are mixed feelings concerning language: either we are just trying to preserve language and culture that may not be around in the next twenty years or are we trying to keep it alive. The technology may work for some people as one way to keep up with the language and culture. Jesse digitized some of the legends that his grandfather told and feels that this type of work should be continued. Currently, he is working with community members to help them recognize the importance of digitizing the stories of the elders. Jesse discussed a youth training project he is currently working on, and his work with the school to develop other resources to work on the technology. He is providing technical support to the youth workers to use the video cameras and so on and use the multimedia equipment. He stressed the need to develop quality content that can be used for publication,

television or even just to share in the communities. More funding is required to develop these resources and to continue the learning. In Six Nations, Chris Bomberry said his community is one of the most progressive reserves in Canada. The infrastructure was not there two years ago and is currently still being built. A wireless system was brought in first.

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In Fredericton, one participant raised a point about how ICT are used to promote language and culture and to advance indigenous knowledge systems. How can we legitimize the systems in the economic community, she asked. Is there any sense of learning outcomes? What happens when the kids use the technology? Does it affect their interest in learning when it is a more active based learning environment?

In Sandy Lake, Jesse Fiddler explained that the technology affects the youths' learning abilities. The youth use the technology very efficiently, they learn the technology for the sake of developing their own websites, and the youth share their skills. The technology can affect their learning, and they use those skills to develop better learning skills. The teachers have to decide how to use the technology in their classrooms.

In Ottawa, Martin Brooks agreed that infrastructure is crucial. Research and development require an environment where people are involved in health, education and so on and a positive environment is created where research can be done.

In Fredericton, participants discussed the importance of involving elders, media, and youth and learning from the communities by videoconference.

In Balmertown, participants discussed the preservation of language and culture and how technology could be developed to promote Aboriginal languages. A question was raised: How do you ensure that these stories that are digitized will stay within the communities? It is important to make sure that the communities have a certain amount of control so that no one takes advantage of this information.

Lunch

5. Introduction to the afternoon sessions

Susan O'Donnell raised four points to frame the afternoon session: the offer by Keewaytinook Okimakanak to host the RICTA meeting in Balmertown is an event that happens rarely in a research career; she is aware of how much she benefits materially as a researcher and it is important to ensure that Aboriginal communities also benefit materially from research activities; we need to shift the research paradigm from outsiders seeking solutions to one in which Aboriginal people conduct research and facilitate solutions themselves; and the afternoon session is for building on what RICTA has already accomplished and for considering what should happen over the next 12 months and the next six years.

Nadia Caidi said that a closer relationship between RICTA and the CRACIN (Canadian Research Alliance on Community Innovation and Networking) project would be beneficial. Susan said that the two projects are communicating and will have a natural alignment in the future. Brian Walmark explained that there will be dialogue between the two groups but that the RICTA project is primarily concerned with building strong bridges to Aboriginal communities and provides an opportunity to open dialogue with the communities. Developing relationships with other universities will take time, but RICTA should focus on developing communications with the communities first.

6. Presentation: Dialogue on Research and Aboriginal Peoples

Craig McNaughton presented a summary of the SSHRC Dialogue process and his report published by SSHRC in 2003. The reports list a set of recommendations. He discussed three of the recommendations, the program on Aboriginal community research, the Aboriginal knowledge systems program, and the Aboriginal research careers program. Craig gave examples of some projects recently funded under the Aboriginal community research program.

He said it is important to keep in mind that there is much more to learn; in particular we know little about indigenous languages and elders. Therefore, we do not fully appreciate the value of indigenous cultures. Respect is the key. The first step in developing research with Aboriginal communities is to approach Aboriginal organizations and obtain a respect for Aboriginal conditions. He discussed the different goals of the Aboriginal research program. How to do the research is the most important step. Key priorities have to be developed. First Nations need to be engaged in a dialogue, not a consultation. Researchers must ensure that the First Nations benefit from research.

Participants in Balmertown and Fredericton had questions for Craig after his presentation. Dean Care was interested to know how many of the applications to the Aboriginal research program were rejected because they were not appropriate to the program rather than for other reasons. Craig

responded that a small percentage of the applications were not appropriate and did not meet the program criteria. Those that were successful were research partnerships (researchers and Aboriginal partners) that had been talking or working together for years and were in a strong position to begin a research project.

Brian Walmark raised his concerns with the Aboriginal research program: it is still institutionally focused and the primary beneficiaries are universities. The program is focused on university researchers, and is not community-focused. Brian reported that he had the list of successful research projects translated and found that none of them could be translated into Oji-Cree – if a community is to benefit from the research, it should be translatable. When looking at the list of research projects, it looks like a collection of conventional academic papers. KORI is trying to develop research capacity at a community level. Research skills must be developed in the community. University students may conduct research in the communities and publish papers but this is probably not helpful for the subjects in the communities.

Craig discussed SSHRC's CURA – Community University Research Alliance – funding program under which projects can be initiated and run by the communities. Craig explained that SSHRC is trying its best to work responsively and comprehensively with the First Nations and is learning as it goes along.

7. Presentation: Historical and International Perspectives

Susan introduced Heather Hudson and thanked Heather for inspiring her to work in this type of research. Heather began her presentation with a quote: "L'information est la clé de toutes les portes," (Information is the key to all doors) from a woman using a telecentre in Mali. Heather underlined the importance of learning from people in developing countries about their experiences and why they want access to ICT. The benefits of ICT include efficiency, effectiveness, equity and reach to new markets and audiences. She noted that Knet is using technologies such as videoconferencing and BREEZE in innovative ways.

Popular strategies for Internet access in developing countries include community e-centres, public access in libraries and schools, and commercial access in cyber cafes. Heather discussed community telecentres in different African and Asian countries. Schoolnet is very popular in many parts of the world, trying to get students on the Internet in preparing for the future. Reselling wireless services in many parts of the world is also a way to get everyone involved. For example, telephone service is provided in salons or grocery stores, etc. There has been an explosion of wireless services in many developing countries. There is a business in prepaid mobile phone services - people able to use a phone, with no credit history, bank account or even an address. In parts of the world with not much electricity coming in, there is use of solar power for wireless access.

Heather presented an overview of the E-Rate Program in the US, which provides a subsidy for the end users - schools and libraries – rather than directly to the carrier. Using E-Rate, it is possible to receive a discount from 20 to 90 percent on phone bills. For more information: see www.universalservice.org.

The E-Rate program has helped developed Internet infrastructure in Alaska, which has had reliable

communications by satellite to Alaskan villages for more than 20 years. Heather reviewed the challenges for rural education and health care delivery in Alaska. Alaska had only community health workers and no nurses in the early days of Telemedicine. Health problems were made worse by poverty and isolation. Now the AFHCAN project provides telemedicine to all federally-funded health care facilities in Alaska – 235 sites, with the majority in Alaska Native villages.

Heather presented the lessons from the Northern experience. Satellites can bring reliable and affordable communications to rural areas. Creative approaches can reduce the cost of rural communications. Design needs to take into account local, regional and national needs and traffic flows. Telemedicine does not require a lot of bandwidth or expensive equipment. Distance education does not necessarily require production of original programming. Competition can reduce prices for telecom services in remote areas and targeted subsidies can extend access to remote areas. Incentives may be needed to get institutions to collaborate. Champions are needed to move past the startup phase. Heather also outlined other lessons related to increasing access.

She emphasized the importance of involving users in the planning process, including training and building local research capability. Learning should happen in a systematic way that can be applied to anything in the community. Begin where there is interest and commitment, work with motivated users. Technology is the easy part, Heather concluded, and putting it to use is the tricky part.

8. Presentation: The Challenge of Conducting Research in an Academic Community

Dean Care began his presentation by noting that researchers have been used to living in their own worlds. When funders like SSHRC go through changes, researchers have to adapt to their way of thinking. Research is still the number one criteria for how academics are reviewed by the funders, peers and so on. The pressure to acquire national funding exists from the time academics are hired, and although they can start off with local funding sources, national funding has the highest value. National funding is a lifeline for researchers but many researchers are not successful in attaining it; the competition is very high and highly stressful. Tenure and promotion in academia is based upon success in generating research money - research is seen as an incentive and motivator.

Researchers need to have the freedom to do research – this is core to the culture of academia. Researchers pursue the kind of research that they feel is important. Research requires partnerships, a team approach, partnerships outside of research groups, decision-makers in the case of Aboriginal communities. Funding sources are requiring these types of partnerships.

Some of the challenges facing academic researchers include: balancing academic freedom with the needs of Aboriginal communities, funding deadlines, working in partnerships (having to address the needs of partners and respecting the needs of partners is a challenge), and adhering to funder and university guidelines. Another major challenge is that deadlines for funding applications are tight, requiring signatures from a variety of people. Working in partnerships is a challenge where partners have to get approval from their people, and so on. Many funding sources are requiring partners to contribute, and those partners need to get approval before moving ahead. This process is very complex and takes time, which researchers do not have a lot of.

Research projects require various levels of approval. Ethical protocols are one level of approval, and this can mean getting approval from two or three agencies that in turn have their own levels of approval. Ownership of research findings - who owns the knowledge that is generated from the research – is an issue that needs to be flagged before you begin the research process. This agreement needs to be reached with the partners before going ahead. How can these challenges be addressed? How can the needs of researchers and Aboriginal communities be met? These questions should be discussed by RICTA.

In Ottawa, Craig McNaughton said that Dean's presentation was an accurate reflection of the situation of academic researchers. In Toronto, Elise Chien noted that listening to others' perspectives is another challenge, understanding that concepts and knowledge are different in each community.

A participant in Fredericton raised the question of ethical protocols used for research across this country that are emerging from First Nations. Dean noted that researchers are required to follow Tri-Council policy guidelines and that researchers want to proceed in an expedient manner rather than have more hoops to go through. A web portal with ethical protocols used by researchers across Canada would be a good idea.

After listening to the presentation, Brian Beaton expressed concerns that universities as institutions have not significantly evolved to serve community needs. The rules concerning academic research, promotion within the institution and other factors serve the institution and not those of the communities which support them. He said that academic researchers must be challenged to question some of the basic assumptions within the university environment and how research is conducted. He said a paradigm shift will be required if university researchers want to work with First Nations now and in the future.He felt that Dean's presentation was depressing in the way it portrayed the academic research culture. Brian Walmark explained that RICTA is an opportunity to change the way research is conducted, to ensure that the communities are equal partners. There is a general consensus in RICTA that we all favour this approach.

In Fredericton, Sonja Perley stated that her priority is always with her community and her identity as a First Nations woman is more important than her identity as an academic researcher. She is not in total agreement with the presentation and a lot of the discussion. Susan O'Donnell thanked the group for their important comments.

9. Small group discussions

Susan O'Donnell asked the participants to divide into five groups to discuss the following three questions:

- What should be the RICTA priority actions for encouraging interactive engagement within the network, with Aboriginal communities, and with wider research and policy networks?

- What are you willing to do during the next 12 months to keep RICTA moving forward?

- How should funding institutions change their policies and procedures to reflect the research needs of Aboriginal communities and RICTA members?

The results of the small group discussions were presented at a plenary session.

