

**ICT in Remote and Rural  
First Nations: Reflections from  
the First Nations Innovation /  
VideoCom Project**

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Communication & Global Power Shifts Conference  
Simon Fraser University, Vancouver, BC  
June 2013

# Pamela Palmater, Ryerson University (2012)

## Stretched Beyond Human Limits: Death By Poverty in First Nations

“... First Nations have gone from being the richest peoples in the world to the most impoverished, as their lands, resources, and ways of being were stolen from them.

Today, Canada may be full of apologies and regrets, but the fact remains that federal laws and policies not only put First Nations in their current state of extreme poverty, but the same laws and policies keep them in this state.”

# Glen S. Coulthard, University of Victoria (2007)

## Subjects of Empire: Indigenous Peoples and the 'Politics of Recognition' in Canada

“...our cultures have much to teach the Western world about the establishment of relationships within and between peoples and the natural world that are profoundly non-imperialist....

.... a growing number of today's Indigenous activists ... have begun to explore the emancipatory potential [of] a politics that is less oriented around attaining an affirmative form of recognition from the settler-state and society, and more about critically reevaluating, reconstructing and redeploying culture and tradition in ways that seek to prefigure, alongside those with similar ethical commitments, a radical alternative to the structural and psycho-affective facets of colonial domination.”

# National Aboriginal Health Organization (2004)

Ownership, Control, Access, and Possession (OCAP)  
Or Self-Determination Applied to Research:  
A Critical Analysis of Contemporary First Nations Research  
and Some Options for First Nations Communities

**OCAP has been described as “a political response to colonialism and the role of knowledge production in reproducing colonial relations.”**

# Penny Carpenter, Keewaytinook Okimakanak (2011)

Intervention at a workshop on ICT and health in Indigenous communities,  
York University

**“No research about us without us.”**

# Research Project Overview

- Research on how remote and rural First Nations are innovating with broadband networks and ICT

<http://fn-innovation-pn.com>

- Four partners, four provinces, three time zones:
  - Keewaytinook Okimakanak (KO) in Ontario (joined 2005)
  - First Nations Education Council (FNEC) in Quebec (joined 2008)
  - Atlantic Canada's First Nation Help Desk (joined 2006)
  - University of New Brunswick (started research in 2005)
- VideoCom (2006-2012); First Nations Innovation (2013 to 2017)
- Funded since 2005 by SSHRC; partners contribute in-kind
- Also partners in the First Mile outreach project: <http://firstmile.ca> (led by SFU until 2013, now part of First Nations Innovation project)

# Community Innovation and Community Informatics



“Community innovation is concerned not with ensuring opportunities for competition in globalized marketplaces but rather with enabling members of these communities to better undertake the tasks for which they normally have responsibility and for undertaking new tasks as they might become necessary - all within a context of shared community norms, values and goals.”

-- Michael Gurstein

# How Can Our Research Support First Nations Innovation with ICT?



- Engaging community members in the design and analysis of the research
- Engaging community leaders in publications and presentations
- Showcasing and celebrating community innovation

# First Nation Organization Research Partners

- Partners are First Nation intermediary / support organizations
- Community engagement would be impossible without excellent First Nation partners
- Responsible to communities and report to First Nation leadership
- Regional similarities and also differences in priorities; operate by consensus as a team
- We meet every month by videoconference, since June 2006



# Community-Based Research

- From 2006-2009, research focused on work of First Nation organization partners and video communications
- Research with collaborating remote and rural First Nations began in 2010
- Collaborated with four First Nation communities to date: Fort Severn (ON), Mishkeegogamang (ON), Kitigan Zibi Anishinabeg (QC), Elsipogtog (NB).
- Each has different culture, environment, interests, priorities, ways of engaging



# Publications a Project Focus

- Have more than 50 publications to date (2006 – 2013) – 10 have been translated to French
- Important for grad students to have the training and experience
- Important for First Nation organization partners to have input and documentation for their needs
- Important for First Nation community members to have their voices reflected in the publications
- Drafting publications to meet all these needs is both an opportunity and challenge



# Project Publication Policy

- Developing our project publication policy has been a major place of learning
- Have had many successes and lots of room for future improvement
- Every project publication must have at least one Aboriginal author
- Every community-based publication must have at least one community member author
- Engaging leadership in presentations
- Other project policy: copyright



# Future Work for This Team

## Research

- Developing e-Community strategies based on community research and needs
- Studies of broadband-enabled services in collaborating First Nation communities in Atlantic, Quebec and Ontario (and NWT)

## Outreach

- Publishing community success stories in First Nations media outlets
- Academic publications and presentations with community co-authors

# Acknowledgements

- Thanks to community members for participating in this research
- Thanks to other members of the research team and community researchers and liaisons
- All the partner organizations contribute in-kind resources to this project
- Our work has been supported since 2006 by the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council – thank-you SSHRC!

## Contacts for follow up

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Thank you!  
Comments, questions?