TO REPRESENT OURSELVES: EMERGING ABORIGINAL DIGITAL IDENTITIES

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ABSTRACT / RÉSUMÉ

This paper explores the emerging presence of Indigenous peoples as digital citizens in the new digital world. Its focus is on how Indigenous organizations in Canada are exercising digital citizenship adding a new dimension to cultural diversity within Canada. While this is no easy way to assess the size of the Indigenous presence on the web, a quick survey of social networking sites and a general Google search indicates a significant presence across the entire web that is identifiably Indigenous and modern. This digital presence includes both individuals and organizations that use elements of historical Indigenous culture as significant aspects of their representation. The rise of digital citizenship and the extension of Indigenous identities to this new space raise interesting questions about the reflexive nature of Indigenous identities and Indigenous communities.

Cet article explore la présence émergente des peuples autochtones comme cybercitoyens du nouveau monde numérique. Il met l'accent sur la manière dont les organisations autochtones du Canada exercent leur cybercitoyenneté en ajoutant une nouvelle dimension à la diversité culturelle au Canada. Bien qu'il n'existe aucun moyen simple d'évaluer l'importance de la présence autochtone sur le Web, une reconnaissance rapide des sites de réseautage social et une recherche générale avec Google révèlent une présence distinctement autochtone et moderne d'importance dans l'ensemble du Web. Cette cyberprésence inclut les personnes et les organisations qui utilisent des éléments de la culture historique autochtone en tant qu'aspects significatifs de leur représentation. L'augmentation du nombre de cybercitoyens autochtones et la prolongation de l'identité autochtone dans ce nouvel espace soulèvent des questions intéressantes sur la nature réflexive de l'identité et des collectivités autochtones.

Issues of identity and representation as acts of citizenship among Indigenous peoples in Canada have been a constant part of the cultural landscape since the inception of the 1876 *Indian Act* which defined who was and was not an "Indian." In traditional Indigenous societies, identities and representation were not citizenship issues in the way we conceive of them in the contemporary world (Peroff 1997; Weaver 2001). Individual and collective identities arose through a system of family, clan and nation and geographical location. The issue of identity choice as a citizenship act, both individual and collective, is actually a modern concern (Grossberg 1996; Bauman 1996), evolving out of the European enlightenment that moved away from the use of formal class stratifications (lords, ladies, freemen and serfs) as identity markers to our current conceptions of identity as a negotiated site, consisting of a mélange of individual and collective conceptions wrapped in a force-field of power.

In a modern sense, we discuss identities in the plural rather than the singular, assuming that we may have

more than one and have moved away from the notion of a fixed identity for life (Gergen 2001). Modern life is comprised of multiple identities attempting to co-exist in overlapping social and political spaces. For Indigenous peoples in Canada (and around the world), identity has been a struggle against external representations, usually through stereotypes (Warry 2008) and a constant attempt to gain control over identity and its representation, an act which Newhouse (2000) considers a fundamental act of self-governance.

The digital world is perhaps the latest forum where these issues are again being played out as Indigenous peoples engage, project their identities outward and establish a new presence. The emergence of the internet as a new site for communication and presentation of self has provided Indigenous organizations in Canada with new means (text, image, video and sound) to reclaim and enhance the process of defining Indigenous identities, and to challenge the ability of others to represent them. Through the choice of images used on their websites, they can create new representations of Indigenous people in Canada, in effect, creating new identities for themselves. These representations can be complex and multi-faceted, challenging the older stereotypes of "savage" and "primitive." These websites illustrate a diversity of interests and involvements among Indigenous communities and organizations[1], adding a dimension to the representation of diversity in Canada when seen through the lens of "digital citizenship."

The growth in the use and popularity of the net over the last decade is having a profound effect on how people interact with each other, how organizations market and represent themselves, and how people acquire information and knowledge as well as represent themselves. The fact that the net is the first "location" in human history that potentially allows for world-wide access and freedom of expression, makes it the first community to which anyone (and everyone) can enter as equals, regardless of place, language or culture. Everyone equally has to go through the process of learning the technology and skills required to participate. People who traditionally have been omitted or lost from mainstream views can choose to participate in "digital citizenship" as an equal citizen (Niezen 2005).

