



Call For Papers - Cahiers du CIÉRA

Temporary title :

Appropriation of New Media by Indigenous Peoples Living in a Remote or Isolated Community: Advocacy, Revitalization, Connection and Sharing

Co-editors :

Roxanne Blanchard-Gagné, PhD student, Culture Société Research Center, National Institute of Scientific Research (INRS), Montreal

Danny Baril, PhD student, School of Indigenous Studies, University of Quebec in Abitibi-Temiscamingue (UQAT), Val-d'Or/Rouyn-Noranda

Summary :

The theme proposed is the result of a reflection on new media use for sharing knowledge and information, and interactive digital tools to connect activism, such as social and political tactics. We are seeking to show different perspectives on the multi-contextual view of how these new media help people living in remote and/or isolated communities to overcome challenges and respond to them (Ginsburg 2008). Isolation is polysemous; it refers to physical distancing, and the observer's fixed point of references. Isolation can also be linked to a cultural distortion of self-(and reality-)perception experienced through the loss of language, spiritual and cultural anchors. Through this link, Indigenous people in urban areas can feel culturally isolated. Regarding this multi-contextual aspect of isolation, new media is providing a valuable insight on how to break the feeling of isolation and stay connected in urban and remote communities. We noted the criteria of *nordicity*¹, which we are more familiar with because of our research fields. Indigenous people from around the world are experiencing increased isolation monitoring through their living conditions at local scale. Our issue of the journal will

¹ We meant « the state or level of being polar in the Northern Hemisphere » (Hamelin 1978 : xi).

consider papers dealing with the use of new media in order to break the feelings of isolation, regardless of geographical location.

The goal of this special double issue is to shed light on platforms that draw aspirations and broad call for actions in terms of advocacy, revitalization, connection and sharing. All of these initiatives of restorative justice and sovereignty (cultural, political, food, etc.) have, among other things, been made possible through technology and Internet connectivity, as a tool for disseminating information in order to democratize access to knowledge outside of the traditional channels (Ginsburg 2008; Turner 1991). Through compelling scholarly research, we aim to give visibility to examples of open innovation based on various approaches that highlight many aspects of these core sharing tools: transmission of knowledge, know-how and interpersonal skills. New media is a crucial tool for knowledge and ideas dissemination, however, isolated Indigenous populations face unique challenges to Internet access. For example, households in northern Canada struggle to maintain connectivity due to the high costs and inequity of internet access between some communities (Alexander et al. 2009).

For decades, new media has been used throughout the North for sharing information and to supply radio programs, in compliance with the interactive storytelling medium (Gitelman and Geoff 2005). Radio stations were built to target Nordic audiences in the late 1940s to provide recorded programs. In 1958, CBC/Radio-Canada expanded their reach to cover more areas in the Arctic regions, where they began to provide programming in Inuktitut, Dene and other Indigenous languages; the same development took place for television broadcasting. The advent of the Anik satellite in 1972 marked the rise of a television era in Canada's North (Roth 1999: 86). Throughout the 1970s indigenous broadcasting took a new turn with the production of Indigenous programming for television. All of these initiatives culminated in the creation of Television Northern Canada (TVNC) in 1991. TVNC later established in 1999 a national Indigenous network known as Aboriginal Peoples Television Network (APTN) (Alia 2010: 97-101; Roth 1999). As Valerie Alia states:

Canada has long been the world leader in fostering broadcasting and film, in remote communities, and by and for First Peoples. Broadcasting has been more durable than print, and now is expanding via “new media”. The leadership role

persists, despite declining government funding, and increasing support in other countries (Alia 2010 : 84).

The Internet that we use today - as general purpose technology - expands the Indigenous realm and goes beyond supporting identity and community, especially in the North, by building connections to the wider world (Christensen 2003: 19). Since the turn of the millennium, Roth threatened the Web as a social environment in which Indigenous people can express their cultures and identity:

To what extent will First Peoples be able to "indigenize" the Internet in the North? The answer to this question will depend on the degree to which they are able to use the net for purposes of cultural persistence, to be present on the net visually, socially, technically, locally, discursively - to make their presence felt (Roth 1999 : 93).

