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The Journey of a Digital Story: A Healing Performance of Mino-Bimaadiziwin: The Good Life

Carmella M. Rodriguez

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THE JOURNEY OF A DIGITAL STORY: A HEALING PERFORMANCE OF
MINO-BIMAADIZIWIN: THE GOOD LIFE

CARMELLA M. RODRIGUEZ

A DISSERTATION

Submitted to the Ph.D. in Leadership and Change Program

of Antioch University

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of the requirements for the degree of

Doctor of Philosophy

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This is to certify that the Dissertation entitled:

THE JOURNEY OF A DIGITAL STORY: A HEALING PERFORMANCE OF
MINO-BIMAADIZIWIN: THE GOOD LIFE

prepared by

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is approved in partial fulfillment of the requirements for the degree of Doctor of Philosophy in
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Creator, I thank you for guiding me through this beautiful journey, for accepting me as one of your children and for all of creation. Thank you spiritual guides for teaching me about life and keeping me on the right path. Brenda Manuelito, thank you for being my partner and the other half of *nDigiDreams*. I'm so grateful I met you in a little hog farm in Lyons, Colorado. Thank you for travelling across this beautiful land with me on dirt roads, blue skies, and across so many waterways. Our learning journey together has been incredible and I'm so happy that we are doing something good for "the people." Thank you to all of the medicine men and women, who helped us raise *nDigiDreams*, since birth and for the spiritual guidance and prayers for this path. Thank you to the Manuelito family for always holding a loving, spiritual and nurturing space for us, and especially to Carol, who traveled with us to so many reservations always making sure we had coffee and something to eat. Although we were divided since birth Rodriguez and Sweeney family, we will always be related. Thank you Barry family for putting a roof over my head, food on the table and encouraging me to go to school.

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Dedication

This journey is dedicated to Gary, my Diné brother, and all foster children. I would also like to dedicate this dissertation to my *nDigiFamily* and all of the *nDigiStorytellers* that have “walked on” into the spirit world. They have left a lasting impression on me.

Abstract

Indigenous peoples have always shared collective truths and knowledge through oral storytelling. Just as we were born, stories are born too, through our sacred “living breath.” We live in a time where stories travel far, beyond our imaginable dreams, and can have an influence on anyone who hears them. In the present-day, we have an opportunity to combine personal stories with digital technology in order to share one of our greatest gifts with each other—our experience and wisdom. For eight years, Brenda K. Manuelito and I have been traveling across Indian Country helping our Indigenous relatives create *nDigiStories* for Native survivance, healing, hope, and liberation. Together with our *nDigiStorytellers*, we are *Healing Our Communities One Story at a Time*®. This dissertation is a phenomenological study about the “story-sharing” of *nDigiStories*. It tells the story about the journey of digital stories created from an Indigenized digital storytelling process called *nDigiStorytelling* with an *Ojibwa (Anishinaabe)* community in Michigan. I explored a bricolage of methodologies from an “Indigenist” perspective, community-based participatory research, performance ethnography, and relational autoethnography. This study shows how combining an Indigenous approach to technology and media-making with deeply-held beliefs and ceremony can revitalize Indigenous people and strengthen community relationships. The electronic version of this Dissertation is available in open access at AURA, <http://aura.antioch.edu/etds/> and OhioLink ETD Center, <http://www.ohiolink.edu/etd>. This dissertation is accompanied by a PDF document that contains links to 45 media files on the *nDigiStorySharing* YouTube Channel that are referenced in this document.

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List of Supplemental Files

Carmella-Rodriguez-Dissertation-Media-Links.pdf 85KB

Life Force

Once you walk with your spirit again, it is easier to find the way (Thorpe, 1996, p. 40).

Introduction

All life forms carry great intelligence. But trees do especially because they spend their entire lives, day and night, in rain, sleet, snow, and sun, in deep meditation. So they have much to impart. The key to communicating and gathering energy from a tree is to recognize the equality in the worth of all life, of the tree's life and your own. (Xochiquetzal & Garcia, 2005, p. 136)

The first digital storytelling workshop I facilitated with Brenda Manuelito with a full group of ten people, took place in November 2008 in Anchorage Alaska for the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC). We flew into the Ted Stevens International Airport a day early. I lived in Denver at the time so I was acclimated to snowy weather. It was just a little colder than I expected. We picked up our luggage at baggage claim and hitched a ride up the escalator. I watched Brenda go first, and then all of a sudden she lost control of her duffel bag. It was like a slow-motion scene in a comedy. She was running down the escalator going up and at the same time trying to grab her luggage, but it kept twirling out of her hands into the air. I told her, "Just drop it and go up with the escalator!" She finally stopped trying and the bag came tumbling down and landed in front of me. I picked it up and carried it onto the escalator. We met at the top, looked at each other and just started laughing.

In the Alaska workshop, we had the privilege to help Rita Blumenstein, a *Yup'ik* Elder, make a digital story. She carried a set of journals that had aging spots from traveling all over the world. I can only imagine the stories that she has shared between the ink of her pen and the blank pages of her journal. She is a great storyteller and shared this story at the workshop (Figure 1.1).

When I was a young girl, my grandfather gave me a bowl he made, and inside was a design that looked like a spider web. He told me that one-day all the Native people would be spread out across the earth and there would be war, sickness and much suffering-but, there would be a web, like a spider's that would connect them all. And through this web,

the Native people of the world would share stories that would make them strong again.
(Rita Pitka Blumenstein, personal communication, November 12, 2008)

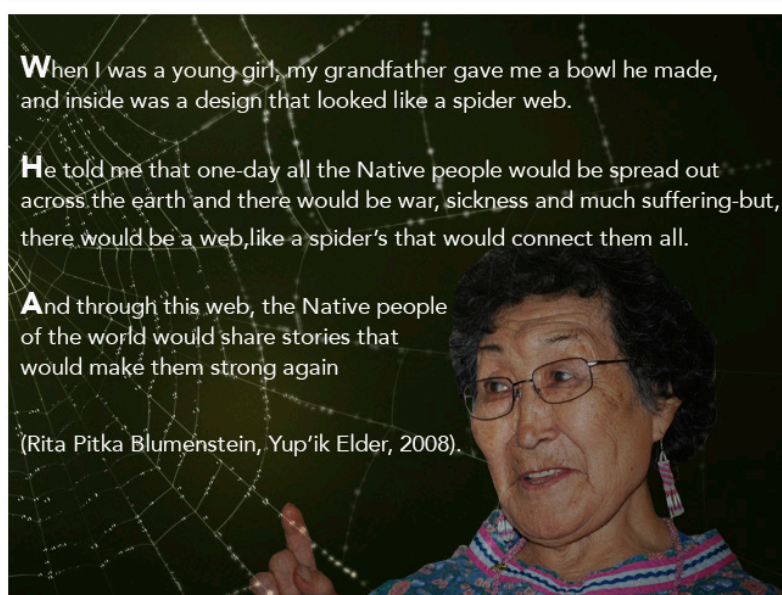


Figure 1.1. Grandma Rita Blumenstein Story Web. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

She thanked us for the work we were doing and realized that digital storytelling was good for Indigenous peoples. Many people say that digital storytelling is only for the youth because “its about technology,” but the Elders are the ones, who finish first because they know digital storytelling is about “story.” Rita was the first one done and had time to take a nap in the back of the room and after she woke up, still had time to play with her game boy (handheld video game). Rita is one of the Thirteen Indigenous Grandmothers, who travels around the world with twelve other Elders praying for the Earth, the Water, the people and peace.

After the ANTHC digital storytelling workshop screening, Rita pulled out her drum (*Yup'ik* hand drum) and started drumming (Figure 1.2) for the group so that everyone could travel safely and in a good way. Brenda and I saw her again four years later in 2012, in Lame Deer, Montana, home to the *Northern Cheyenne Nation*, at the 11th gathering of the International Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers (Figure 1.3). It was held at the Kenneth Beartusk

Memorial Powwow Grounds. We saw two other *nDigiStorytellers*; we had trained in Montana in 2010. One of these women organized the gathering for the Grandmothers, exemplifying the courage she experienced after making her own digital story.



Figure 1.2. Grandma Rita Blumenstein with *nDigiStorytellers*. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 1.3. 11th Gathering of the International Council of 13 Indigenous Grandmothers. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

At the 11th gathering, Eduardo Duran, the author of the seminal book, *Healing the Soul Wound: Counseling with American Indians and Other Native Peoples*, was invited to talk about his knowledge of the “soul wound” in the context of counseling and psychotherapy. The “soul wound” is a concept that came from Ron Teague, Joseph Campbell, James Hilman and various Native Elders. The “soul wound” is “the legacy of intergenerational trauma” and “it lives on and thrives over time” (Ivey, 2006, p. ix). According to Duran:

The mental health profession has been instrumental in fostering the colonial ideation of Native Peoples all over the world. Liberation discourse involves taking a critical eye to the processes of colonization that have had a deep impact on the identity of Original Peoples; as a result a new narrative of healing will emerge. (2006, p. 1)

The idea of the “soul healer” in the context of “Traditional Healers” means that “the healers embody the healing energy in their life and in all that they do. Western healers have a way of compartmentalizing their role as a healer from what they do in ‘real life’” (Duran, 2006, p. 44). The mental health system exercises ethnocentric-based interventions that are considered

appropriate, neglecting the worldviews, values, beliefs and traditional practices of Indigenous peoples continuing the perpetuation of various forms of psychic and spiritual suffering (Duran, Firehammer, & Gonzalez, 2008). If not effectively dealt with, the “soul wound” will continue in each person as well as their descendants and the spiritual and natural world. Duran shared his story of the “soul wound” with several hundred people that were in attendance at the 11th gathering. After he finished, the great-great granddaughter of General George Armstrong Custer stood up, announced herself and apologized for the wrongdoings of her relatives. The next to stand up was a Spanish delegation from Spain who also apologized:

If we are to realize new and untapped dimensions of our individual and collective health and psychological liberation . . . we need to understand the way toward liberation and the fullness of life in a manner that promotes harmonious interactions within the overall web of the life-world. (Duran et al., 2008, p. 288)

In her informative book, *People of the Seventh Fire: Returning Lifeways of Native America*, Thorpe (1996) tells the story about how the natural way of life was intruded upon by the European invasion, but the natural way of life still exists beneath the surface of most Native peoples and communities:

Each nation has a unique language, set of teachings and ceremonies, and a way of life given to them by the Creator through the combined efforts of hundreds of thousands of their ancestors . . . Each race, nation, community, family and individual possesses unique characteristics which help to create a healthy environment through which their gifts can be revealed. . . . The Native ways of life are spiritually guided . . . An understanding of spirituality comes through the practice of a natural lifeway harmonious with all of creation. (p. 2)

Teachings and knowledge were passed down from generation to generation to teach about history, culture, values and relationships through oral storytelling, singing, drumming and dancing. Storytelling is at the center of survival. It is an art form or all-embracing expression that produces a story that has a spirit regarded as an element of life (Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Garroutte & Westcott, 2013). When we share our stories, they come to life (J. Archibald, 2008;

Lewis, 2011). We have a responsibility to share stories: “Stories themselves had the power to protect us and even heal us because the stories are alive; the stories are our ancestors. In the very telling of the stories, the spirits of our beloved ancestors and family become present with us” (Silko, 1986, p. 152).

A new sense of presence comes from stories of survivance; these stories are creating a new consciousness, rejecting the colonial notion of domination and oppression, celebrating courage, self-determination and liberation. “Native survivance is a continuance of stories” (Vizenor, 2008, p. 1). Indigenous peoples are weaving their stories in the digital era reclaiming lived experiences giving voice to survivance, resilience and an inter-generational spiritual legacy through digital storytelling.

Brenda Manuelito and I have traveled far and wide across Indian country to teach digital storytelling under the auspices of *nDigiDreams*, LLC (hereinafter called *nDigiDreams*), a digital storytelling consulting and training company we established in 2008. We have helped birth (co-produce) over 1,200 digital stories with Indigenous peoples from over 80 different tribes across 15 states. Throughout this paper I alternate between “Indigenous,” “Aboriginal,” “Native,” “American Indian,” “Alaska Native,” or “First Nations.” Digital stories are first-person narratives told through the oral tradition using digital technology. Digital storytelling has helped Indigenous peoples delve into their own cultures, philosophies and “soul wounds,” creating space for “having the courage and imagination to envision life beyond the state” (Corntassel, 2012, p. 86). The realignment of remembering and visioning (McLeod, 2007) is about tapping into the life force of the spirit, which has always been present. The digital stories are not so much about the trauma and victimization but about the “soul healing.” When a

storyteller taps into their life force and ancestral roots, they are tapping into the spirit and origin of presence.

Breath is Sacred

Breath has sorrow, it has pain.

More importantly, it has light, it has courage, it has hope.

It has healing. It has truth.

In the telling of my story, I give you life.

You are the breath of the living.

You are sacred (C’Rodrigo, 2014).

Digital stories are living beings. They connect us to place, space, ancestors and natural ways of life. Each one is unique and has a purpose. By sharing our stories, we share our lives and we share our sacred breath. In this dissertation, I suggest that digital stories are not mere “artifacts” or “products;” they have life. Thus, they have meaning and can bring healing to the storytellers who make them and those people who watch them.

My dissertation will focus on the journey of digital stories as they are shared across the landscape from an “Indigenist” perspective, “A progressive, Native viewpoint that acknowledges the colonized or fourth world position of Natives in the United States and advocates for their empowerment and sovereignty” (Walters, Simoni, & Evans-Campbell, 2002, p. 1) grounded within an Indigenous framework.

As I have traveled across Indian Country as a digital storytelling practitioner, I have witnessed the “soul-wind” of the storytellers and the living breath of the digital stories and the courage it took for the storytellers to tell their stories. The storytellers are the ones that inspired me to travel on another educational journey. It is my hope that the Antioch PhD in Leadership and Change program and the journey of this study will help create the sustainability for

storytelling in contemporary times using digital technologies, to bring additional healing and wellness to Native Nations. It is my intention to tell the story of this study through the many voices that collaborated on this project with me.

In the next section, I will present myself as a foster-child/video artist/digital storyteller/*nDigiSister*.

It's a Good Day to Live!



Media 1.0. Author's Introduction
Access Media 1.0 by using the link
<https://youtu.be/fRsZ3d3xI-M>

Gentle Wind of the Ancestors

*As the Eastern sun was melting into the horizon,
I felt the gentle wind of the ancestors cross over
Huron Bay,
only to whisper goodbye.*

*They inhaled the rhythmic echo,
whirling around from the drumming of the day before,
and exhaled ice crystals turning them into snowflakes.
The snow lightly fell to ground to provide a blanket
for our feet,*

*so our footsteps would not be forgotten,
by the ancestors or the digital storytellers
(C'Rodrigo, 2014).*

In the Upper Peninsula of Michigan, our storytellers from the pilot study finished their movies in the late afternoon and were in a hurry to drive home because they all lived a half-hour away. Coming from the Southwest, I thought they wanted to beat the snow. “What did I know about Michigan snow?” They wanted to rush home to see a “sporting event.” I thought all the storytellers had left until I heard the “creating lodge” door swing open. It was one of our storytellers. He carried a rectangular cedar box so respectfully in his arms. I was surprised he came back inside especially since his oldest sister was sitting outside in the vehicle waiting for

him. He slowly opened the cedar box, raised his hand and gifted all five of us (digital storytelling facilitators) with an eagle feather and said, “Thank you for the work you are doing.”

We took a moment and inhaled a breath of silence. For American Indians, receiving an eagle feather is a high honor and a symbol of high achievement. Many academics have asked if digital storytelling is an evidence-based practice. Receiving an eagle feather is evidence that is realized by Indigenous digital storytellers and their communities.

Brenda Manuelito and I drove over two thousand miles in *nDigiChidi*, the *nDigiDreams* company van (Figure 1.4) all the way to Michigan to attend the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) Powwow and also to meet with members of the KBIC community to discuss the possibility of collaborating on a pilot project using digital storytelling.

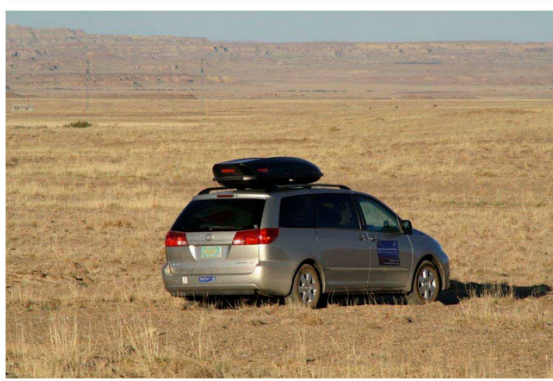


Figure 1.4. nDigiChidi Crossing the Navajo Reservation (Chidi means car in Navajo). Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.

After our meeting, Brenda and I drove to the Tribal Department of Health and Human Services to offer technical assistance to a previous storyteller while we were still in the area. After we finished helping her, we walked outside towards *nDigiChidi* and across the street an older eagle with a wingspan of about five feet came flying out of the trees. I turned to Brenda and said, “Hurry, Look up!” We watched the Eagle fly seemingly unbounded and turned to each other and smiled. I continued with, “It’s a good day!”

The high achievement signified by the “gifting” of the eagle feather was not an individual achievement but a collective one. Metaphors are often used to teach about Native identity, culture, and community. Sinclair (2013) shares his insight about collectivity from a story he heard by Basil Johnston, “Feathers, as anyone knows, enable eagles to fly— but explaining exactly how this is, is almost impossible” (p. 89).

Johnston tells the story of an interconnected process of independent parts that leads to the collective:

We are made up of thousands of tiny (and virtually unexplainable) filaments that constitute unique parts of a system that together make up a crucial, interconnected process of making our universe fly. One strand of a feather cannot control another; they must simply do their job and rely on others to do their work. At the same time, and like our many separate yet interconnected communities, it is important for each filament to understand something about what the other does, so we can all understand where we are going. While each are separate parts, we need to respect the other strands, support them, and together, we will all carry our collective weight. (as cited in Sinclair, 2013, p. 89)

I appreciate the metaphor that Johnston uses about eagle feathers to illustrate how everything is related and can remain in balance if respect is practiced. I have prayed many times with the feather I was given by my storyteller, for guidance with our digital storytelling practice and throughout the writing of this dissertation and for all of our *nDigiFamily* (storytellers) and their relatives. *nDigiFamily* is a term of endearment that Brenda and I use to refer to all of the storytellers, who have participated in our digital storytelling workshops. They have become our relatives by the simple virtue of sharing their personal stories with us in digital storytelling workshops. In an earlier workshop in 2009, one of our digital storytellers referred to Brenda and I as her *nDigiSisters* and I guess you can say, the name and gesture stuck.