The digital world also consists of newcomers and natives. Prensky (2001) makes a distinction between "digital natives," those individuals who began "surfing" the internet as children, sometimes before they can string a full sentence together, and the rest of us, whom he calls "digital immigrants." Given that Indigenous people in Canada represent its fastest growing cultural group and as a youthful population enjoys a majority of "digital natives," it should not be surprising then that Indigenous people in Canada as "digital citizens" have embraced this new form of citizenship as a way to define their own identities. Both "immigrants and natives" use the various mediums offered through the web, including videos, sounds, blogs and other social media such as Facebook or Myspace and most recently Ning and Twitter to create cyber communities and in the process altering how they are seen by others and their own view of themselves.

While a count of Indigenous websites is impossible, one can obtain an idea of the scope, extent and depth of Indigenous participation in digital citizenship. Niezen (2005) explores in some depth its characterization, dating it back to the early 1990's. The Canadian Aboriginal Portal (www.aboriginalcanada.gc.ca) illustrates the depth and the current diverse presence of Canadian-based Indigenous websites. The Government of Australia also has a similar site: The Indigenous Portal (www.indigenous.gov.au). Bill's Aboriginal links (www.bloorstreet.com/300block/aborl.htm) provides an excellent set of links. NativeWeb (www.nativeweb.org) describes itself as "resources for Indigenous cultures around the world."

CREATING POLITICAL AND SOCIAL IDENTITIES

Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada have embraced the internet as a way to engage and educate both Indigenous and non-Indigenous people about their political agendas and social issues, extending their citizenship activities into the digital sphere. Participation takes the form of websites that provide voice in this new digital community for individuals and collectives. The Assembly of First Nations (www.afn.ca), a national body of chiefs representing First Nations peoples across the country, posts comments on recent developments involving Indigenous people in Canada and explains the issues and concerns of First Nations people in Canada. Through the web, they are proactively creating new images of modern Indigenous peoples in Canada, discussing their concerns and providing an alternative perspective than that provided by mainstream media. Their site also contains links to other Indigenous and government sites, creating a sense of a linked community. The web then becomes an expression of a foundational idea in Indigenous traditional thought: interconnectedness.

The Métis National Council (www.metisnation.ca) is another prominent Indigenous political organization in Canada. It is a member-elected organization that represents Métis peoples in Canada from Ontario, Manitoba, Saskatchewan, Alberta and British Columbia. Its main concerns are Métis rights in Canada. Its presence on the web works to illuminate the diversity among Indigenous

peoples in Canada; not all Indigenous people in Canada share the same cultures or political objectives or social and political status. It communicates the unique heritage of Métis peoples in Canada, and works to educate Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples about their culture. It also invites people to join them in advancing Métis political objectives, in effect, asking others to exercise their citizenship rights.

Indigenous women in Canada also have their own voice on the web; they are represented collectively through the Native Women's Association of Canada's website (www.nwac-hq.org). Urban aboriginal peoples are represented by the National Aboriginal Friendship Centres (www.nafc.ca) and the Congress of Aboriginal Peoples (www.abo-peoples.org). Inuit people are present through organizations such as the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (www.itk.ca) and Inuit women by Pauktuutit (www.pauktuutit.ca). Aboriginal two-spirited people and two-spirited issues are represented at sites such 2spirits.com (www.2spirits.com). All of these organizations, through their websites, are creating new images of who Indigenous people in Canada are, and challenging entrenched stereotypes. These websites are examples of a strong, proactive presence in illuminating the diversity of Indigenous identities in Canada; they also add an additional layer to the multi-cultural representation of the country.

ADVOCACY AND IDENTITIES

Advocacy websites create a space where Indigenous voices discuss Indigenous issues. They also offer a way for individuals, both Indigenous and non, to educate themselves on the issues facing Indigenous people in Canada today from Indigenous perspectives. These websites play a role in the ongoing formation of Indigenous identity in Canada through the forums and information they offer. Through educating people in how the past plays a role in the present, they create a depth to Indigenous identity that is lost in the mainstream media and standard stereotypes. They fill in the spiritual, psychological and emotional dimensions that are often missing from the less interactive and personal information sources. Some examples include:

- The Indian Residential Schools Truth and Reconciliation Commission (www.trc-cvr.ca) provides information about Indian Residential Schools and their effect on generations of people and communities, including individuals who never themselves attended these schools. The Commission plans to document survivor stories, creating a national archive to ensure this traumatic piece of Canadian and Indigenous history is not lost or forgotten.
- The Aboriginal Healing Foundation website (www.ahf.ca) provides a repository of research and best practices for dealing with the effects of Residential Schools.
- The Sisters in Spirit campaign (www.nwac-hq.org/en/background.html), seeks to bring attention to the large number of Indigenous women in Canada that go missing and the fact that these disappearances do not receive the due diligence of the investigative authorities in Canada to find them. It provides a pictorial listing of missing and murdered Indigenous women.
- The Native Women's Association's website gives Indigenous women in Canada their own voice to counteract the stereotypes that they continue to face, as well as a place to reclaim their traditional position as influential voices in their communities.

