

# Captured by the spider

A journey of a small town to the edge of computing power

Young people  
are the pioneers  
of new ways.  
Since they face  
too many temptations  
it will not be easy  
to know what is best.

*Chief Dan George*



Doug Smarch  
Prof. Erkki Huhtamo  
Design Media Arts  
April 16, 2004

**A PLACE AWAY FROM HISTORY**

- A.
  1. From arrows to rocket ships
  2. The world was inventing
  3. Ease dropping in a still place in the world
  
- B. A new way to experience night,
  1. Surfing the AM
  2. Becoming numbers
  3. Fairless tails
  4. Abolish the circle of chairs
  5. Gazing
  6. Locked out



#### PRE MODERN COPY CATS,

- A. Selling a life to a small town
  1. Out growth of an old communication system
  2. Flat legends consoling
  
- B. The great indoors
  1. The glass forest
  2. Sleeping the day away
  3. Leave it until later



#### EMBRACING THE TECHNOLOGY

- A. Continued growth,
  1. The thinning of the vial between two worlds
  2. Magic that doesn't live on its own
  
- B. Cyber tradition
  1. Cultural appropriation
  2. In the hands of two worlds



Example<sup>1</sup>

This paper is written by a First Nations.<sup>2</sup> It is a story of change that occurred within sixty years from the present back to the past. The young community of Teslin adapted new life styles, systems of communication, world views from media devices, then with time learned to include their voice in the mediums by creating culturally sensitive context in media. The web<sup>3</sup> of a spider is a metaphor about the subject of being caught by media. The silk of a spider web foreshadows the tantalizing qualities of electronic media; the question

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<sup>1</sup> A spider is recognized as a creature that taught weaving to the Nava Jo people as well taught a form of writing..

<sup>2</sup> Term used for Native Americans in Canada.- The author Doug Smarch is from the community that is written about Teslin Yukon, the changes and losses are directly related to the author.

<sup>3</sup> The web is partly the Alaska highway, it was windy, it touched points in the Yukon region and wove communities together, but in the same way all communities along the Alaska Highway were affected by the coming of the Alaska highway.

to be answered in this paper is, did media victimize, or did it transform, even expand, the culture? A spider web is: “The silken web which is formed by most kinds of spiders, particularly the web spun to entrap their prey”<sup>4</sup> In this paper, the spider’s web is used as a metaphor to represent the movement of being caught without seeing the trap. The tactics of the spider involve laying an invisible web to catch its prey, which is later devoured. The Black Widow builds its web by attaching its silk to points and then adding to those points a sticky spiral that adheres to the unaware prey. Then the spider goes to its fresh victim and shrouds it with silk to immobilize it. Once it is caught it is injected with venom and its insides are liquefied and sucked out as the spider’s food.

What is so vital about the web as a metaphor is its virtual invisibility. For the spider’s victim, its sight becomes its enemy. The dilemma of being caught by an invisible force such as a web is the metaphoric example, of the effect of electronic media on a small First Nations<sup>5</sup> town in Canada’s north: Teslin, Yukon<sup>6</sup>: of being caught by silk and

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<sup>4</sup> Sherlock 2001-2002, Apple Computer Inc. <http://www.apple.com/macosx/feedback>

<sup>5</sup> The proper name for the familiar term for Indian of Canada, the United States uses Native American

<sup>6</sup> The web ensnared us in a web of images and misconceptions, holding our consciousness

the tension of not escaping but transforming. The coming of modern civilization to the small community came to a passive people who did not know about competition. I will give examples of how the Internet misrepresents the Teslin Tlingit, and also how we are using the same tool to recreate the way we want to present ourselves to the world.

This paper is written with the awareness of the mission school system's attempts to assimilate First Nations, particularly the Inland Tlingits of Teslin, Yukon Territory, Canada. The crippling results from mission schools on the Culture will not be included as a topic in this paper. The after effects from the fragmentation are an issue. The First Nations now have to exist in a Western system, but along the way have adapted to the new concepts in a unique way. The focus will be media and the vehicle that brought it. In no way will there be an attempt to chastise the existence of media, only to comment on the impact it has had on a remote, northern, Native Canadian community. The order of the paper will start from the present and jump back into history relating accounts with each media device as follows in the time it was used in the Teslin region.

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captive. But I will attempt to show that something vital happened- eventually, we realized we are being held captive by the spider, and we began to talk back.

What motivates the chain of events of this thesis are the experiences of the writer, who lived through some of the experiences written about and who uses accounts that were told to the writer as a child. Since the culture is a verbal culture, the times and incidents are from memory. The Inland Tlingit, before modern civilization revolutionized the traditional modes of communication, foretold and managed future events by means of using people known as medicine men and women. These individuals were capable of foreseeing events and issued warnings of problems with the aid of dreaming. This means of communication was normal and was not viewed as strange or with skepticism. What was vital about this practice was this ability to peer into the future; the gifted medicine person who was able to accurately do this was held in high esteem and had much political power. There is a story that everyone in Teslin knows, an important incident that happened around mid-1700s. A man was lost in Teslin. The family of the missing man went and asked the assistance of a medicine man to find the missing person. So a community gathering took place and a ceremony was performed. The medicine man transformed his essence into an animal and started to look for the missing person. I was told the animal was a Fox. While the medicine man was looking, he was talking in a higher tone of voice, panting like a tired dog after

running a long time, telling the people in the ceremony that: " I don't see him". So he continued to look, and went over to another community called Carcross, 60 miles south of Teslin. He came to a place where there were a lot of people. He found the man and told the family. The man came back toward Teslin and came over a hill and he saw Teslin through the eyes of his spiritual self. Teslin had a dark cloud over it. The man came back to his body and woke up and told the people that there is going to be a big change that was going to happen to the people of Teslin. What is vital about this story is the method in which this man communicated with the outer world, by accessing his own spiritual resources to define the present and future.