Fredericton group: Shift academia to a community value framework. Ensure the priorities of the communities come first. Projects should be initiated by invitation from the community. Dialogues could be held to discuss research partnerships (e.g. over a cup of tea). Researchers need to state who they are, why they are there to do research, what they want to do. The environment for open discussion must be safe, particularly with mixed ethnicities. Long-term exchanges, such as visits or fellowships might be useful. RICTA might find that social concerns are more of a priority in communities than ICT and researchers need to be aware of the benefits of using ICT to address social concerns. Research priorities need to be articulated by communities. Lived experience is valid, not just publications. Develop protocols that balance community values and academic needs. Identify First Nation researchers. Academics must also develop capacity – capacity building is bi-directional. The term "research" carries negative connotations. Develop budget lines that allow full partnerships between researchers and communities. Give support to youth (both students and non-students), mature women, and others not traditionally involved in research.

Ottawa group: Both the Aboriginal and academic communities need to dialogue in order to understand each other. The academic community must make the first move to initiate this dialogue, and to start with an attitude of long-term apprenticeship to learn about Aboriginal cultures. Elders should participate. Create an inventory of relevant existing research projects in this area. Identify exemplary procedures for building positive relationships and practical projects with academic and Aboriginal communities. Create a shared online resource for the academic community to learn about culture and practice in the Aboriginal communities. Allow new forms of projects to happen, and learn from them.

Balmertown group 1 (including videoconference sites): Develop a set of principles whereby research would build capacity that is left in the communities, such as evaluation research and video projects so that people in the communities can carry on with these types of projects. Focus on building community bridges. Develop authentic relationships with those communities. Build on relationships with KORI, academic partners, government partners and others that can help this research grow. KORI should develop an approval process for other researchers going into the KO communities. Develop a research advisory council with a broader view of research. Encourage SSHRC and other funding agencies to be flexible with respect to funding arrangements. Explore all sorts of innovative foundations or departments that are able to grant some funding.

Balmertown group 2: Engage in a community consultation process with elders, tribal councils, and other community leaders to learn about priorities, what is possible within cultural frameworks and willingness. Part of the questioning process is: What is research for? Establish links with the Canadian Center for Policy Alternatives - locations in four or five locations across Canada. Determine whether a portal or interface exists for current research projects and community projects - if there is no portal, it should be developed. Dedicate at least a portion of our work to developing research capacities within First Nations communities, and work on changing what counts as research. Engage in relegitimizing. Work more closely with CRACIN and other existing alliances. During the community collaboration process, there is a need for a set of collaboratively developed "discussion points" for beginning conversations about doing research - e.g., for engaging in discussions about who owns data, or what may be done with it. Funding agencies need to look at becoming full partners, not just funding partners. Is there some possibility for institutional change at the curriculum level? Teacher training? There is a need to establish ethical protocols and make them available.

Balmertown group 3: Establish relationships between RICTA and community members. Discuss how RICTA researchers can integrate their existing relationships with Aboriginal communities into the RICTA network. Have the community perspective expressed in all RICTA activities. Focus on

developing friendships, relationships and dialogue with community members. Create an expert database that would include community researchers. Spend time together collectively as a RICTA group. Prioritize good relationships with non-political groups within the communities as well as the leadership. Facilitate community researchers. Build research teams in the communities to include elders, youth, grandmothers and others. Develop a common portal for research protocols. Review the inputs to the morning session of the meeting to see what kind of research projects can be developed with RICTA and community members. Share grant applications so that we can learn from each other. Link project websites to the RICTA website to make it more visible. Provide a place for researchers to challenge academic way of awarding promotion and tenure. Develop technical skills and training capacities. Co-author a publication on the RICTA process.

10. Closing Remarks

Brian Walmark discussed the impacts of broadband services in remote and isolated First Nations communities. He says First Nations in Ontario's far north have adapted broadband to create a variety of applications to address challenges in education and health access. He argued that RICTA should focus its attention to the impacts of broadband in remote and isolated First Nations where the need for such tools are greatest and where people have no alternatives to address their local priorities.

Geordi Kakepetum, Executive Director of Keewaytinook Okimakanak, thanked everyone for coming to Balmertown to see exactly what we are doing. It is hard to explain in words, better to see the technology for yourself. He was glad that RICTA was able to come to Balmertown. Geordi explained that so much research in the communities has been done in the past and wondered what kind of research RICTA members would do. It has taken a lot of time for the communities to do their own research. Geordi explained that he never saw any results of those research projects that were done in the communities, therefore, many people are reluctant to participate. If you are planning to go up North, he concluded, please plan to stay for a few days.

Geordi Kakepetum was presented with a gift from Susan O'Donnell on behalf of RICTA.

Closing comments were made from each of the videoconference sites.

Meeting adjourned at 4:20 CST.
Minutes taken by Cheryl Bechard, Northern Chiefs Staff

A1: ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

RICTA would like to thank all the meeting participants who contributed their thoughts, ideas and opinions during the day – their names are listed earlier in this report. RICTA would also like to acknowledge the following people and organizations who contributed to the success of our meeting.

Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) – for providing funding for the meeting as part of RICTA's Strategic Research Clusters Design Grant in 2004-2005; **Craig McNaughton** of SSHRC for presenting at and participating in the meeting.

Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) – for inviting RICTA to hold its first meeting at KO's Balmertown office and for providing funding for its staff to travel to the meeting, for hosting the welcome dinner for RICTA members, and for arranging the visit for RICTA researchers to Deer Lake First Nation; **Brian Walmark** for co-organizing the RICTA meeting; **Geordi Kakepetum** and other Northern Chiefs staff – **Cheryl Bechard, Donna Williams, Cheryl Klassen, Nancy Muller, Darrin Potter, Wesley McKay** – for participating at the meeting.

Kuhkenah Network (K-Net) – for providing the videoconferencing bridge, the BREEZE chat, and the webstreaming facilities for the meeting; Brian Beaton for co-hosting the meeting, **Lars Dixon, Dan Pellerin** for providing technical know-how and support; **Cal Kenny**, for video and design work related to the RICTA meeting, the RICTA website and the meeting report.

The following Aboriginal community members and community workers: **Peter Garrow, Claude Pike and students** who participated in the meeting from Akwesasne; **Chris Bomberry, Gary Joseph and Jeff Thomas** who participated from Six Nations; **Chessa Syrette and Elaine McDonagh** who participated from Sault Ste. Marie; **Jessie Fiddler** who participated from Sandy Lake First Nation; **Angela Nash and Sonja Perley** who participated from Fredericton.

Heather Hudson, University of San Francisco and **Dean Care**, University of Winnipeg, who made presentations during the meeting.

National Research Council Institute for Information Technology – Susan O'Donnell for co-organizing and co-hosting the RICTA meeting; **Bill McIver and the e-Citizen Studio,** for hosting the Fredericton node; **Martin Brooks and the Broadband Visual Communication Research Lab** for hosting the Ottawa node.

Elise Chien and the Knowledge Media Design Institute, Bell University Laboratories Conference Room, University of Toronto for hosting the Toronto node.

Leigh Gillis, University of New Brunswick, for compiling the RICTA member biographies.

A2: MEETING EVALUATION *(unedited responses to the evaluation questions)*

1. Did the meeting generate any research ideas? If yes, what were they?

•   Yes. I think of RICTA now as a platform for innovation where different organizations can push the envelope, identify barriers to working WITH Aboriginal communities/researchers, and seek ways to overcome them. These barriers will be structural (power-holding procedures) as well as methodological.

•   It made me want to pursue further the idea of improving the learning and knowledge infrastructure of the remote communities by adding the library element. Perhaps a mixture of physical and virtual libraries could be of great benefit to the communities

•   It seemed to generate more meta-research ideas than research ideas. That is, it focused on how to do research and what the priorities should be.

•   Working with KORI to develop a set of research principles and protocols for research on ICT with Aboriginal communities. This would build on the protocols already established and in development for research with Aboriginal communities, in particular the framework of OCAP (Ownership, Control, Access and Possession) or self-determination applied to research. Donna Williams of KO Telehealth discussed the importance of OCAP with me, and by coincidence I have been reading about OCAP so this is an excellent opportunity to start developing these protocols collaboratively.

•   I think the research ideas need come from people in the communities. As Geordi said ' we need ask communities what they want researched and what purpose it will serve for them. RICTA has the opportunity for communities to think differently about research'. As I believe you said Brian, we can then be equal partners in developing the questions and analyzing the data. So for me the question is what is the most appropriate process for going about this?

•   For me the meeting did not generate specific research ideas, maybe because a large component of the gathering was 'show and tell'. But the event did generate substantial social capital and a commitment to collaborate and work together with RICTA as an institution and its members in the future.

•   I moved in and out of the meeting in Fredericton due to work commitments, so my exposure to overall discussion was limited. However, a couple of topics sparked my interest as possible discussion points or research ideas. I also come from a humanities background so these thoughts stem from interest in social sciences and cross-cultural educational research: 1) Through our discussion we articulated that communities rely heavily on a limited number of "movers & shakers". That is, those people who are heavily involved in their community on a regular basis. These people

are often women who have a number of other commitments in their daily lives. How can RICTA recruit and maintain the interest of new community conscious individuals who will work actively in their communities; therefore, broadening the energy & resource base of the community as a whole. 2) Discussion and more extensive inquiry is needed on who does what " research" where. We heard from a community member in Balmertown at the end of the day (forget name) who stated that his community had been researched to death with no lasting benefit, result, or impact. We need to be aware that the term "Research" carries a negative overtone for First Nation individuals and communities. We need to create new language that is associated with a new generation of project endeavors. 3) RICTA needs to discuss, as a group of mixed ethnicity, what it means to work Cross-Culturally. We also need to be aware, without defensiveness, that White professionals specifically have bridges to build. TIME & ENERGY are needed to create a foundation of trust and it must happen naturally through consistent communication, accountability, and community participation.

• My project is really quite similar with respect to research process that is planned for this application. I am really new to the whole technology side of the project, however. I am really curious about the internet classes and teachings and I could see interest there with respect to research ideas. I think as I write up more findings from my current research project, I see similar research interests for sure with respect to capacity building, networking and social capital.

• Yes, I thought the meeting was an excellent venue for eliciting an initial start at identifying priority research areas by First Nations representatives/communities. It assisted me to view ICT as a tool by which new and innovative pathways, reflecting structure (path) and process (way), may be created to enhance the quality of life for Indigenous Peoples. By the end of the morning it was made clear that those priorities related to: - the need to continue building ICT infrastructure in order to 'keep placing the cart behind the horse'. It was stressed that this requires the establishment and sustainability of Native and non-Native partnerships (ICT capacity building). Thus research focused on enhancing the economic, social, cultural, health, political capital of Aboriginal communities would be warmly received. - the need to focus research on the areas of education, health, governance, language and culture, economic development, etc. In terms of health, numerous research questions arise from the Deer Lake Telehealth initiative, including different aspects of service implementation and evaluation from both provider and recipient perspectives. It would be valuable to identify several 'telehealth' research projects that build on the current research focus, culminating in results that assist in moving such an initiative forward. This has to be done in close partnership with those involved in the telehealth project through conversation and dialogue in order to identify relevant research questions and select appropriate methodologies/methods. My brief sense was that they are proud of this initiative and highly receptive to participating in associated research possibilities. As an additional comment, telehealth has the potential to create immense health educational opportunities, whereby ICT is used to connect and link up people experiencing a variety of health conditions. For example, elders living with diabetes may be receptive to sharing their experiences with newly diagnosed diabetics in their own communities and concurrently with others located in other communities. New ICT pathways could open up new terrain in terms of continuing diabetes education and follow-up over time in a diabetic's own community.