All of these organizations, through their websites, are examples of the proactive steps Indigenous people in Canada are taking to create identities for themselves. They offer a depth to the struggles facing Indigenous peoples by providing specific examples and real people ordinary Canadians can identify with.

DIGITAL IMAGES AND IDENTITIES

Indigenous organizations are aware of their role as prominent voices on Indigenous issues on the net and have chosen to use particular pictures and symbols to help portray the image they want others to see. The portrayal of Indigenous issues and identities have often been problematic for Indigenous people in Canada as historically they have been represented by the words, interpretations and images of non-Indigenous people (Warry 2008). Such images include the stereotypes of the "noble savage," or the drunken Indian. Sometimes the stereotype is simply that of living in poverty, undereducated and unmotivated. For Indigenous women, it includes being subservient labourers and sex symbols. Indigenous organizations are using the web and their digital citizenship to present a more complex and self-defined image of the realities of Indigenous peoples.

The idea that Indigenous people are using the web to put forward an image of a more diverse group of people with complex issues and identities can be said to be a move towards an acknowledgement of the fusion of the traditional and the Euro-modern lives that most Indigenous people in Canada are living – or perhaps a move towards embracing a more bicultural stance within Canada. What is interesting about how Indigenous organizations are portraying themselves is that many are choosing to use a collage of images. These images, instead of providing a clear definition of what that organization thinks it is to be Indigenous in Canada, leave room for interpretation, following a more Indigenous paradigm of learning through personal thought and experience (Deloria 1997).

FIGURE 1: Chiefs of Ontario Header.



Source: Chiefs of Ontario. 2009. Home. http://www.chiefs-of-ontario.org/.

For example the website for the Chiefs of Ontario (www.chiefs-of-ontario.org) uses the image of an Indigenous man, probably in his early twenties, in a full head dress, standing on the side of a pristine clear lake (fig. 1). Behind the young man, slightly blurred, is what looks like a factory with a series of Canadian flags strung out along its side. We interpret this collage of images as challenging past stereotypical images through representing indigeneity in its current form: that of traditions forged with the reality of the Canadian nation-state. But the ultimate meaning of the image remains open to interpretation: what does this image of a mixture of Indigenous and Canadian symbols mean to this organization? Does the blurriness of the objects representing Canada signify uncertainty of the connection between Indigenous people and the nation-state of Canada? The use of a collage of images clearly demonstrates the complexity of Indigenous identities in Canada and shows how the internet is being utilized to explore this complexity.

FIGURE 2: AFN Header.



Source: Assembly of First Nations. 2009. Home. http://www.afn.ca/.

The use of collage to represent the diversity of Indigenous identities and issues in Canada is also embraced by other Indigenous organizations. The website for the Assembly of First Nations has a collage of a group of Indigenous men in traditional regalia, a war veteran in uniform with his remembrance poppy and flag whose symbol is not clear but is the colours of red, white and black (colours commonly found on the medicine wheel), a young Indigenous child and a picture of a dreamcatcher (fig. 2). These images are both traditional and current, Indigenous and Canadian. We see this as representative of the fused reality (Little Bear 2000; Newhouse 2004) of Indigenous identity in Canada.

The Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami, the national Inuit organization of Canada, has a picture of wildflowers gone to seed, a young Inuit boy dressed in modern everyday clothes and a large inukshuk (which looks much like the current symbol for the 2010 Olympic Games) at the edge of the ocean on a pristine day (fig. 3). This is another fused identity embracing a reality of traditional and modern symbols, in this case also merged in the inukshuk itself.

FIGURE 3: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami.



Source: Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami. 2009. Home. http://www.itk.ca/.

