ARCLinkage Grant: Computer Assisted Knowledge Making.

Dear

The ARC has awarded a three year grant for user-friendly database development for indigenous communities. The database development will be aimed at IP owners who wish to explore the uses of digital technology for teaching young people about their land, language and cultures. The grant has been awarded to the Northern Territory University and the University of Melbourne in collaboration with the following partner organizations; the Yothu Yindi Foundation, The Department of Infrastructure Planning and Environment, and the North Australian Indigenous Land and Sea Management Alliance (through the NLC).

Attached is a short outline of the project.

On September 24th, at 1:30pm there will be a meeting at the Faculty of Indigenous Research and Education, NTU, for people from the partner organizations, to begin to develop a strategy. If you or anyone from your organization is able to attend, please let us know. If you are not able to attend, we can arrange for meetings at a time suitable to you.

Before the meeting, the regular FIRE seminar (at 12noon) will be delivered by Michael Christie. The seminar will be on the subject of the use of digital technologies for the intergenerational transmission of indigenous knowledge and will introduce a range of issues to do with digital technology and Aboriginal knowledge, including technical, philosophical and pedagogical issues.

At the 1:30pm meeting, we hope to have Bevan Koopman from the DSTC CRC at the University of Queensland available to talk about a database shell they have prepared and which they are offering for our use for implementation in local contexts. (We will have the choice of negotiating new systems like the DSTC system, or of modifying existing databases if that is what is preferred.)

The project will develop databases in a number of locations. The nature and purpose of those databases needs to be negotiated carefully among the researchers, the partners, and the indigenous stakeholders. The focus will be on the needs of the communities, so it is imagined that the resulting databases will be quite different from each other, reflecting the contents, the user goals and experience, the available technology etc.

Agenda for ARCLinkage Meeting Sept 24th;

1. Outline of Project (Michael Christie & Waymamba Gaykamangu)
2. Issues to do with research management (Research Branch)
3. Introduction to the DSTC database (Bevan)
4. Stakeholder goals and contributions

5. Tentative negotiation of goals, timelines, and deliverables

Contributions from stakeholders:
NAILSMA, DIPE and YYF will be asked at the meeting to contribute to some basic scoping work. To facilitate this, we hope you will be able to come with answers to a few questions:
1. What databases/digital-datasets containing indigenous knowledge does your organization have?
2. In which indigenous communities/organizations would you like database prototypes to be developed?
3. What sorts of learning contexts, practices and purposes do you think these databases would support?
4. Do you expect that the knowledge-owners would like to focus on developing new content for these databases, or on migrating and repatriating digital data from other collections? Or both?
5. What hardware is available or required for each database?
6. What personnel does your organization intend to make available to the project over the next three years (what are their experience, skills, current involvements, and availability)?

Proposed Time Line:

This timeline is tentative and very flexible.

August/Sept 2003:
• finalise arrangements between ARC, Partners, NTU and Melbourne University.

Sept 24th:
• Seminar and meeting with partners (as available)

Sept 24th – 27th
• Bevan Koopman (DSTC) in Darwin for talks with NTU and other partners

Oct – Dec 2003
• NTU prototype developed (from existing database content using DSTC software)
• Other partners develop plans for specific db development, implementation and use with indigenous groups and NTU researchers.

March 2004: Darwin meeting.
• NTU demonstrates basic Yolngu studies database as proof of concept to partners. (Indigenous stakeholders can attend meeting or call a meeting on their own land)
• Discussion on development of special search and interface features, and planning for implementation.

- Discussion focussing on uses of digital technology in indigenous teaching contexts, and implications for database design.

April – Oct 2004: Community-based meetings and development
- Individual project plans finalised (place, content, hardware, software, IP issues, ownership, ongoing support)
- Workshop in each target community to demonstrate proof of concept, finalise initial content, brainstorm datastructures, interfaces, searchpaths, upload etc.
- Developing plans, and policy for use of digital content by owners and custodians.
- Planning for evaluation and ongoing support.
- NTU team prepares digital content for upload to each database
- NTU team develops prototype databases

Late 2004:
- Delivery of prototype to all target communities

March – July 2005:
- Meetings in target communities to evaluate progress and plan for further development of search-friendly and upload-friendly features.
- Workshops in target communities evaluating function and use of prototype systems.
- Negotiating second stage development work.
- Further development of search, and upload features.

August 2005: Darwin Workshop
- evaluation of work so far
- discussion about educational applications and formulation of recommendations for database development and use.
- Discussion and development of recommendations for db implementation in other contexts.