More than 20 years later, it is indeed in this articulation that many communities appropriated media technologies to serve their vision. Bronwyn Lumby's research on the use of social media supports this point : « [...] Facebook is becoming a popular vehicle amongst Indigenous people, to build, display, and perform Indigenous identities (Lumby 2010 : 70) ». Such practices are omnipresent in northern regions. For example, the community members of the Inuinnaq Hamlet of Cambridge Bay (Iqaluktuuttiaq) in Nunavut engaged in Facebook groups for sharing country food (Dunn 2015; Dunn et Gross 2019). A social network analysis of Twitter by Jeffrey Ansloos, psychologist and professor at the University of Toronto, can be summed up as:

#NativeTwitter is repurposing the platform to not only revitalize Indigenous cultures, but to mobilize politically and to assert sovereignty. His [Ansloos] research into language revitalization on the site found that "the [Twitter] ecology is producing an opportunity where there is language learning, but not in the way we have understood it — not merely to indigenize, but also to speak politically . . . and to strategically engage systems of the settler state." (Gaertner and Haberl 2020).

Social media allows Indigenous people to stay connected to the general public and share information about current events and controversial issues. We noted the example of the Idle No More movement in 2012 to contest the Bill C-45, an omnibus law introduced by the Harper government which would have affected the rights of Indigenous people (Wood 2015). The #sealfie campaign is another good example. In 2014, the social media campaign conflates the

right of Inuit to seal hunt, to promote the importance of seal hunting for northern communities and to target Ellen Degeneres who donate the money raised by selling her Oscar selfie to anti-seal hunting charity (Hawking and Silver 2017; Battistini 2018). In 2016, the movement #NoDAPL communicates — all around the world — on behalf of the Standing Rock Sioux for the preservation of their land against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) (Johnson 2017; Streinman 2017). In 2019, the Waorani people launched their digital campaign #WaoraniResistance to seek support to stop Ecuador's government for the concession contracts for oil drilling on their traditional land (High 2020); the aim is to protect the Amazon rainforest and to promote Waorani's right to self-determination (Severns 2020).

Thus, since the 2000s, the use of new media has increased to thousands of hundreds initiatives regarding the growing demand for knowledge sharing platforms (applications dedicated to revitalize indigenous languages, maps of lands' ancestral occupants, documentaries, historical atlases, podcasts, video games, Facebook groups, etc.). At this moment, we have already seen the effects of the COVID-19 pandemic on the surge in the use of digital technology, as well as the number of research projects related to these new platforms. It is in this spirit, we aim to shine a spotlight on collaborative works, community-based initiatives and how Indigenous people in the North face barriers. All proposals related to the subject will be considered, whether the initiatives were put in place before or during the current pandemic. This issue of the journal will offer a contemporary look at the potential possibilities offered by new media in its diversity to raise awareness, to resist, to facilitate social and political engagement, to transmit language and cultural knowledge and restore Indigenous heritage.

Contributions* :

We will consider the following contributions: scientific papers, parole and opinions essays, interviews, reviews, bibliographic notes, testimonials, stand-alone articles, poetry, comics, videography, etc. In order to take actions towards linguistic imperialism, submitted essays can be written in English or in French or Indigenous languages with an accompanying English or French translation.

* For all other contributions, please submit your proposal to the co-editors.

Timetable for authors:

Please send expression of interest, including the title with 300 words abstract (Word .doc or .docx) to cahiersduciera@ciera.ulaval.ca before August 4, 2021.

All authors will be notified by email in the next days following the pre-review quality screens. If you are an author accepted, you are entitled to provide your paper (6000 to 8000 words including end notes and bibliography) by September 30, 2021 then it would get through a peer-review process. We aim to publish the next special double issue in September of 2021. All scientific papers and bibliographic notes have a minimum length of 6,000 words and the authors can extend it to 8,000 words — including end notes and references.

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