The society of the Teslin Tlingits was separate from Western technology, even as late as the nineteen forties. One day you're sitting by a river around campfire, roasting a rack of moose ribs and listening to your grandparents laugh in Tlingit undertones about silly encounters of long ago. Dogs are tied to trees sniffing the breeze, keeping off unexpected visits of a wandering bear. The river crackles and swirls. Crows sit and watch for a moment when one looks away

to steal a piece of food. Then the next day you turn a television on and see a rocket blasting into space with the headline "*The Eagle* has landed on the moon"<sup>7</sup>

The change that the Native American and Canadian Indian have encountered is immense, but their adaptation as an evolving culture is unexpected. Media gave the Inland Tlingits another subject to add to their nature-based beliefs which had at their core the theme of the land as a mother and the sky as a father.<sup>8</sup> Relating to the land is what keeps the traditions of the Inland Tlingits, which center on the gifts that are gathered from the land. Food, water, shelter and serenity are what entertained and created a common bond. In the experience of this author, who grew up camping on the land, one would look at the stars at night thinking about absolutely nothing: no Avon, no Levis jeans, no cell-phone, just stars and tea and family. This is an example of a consciousness free from static, not yet ensnared in the web of all-pervasive media and its fragmentation of experience.

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<sup>7</sup> Quote from CBC news, date unknown, first Nasa space craft to land on the moon.

<sup>8</sup> As Elder Pete Sydney of Teslin says: "This land is one big plate for all of us to share." 2002 Teslin yukon



The media I will be discussing are the radio, the camera, the telephone, the television, and the internet. Each one of these media created a manipulation of immediate, physical experience. The new media devices gave glimpses to an outer world that simply had little context in the small town. The collective community existed in solace while the Western world was breaking the sound barrier and inventing flying machines that scaled the atmosphere. The eventful journey toward modernity gave new and interesting invitations for expression. The new media infiltrated and entangled themselves into the social structure of the Teslin Inland Tlingits: first the radio that filled spaces with breathless audio and added to the silence of nights around a busy table; the photographic camera allowed time to stand still, adding a visual element to the term (in Teslin) “olden Days”, like licking a window and coming back ten years later and the window is still wet, then the phone eliminated the need of physical contact<sup>9</sup>, creating a social system based on numbers. The television,<sup>10</sup> spread rumors of an outer world, letting people realize far-off lands; and,

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<sup>9</sup> The youngest or the oldest were the messengers in the family, the simple phone eliminated this system, sadly the personal quality of delivering a message was also a means of checking up on people, The messenger was also a deliverer, the one sending the message was usually given food to take back with them, a simple ritual unified kinship and created love.

<sup>10</sup> Coined “the Box of Light” by prophets, heard by author

lastly the Internet,<sup>11</sup> The powerful new tool, the Web, put the experience of media visualization in the context of personal touch. The subject was the person, what the user gave the computer was the result.<sup>12</sup> The collective of the media devices challenged the advancement of the community, because without knowing they were in the midst of a radical makeover. The way they related had a choice once the visual media entered the spectrum- issues of style, medium, advertising, subcultures, money system, drug culture. This was all new to Teslin.<sup>13</sup>

Example<sup>14</sup>

### **A Place Away From History**

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<sup>11</sup> "making its user go everywhere but in actuality going no where.", Inuits in cyber space, Christensen

<sup>12</sup> reference, Inuits in Cyber Space, Christensen

<sup>13</sup> " I found a jar on the side of the road by the old dump, that was full of green leaves, I showed it to my mom, she didn't know what it was, we called the police and they said it was dope(marijuana)" William Smarch 1976 Teslin Yukon. Observed by author at eight years old, Teslin.

<sup>14</sup> Teslin outfitters LTD, Teslin Tlingit Council Picture of a hunter Earl Douville on a hunting excursion in the Yukon Territory <http://www.teslinoutfitters.com/>