Learning To Listen

Watching the eagle soar through the Michigan sky reminded me of the times I sat high up in my tree house as a young girl.

My Tree House

With her permission,

I built a tree house on top of her branches.

She taught me how to watch and how to listen.

Always giving me safety and tranquility.

*So much so, that I could hear a drum beating,
and in my mind, I could see the Native man drumming,*

and in my body, I could feel my spirit vibrating.

Thank you Elm (C'Rodrigo, 2014).

It was difficult growing up as a foster child, which made life more challenging as an adult. I don't have family stories to tell. I did not learn about life in a book, I learned about life by going through it. My teachings came from the trees, the wind, the water, the earth, the sky, the sun, the moon and my spiritual helpers. As a young girl, my spiritual guides kept whispering these words to me "Carmella, if you drink, it will be the end of you," but they wouldn't tell me what it meant.

There were times I listened and times I did not. In short, those few words probably saved my life. I met my biological family when I was twenty-five and I was told that my biological father was part Native, perhaps Apache. Unfortunately he died when he was twenty-seven from alcoholism, so I never had the opportunity to meet him. My younger brother died in April 2013 from the same disease at the age of forty-three. It was through his passing that I met new cousins for the first time and discovered that my father's great-great grandmother was born at the San Ildefonso Pueblo in New Mexico, and was a servant to my father's great-great grandfather, who was of Irish descent. I was told that my father's mother was of Spanish and Diné descent. My biological mother is of Italian and Spanish descent.

Unfortunately, I had to say goodbye to my elm tree when I was seventeen years old. I wandered through life living each day in the moment hoping to understand the next one. As I got older, I kept asking myself, “How did I survive?”

How have other people survived? When I was seven years old, a social worker brought Gary, a young Navajo boy to live with me in my second foster home. His body was covered with cigarette burns from the abuse of his alcoholic mother. I had a different understanding other than the story the social worker told my foster mother. I didn't blame his mother; I blamed the bigger system (human services) that I was familiar with as a foster child. Somehow I knew, even at that age, that events surrounding his abuse were more complex than the social worker made it out to be. I promised him that I would find a way to help other foster children. About a year after Gary arrived, “the black car” drove up our dusty dirt road. Helpless, I watched the social worker put him in the back seat as he cried hysterically. He scratched at the window just like I did when I was abruptly removed from my first foster home. I was only three years old when that happened, and I remember it, as if it happened yesterday. The duality of observing his experience and reflecting on mine created a method for me to look at life through a different lens: I was a filmmaker on the outside looking at myself through the lens on the inside and giving a performance. Luckily, this technique helped me survive difficult times and I developed a good eye for photographic composition. I still pray and hope Gary will walk into one of our digital storytelling workshops one day.

Riding the Super-Information Highway to Video Bliss

As a young girl, I received a Kodak 110 film camera as a gift. I loved telling stories through photography. It brought life closer to me, close enough to embrace and be embraced. I was curious and loved learning. Throughout life, I have used education as part of my own

survivance. That is a term, Vizenor, refers to as “an active sense of presence” (Vizenor, 1999, p. vii). I privileged Western education and technology and ignored my spiritual self. I took a ride on the super-information highway. When people hear the phrase “emerging technologies,” they often think of all of the electronic gizmos and gadgets they carry in their purses or pockets.

But we must not forget that Indigenous peoples have been developing and using “technology” since time immemorial and are very skilled at adopting useful technologies that have been developed outside of their communities (Bang, Marin, Faber, & Suzukovich, 2013). For example, the *Ojibwa* built canoes from birch bark trees, as outlined in this excerpt by Vennum (n.d.), originally written by George Catlin in 1841 who describes the *Ojibwa*’s flawless craftsmanship:

The bark canoe of the *Chippewa* [*Ojibwa* Indians] is perhaps the most beautiful and light model of all the watercrafts that were ever invented. They are generally made complete with the rind of one birch tree, and so ingeniously shaped and sewed together, with roots of the tamarack . . . that they are water-tight, and ride upon the water, as light as a cork. (as cited in Vennum, n.d.)

As a senior in high school, I turned the key, pressed on the gas and started the computer technology engine in 1982. After I graduated from high school, I sent myself to college and graduated in 1986 with a Bachelor of Science degree in Computer Science. In 1987, I drove up the hilltop to the Los Alamos National Laboratory where I was employed for a few years. I had access to Cray super computers and the Internet. The Internet had been in existence since the 1960s, and I had access to send email around the world in the 1980s. Eventually, I moved on to work at Texas Instruments in Dallas, Texas, to test the Integrated Circuit that was manufactured from silicon dioxide in the form of quartz, also known as sand.

I longed for employment that was more visually stimulating. I quit Texas Instruments and went to work for American Airlines. I worked with big databases and programmed GUIs

(graphic user interfaces) to help people communicate between the computer and the applications running on their computer. I was tempted by my co-worker to join a group of people, who were designing a video-on-demand application. I spent a year and a half after hours and on weekends with other programmers designing the application. I quit American Airlines in Dallas, Texas and moved to Austin to help start the company, *On-Demand Technologies*. We were successful at creating both an analog and digital video server similar to what is seen in hotel rooms and Netflix. We started investigating interactive consumer-driven appliances akin to the apps of today (iPhone) that would work through interactive video on home television sets. Unfortunately, technology was too expensive for consumers and the United States was not physically wired to accommodate the video bandwidth that was necessary to play streaming video in the home.

In 1994, while I was still in Austin, I attended a presentation by Dewey Winburn, the founder of South by Southwest Multimedia Festival (SXSW). He presented his new interactive multimedia application that was being developed to help youth with addictive behaviors. The minute I saw his presentation, I realized that technology could be used for health education and prevention. Multimedia was creative, artistic and could help educate people how to live healthier lives.

In 2014, twenty years later, Chelsea Clinton, the daughter of former President Clinton was a keynote speaker for SXSW. She informed the audience about the work of the Clinton Foundation to improve global health care. She tried motivating them to think critically about making the world a better place using the things they were most passionate about, like technology. She challenged them by asking this question: “What do you [I] think is really unjust? That should be a starting point for how you engage with the world” (Griggs, 2014). Consequently, the technology and applications we have at our fingertips today are a direct result

of those programmers who stepped out of the box and took a stand to bring innovation to the masses by openly sharing their source code and creating applications that were free. This happened after the shocking dot-com crash, causing many programmers to become unemployed.

After my video-on-demand stint, I dabbled in multimedia and web development for a few years and then moved to Colorado to work for Galileo International, Inc. to be part of a team that was tasked with designing and testing the first airline reservation system for United Airlines for online ticketing. After spending twelve years in the computer industry, I became worn out for being female in a male-dominated industry, so I quit. I just quit! I asked myself the same question Chelsea Clinton asked of the programmers, “What are you passionate about, Carmella, and what do you think is really unjust?”

As a result, in 1999 I pursued documentary filmmaking and enrolled in film school. While still in school, I started my own video production company to financially support myself. Documentary filmmaking was expensive, took a long time to produce and I found Denver was not film-friendly to people of color. So, I opted to produce commercial and consumer videos. I worked on several projects with the Denver Indian community, African-American and Latino communities. I also worked several years helping Colorado Access, a nonprofit health plan that continues to provide access to behavioral and physical health services. My job was to create videos for the *Morning Show*. I was responsible for translating the President/CEO’s management vision into visual commercials for the show, and I was also responsible for videotaping the entire show as an archive for the company. In lieu of typical staff meetings for employees, the *Morning Show* was an interactive performance between management, providers, board members, staff and community members. The CEO had the insight to bring the lived experiences of the members from the groups I mentioned onto the stage to help motivate people that played a role in

providing or receiving health services. From behind the camera, I felt privileged to observe the systemic complexity of health care portrayed through a humanistic perspective that used storytelling as the catalyst for education and motivation. As an observer, my preconceived notions of the human services system constructed out of my experiences as a young girl had changed. I saw the human side of things and realized that relationality (Wilson, 2008) was necessary for the larger system to operate successfully and for the patients to be treated justly. The relational part of relationality is central to knowing and acting.

On the consumer side, I helped “extraordinary” people create videos with personal photos, short video clips and first personal narratives. While I was editing their movies, we had long discussions about the people, places and events related to each photo. After the videos were completed with music, we watched them and experienced a cathartic release. I couldn’t explain what happened, I just felt it, and based on my client’s response, I could tell they did too.

Unfortunately, I had to shut down my video business due to a devastating health virus, which attacked my immune system. I wasn’t sure if I would ever walk or use my hands again. I sat in silence for several months as the pain ravaged my body. I became obsessed over the fact that I didn’t know how I could be of service to humanity. And then it hit me: I was a creative person, and I didn’t need my legs or hands to create; I just needed my mind and heart. After having that realization, miraculously, I could literally feel my body healing. That is when I realized the true power of intention and the sacredness of thought. As soon as I felt well enough to move around, I enrolled in two Reiki courses and I also signed up for graduate school at the University of Colorado in Denver in 2006. I wanted to bring the power of video into curriculum design to improve health literacy.

Becoming a Digital Storyteller and *nDigiSister*

I'll never forget the day I discovered digital storytelling. I saw a brochure lying on the desk in my classroom at the University of Colorado. I had never heard of it, and I didn't know what it was, but the minute I saw the words "digital storytelling" I had a knowing, an intuitive sense of what it could be. I knew what I experienced in my editing studio with clients, could digital storytelling have the same impact? I was editing for people one-on-one and the Californian model of digital storytelling (Hartley, 2008) was participatory with a group of people and hands-on for the participants.

In June 2008, I walked into a digital storytelling train-the-trainer workshop in Lyons, Colorado (Figure 1.5). I was early to the training, which was unusual for me. The workshop was held on an old hog farm right near a vegetable co-op on the outskirts of Boulder, Colorado.

Coming Full Circle

I sat facing East.

The rays of the sun were shining like the rays in a God sky.

My body felt warm and full of love.

I raised my hands and proclaimed myself of service.

I remembered how Elm taught me to listen.

I could hear the drum beat again but this time it was louder.

Instead of one drum,

I heard many drums beating at the same time.

Instead of one Native man,

I saw many, men, women and children.

Walking synchronously to the beat of the drum.

The promise I made at the age of seven was being realized.

I had come full circle (C'Rodrigo, 2014).

My journey had been one of uncertainty, lots of twists and turns, but every stone I picked up on my path had meaning. Every lived experience and learning opportunity contributed to the whole. My spirit was soaring so high that I could not feel my feet touch the ground the entire time I was in the workshop. I knew I caught up with time. With absolutely no doubt, no hesitation, I knew I was about to embark on something bigger than myself, something that was going to help lots of people with experiences similar to my Diné brother, Gary. I accepted the journey and gave thanks to the Creator. I realized that I was not there to learn anything new; I was there to meet Brenda Manuelito.

We shared the same vision of helping Indigenous peoples reclaim their lived experiences using technology. We were familiar with critical issues facing Native communities and intuitively knew that digital storytelling could be used as a tool to bring about social justice.



Figure 1.5. Train-the-Trainer Digital Storytelling Workshop in Lyons, Colorado. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.

In 2005, she had envisioned the possibilities for health promotion by engaging in personal storytelling through digital storytelling. In 1994, I witnessed how interactive multimedia and personal storytelling could be used to educate people about substance abuse prevention. From that vision, we created *nDigiDreams* in 2008, and in July of that same year, we worked on our first digital story together in Albuquerque, New Mexico, with a Cherokee Elder who told a story about donating his kidney to his daughter. By November 2008, we headed to Anchorage, Alaska for a full ten-person workshop. That's when we met Rita Blumenstein and helped her make her first digital story. We realized that in order for digital storytelling to meet

the needs of Indigenous communities quickly, it had to travel as a grass roots effort. In 2009, Brenda quit the University of Washington, as the Director for Native People for Cancer Control, where she had introduced digital storytelling to the university and Indigenous communities in a seven state region. And I quit my part time job at the University of Colorado, where I introduced video as a tool for Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorders prevention, and at the same time I graduated with my Masters degree from the University of Colorado.

In 2008–2009, the economy was experiencing another downward spiral and people inside the universities thought we were crazy for quitting our jobs. Native communities embraced our work and invited us to help increase wellness in their communities using digital storytelling. I made a promise at the age of seven, and I knew life had come full circle, I realized my spiritual self and I made a universal commitment. Brenda and I have been driving down two-lane highways and dirt roads, flying across blue skies, and riding ferries across waterways to reach our Native relatives who have become our *nDigiBrothers* and *nDigiSisters*. We realize *nDigiDreams* as a “sacred presence” through our continual prayer offerings and Diné ceremonial songs. We lay down our best thoughts and intentions for the digital storytelling journey.

I did not have the privilege of growing up with teachings about stories or anything else from family, but I am familiar with ways of being, through the natural world. I realized the sacredness of stories much later in life even though, ironically, I have been painting stories onto video frames using a video camera for years. I am continually learning about the sacredness of storytelling through the life stories told by our digital storytellers, and by our interaction together during a digital storytelling workshop, and from their reactions during the workshop screenings (showing of digital stories after a workshop). I get really excited when I get to help our digital storytellers record their voice for their digital story. I have helped most of the 1,200 digital

storytellers record their narration and background music. I started noticing the subtle characteristics of a person's voice. For me, hearing their voice is like looking through the viewfinder of a camera. The experience is hyper-focused and all my senses become in tune. I can feel if a voice is creamy or has texture, color, heat, or flavor. Storytellers get worried that they will not like their recorded voice. I tell them voice is like the variety of plants we experience when we walk outside. The Creator gave every living entity a unique voice; each one has a purpose and is beautiful. When a storyteller introduces themselves in their Native Language as opposed to using English, their voice changes and the experience becomes multi-dimensional, almost initiating transcendence to a place of origin. After storytellers finish recording their narration, the reclamation of story is released from their being. They are free to walk with their spirit, making it easier for them to find their way. Their experience helped my experience. The sacredness of their breath and story is grounded in the roots of origin and the roots of resilience, which is why the branch can sway but never break. Therefore, the sharing of a digital story is also sacred because of how deeply rooted it is within the cosmic system.

Healing Our Communities One Story at a Time®

The above title is our vision and tagline for *nDigiDreams*. Healing can be realized in a community one story at a time, one person at a time, because we are all related. Even though Brenda Manuelito and I attended the train-the-trainer workshop with Joe Lambert, the Executive Director of the Center for Digital Storytelling, to learn how to teach other people how to make digital stories, out of respect for other people's knowledge and expertise, and because of her teachings, Brenda asked Joe for permission to take digital storytelling across Indian Country.

Before we started traveling extensively and planting *nDigiSeeds* (digital storytelling capacity building) across Indian Country, we made sure to make prayer offerings within the

sacred mountains of the Diné people. We renew the offerings every season with help from Brenda’s grandfather. One time, we drove to his Hogan (ancestral home) on the Navajo Reservation, and I put my hand on the door and I was transcended into a different time period for a millisecond, long enough to know a part of me had been there before in a different time as opposed to the time of now. I told her grandfather about my experience and he said that even though I am of mixed ancestry, there is a root of origin that will always connect me to place. With him, we discussed the similarities between our digital storytelling workshops and the Navajo healing ceremonies. Because of Brenda’s background as a Diné woman and familiarity with the teachings of the Navajo people, we decided to “Indigenize” or adapt digital storytelling to reflect an Indigenous worldview. We call our model of digital storytelling *nDigiStorytelling* and use the Diné Cornstalk Teachings as a metaphor for our digital storytelling pedagogy as illustrated in Figure 1.6.

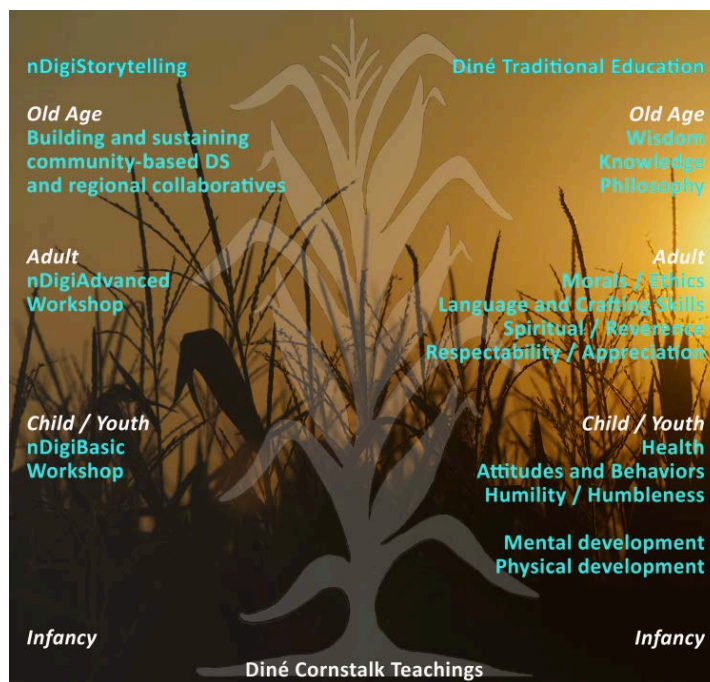


Figure 1.6. Diné Cornstalk Teachings. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

Corn has been recognized as indigenous to this continent and can be seen as a representation of human development from conception to old age during the developmental stages of life, starting with the roots of the cornstalk to its corn tassel. Navajo teachings

recognize four varieties of corn: white, yellow, blue and black. They are associated with the four cardinal directions. The white corn, yellow corn and corn pollen have a deep spiritual significance within Navajo ceremonies and daily life. The Diné Cornstalk Teachings have been used for teaching, healing stories, and creation stories. According to the Diné people, the first man and first woman came from an ear of corn, a perfect white and yellow ear of corn. That is how spirit was brought into them. As human beings we have roots that go into the Earth. We are the representation of the corn plant. As we get older, we start growing towards the sky. When we reach maturity, our hair turns gray like the corn tassel. It is our vision to build capacity and sustainability of digital storytelling framed within a Diné philosophy of teaching that uses the cornstalk teachings to show the different levels of learning and attainment. The right side of the cornstalk model is the Diné Traditional Education and on the left side is the *nDigiStorytelling* model of digital storytelling. Going through each developmental stage, similar to the right side of the cornstalk model, we are planting *nDigiSeeds* with Indigenous communities starting with *nDigiBasic* workshops and then helping them build capacity with *nDigiAdvanced* workshops working towards the building of community-based digital storytelling initiatives and regional collaboratives. The cornstalk teachings show from infancy to old age, how to develop skills and knowledge about digital storytelling and how through humility, discipline, and positive determination we can decentralize and culturally-tailor workshops to promote tribal sovereignty and Native nation building.

nDigiStorytelling privileges Indigenous ways of knowing and is based on the Diné philosophy of learning in accordance with the Diné traditional living system called Sa'ah Naaghái Bik'éh Hózhóó (Diné College, 2013) and has similarities to other Indigenous life models that incorporate the four directions or the medicine wheel. This philosophy is realized

through the concepts and values identified through the four cardinal directions, East, South, West, and North and follows a clockwise fashion starting at early morning dawn (Nitsáhákees) in the East direction. The *nDigiStorytelling* Four Directions approach is illustrated in Figure 1.7.

