InDIGenius

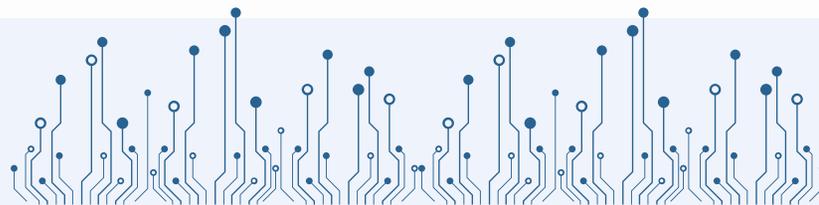## INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES + TECHNOLOGY SHARING INITIATIVE

TABLE OF CONTENTS

OVERVIEW

The Americas Research Network (ARENET) in partnership with the Smithsonian Institution's Recovering Voices program (RV), the National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH), the COLING Project, the Experimental Humanities Collaborative Network (EHCN) and The Council of American Overseas Research Centers (CAORC), is organizing a three-day meeting focused on assessing the current state of knowledge around the use of digital technologies by Indigenous scholars for language revitalization efforts in the Americas. Our principal aim is the planning of the InDIGenius Languages and Digital Technology Fair that will be held in 2024.

This "state of knowledge" meeting will take place in Mexico City over three days between August 7th and 10th, 2023, with over twenty participants from the U.S., Mexico, and Canada. We will convene experts in digital humanities technology, with a focus on indigenous scholars, researchers, community experts, language activists, digital technology developers, and policymakers. Together, this group will appraise the different scales of technology employed for language revitalization by Indigenous communities, scholars, educational institutions, as well as industry partners. We see a need to convene a diverse group that highlights the work being done by Indigenous scholars and to assess which methods and technologies are already in use, as well as technologies that are currently in development. We will also identify areas needing support, and create opportunities for Indigenous scholars to share and exchange knowledge around the use of digital technology.

BACKGROUND

The InDIGenius initiative is the result of an ongoing partnership between ARENET, the Recovering Voices program, the Experimental Humanities Collaborative Network (EHCN), the Council of American Overseas Research Centers; the Coling Project which include the University of Warsaw, Poland; the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill; and Bishop University in Quebec, Canada.

This interdisciplinary international collaboration is at the forefront of research with Indigenous scholars in language revitalization efforts, linking these with institutional partners such as museums and archives, as well as highlighting support for technological innovations in education and access to archival and museum-based resources. The cluster of projects carried out through this partnership has identified the specific community-led research approaches that place resources where they are needed most for language revitalization efforts, and has created channels for Indigenous scholars to present their work at high profile academic conferences and publications. This InDIGenius Technology Sharing Initiative is the logical next step in building increased capacity within communities, as well as supporting their efforts in the dissemination of their innovations more broadly.

GOALS

Our aims for InDIGenius 2024 is to convene a diverse cohort of Indigenous scholars—many of whom are innovators in the use of digital technology within their communities—and support their efforts through developing a unique community of practice. The initiative would consist of three complementary elements:

1) to develop a public technology sharing event (fair) that would allow these scholars and relevant tech innovators to showcase to a public audience digital tools used for language revitalization;

2) to convene a series of workshops around specific tools that are critical for sharing knowledge among different communities and scholarly disciplines, thereby using on-the-ground community-based experiences to help other communities in their language revitalization efforts;

3) to organize a series of competitive but targeted fellowships for Indigenous scholars to join university, museum, or archive interactive programs as part of their professionalization, and to work with them on technology innovation for language revitalization.

GOALS

The workshops would include hands-on training in the use of technology; discussions on ethics affecting communities around use rights, copyright, and Open Access; meetings and panels with funding agencies who support technological innovations and research; meetings with museum and archive staff to develop best practices for digital access. The technology currently used in language revitalization efforts include: social media for teaching languages and connecting community speakers and those geographically separated through migration; phone apps and digital dictionaries; databases designed according to community cultural protocols; the use of videos for recording and teaching Indigenous languages; publications using digital audio and visual components; digital tools supporting Indigenous speakers with hearing and sight disabilities; data management tools that convene multimedia resources for language teaching (audio, text, video, translations, etc.); digital transcription tools; digitization technology to improve access to archives; virtual consultation technology to connect communities with otherwise inaccessible collections.
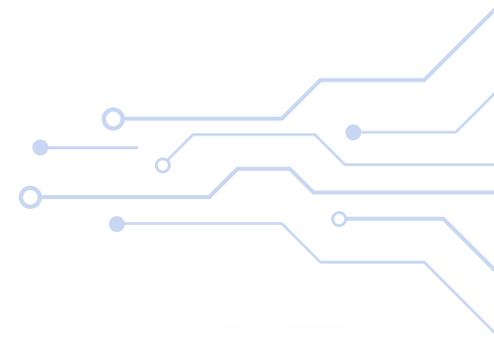
PROJECT DESIGN

To assure the quality of the project design, we are in the process of establishing an advisory board whose members will include language and tech specialists, and scholars affiliated with our programs. The advisory board for InDIGenius will provide guidance in the development and implementation of activities and evaluate each stage of the initiative.