• I am not sure that the meeting itself generated research ideas, but the meeting spaces most certainly did. I think that in terms of my own research agenda, I have many of the same ideas going in as I did leaving, but I learned a lot about who to collaborate with, and how to engage in collaboration. I did learn a lot about how ICT is being used, but at this moment, I haven't really thought through how that might influence a research question. My big questions are still about archiving language, culture, and oral history--not really something we touched on. I became really interested in some work that

is happening. In fact, I don't think I met anyone whose work "on the ground" or in universities didn't fascinate me.

• The one thing that stood out to me was the lack of recognition from funding bodies of the importance of ICT in Aboriginal communities. For instance, discussions around government/ public-sector doubts regarding the benefits of something as obviously fruitful as KiHS really stress the need for evaluative research. This need extends to other sectors as well, including health and community development.

• I liked the comments about the importance of apprenticeship and would be interested in exploring this further.

• The meeting provided a great venue for networking with First Nations, practitioners and ICT applications, learning about their work and determining if interested researchers might work with them to address both research and evaluation opportunities. Researchers were also provided with the opportunity to network together, learn about their present research initiatives and determining if some of their work might be applied in other settings. Some examples of possible research work include working with Aboriginal entrepreneurs (for example Six Nations Cable) to examine the work required to create a successful ISP operation in First Nations. Other research initiatives introduced include working with First Nation youth, ICTs in remote First Nations, telehealth applications, First Nation capacity building, etc. Researching the RICTA development and growth process and participants is another important initiative that needs to be captured right from the beginning so others can learn from the experience.

• No research ideas were immediately apparent but I now have contact information from those who I may be able to partner with in the future.

2. What did you learn?

• That, thankfully, there are other researchers in Canada working on related issues, using similar action-oriented research methodologies and processes.

• I learned many things. Here are a few examples: -Again from what Geordi said ' when one comes to the North you had better be prepared to stay for a few days as often it takes 3 or 4 days before people are ready to talk about things. -The concept of KO setting up their own research institute (KORI) is very unique and presents a great opportunity for all. We need work within a " community value framework" and RICTA can be a change agent for this. -From Donna, that it remains important to continue to ask ourselves the question "what is meaningful input" and to spend time thinking about and discussing the how to continue to build the necessary bridges between the different "world views" of community, academics and government. -From Jessie, ' that it is very important to make the research process relevant and include all community members, especially elders who are the keepers of knowledge and culture'. -that OLT need learn more about the work of Infrastructure Canada. -how well this type of use of interactive technology can work with an experienced facilitator ensuring everyone has an opportunity to actively participate. -that aspects of the present approach e.g. peer review process need be examined and discussed and understanding the "paradigm shift" that need occur is very important. That there are many others interested in working together to find the best way of providing input to the policy development process with a view to continuous improvement of policy and program development that will meet the needs of communities.

•   That we need to create new structures and mechanisms for demand-driven research. That we need to find strategies to build capacity development into all activities.

•   A lot about the realities of living in the far north. How much the ICT development activities in Aboriginal communities need to be supported.

•   I appreciated that the event tried to focus on the communities by engaging community involvement through the visits and dialogue. Also, having the session in Balmertown showed the willingness of the team to learn about the realities of the communities represented as they begin the process. This event opened my mind to the possibilities for study in our communities and with the community members which could benefit the people through involvement and results.

•   That my particular work interests and the methodology used in my thesis may have some applicability with RICTA. Very exciting!

•   I learned somewhat about perspectives from aboriginal communities about the legacy of research in them and about them, and what they would like to see changed.

•   I really learnt a lot from watching people move in their own environment. I think ICT researchers can become a bit disaffected and disconnected from the reality of the technologies and the impacts they have for the people they are helping. We start thinking in very abstract if not idealistic terms. By visiting the various places during the RICTA meeting and really seeing what ICTs can do when well harnessed and when introduced in a systematic way (rather than a piecemeal approach).

•   It really was very useful. It almost gives me faith again in ICTs as able to make real changes in people's lives. Plus, it was wonderful to be able to get to know all the wonderful colleagues (face to face and remotely).

•   One major thing that I learned is how much we tend to be in silos, at least in academia. I never really thought before about how the title of RICTA could be taken apart. Really, it's three separate ideas--research, ICT, and Aboriginal partnerships. Rare indeed are people whose work deals in equal parts with all three parts of this title. I learned a lot about how technology is used synchronously, but I have lots of questions about how it is used asynchronously which still remain. Also, I had little idea that people actually focused in research on ICT specifically. I have always thought of research and Aboriginal partnerships, but have given little thought to ICT except as a methodological tool. Thank you to many (like Teresa, Dean, Ricardo, Jill) who opened my eyes! There is a whole politics and research agenda around ICT itself. I feel much enlightened.

•   Gained an understanding of how valuable ICT can be for Aboriginal communities, through something other than reading.

•   I learned a lot! It was wonderful being able to visit the Deer Lake First Nations communities and to view first hand the Internet High school and Telehealth projects. The experience of flying to the community, talking with community members, and understanding how the technology is being implemented speaks volumes in terms of its utilization. I was particularly impressed with how ICT may stimulate Aboriginal self expression, creativity and art, learning and sharing, Aboriginal knowledges and ways of knowing, as well as a means to reflexivity of human experiences.

- Craig McNaughton's presentation was excellent and the 'Opportunities in Aboriginal Research' document most useful. His emphasis on 'interactive engagement' is a key concept within Aboriginal research. It amazed me that SSHRC has clued into the need to "shift the research paradigm from outside to insider'. RICTA could move this forward in terms of research with and by Indigenous Peoples. We need to think how RICTA might fit within the three recommended categories: 1) Program on Aboriginal Research; 2) Aboriginal Knowledge Systems; 3) Aboriginal Research Careers.

- That my idea of research and my approach to research may not be the same as those from aboriginal communities. I should be more aware of different views and the value of community over the importance of a research agenda.

- I learned that many researchers still struggle with the concept of working outside of their safe, institutional environments. The effort to include First Nation people and communities in all aspects of research, from the conceptual to the implementation is still a long way off. The need for First Nation to lead research initiatives that are adequately funded by programs like SSHRC is critical to engaging academic researchers in working with Aboriginal communities. The only way that this can possibly work is if the dollars are made available to the First Nation groups so they can then contract appropriate academic institutions and researchers to do the work necessary for addressing local needs and issues.

- I gained a greater appreciation for building relationships with Aboriginal communities well before beginning the research process.

- I am really new to a lot of what technology has to offer for research and I learned that it is quite useful for research and connecting in remote communities or really just all over Canada and abroad. The methods chosen for our meeting were very innovative and really captured the attentiveness of the participants (which, in past meetings can be difficult to do)

3. Are you aware of any other outcomes of the meeting?

- Networks of trust emerging.

- Interest was generated in Fredericton about creating Regional meetings? I would like to see this happen.

- The outcome was a raised awareness of what the situation is and the opportunity we have (collectively) to bring about change.

- The level of commitment among academic researchers to work WITH Aboriginal communities is very small. The group that did come together for this meeting was made up of those who either are already engaged in this work or young people interested in exploring possible collaborative work. Many people expressed an interest in participating but then did not make the effort to join in even though so many opportunities to join and contribute were presented to them. This meeting demonstrated to me that most face-to-face sessions in urban centres are simply another opportunity for those with the resources to travel to these centres and socialize. These urban-based meetings thus reflect the maintenance of the status quo at the expense of those at the "edges" of this work and outside of the "inner circles" of this artificial research environment.

- Our local group seemed to have fruitful discussions off line. Perhaps that could be explored further in a mini video conference.

- Support in my own organization to continue working on RICTA.

- A few other thoughts to share based on some statements that I found particularly stimulating with increased potential to generate outcomes. They include: - The Aboriginal Diabetes Initiative through Health Canada may be receptive to involvement on ICT research. - An expansion of Ricardo's research on Telehealth Evaluation is selected ways. -Establishment of culture-specific e-learning with an avenue to remain in the community has tremendous potential to engage First Nations people for their own people's sake. - research papers to influence policy as Brian W suggested is crucial - I would be interested in contributing to a co-authored paper on the meeting experience. I think the content of such an article would be publishable and interesting to a trans-disciplinary readership. It could focus, in part, on recommendations of a) how to do research that is inclusive of Aboriginal people b) who should be doing it? c) what does Aboriginal research by and with Aboriginal people mean? d) the location of dialogue versus consultation within the research process. - think national, look local in order that a community voice is heard by government. - include partnerships with cable companies, satellite providers, telephone, hydro (I think as academic researchers we are inclined to forget about these). -consideration for a community development process needs to guide the taking of each step. - an awareness of Aboriginal peoples' experience of/with disabilities as a component to their reality may open up research justification strategies

- I think that some strong Pan-Canadian links have begun to be forged. The intensity of this kind of meeting has certainly led to some wonderful relationships. I have had two meaningful conversations about future partnerships, and I will follow up with one of the participants who was on the Breeze.

- Not directly. But I am sure there is going to be plenty. People present in Balmertown really had a chance to chat with one another and got to establish relationships that are the basis of cooperation.

- Also, there are more possibilities that people who attended the meeting can see being created with existing networks and projects) e.g., CRACIN, etc.).

4. What were your expectations before the meeting and how do you feel now about this?

- I had very few expectations prior to the meeting. I now have an overwhelmingly positive feeling about the meeting activities, participants, experience and schedule. I would have enjoyed more of an opportunity to discuss future collaboration in a less rushed environment. This would have required an additional day. Still this was achieved on a personal level through informal discussion.

- My expectations were a) to better understand the situation of the people living in these remote northern communities and b) to build relationships with other RITCA members towards working together in the future. These expectations were met.

- They were vague. I always enjoy meeting new colleagues. I wanted to hear how others address these challenges.

- I did not know what to expect. With all of the sites, many people in attendance and complicated logistics, the conference could have gone in many different directions. It worked out well.

- Had expectations that we would start a dialogue and this has been met.

- No real expectations. Appreciated the conversation with First Nations members.

- Before the meeting I didn't have high expectations because it is extremely difficult to get the right mix of researchers, etc to engage with each other in authentic and effective ways. However, during and following the meeting I was amazed at how committed and passionate everyone was in terms of trying to find ways to facilitate culturally-competent research and scholarship. This group is special! And combined with the hospitality and receptiveness of the First Nations communities is an ideal foundation upon which to continue.

- I wasn't quite sure what we were supposed to do, frankly. I knew that the aim was to establish a research agenda for RICTA folks. But beyond that, I was not sure. I did not think overly about what we wanted to achieve. I thought that there was a need to meet face to face with people involved to see whether there were some common/shared interests. I feel now that this meeting was critical to the success of RICTA. It allowed people to meet others and to start caring about making this project work. Our hosts were wonderful and I think I am not the only one in appreciating all their hard work in coordinating the day trip and making it all happen. I am very excited about RICTA's prospects, for sure.

- I expected to listen and participate where necessary. I did and it was awesome!

- I expected that we would write some kind of proposal together, with a Pan-Canadian research focus, possible extension to other countries and in partnership with Aboriginal communities. This was unrealistic. It was my impression that RICTA could eventually operate like the Metropolis project, with different domains, and different research projects within it. If there were funding sources for it, I still believe this could be the case.

- I did not really have too many expectations before the meeting. I was excited to be involved with scholars, communities, etc. that are also convinced of the importance of ICT in Aboriginal communities and related research. The RICTA meeting has been a valuable beginning-step in moving towards goals of research based on sharing, inclusion, and collaboration.

