FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE
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New Agreement between NRC and FPCC to Support Indigenous Language Learning

The First Peoples' Cultural Council (FPCC) and the National Research Council of Canada (NRC) have signed an agreement to collaborate on upgrades to FPCC's FirstVoices Language Tutor software. Under the agreement, the Language Tutor will be updated to align with current technologies and enable new functionalities to support effective Indigenous language learning. Along with software upgrades, the updates will include improved user tools and language lesson templates that will integrate with other technologies at FirstVoices.com.

The FirstVoices Language Tutor will prioritize Indigenous leadership, community ownership and security of data, and support FPCC's longstanding commitment to maintain the technology into the future.

"We are excited about this opportunity to bring the FirstVoices Language Tutor up to speed with current technology and offer this valuable tool to First Nations in B.C. and across Canada," said Aliana Parker, FPCC Language Programs Manager. "We are very grateful for the NRC's investment in this project, which will allow us to provide the Language Tutor at no cost to all First Nations communities in B.C."

"We are very lucky to be working with the First Peoples' Cultural Council, which has an impressive record of promoting Indigenous languages and cultures," said Roland Kuhn, who is leading the NRC's Indigenous Languages Technology project. "All Canadians should be aware of FPCC's achievements in this area. As relative newcomers to the field of Indigenous language technology, we at NRC hope this collaboration will be an opportunity to learn from our partners at FPCC."

The FirstVoices Language Tutor is a web-based tool that allows language teachers to create interactive online lessons for Indigenous language learners. It was developed as part of FPCC's FirstVoices program, which is an internationally recognized and acclaimed online Indigenous language archiving and teaching resource that allows communities to document their languages for future generations.

Using the Language Tutor, First Nations communities can build media-rich intuitive lessons. This multimedia platform incorporates images, video and audio clips from the FirstVoices library of words and phrases. The Language Tutor also includes a learner management system that allows teachers to track the progress of each student through the lessons.

The new Language Tutor software will be developed by Udutu, a Victoria-based online learning company.

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About the First Peoples' Cultural Council:
FPCC is a First Nations-run provincial crown corporation with a mandate to support the revitalization of Indigenous 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. FirstVoices currently hosts 46 language archives in B.C. and supports 70 Indigenous communities in Canada, the USA and Australia. FirstVoices features several innovative apps, including FirstVoices Keyboards for use on mobile devices, and dictionary apps for several B.C. First Nations languages. FirstVoices.com is managed by the First Peoples' Cultural Council. For more information, visit www.firstvoices.com

About the National Research Council
The NRC is Canada's premier research organization at the federal level. Its Digital Technologies Research Centre within NRC – whose employees are involved in this collaboration – focusses on advanced software for processing human language, pattern recognition, augmented intelligence and machine learning.