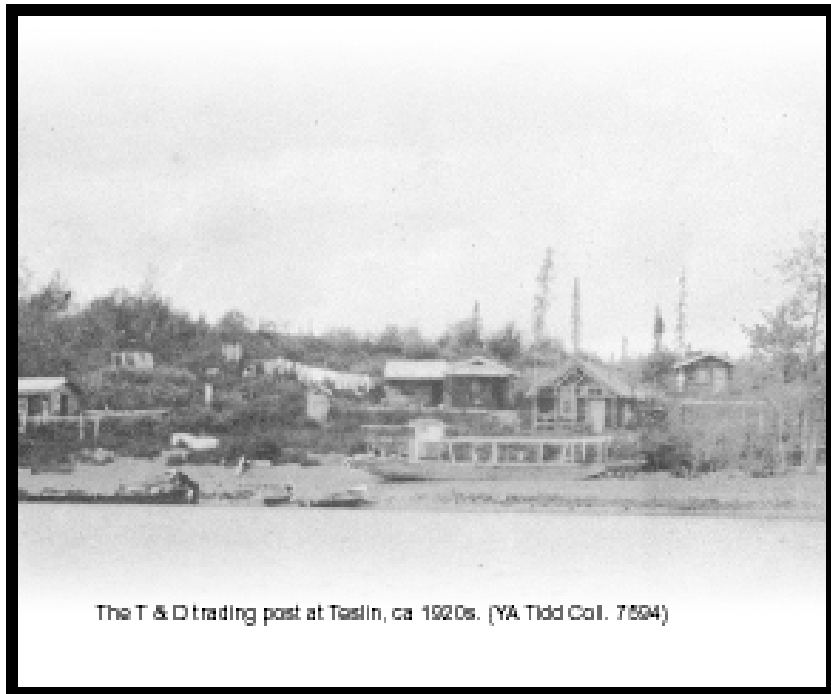


The Teslin Tlingit, before the forties and the coming of the Alaska highway, lived a life of hunting, trapping, and otherwise living off the land.<sup>15</sup> During the summer, people reunited and greeted family after the long eight month winters. they visited and shared their winter stories. It was a time to gather food for another winter. The snow had melted, the land was green and the sun stayed out long into the evening. People shared stories and descriptions of hunts, prophecies and adventures of elders and their cleverness. It was a verbal culture.

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<sup>15</sup> 14The community was first settled in the mid 19th century by Coastal Tlingit traders and explorers who had been travelling inland regularly in earlier times. The village became more permanent during the 1940's when the Alaska Highway was built through the annual area. Prior to that time, the village site had been a summer gathering place where the people came to rest and spend time together during the busy round of trapping, hunting, and harvesting. The people brought with them their clan system, potlatch tradition, language, songs and dances”  
<http://www.cyfn.ca/ourNations/teslinTlingit.html>

The use of oral history was the strength and comfort of a closely- knit society. The members of The Teslin Tlinghit enjoyed the intimacy of a community unit.<sup>16</sup> Communication was personal; people were a part of each other's lives. The strength of this social system enabled the preservation of customs and a common social system that allowed the familiarity of each person. People had their roles in this society and it was the difference they had that enriched the culture.<sup>17</sup>



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<sup>16</sup> “The people were united, you could go everywhere and feel like you were in your own home, we all shared and helped ” (Virginia Smarch) 1980, deceased Teslin elder.

<sup>17</sup> People had gifts, they could do something better than another, so when they died you missed them. We had our own traditional doctors and black smiths, boat builders, people who could hunt really good, we had every thing, that's why when some one died, they were missed (Virginia Smarch) 1980 deceased elder Teslin .

Example<sup>18</sup>

Today the Teslin Tlingit council is living in parallel with society, actively relating to the world as a unique society and offering their cultural identity. Passersby can visit the local Teslin Tlingit Heritage Centre to gain knowledge of the local people and speak directly to its citizens. The centre is a place of teaching for outsiders and locals alike who wish to learn more about the community.

Example<sup>19</sup>



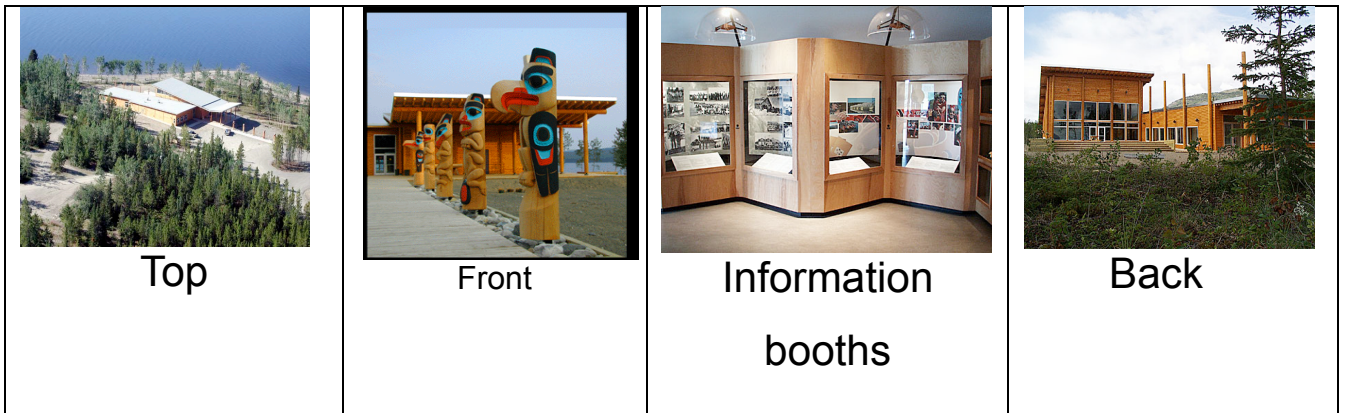
Example<sup>20</sup>

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<sup>18</sup> Picture of Teslin in the nineteen twenties, Yukon Archive pict.7504 The remnants from this store are from the Yukon Gold Rush. Showing the state of Teslin then, just a few dwellings that are inhabited by merchants.

<sup>19</sup> Clan crests, left to right Frog, Wolf, Raven Childeren, Beaver, Eagle.

<sup>20</sup> **Teslin Heritage Building** In Teslin Yukon Canada



Example<sup>21</sup>

Teslin currently operates as a self-governing First Nation with a land base of approximately 938 square miles, This means that the First Nation is now able to make laws on their lands and on behalf of their membership. The Council is also able to take control over and deliver programs and services for their citizens. As a recognized level of government, the Teslin Tlingit Council has a powerful voice in co-management of lands and resources within their traditional territory.

