Indigenous Cyberactivism:
The case of KO-Knet and MyKnet.org in Canada

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objective

- not case against ... social media or specific services
- but case for ... media / technology diversity that is **cultural diversity**
- through activist projects & practices

- UNESCO Interactive Atlas of the World’s Languages in Danger
cyber / digital / online activism

• no single definition / no clear boundaries
• different activist practices, strategies, forms of, ...
• social / political change central

• a possible typology for cyberactivist practices (Vegh 2003):
  (1) awareness / advocacy -> organizing & carrying out actions
  (2) organization / mobilization -> call for actions
  (3) action / reaction -> "hacktivism"

• need for more research -> historically informed, contextualized, ethnographic

indigenous cyberactivism

• indigenous people / movements / groups early ICT adopters -> improve political / sociocultural / economic situation

• outreach / inreach initiatives (Landzelius 2006)

• outreach:
  Zapatistas / EZLN in Mexico (1994) -> transnational networks of support & solidarisation use ICT -> electronic solidarity scapes -> counter publics -> political negotiations

• inreach:
  KO-Knet in Canada (1994) -> ICT infrastructure -> ICT services -> community owned & controlled

Keewaytinook Okimakanak's Kuhkenah Network (KO-Knet – www.knet.ca)

- **connecting** First Nation people & communities in northwestern Ontario -> remote region / isolated communities

- from bulletin board to broadband / satellite internet infrastructure & services

- telemedicine, internet high school, video conferencing, IP cell phone network, IT training, personal e-mail & web presence, ...

MyKnet.org – "the native facebook"?

- (ad)free webspace -> personal homepages
- about 30,000 active accounts (total pop. 50,000)
- set-up for the youth (~50% < 24)
- users are also active producers
  -> creating representations of local daily life,
  -> learning to write, code, design, discuss

- MyKnet.org & Facebook (2011):
  communicating / connecting via FB vs
designing / creating & gathering local info via MyKnet.org

  Nation communities made themselves at home on the World Wide Web. The Journal
“safe and healthy on-line space for young people”

"... knowing native people have a place to visit on the WWW"

"... to have a native web page for the whole world to see ..."
JOSHANE'S COMMENTARY

July 31/07

Hey there, indiansoid!

I decided to do one of these rare updates on Knet. I've been just working and staying at home. There is this dog that I have been feeding our scraps to. I don't know his name but I guess will call him Scraps. My son just keeps looking at the dog. I guess he doesn't know what it is yet. He'll be 10 months old tomorrow so he'll be on very shortly. Wow they do grow fast. Faith should be getting back to work soon and we don't have a sitter yet.

SO if you can refer a baby sitter to me give us a call. I'm in the phone book under Joshane Fiddler. It may only be 4 days a week.

No lamplin has come around my way lately. I've been trying to get together with Stacie, Dannew, and Abin. Since Faith is out of work and mine is also, I'm trying to find out if we can get together. A good thing is that the only thing I'm doing is trying to get in the phone book. I don't have to spend any money.
(indigenous) cyberactivism = cultural activism

- diversity of cultures
- but dominance of few = marginalization of many
- need to support local languages, cultural heritage & practices
- through (1) control & ownership (2) cooperation, networking & sharing
- considering limitations ...