



FIRST PEOPLES'
CULTURAL COUNCIL

FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE

January 29, 2018

FPCC Announces Launch of FirstVoices.com, Version 2.0

Brentwood Bay, B.C. – The First Peoples' Cultural Council is excited to announce the relaunch of a beta (preview) version of FirstVoices.com, its ground-breaking online Indigenous language archiving and learning resource.

Over the past two years, the FirstVoices website and back-end system have been significantly upgraded with input from over 50 community partners from across B.C. and feature improved navigation, easier data entry and faster access to language information and resources. We are continuing to make updates and are seeking feedback from the wider community of FirstVoices users until March 31, 2018 via a new feedback feature located on the FirstVoices homepage.

The new FirstVoices will make it easier for First Nations communities to upload and manage their language content, providing greater access to online Indigenous language revitalization for language learners, teachers and advocates.

FirstVoices.com also features the following improvements:

- A faster loading website – language administrators will be able to upload larger media files and all users of the site can navigate quickly and easily through the content of an archive.
- Time-saving searches – a better search function means that each language archive now has its own search tool, which means users can search for words, phrases, songs and stories within a single archive.
- New ways to enter data – users can now add multiple sounds files, video and images for a single word or phrase entry, which removes the need for duplicate entries.

FirstVoices was initially launched in 2003 to aid in the preservation of the remaining 34 Indigenous languages in B.C. It provides a space for Indigenous community language teams to archive their languages by recording and uploading words, phrases, songs and stories to a secure, centralized database. FirstVoices hosts 47 (36 public and 11 private) language archives in B.C. and also supports 70 First Nations communities in Canada, the USA and Australia. Content is entirely controlled and managed by community language administrators.

For more information, visit the new website: <http://www.firstvoices.com>.

We wish to acknowledge the support of our funding and community partners:

- The Ministry of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation and the First Peoples' Cultural Foundation provided funding to rebuild FirstVoices.com's software architecture, which included upgrading to new technologies to improve the organization and indexing of data and updating the user interface.
- The New Relationship Trust and the Department of Canadian Heritage provided funding to community teams for training to use FirstVoices.com and to upload new content to language archives.
- The B.C. Government Communications and Public Engagement - Government Digital Experience team provided extensive in-kind development services.
- The many FirstVoices administrators, Elders, linguists, students, teachers and everyday users who provided us with feedback to make FirstVoices a more effective language learning resource.

About the First Peoples' Cultural Council:

FPCC is a First Nations-run provincial crown corporation with a mandate to support the revitalization of First Nations languages, arts and cultures in British Columbia. The organization provides funding and resources to communities, monitors the status of First Nations languages, develops policy recommendations for First Nations leadership and government and collaborates with organizations on numerous special projects that raise the profile of arts and languages in B.C., Canada and around the world. FPCC is the key source of current and accurate information on the state of First Nations languages in B.C. For more information, visit: www.fpcc.ca

About FirstVoices:

Launched in 2003, FirstVoices is a suite of web-based tools and services designed to support Indigenous people engaged in language archiving, language teaching and culture revitalization. The FirstVoices language archive contains thousands of text entries in many diverse Indigenous language writing systems, enhanced with sounds, pictures and videos. There are currently 47 B.C. First Nations archives and 22 archives from outside of B.C. on FirstVoices.com. FirstVoices also features several innovative apps, including FirstVoices Keyboards for use on mobile devices, and dictionary apps for several B.C. First Nations languages. For more information, visit www.firstvoices.com

QUOTES:

Tracey Herbert, CEO at First Peoples' Cultural Council:

It has been a privilege to work in partnership with our First Nations community language partners on improvements to the FirstVoices language archiving resources. Since 2003, when the FirstVoices website launched, community administrators in B.C., Canada and around the world have uploaded thousands of text entries, sound files, pictures and videos to language archives that they independently control and curate. We are committed to providing quality language archiving tools to support the revitalization of First Nations languages and ensure that our cultures will continue to thrive.

The Honourable Scott Fraser, Minister of Indigenous Relations and Reconciliation:

Both the Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action and the articles of the United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples emphasize the need to preserve and revitalize Indigenous languages for the benefit of current and future generations. FirstVoices is a highly respected resource to support this urgent work in B.C. and I am proud to work alongside the First Peoples' Cultural Council in their endeavours to help support communities to revitalize connections with their languages.

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