Today the Teslin Tlingit Council has returned to a traditional form of government, which operates through the clan system. The council is composed of five clan leaders, or spokespersons, who are chosen by their respective clans. As a group this body provides the leadership

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<sup>21</sup> <http://www.cyfn.ca/ourNations/teslinTlingit.html>

for all citizens.<sup>22</sup>

The mission of the Council is to Tlingitize the avenues to the world and current technologies and implement a governing system that delineates the prejudices of marginalization. Therefore; The package of being an older nation; with their own beliefs and practices; to bring forth older with the newness of modern society and retain a balance. The term “paddle the red and white canoe”<sup>23</sup> best fits the plans of Teslin Tlingit Council.<sup>24</sup>

Through education and working together, the dream to be a self-defining Nation such as the Teslin Tlingits was achieved. The Council has a responsibility as a now self-governing nation to unlearn the self-denigrating effects of modern assimilation (such as poor self-image and a belief not in what we are but what others tell us we are: primitive people out of a Stone Age, and lazy, drunk heathens who can't adapt.) The collective of First Nation leaders

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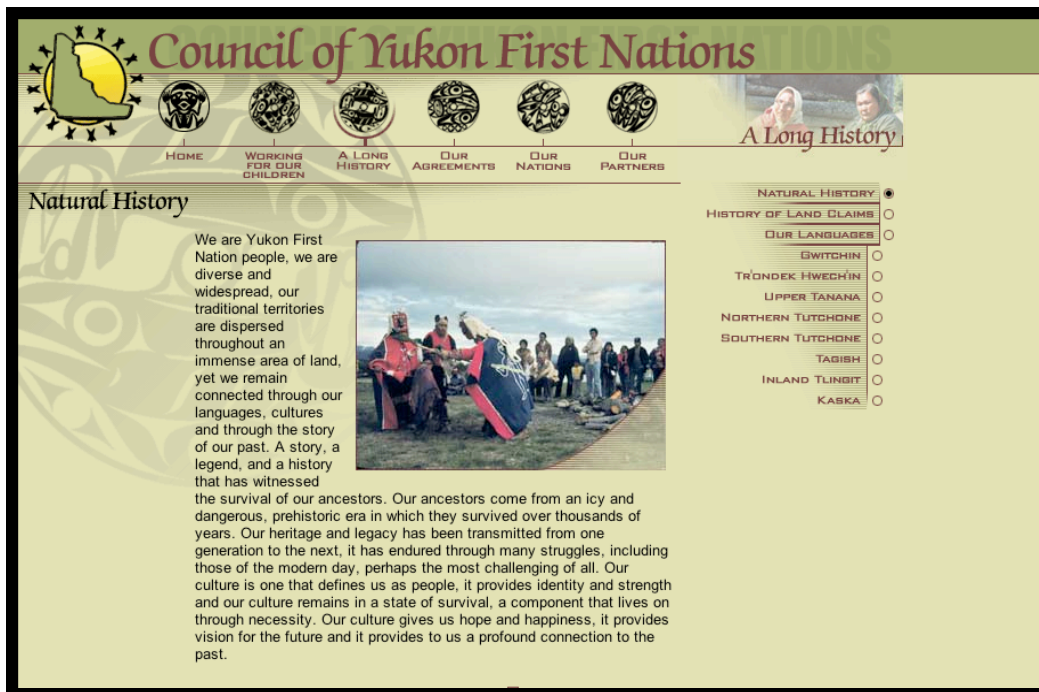
<sup>22</sup> Chief Eric Morris writes “Teslin Tlingit Council is actively involved in the implementation process, attempting to build new ways of becoming self-sufficient in a contemporary world and continuing to prosper in the old traditional ways, retaining the language, culture and laws for future generations” <http://www.cyfn.ca/ourNations/teslinTlingit.html>

<sup>23</sup> Common term for living in the modern and native world with union of both traditions and practices,

<sup>24</sup> An example: I can go to work and put on nice clothes and be like any other non-Tlingit person, then come home, dress up in my old clothes and tan my hides...

thought in 1973 that for the survival of the uniqueness of their livelihood and the children of tomorrow, it was in their best interest to settle and reclaim regions of the Yukon that should be governed on First Nation terms.

The Teslin Tlingit Council also belongs to the Council of Yukon Indians. Their website is a positive example of the way modern- day First Nations are using media to empower ourselves and our image to the world:



Example<sup>25</sup>

<sup>25</sup> Image from this website <http://www.cyfn.ca/aLongHistory/index.html>



Here is an excerpt from:

*Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*

*The Yukon has always been home to more than 6,000 people of Indian ancestry who, until even 75 years ago, always lived off the land in brush camps, by hunting, fishing and trapping in small tribes, who harvested the land carefully, and who kept the waters clear, the air pure and the land clean.*

*The land has always been home to us and this is where we intend to stay. The White man has always come to the Yukon for money and left without*

*really ever having experienced her quiet brown people or the majestic reaches of her land. But the Indian people have always been there through all the major invasions caused by the fur trade, gold rush, highway construction and now, the people who want to build pipelines across our land.*

*As times changed for the Indian people, our leaders began to realize that*

*if we were to survive as a unique people, we must have our rights to the land--rights which had never been ceded to the Crown--formalized in law, and so back in 1973 the Council for Yukon Indians was formed to negotiate a land claims settlement with the Federal Government based on aboriginal rights.*

*Regardless of status under the Indian act, the Council was formed to ensure that all Indian people could participate in the claim and as the basis for their negotiations, the CYI chose the historic document which follows in this book, Together Today for Our Children Tomorrow*

Here is an example of another culturally aware web page,

Example<sup>26</sup>



Teslin School creates a culturally aware atmosphere and offers a union in two cultures. The term cross- cultural is a common

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<sup>26</sup> <http://www.yesnet.yk.ca/schools/teslin/> 2004 This is a web site for the Teslin School. It clearly relates to the efforts of the Teslin Tlingit Government to parallel Tlingit society as a valid people with their own ideas.

reference for binding two cultures together in harmony. The art on the page shows the five traditional clans (from left to right): Wolf, Crow, Beaver, Golden Eagle, Frog. All the students, First Nations and non- Native, are taught the qualities of the crests as well the history behind them. In fact, the multitude of clans together in one place allows the enforcement of a traditional law of complete respect for another clan and their family. Then the benefit of receiving accurate knowledge from its actual source in an environment that is valid is a focus that can grow.