- I wasn't sure what to expect before the meeting.

- I expected to meet with a group of like-minded people who were interested in learning about First Nation issues and how to build and maintain healthy and respectful relationships with Aboriginal people. I hoped that an equitable, team approach to addressing research needs and priorities with Aboriginal groups and communities would be established. I expected to meet a lot of interesting people, doing interesting things with Aboriginal communities and willing to network together to expand their scope of work. I hoped we would be able to demonstrate and facilitate a national group of people who would be willing to continue meeting and working together, utilizing available ICTs and resources, demonstrating the value of ICTs with Aboriginal groups and communities. I am still hopeful that some of these expectations will be achieved over the next few years. This meeting was a good first step.

- The meeting exceeded my expectations. I was impressed with Susan and Brian's leadership before the meeting, and was not disappointed!!

- I expected that the group would be getting together to share ideas, learn from each other and each other's experiences and to listen to the first nation communities. All of this did happen.

5. Why did you choose to participate in the RICTA project (RICTA members) or the RICTA meeting (RICTA guests)?

- I often feel isolated in the work that I do. In BC, a lot of the innovative work seems to being done in the non-profit or community organization level and less so in the academy. I chose to participate in the hope that I would meet other academics in my area of research and explore the possibility to collaborate on research programs in the future. These objectives were realized.

- I am passionate about Aboriginal research, particularly Aboriginal health research; view the challenging research areas identified as requiring strong networks of researchers from a variety of disciplines in order to make a difference, respect and honor Indigenous worldviews as they have so much to teach and share with the rest of the world.

- I chose to participate in the RICTA project, representing HRSDC (OLT), as we are committed to working with First Nations and non First Nations communities in rural and remote regions of Canada, to improve opportunities for learning and skills development through the effective use of technology.

- A great opportunity to learn and contribute to this important research area

- I am interested in ICT for development and in learning more about aboriginal communities in Canada.

- Again, I am really intrigued in the impact of culture on the information life cycle. I wanted to see what the issues were in the context of Aboriginal communities' needs and uses of ICTs I also knew Brian Beaton and Brian Walmark through CRACIN and was really impressed and intrigued by their excellent work at Knet.

- To overcome the forces that keep us in silos. To have face to face exchanges that still make more sense than all the technology...

- The posting for a grad student in Fredericton piqued my interest. Even though I'm not working with the project directly, I'd be very happy to stay involved if possible.

- One of the attractions was the location of the meeting. I chose to participate in the project because of the focus--something I have been giving a great deal of thought to lately, though my focus is asynchronous rather than synchronous. I went to the meeting largely because of the location. I was certain there would be opportunities for partnerships and important conversations, as well as an opportunity to see some non-university uses of ICT. I was right.

- RICTA member – My research has been focused towards Aboriginal communities and ICT for a number of years, and I think RICTA's approach towards research in this area is very promising. The very nature of this research area requires a paradigm shift, and I am excited to see how RICTA manifests itself over the next while.

- I chose to participate in RICTA for 2 reasons: 1) to learn and grow as a researcher, 2) to be on the "ground floor" of establishing a network with a mandate to change the way we conduct research with Aboriginal communities.

6. If you participated in the Deer Lake visit… what did you learn? In your next community visit, would you prefer to spend more or less time there? If more time, would you be prepared to travel a day earlier to facilitate this?

- There is often the desire to spend longer in the field with other interesting people. Perhaps an extra couple of hours in Deer Lake might have been positive. I found the content of the visit fascinating (particularly seeing the telemedicine facilities). As I am certain that you are aware, September until March are busy times with all the teaching and proposal writing commitments – a meeting held in April might certainly persuade a lot of academics to stay longer! But considering the timing I think that the duration of the meeting was perfect.

- I would like to spend more time in the community the next time and would be prepared to make time for this.

- The Deer Lake visit was extremely valuable. I would be most receptive to spending more time there in order to have conversations and dialogue with more people who want to share their ideas and experiences with ICT.

- I really enjoyed Deer Lake. It was perhaps a bit short in that we had just a quick overview of the various places. It would have been nice to spend a bit more time and talk to the students, and others who live there. We had a bit of that remotely and that was fine. I thought the overall idea was an excellent one. It really helps put things in perspective and was a useful reminder to us city-dwellers.

- Visiting Deer Lake was a wonderful experience. Traveling to and spending some time there gave me new insight in regards to the meaning of "remote communities". Listening to students, community residents, etc. describe their experiences with ICT really demonstrated how technology can be used as a tool for empowerment. Personally experiencing e-health by listening to someone's heart beat and looking at another individual's inner ear, both of which were physically located in distant communities, was invaluable in showing, rather than simply telling, the possibilities for ICT in remote and northern Aboriginal communities. An entire day would be great since the visit to Deer Lake felt a bit rushed.

- In my visit to Deer Lake I learned that in spite of the many challenges facing the people living in this community they are making very effective use of technology to improve opportunities for learning via the KIHS and for health care via telehealth. Yes in future visits I would prefer to spend more time and yes would be prepared to travel a day earlier.

- I don't really have too much to add with respect to this visit in that I lived in a native community for over two years. I visited quite a few remote communities, too when I lived up North. But, I really enjoyed going there. And, I think our time was well spent doing the activities that were organized.

- I did not travel to Deer Lake but I was able to meet with the RICTA team that was in the community during the telehealth demonstration. I was located in Balmertown with the group from Prince Albert Grand Council during the demonstration. I think it is important that future meetings /

workshops be actually held in remote, Aboriginal communities where there is the connectivity required to include other locations (i.e. video conferencing). I think it is important that the RICTA team be seen to be engaging and working directly with the communities.

7. If you were in Balmertown, Ottawa, Fredericton or Toronto, comment on the space (physical space, food, layout, comfort level, etc) with a focus on how to improve it for the next meeting.

•   Considering our location the physical space, food, layout and comfort level were amazing. I felt treated like a king! Many thanks to KO for their amazing hospitality too!

•   I think it went well in Fredericton. Perhaps more thought could be given to having periodic breaks (e.g. 10 minutes every 60 to 90 minutes).

•   I attended the Balmertown meeting. Every aspect of the process was outstanding (except that I did not get a room with a view to the lake...)

•   Balmertown: great meeting space. Great food. Wonderful hosts. A truly great facility with helpful people.

•   I was very impressed with the meeting space. The room was a little crowded, but nothing that made it uncomfortable or anything. It would have been nice to have a closing prayer at the end and maybe some more participation from community members (at the Balmertown location that is).

•   Excellent

•   I was in the Balmertown location and thought the space (main meeting and breakout rooms), food, comfort level overall was fine for the number of people.

•   Meeting space, etc was most complimentary to my needs as a participant. In terms of process, I view the day's meeting was orchestrated extremely well. Next time I would be most receptive to a second day in order to continue the process and have a little more time to engage in dialogue with each other. There was a lot of listening, which was extremely valuable. A second day would have been put to good use too.

•   Again, not being there for the entire day I can't really comment on long-term (i.e., entire day) comfort. However, the only thing missing for me was sunlight. A room with windows and some natural light would be awesome.

•   I don't think I could improve on the space. This was an ideal location (Balmertown). I wish there had been more time.

•   Balmertown – The board room for the meeting was comfortable, though because of the seating arrangement and location of the TV, I found it difficult to see the participants at the various conference nodes. The chairs were very comfortable and lunch was nice; however, I did find the meeting room cold. In addition, I found the chat discussion distracting since the conversation was both interesting and not in line with the spoken meeting. I am interested in knowing if the original idea was to have the chat discussion to include more people in the meeting or to entertain other, related issues.

•   Food and space excellent.

- Food was great. Comfort level wasn't great – chairs were very uncomfortable and there was no table which made it awkward. However, I feel that the coordinator did a great job with the resources available to him and would not hesitate to participate again.

- The space in Balmertown was excellent. It was conducive to face-to-face discussion. The food was plentiful and tasty. No complaints there.

- It was fine for me in Balmertown.

8. If you were in Balmertown, all things being equal, how would you like to conduct the next RICTA Meeting? Choose One: All digital, Mix face-to-face with digital option, All face to face

- Mix face-to-face with digital option (5 respondents plus those below)

- Mix face-to-face with digital option – over a two day session, mornings digital and afternoons face-to-face. The digital environment limited free flowing conversation and brainstorming. I felt that it also slowed the meeting tempo. I would have enjoyed more structured face-to-face discussion.

- Mix face-to-face with digital option. We were invited to N. Saskatchewan. I think we should go there if/when we can afford to do something comparable without the K-Net infrastructure. One can still do a lot with phones.

- Mix face-to-face with digital option. The digital option was great for hearing voices that would not otherwise be heard.

- I think a mixed approach is best. That will allow maximum participation from those who can't attend. The Webcast feature did not contribute much to the discussion nor did it improve our outcomes. I did not engage with those using Webcast at all. Is audioconference a better option?

- All face to face – well, in the research project that I am working on, we really get a lot out of our face-to-face meetings. And it is something that our First Nation community members really ask for and appreciate, too. Although, it is the mostly costly category, it can also be really effective, especially in establishing relationships, trust, partnership, etc - but like I said before, I had never really participated in anything like this before (technology-wise) and so I would not necessarily say that my choice - #3 is the best one. I would honestly probably say a mixture, but leaning heavily on face-to-face.

- All digital - I would recommend a totally on-line series of shorter (maximum 2 hours) sessions that brings the group together

9. If you participated outside of Balmertown, do you agree with the following statement: "As a RICTA member participating remotely, my voice was heard and my positions taken seriously as seriously as those who participated in the face-to-face meeting." Strongly Agree, Agree, Disagree, Strongly Disagree, No Opinion

- Agree

- I would disagree with this statement. I think that comments were all taken seriously; however, it was hard to participate via video conference. Just jumping in to voice your opinion was very difficult and sometimes confusing.

- No opinion. I did not really make interventions. I listened. It did seem, however, that other participants in Fredericton were heard.

10. If you participated outside of Balmertown, all things being equal, how would you like to conduct the next RICTA Meeting? Choose One: All digital, Mix face-to-face with digital option, All face to face

- Mixed f2f with digital option is really the only way to go. F2F is preferable, but everyone that should attend will not be able to. At the very least, they can be offered several other possibilities for "attending."

- Mix face-to-face with digital option

- I thought that the digital aspect was interesting and I would hate to rule it out as it is so difficult to have people gather, but face-to-face would be preferred.

11. Nodes (Ottawa, Fredericton, Toronto) - We tried to cluster members in these three locations, with mixed results. We also had a group of participants in Akwesasne, Sault Ste. Marie and Six Nations and individuals in Sioux Lookout, Thunder Bay, Sandy Lake and Guelph. If the next RICTA meeting is also held in a remote location, should we try to cluster the members in node locations or just have people videoconference in from where they are?

- Nodes might help breakout sessions, micro networking etc.

- Again, I think F2F is far preferable. If possible, it should be done; if not, using VC is acceptable.

Additionally, I think it is really up to individual groups to give input about their culture of communication and whether VC is acceptable. RICTA might also think about hosting smaller clusters more frequently with the whole group coming together annually or semi-annually. Smaller configurations might allow more in-depth work to get done.

- Unfortunately, people didn't show up in Toronto, eliminating the possibility for close conversation. It's a good idea, though (I envied the clusters with 4 or 5 people present)

- A lot of effort went into the nodes. Toronto was the least successful. We should decide what the max number of locations will be and go from there. We could have facilitated more RICTA participants who could not travel if we had known that single locations were possible.