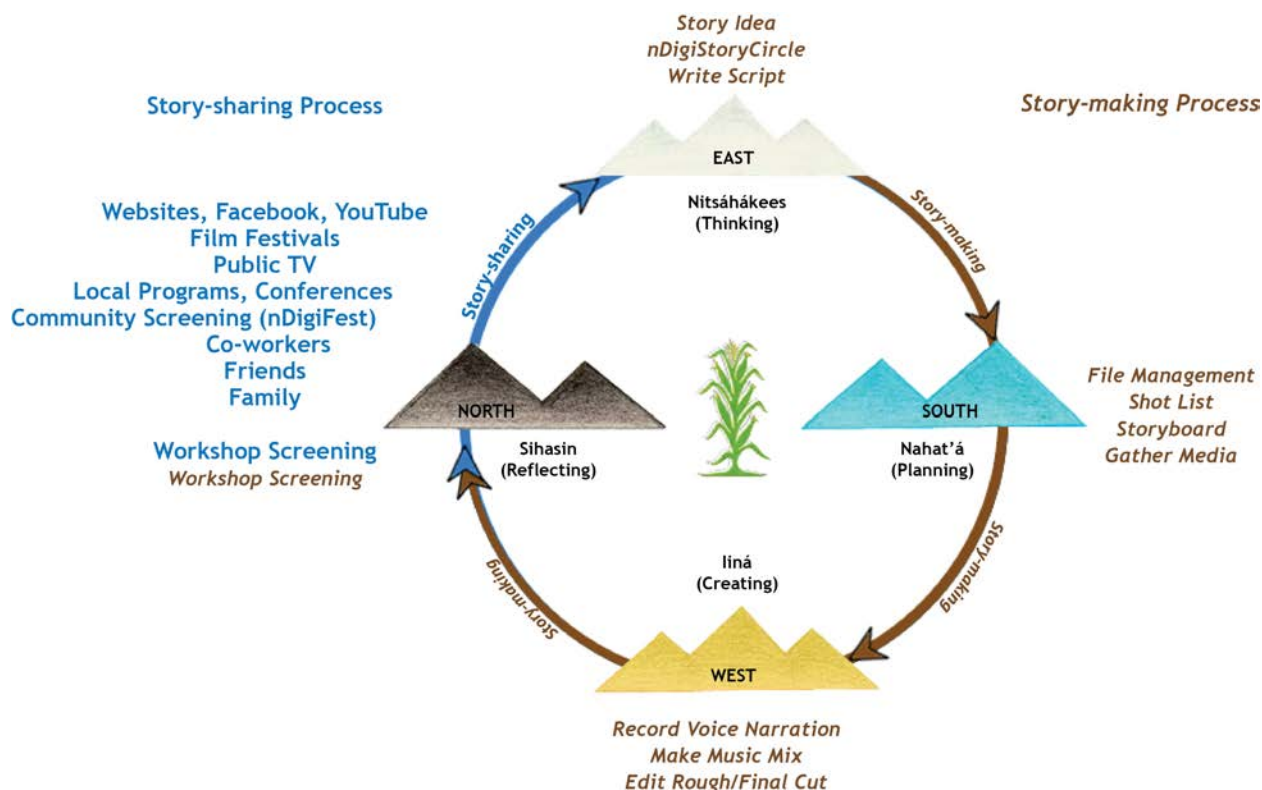


Figure 1.7. *nDigiStorytelling* Four Directions approach. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

nDigiStorytelling can be seen as two activities: starting in the East direction moving clockwise and ending in the North direction is the “story-making” process, indicated by the brown circle in Figure 1.7, and the “story-sharing” process continuing from the North direction clockwise and ending in the East direction, indicated by the blue circle, also in Figure 1.7. For the aim of this study, it is imperative to understand that the inquiry will be divided into two complementary dissertations. My dissertation will focus on the “story-sharing” process of sharing *nDigiStories* and Brenda Manuelito’s dissertation will focus on the “story-making” process of creating *nDigiStories*.

The “story-making” process of an *nDigiStory* begins with the birth of a story, the planting of *nDigiSeeds* in a four-day workshop combined with technology to create a two-to-five minute personal video story. The storytellers typically share their *nDigiStories* at the end of the workshop with the other storytellers at the workshop screening. This is where the “story-making” process overlaps with the “story-sharing” and then the “story-making” ends and the “story-sharing” begins. It continues clockwise until it reaches the East direction. When a cornstalk fully matures it develops a corn tassel that emits corn pollen, pollinating new plants, in the same way a storyteller starts sharing their *nDigiStory*, thereby inspiring the creation of new stories.

As a youth, I learned about the natural progression or life cycle of living things through observation. Every living thing begins and ends in balance. As an example, the *Ojibwa* (Anishinaabe) refer to *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* as the *Good Life*—living in balance (Benton-Banai, 1988; Hart, 2002; Peacock & Wisuri, 2006; Petoskey, 1992; Rheault, 1999), being conscious of relationships with the rest of creation based on the Seven Grandfather teachings: Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility and Truth (Benton-Banai, 1988). This is similar to the concept of *Hózhó* for the (Navajo)-beauty, balance, peace, wellness and harmony (Kahn-John, 2010). Similarly, we believe, an *nDigiStory* has the same life force and can help transform the storyteller who created it, change the person and families who viewed it and help connect the community that watched it. It does not end there, because it is a living being and has a life force; it resonates beyond the community influencing all living beings. It is interrelated to all of creation and is in constant flux/motion because it consists of energy and is imbued with spirit (Little Bear, 2011).

We have a growing family of storytellers that we refer to as our *nDigiFamily*. We continue to exchange emails, text messages, and Facebook pages. We run into them everywhere; at grocery stores, hotels, conferences, airports and on occasion we make special trips to visit them. Our philosophy has always been that the storytellers own their movie. They decide if they want to share it and how. Most storytellers do share their movies. Digital stories have traveled to relatives in the military all the way to Afghanistan. They have been shared in community clinic settings, GoodHealth TV, radio stations, published in on-line newspapers, websites, YouTube, Facebook, Vimeo, and other social networking sites. We have been organizing community screenings (*nDigiFest* Film Festivals) since 2010 within local tribal communities and urban Indian centers.

Our first *nDigiFest* was in September 2010 in San Diego California in conjunction with the Native Wellness Institute's 10th Annual National Wellness Gathering. The digital stories focused on healthy living and lifestyles. We screened twelve stories and the ages of the storytellers varied from eight years old to eighty-two. We had a panel of three storytellers that shared their perspective on the "story-making" and "story-sharing" of their *nDigiStories*. Being a witness and observing the impact that *nDigiStorytelling* had on the storytellers on the panel helped initiate the *nDigiStorytelling* journey that I expand upon in this dissertation. As a reference of how a single storyteller has matured along the continuum of the cornstalk teachings, Theda New Breast gave me permission to share her first *nDigiStory*, third *nDigiStory*, and a clip from our *nDigiFest* (film festival) dialogue panel from the San Diego gathering. Joanelle Romero, founder of the Red Nation Film Festival (RNFF) gave me permission to share the clip of Theda winning Best Documentary Short at the Red Nations Film Festival in Los Angeles, California in November 2013 for her third *nDigiStory*. Theda New Breast is Blackfeet from

Montana and a master trainer/facilitator for the Native Wellness Institute (NWI). She participated in an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in March 2009 in Washington State and made her first *nDigiStory*, her second in Portland, Oregon in November 2009, and a third in Browning, Montana in March 2013.

I felt it was important to share these clips because they illustrate the longitude of *nDigiStorytelling* across Indian Country and the maturity of skills of the storytellers. Witnessing the impact of the voices and experiences of the storytellers inspired me to look deeper at the healing influences of *nDigiStorytelling*. Access Theda's first *nDigiStory Media 1.1 Theda's 1st nDigiStory* online at <http://youtu.be/poG-RIJX8bY>



Media 1.1.
Theda's 1st
nDigiStory

Media 1.2.
Theda's
nDigiFest Panel

Media 1.3.
Theda's 3rd
nDigiStory

Media 1.4.
Theda's RNFF
Award

In the 2010 *nDigiFest* panel discussion, Theda shared her thoughts on filmmaking and treatment programs. Access Theda's panel discussion *Media 1.2 Theda's nDigiFest Panel* online at <http://youtu.be/L1a6QtqhOEY>

That was the first digital story I ever made in my life. That was the first time I ever did any kind of film, thank you. It was like going to a mini-treatment program, because I've been through treatment twice, a 30-day program, and a 45-day program. And I feel like I packed 45 days into three days, because you can't, number one, bullshit, you cannot fake, and you have to show who you are. You have to be authentic, and honest.
(*nDigiStorySharing*, 2015a)

That was the first time I heard *nDigiStorytelling* being compared to a treatment program.

The words authentic and honest are bold words that will become a common theme in my inquiry.

Theda tried to give a few words of encouragement for the audience to make stories too:

I encourage you, take the time to do your story, it's healing. Take the time for everyone in your reservation or urban community to tell his/her story because it's healing. When you were watching it, didn't you feel it, the emotions, all those little kids and the stories here. It resurrects something, and it's also honoring. It's an honoring process that we are able to tell our stories. We've always told stories but to show it visually is just really, really special. So thank you very much. (nDigiStorySharing, 2015a)

She felt the *nDigiStorytelling* process was healing and honoring. Her third story was made in a workshop in Browning, Montana in March 2013. Access Theda's third *nDigiStory*, using the Media 1.3 link http://youtu.be/SjycjNr_O6E The March workshop was initiated on the heels of the January 2013 workshop that also took place in Browning. Brenda Manuelito started a conversation with Angela Johnson after the workshop about the possibilities of having a second workshop to raise domestic violence awareness for the Blackfeet community using digital storytelling. Several more of us joined the conversation and committed to creating a small planning group. After several phone calls with the group, Brenda and I found a major sponsor, the National Library of Medicine, and with the group, we scheduled an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop with eleven storytellers (Figure 1.8). The Blackfeet Community College agreed to provide space for both the workshop and the *nDigiFest* (film festival) and the University of Montana agreed to provide nutritious meals everyday for the storytellers during the workshop.

Inspired by *One Billion Rising* (Figure 1.9), a global movement to end violence against women, the group agreed upon the name *Native Women Rising* (Figure 1.10) with the hope of using digital storytelling to help end domestic abuse in Indigenous communities. The University of Montana also provided t-shirts that were given to the storytellers. More information on Native Women Rising, is provided in an article that was published by Landry (2013) in *Indian Country*

Today. Access the article online at

<http://indiancountrytodaymedianetwork.com/2013/09/30/native-women-rising-ending-violence-and-healing-through-digital-storytelling-151494>



Figure 1.8. Blackfeet *nDigiStorytellers*. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*



Figure 1.9. One Billion Rising. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*



Figure 1.10. Blackfeet Native Women rising. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*

In Theda's award speech at the Red Nation Film Festival for Best Documentary Short, she stressed how the *nDigiStorytelling* process was like prayer and how fast *nDigiStories* can travel across the world through social media. Access Theda's award speech *Media 1.4 Theda's RNFF Award* online at http://youtu.be/GMU1bJ_griA

In Theda's words at the awards ceremony:

Thank you, you know. I come from a reservation that's a million and half acres at the top of Montana and some of our people don't even have running water. But what we do have: we have our language, we have our songs, we have grizzly bears, we have moose, we have elk and we have the love of our ancestors. The only thing that destroys our people is alcohol. When we got together on the reservation there was 13 of us (*nDigiStorytellers* and facilitators). This is actually a digital story. I don't make film. I don't do any of that. It was like a prayer, it was like a smudge. [*nDigiStorytelling* workshop] It was like begging the ancestors to help us to get this message out. It's not to make money; it's not to sell DVDs or anything like that. When I posted it on Facebook, I have 5000 friends and they were all posting it and all my Indigenous friends around the world re-posted it, and reposted it. And Joanelle said, "Theda, you need to come to the Red Nations Film Festival." I just want to tell you from the bottom of my heart, all this year, all my people will be praying for all of you. And you know the numbers may not be large here but you don't know how you impact us when you come here and you say statements like, "I wish this was about my family." Because you too, know that when we're sober and we're sane, we are more creative. Thank you. (*nDigiStorySharing*, 2015b)

The story that Grandma Rita Blumenstein shared with us in the Alaska *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in 2008 was foretelling about the importance of oral narratives in contemporary times using technology to reclaim space for storytelling. Reclaiming of space is not just in the physical realm but everything that still exists beneath the surface of most Native peoples and communities, including especially the innate resilience to succeed, as illustrated in Theda's testimonial.

The Gaps

The concept of resilience started as a social theory term in psychology and psychiatry in the 1970s based on "an individual's ability to overcome stress and adversity" (Kirmayer, Sehdev, Whitley, Dandeneau, & Isaac, 2009). It mainly focused on risk factors. The current body of literature emphasizes the use of ethnographic methods such as key informant interviews, focus groups, journaling and surveys. Researchers such as Kirmayer, Dandeneau, Marshall, Phillips, and Williamson (2011) generate "narratives of historical identity and continuity [that] speak directly to the ruptures of cultural continuity that have occurred with colonization and the active suppression of Indigenous cultures and identity" (p. 86). This approach focuses mainly on the traumatization and victimization of the storytellers. *nDigiStorytelling* used as a method of narrative inquiry can benefit Indigenous peoples because the focus is not placed so much on the victimization but on the "victorization."

Indigenous storytellers are constructing a wider web similar to the one described by Grandma Rita, the web that would connect Indigenous peoples together across the earth, across time and space with every new story. Storytelling is the center of survival and sharing a story has the power of healing. Sharing stories are considered sacred work among Indigenous peoples. Around the world, they are using visual media to tell stories of survivance (Vizenor, 1999), on

their own terms. Simpson (2011) suggested we move ourselves beyond resistance and survival refocusing our work from trying to transform the colonial outside into flourishing of the *Indigenous inside* (Alfred, 2005). That means moving away from the stereotypes and images of defeated Native peoples towards the empowering and sacred, “presenting Indigenous stories that draw on uniquely Indigenous cultural traditions” (Dowell, 2006, p. 380). This view also emphasizes an Indigenous aesthetics moving towards “visual sovereignty.” Raheja (2011) introduced the concept of “visual sovereignty,” a “creative act of self-representation that has the potential to both undermine stereotypes of Indigenous peoples and to strengthen the intellectual health of communities in the wake of genocide and colonialism” (p. 60), and it includes action to reclaim cultural history through filmmaking and emerging technologies. The current body of literature is sparse with the concepts of “visual sovereignty” and “Indigenous aesthetics.” They are both important principles in maintaining self-determination and self-representation, especially with the increase of access to technology. Not surprising, funding and policies are concerns for Indigenous media production, programming and distribution.

In the digital era “Atchley’s innovation was to develop an exportable workshop-based approach to teach “ordinary’ people”—from school students to the elderly, with or (usually) without knowledge of computers or media production—how to produce their own personal videos” (Hartley & McWilliam, 2009, p. 3). The Californian or classic model of digital storytelling (Hartley, 2008), defined by facilitators, academics and researchers, is a workshop format in which “ordinary people” produce a short one-to-three minute film created with photographs, short video clips, music and a voice-over to create compelling accounts of experience (Burgess, Klæbe, & McWilliam, 2010; Gubrium, 2009; Hartley & McWilliam, 2009; Lundby, 2008). Social science researchers are using digital storytelling as a method of narrative

inquiry using community-based participatory research. There is a duality of knowledge creation happening, at the local tribal level and at the broader research institutional level. But tribal communities have had minimal involvement in the research process. When the workshop is complete, the digital stories may travel back into the community creating local Indigenous knowledge because the analysis of the stories by the community remains within the context of local Indigenous epistemologies. And at the same time the digital stories travel back with the researcher archived as “artifacts” (Gubrium & Scott, 2010; Gubrium & Turner, 2011; Merrill, 2006; Wexler, Gubrium, Griffin, & DiFulvio, 2013) to be analyzed and the research published through a Western hegemonic lens, which it must be noted, maintain a colonial stance over knowledge creation. Even though digital storytelling started in 1994, it wasn’t until a few years ago, that social scientists became interested in using it as a tool for narrative inquiry with Indigenous peoples; so, in its infancy, the current literature is minimal and could expand with scholarship from an Indigenist approach, which may also lead to more “soul healing” and less “soul wounding.”

The Indigenous literature is asking us to reclaim our lived experiences by flourishing from the Indigenous inside, moving the focus away from the history that ruptured cultural continuity and toward the strengths of survival and resilience. Parallel to that approach is the focusing on the creative-self, moving away from the stereotypes and images of defeated Native peoples towards the sacred in “Indigenous aesthetics” and “visual sovereignty.” Indigenous researchers and the inclusion of tribal community in research can assist non-Native researchers and research move towards an Indigenous epistemological center when research projects involve Indigenous peoples as participants.

Intention

The purpose of this phenomenological study is to share space through a sacred performance or community screening (*nDigiFest* Film Festival) of *nDigiStories* with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in Michigan and journey with the *nDigiStories* as they travel through time through the experience of the storytellers and the people who watch them. I will use a bricolage of methodologies: community-based participatory research, performance ethnography and relational autoethnography, which will favor the lifeworld of Indigenous peoples, a holistic approach that keeps us moving within the circle. Holistic healing is inclusive of the creative art of *nDigiStorytelling* and is consistent with holistic worldviews that stress balance, harmony and connectedness.

The “story-sharing” journey of an *nDigiStory* is based on the direct experience of the storytellers, the experience of their families and communities. My methodological approach is grounded in “story” in the modern age with the belief that “story” is healing. The “story-sharing” journey starts at the time the workshop screening begins, when the *nDigiStories* are screened for the first time to the group of storytellers who participated in the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. It continues the following day with a scheduled community screening (*nDigiFest* Film Festival) inclusive of *nDigiStories* from the same community that were produced in an *nDigiStorytelling* pilot workshop six months prior to the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop for the final study. The “story-sharing” journey extends into any direction that is recommended by the storytellers (i.e. family, treatment programs, social media sites) The study is grounded in Indigenous epistemologies and cultural protocols of the *Ojibwa*.