### Example<sup>27</sup>



The leaflet is a 2004 federal document, a guide to reservations. In this document, Teslin is presented as a reservation.

What the reader needs to know is that Teslin never was a reservation, even though it is stated here as thus. It is important to know that reservations were places the Canadian government allocated to First Nations because their inherited land was taken. The reservation

<sup>27</sup> shows the kind of misrepresentation that occurs when we do not have control over the media's representation of us. It is a web blurb on Teslin with the Canadian Government Logo [http://www.gospelcom.net/ilm/reserves/yukon/pro\\_yt13.php](http://www.gospelcom.net/ilm/reserves/yukon/pro_yt13.php)

system was created so First Nations would cease to be nomadic people and become farmers. It was land set aside for a defeated race. The fact that Teslin is lumped in as a reservation shows how easily assumptions about Native communities are made: a lack of care. Please compare this to the Council of Yukon Indians website which is the first example I gave. The story there is much different.

Examples<sup>28</sup>



“The project is believed to be one of the oldest and most complete web sites for obtaining culturally appropriate Indian teaching resources for both main stream and Indian class rooms”<sup>29</sup>

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...bsite that combats miss-concepts of Indigenous peoples. The Cradleboard Teaching Project is headed by American Indian recording star Buffy Saint Marie (Cree). It strives to educate the public about Native American culture: [www.cradleboard.org](http://www.cradleboard.org)

<sup>29</sup> (Robert Capriccioso December 2003 American Indian report

Example<sup>30</sup>



## Mission Statement

The Cradleboard Teaching Project turns on the lights in public education about Native American culture - past, present, and most important for the children - the Future. It comes out of Indian country, and reaches far beyond, into the mainstream classroom and into the future of education.

Backed by lesson plans and an excellent curriculum, the Cradleboard Teaching Project is also live and interactive, and totally unique; children learn with and through their long-distance peers using the new technology alongside standard tools, and delivering the truth to little kids with the help of several American Indian colleges. Cradleboard reaches both Indian and non-Indian children with positive realities, while they are young.

This is the way of the future when it comes to offering a cultural study unit to a child, because it's alive! This is the future when it comes to offering the cultural "real deal" to youngsters half a globe away, in time, we hope, to benefit the lives of Indian children who wonder "Who am I?...and who do others think I am?"

During the five years that Buffy Sainte-Marie spent as a semi-regular on "Sesame Street", it was always her hope to convey in the Native American episodes one message above all: Indians Exist. We are alive and real, and we have fun and friends and families and a whole lot to contribute to the rest of the world through our reality.

It's our hope at Cradleboard that we can joyfully replace the old inaccuracies, with reality, delivered by teams of experts; to the lifelong benefit of Indian children; and that every mainstream child will have access to an enriching Native studies unit provided by Indian people, including children of his or her own age.

**Cradleboard** (krad-l-bord) a frame, made of natural materials, used by North American Indians to carry a child. The cradleboard style varies from tribe to tribe. It is flexible in use, protective and decorative; a Native American invention much appreciated by other cultures who have adapted the idea to their own uses.

**The Cradleboard Teaching Project**  
is a project of the Nihewan Foundation for American Indian education, which was founded by Buffy Sainte-Marie in 1996 with a non-profit registration number of LA:E069-1-177. code 421 ED

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## The World Was Inventing

Teslin is a place that accepted a coming of a highway<sup>31</sup> in the mid

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<sup>30</sup> Cradle board mission statement, explains the motives of the website, [www.cradleboard.org/2000/go\\_main.html](http://www.cradleboard.org/2000/go_main.html), Nihewan Enter Nihewan Foundation for Native American Education.

<sup>31</sup> The highway came like a flash flood, one day there was silence, another day there was a grader coming over the hill, lights flashing people thought it was the end of the world. Jane Smarch, telephone.2004

40s. World War II brought it on, because the United States feared invasion through Alaska after the invasion of Pearl Harbour. The impact of the outer world traveled down this highway and brought the advances of the modern world, which grew roots in Teslin. Prior to the forties travel by dog sled was a means of travel, and without discession people journeyed hundreds of mile by dog team. Yet the coming of the vehicle was a day and night event. Transportation was revolutionized over night. The companionship of a dog reliant society faded into a novelty saved for competition in winter carnivals.<sup>32</sup>

Teslin is a serene place inset in a long, corridor- like valley, on the shore of a 99 by 2 mile wide lake. It is a haven for nature enthusiasts, and the locals enjoy the abundance of wildlife. Beyond the small town lie miles of green mountain spans and at the point of 114 miles NE is the nearest city. Currently, in 2004 Teslin economizes with two small stores, one restaurant, two gas stations, and one store with a wood floor. There are no high rises, of shopping malls. In the long, summer days one can fish on the silent lake long into the early hours of the morning. Families camp out together at fish camps for weeks at a

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<sup>32</sup> “we never had cars, we went every where with a dog team, sometime days we traveled, we were in good shape, now you can get in a car and go to Whitehorse and be there in the same day, it used to take us a week to walk there” Virginia Smarch, deseased Elder Teslin Yukon, 1980

time. In the dead of winter, trappers sit in cabins in front of woodstoves, while wolves howl around them and Northern Lights sizzle and crackle overhead.