- Node location. Although people think and learn differently, there is a collaborative nature to having at least some face-to-face interaction. People often get energized just be being in the same space, working together. If at all possible, I feel linking nodes would be preferable to linking isolated individuals.

• I thought that the video-conference with remote communities was essential, but I am ambivalent about the participation of the nodes.

• I thought the cluster was good. It allowed people to have a sense of who was who. Otherwise it becomes hard to remember who is where and with what group. Also if too many people join in individually, there is a risk that some people may talk a lot and others will not.

• I think it is important to try and cluster members. While videoconferencing is a great tool, I think all of us who traveled to Balmertown can attest to the value in meeting each other face to face. By gathering at node locations, all members can have that experience. In addition, from a logistical standpoint, I think that there is definitely a maximum number of locations that can participate in the meeting via videoconference. However, I'm not sure exactly what this number is or how to best decide upon node locations, though it should be taken into consideration that individuals in remote communities likely face more difficulties in traveling to nodes than those in larger centres.

• I think clustering is best. Having so many different nodes was sometimes difficult to manage and was also very time consuming.

• I think the cluster method is a MUST so we can include participants from across the country. I think that the RICTA membership needs to understand the importance of their roles in gathering people together in their local region.

• Videoconferencing in from many (more than 6) locations gets a bit hard to manage. I think we experienced the maximum number of nodes that we could effectively accommodate.

12. Think about the meeting process (including who got to speak, how we moved the discussion between locations, etc.). Do you have any comments or suggestions on how to improve it next time?

• Every one had an important contribution to make – it was wonderful to hear the voices and experiences of those 'peripheral' to Balmertown – especially community members and organizations. However, the ambitious agenda (and perhaps the digital medium itself) meant that interaction and discussion or following up on certain issues was hard.

• I thought the facilitation of the meeting was excellent and that all had ample opportunity to participate.

• Process went well. You moved the discussion between locations smoothly and provided the peripheral meeting locations with plenty of opportunities to speak. Maybe next time, the main organizers of the meeting could split up, where one stay with the larger group and one say go to a community such as Six Nations? I liked how the morning was dedicated to the communities; however some members of the academic community did interject a little too often. But, this was moderated well and the flow moved well to avoid this from happening too often.

• We will have to work the next time on including francophone RICTA members. One RICTA member from Chicoutimi participated briefly on the BREEZE chat. She said that most of her colleagues – and the Quebec First Nations communities they work with – do not speak English. As well there are the many Aboriginal languages …. hard to say if this also presented a barrier to participants and if we can address this in future.

• There should be more time for participants in the main meeting – Balmertown – to talk with each other. Often it felt as if we were watching the others talk on the TV screens and were not participating ourselves.

• I feel that the event may have been a little too structured without providing enough time for free dialogue during the presentations. Sometimes this open dialogue helps provide valuable chunks of information and direction that will not surface otherwise. Also, giving all people present some time for more structured input might help. There were people I didn't get a chance to hear from.

• Was very smooth and efficient. It is always a bit frustrating, because you have to allow for everyone to speak, and you lose the spontaneity of the face to face interaction around the table, but you gain so much more.

• I would suggest allowing for more time in order to accommodate for the extra time digital communication requires.

• Facilitation was very good – no suggestions for improvement.

• In Fredericton, at times (not always) our camera focus was not the best. We could hear the speaker but not see them as the camera was pointed in another direction. Simple to fix, but creates a feeling of connection when a visual is consistently established.

• I would have liked for the small group breakouts to last longer. In the morning session, there was a lot of "food for thought" in the digital environment. There were questions for remote communities, and the opportunity to develop a greater understanding. In the afternoon, and I don't know how to avoid this, it seemed that, apart from the formal presentations, there was little opportunity for those at Balmertown to interact. Once every person at Toronto, Fredericton, and Ottawa was asked if they had anything to add, there was little opportunity for the round table participants to say anything. There was a comment at one point that we were oddly silent at Balmertown. Perhaps, as a result, there was a lot of "off camera" conversation back at the lodge.

• I definitely think there needed to be more time for discussion, both during the meeting and in small groups. However, given the meeting only lasted for 1 day, the amount of things covered was laudable. I personally thought the presentations were quite good, though more time for Q & A would have been nice. Meeting chairs did a good job of keeping things on target. This is my first time participating in a multi-node videoconference, and I thought the discussion between locations was facilitated really well.

• I think that this meeting was great. I don't really have too many suggestions – perhaps a more detailed agenda or even copies of some prepared remarks could be sent around prior to the meeting. This would give more of an opportunity to reflect on comments and issues – sometimes it was difficult to hear during with the video conferencing making it difficult to offer comments.

• More break out sessions for local discussion groups with appropriate questions and support materials with interactive feedback loops. Presentations need to more balanced with stronger Aboriginal focus that is demonstrating Best Practices in research between Aboriginal communities and institutions rather than simply an institutional perspective. The meeting chairs need to be at the edges wherever possible. Rotating chairs and facilitators will ensure engagement of all along with people become more skilled in effectively using ICTs to engage and share information.

- I think it went well.

- The meeting process was hampered because of the large number of participants. I realize this was an inaugural meeting so the numbers may eventually even out to a more manageable size. There are many stakeholders from many organizations. I wonder how we (RICTA) can attend to the needs of multiple stakeholders and still fulfill our research mandate. The small group discussions were an effective way to deal with the large numbers. This should be continued.

13. Thinking back to the speakers and discussion sessions, do you have any comments about how the discussion topics and meeting content could be improved the next time?

- As I have already mentioned, more time for structured discussion both via video as well as face-to-face would be beneficial. I am wondering about how you evaluated Breeze, did you think that it was a worthwhile medium to use alongside the video and face-to-face discussion?

- Keeping presentations brief and concise are valuable, and allowing for some discussion to follow allows essential presentation points to be processed.

- I thought the agenda was well planned. For future meetings I would recommend continue to do the same as you did with this meeting i.e. build agenda collaboratively and give individuals from communities an opportunity to present on items important to them.

- I would have really liked to have the SSHRC rep at the meeting in Balmertown. I feel we need to explore opportunities with them further and get an insider/informal view on what it takes to continue this experiment.

- More discussions, more time to discuss presentations.

- On some parts of the program, such as the [SSHRC?] presentation, there was clearly a lot more interest in responding than to other presentations. It would be good perhaps to identify these "hot" topics and focus on them for extended periods of time in the next meeting. There could be a conference just on perspectives and orientation on research (from both sides), where the traditional academic community and aboriginal communities have an exchange.

- I think shorter presentations and more time to focus on a few key questions. Perhaps in follow-up meetings, it will be better to have different working groups on various issues that people are interested in (the groups can meet in a small format session and report later on). This along with general ideas can provide a balance between overall direction and particular emphasis/interests of people. In other words, we have to identify some general directions.

- I would like to hear more case studies from Aboriginal representatives on ICT research. There may be few cases, but we should identify these and build from that foundation.

- The speakers were heavily weighted on the academic side. Which, I am not saying is all that incorrect, but if such research is to be empowered, more of the centre of control (and presentations and discussion topics) may need to come from the community level in general. I think a nice presentation explaining who Knet is and KO might have been an asset.

- It would be good to have more opportunity to discuss the presentation.

- Again, just more time for Q & A and overall discussion.

- I think some of the meeting structure tended to "put" or "make" Aboriginal groups the "recipients" of the research experience instead of placing them in the leadership role. The transformation from the traditional institutional approach to research will need to support a much stronger leadership role for Aboriginal communities and their leadership.

14. What did you like best and least about the RICTA meeting?

Best:
- The amazing hospitality that KO and K-Net offered!
- Meeting people, working with the group in Fredericton. Fantastic!
- The company.
- The location, The people - These were fantastic.
- Personally, I thought the overall experience of RICTA's first meeting was great.
- I enjoyed hearing from some many different people who are working in diverse areas.
- getting to know the all the people participating in RICTA; visiting Deer Lake and community members; conversation and dialogue that ensued throughout.
- Meeting new colleagues and community members. Seeing the dedication in the communities.
- I liked having an overview of the concerns and interests, as well as hearing for the first time from other members.
- The company and the visit to Deer Lake; the hotel we stayed in and its chef! The run in the morning, too.
- What I liked best was the opportunity to hear from people such as Geordi, Jessie, Donna and others in many others in different locations. The chance to see students of Peter and Daryl participating for the first time via the technology, to experience the very creative talents of Cal and his video of the 8 days for youth to experience the traditional ways through the teachings of an elder and to see and hear the very moving presentation on effects of diabetes from the young woman in Claude's class.
- Using ICTs to bring people and groups together, working with the community groups, involving other groups and individuals, building relationships.
- Traveling to a remote location in northern Ontario was both a blessing and a hardship. On one hand, it got me out of my familiar academic setting and allowed me to experience a progressive Aboriginal community. On the other hand, it was a huge investment in time. Travelling to remote locations has its disadvantages and risks. We lucked out with the weather this time. Next time, we might not be as fortunate. What I liked best was meeting new people from a variety of backgrounds. It was an energizing experience!
- Best – that it was in Balmertown and that everyone got along famously. It was really well organized, too and that really enhances one's experience.

Least:
- Not being there for the entire day. Not so fantastic.
- Hard to find something to complain about... More case studies of actual work happening.
- The Kentucky Fried Chicken in Deer Lake.
- Not having more time to continue the RICTA dialogue
- I least liked the technical difficulties, which were not RICTA's fault.
- The weather, the stories about the polar bears, Jetsgo, having to leave the meeting without knowing for sure what will happen next to keep RICTA alive and going.

- I liked the input from the nodes the least as they seemed to get more "air time" than the participants in Balmertown. It often felt like we were an audience watching TV together rather than engaging with each other.
- I think the meeting could have been improved by being a bit longer (e.g. an extra day).
- I was pretty uncomfortable in the room I was in…..however, the good company, and the high level of discussion far outweighed my discomfort and would not hesitate to participate again.
- The academic institutional approach to research and "doing it for" Aboriginal groups instead of building relationships with the communities and the people, the face-to-face aspect of the meeting made it difficult for everyone to get to know the others who were participating in the other sites and on-line (these folks were accommodated but I do not think they were actively engaged in the process).

15. Anything else you'd like to tell us about the RICTA meeting?

- I think the location is important. If the research and discussions are to be focused on First Nations issues, then it makes better sense to be at a location where local input is more readily available. Community members will be much more willing to participate openly if the location is familiar.

- I congratulate both Susan and Brian on organizing such an interesting and well planned trip. The sense of 'shared experience' is a wonderful foundation to build RICTA on. The whole event was especially wonderful for a neophyte of the Canadian North.

- A sincere THANK-YOU to the organizers!

- I felt that you had a mandate for the proceedings but the atmosphere was relaxed and had an element of fun. Don't lose that!

- Thanks for the opportunity to participate.

- The RICTA initiative is a great opportunity for different groups to come together to change an entrenched and out-dated institutional approach to doing business and research. Taking these "baby steps" in actually using ICTs to work together is important but a much greater effort must be made to attract the Aboriginal communities to become involved in this work and to take their rightful place to be the leaders of this process. Evaluating the development and engagement process of RICTA is in itself an important component that has yet to be addressed and supported by the group. Making sure that all members are committed to working with the Aboriginal groups and communities in their local region will support the growth and engagement of more representatives who are to direct the development of RICTA. Hosting a series of open and transparent on-line workshops and information sessions around research will support further involvement of both academic researchers and Aboriginal communities. Ensuring there is adequate budget support to include all sectors in this initiative is an important component of the overall sustainability strategy.