Curiosity

Curious Cat

*I'm curious cat,
all bundled up,*

soaking in the sun, coming through the windowpane.

In my dreams I wonder, what are those other cats up to?

How did they feel about their day?

Time to wake up.

I have a few questions to ask (C'Rodrigo, 2014).

Research Questions

How does the “soul-wind” of a digital story travel beyond the workshop? Does a digital story continue to influence people after the workshop? If so, how does it influence people?

Spreading Corn Pollen With *nDigiFamily* in Michigan

In the fall of 2011, the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan, with support from the National Library of Medicine, hired *nDigiDreams* to deliver a digital storytelling workshop for their Tobacco Cessation program in Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan. Eva Petoskey, the director of the *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery (ATR) Program, participated in making a digital story. She became interested in learning how digital storytelling could be introduced into ATR services. Together (the *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle and *nDigiDreams*), we investigated an evaluation strategy for digital storytelling. Since 2011, Brenda Manuelito and I have traveled to Michigan many times to teach digital storytelling and to build capacity in Michigan for ATR's Sowing the Seeds of Recovery initiative. At the same time we were nurturing our relationships with our *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle *nDigiSisters* from Michigan (Eva, Terri, Arlene, and Linda), we also explored “the mystery” of digital storytelling, learning together from our shared experiences and lifeways. Really late one night as we were all sitting in a cabin in the middle of winter in Petoskey, Michigan, telling stories, the subject of our research study with digital

storytelling came up. It was that night our *nDigiSisters* also became our co-researchers, also known as the *nDigiDreamers*. Since they all participated in making and screening their own digital stories, they also witnessed the positive impact digital storytelling had on themselves and their communities. Through prayer and spiritual guidance, we embarked on this journey to continue exploring *nDigiStorytelling* together. Our *nDigiDreamers* helped us identify the research site.

Selecting the Research Site

Since 2007, ATR has been involved in a large statewide collaborative involving twelve federally recognized tribes in the state of Michigan and is the only remaining tribal organization that continues to be part of the Access to Recovery initiative that was started by President Bush in 2003. Eva Petoskey has over thirty-five years of experience with research and program evaluation with tribal communities. She identified the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC) as an Anishinaabe community that might be interested in developing doctoral-level research on *nDigiStorytelling*. She contacted two local KBIC leaders, Jerry Lee Curtis and R.D. Curtis and inquired about their interest in digital storytelling. In the fourth chapter, R.D. shares a few comments about KBIC's engagement in digital storytelling at the pilot *nDigiFest* (film festival).

Based on the collaborative commitment, in the summer of 2013, Brenda Manuelito and I drove over two thousand miles to Michigan to spend time with our *Anishinaabek* co-researchers to discuss our digital storytelling practice, our dissertations and research plans. We awoke every day with the morning sun and joined each other for daily walks through the North Woodland forest among the birch bark and hundred-year old maple trees. Our group dialogue was always initiated with individual and group prayers to give gratitude for the blessings of every day, our

safety, the health of the community and the spiritual guidance for our collaborative project. It was important to acknowledge the ancestors, water, land, and all that was around us because they are spiritually a part of us, and their spirits will be carried through the digital stories. Our relationships are based on the *Anishinaabek* Seven Grandfather teachings. We are demonstrating responsibility and reciprocity by engaging in collaborative research that will benefit the Indigenous communities, with whom we are working.

Scope and Limitation

My plan was to conduct a final study with the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community in Michigan where we did a pilot study in November 2013. Included in the third chapter is an extensive description of the pilot study. The final study explored the “story-sharing” of the *nDigiStories* with a new set of four storytellers and with the pilot study set of five storytellers.

A limitation of this study is the sample size as well as the amount of time the storytellers have to share their movies. Therefore, it was important to include the digital storytellers from the pilot study because they had at least six months to share their stories with their families, community, friends, colleagues, social networking sites and other venues. Performance ethnography and relational autoethnography allowed multiple voices to be heard throughout the text in a conversational style, using performative writing. I documented stories, experiences and changes through conversations, interviews, observations, surveys, story tracking and the *nDigiStories*. Even though the sample size is small, the qualitative research will provide an opportunity to engage in conversations that are missing from the Indigenous resilience, Indigenous film and digital storytelling literature.

The Journey

In the first chapter, we walk together in a new sense of presence, where spirit meets way, the life force. I introduce myself and share a story about coming full circle within myself. I provided a glimpse into the gaps in the literature. I share a story about the purpose of my study, my research questions and introduced the concept of the cornstalk teachings, a metaphor Brenda Manuelito and I use for our *nDigiStorytelling* work.

In the second chapter we climb to the top branch of our tree relative, to listen to the stories that are told in the relevant Indigenous resilience, Indigenous film and digital storytelling literature, helping us to understand the gaps and limitations of the research.

In the third chapter, we engage in learning why I chose a bricolage of methods for this study. I present this study through performative writing because, after all this study is about storytelling. I use performance ethnography to celebrate the ceremonial performance of sharing the stories through a community screening and the voices that present themselves in this text. It is not respectful to share just my voice because this study is not just about me; it is part of a community based participatory research approach. Relational autoethnography will help make space for the inclusion of multiple voices in a conversational style. I used Indigenous methodologies to frame my study within Indigenous epistemologies.

In the fourth chapter, we join the first set of storytellers at the community screening to listen to how sharing of *nDigiStories* from the *nDigiStorytelling* pilot study, held in Skanee, Michigan in November, 2013, influenced the storytellers, themselves and people that watched their movies.

In the fifth chapter, we join all the storytellers at the second community screening to listen to how the sharing of digital stories from the *nDigiStorytelling* pilot study, and final study

which was held in Baraga, Michigan, in May, 2014, influenced the storytellers and people that watched their movies.

In the sixth chapter, we join in a conversation with the *nDigiDreamers* (co-researchers) about how we approached this study using Indigenous epistemologies and *Anishinaabek* teachings to explore the “story-sharing” of *nDigiStorytelling* with the *Keeweenaw* Bay Indian Community. Finally, I explore the influence of “story-sharing” through local tribal knowledge known as the *Anishinaabek* Grandfather Teachings using the words of the nine *nDigiStorytellers* to better understand the healing impact of *nDigiStorytelling*.

In the seventh chapter, we look at the future implications of *nDigiStorytelling* and how it is an emerging method that can be adapted for other tribes and non-native participants. I make suggestions for future research and share a story about my personal learning journey.

Corn Pollen “Drift”

In the previous chapter, we took a walk together so I could tell you a story about myself and why I’m so passionate about my practice and what I hope to accomplish by performing research in collaboration with an *Ojibwa* community in northern Michigan using *nDigiStorytelling*.

In this chapter, we are going to climb to the top of a tree and sit quietly so we may hear the stories that are told through the relevant literature, listening for gaps in the literature in the areas of Indigenous resilience, Indigenous film and digital storytelling.

In April 2014, I flew out of town to surprise my friend for her 50th birthday. On the airplane I sat in the middle seat and couldn’t help overhear the conversation to the right of me. My flying companion was a middle-aged man having a conversation with his buddies. His voice was stern and loud. He mentioned he has high cholesterol levels and his doctor had prescribed him medicine to help. He told his buddy:

I didn’t realize what you eat can affect your cholesterol. I’ve been juicing everyday and I’ve been successful at maintaining my cholesterol levels. I learned about cholesterol by watching a couple of documentaries on Netflix. I sure hope I can eliminate the prescription drugs (Anonymous, personal communication, April 19, 2014).

Thinking about what he said, I had a flashback about a digital storytelling workshop we did in Spokane, Washington, in August 2011. It was a workshop for a Native healthy heart study. This handsome Native man came in and thought he was going to be videotaped and done in 20 minutes. I said jokingly but seriously, “Oh no, no, my man, we are going to help you through the process of telling your own story and YOU are going to make the video.” At first he was startled, but then he said, “I can do this.” He told a story about how he wanted to motivate his buddies to become more physically active instead sitting around being couch athletes. He said guys don’t talk about health issues with anyone, not even their doctors. He and his friends had been active

when they were young, but now the only activity they performed as adult men was moving their hands from the coffee table to their mouths. He made a personal video story about his own health and the camaraderie that existed between friends. My flight companion told his buddy how he was maintaining his cholesterol probably not realizing that someday that information might extend his friend's life too. He also mentioned to his buddy that he talked to his mom about eating healthier, but unfortunately she didn't want to hear it. He was resolved to the fact that she wasn't going to live a long life. That reminded me of two more digital stories.

The first digital story was created during the "rez tour" in Minnesota. Brenda Manuelito and I had facilitated four back-to-back *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, in four different tribal areas, in the state of Minnesota as part of a tobacco cessation program. The first digital story was about an Elder who quit smoking because her grandson shared a story about what he had learned in school. It went something like this: "Nana, I learned something in school today. I learned that your lungs must be really black . . . and you know what else . . . If you stopped smoking today, you will have fifteen more years with me" (*nDigiStoryteller*, personal communication, 2013). The other story was made in conjunction with the *Cherokee Nation Healthy Nations* program in Oklahoma. The digital storyteller had a newborn baby and her mother-in-law was the caretaker for the baby. The new parents tried to convince the baby's grandma that it was important to feed the baby with a healthy diet, but she refused. The digital storyteller used a personal story to inform her mother-in-law about why it was important to support a healthy-diet for the baby. The digital storyteller told me she didn't know if her mother-in-law would even watch the video. She contacted me over email several days after the workshop was over and said: "My mother-in-law watched the digital story, and she changed the feeding habits for our baby" (*nDigiStoryteller*, personal communication, 2013).

All of these digital stories involved a personal connection to the story. I believe this helped motivate change for the storyteller and the audience. I wanted to share this knowledge with my flight companion, but it was time for him to switch planes. With permission of the digital storytellers, I carry various digital stories on my iPhone and iPad to share with “everyday” people. Access to video technology, the Internet and social media are changing the ways we create knowledge, communicate and disseminate information. We are witnessing a holistic peer-to-peer restorative movement healing the “soul wound.” I am interested in helping the movement with a focus on wellness using digital storytelling coming from an Indigenous epistemological center. I believe each new *nDigiSeed* we plant with digital storytelling enables each Indigenous person to heal and become a “soul healer.” Soul healing is a way of life, as is *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* and *Hózhó*. We are spreading the corn pollen to help build the web prophesized in old times, as seen in Grandma Rita’s bowl given to her by her grandfather.

Let’s climb to the top of the tree so we can sit and identify the gaps in the literature with research, which has been carried out with Indigenous peoples that are similar to my interest in the holistic peer-to-peer restorative movement. Funding sources impact research with Indigenous peoples, Indigenous film production (Dowell, 2006; Michaels, 1994) and health services for Indigenous peoples (Duran et al., 2008). Duran et al. (2008) argue that funding sources ensure Western empirically tested treatment paradigms are adhered to while disregarding culturally appropriate interventions. They are not arguing that they oppose empirically supported services; they are calling for culturally appropriate effective approaches that can benefit the people. Research performed with Indigenous peoples is done using Western scientific methods of inquiry, and the data are analyzed through a Western hegemonic lens.

Let's practice Duran et al.'s (2008) suggestion of liberation discourse and emerge with a new narrative for healing that is beneficial to Indigenous peoples. I chose three areas of research, Indigenous Resilience, Indigenous Filmmaking and digital storytelling with Indigenous peoples. Indigenous Resilience research has moved from the individual into the circle of family and community, recognizing the importance of narrative and culture. The political resurgence of the 1960s–1970s influenced Indigenous filmmakers in the United States and Canada. The participatory method of digital storytelling was developed in 1994 but took over ten years to reach Indian Country. Researchers are using it as a narrative method to work with Indigenous communities.

Indigenous Resilience

The concept of resilience started as a social theory term in psychology and psychiatry in the 1970s based on “an individual's ability to overcome stress and adversity” (Kirmayer et al., 2009, p. 63). Why do some people stay calm and others fall apart when facing a disaster? What are the skills people use to cope and recover from problems and challenges? Norman Garmezy was the pioneer in the field of resilience theory. Instead of focusing on pathology, this approach looks at cognitive skills, motivation and other protective factors. One of his studies (Garmezy, Masden, & Tellegan, 1984) focused on the question about why do some children, genetically at risk for developing mental illness, experience stress and adversity languish in life, while others in the same circumstances flourish? E. James Anthony studied child development, under Jean Piaget, and investigated why some children cope better than others when faced with high adversity, mainly looking at trait factors such as cognitive flexibility, problem solving ability, intelligence, and social skills (Tugade & Fredrickson, 2004). Researchers became interested in

communal dimensions, so they started looking at relationships within the family and community (Walsh, 2006).

Using ethnographic methods such as key informant interviews, focus groups, journaling and surveys, researchers such as Kirmayer et al. (2011) have generated “narratives of historical identity and continuity [that] speak directly to the ruptures of cultural continuity that have occurred with colonization and the active suppression of Indigenous cultures and identity” (p. 89). These studies focused more on the traumatization and victimization of the storytellers. These models were being contested because they did not include Indigenous definitions of identity nor did they address the historical, social, cultural and geographic settings of Indigenous peoples. Research eventually expanded beyond the individual and moved into the family, community and most recently has begun to include culture (Fleming & Ledogar, 2008). Researchers are realizing that community resilience may reside in interpersonal relationships and wider social networks of support. Indigenous resilience is based “on Indigenous people(s)’ innate capacities and focuses on success rather than overcoming challenges” (McGuire, 2010, p. 121). Resilience can be thought of as the inner strength that helps an individual bounce back like a willow branch being blown back and forth by a harsh wind but never breaking.

Narratives and stories are becoming prominent in the Indigenous resilience literature. The term *narrative resilience*,

has a communal or collective dimension, maintained by the circulation of stories, invested with cultural power and authority, which individuals and groups use to articulate and assert their identity, affirm shared values and attitudes toward challenges, and generate creative strategies to address predicaments. (Kirmayer et al., 2011, p. 86)

Several researchers such as Wexler (2014) are interviewing Native peoples and investigating resilience within multigenerational families. Techniques used for inquiry are ethnographic methods such as key informant interviews, focus groups, reflective journals, and

surveys to gather narrative data. As of the writing of this dissertation, I'm not aware of any research that has used digital storytelling for research with Indigenous resilience. The Center for American Indian Resilience (CAIR) is planning on using digital storytelling as part of their five-year grant on resilience research.

CAIR, established in 2012, is a partnership between Northern Arizona University (NAU), the University of Arizona (UA) and Diné College. They will conduct a five-year study on Native resilience, first, at NAU focusing on health and lifestyle choices in relation to obesity. The question they plan on asking is, "How do some people avoid obesity?" Researchers will interview adults and parents of children with healthy lifestyles; second, UA will be focusing on using digital storytelling to record Elders' narratives of their lives in order to provide qualitative data for the project. The third component, at Diné College, is an educational piece that focuses on getting American Indian students involved in research in their own communities (Lee, 2012). Teufel-Shone, a CAIR Co-Principle Investigator, defines American Indian resilience as "the behaviors, and practices that provide people the strength and the skills to be successful; success can be measured in health outcomes, or our overall perception of well-being and just having a positive health outcome" (as cited in Telis, 2013). Even though the research on resilience started in 1970, Indigenous resilience is still being defined.

Indigenous Filmmaking

Sharing stories is one of the most powerful ways we can help our culture survive. (Wilma Mankiller, Former Chief, Cherokee Nation).

Indigenous peoples have been deconstructing the master narrative (Cook-Lynn, 2008), the view of Indigenous peoples coming from the white man's point-of-view. Since the 1970s, Native documentary filmmakers have been "shooting back" (Ginsberg, 1999) to reverse the colonial gaze produced by the mass media that legitimized commodity racism (S. Hall & Evans,

2013) against American Indians and Alaska Natives. Identity was not based on Indigenous peoples knowledge of themselves but on a fictional one, created by the press for the purpose of control and to impose social order against opposition of the ideals of Euro-America.

Unfortunately, media misrepresentations and assimilation practices caused American Indians and Alaska Natives to be silenced and many to become the passive recipients of those identities.

Indian activists and intellectuals found a collective voice (Miller, 2008, p. 10) to challenge these fictional identities and stereotypes and stand up for basic Indigenous human rights. Indigenous peoples around the world are using visual media to tell their stories of survivance (Vizenor, 2008) on their own terms, moving beyond resistance and survival letting the colonial pillars crumble as the Indigenous interior flourishes. Raheja (2011) introduced the concept of “visual sovereignty . . . a creative act of self-representation that has the potential both to undermine stereotypes of Indigenous peoples and to strengthen the intellectual health of communities in the wake of genocide and colonialism” (p. 60), as a way to reclaim cultural history through filmmaking and emerging technologies. The next section will speak to the mis-(representation) enforced by mainstream media that situated Indigenous peoples as powerless and voiceless in the minds of dominant society.

Mis-(Representation). The representation of Indigenous peoples as *infidels*, *heathens*, and *savages* (Miller & Riding In, 2011; United Nations Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, 2013) written, photographed, and filmed by non-Indigenous people, continues to brand the ideology that Indigenous peoples are inferior, less than human, powerless, and voiceless, embedding it into the minds of the dominant society. Historically, in the United States, *Indigenous Presence* was the *Indian Problem* to Westward expansion of newly discovered lands, industrial progress and economic development. Newspapers portrayed complex critical conflicts

between Indians and whites as stories of violence as a way to advocate for white revenge and genocide (Coward, 1999, p. 5). The press created the image of a *Bad Indian*, as an *Ignoble Savage*, that had to be tamed by Christian civilization, and a *Good Indian* as a *Noble Savage* that was exotic but a primitive who might be saved. These two stereotypes were conceived by the Euro-American culture and could be controlled and manipulated by the dominant culture. Coward (1999) claimed that “this was a highly unequal process, of course, and it allowed few opportunities for Indigenous peoples to speak for themselves or to control the manner in which their lives and cultures were understood or interpreted” (p. 9). As newsgathering expanded into more professional systems, it became more commoditized; it glorified stories that started from fact and ended in embellishments to be sold as interesting bytes of reality. The power of the press played a major role in the creation of Indian identities and maintains it through the American Journalism principles and practices that were formed by the same ideologies that said Indians are a race of primitive people (Coward, 1999, p. 228). Journalism and the written word contributed not only to shaping the beliefs of Indian identities but helped the larger political and religious system maintain colonization. During the mid 1890s the invention of the film camera visually and geographically widened the exposure of American Indian stereotypes.