It was a turning point in 1973 that changed the relation of Yukon First Nations to the world. The Yukon First Nations realized if they were to survive as a unique people, the interpretations, images and tonalities of how they were represented needed to be on their own terms. They needed to be cross-cultural<sup>33</sup>. Each community adopted the need for self- sufficiency, self-determination, and self- government. It was this process that generated awareness of the state of the Nations.

Tlingitization of western technology, by including themselves in the development of culturally sensitive subject in media devices; the radio, Camera, telephone, television and the Internet. The Teslin Tlingits felt the manage-ment of what there off spring gained as individuals out of life is culturally important. Media was not doing that for first Nations. Bluntly, the dirty, greasy, lazy, heathen Indian wasn't a good image for the now politically correct "First Nations".

Teslin, at this time, asked questions of the future of their

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<sup>33</sup> Definition, the balancing of two cultures were one culture is not destroyed, changed or unbalanced in any way

Culture, their people, the language, the habitat. There had to be a re-examination of livelihood: the culture was slowly being erased and a more modern lifestyle was taking over. People<sup>34</sup> felt caught between two worlds. The first world was that of a traditional life, the second world came through radio in the early 1920's<sup>35</sup>. People of Teslin adopted battery -powered radios in their lives in the early twenties, they were bought on credit at the Taylor & Drury's store in Teslin. People traveled with their radios, including them in their winter supplies on dog sleds. Radio then only worked at night, and according to the weather<sup>36</sup>. If it was a clear, cool night, reception was good.<sup>37</sup> Some people could hear Russia and Japan. Eavesdropping from a still place in the world, the simple radio highlighted nights on trap-lines.<sup>38</sup> The practice of visiting as a means of entertainment gave way to an electronic device. A new way to experience night, now

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<sup>34</sup> "Living to much like the white man"

<sup>35</sup> The first of four other technologies to come to Teslin Yukon, Camera, Telephone, Television, Internet

<sup>36</sup> " You could only hear outside stations then there was no CBC, I was a little girl then" Jane Smarch teslin 2004, telephone

<sup>37</sup> "Uncle Sandy used to say "ahh gonna be good radio tonite" When the sky was clear" Jane Smarch teslin 2004, telephone

<sup>38</sup> I remember people crowding into uncle Sandy's tent to listen to boxing fights" Jane Smarch Teslin 2004, Telephone



occupied by the radio, denied the common practice of listening to nature and each other. Strangely, the act of sleep was important, since the chores of being on the trapline started before sunrise. The radio set a tradition of staying up late, leading into the early seventies<sup>39</sup>. People surfed the night, for voices, music. Then, in the forties, a local CBC radio station out of Whitehorse, Yukon<sup>40</sup>, broadcasted a strong enough signal and people could listen all day long. The station<sup>41</sup> played country music favorites: Walon Jennings, Merl Haggard, Johnny Cash, local favorites to a cowboy town.

After the highway came, Teslin lost its isolation, it became a highway town people were confronted by a race that was set in defending their country from invasion<sup>42</sup>. Its residency changed overnight, new people, over worked, tired, dominating, and doing violent acts to a quiet land slumbering through Teslin. Electricity came with the influence of the highway. The highway brought a race of people<sup>43</sup> who were used to needs other than flour and salt, a few bullets, and a

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<sup>39</sup> Television changed this

<sup>40</sup> Local city 114 miles south of Teslin Yukon

<sup>41</sup> "Lovin, Trucking, Drunk driving and Moms show"

<sup>42</sup> The quiet First Nations of Teslin never knew patriotism like US soldiers .

<sup>43</sup> The new people were the US army citizens

radio. The strangers needed restaurants, stores, gas stations, bridges,<sup>44</sup> and alcohol. Jails, land to inhabit, aircraft and airports.<sup>45</sup>

### Abolish the circle of chairs

No longer can I give you a handful of berries as a gift,  
no longer are the roots I dig used as medicine,  
no longer can I sing a song to please the salmon,  
no longer does the pipe I smoke make others sit with me in friendship,  
no longer does anyone want to walk with me to the blue mountain to pray,  
no longer does the deer trust my footsteps<sup>46</sup>

*Chief Dan George*

The Tonality of the community of Teslin after the forties just flipped, many people died because of the disease brought on from the highway<sup>47</sup>, new opportunities, to make money was shown to locals.<sup>48</sup> People could actually get jobs, some jobs were close to home, others were far away. The new jobs allowed people to buy new things, kinda like copying the new comers people eventually bought, tried new things. Candy, pop, ice cream, were new to kids, the health and state

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<sup>44</sup> "The new bridge crossing the river blocked the river and everyone had to land their boats on the side leading up the river away from their regular boat landings"

<sup>45</sup> Between 1940-1943 most of this change happened-----Reference

<sup>46</sup> Chief Dan George

<sup>47</sup> Foreign sickness like the cold, flew killed many people.