Another example of the blending of the traditional with the modern is found on the website of Native Child and Family Services of Toronto. It has as its logo the Toronto skyline within a dreamcatcher; the portrait of an Indigenous family is in the forefront (fig. 4). The Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society has at its logo a black print of a human foot with a red maple leaf (the symbol on the Canadian flag) connected strategically to the curve of the footprint, both outlined in white (fig. 5). Perhaps the motive behind these collages is to promote a variety of images to be associated with both Indigenous people and specifically these organizations. Although pictures on many of the Indigenous websites often include images of children, or of a young person dressed in traditional regalia, together with pictures of the land they are from (purportedly) as well as ancestral pictures or images, on

FIGURE 4: Native Child and Family Services Toronto.



Source: Native Child and Family Services Toronto. 2009. Home. http://www.nativechild.org/.

FIGURE 5: Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society.



Source: Blackfoot Canadian Cultural Society. 2006. http://www.blackfoot.ca/.

the web these organizations are choosing to move beyond these images to create a more complex image of Indigenous peoples in Canada. We argue that these organizations are proactively creating images of modern Indigenous peoples and the organizations that represent them, challenging the image of the stereotypical Indigenous person perhaps to one who is a member of a group of people who are diverse in both interests and identities. Whether these identity images are effective is beyond the scope of this paper and requires further research.

CREATING CULTURAL IDENTITIES

Many Indigenous organizations use traditional cultural symbols alone or presented within organizational logos to create their identity on the web. The common denominator among many of the logos being created by these Indigenous organizations is that they are mostly contained within a circle or the image of a dreamcatcher or medicine wheel. Both take as the foundational form a circle, which for many Indigenous nations in Canada has spiritual and cultural significance. Most have a detailed story within the circle. For example, the Sisters in Spirit Campaign run by the Native Women's Association of Canada has a face that encompasses the circle in the colours of blue and black (fig. 6). The website explains that it is the face of Grandmother moon and the implications of the colours and the symbol to the organization. Many websites provide an explanation of the symbols they use. The website of the Gitxsan Chief's Office (www.gitxan.ca), a cultural and political site, has as its symbol a canoe with a large hooked end reaching skywards. In the canoe are fish and what looks like eggs and sea beings and within the body of the canoe are faces to represent human beings (fig. 7). The website provides a detailed explanation of what this symbol represents to this organization and the Gitxsan people.

FIGURE 6: Sisters in Spirit Logo.



Source: Native Women's Association of Canada. 2009. Sisters in Spirit – Background. http://www.nwac-hq.org/en/background.html.

"The late artist Dick Baker designed the Kwakuitl Moon for the front of the poster, as well as carving a memorial that now stands in the Downtown Eastside of Vancouver. Grandmother Moon is a powerful teaching about Aboriginal women's special connection to our Grandmothers who have passed into the Spirit world. Grandmother Moon provides us direction, strength, knowledge and wisdom in taking our sacred place in our families, communities and beyond. She teaches us about our sacred role as the life-givers and the heart of our nations — for without women our nations cannot go on. We need Grandmother Moon's presence in our lives now more than ever, especially for our young women who live in the dark and struggle to live in the light." (Native Women's Association of Canada 2009, under "Sisters in Spirit Logo")

FIGURE 7: Gitxan's Chief's Office.



Source: Gitxsan Chief's Office. 2009. Home. http://www.gitxsan.com/.

"Depicted is a canoe with the bow hooking sharply skyward to our forebearers. Water, earth, fish and people are in the canoe. The faces represent the Gitxsan guiding (Gimlitzwit) the canoe, with the face at the stern being the one who steers (Gaayuuhadayet). Above the canoe are the elements of sun, earth and moon. There is a salmon and a river with eagle down on the surface of the water. This symbolizes the ceremony welcoming the first returning salmon that takes place each year. We are all people in one canoe, dependent upon, and a part of, the natural elements abundant in our territories." (Gitxsan Chief's Office 2009, under "About the Gitxsan logo")

The images are carefully chosen to create a connection to a historical cultural past while giving it a contemporary presentation. They serve to connect past with present. These symbols can also represent the continuation and strengthening of the cultural heritage of each Indigenous group. They foster an identity built upon a solid cultural foundation while clearly a part of a contemporary age. They present tradition as part of an emerging Aboriginal modernity (Newhouse 2000)

Cultural preservation and revitalization are also important components of Indigenous websites that originate from Canada. For example, Anishinaabemodaa (www.anishinaabemdaa.com) is a language site supporting the revitalization and preservation of the Anishinaabe, known by mainstream Canadians as Ojibway. Another site, Ohwejagehka:ha>degaenage (www.ohwejagehka.com), a Haudenosaunee (known by mainstream Canadians as Iroquois) website, explains the meanings behind Haudenosaunee songs and has clips that

can be downloaded for free. This site also has songs that can be purchased and downloaded. The Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park has a website that provides information on Blackfoot history and culture.