- It was the best research meeting I have engaged in to date. So worth the time, effort, and money – thank you!!

- Keep up the good work!

RICTA
Research on ICT with Aboriginal Communities

A3: RICTA MEMBERS

Dr. Cynthia J. Alexander

Cynthia Alexander is an Associate Professor of Political Science at Acadia University. She has been investigating the adoption of computer technologies by Canadian governments since the mid-Eighties when she received her Ph.D. at Queen's University in Kingston; that early work assessed the evolution of e-government in three provincial governments. In her assessment of the evolution of e-government and e-governance in Canada, she has been paying particular attention to whether and how new media technologies can serve to meet the policy needs and interests of marginalized communities of interests. She has been working in partnership with several First Nations communities in Canada to develop a culturally relevant First Nations ICT strategic development model. Alexander's research and teaching initiatives focus on how ICTs can facilitate consensus and collaboration in poly-vocal communities. The challenge is how technological environments can be designed and implemented to support cross-cultural communication, an increasingly important objective in multi-cultural societies such as Canada.

Cynthia J. Alexander
Associate Professor
Department of Political Science
BAC 221
Acadia University
Wolfville, NS B4P 2R6
Tel: 902-585-1451
Fax: 902-585-1070
cynthia.alexander@acadiau.ca

Sylvia Barton

Sylvia Barton RN, MSc, Ph.D(c), is an Assistant Professor in the Nursing Program at the University of Northern British Columbia in Prince George, Canada. Her area of practice includes acute care, community health nursing, and outpost nurse practitioner. She teaches undergraduate and graduate courses in community health nursing, and Aboriginal health. Her research includes qualitative approaches focused on legislation and implications for youth services, program evaluation of at-risk parents and newborn children, and substance abuse experienced by employees working in remote work camps. She is currently writing a dissertation on the Aboriginal experience of living with diabetes, using a form of narrative inquiry guided by hermeneutic and phenomenology methodologies. Her future research interests include an expansion of her doctoral work in Canada, as well as in Australia. She has received funding through grants, contracts, and scholarships, and has published articles, provided government with reports, and presented at international conferences.

Sylvia S. Barton
Assistant Professor
Nursing Program
University of Northern British Columbia
3333 University Way
Prince George, BC
Canada V2N 4Z9
Tel: 250-960-6631
Fax: 250-960-5744
bartons@unbc.ca

Brian Beaton

Brian is the K-Net Coordinator of Keewaytinook Okimakanak's Kuh-ke-nah Network (K-Net - http://knet.ca). The K-Net program began in 1994 under the direction and vision of the First Nation Chiefs. Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) was Industry Canada's Aboriginal Smart Communities Demonstration project starting in April 2001 until March 2004. His background involves community development, system-management, and a wide area of team-building initiatives. His applied experience in the implementation stages of Contact North, Wahsa Distance Education Centre, Keewaytinook Internet High School, KO Telehealth and other broadband applications, highlight his personal commitment to community-driven delivery strategies and outcomes-based approaches to project leadership. Brian has an intensive and concrete knowledge of community needs and issues and has worked extensively with local and regional stakeholders to design and implement appropriate First Nation driven telecommunications partnerships and solutions. Work that develops and sustains Aboriginal communities must be the priority of First Nation community leaders. This requires leaders have the information and resources they need to facilitate effective decision-making and policy creation.

Brian Beaton
K-Net / ON-RMO Coordinator
Keewaytinook Okimakanak
Box 1439, 115 King Street
Sioux Lookout, ON P8T 1B9
Tel: 807-737-1135, Toll-Free: 877-737-KNET (5638) ext 51251
Fax: 807-737-1720
e-mail: brian.beaton@knet.ca
web: http://knet.ca

Nadia Caidi

Nadia is an Assistant Professor at the Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto. Her background is in Communication Studies (Universite Grenoble, France) and Information Studies (Ph.D., University of California, Los Angeles). Her primary research interests are information policy and social/community informatics. She examines the influence of culture on the production, distribution and use of information and its technologies. She is the PI on a SSHRC-funded grant on "Information and Access Post 9/11". She is also the lead researcher on the Information Practices of Ethno-Cultural Communities project, which aim is to provide insights to libraries and other frontline information providers about the types of information needed by immigrant groups to deal with situations encountered in their everyday lives. Nadia is also a collaborator on the Canadian Research Alliance for Community Innovation and Networking (CRACIN) as the academic lead in a broad-based study on community networks and their relationships with libraries. Finally, she is a Research Advisor for a project funded by the federal Office of the Privacy Commission on "Implementing PIPEDA: A review of Internet privacy statements and on-line practices."

Nadia Caidi
Assistant Professor
Faculty of Information Studies
University of Toronto
140 St. George Street, Room 646
Toronto, ON M5S 3G6
Tel: 416-978-4664
Fax: 416-971-1399
nadia.caidi@utoronto.ca

Dr. Dean Care

Dean is an Associate Professor and Acting Dean in the Faculty of Nursing, University of Manitoba. His main areas of interest are nursing education, distance learning, and nursing administration. Dean has held previous positions as a Unit Manager, Instructor, Coordinator, and Associate Dean. He has taught graduate and undergraduate courses by various distance modalities (audio conference, video conference, and web-based delivery). Dean is the Principal Investigator on a recently awarded a $100,000 - Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC) grant to investigate the learning experiences of Aboriginal nursing students studying with distance technologies. He is also a Co-Investigator on a $160,000 - Canadian Health Services Research Foundation (CHSRF) grant to study strategies for effectively integrating new nursing graduates into the workplace. Dean is married with two children. He has a passion for curling in the winter and golf in the summer.

W. Dean Care
Acting Dean & Associate Professor
Faculty of Nursing
212 Helen Glass Centre for Nursing
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Tel: 204-474-9201
Fax: 204-474-7500
Dean_Care@umanitoba.ca

Craig Clark

Craig is the Multi Media and Technical Coordinator for Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK), which is Canada's National Inuit Organization. He spent ten years in Iqaluit Nunavut where he became involved in several projects with the Canadian Arctic's first private ISP, Nunanet Worldwide Communications. Since 2001 Craig has worked for ITK dealing with information and communication technologies as they relate to Inuit.

Craig Clark
Multi-media and technical co-ordinator
Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami
170 Laurier, Suite 510
Ottawa, ON K1P 5V5
Tel: 613-238-8181 (226)
Fax: 613-234-1991
clark@itk.ca

Jonathan Corbett

Jon is an assistant professor and SSHRC funded post-doctoral fellow in the Geography Department at the University of Victoria. His action-oriented research program examines the relationship between Indigenous people and their knowledge of traditional territories, using a range of digital cartographic and multimedia technologies. His research is based in South East Asia and British Colombia, Canada. The theoretical component of his research investigates how these technologies impact communities with respect to altering internal and external social and political relationships, more specifically framed within the conjectural area of empowerment. Jon is committed to working and undertaking collaborative and participatory action-oriented research with local communities that both supports and strengthens their livelihoods, whether these communities are located in the South or are rural and/or First Nations in Canada.

Jonathan Corbett
SSHRC Post-Doctoral Fellow
Department of Geography
University of Victoria
PO BOX 3050 STN CSC
Victoria, BC V8W 3P5
Tel: 250-721-7360
Fax: 250-721-6216
jcorbett@office.geog.uvic.ca

Ryan Corbiere

Ryan is the administrative and communications support person in the Economic Development Secretariat for the Assembly of First Nations, in Ottawa. He has been involved with the Secretariat for two years handling all administration. He was involved with the development and launch of the EcDev.ca website that was published in the fall of 2003. He has been with the organization for three and a half years with his start in Finance, then the National Chiefs office and now with the Economic Development Team.

Ryan Corbiere
Administrative & Communications Support
Assembly of First Nations
1 Nicholas Street, Suite 1002
Ottawa, ON K1N 7B7
Tel: 613-241-6789 ext. 394
Fax: 613-241-5808
rcorbiere@afn.ca

Beverley Diamond

Beverly, B.Mus, M.A., Ph.D. University of Toronto, is the Canada Research Chair in Ethnomusicology at Memorial University of Newfoundland and Director of the Research Centre for the Study of Music, Media, and Place (MMaP), established at MUN in 2003. She previously held full-time teaching positions at McGill, Queen's, and York Universities, as well as visiting professorships at the University of Toronto and Harvard University. Since the early 1970s, she has worked extensively in Inuit and First Nations communities in the Northwest Territories, Labrador, Quebec, and Ontario. She has also done oral historical research with musicians from diverse ethnocultural traditions in several Canadian communities. Currently, she is interested in recording studio practices, including the ways that the social relations in the studio and technological processes of recording and mixing impact on the construction of sonic identity. Beverly has numerous publications and in 2003 she was awarded the Kunst Prize by the Society for Ethnomusicology for her article "Native American Contemporary Music: The Women," published in The World of Music (2002). An anthology on Canadian Music: Issues of Media and Technology is currently in press.

Beverley Diamond,
Canada Research Chair in Ethnomusicology,
Music / Folklore,
Director of the Research Centre for the Study of
 Music, Media, and Place
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's, NL A1C 5S7
Tel: 709-737-3701
Fax: 709-737-2018
bdiamond@mun.ca

Élise Dubuc

Élise est professeure-associée à l'Université du Québec à Chicoutimi. Elle détient un doctorat en anthropologie et une maîtrise en muséologie. Ses champs de recherche couvrent l'anthropologie du musée, l'anthropologie du corps, l'identité, le patrimoine, ainsi que les liens entre culture matérielle et immatérielle. Elle est impliquée comme co-chercheure dans des projets de recherche d'envergure avec des communautés autochtones. Ses publications traitent de l'histoire et la critique des musées, des musées autochtones, de l'épistémologie de l'objet, des vêtements, des savoir et savoir faire. Ses travaux de recherche actuels touchent à la médiation par l'objet, notamment à travers les institutions du musée et des vêtements, aux nouvelles stratégies de transmission de la culture, et au renouvellement des musées autochtones comme outil communautaire.

Elise Dubuc
Professeure-associée
Département des arts et lettres
Université du Québec à Chicoutimi
555, boulevard de l'Université
Chicoutimi, QC G7H 2B1
Elise_Dubuc@uqac.ca

Dr. Carrie Dyck

Carrie is an Assistant Professor of Linguistics at Memorial University of Newfoundland. Her primary research interests are theoretical phonology and Cayuga (Iroquoian) phonology and grammar. Carrie has been privileged to work with Cayuga speakers for approximately the past ten years. As a result of this collaboration, Carrie helped complete a dictionary of Cayuga, published in 2001, and is currently working on a grammatical description of Cayuga. She and Amos Key Jr. (co-investigator) recently received funding for a three-year project to transcribe recordings of Cayuga oral literature and to design community-informed protocols regarding access to, and treatment of, any outcomes resulting from the project. Carrie has also begun to work on Algonquian languages and is involved with a project (headed by Dr. Julie Brittain of Memorial) to investigate the acquisition of Northern East Cree (spoken in Chisasibi, Quebec, etc.) as a first language.