<sup>48</sup> Over night land going people became heavy duty vehicle operators,

of people changed, Tantalizing is a good word, people started to want things<sup>49</sup> and to work one would have to speak English not their native language of Tlingit. The advancement of the outer world came down the Alaska highway, eventually attracting tourists, millions each year. There was prophet to be made and not by the locals. Land was taken to set up businesses, at first the places were nice<sup>50</sup>, The ability to keep up to this world was difficult, locals largely lacked education to do so,<sup>51</sup> although some persevered<sup>52</sup> others had to change,\*\*\*\* some intermarried with the new comers,<sup>53</sup> So life then shortly after forties, shortened travel, introduced new food, new clothing, advancement with cars that had radios,

Teslin got the name from the US soldiers, it used to be Tes'lahe'en in the local language, (*meaning big water*), and the soldiers could not say it properly and called it Teslin. Much was happening in the forties,

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<sup>49</sup> Already the visits of the steam ships to Teslin Yukon from Dawson City had people from high societies and they dresses classy. This first model of how to dress was from these people, so the first model of western dress started at the top of the scale.

<sup>50</sup> The side roads stores were on the way to berrie picking grounds and a nice side stop because packing for camping didn't have to be so complete when we could buy from the places our needs .

<sup>51</sup> The earlier mission schools only went to grade 8 and only taught ment to be gardeners and women to be house cleaners

<sup>52</sup> The work ethics of Teslin people were deep in honour, so most did good in the beginning .

<sup>53</sup> It is rumored that the ability to live a better life is why this move was made, others say this was done because of shame .

people were allowed to drink alcohol<sup>54</sup> this was the hard ship, many social problems came with alcohol, First Nations are affected by alcohol a little more than none first nations.<sup>55</sup> The use of this new social tool got out of hand, a new life, minor consumerism, and a growing city that was three hours north, Jobs, the Tlingit language was spoken less if not at all. Then the telephone came, first in restaurants, people could phone to the city or truck drivers and tourists could keep in contact with home.



This section about telephones need facts here

People communicated from a distance, it became a convenience, mixed with alcohol

Still researching(very hard to write about)---I lived through this

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<sup>54</sup> Still researching this--

<sup>55</sup> Alcohol was probably introduced once people started working in mixed groups—still researching

In 1969 the author of this thesis was born into this new society, he did not know he was first nations until he was six years old<sup>56</sup>. The usage of the radio was central to the household. It was turned on in the morning and remained background noise for the entire day, some people used it out side while they polished their cars, others fixed their cars and played their radios. At nights there were stories and plays on the radio, but they were not that important just the noise of the radio. When the clock struck twelve a new world opened up, people started tuning in for other stations, Vancouver, radio or whatever was the clearest. Then the stations at night came in and out; loud and clear one moment and full of static the next. People tried innovative things to fix the problem, Some used to put pie plates on their radios and move them around in circles until the radio station came back, families had a person who was good at these methods, usually old women were the best at getting good radio<sup>57</sup>. Other families had other radio reception traditions; wires would stretch out the Kitchen windows onto roofs with a bicycle rims attached to it.<sup>58</sup>

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<sup>56</sup> Then first Nations were called Indians, Over heard by Author, Mother saying to father, "they don't like us because we are Indians"

<sup>57</sup> Still the best radio was out on the trap line .

<sup>58</sup> There was a plan to attach a wire to the new bridge In Teslin, it was a half mile long and made of steel, it was thought to be the best for good radio and you could possibly hear Vancouver in the day times.

One family always had a simple solution, they were like gurus of good radio reception<sup>59</sup>. It was common then to brag about getting radio earlier than 12:00 at night, it was like a form of hunting, people became innovators and experimenters in good radio receptions. The best solution for radio was to just go camping, there was more to do and the frustration with the local radio station CBC was not felt and nights were spent visiting and surfing the AM.

About 1974 the rumor of television was circulating for about three year prior, It was October, a messenger came to the door and said turn it on<sup>60</sup>. So the television was turned on at 9:00 0clock at night October 15<sup>th</sup> 1974 and a movie about space rocks killing people was on. Of course it was confusing but the fact it was interesting to watch people without being close to them was intriguing. Then there was excitement all over town, people had to have a television, the ones who did had a flood of visitors, there was no room to walk in the houses. Privacy of the quiet nights turned into gazing at this glass forest of images, light and noise. This new instrument filled our

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<sup>59</sup> The innovative oven rack became a good solution, radio could come in at 10:00 pm but only up town, it was higher .

<sup>60</sup> The smarch family had a television waiting for the three years waiting for the event.

interests in each other with images of commercials, people singing about food<sup>61</sup>. Now people could see the news that they heard on the radio and largely people were shocked at the violence that was happening in the world. Some commented on what is this world coming to, but never knew the violence was happening long before it was seen<sup>62</sup>.

Some popular shows back in the seventies were the Walton's, forest Rangers, and happy days, all in the Family, National Geographic and Walt Disney.<sup>63</sup> Television caught on quick, there was a race to have one and Christmas time in 1974, everyone had a television on their list, soon people didn't have to crowd each others houses they could stay home and watch their own. Sadly without knowing then the social circle of chairs in a home was abolished. The living rooms in peoples home were interrupted with a television set, the bigger the better. Peoples rate of visiting each other changed rapidly. The diversion with the fascinating media box of light enchanted people.