In 1893, in his Black Maria film studio, Thomas Edison shot short films; two films of significance were the *Sioux Ghost Dance* (Edison Manufacturing, 1894a) and the *Buffalo Dance* (Edison Manufacturing, 1894b) both performed by American Indians who danced for the Buffalo Bill’s Wild West show. That was the first appearance of American Indians on film. Those two films helped expose the new cinematic technology and at the same time devalue the ceremonial experience of the dancers to mere entertainment.

Buffalo Bill's show romanticized the Wild West and contributed to the stereotypes of Native American cultures and especially the Plains Indians throughout the United States and Europe. The re-enactments of Indians losing the war justified the American conquest to the audience comprised of the dominant society. His shows influenced many 20th century portrayals of the West in cinema. After his show went bankrupt, he convinced the U.S. Secretary of War to lend him troops of the 12th US Cavalry and up to 1,000 Sioux Indians to make a movie about the Indian Wars. It was released in 1914 and was only shown in Denver and New York. It was shutdown by the government because it displayed Indians favorably (American Film Institute, n.d.). Live Wild West shows like Buffalo Bill's disappeared, and in the 1920s the first western film was produced, called, *The Great Train Robbery*, albeit it was only 12 minutes in length.

John Wayne was the cinematic American western hero, and he sensationalized the genre maintaining the stereotype of the savage Indian because that's how they were usually portrayed in his movies. In an interview with Playboy Magazine, Mr. Wayne was asked if he felt any empathy for American Indians, especially because they played a subordinate role in most of his westerns. He stated: "Our so-called stealing of this country from them was just a matter of survival . . . people needed land, and the Indians were selfishly trying to keep it for themselves" (Playboy, 2012, p. 324). Wayne was asked if they had the same advantages as he did. His response was:

I've gone without a meal or two in my life, and I still don't expect the government to turn over any of its territory to me. Hard times aren't something I can blame my fellow citizens for. Years ago, I didn't have all the opportunities, either. But you can't whine and bellyache cause somebody else got a good break and you didn't like these Indian are. We'll all be on the reservation soon if the socialists keep subsidizing groups like them with our tax money. (Playboy, 2012, p. 352)

Wayne's response in Playboy's interview paralleled the attitudes about American Indians set forth by Hollywood. In her book, *Celluloid Indians: Native Americans and Film*, Kilpatrick

(1999) touches on how language and discourse of art doesn't come from the real world but is a representation based on preconceived notions and attitudes of the artist. She stated "authors cannot help but invest in their work their own preconceptions and attitudes" (p. 1). The myth of *How the West Was Won* was based on the expansion of Euro-America's manifest destiny. The national mythology of historical origin depended on the creation of an invented national history. Euro-Americans used manifest destiny as the perfect plot, discovered the tract of land, characterized heroes and villains and even made claims that it had the backing of God. Who could argue with that? The nationalist agenda was one of political ideology and power. The combination of government policy in favor of the dominant society and the institutionalized attitude of Hollywood worked together to legitimize cinematic racism by fabricating the identities of American Indians on celluloid film, selling their identities around the world and at home to white Americans and eventually to American Indians as passive recipients.

Passive Recipients. Cultural theorist Stuart Hall stated that commodity racism is the engagement of representation of *other* to define a marketable product based on stereotyping (S. Hall & Evans, 2013, p. 215). The *other* can be considered any characteristic of difference that the ruling class does not accept as natural within their worldview. Commodity racism against Indigenous peoples accomplished several things. First, it helped declare that Indigenous peoples were *less than human*, guaranteeing the European colonists dominion over Indigenous peoples (Miller & Riding In, 2011) and deposing them of their land, culture, language, religion, and their human rights by religious and ethnocentric ideas of European superiority. Second, it perpetuated religious agendas and racism for political and economic gain. Third, it helped advance the imperialist agenda of assimilation practices. Fourth, it established centuries of cultural oppression, institutional racism, exploitation, and an unequal access to human rights. And fifth, it

caused displacement and dismemberment of Indigenous peoples (Delgado & Childs, 2005, p. 68). The government defined *what was an Indian* and decided *who was an Indian* and where they could live. Various tribes lost tribal recognition through the Termination Act, deposing them off their land and limiting their traditional fishing and hunting rights, reducing their food subsistence to little or nothing at all. As part of the assimilation plan, children were separated from their families and forced to attend residential and boarding schools being prohibited from speaking their languages or practicing spirituality, and they were coerced into wearing different clothing, cutting their hair, and speaking English (McGuire, 2010, p. 122). Indigenous peoples voices were silenced; colonization caused their traditions to go into hiding or at times were even lost. Indigenous stories lost their educational and social value, and when they were translated into English, they lost their meaning, becoming nothing more than myth and entertainment (J. Archibald, 2008, p. 7). The passive recipients became the Indians watching the Hollywood Indians in movie theaters and on TV. One of my favorite lines in the independent film directed by Chris Eyre (*Cheyenne, Arapaho*), *Smoke Signals*, was when Thomas Builds-the-Fire with his candid smile told Victor Joseph “you know the only thing more pathetic than Indians on T.V.? Indians watching Indians on T.V.!” (Alexie et al., 1998).

Representation. *Smoke Signals*, released in 1988, was directed by Chris Eyre and written by Sherman Alexie (*Spokane, Coeur d’Alene*), and had a cast of Native actors. Eyre’s film was a breakthrough for Native Americans and according to Beverly Singer (2001), “the production of *Smoke Signals* demonstrated that American Indians could make a good commercial product while telling a good story with Indians as the central characters” (p. 61). She acknowledged that several movies made before *Smoke Signals* had helped set the stage for Eyre’s film. It was typical for Native filmmakers to be viewed as positioning themselves as activists and opponents

of mainstream white filmmakers. This was an important step in the filmmaking process that led to an understanding about the inappropriate representations of Indians. Kilpatrick (1999) realized that the inappropriate representations of American Indians in film needed to be questioned and the complexities of the “distorted reality that has been mistaken as truth” (p. xv) needed to be understood in order to comprehend the *Hollywood Indian*. S. Hall and Evans (2013) claimed that the common-sense meaning of the word representation means, “using language to say something meaningful about, or to represent, the world meaningfully, to other people” (p. 1). He connected representation to culture and stated culture is about ‘shared meanings’ (p. xvii) and in order to makes sense of culture we need common access to a language that will help us understand its meaning. “In language, we use signs and symbols – whether they are sounds, written words, electronically produced images, musical notes, even objects – to represent to other people our concepts, ideas and feelings” (p. xvii).

Representation of American Indians in film followed the literary trail of hegemony that was formed through ethnocentrism that the Euro-American worldview was superior. Inappropriate stereotypes about Indigenous peoples were developed through a language of imperialism and violence; “media depictions of Indigenous peoples are steeped in the language of conquest and colonization” (Alia, 2012, p. 33). Stereotypes strategically became ingrained in sociopolitical practices, and the fabricated idea of the *Indian Problem* was disguised in the form of a preconceived *social/cultural deficit lens* (Harry & Klingner, 2007), which has negatively affected people of color (Ross, 1998) within our educational, employment, healthcare and judicial systems. The cultural deficit model described by Irizarry from the Gale Group:

Blames the victims of institutional oppression for their own victimization by referring to negative stereotypes and assumptions regarding certain groups or communities by passing the root causes of oppression by localizing the issue within individuals and/or their communities. (Irizarry, 2009, para.1)

The social/cultural deficit lens has roots deep in U.S. history that interprets cultural and racial difference as a deficit. In her book, *Inventing the Savage: The Social Construction of Native American Criminality*, Ross (1998), listed three chronological stages of how race is socially constructed:

1. The first period, during colonization of this country, race was discussed in biological terms complete with notions of the biological inferiority of people of color.
2. The second period, the early part of the twentieth century ethnicity was substituted for race as differences between groups were defined and categorized. During this time, culture was added to the understanding of racial/ethnic relations and assimilationist paradigms were developed.
3. The third period, emerging in a time of turmoil, the late 1960s and early 1970s, witnessed radical and nationalists movements, such as the Red Power and Black Power groups. The focus was on the differences between white Euro-America and people of color. (p. 3)

During all three of these periods Indigenous peoples managed to survive. Their resilience can be described as survival based on community strengths (McGuire, 2010, p. 120) and the ability to adapt to adverse struggles. Vizenor (2008) looked at Indigenous resilience as looking at survivance through a positive lens, stories as:

Renunciations of dominance, detractions, obtrusions, the unbearable sentiments of tragedy, and the legacy of victimry. Survivance is the heritable right of succession or reversion of an estate and, in the course of international declarations of human rights, is a narrative estate of native survivance. (p. 1)

During the third period, “the Civil Rights movement and Black and Chicano activism in the late sixties and early seventies were influential for Native Americans, inspiring many to generate an Indigenous version of these movements” (Singer, 2001, p. 23). Globally “Maori, Australian Aboriginal, Hawaiian, Saami, and North and South America Indian activists and intellectuals found a collective voice to express a list of issues common to their communities” (Miller, 2008, p. 10). Author and activist D’Arcy McNickle (*Salish Kootenai*) helped found the

National Congress of American Indians and the Center for History of the American Indian in the Chicago's Newberry Library, and Indigenous scholar, activist, and author, Vine Deloria, Jr. focused on the rights of American Indians by way of treaty negotiations with the United States. He challenged colonial thought by promoting Indigenous oral history as an important source of critical historical evidence and set a precedence of using treaty rights in legal proceedings.

Deloria helped gradually raise the inclusion of Indigenous discourse into American historiography (Miller & Riding In, 2011), and it continues to be of great significance in fighting for Indigenous human rights. He opened the door for other Indigenous writers and scholars to dispute the American academic hegemonic discourse, as exemplified by the Native Renaissance of Indigenous writers in Canada and the United States (McKenzie, 2007; Miller & Riding In, 2011). Reclaiming of Indigenous identity in the third period opened the doors for more creative works by American Indians as active producers.

Active producers. Political Indigenous activism also sparked documentary filmmaking in the 1960s that dealt with cultural and social issues and political conflicts. “The cultural politics of Indigenous video makers cast audiovisual technology of knowledge equivalent and to a degree preferable to literacy, frequently considered a hegemonic epistemic form and means of representation” (Schiwy, 2009, p. 14). Indigenous peoples managed to enter the 21st century defeating the myth of invisibility and old stereotypes by engaging in resiliency. Womack (1999) stated,

A key component of nationhood is a people's idea of themselves, their imagination of who they are. The ongoing expression of a tribal voice, through imagination, language, and literature, contributes to keeping sovereignty alive in the citizens of a nation and gives sovereignty a meaning defined within the tribe rather than by external sources. (p. 14)

Howe (2008) argued that stories are a foundational principle of sovereignty, “no matter what form they take—history, oral story, drama, memoir, poem—seem to pull all the elements

together” (p. x). According to Raheja (2011) Indigenous peoples “theorized about the concept of sovereignty in order to discursively distinguish themselves from the other human spirit, animal, and inanimate communities surrounding them through performance, songs, stories, dreams, and visual texts such as wampum, pictographs, and tipi drawings” (p. 198). Sovereignty varies for every Indigenous nation because each nation is different and has been influenced by the European term of sovereignty of nation-to-nation political sovereignty.

Hollywood movies spread the American view around the world and heightened North America’s national mythology in the movie, *How the West Was Won* (Kilpatrick, 1999), where white settlers and cowboys pushed the frontier forward eliminating any barriers in order to succeed. The same visual methods that were used by film producers to produce fictional representations of Native Americans had a turnabout and have been used by Indigenous peoples to fight for sovereignty and Indigenous human rights. Mirzoeff (2006) referred to this as *visuality*, a term coined by Thomas Carlye, a “keyword for visual culture as both a mode of representing imperial culture and a means of resisting it by a means of reverse appropriation” (p. 53).

Visual sovereignty. Raheja (2011) envisioned visual sovereignty through a triad of discussions around sovereignty outside the frame of legal discourse. Rickard’s (2011) concept of sovereignty is about self-defined renewal and resistance, a unifying political strategy to maintain communities, land and traditions based on the interconnectedness of all life as sacred and key to human survival as opposed to a narrow interpretation of sovereignty based on Western legal jurisprudence that excludes intellectual, cultural, artistic, and visual expansion. Cobb (2005) contended that Robert Allen Warrior’s concept of *intellectual sovereignty* was intended to empower Native scholars to engage through a reflective process so as not to mimic the dominant

society, to spend less time *writing back* to the colonizer and more *writing forward*, charting their own course, forgetting about outside approval. “Intellectual sovereignty is based on the notion of sovereignty as an open-ended process, a beginning step rather than an ending” (p. 128), organically defining what it means to emerge while critically reflecting on the struggle. Filmmaker Beverly Singer (2001) asserted the idea of *cultural sovereignty* that involves using traditions, *old ways*, and adapting them to *new ways* in current day situations (p. 2), realizing the power in adaptability to any new challenges.

Visual sovereignty in the 21st century is helping Indigenous peoples reconnect to old traditions and identities. It helps to extend traditional visual and oral Indigenous communication methods. Visual sovereignty encourages Indigenous filmmakers to assert meaningful self-representations and help render “Native American intellectual and cultural paradigms, such as the presentation of the spiritual and dream world, than are often possible in official political contexts” (Raheja, 2011, p. 200).

Indigenous communities have created an international movement to help preserve ancient languages and cultures by communicating across cultural, political, and geographical boundaries using technological innovations (Alia, 2012). The first full-length documentary film representing Indigenous peoples was Robert Flaherty’s film, *Nanook of the North*, shot in Quebec and released in 1922. Knopf (2009) described the early ethnographic films, such as Flaherty’s, in these terms: “the colonial group were making films about individuals from the colonized group. These films clearly resemble a colonialist subject/object relation (filmmaker/filmed) with its underlying self/other dichotomy” (p. 56).

The 1966 visual anthropological research study performed by Sol Worth, a filmmaker, and John Adair, an anthropologist, with the Navajo people opened the door to future

participatory ethnographic film projects. The researchers put film cameras in the hands of seven Navajo community members from Pine Springs, Arizona, and taught them how to use the cameras. They were interested in learning if it was possible to teach filmmaking to members of a culture vastly different from their own, and how a film made by a Navajo person might differ from a film made by members of other cultural groups (Worth & Adair, 1972). The Navajo used the cameras, made the movies and watched them. The researchers trained them, observed and analyzed the interviews and films. The most poignant question came from their Navajo translator, Sam Yazzie:

Will making movies do the sheep any harm? Worth was happy to explain that as far as he knew, there was no chance that making movies would harm the sheep. Sam thought this over and then asked, Will making movies do the sheep good? Worth was forced to reply that as far as he knew making movies wouldn't do the sheep any good. Sam thought this over, then, looking around at us he said, then why make movies? Sam Yazzie's question keeps haunting us. We did not answer it then and it is not directly answered in this book. (Worth & Adair, 1972, p. 5)

Worth and Adair (1972) involved the Navajo using a participatory method not as co-researchers but as subjects and analyzed the results of the study through an anthropological and western filmic lenses. If Navajos continue to be understood through anthropological practices privileging a Western framework, "we are continuing to distort the realities, cultures and histories of Native lives" (Denetdale, 2007, p. 19). Six of the films were screened for the Pine Springs community in 1966 and were repaired and released in 2012 for a premiere at the Navajo Nation Museum in Window Rock, AZ. Audience members found new uses for the films, but, according to Peterson (2013), the only way to rescue the films from lingering anthropological interpretations such as primitive or technological incompetency is to reframe their meaning through the lens of visual sovereignty and community rearticulations (p. 38).

Aufderheide (2008) raises important issues about ethnographic documentaries saying, “Any documentary form grapples with the core problem of truthfulness— not only whether any particular fact is correct, not only whether a portrayal is a fair one and set properly in context, but also to whom and why it is relevant” (p. 27). Based on the door opened by Worth and Adair for making ethnographic films with Indigenous peoples, in 1987, Vincent Carelli started the Video in the Villages with Brazilian Indians. The goals of the project were:

to make accessible to Indians the vision, the production and the manipulation of their own image, and at the same time to see to it that these extremely isolated communities could get to know other groups, fostering comparisons of their traditions and experiences of contact with national society. (as cited in Aufderheide, 2008, p. 28)

Ethical questions still remain. Do the participants of cultural groups have less power in society and media than the filmmaker? After the first film the Indians demanded some control in the process. Carelli started training them on how to use the equipment, and they started using the video to reflect on their own cultural production.

In the 1960s, the Indigenous film movement started traveling across Canada and the United States creating space for Indigenous filmmakers to learn video production skills and use media to tell their own stories. In 1988 Michael Mitchell (*Mohawk*) directed the first Indigenous television documentary, *Sharing a Dream*. Igloolik Isuma Productions was incorporated in January 1990. They were the first Inuit independent production company and 75% Inuit-owned. In 2001, they produced *Atanarjuat: The Fast Runner*, a full-length, award-winning, feature film produced, directed and acted entirely by Inuit in Inuktitut. They closed their doors due to complex financial issues but created a new company called Kingulliit Productions in 2010. It is mostly Inuit-owned, based in the same Canadian area, Igloolik, Nunavut. They are using the Internet as a social media site to bring multimedia and people together to tell stories and create change (Isuma TV, n.d.).

Alanis Obomsawin (*Abenaki*) is one of the most celebrated Aboriginal filmmakers and has received Canada's highest honor in recognition of her dedication to the preservation of the First Nations cultural heritage through her filmmaking (Singer, 2001). She has worked with the National Film Board of Canada since the 1960s. She is best known for her documentary film *Kanehsatake: 270 Years of Resistance*, chronicling the 1990 Oka Crisis. She uses a social documentary format to report on issues affecting Aboriginal people in Canada; this is her way of passing down history, beliefs, and culture to the future.

In 1998, the Chiapas Media Project (CMP) was founded by Alexandra Halkin to help train marginalized Zapatista, communities in Southern Mexico to create their own media (Chiapas Media Project, n.d.). "We're not just documenting resistance . . . Chiapas Media Project is part of it, a form of resistance in itself" (as cited in Alia, 2012, p. 125). CMP has distributed over 6,000 Indigenous produced videos. They have been screened at universities, museums, and film and video festivals worldwide. The Promedios de Comunicacion Comunitaria is working with the Zapatista communities now. CMP is now Americas Media Initiative working with Cuban filmmakers.

Indigenous peoples have been engaged in Hollywood films since the invention of the film camera as participants based on Indian characters created by non-Indigenous directors. As discussed above, most of those films promoted a false representation of Indigenous peoples. Marlon Brando rejected his 1973 Oscar for his role in the film, *The Godfather*, in protest of the lack of sensitivity of filmmakers to the true story of Native Americans and the treatment by the film industry (see Oscars, 2008). He sent Sasheen Little Feather to deliver the message which was progress, but why didn't he reject it himself?