All activities will be carried out in close consultation with the initiative's advisory board.

PLANNING MEETING
MEXICO CITY
AUGUST 7 - 10, 2023

7

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Participants will share their expertise with the larger group through brief introductory "lightning talks" (6 mins each), followed by an afternoon of brainstorming sessions that will chart pre-existing projects and experts working in this field, and identify areas needing further support. Each session will include the gathering of information followed by summarizing these as reports to be used to develop the 2024 Tech Fair.

Topics that will be part of these sessions will include:

LANGUAGES + DIGITAL TECHNOLOGIES

Best practices, methodologies, and strategies for applying digital technologies to language revitalization efforts; Orthography development; Oral recordings and dissemination for language revitalization; Wiki or Dictionary-making in Indigenous Languages; Language mapping and migration; Animated stories narrated in Indigenous languages; Digital humanities, digital archives.

Radio stations, TV, podcasts, and social media; Apps, memes; Creative Commons for transcription, video, etc. and use with museum collections, archives, and exhibits; poetry, literature, performance, theater, contemporary music, and film.

LANGUAGE IN ACTION

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Day Two will divide participants into focus groups to design specific aspects of the Tech Fair.
Each group will be given the opportunity to discuss best practices for workshops. The second half of the day will include the screening of video projects and a technology showcase.

Topics that will be part of the focus group discussions will include:

TEACHING WITH TECHNOLOGY

Selecting and assessing appropriate technologies, new uses for existing resources, as well as developing digital tools for aggregating, analyzing, and disseminating multi-media language documentation and education. Exploration of technologies for specific age groups.

Ethics for intellectual property rights and dissemination of cultural knowledge; Policies for digital language revitalization efforts and maintenance; Culturally responsive and appropriate approaches to linguistic rights and responsibilities

LANGUAGE AND DIGITAL CONTENT POLICIES IN ACTION

PRELIMINARY PROGRAM

Will focus on the development of a Tech Fair management plan that places participating Indigenous scholars and community experts in leadership positions, as well as design pipelines for professionalization for young, as well as up-and-coming Indigenous scholars. This will include planning discussions for how to administer resources for multiple communities, scholars, institutions, and experts prior to, during, and after the Tech Fair.

The outcome of Day Three includes an organization chart, grant writing plan, and the appointment of leadership positions in each area of expertise.

PARTNERS

NEH.GOV

The National Endowment for the Humanities supports research, education, preservation, and public programs in the humanities.

NATIONAL ENDOWMENT FOR THE HUMANITIES

COLING.AL.UW.EDU.PL

COLING promotes and develops sustainable measures for language revitalization and maintenance.

COLING

UNESCO.ORG

This event is part of the UNESCO's International Decade of Indigenous Languages (2022-2032).

2022-2032 | INTERNATIONAL DECADE OF Indigenous Languages

The Americas Research Network

ARENET is an international consortium, founded in 1998 as a not-for-profit organization to promote collaboration and exchange in the Americas by supporting innovative programs on research, education, and outreach.

ARENET.ORG

Smithsonian Institution
RECOVERING VOICES

RV is a collaborative program at the Smithsonian Institution that partners with communities around the world to revitalize and sustain endangered languages and knowledge.

NATURALHISTORY.SI.EDU/RESEARCH/ANTHROPOLOGY/PROGRAMS/RECOVERING-VOICES

Experimental Humanities Collaborative Network

The EHCN is a global network rethinking the humanities in the light of changing technologies, our increasingly connected planet, the ongoing ecological crisis, and the need to create more inclusive institutions.

EHCN.BARD.EDU

CAORC

CAORC is a federation of independent overseas research centers that promotes advanced research, mainly in the humanities and social sciences, with a focus on the conservation and recording of cultural heritage and the understanding and interpretation of modern societies.

CAORC.ORG

CONTACT

Greta de León
Executive Director
The Americas Research Network

gretadeleon@arenet.org

Gwyneira Isaac
Director, Recovering Voices
National Museum of Natural History
Smithsonian Institution

IsaacG@si.edu