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<sup>61</sup> " I remember when I first saw a commercial, it made me laugh when I saw a song made about coffee, we used to sing the song in school, (lyrics) Hug a hugabug hug a mug of coffee, it was funny" (youth from Teslin in 1975)

<sup>62</sup> It is important to know or the reader that the Teslin Tlingit has a verbal Culture, so what they hear they believe, television had an element of fiction to it. This was damaging to a people that relied on what they heard as it was expected to be true, that is why the Tlingits adapted but were taken down a wrong path, captured""

<sup>63</sup> A trapper named Doug Smarch Sir used to check his trap line and race home so he wouldn't miss the Sunday night showing of Walt Disney

The once popular radio became a tool to sooth the boredom when television programming was slow and repetitive. There would be moral uprisings when an innovative invention would enchant the screen, like the pocket fisherman, it convinced Teslin Tlingits that having it was important. So people bought things because, “then” it was important to change, adapt and be modern, television was a good method to copy like the people were pre modern copy cats the television programming was selling a life to a small town. There were commercials about new and innovative pot sets that would revolutionize cooking. So people found that they needed this new method and bought the non stick pans. As well Dad had to have this new chair called the lazy boy chair and because the television said so and the living rooms slowly grew to include a chair that was meant for one person to sit on. The social structure of a free home and the common social living area gave way to a restriction of a monitor and dads chair. The Tlingit man now became the head of a house hold, rather than a man of the forest.

People did get tired of the television and went camping, but left there radios behind to a more quiet atmosphere, because people would still talk during television programs so televisions were played loud and



tempers flared<sup>64</sup>. Camping was peace and quiet, but people still spoke about satellites and watched for them in the sky because they believed that's where television came from, the sky.<sup>65</sup> So watching for moving lights in the sky was a pass time at nights when camping.

Children's games changed, from the movies of cowboys and Indians children created tribes and held raids on each other, creating a mixture of head quarters and tribal camping grounds in traditional playing places that were used by their older peers when they were children. The childish tribal wars that happened amongst children, adapted methods of how to stalk an enemy in disguise ones self in nature. As each kid would go home at night and watch something new on television, games would change. One youngster adapted snaring methods from program about the Bush People from Africa on National Geographic creating "booby-trap" learned from war movies, as tactics against his rival tribes. He pulled a small tree over with the help of his tribal members and fastened a torn cloth to it in the shape of a lasso set a spring and his tribal member volunteered to be caught in it. The trap managed to elevate the child three feet off the

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<sup>64</sup> Turn that stupid thing down, Jane Smarch informing son 1974

<sup>65</sup> Few people knew about television programming stations then.

ground. The creation of hybrid versions from television networking of Childs play was a waiver from traditional methods of play time.<sup>66</sup> The ability for youngsters to manifest what they saw on television is interesting. Although the people were never a television society, the adaptation and the will full use of what they saw showed a resilience of adaptation.

To be updated, check bi weekly Doug

The art for this thesis is encouraged by the work from Rebecca Allen, the term Bush Soul, is the focus of piece. What kind of forest are we in now as a First Nations. The last forest to come to our fingertips is

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<sup>66</sup> children copied adults to master traditional skills that helped them in life and survive.

the computer, the power of this tool encourages the quality of looking, one can erase their existence and not have an identity with the computer. It is a machine, Its human less quality is becoming the fence that identity can be formed by the management of its user. The computer works at the pace of its user and there is no restriction to it, there is no government to the computer, there is no culture to the computer or gender, but the First Nations know it is a tool from god, First Nations were told by prophets that science will use a piece of god and put it in a machine and call it a computer. Computing power is respected, but it has its boundaries, it can be trained to fit, it can convey a message and it can be turned off. The present standpoints of its users fit their existence and enables on to upload an identity. The computer in the hands of cultures in a blockade against shattered and fragmented identities. Now life can slow down and be changed into its reality, the Tlingits of Teslin are slow to change, but eager to adapt to the modern and the old. The computer has been a story teller and can be many things, it can be pleasure to a person with social restrictions, it can be a vehicle to a limited traveler. It can manage a person's day and be like a parent and remind a person of important deadlines. As well it can travel back beyond today, to 1940, 1920's to the 1700's and beyond. It's a freedom of a second world.

For my thesis the computer will be a storyteller of one medicine man in Teslin who dreamed of changes in the lives of Teslin Tlingits.

Although he is not living, but through his verbal ancestors stories is alive, Computing power will tell the prophecies of changes in art form.

Prior to this time Teslin embarked on a journey that the outer world had little relevance, Teslin inhabited their Yukon region in the adventures of the back woods, It is a hunter gatherer society and people sat told stories of hunts and losses. How one fell through river ice going home to the trap line, and traveling by moon light on Christmas eve by snow shoes. Others laughed about dances held in cabins tucked miles away from small senses of modern life. It was a society of stories, keeping yesterday fresh and alive. The idea of wrestling with metropolitan life was never a feeling nor a recollection, people worried their time with family, relating to each other as brother and sister, encountering the days with prayer and thankfulness of good dreams of the night before. The unawareness of time can be disheartening to an western on looker, while Teslin laughed the night away, the outer world mattered their society with modern marvels the fact that in NASA was already invented, great political struggles massed in great populous. The town of three hundred had its own

silent lively hood of language eating fresh food from the land.

The art the piece for the thesis Inspirlucinations will be the light in nature, the luminous colors and materials we experienced in nature, the lake we loved to travel, a rainbow after a cool rain, a snow storm and the light of home seen through the mist, stars that fade in and out from cloud cover in the night sky, the quiet that is haunted by a medicine dreams of a life that will be lost for a little while that will be lost for a little while.

The art piece will be set in an environment of a boat and sale