Carrie Dyck
Assistant Professor
Department of Linguistics
Memorial University of Newfoundland
St. John's NL A1B 3X9
Tel: 709-737-8170
Fax: 709-737-4000 (fax)
cdyck@mun.ca

Lawrence Euteneier

Lawrence has a B.A. in psychology and sociology, and a Masters in environmental studies. Both were obtained at York University, Toronto. He is currently working towards an MBA at the University of Ottawa. Mr. Euteneier received a Northern Studies Research Training Grant to conduct research in the McKenzie Delta region of the NWT in 1989. The research involved documenting community responses to Native and Inuit Peoples with disabilities residing in the NWT. Mr. Euteneier is presently participating in a SSHRC 3 year study on the role of technology and people with disabilities being coordinated out of the University of Manitoba, and a Health Canada 3 year study on children with special needs residing in the north being coordinated out of Lake Head University. He is also advising the Mira Foundation in Quebec on the implementation of a service dog strategy for Aboriginal and Inuit Peoples. Mr. Euteneier currently works at Industry Canada as the manager of the Web Accessibility Office.

Lawrence Euteneier
Manager
Web Accessibility Office | Bureau d'accessibilité au Web
Industry Canada
365 Laurier Street
Ottawa, ON K1A 0C8
Tel: 613-952-9691
Fax: 613-941-8617
TTY1-800-465-7735
euteneier.lawrence@ic.gc.ca

George Ferreira

George is a Ph.D candidate in the Rural Studies program at the University of Guelph's School of Environmental Design and Rural Development. His research focuses on the application of participatory video in remote, fly-in First Nations communities in Northwestern Ontario. He has been using video in these communities to build capacity (through production training) as well as to facilitate a collective voice for the communities around key policy issues such as health care, education and economic development. Building on the Fogo Process, developed by Don Snowden, his work seeks to build new-media based communication conduits between remote communities and urban policy makers. The title of his Qualifying Exam Paper was "A Conceptual Framework for the use of Video in Policy and Planning" and presently he is writing his dissertation, "Video as the Organizing Structure: New Media for Policy in Remote First Nations". He has produced several documentaries and a feature film for which he was also writer and director. George has also worked in the development of environmental policy initiatives at Ontario's Ministry of the Environment, Environment Canada and the Treasury Board Secretariat.

George Ferreira
PhD Candidate
School of Environmental Design and Rural Development
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2W1
Tel: 519-767-9548
gferreir@uoguelph.ca

Jill Finley

Jill is the Project Director for Understanding the Strengths of Indigenous Communities Project, has a Bachelor of Commerce from McGill University, and recently completed a M.Sc. (in Management) at the University of Lethbridge. Her specialization was Business Enterprises and Self-Governing Systems for Indian, Inuit and Metis Peoples. Her thesis was an ethnographic case study to understand the effects of change on an Aboriginal nonprofit health organization. Prior to the completion of this graduate degree, Jill worked as a consultant in the natural gas industry and has experience with environmental issues and cultural issues in large urban centers and in small communities (Inuvik, NT). Jill has many years of experience as a volunteer and as a volunteer board member. Research Interests include Aboriginal community development as an emerging field that promotes the growth of sustainable communities, methodological best practices, social capital and community health.

Jill Finley
Project Director
Understanding the Strengths of Indigenous Communities (USIC)
York University
BSB 244
4700 Keele St.,
Toronto, ON M3J 1P3
Tel: 416-736-2100 x20940
jfinley@yorku.ca/jillfinley@usic.ca

Adam Fiser

Adam is a Ph.D candidate at the Faculty of Information Studies, University of Toronto. His research interests include community networking, community media, youth empowerment, and narrative based evaluation. He is partnered with K-Net Services to study its work under Industry Canada's First Nations SchoolNet Program. His research is supported by the Canadian Research Alliance for Community Innovation and Networking (www.cracin.ca). Adam's supervisor is Prof. Andrew Clement.

Adam Fiser
PhD Candidate
Faculty of Information Studies
University of Toronto
140 St. George Street
Toronto, ON M5S 3G6
Tel: 416-978-4715
fiser@fis.utoronto.ca

Mary Francoli

Mary is a Ph.D Candidate in Political Science at The University of Western Ontario. She recently completed her doctoral dissertation, entitled Toward a Digital Commons?: The Impact of ICTs on Democracy in Canada, on the subject of e-government and e-democracy in Canada. Currently, Mary is teaching a mass communications class at Carleton University on the subject of communication technology and culture. Mary's research interests are diverse and include: the impact of ICTs on the relationship between representatives and their constituents, the potential for enhanced participatory democracy, cyberactivism and ICTs as a tool for cultural preservation.

Mary Francoli
PhD Candidate
Department of Political Science
University of Western Ontario
Home: 129 Catherine St, Apt. 4
Ottawa, ON K2P 1C3
Tel: 613-230-2929
mary_francoli@yahoo.ca

Dr. Michael Gurstein

Dr. Gurstein is currently a Visiting Professor in the School of Management at the New Jersey Institute of Technology and a Principal with Michael Gurstein & Associates, Vancouver BC specializing in community based technology applications. From 1992-95 Dr. Gurstein was a Management Advisor with the United Nations Secretariat in New York. Prior to this Dr. Gurstein was the President of Socioscope Inc. a management consulting firm based in Ottawa Canada which specialized in policy and program analysis and evaluation including a long term assignment with the Canadian Office of the Auditor General developing evaluation methodologies for implementation by line departments and agencies of the Canadian Government. Among the projects with which Dr. Gurstein was directly engaged was an extensive analysis and evaluation of a major program in Community Radio among the Inuit and Cree aboriginal people of Northern Quebec funded by the Government of Canada.

Michael Gurstein
Clinical Professor
School of Management
New Jersey Institute of Technology
Newark, NJ
Tel. 973-596-6426
Fax. 973-596-3034
gurstein@njit.edu

Jennie Hornosty

Jennie is a Professor of Sociology at the University of New Brunswick. Her current research is the area of family violence within the context of farm and rural communities. Specifically, her interest is in understanding the structural and cultural contexts in which abuse occurs, and how this impacts on people's understanding of abuse and their decision making. Although she has not had an opportunity to work with Aboriginal communities, most of the research she has completed has been team based and of a collaborative nature with both community partners and academics. A participatory action methodology, which incorporates the voices of community members both in formulating research questions and developing strategies for action, has informed much of this research. A current project she is working on involves a partnership with the Sackville Memorial Hospital and the Tantramar Caring Community Committee to assess the needs of abused women in the region and to implement appropriate action strategies.

Jennie M. Hornosty
Professor
Department of Sociology
University of New Brunswick
PO Box 4400
Fredericton, NB E3B 5A3
Tel: 506-458-7445
hornosty@unb.ca

Sandra Kouritzin

Sandra is an Associate Professor of Teaching English as a second language in the Faculty of Education at the University of Manitoba. Her current research projects focus on multingual development in the context of globalization, especially changes in interaction patterns and language use which result from the learning of English as an additional/standard language by Aboriginal/indigenous children at school. She is also interested in language loss and language death, which result from various forms of linguistic imperialism both within Canada, and in indigenous populations worldwide, particularly in the Pacific Rim nations. Dr. Kouritzin's publications focus on the ideologies, policies and practices which support the maintenance and development of heritage, international, Aboriginal and indigenous languages for all individuals within an additive bilingual framework, the responsible, informed teaching of English as a second/foreign/additional language and other international languages within diasporic and indigenous communities, and the impact of globalization (increasing interaction in terms of commercial, information, and human resources) which threatens the viability of many linguistic and cultural communities.

Sandra G. Kouritzin
Associate Professor
Faculty of Education, #260
Department of Curriculum, Learning and Teaching
University of Manitoba
Winnipeg, MB R3T 2N2
Tel: 204-474-9079
kouritzi@ms.umanitoba.ca

Rob Mastin

Rob is Manager of the Office of Learning Technologies (OLT), part of Human Resources and Skills Development Canada. OLT works with communities, especially in rural and remote areas throughout Canada, through the Community Learning Networks initiative. As changes continue to occur, OLT is attempting to look ahead in collaboration with others to design the best possible programs and services. In addition to supporting over 100 Community Learning Networks across Canada, OLT is also supporting research to inform policy development and future program design. By way of examples, OLT is working in collaboration with the Canadian Research Alliance for Community Innovation and Networking (CRACIN) and with the National Research Council (NRC) to advance the work of OLT. Rob is a proud Maritimer, originally from Nova Scotia, and holds a Masters Degree from Dalhousie University.

Rob Mastin
Manager, Strategic Modernization
Office of Learning Technologies
Human Resources and Skills Development Canada
Place du Portage
40 Promenade du Portage
Phase IV
Gatineau, QC K1A 0J9
Tel: 819- 994-5278
Fax : 819-997-6777
rob.mastin@hrsdc-rhdcc.gc.ca

William McIver, Jr.

William holds a Ph.D in Computer Science, with a specialization in database systems, from the University of Colorado at Boulder, in Colorado. He is a Research Officer for the National Research Council of Canada Institute for Information Technology (NRC-IIT). He is acting Group Leader for NRC-IIT's e-Government / e-Citizen Group and coordinator of its e-Citizen Studio. Bill is a computer scientist with research interests in the areas of social and community informatics. His current work is focused on understanding life-critical information needs and uses of citizens, and engaging in participatory design and development of information and communication technologies (ICT). He also studies human rights as they pertain to communication and ICT. Bill has been the co-editor on various published works and he has authored several book chapters on topics dealing with social and community informatics, as well as communication rights. Bill also holds a B.A. degree in computer science from Morehouse College in Atlanta.

William J. McIver Jr.
Research Officer
eGovernment / eCitizen Group
National Research Council
Institute for Information Technology
46 Dineen Drive
Fredericton, NB
Tel: 506-444-0387
Fax: 506-444-6114
Bill.McIver@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca

Karen Murray

Karen holds a Ph.D from the University of British Columbia and is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Political Science at the University of New Brunswick. Dr. Murray is the principal investigator of a major collaborative research program entitled The Health, Governance, and Citizenship Project, which uses a multi-faceted qualitative methodology to examine the interconnections and flows between broad governmental transformations and local-level changes in social services. Karen has published in The Canadian Historical Review, Canadian Public Administration, and the Canadian Journal of Urban Research.

Karen B. Murray
Assistant Professor
Department of Political Science
University of New Brunswick
P.O. Box 4400
Fredericton, NB E3B 5A3
Tel: 506-458-7490
Fax: 506-453-4755
kmurray@unb.ca

Marcia Nickerson

Marcia is the Head of the KTA Aboriginal Practice Group and has experience in undertaking small and national scale policy-related research and analysis projects. Most recently, Marcia has responsibility for the Aboriginal Voice component of the Crossing Boundaries National Council. This is a collaborative initiative between several federal departments, provincial governments, and National Aboriginal Organizations to undertake a national discussion regarding the impact of information and technology on Aboriginal governance. Marcia has also contributed research and writing to several KTA reports, including the INAC Case Studies on Improving Collaboration, a review of the Indian Residential Schools pilot project review, and the Atlantic Policy Social Development Reform, the Privy Council Office Report on Métis and Off-Reserve Aboriginal issues. Prior to joining KTA in 1999, Marcia acted as a Senior Policy Advisor to the Associate Deputy Minister of Indian Affairs as well as a self-government negotiator.