Many First Nations communities also have their own websites that present and discuss their history, traditions and current issues. The Six Nations of the Grand River (www.sixnations.ca) has a website that is cultural, political and socially oriented. They are currently involved in land claim disputes and use their website to educate the public, both Indigenous and non-Indigenous, about the history and ongoing situation with respect to their various claims.

The roles these websites play, and thus the images they use, are different than the collages used by the websites more concerned with promoting the diversity of Indigenous people in Canada. These organizations promote their specific identities and in the way illustrate the extent of the diversity of nations, issues and interests that Indigenous peoples are connected or involved with currently in Canada.

CREATING COMMERCIAL IDENTITIES

Another way in which Indigenous people in Canada have exercised their digital citizenship is through the promotion of commercial ventures online. As Aboriginal businesses have grown, and like businesses everywhere, they have also engaged the web as a site that can be used to advance their interests and generate revenues. They have created a commercial identity that has allowed groups even in remote communities to have a web business presence and identity, extending markets and business reach far beyond local markets. Goodminds.com (fig. 8) is an Indigenous bookseller that operates out of the Six Nations Reserve near Brantford, Ontario, and ships

FIGURE 8: Good Minds.



Source: Goodminds.com. 2009. Home. http://goodminds.com/.

books connected to Indigenous culture and heritage around the world. Indigenous ecotourism has really taken advantage of the benefits of the internet. Aboriginal Tourism Canada (www.aboriginaltourism.ca) showcases and links to twenty-eight Indigenous ecotourism sites in Canada (fig. 9). Many First Nations communities use their own websites to promote annual pow wows to the public: these are significant cultural events, but they also generate economic activity and revenue for the community. Many cultural sites and heritage museums also use

FIGURE 9: Aboriginal Tourism Canada.



Source: Aboriginal Tourism Canada. 2009. Home. http://www.aboriginaltourism.ca/.

the internet to generate interest and revenue for their venues: one such example is Blackfoot Crossing Historical Park (www.blackfootcrossing.ca).

The extensive Aboriginal web presence challenges negative stereotypes about Aboriginal peoples as uninterested in business and unable or unable to participate in modern commercial enterprise. Indigenous communities and organizations in Canada have embraced the internet as a way to both promote and conduct commercial activities. These sites typically present themselves using elements of historic Aboriginal cultures, clearly identifying themselves as "Aboriginal" in this modern medium. The strategy appears to be one of linking "indigeneity" or "aboriginality" to quality and stability; a direct challenge to an old stereotype.

EMBRACING INTERNET COMMUNITIES

As technology evolves, Indigenous people have been embracing new ways of communicating on the internet and extending their identities into this new space (Niezen 2005). Indigenous people and communities are using the video sharing website known as YouTube (www.youtube.com) as a place to update and educate people about Indigenous culture and specific social-political issues. A search of YouTube (September 09, 2009) using the terms "Aboriginal," "First Nations," "Indigenous," "Inuit," "Métis," and "Native American" uncovered nearly 200,000 videos across a broad spectrum of topics: traditional teachings, political information, advocacy for specific issues, art videos, music videos to name a few. Searching using specific cultural groups yields additional results: using the keyword "Cree" yields 76,200 videos, again across a broad range of topics and organizations. There is clearly a substantial Indigenous presence on this new medium. YouTube has become a place to showcase Indigenous culture and knowledge through videos of Indigenous dance, music and arts as well as community events. Indigenous resistance movements are also using this internet community as a place to educate people about social,

political and environmental issues. Communities such as Grassy Narrows First Nation in Ontario (www.youtube.com: search term Grassy Narrows First Nation) are posting videos to better illustrate the issues they are facing or fighting against. In the case of Grassy Narrows, they have posted videos illustrating the environmental damage caused by clear cutting, an issue they have been fighting for years. As videos posted are both professional and amateur, communities like Grassy Narrows also post videos from demonstrations and fundraising events to build awareness and stay connected to members of their community.

