



FIRST PEOPLES'
CULTURAL COUNCIL

Dear British Columbia First Nations Language Champions,

Many of you will have heard the news of a new collaboration between First Peoples' Cultural Council and Google.org, the philanthropic arm of Google.com. We are pleased to provide some background information on our decision to enter this partnership and our hopes for the future of the project.

The leader of the Endangered Language Project (ELP) at Google.org contacted First Peoples' Cultural Council in July 2011 to seek our input into their proposed international project. First Peoples' Chair Dr. Lorna Williams and Executive Director Tracey Herbert carefully considered the pros and cons of joining the Endangered Languages Alliance and taking an active role in the project. Following a number of meetings with the Google.org team, the First Peoples' leadership team saw the many potential advantages for language revitalization through an international alliance of this stature.

Initially, the language information on the ELP website was provided by Eastern Michigan University and the University of Hawaii at Manoa. The universities agreed to share their research at an early stage in the project development because the best way to improve it is through including the expertise of community members and scholars around the world. Now that the site is live, users can submit information to improve and enhance the database, including updating or correcting information, via each language's description page. Submissions go directly to the team, who then include it on the website. This open, collaborative process will improve understanding about the world's threatened languages and will allow the information to remain updated over time.

As a first step in the process, the First Peoples' language map team has engaged with the ELP map team to enable a rapid transition from the 'place-holder' British Columbia language data to the latest community-driven language data compiled by First Peoples' over several years and already available at <http://maps.fphlcc.ca/>. This transition is a high priority for us at First Peoples'. Work to update the ELP map will commence immediately and we anticipate that the B.C. information will be consistent with the First Peoples' language map soon.

First Peoples' will continue to collaborate with Google.org on this project by sitting on an international Advisory Committee to ELP and we will be a key moderator of the site to ensure that the content is respectful and accurate. All language communities are welcome to join the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity. Please pass this information on to your local language authority and key language champions.

We encourage you to visit the site at: www.endangeredlanguages.com to review any content related to your language group and submit your feedback via the tools built into the site. For further information regarding First Peoples' role in this project, please contact us at: info@fpcc.ca.

Sincerely,
Dr. Lorna Williams, Chair, First Peoples' Cultural Council