Marcia Nickerson
Head, Aboriginal Practice Group
KTA Centre for Collaborative Government
Kaufman, Thomas and Associates
401 Richmond Street West
Box 2, Suite 389
Toronto, ON M5V 3A8
Tel: 416-204-9658
mnickerson@kta.on.ca

Susan O'Donnell

Susan has three broad research interests: digital communications, the electronic public sphere, and democratic citizen and social movements in the information society. In 2004, Susan became a Research Officer at the National Research Council and an Adjunct Professor at the University of New Brunswick. Previously, she was a researcher for 10 years in Dublin. Projects include: an evaluation of Womenslink, an email network linking women's organizations in Northern Ireland and the Republic of Ireland; developing a research framework for analyzing social movements and alternative media on the Internet; a feasibility study for Diversity Ireland, a website for newcomers to Ireland; leading two studies on social disadvantage in the information society in Europe funded by the European Union's IST Fifth Framework research program; and, for the Irish Government, leading a major review of Ireland's national policy to address the digital divide. Susan holds a PhD in Communications from Dublin City University. Her MA (Cardiff University) investigated how the Internet is used to build solidarity between indigenous nations and their supporters in the Americas.

Susan O'Donnell
Adjunct Professor, Sociology
University of New Brunswick
Research Officer, National Research Council
Institute for Information Technology
46 Dineen Drive
Fredericton, NB E3B 9W4
Tel: 506-444-0374
Fax: 506-444-6114
Susan.ODonnell@nrc-cnrc.gc.ca

Frits Pannekoek

Dr. Frits Pannekoek is currently (since 1998) Director of Information Resources at the University of Calgary, with academic appointments in the Faculty of Communication and Culture and the Department of History. He has direct responsibility for the University Library and its five branch libraries, the University Archives, the University of Calgary Press and the Nickle Arts Museum. He has also been Chair of the Alberta Library, a consortium of more than 300 libraries and the Health Knowledge Network, a health information collective. On the University of Calgary campus, Dr. Pannekoek has been a primary mover in the creation of the Information Commons and he is a national leader in the creation of digital resources and the transformation of academic publishing. He is also currently a member of the University of Calgary led, SuperNet research alliance which is studying the impact of the network on Alberta. Dr. Pannekoek's long-standing interest in Aboriginal communities is reflected in his participation in initiatives such as the partnership that led to the Head Smashed In Buffalo Jump historic site and the University of Calgary partnership with Red Crow College and his many publications.

Frits Pannekoek
Director, Information Resources
University Librarian
Associate Professor
Faculty of Communication and Culture
MacKimmie Library tower Room 408A
University of Calgary
2500 University Drive NW
Calgary, AB T2N 1N4
Tel: 403-220-8743
Fax: 403-282-1218
fritsp@ucalgary.ca

Ricardo Ramirez

Ricardo joined the School of Environmental Design and Rural Development at the University of Guelph, in January 2004. Before that he was involved in consulting and research efforts in rural communication and resource management projects both internationally as well as in rural and remote parts of Ontario. His career started with non-governmental organizations in Latin America and the Caribbean with small-scale agricultural projects. Ricardo spent over five years working with the Communication for Development unit of the Food and Agriculture Organization of the UN (FAO) in Rome. He then worked in the Netherlands as coordinator of the information and communication unit of a sustainable agriculture project. Ricardo became familiar with K-Net in 1998 when this organization agreed to be featured as three case studies in his Ph.D dissertation. He was part of the team that developed the community engagement and evaluation approach for the Kuh-ke-nah Smart Demonstration Project. He coordinated the production of a multi-media package on K-Net http://smart.knet.ca/kuhkenah_flash.html and is currently involved with a participatory evaluation of KOs telehealth expansion project.

Ricardo Ramírez
Assistant Professor
School of Environmental Design and Rural Development
Landscape Architecture Building #104
University of Guelph
Guelph, ON N1G 2C9
Tel: 519-824-4120 x 53986
Fax: 519-767-1686
rramirez@uoguelph.ca

Teresa Ritter

Teresa is an MA candidate in the Joint Graduate Programme in Communication and Culture between York and Ryerson Universities in Toronto, Ontario. She holds a BA in Canadian Studies and Film and Media Studies from the University of Alberta. Her major research is concerned with broadband technology in rural, remote, and northern areas of Canada. Her MA thesis, Building Broadband Basics, looks at two public-sector initiatives to build broadband infrastructure in rural and northern areas of the country. The thesis explores expectations for broadband and experiences of these initiatives through a case study with Blue Sky Net. Blue Sky Net, located in northeastern Ontario, is a community-based network made up of 83 communities, including five First Nations. Teresa is also involved with the SSHRC funded study, "How Will Canadian Consumers Benefit from Access to Broadband Networks? An Investigation of Broadband Demand, Usage, Supply and Policy in Canada," headed by Dr. Catherine Middleton at Ryerson University.

Teresa Ritter
MA Student
Joint Graduate Programme in Communication & Culture
York & Ryerson Universities
Home Contact:
#201-376 Brunswick Ave
Toronto, ON M5R 2Y9
Tel: 416-732-3103
tritter@ryerson.ca

Scott Robinson

Scott has been teaching since 1983 as a Social Anthropologist at the public Universidad Metropolitana, Iztapalapa campus in Mexico City. He has also been a Documentary film and video producer since 1969 and was a co-signer for the Declaration of Barbados in 1971. His Research interests include indigenous rights in Latin America, negotiating new rules for hydropower development projects forcing involuntary relocation of traditional peoples, the challenges of using the emerging digital tools for social justice and social development in Latin America, community telecenters and telecommunications public policy reform issues in the region. Scott's CV can be viewed by visiting his institution's website: www.uam-antropologia.info/profesores/robinson.html

Scott Robinson
Professor Titular
Departamento de Antropologia,
Universidad Metropolitana
Iztapalapa
Louisiana 133-2
Colonia Napoles
Mexico, D.F. 03810
Mexico
Tel/Fax 525 55 687 6030
ssr@laneta.apc.org

Dr. Lorna Roth

Lorna is Associate Professor and Chairperson at the Department of Communication Studies, Concordia University in Montréal. Dr. Roth has been involved in broadcasting policy development and analysis, and has consulted with First Peoples and multicultural/multiracial groups since the late seventies on issues of technology access, fair portrayal practices, infrastructure and human resource diversity, and minority representation at the level of employment. Her book, Something New in the Air: The Story of First Peoples Television Broadcasting in Canada (McGill-Queen's University Press), will be released in June. She is currently working on another book entitled: The Colour-Balance Project: Race and Visual Representation. She has a long-standing interest in minorities in public and private broadcasting sectors, and has written extensively about the construction of cultural and racial diversity in the media.

Lorna Roth
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Communication Studies
Concordia University
7141 Sherbrooke St. West, HB 427
Montreal, QC H4B 1R6
Tel: 514-848-2424 ext 2535
l.roth@sympatico.ca

Duncan Sanderson

Duncan completed a Ph. D. in Sociology and has been conducting research into the social dimensions of the implementation of new technologies for the past 14 years. He has conducted field studies of the implementation of videoconferencing, analyzed collaborative research projects, investigated communication in engineering design groups, documented a participatory design approach in a multi-media mail project, and conducted an ethnographic study of the training needs of telehomecare nurses. Most recently, Duncan has been studying the development of community networks and the creation (and obstacles to creation) of Web sites by community organizations. In relation to the use of new technology by First Nation communities, his research interests include the evaluation of government programs designed to support community use of new technologies, the process of introducing and using telehealth, and the way that the cultures of First Nations may shape the take-up and use of new technologies.

Duncan Sanderson
Chargé de cours, programme STS
Université du Québec à Montréal
Home: 10842 Waverly
Montreal, QC H3L 2W8
Tel: 514-334-0300
Duncan_Sanderson@yahoo.ca

Peggy Smith

Peggy Smith is a Registered Professional Forester, and currently a Ph.D. candidate in the University of Toronto's Faculty of Forestry. She is working on a thesis examining the roles and responsibilities, based on a comparison of institutions and values, of Aboriginal groups, the forest industry, the provincial government and environmental non-governmental organizations in northwestern Ontario. Her appointment with the Faculty of Forestry and the Forest Environment at Lakehead University began August 1, 2000. Upon completion of her Ph.D. she will transfer to a tenure-track position focused on Aboriginal Peoples and forestry, a new position at Lakehead. Peggy continues her longstanding affiliation with the National Aboriginal Forestry Association whose goal is to increase Aboriginal participation in the forest sector. Her areas of expertise are: Aboriginal peoples and forestry, community forestry, co-management, public participation, forest policy and legislation, northern development, forest management planning, forest certification

Peggy Smith
Lecturer
Faculty of Forestry & the Forest Environment
Lakehead University
Thunder Bay, ON P7B 5E1
Tel: 807-343-8672
Fax: 807-343-8116
peggy.smith@lakeheadu.ca
website:
http://flash.lakeheadu.ca/~psmith/index/

Brian Walmark

Brian is the coordinator of the Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute (KORI) in Thunder Bay. (http://research.knet.ca/) KORI was established by Chiefs' resolution to change the way in which academic research is conducted in First Nations communities. KORI has been mandated to seek out university partners who support participatory research and to build research capacity at the community level. Brian has worked with First Nations and Metis in Northwestern Ontario for over twenty years. He is a member of the Metis Nation of Ontario and a founding member of the Metis Cultural Commission. His research interest focuses on the ways in which First Nations and Metis users shape ICTs to improve education, health and community development.

Brian Walmark
Policy Analyst and Research Director
Keewaytinook Okimakanak Research Institute
135 Syndicate Avenue, Suite 405
Thunder Bay, ON P7C3V6
Tel: 877-737-5638 extension 51261
Fax: 807-345-7882
brianwalmark@knet.ca
website : http://research.knet.ca/

Dr. Lorna Roth

Lorna is Associate Professor and Chairperson at the Department of Communication Studies, Concordia University in Montréal. Dr. Roth has been involved in broadcasting policy development and analysis, and has consulted with First Peoples and multicultural/multiracial groups since the late seventies on issues of technology access, fair portrayal practices, infrastructure and human resource diversity, and minority representation at the level of employment. Her book, Something New in the Air: The Story of First Peoples Television Broadcasting in Canada (McGill-Queen's University Press), will be released in June. She is currently working on another book entitled: The Colour-Balance Project: Race and Visual Representation. She has a long-standing interest in minorities in public and private broadcasting sectors, and has written extensively about the construction of cultural and racial diversity in the media.

Lorna Roth
Associate Professor and Chair
Department of Communication Studies
Concordia University
7141 Sherbrooke St. West, HB 427
Montreal, QC H4B 1R6
Tel: 514-848-2424 ext 2535
l.roth@sympatico.ca

Duncan Sanderson

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Duncan Sanderson
Chargé de cours, programme STS
Université du Québec à Montréal
Home: 10842 Waverly
Montreal, QC H3L 2W8
Tel: 514-334-0300
Duncan_Sanderson@yahoo.ca

Kathi Wilson

Kathi is an assistant professor in the Department of Geography at the University of Toronto at Mississauga and a research associate with the McMaster University Institute of Environment and Health. She has a long-standing interest in the health of Aboriginal peoples and is firmly committed to community-based research. Her past research has explored the links between environment and health for Aboriginal peoples. Her current research, funded by CIHR, seeks to examine the extent to which inequalities in access to health care services exist for Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal Canadians living in urban areas and to determine the relative role of these inequalities in shaping health disparities.

Kathi Wilson
Assistant Professor
Department of Geography
University of Toronto at Mississauga
3359 Mississauga Rd. N.
Mississauga, ON L5L 1C6
Tel : 905-828-3864
Fax: 905-828-5273
kathi.wilson@utoronto.ca