There have been several Native American filmmakers who have created shorts (too short of a film to be a feature film), mostly documentaries. Most recently, film festivals are including Native programming, and several Native film festivals have started in the bigger metropolitan areas, for example, the Red Nation Film Festival (Red Nation Film Festival, n.d.) in Los Angeles. YouTube has been a valuable resource for Indigenous people to post videos from around the world that include cultural information, Indigenous languages, and songs. Facebook has been successful in helping the “moccasin telegraph” go viral. Facebook has been used to mobilize social movements such as Idle No More, a peaceful social movement that started in Canada and has spread into the United States. Indigenous peoples are gathering in different cities to honor Indigenous sovereignty, and protest against political acts that continue to destroy the land and pollute the water.

In her book, *Shimmering Screens: Making Media in an Aboriginal Community*, anthropologist Jennifer Deger (2006) explained that even though the Yolngu, Indigenous Australian people inhabiting north-eastern Arnhem Land in the Northern Territory of Australia, had embraced the roles of traditional filmmakers. They understood the importance of using technology for their own purposes, “putting them to work for remembering, imagining, connecting, and becoming-in-relation to the Ancestral-in practices” (p. xix) that challenge Western cinematic nature. Yolngu privileged unmediated knowledge that comes through experience and found it imperative to use media technology, not as a way to archive fact for future generations but to promote “a particular ontological position as an experiential basis for *relating-in-the-world*” (p. 217). Deger was interested in how media technology strengthens Indigenous culture and her co-producer, Bangana Wunungmurra, was interested in using media as a means to strengthen Yolngu culture. Wunungmurra described the moment of revelation as

the “coming from everywhere” experienced as a sensuous reality (as cited in Deger, 2006, p. 217). The production, process and even the vibrations of the Yolngu music were part of the experiential relationship. Deger referred to that as *intercultural regard*, the process of coming-into-relationship via the senses; an understanding by the Yolngu to mediate across the gaps of difference through Ancestral presence, “generating a shared space of co-presence, and, in the process, producing grounds for reciprocation and respect” (p. 220). The Yolngu expected that the act of displaying a powerful presence would invite the audience to be appreciative and be open to different perspectives strengthening not only Yolngu culture, but relationships with the Balanda (non-Yolngu).

Martens (2012) has claimed that Indigenous media emerged in the late 1970s for the Maori as a “response to the Eurocentric domination of mainstream media outlets and official state narratives” (p. 2). The Maori use media to address their political concerns and express their cultural identities. They were interested in the representation of Indigenous peoples on and off screen as well as production and distribution. They opened up possibilities for talking back by establishing projects that included Indigenous people. They established a global network among Indigenous peoples using the Internet. Indigenous media has played a significant role in the development of a global Indigenous movement. Barry Barclay (Maori) coined the term Fourth Cinema after struggling to become one of the prominent filmmakers. First is the cinema of America; second cinema, is art house cinema; third cinema, is for third world nation states; and fourth cinema, is Indigenous cinema, films produced by Indigenous filmmakers that engage in “filmmaking that has emerged from shared Indigenous experience of exclusion in postcolonial settler states and allows film practices and images that are controlled by— and do justice to—Indigenous peoples and their concerns and customs” (Martens, 2012, p. 3). Although New

Zealand funds film opportunities for Maori filmmakers, they still have to work within the Eurocentric confines of the state system and global market to meet the settler state interests and global consumption. Martens (2012) believed that Indigenous filmmaking would remain a key negotiating site in the ongoing struggle for Indigenous self-determination and cultural survival in the decades to come.

At the 1991 Two Rivers Native American Film and Video Festival, Roger Buffalohead (*Ponca*) challenged the audience about their responsibility to keep their cultures alive. “We are carriers of a rich tribal tradition, and our ancestors left us with a rich legacy that we are now responsible for” (cited in Singer, 2001, p. 92). Cook-Lynn (2008) asked, “Does art give thoughtful consideration to the defense of our lands, resources, languages, and children? Is anyone doing the intellectual work in and about Indian communities that will help us understand our future?” (p. 343). In order for meaningful change to happen in the lives of Indigenous communities, change must start with the individual; the first part of self-determination is self (Alfred, 2005). We need to focus on what we want to become and act on the positive remembrances of our ancestors. “Their lives are a dynamic of power generated by creative energy flowing from their heritage through their courageous and unwavering determination to recreate themselves and act together to meet the challenges of their day” (Alfred, 2005, p. 22). In the 21st century, technology has become an extension of our “ordinary” lives. Indigenous peoples are using emergent technologies to create counter narratives (Smith, 2012) in an effort to help preserve traditional knowledge, expand cultural sovereignty and self-determination and increase social justice and address misrepresentation.

Indigenous filmmaking has traveled a long way since the 1960s, a time of revitalization and activism by Indigenous peoples around the world. Like the literary trail, video followed a

similar pattern; one of resistance and activism, opposing stereotypes and images produced by the dominant society. Once Indigenous peoples started stepping behind the camera, cultural traditions, languages and politics became more important than trying to create a different type of genre for the rest of the world to see. Funding is always an issue when more expensive equipment is needed to produce videos and maintain production. How much has the power structure changed in production and distribution? Many of the films produced are not accessible for Indigenous communities but are affordable by outsiders. Kingulliit Productions, is using the Internet as a video social networking site and has published films that are viewable and downloadable for free. The idea of “visual sovereignty” and “Indigenous aesthetics” are new concepts that need to be explored by Indigenous media producers; and with all the new technology that exists today that landscape is quickly expanding beyond video. We must always keep Sam Yazzi’s question in mind: “Will making movies do the sheep good?”

Indigenous peoples have embraced digital storytelling mixing old traditions flowing into new technologies (Alia, 2012, p. xii). Stories and many films have been made about Indigenous peoples and now new media and the Internet are giving back the power and authority to the person who can tell their own story the best, the Indigenous storyteller.

Digital Storytelling

Since the invention in 2005 of YouTube, a video streaming application site on the Internet with accessibility for “ordinary people” to share digitally user-generated media, digital storytelling has been defined in several ways. One could assert that digital storytelling is storytelling in the 21st century via a digital audio or video device, that is true, and many digital storytelling projects are based on that assumption. The definition I use is based on the model that was developed in California by Dana Atchley and Joe Lambert in 1994 as an independent film

practice, a radically democratized notion of “artist”, artist + festival model (Hartley, 2008). Video sharing websites such as YouTube were not available until 2005 so sharing of user-generated videos had a low distribution and festivals were a more promising outlet. The Californian (Hartley, 2008) or classic model of digital storytelling is a participatory workshop-based format in which “ordinary people” produce short one-to-three minute films created with photographs, short video clips, music and a voice-over (Burgess et al., 2010; Gubrium, 2009; Lundby, 2008). It is important to distinguish the definition of digital storytelling because the process and outcome will vary in accordance with the experience and autonomy of the storytellers who produced their own movies versus someone producing it for them or about them.

When I first started researching digital storytelling in 2008, I found Lambert had published his second edition of *Digital Storytelling: Capturing Lives, Creating Community* in 2006. The conversation on the Internet was mainly about digital storytelling in education. Ohler’s book surfaced in 2007, *Digital Storytelling in the Classroom: New Media Pathways to Literacy, Learning, and Creativity*, and in 2008, Handler-Miller’s (2008) *Digital Storytelling: A Creator’s Guide to Interactive Entertainment* was published. Handler-Miller works out of Los Angeles and Santa Fe. In the fall of 2008, she agreed to have dinner with Brenda and me. We had a delightful time in downtown Santa Fe. The version of digital storytelling she was developing was interactive and multimedia based. Ohler and Handler-Miller were using a different model from the Californian model developed by the Center for Digital Storytelling. I continued my search on the Internet and discovered *BBC Capture Wales* (British Broadcasting Corporation, n.d.) and Pip Hardy’s *Patient Voices* projects. It was in the last couple of years that literature had started emerging out of public health and anthropology.

I was interested in learning how digital storytelling was being utilized for educating and encouraging healthy Indigenous communities. I focused on a cross-section of studies that were performed with Indigenous communities. I was particularly interested in studies that centered around Indigenous epistemologies, were inclusive of Indigenous communities as co-researchers, was beneficial for the community, and that initiated a dissemination and sustainability plan. Let's take a peek.

Davey and Goudie (2009) used participatory action research within an Indigenous perspective for the Hope Vale project in Australia. Digital storytelling was embedded as a documentation activity within the bigger Hope Vale/Pelican Expeditions project that had been in existence several years prior, and which was developed in response to the Hope Vale Aboriginal community's concern over youth suicide. A very important aspect of the Pelican project is that it had to take place on Country and particularly Sea Country. Davey and Goudie (2009) turned to this moving portrayal of the Aboriginal meanings of "Country:"

Country in Aboriginal English is not only a common noun but also a proper noun. People talk about country in the same way they would talk about a person; they speak to country, sing to country, visit country, worry about country, feel sorry for country, and long for country. People say that country knows, hears, smells, takes notice, takes care, and is sorry or happy. (Rose, 1996, p. 7)

The definition of Country described the relationship and connection that the Aboriginal peoples have to place, which is very important for reconciliation and healing, given the colonial history of Aboriginal peoples in Australia. The other important aspect of the Hope Vale project is that the Hope Vale community assessed their own health needs and made recommendations about the inclusion of important activities to the Pelican Expedition team. This juxtaposes the history of research, where usually, the researcher performed a community assessment and dictated to the community what programs and activities they should implement. In this case, the

researchers on the Hope Vale project made sure to obtain permission according to the National Ethics protocols and worked under the guidance of the community, the Elders, Pelican and stakeholders. They used a methodology that modeled an organic participatory action research process from the inside out, with participants and researchers as co-creators. The guiding principles were embodied in centrality of relationship, deep listening, flexibility, ownership and returning of materials. Eighteen digital stories were completed. On the last night of the camp, the movies were shared with the staff, other participants, and the Hope Vale community in conjunction with a community celebration. The storytellers were proud of themselves for having created digital stories, and the community was proud of the storytellers' accomplishments. People recognized the reflective attributes of the process and realized that digital stories could be used for developing agency and voice within the community. Sharing the movies in a community setting led to communal reflection about the importance of the history and traditional stories of the Guugu Yimithirr. The Cultural Center was interested in using digital storytelling to document the lives of Elders, artists and language. Portable digital storytelling kits that were developed for the camp are now a part of the State Library of Queensland so they can be used for similar projects in remote locations. Elders were hesitant at first with the technology because they had a valid concern about it dominating the minds of the youth versus cultural interests. After they witnessed the activities in the camp, the process of digital storytelling and the finished digital stories, they decided that technology could help retain their history and intersect between the new and old ways. The community embraced digital storytelling and developed digital storytelling curriculums in the Hope Vale School, and interestingly, the concept was expanded to other communities to form sister-brother communications. Davey and Goudie (2009) suggest that "The Sea Country work shown in the digital stories also supports the growing body of work

that indicates the inclusion of ‘Caring for Country’ as a relevant and important health determinant for Indigenous peoples” (p. 45), and that the Hope Vale/Pelican project contributes to building capacity and developing social and emotional, cultural and spiritual wellbeing for the Guugu Yimithirr people. The digital stories are posted on Goudie’s blog, “stories of hope and resilience” (Goudie, n.d.).

In Canada, Iseke and Moore (2011) collaborated with Metis and Mi’kmaq Elders to create digital stories with the goal of producing videos that were beneficial for the community. Moore met with the community to determine the story line. Iseke and Moore combined traditional video interviewing and editing techniques to create the digital stories. The interviews were audio and video recorded. The Elders gave Iseke and Moore the power and authority to edit their ideas, words and video. Iseke and Moore quoted Powell, Weems, and Owle’s (2007) description of Indigenous digital storytelling as “the potential to integrate Indigenous artifacts, sacred places, and stories in innovative new ways undreamt of between the margins of the white page” (p. 19). Iseke and Moore engaged in Indigenous approaches throughout the production process. They stated that, “Indigenous digital storytelling is created by or with Indigenous peoples for Indigenous communities” (p. 21) being proactive about Indigenous theories and ways of knowing. The storytellers control the images and structures of self-presentations, and identities. Iseke and Moore suggest: “A respectful way to work in a community is to locate oneself within the research process and in relation to the community . . . Reciprocity in these relationships involves honoring the community and the contributions of its members in the stories” (p. 21). They shared their technological skills and stressed the importance of using technology to sustain their Indigenous worldviews through video. Metis organizations approved the project based on a set of Indigenous protocols created by the researchers and community

collaboration. As a part of protocol, prior to filming Iseke and Moore offered tobacco to the Elders before filming. Moore worked with students so they could perform the video interviews for a school project, stating “Students learn filmmaking skills while making these Indigenous films . . . which increases students’ Indigenous knowledge” (Iseke & Moore, 2011, p. 26). The youth edited the videos with assistance from Moore. Iseke and Moore worked in the heart of the community. They stated, “Our relationships with community members and with our storytelling traditions are strengthened as we gather, edit, digitize, and honor the storylines of our Indigenous Nations” (2011, p. 34). The digital stories they created used traditional video filming and editing methods to gathering storylines and edit the material versus the classic model of digital storytelling where the digital storyteller is the sole author and creator of their digital story. Iseke and Moore used Indigenous protocols, which helped engage the community in the project, maintained relationships, involved the community in storyline development and in collaboration worked with youth for school and community stories. Iseke published the videos on her website, “Voices in the Wind Productions” (Iseke, n.d.).

In Alaska, Melanie Cueva, from the Alaska Native Tribal Health Consortium (ANTHC), the primary author of *Bridging Storytelling Traditions with Digital Technology* stated, “The purpose of the study was to learn how Community Health Workers (CHWs) in Alaska perceived digital storytelling as a component of the ‘Path to Understanding Cancer’ curriculum and as a culturally respectful tool for sharing cancer-related health messages” (Cueva et al., 2013, p. 1). A total of 67 CHW workers participated in the study, which started in 2009 and ended in 2012. Similar to the study of Hope Vale, this study embedded digital storytelling within the 5-day cancer education course, “Path to Understanding Cancer.” Long-term relationships between staff of ANTHC and CHWs had been established since 1999. They used the classic model of digital

storytelling and proposed a set of five digital storytelling topics related to cancer education for the CHWs. A pre-course application and an end-of-course written evaluation were given to all participants. All participants reported that combining digital storytelling with cancer education supported their learning and was a culturally respectful way to provide health messages; 62 of 67 reported that it increased their confidence to share cancer information with their communities. All 67 participants successfully created digital stories regardless of computer skills and shared their movies with other course members. Participants were contacted three years following the course and asked to complete an Internet survey; 24 CHWs responded to the survey; all 24 had shown their digital story and 23 reported a change in their own behavior as a result of the experience. Using digital storytelling for health messaging made it easier for the audience to hear the message because it created a connection through their heart. Participants also reported that creating a digital story helped them reflect on their own experiences, opening a path for group discussions and course material. They expressed feelings of healing and renewal. The digital stories were shared in a variety of ways. According to Cueva et al. (2013), they were shared through “community presentations, family gatherings, health fairs, school presentations, clinic visits . . . YouTube, Facebook and other websites” (p. 4). Future considerations include learning about the dissemination of digital stories. What are the perceptions of cancer after viewing a digital story? What makes digital stories a powerful tool for health messaging? The article explained the technical details about the process of making the digital story, but not the experiences of the digital storytellers as they went through the process. Digital stories can be found on the website of the Alaska Native Center for Digital Storytelling (n.d.).

Jernigan, Salvatore, Styne, and Winkleby (2012) reported that digital storytelling was used as an adaptive tool to inform focus groups as part of a community based participatory

research study with the Round Valley Indian Reservation community in Northern California. The Indian community was interested in accessing the information about health disparities through examining determinants of Native American food insecurity and changing the reservation food environment. They chose to use a community based participatory research (CBPR) orientation because it offers community involvement and control of the research that is culturally relevant. They created a community coalition, adapted the Tool for Health and Resilience in Vulnerable Environments (THRIVE) framework using digital storytelling, implemented focus groups and developed policy alternatives to address community priorities. The coalition invited Native American community leaders to participate in the digital storytelling component of the project. Participants were compensated and meals were provided during the digital storytelling activities. After the stories were made, they were screened for the group using a technique called SHOWedD to engage the group in a series of questions. The questions were:

- What do you see here?
- What's really happening here?
- How does this relate to our lives?
- Why does this problem, concern or strength exist?
- What can we do about it?

Based on the response to the questions, the group selected particular stories to be used in the focus groups. Members of the coalition and digital storytelling participants contributed to the discussion of the findings. Digital storytelling, as a participatory method was used as a way to engage community members to share information that is rarely discussed. The project was successful at translating research into practice, and it was responsible for building the capacities of community and academic partners. One example of community action based on the results

arose when the coalition worked with the local grocery store to change shelf-space with healthier products.

According to Wexler et al. (2013), Alaska Native youth suicide and suicide attempts are the leading causes of hospitalization and death in Northwest Alaska. In an attempt to remedy the situation, they brought digital storytelling to Alaska Native youth in the Northwest Territory based on a body of literature that indicated new media is a way to foster youth and community engagement. For three years they traveled across the Northwest Territory to 12 rural Alaskan villages, giving 39 digital storytelling workshops, completing 566 digital stories. They combined digital storytelling as a health promotion strategy within a positive youth development (PYD) framework that focused on supporting interpersonal and community factors that promote health and well-being as young people mature. Participants completed exit surveys, and many agreed to a follow-up interview. Participants were encouraged to invite their relatives to the final screening. 69% of the participants found the workshops to be meaningful to their lives; others noted that digital stories are good for strengthening relationships, and they were happy to share it with their families. Wexler et al. (2013) contend,

Digital storytelling presents a promising approach to health promotion and primary prevention that can be used to bolster cultural and identity-based protective factors needed for ushering marginalized young people into healthy adulthood [but] the bulk of the recruiting efforts involved in-class presentations . . . neglecting to target young people who dropped out of school even though these youth are at highest risk for suicide . . . Our study, therefore, cannot make direct linkages between digital storytelling as a suicide prevention strategy. (p. 622)

The website URL <http://www.projectlifealaska.org>, cited in the article *Promoting Positive Youth Development and Highlighting Reasons for Living in Northwest Alaska through Digital Storytelling*, no longer works; therefore, the digital stories are unavailable at this time.

