



# Media Statement

Thursday, April 26, 2007

## FIRST MULTI-MEDIA CREE DICTIONARY GOES ON-LINE

REGINA - The First Nations University of Canada's (FNUniv.) Department of Indian Languages, Literatures and Linguistics is partnering with the Miyo Wahkohtowin Community Education Authority (MWCEA) in the on-going development of a new web-based interactive First Nations language portal with dictionary and curriculum-based resources to support the development of Cree language use in Canada.

The signing of the Memorandum of Understanding will take place in the atrium on Friday, April 27, 2007 at 12:00 p.m. at the First Nations University of Canada Regina campus, followed by a website demonstration in the Mezzanine Boardroom.

The Cree Language Resource Project (CLRP) dictionary will have the ability to translate words from English to Cree in Syllabics and Roman Orthography (Cree written in the English alphabet) with both grammatical explanations and contextual indication of its use in sentences. In addition, the translated word will be linked to picture, sound and video clips. The goal of the project is to promote the learning and preservation of the Cree language. The online dictionary will have the ability to accommodate different regional Cree dialects.

Prof. Wolvengrey of the First Nations University of Canada's Department of Indian Languages, Literatures and Linguistics has provided all data from his Cree Dictionary *nêhiyawêwin: itwêwina / Cree: Words*. Wolvengrey utilizes his expertise in developing this work from the print version to a web-based tool.

In addition to the translation function, the system will allow the creation of flash cards and storyboards using both pictures and words (in either Syllabics or in Roman Orthography) from the database. Other features will include managed educational games such as word matching and puzzles. These games will have a testing component to assess student learning. The system will include a database of Cree language lesson plans that will guide teachers in integrating First Nation Languages in the curriculum.

The partners will bring an educational perspective and a user-friendly concern to the creation of this language portal, with the goal to have the website as a tool to enhance and support Cree language programming. MWCEA will support the development of the portal and will assemble an advisory committee from the Cree community to guide the project. The two partners agree to seek applications for funding for the future of the project.

The goal of the web-site is to be expandable as required by the communities. Eventually it is hoped to bring in partners from other national Cree jurisdictions, and to provide a mechanism for Cree speakers to provide us with words not found in the system to date,

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as well as new words as they become accepted within the communities. In this way the site will remain current and growing. The potential is to develop a nationally-significant Cree language resource.

Intellinet Technologies Inc. ([www.intellinet.ca](http://www.intellinet.ca)) is the technical partner of the project.

**About Miyo Wahkohtowin Community Education Authority:**

Miyo Wahkohtowin Community Education Authority operates Ermineskin Kindergarten, Ermineskin Primary, Ermineskin Junior Senior High and Ermineskin Ehpewapahk (Alternative) schools. These schools serve 850 students, drawn mainly from the Ermineskin Cree First Nation at Hobbema, located 90 kilometres south of Edmonton.

**About Professor Wolvengrey:**

Arok Wolvengrey has been a Professor of Cree Language Studies and Linguistics in the Department of Indian Languages, Literatures, and Linguistics (DILLL) at the First Nations University for 14 years. He was a student of Dr. Freda Ahenakew and is proud to continue the work in Cree language education that she, and his colleagues in DILLL, have been engaged in for the past thirty years. His two volume Cree-English bilingual dictionary was first published by the Canadian Plains Research Center in 2001.

The project can be found at <http://www.creedictionary.com>.

**FOR MORE INFORMATION:**



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