"How do I print this photo off my phone?"

New and emerging technology in remote community libraries

Networking with Bluetooth, video editing, and DVD authoring are just some of the queries that trainers receive when they conduct training in public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centre's (IKCs) throughout Queensland's remote indigenous communities.

With the Telstra Next G network extending as far north as Saibai Island in the Torres Strait, a rapid uptake of mobile phone ownership has followed. The use of phones extends beyond communication. Music playback, digital photos, and video recording are all features that have led to a significantly higher rate of adoption than personal computers or fixed line telephone services.

The State Library of Queensland has been helping public libraries and Indigenous Knowledge Centres to provide public internet access and improve digital literacy through projects such as *Taking I.T. On* and *Online Public Access in Libraries (OPAL)*.

Training has been highly responsive to the interests of participants, setting up emails and exploring social networking to stay in touch with family members. The use of existing equipment in communities including cameras and mobile phones has helped to reinforce the creative use of available technology. In some cases the community educates the trainers. PJ and his friends at Pormpuraaw recorded their own short dance video using two mobile phones – one phone was used to record video while the second phone provided the audio.

Low upfront costs using phone plans or pre-paid accounts, portability, and personal ownership may see the 'pocket computer' leapfrog desktop computers and laptop ownership as the online device of choice throughout Queensland's remote Indigenous communities.

Low cost equipment such as Flip videos enable community members to experiment with video recording and sharing via their own YouTube pages or the IKC blog (**http://ikcnetwork.blogspot.com**) to share their projects. Participation within mainstream and emerging social spaces ensures that the ideas and opinions of Queensland's first people continue to be shared, experienced, and valued.

Closing the Gap: National Partnership Agreement on Remote Indigenous Public Internet is a new initiative funded by the Department of Broadband, Communications and the Digital Economy. The State Library of Queensland is partnering with the Department of Public Works over the next four years to provide improved public internet access through libraries and IKCs. Building on previous training and support, this four year commitment will ensure that ideas from Indigenous Queenslanders living in remote communities continue to permeate today's digital realm.

Providing the skills and equipment to create and share material should go hand-in-hand with the knowledge and processes required for preservation. Looking back to 2010, will our descendants be able to access a rich tapestry of information or will it be patchy with substantial gaps? The emergence of digital cameras represents the pros and cons of digital media. How many digitally literate photographers can be confident that copies of their collections will still exist to be passed on to their grandchildren?

Along with the creation of new content, staff in IKCs are learning to develop and manage their own local collections. Through the Keeping Culture Strong initiative, the State Library will pilot the local management, ownership, and sharing of digital collections using the Ara Irititja system developed by the Pitjantjatjara Council in South Australia. It is hoped that these locally managed databases will be able to take advantage of the technical integrity of the centralised storage network while still maintaining individual ownership and control over the content with appropriate levels of access chosen by the local community.

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"I don't know how to use this thing"

Charles David came to OPAL training with his own laptop. He wanted help connecting to the internet. When questioned on how he usually connected to the internet, he said he had never connected to the internet, though he had a Telstra Next G modem. He bought the modem from Cairns, but the salesperson showed him only briefly how to use it and he had not tried since for fear of breaking it.

Within five minutes, he was shown how to connect to the internet via his modem. Needless to say, Charles was ecstatic and a little amazed at how easy it was! Charles runs his own small business selling live crayfish, and was excited that he could now access information to assist his business from anywhere on Iama in the Torres Straits.

"That man there is my twin brother"

Kubin Indigenous Knowledge Centre (IKC), located on Moa Island, 40km north of Thursday Island in the Torres Strait, hosted Online Public Access in Libraries (OPAL) Training. One of the first to attend was Father John Manus, former Deacon in Kubin Village. Father Manus, 79, was most interested in accessing family history resources on the internet.

It was on viewing a particular photo from the Picture Queensland website that Father Manus commented "That man there is my twin brother". Further discussion between the group revealed that the photo was taken at the old Church at Poid village on Moa Island. This church was dismantled and rebuilt in Kubin village, leaving behind the walls and foundations.

Digital skills for artists

Artists at Erub in the far eastern Torres Strait during OPAL training in May 2009 setting up email and instant messaging to better stay in touch with family members.

The artists also learned about digitising artworks which lessens the reliance on storage space and greatly increases the ability and ease with which the artists can communicate their artworks to others.