Researchers Willox, Harper, Edge, the “My Word: Storytelling and Digital Media Lab,” and the Rigolet Inuit Community Government (2012) are listed as authors for the article, *Storytelling in a Digital Age: Digital Storytelling as an Emerging Narrative Method for Preserving and Promoting Indigenous Oral Wisdom*. This is an important distinction from other articles because the community was included as a co-author in the publication. The premise of this study was to design an Indigenous research method that was locally appropriate and resonated with narrative wisdom to engage a northern Inuit community located in Labrador, Canada with information exchange about how climate change and well-being are related. The authors found limitations posed by interview-based narrative research and decided to incorporate digital storytelling as part of the solution. The research team was composed of Indigenous and non-Indigenous members. They agreed digital storytelling could be used as “a method that reflected, preserved, and promoted the culture, histories, and narratives of the community” and “first-hand observations and experiences of environmental change and climatic variation, shared through oral stories, are not only an important and legitimate source of research but also are methodologically rich and powerful” (Willox et al., 2012, p. 131). After six week-long workshops and several one-on-one workshops, 37 stories were completed and distributed to participants, households in Rigolet, policy makers, health professionals, project stakeholders and presented at national and international conferences and meetings. The stories have been posted on the Rigolet community website (Rigolet Inuit Community Government, n.d.), a YouTube channel and Facebook page. Because of the research being conducted through Indigenous methods, the Rigolet Inuit Community Government established the “My Word: Storytelling and Digital Media Lab to engage community research and capacity development. “Inuit research and facilitation by and for Inuit” (Willox et al., 2012, p. 133). Participants and people who attended

public screenings were interviewed to assess their perceptions about the approach and value of the methods. Based on the responses from the interviews, Willox et al. (2012) suggested, “Digital storytelling dovetails, overlaps, and complements several of Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s interconnected and overlapping ‘Indigenous projects’: storytelling, creating, remembering, connecting, sharing, representing, networking, and intervening” (p. 133). The authors agreed that digital storytelling as a narrative-based social science method has opened up new terrain for research, particularly within Indigenous communities..

The “kiskinohamâtôtâpânâsk: Inter-generational Effects on Professional First Nations Women Whose Mothers are Residential School Survivors” project is one of many that respond to ill-treatment of Indian students by the Indian residential school system in Canada. Stout and Peters (2011) explained the Cree word kiskinohamâtôtâpânâsk used in the title as the following:

A Cree phrase that means ‘school bus’, but has various other nuanced meanings when looking at each of the root words individually. The root word “kisk” means ‘to learn’, “mâtow” is a verb that, on its own means ‘to cry’, and “otapanâsk” is the word for ‘wagon’. Through this particular morphological interpretation, crying is part of the school bus experience. (p. i)

You would only know that if you were Cree or spoke the language. The literal translation “school bus” does not have the same meaning for an outsider as it does for the Cree. The meaning is connected to history and place and not just to an object. The kiskinohamâtôtâpânâsk study built upon a previous study called *kiskâyitamawin miyo-mamitonecikan (Knowing Mind Fullness): Urban Aboriginal Women & Mental Health* (Stout, 2010). The study suggested placing Aboriginal women’s stories at the center of research to understand Aboriginal women’s health needs because of the high rate of inadequate mental health services for Aboriginal women in Winnipeg and Saskatoon. The kiskinohamâtôtâpânâsk study placed an emphasis on the inter-generational effects on the wellbeing of professional First Nations women whose mothers

attended residential school. According to Stout and Peters (2011) “this project used Indigenous, arts-based and participatory approaches in a gender-based framework” (p. 5). They used oral storytelling and digital technology to create digital stories. A local filmmaker provided a two-hour workshop on digital storytelling, and then the women had two days to craft, record their own first-person narratives and create a digital story. Stout and Peters claim, “Researchers and communities are increasingly recognizing the healing properties of visual and narrative approaches. This project both generated information about the experiences of women whose mothers attended residential schools and served a therapeutic purpose” (p. 7). Both of the authors previously made a digital story and shared them with the participants. Stout’s mother was a residential school survivor and Peters was a non-Aboriginal researcher and the daughter of a mother who experienced family violence. They had a sense of the emotional challenges and healing that happens when making a digital story and therefore could empathize with the women’s stories. Stout and Peters (2011) concluded that the effects of residential school system are passed on to their children, sometimes through ‘body memory’; the voices, muscle reflexes and habits of the survivors. Alongside the intergenerational grief and pain is determination and resiliency. Sharing their experiences gives them an opportunity to see their strength and beauty. Through sharing they are helping to heal through the generations. The daily work involves emotional, physical, intellectual and spiritual aspects. Stout and Peters (2011) closed by saying, “From the stories, we can better understand these women’s processes of both of experiencing inter-generational effects and healing and resiliency of reconnecting children and adults with their health, families, traditions, and cultures” (p. 75). The women’s stories can be seen on the Internet (Aboriginal Women’ Health, n.d.).

Three of the studies performed with Indigenous communities, Davey and Goudie (2009), Iseke and Moore (2011), and Willox et al. (2012), had significant characteristics that are important to the theoretical concept of resurgence. Simpson (2011) indicated that the concept of “resurgence” with Indigenous thought is tremendous, and it is important that:

Indigenous peoples delve into their own culture’s stories, philosophies, theories and concepts to align themselves with the process and forces of regeneration, revitalization, remembering, and visioning. It is a call for Indigenous peoples to live these teachings and stories in the diversity of their contemporary lives, because the act in and of itself is the precursor to generating more stories, processes, visions and forces of regeneration, propelling us into new social spaces based on justice and peace. Our social movements, organizing, and mobilizations are stuck in the cognitive box of imperialism and we need to step out of that box. (p. 148)

All three studies involved at least one Indigenous researcher on the project. Having an Indigenous researcher involved in the project may ensure that ethical protocols are followed and Indigenous knowledge is privileged. Community participation and guidance was realized in a variety of ways, and place became especially important for Davey and Goudie (2009) and Willox et al. (2012). The classic model of digital storytelling was modified to accommodate the particular conditions of the study. Iseke and Moore (2011) defined digital storytelling completely differently than the other two studies. They used traditional video production techniques instead of a participatory method. They also performed all the video editing removing the power and authority from the storyteller even though they received permission to do so; but they were the only ones that mentioned using a Native purification ceremony or offering tobacco before interviewing the Elders. Davey and Goudie and Willox et al. had an expansive dissemination strategy. Davey and Goudie’s strategy was guided by the community after the digital stories were created. Reflecting on my own practice, I appreciated the similarities of these three studies. Investigating deeper, I did a comparison of two studies that both focused on suicide prevention with Indigenous youth to illustrate the impact of each approach, using Davey and Goudie, Hope

Vale/ Pelican Expeditions in Australia, and Wexler et al. (2013) promoting positive youth development in Alaska.

Davey is an artist, motivated by a concern for the environment, love of the sea and a desire to work with Indigenous issues for social justice. Goudie is part Aboriginal, loves the sea, has worked with Indigenous communities for over 20 years, and the Hope Vale Study is part of her PhD research. The study performed by Davey and Goudie (2009) was a participatory action research study and lasted for four weeks. Eighteen digital stories were produced. They obtained permission from all the stakeholders and were guided by the community. They designated the participants and researchers as co-creators. Through digital storytelling, the Hope Vale Elders recognized that the collaboration of old ways with new ways could benefit the community. Digital storytelling was integrated in the Hope Vale/Pelican Expeditions as a documentation activity that generated more stories and visions of regeneration by way of introducing digital storytelling into the schools, the cultural center and most impressive was the expansion to other communities to form sister-brother communications. Additionally, they developed a portable digital storytelling kit that could be reused in remote areas. Participants received DVDs, and the stories were uploaded to social networking sites and local websites. The significance of involving community throughout the process and having the project take place in Country demonstrated the reclaiming, restoring, and regenerating homeland relationships (Corntassel, 2012). The Hope Vale/Pelican Expedition project contributed to building capacity and developing social and emotional cultural and spiritual wellbeing. Community support for the youth was intergenerational and the digital stories generated pride for both the participants and the community. This project generated a hopeful outcome for youth that were at-risk for suicide. The researchers modified the classic model of digital storytelling to fit within the context of the

overarching project, and instead of personal stories, the participants documented activities and Elders stories, which is a great place to bring the youth into the process. The researchers performed individual interviews, and all media was archived with the Indigenous Knowledge Centre in Hope Vale.

Wexler is an Associate Professor and Director of the Division of Community Health Studies at the University of Massachusetts, Amherst. Wexler has been performing research with Alaska Native youth since 1999. Her interests are American Indian/Alaska Native Suicide Prevention; Indigenous Youth Resilience; Culturally-Specific Behavioral Health Services, and Digitally-Enhanced Participatory Research. Gubrium is an Associate Professor and Director of the Community Health Education Program at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. Her interests are sexual and reproductive health, rights, and justice; participatory digital, visual, and narrative research methodologies; and holistic and culture-centered approaches to health promotion. Griffin is an undergraduate program advisor at the University of Massachusetts Amherst. DiFulvio is a Lead Evaluator and Director of Public Health Undergraduate Studies for the University of Massachusetts Amherst. She has focused on the translation of research to practice over the last 15 years and has extensive experience in the design, implementation, and analysis of focus group and individual interviews. Wexler et al. (2013) suggested that Alaska Native youth have difficulties constructing a positive and coherent sense of cultural identity because adults cannot be present due to economic hardships. The adults have to work away from home to support the family. Substance abuse has increased health issues, and suicide attempts have increased hospitalization visits and are the leading cause of death in the region. Wexler et al. claimed the health issues are related to cultural disruptions, and the digital storytelling project was intended to remedy the situation. They decided to use digital storytelling because research

shows that participatory video engages youth in primary prevention and health promotion. They wanted to use digital storytelling as a health promotion strategy within a “positive youth development (PYD) framework that focuses on facilitating and supporting intrapsychic, interpersonal, and community factors that promote health and well-being as young people mature” (Wexler et al., 2013, p. 617). “The research team engaged a non-Native man and alternated between an Alaska Native woman and man, who traveled to 12 villages at least once a year for 4 years to offer a 5-day digital storytelling workshop. Workshops took place for 3 hours every day after school” (Wexler et al., 2013, p. 619). Recruitment for participants was broadcast through the radio and in the schools. Legal guardians signed consent forms before the workshop began. From 2006 to 2010, 432 people generated 566 digital stories. Youth were encouraged to invite friends and family to the screenings: mostly peers attended. Thirty-nine community showings were conducted. The stories were posted on the project website. Participants were given exit surveys, and open-ended survey responses were characterized with a one-word code. Participants were interviewed about their digital storytelling experience. Results indicated that 69% of the participants found that the workshop was meaningful. Some of the youth indicated that by watching their videos, they realized people care about them. From that outcome, Wexler et al. (2013) summarized “digital stories can be seen as culturally salient artifacts for use in constructing culture-centered health communications messaging” (p. 621).

The Hope Vale’s digital storytelling project was part of a bigger project that was a call to action from the community to help prevent suicide. The purpose was to explore early findings of both the benefits and problems using digital storytelling to promote social and emotional wellbeing and caring for country. The project was guided by community involvement from the beginning of the project and continued during the capacity building within the community after

the camp. They made specific cultural recommendations that were important to help the youth connect to support their identity and place within the community. The camp took place on Country, purposeful within the holistic view of well-being, connection to place, spirit and community. All stakeholders submitted permissions.

Wexler et al. (2013) brought the study to Alaska based on suicide statistics, focusing on health disparities of the community. The purpose was to analyze the direct linkages between digital storytelling and suicide prevention. There was no indication of community involvement except for the two people that were recruited to give the workshops. The project took four years to complete and compiled 566 digital stories. Recruitment efforts failed to recruit the highest at-risk youth. The Hope Vale digital storytelling facilitators were present during the entire duration of the camp and assisted with the digital storytelling effort. Wexler et al. did not indicate if the researchers for the Alaska project were present for the workshops, screenings or interviews. Assumptions were made that youth would craft positive and salient identities if they made digital stories after school for three hours a day for five days. The study indicated that mostly peers attended the screenings. The Hope Vale project had a celebratory screening of the digital stories with the support of the community. Elders had an opportunity to analyze the process and outcomes making decisions for further development of digital storytelling in the community. The Alaska project didn't indicate any capacity building efforts.

The Hope Vale project itself was a call to action desired by the community to curb suicide rates of its tribal youth. It was centered within community and culture, embracing the past, present, and future using a participatory holistic model inclusive of Indigenous epistemology focusing not just on the individual but on the collective. Even though the Hope Vale project included digital storytelling as a single activity within a bigger project, with its

eighteen digital stories created over four weeks had a community wide impact, so much, that the community embraced a strategy for sustainability for digital storytelling. The Alaska project was responding to the suicide rate of Alaska Native youth. It was framed within a Western research paradigm, creating 566 digital stories over four years. Youth created digital stories and gained technological skills and had peer support by attending the community screening. The Alaska team referred to digital stories as “artifacts” for well-being. Regarding research, the term “artifact” is also inextricably linked to European imperialism and colonialism similar to the term “research” (Smith, 1999). During the late 19th and early 20th centuries, it was assumed that tribes would vanish, so ethnologists, anthropologists and archeologists used *salvage anthropology* (Starn, 2011) to collect Indigenous “artifacts” and information about Native languages and culture using disrespectful methods. They also disregarded any ceremonial and spiritual connections that were associated with items they collected. Without the tribal community involvement in the research, two roads of knowledge will be traveled. A set of digital stories will go into the community through the digital storyteller one at a time and 566 stories will travel to the university to be analyzed through a Western hegemonic lens maintaining a colonial stance over knowledge creation and ownership. Therefore, maintaining the possibility of marginalization by publishing results based on health disparities instead of community resilience.

Closing the Gaps

Berryhill, a Native American broadcast producer stated,

Native people are doing for themselves what cannot be accomplished by the mainstream media. They are sharing their communities’ concerns in their own voices, uninterrupted by cultural interpreters and reporters who lack the background to understand the complex issues of contemporary Native life. (as cited in Alia, 2013, p. xi)

Access to emerging media such as digital storytelling has empowered Indigenous peoples to become the active producers; they have the authority to create their own mini-movie

from beginning to end, make editorial decisions and decide if and where it can be shared. They own the exclusive rights to their movie. Shared experiences by individuals who write about them can bring healing to themselves and the readers no matter the form. Through his healing journey, Morrisseau (1998) tells the story of the gentle pearl through his lived experience,

Native healing is done on the intrinsic level: healing is a matter of the heart and not just the 'head.' I suggest that deep inside all of us lies a gentle pearl, which gives us all the ability to be healers. What we lack is the confidence and knowledge to recognize what is important in healing. It is this gentle pearl that must be cultivated and brought back to life. (p. 6)

As a digital storyteller, I believe what Morrisseau is talking about, for each individual has the ability to be a “soul healer” drawing from the strengths and resilience of the community and connection to spirit. Digital storytelling in the participatory sense, from an “Indigenist” perspective, can help close the gaps that exist in research and build upon new scholarship that is inclusive of Indigenous voices and Indigenous epistemologies. Jo-Ann Archibald (2008) declares, “[Indigenous peoples] need some space to talk so that we can share our stories in our own way and create discourses based on our Indigenous knowledge systems. Then we can open the conversation for others to join” (p. 19). The new narrative of healing is emerging as part of the liberation discourse. Loft (2005), mentions that liberation can be obtained by asserting control over our lives and culture: “politically, socially, and artistically, they go beyond oppression. Thus, control of ‘our’ image [and stories] becomes not only an act of subversion, but of resistance, and ultimately, liberation” (p. 66).

As indicated earlier by Lewis (2011), when we share our stories, they come to life. They are sacred and have a healing influence; thus, as storytellers we have a responsibility to share our stories. Digital storytelling is an example of emerging media technology that brings storytelling and technology together to create short two-to-three minute personal video stories that inspire,

renew, and heal, and thereby are working to preserve and reenergize the wisdom and traditional cultures. In this way, the generosity of sharing takes on great significance for present and future generations.

We (Brenda Manuelito and I) developed the *nDigiStorytelling* model of digital storytelling in 2008, to address the urgency of cultural preservation, health, education, and advocacy for Indigenous peoples. *nDigiStorytelling* is a grassroots movement that takes shape in the heart of the community and practices Indigenous ways of knowing. It is an “Indigenized” version of the classic model, which includes Native purification rituals (i.e., smudging, cedarizing, praying) during the process of the workshop and the sharing of the movies. *nDigiStorytelling* has a familiar communal or ceremonial (Wilson, 2008) feeling of bringing tribal community together for a specific purpose. Trust, respect, and prayer help to hold the story circle space together by all who take part in the workshops; participants have indicated that it is a place of liberation and safety. Emphasis is not placed on technology but on the person telling their story—the story, and the process of telling. The story is nurtured within the heart of the individual realizing the four areas of being: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Similar to the oral narratives and songs that Indigenous societies shared to teach and heal, *nDigiStories* are birthed, nurtured and shared by the storytellers. They have shared stories about culture, resiliency, survival, sovereignty, healing, beauty and hope. Through personal courage the *nDigiStorytellers* cultivate their gentle pearl back to life. Health is about finding harmony and balance. “Harmony is conceptualized as being in balance with the self, others, community, and surrounding world which also includes a spiritual sense” (Palacios, 2012). According to Michell (2009), “Health and wellbeing is more than just the *absence of disease and the physical*; it is about an entire philosophy of life, a way of

being, a way of knowing, and way of becoming whole and complete as we move through the different stages of life” (p. 68), as in *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* and *Hózhó*.

The digital story created during the *nDigiStorytelling* process was conceived through the sacred breath and intention of the storyteller. It was born with a spirit regarded as an element of life. Many *nDigiStorytellers* have expressed healing as a result of their digital storytelling journey. The digital storytelling journey is a sacred journey that finds harmony and balance based on the depth and process of “story-making” (digital storytelling process) and the “story-sharing” (dissemination) by the storytellers and the broader community.