Indigenous individuals also use the web to create a digital presence online through personal blogs. Online communities have developed around these sites, creating another type of Indigenous community and adding to the representation of diversity. The increased use of social networking sites such as Facebook and MySpace have gone beyond personal blogs in creating dialogue and community. These web 2.0 networking tools, where individuals and organizations can post information, photos and videos and then invite people to join their websites, the posting of videos, listing of events, as well as the layering of privatizations so that the public can connect with certain sections of the Ning, such as event calendars and videos, while members (who are regulated by the administrators) can have more personal conversations in a private environment. Organizations are using Nings to showcase themselves to the public, while at the same time allowing members (often employees) to participate in private blogs and have access to information that the public cannot see.

As the popularity of Ning grows, Indigenous organizations and social networks have begun to use them. The Michif Métis Trading Post Ning, Creehealth Ning and the Elsipogtog First Nation Ning, are all Nings which have public homepages explaining their community, providing history and cultural information, and offering links to public blogs, Indigenous radio and videos. At the same time, they offer private blogs for members. Other Nings, such as the Inuit Traditional Stories Ning and the National Aboriginal Arts Administrators and Funders Gathering are private Nings that are accessible by invitation only. These digital communities, comprised of people

> *"On the internet, no one knows you are a dog* (Peter Steiner, New Yorker, July 5, 1993)"

community are also contributing to an Indigenous on line presence that is participative, collaborative and interactive. Indigenous people and communities use these sites to create networks of Indigenous communities and build ties with non-Indigenous people who otherwise would not be connected. Indigenous peoples recognize the ability of the web to build alliances and they have been utilizing these tools to develop intercultural communities and support for their causes around the world, creating a sense of a global community and a new sense of connected personhood, community and perhaps nationhood. The effects on Indigenous identities are yet to be theorized and explored. If identity and community are inter-related, as they are taught in Indigenous traditional teachings, we can certainly expect these new types of community to increase the diversity already present in Indigenous communities.

A relatively new free social networking site is Ning. While Facebook and MySpace are geared towards individuals connecting in general, Ning is targeted at organizations, social groups and individuals who want to create a more specific online community; as such it provides more customization options than either Facebook or MySpace. A Ning allows for links to other blogs and with similar interests but different backgrounds are widely scattered can have the effect of challenging stereotypes and increasing the complexity of Indigenous representation on the web.

Twitter is the latest evolution in cyberspace communication, through instant messaging available from individual cell phones as well as through computers. It is a system of quick short messages. It is used to make announcements of things going on, usually as they happen. There is no membership beyond having an account and this had led to huge groups of people following the "tweets" of others. This messaging is bound to have an effect on Indigenous organizations and resistance movements in the future as news now travels instantly. It will be the tool for future resistance movements as a way to quickly and efficiently mobilize people in support of an issue or crisis.

CONCLUSION

It is clear that Indigenous people are embracing the internet as a place to extend and assert their own identities. They are becoming digital citizens, creating their own spaces and presence in new and growing

cyber-communities. The representations are multilayered and illustrate the diversity of Indigenous presence and experience. Overall, the digital presence suggests vibrant, contemporary and modern Indigenous communities and organizations comprised of creative, innovative and forward-looking individuals, knowledgeable of their cultural heritage and traditions, and willing to engage the contemporary world from a foundation rooted in their traditional cultures. The images and identities they are creating on the internet challenge conventional stereotypes and speaks to the diversity of issues, interests and routes to representing traditional heritages while at the same time engaging as full citizens in the open space of the World Wide Web.

On the other side, digital identities also challenge our own notions of identity and identity formation and what is real and truthful. The diversity that we see represented has been deliberately created as a result of the willful choices of individuals. It is important to understand that a digital citizen is created and reflects what its creator wants others to see. The diversity that we encounter, while real, needs to be both embraced and challenged. Digital identities exist in a reflexive relationship to what we might call "the material world." A future research project could explore how digital citizenship activities of Indigenous peoples affect their lived social and political reality.

NOTES

* It is hard to know what term to use to describe this new digital space: it has been called the world wide web, the internet, the web or simply the net. In this paper, for simplicity of use, we refer to the net to describe this huge set of interconnected sites.

FOOTNOTES

[1] Ronald Niezen (2005) discusses the use of the internet as a place where Indigenous peoples globally have engaged in changing or recreating their identities.

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