In this chapter, we sat high up in the tree looking at three bodies of research from a different perspective, Indigenous resilience, Indigenous film and digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is a tool with many uses. For the purposes of this study, I refer to it as a healing tool that must come from a strength-based place instead of a ruptured one, and a place of Indigenous solidarity, where visual sovereignty and Indigenous aesthetics can be explored. In this dissertation I will be using a bricolage of methods for this study-performance ethnography, relational autoethnography, community-based participatory research and Indigenous methodologies

Sharing Corn Stew

Dreams, when spoken, sometimes lose their power. And waking sometimes disappears them. Perhaps the uncharted mind wants to remain so. It is a mystery we have always searched for, whether with the inner dimensions of a single person or in voyages across the world. Humans are always digging for the past with theories, beliefs, tools, and all the other fruitless efforts into unknown worlds. But I remember looking into the crevasse of ice, feeling small, knowing that we are temporary explorers who, after all this time, still know almost nothing about our world. (Hogan, 2001, p. 137, *The Woman Who Watches Over the World*)

Driving across the prairies of Montana, like Hogan remembering the enormity of the crevasse of ice, I felt small in the vastness of the prairie, but present with what I was seeing, feeling and hearing. It took us five hours to drive in our rent-a-wreck from the airport in Billings, Montana to Poplar to give an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop on the Fort Peck Indian Reservation. It was my first time to visit Fort Peck. The workshop included a mix of three generations. Knowledge was shared between the youth and Elders; the youth helped the Elders learn about technology and the Elders taught the youth traditional knowledge. After the first day was over, we loaded the car to drive to the hotel where we would be staying in Wolf Point, 22 miles away from Fort Peck, 44 miles round trip. As I was getting ready to sit in the car, I heard songs of the ancestors echo across the prairie. My ears were already in tune by the songs of the ancestors I had heard in Neah Bay, Washington, home to the Makah Tribe during the time we were teaching an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in 2009. Like the Eagle we saw in Michigan, it was a sign! The ancestors are present: they are watching, and they are listening. I am cognizant that my study involves a lot more than just the participants. On our way back to Billings, the rent-a-wreck started to hum rather loudly. I recognized the sound from a past experience with my automobile when my mechanic forgot to tighten the lug nut on the oil pan. Two hours from Billings, we came upon one mobile home. We stopped the vehicle, knocked on the door and inquired about the nearest gas station; it turned out it was only two miles away. It was the longest two miles I

had ever driven. The owner had let the oil go dry without checking it before he rented it to us. We never rented a rent-a-wreck again, but we sure laugh about it today. The ancestors are always watching over us.

Echoes of a long history of exploitative research (Simonds & Christopher, 2013) also live among the prairies. “The word itself, ‘research’, is probably one of the dirtiest words in the Indigenous world’s vocabulary” (Smith, 2012, p. 1). Smith defines methodology as “the reasoning for selecting a set of methods [that are] concerned with the context in which research problems are conceptualized and designed, and with the implications of research for its participants and their communities” (p. 2). The concept ‘research’ is a Western academic method and from the Indigenous perspective was gathered randomly and ad hoc, reflecting less on the cultural aspects of the colonized. Smith implies that new ways of thinking about Indigenous research are needed in order to frame the world in the way Indigenous peoples see it, the way they organize themselves in it, and the questions they ask and solutions they seek. Basically what is needed is centering Indigenous concepts and worldviews, placing self-determination in the center because as a social justice issue it is expressed across a wide range of psychological, social, cultural and economic terrains. Castellano (2012) asserts that “fundamental to the exercise of self-determination is the right of peoples to construct knowledge in accordance with self-determined definitions of what is real and what is valuable” (p. 102).

Earlier I mentioned that Brenda Manuelito and I had driven over two thousand miles to Michigan to meet with members from *Keeweenaw* Bay Indian Community to discuss the possibility of hosting a pilot *nDigiStorytelling* workshop with their community. After we left the Michigan site, we drove to Peshawbestown, Michigan to meet with our co-researchers. Our gatherings took place in an Amish made circular Gazebo; the feeling was similar to being inside

a Hogan (Diné ancestral home). It was important to all five of us, that we start everyday with Native purification rituals. It is a way to let the ancestors and all that exists around us know about the intensions of our study and ask for their guidance through the process. We engaged in conversations about the protocols specific to KBIC (Keweenaw Bay Indian Community) and how important it was to use methodologies that center on an Indigenous framework. I will discuss the process we experienced with our co-researchers and the pilot *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and community screening or *nDigiFest* (film festival) in more detail in the fourth chapter and the fifth chapter.

Defining the methods for this study reminded me of the time that we gave an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop at Laguna Pueblo in New Mexico. We usually arrive a day early to make sure everything is in place before the workshop begins. The workshop was going to take place in the community building. There was no separate room for the voice recording. So, Brenda and I looked around the community room for possibilities. I walked into the women's restroom and started yelling. I had to listen for the amount of echo my voice would generate in the restroom. We jumped in *nDigiChidi* and drove west on Interstate 40 to Grants, New Mexico, a thirty-five mile drive from Laguna Pueblo. I ran into the Wal-Mart Supercenter and found a couple of people in the back. I graciously asked them if I could have the left over cardboard from the big-ticket items. I explained the work we were doing, and they got really excited, so they helped with everything we needed. I walked out of the store with several large cardboard pieces and two egg crate mattress pads. We drove back to Laguna Pueblo and started cutting and pasting. We managed to create a makeshift recording studio out of cardboard, egg crate mattress pads and Pendleton blankets. It was a bit tight in the bathroom stall, but it worked. When there is a need in the community, tribal members respond by bringing resources or volunteering time to

help the situation at hand. I'll never forget what one of our male digital storytellers said after he had to record his voice in the women's restroom: "I've never been in a women's restroom—it's so clean" (*nDigiStoryteller*, personal communication, April 7, 2010).

The methods I used for the study are a lot like resources that helped create the makeshift studio. Depending on who I share that story with, some will say, "the recordings are not professional enough" and others say, "that is so awesome, you were able to take what was in the community and make it work for the people." I chose a bricolage of methodologies that would favor the lifeworld of Indigenous peoples working with participatory visual art within a holistic and circular process. Holistic healing includes creative arts and is inclusive of digital storytelling. "It captures the interrelatedness of creative arts, culture, and traditional healing and is consistent with holistic worldviews that stress balance, harmony and connectedness" (L. Archibald & Dewar, 2010, p. 6). Previously in the introduction, I mentioned that my study would involve learning about the journey of a digital story based on the direct experience of the participants sharing their movies. My methodological approach is grounded in "story" in the modern age, with the belief that "story" is healing. Alfred (2005) expresses it this way: "There is a solid theory of change in this concept of an Indigenous people's movement. The theory of change is the lived experience of the people" (p. 22). In the following sections, I will highlight the bricolage of research methodologies, weaving Indigenous threads throughout. I chose these methods based on existing literature and discussions held with co-researchers. I will present my experience and the conversation with participants and co-researchers through performative writing, performance ethnography, and relational autoethnography centering Indigenous methodologies using community-based participatory research. I first tell a small story about phenomenology because the center of this study is grounded in "direct experience." I touch on

Indigenous methodologies to provide a foundation for using an Indigenous framework.

Following that, I turn to performance ethnography and relational autoethnography to provide clarity of performance as sacred versus just entertainment and relational autoethnography as a shared storytelling conversation to be inclusive of the participant and co-researcher voices instead of just my own. In the last section, I describe the concept of community-based participatory research as a reflection of the work in progress that has been ongoing with our co-researchers since 2011.

Phenomenology

In the 20th century, quantitative research was influenced by a positivist tradition, one that emphasized empirical data and scientific methods (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998). “Habermas has argued that, at root, positivism is simply the denial of reflection, that is, of the need to reflect explicitly on the philosophical and social condition of knowledge” (Bentz & Shapiro, 1998, p. 30). Kovach (2009) describes the point of divergence between qualitative and quantitative approaches with this statement:

It is likely at this point that qualitative research diverges most clearly from traditional positivist quantitative approaches. Each guided by their own philosophy, one is a seeker of a singular static truth from an objective distance, while the other searches for contextualized realities and acknowledges many truths. These approaches differ significantly, but both stem from a paradigm defined and nuanced by Western thought. (p. 26)

Early qualitative studies centered on Western epistemologies and extractive research approaches with Indigenous societies, leaving them disenfranchised from the knowledge they shared. The worst extraction was “the ways in which knowledge about Indigenous peoples was collected, classified and then represented in various ways back to the West, and then, through the eyes of the West, back to those who have been colonized” (Smith, 2012, p. 1). Fortunately, we are witnessing an increase of “innovative research methods that focus on community

participation, capacity development, social justice, and the decolonizing of research, knowledge, and method” (Wilcox et al., 2012, p. 129). “In nonpositivist paradigms, research is often seen as a researcher-participant coproduction of knowledge in which the division between researcher and subject is blurred, and control over representation is increasingly shared” (as cited in Karnieli-Miller, Strier, & Pessach, 2009, p. 279). Denzin and Lincoln, claimed, qualitative research is in the “seventh moment” when “inclusivity of voices in research practice is possible” (as cited in Kovach, 2009, p. 27). Four of the emerging innovations described by Gergen and Gergen (2000) are reflexivity, multiple voicing, literary representation, and performance challenging the traditional binary between research and representation.

As researchers, it is our responsibility to make sure that our contributions to research adds value to society for the future (Smith, 2012) encouraging equitable power relationships between the researchers and the participants. Research approaches should be determined by cultural views and lifeworlds. “Phenomenological inquiry enhances understanding of what humans actually experience in their situations and lives” (Rehorick & Bentz, 2008, p. xv) within the everyday lifeworld. It is important to understand how Indigenous ways of knowing connect with Western approaches of research. The concept of Indigenous Knowledge (IK) is local knowledge that is unique to a particular Indigenous society, and because of the multitude of diversity among tribal communities; the topic of Indigenous Knowledge exceeds the scope of this chapter. I follow a common thread that has been explored by Indigenous scholars to bring light to the subject.

Indigenous Methodologies

Indigenous epistemologies, or Indigenous ways of knowing, are based on a worldview that is unique to each Indigenous community and is usually grounded in unique tribal languages,

cultures, histories, places and spaces, stories, songs and prayers. Indigenous worldviews are traditionally holistic, and life is lived in a circular fashion (Duran & Duran, 2000; Graveline, 1998; Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005). Duran and Duran (2000) explain that a “Native American worldview is one in which the individual is a part of all creation, living life as one system and not in separate units that are objectively relating with each other” (p. 91).

Consensus among many Indigenous scholars indicates that research with Indigenous communities should be beneficial for the community, follow cultural protocols and rules of respect for sharing knowledge, and it should share control of research maximizing the participation of the community (Kovach, 2009, 2010; Smith, 2012). Based on Indigenous philosophical principles, Indigenous knowledge “is not reducible to finite parts. Rather it encapsulates a fluidity that intertwines itself with and around a paradigmatic structure in a non-linear way” (Kovach, 2005, p. 6). The distinctive characteristics of each Indigenous community inform Indigenous methodologies that will be employed for research. Therefore, the paradigmatic approach is based on contextual knowledge from a particular tribal knowledge base (Kovach, 2010), “centering our concepts and worldviews and then coming to know and understand theory and research from our own perspectives and for our own purposes” (Smith, 1999, p. 39).

Wilson (2008) contends, “the shared aspect of an Indigenous ontology and epistemology is relationality [and the] shared aspect of an Indigenous axiology and methodology is accountability to relationships” (p. 7). Little Bear (2000) described the circle of relationships or kinship as a number of concentric circles, a spider-web of relations. He compared it to the wholeness of a flower with four petals. It is in the collective that the petals create balance, harmony and beauty. Like Little Bear, Kenny (2004) asserts “Great importance is based on the

principle of balance in this delicate web of life” (p. 8) and it is always changing. The web starts with “self-in-relation” (Graveline, 1998, p. 57) informing the inter-relationship of family, community, and the natural and spiritual world (Castellano, 2012; Deloria, 2003; Little Bear, 2000). Based on Indigenous relational philosophy, Kovach (2010) posited that the Indigenous paradigmatic approach is accountable to the world, and asserts a non-human centric relational philosophy. Knowledge sharing is based on a collective oral and storytelling tradition acknowledging that “knowledge is co-created within a relational dynamic between self, others, and nature” (Kovach, 2010, p. 42). Indigenous societies have particular protocols when sharing stories. Certain stories can only be shared at certain times of the year and told in certain ways; other stories can be shared at the discretion of the storyteller. It is important to learn how to listen to stories and make meaning from them, drawing from Indigenous epistemologies instead of Western theories that are not Indigenous based. Storytelling is a primary form of experiencing, and in order for stories to be used effectively, certain story principles need to be utilized. For example, the Sto:lo and Coast Salish storywork principles are based on respect, responsibility, reciprocity, reverence, holism, interrelatedness, and synergy (J. Archibald, 2008). The storywork principles are methodologies that can be used to make meaning from stories. L. Archibald and Coyote learned that these “storywork principles are like strands of a cedar basket. They have distinct shape in themselves, but when they are combined to create story meaning, they are transformed into new designs and also create the background, which shows the beauty of the designs” (2008, p. x).

In Living Indigenous leadership: Native narratives on building strong communities, Kenny (2012) maintains “Stories are a creative act of leadership through which we manifest our solidarity and strengthen our people to take their next steps in encouraging good and healthy

lives” (p. 1). Episkenew (2009) asserted, “Indigenous societies shared and transmitted their collective truths by way of oral narratives, Indigenous peoples placed high value on memory and honesty . . . thus, stories were central to the functioning of Indigenous societies” (p. 3). Words are spoken with sacred breath and intention; they are alive (Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Einhorn, 2000; Garrouette & Westcott, 2013; Lewis, 2011; Silko, 1986). “People are not the only ones that speak. Willows whisper, rains roar, trees talk, hills hum, and spirits speak” (Einhorn, 2000, p. xiv). Speaking and listening are not a simple matter but a living process, and sacred words speak of the past and weave the future; they affirm existence as stated by Einhorn (2000):

They breathe and beat, pound and palpitate, resound and reverberate. Words pulsate with life, making their use potent and powerful. Sounds re-sound; they react and respond to each other. Their returning rings rebound and ricochet, resulting in a perpetual promenade of timbres and tones. Because words take on a living presence, they possess senses, souls, colors, textures, personalities, and identities. Speakers bring new words to life and new life to words. (p. 3)

Sharing a story is considered sacred work among Indigenous peoples. Stories are powerful and have a healing influence; they can help inform health wellness (Banks-Wallace, 2002) and create dialogue that triggers reflections of health patterns (Struthers & Peden-McAlpine, 2005). Silko (1986) suggests:

Storytellers have a responsibility to others because of the healing power and influence a story has; the old folks said the stories themselves had the power to protect us and even heal us because the stories are alive; the stories are our ancestors. In the very telling of the stories, the spirits of our beloved ancestors and family become present with us. The ancestors love us and care for us though we may not know. (p. 152)

Individual stories are powerful and contribute to a collective story where every Indigenous person has a place (Smith, 2012). The opportunity to combine Indigenous storytelling and Indigenous knowledge as part of the cultural revitalization and resurgence with the advances of media technology and dissemination will help improve Native health (Gray, Oré de Boehm, Farnsworth, & Wolf, 2010; Palacios, 2012). Access to emerging technologies like digital

storytelling brings storytelling and technology together to help Indigenous peoples create short two-to-three minute personal video stories that inspire, renew, and heal. As co-owner of *nDigiDreams*, with Brenda Manuelito, I have witnessed more than a thousand Indigenous digital storytellers travel through the *nDigiStorytelling* creation process and share their movies. Following our workshops, many of them have personally contacted me either face-to-face, by email, phone, or Facebook to tell me about how they shared their movies, sensed a feeling of hope, liberation and healing, and received positive responses from those who watched their movies. In March 2014, I received an email from a storyteller who participated in a *nDigiStorytelling* workshop in March 2013 in Browning Montana. She was recognized by the United States Attorney for the District of Montana with the “Working Hard, Making a Difference” award for her service to crime victims in Indian Country. This is an excerpt from her email:

I wanted to share with you that I received a national award last week from the United States Attorney’s Office. At the award ceremony they invited my entire family and surprised me, along with my coworkers and members of the Montana Native American Domestic Violence Review Team. They showed my video to open it up. It was very well received. Then a press release was sent out and the Assistant US Attorney attached the video to it. So my bosses in DC loved it and sent it on to their colleagues! I got to share with them where I made the video, why I did it and how powerful your training was ☺ Thank you again for the opportunity to do this. I appreciate you both very much. (Bremner, personal communication, March 31, 2014)

Her video was posted on YouTube for the public to see (Kbwg browning mt, 2013) Many storytellers have released their movies to *nDigiDreams* to screen in different venues. Out of respect for the storyteller, the story and the spirit of the story, even though we already have permission to show it, we always ask for their blessings before showing their movies to anyone. As soon as the workshop was over, uploaded her movie to Facebook and has shared it continuously to advocate for the prevention of domestic violence. Our workshops are held in the

heart of the community and our practice incorporates Indigenous ways of knowing. I have a responsibility as a scholar-practitioner/teacher/participant/*nDigiSister*/researcher and person of Indigenous ancestry to help our storytellers behind the voices of the digital stories. Smith (1999) argues:

We must be engaged in making space through struggles over power, over what counts as knowledge and intellectual pursuit, over what is taught and how it is taught, over what is researched and how it is researched and how it is disseminated (p. 5).

The next section will explore the concept of “story-sharing” as a performance of becoming.

Performance Ethnography and Relational Autoethnography

Last November, Brenda Manuelito and I, along with our co-researchers conducted a “pilot” *nDigiStorytelling* workshop with five local tribal members in Michigan and screened the movies at a community screening or *nDigiFest*. The pilot study was conducted as a community-based participatory research project to guide us through the learning process of performing research within an Indigenous community. The power of performance ethnography involves all who participate (Denzin, 2003) (e.g., storytellers, co-researchers, audience, community, the drum, ancestors, trees, and even the person who made the fry bread) at the *nDigiFest*. Departing from an essentialist concept of self, and replacing it with the relational self, “constitute[es] both an individual and collective identity through narrative and ceremonial performance that are simultaneously Indigenous and intercultural” (Ginsburg, 1995, p. 123). An *nDigiFest* creates space for sharing and “story-sharing” through cultural exchange and dialogue.

Denzin (2003) further implies:

The performance of these rituals validates traditional ways of life. The performance embodies the ritual. It is the ritual. In this sense, the performance becomes a form of public pedagogy. It uses the aesthetic to foreground cultural meanings and to teach these meanings to performers and audience members alike. (p. 6)

The *nDigiStorytellers* invited family and community members to attend the *nDigiFest* initiating the festival with prayers through drumming and singing sacred songs. All in attendance prior to the screening shared a meal together. The spirit of the story flowed from the nourishment of the land, water, ancestors and all that was around us into the telling of the stories becoming and existing as *nDigiStories*. They are sacred and are shared in a ceremonial performance addressing all four areas of being: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. As a rhetoric of survivance, Ginsburg (1995) asserts, “Indigenous media can be understood as part of a powerful new process in the construction of contemporary and future identities . . . of times and social relations in ways that point to a cultural future” (p. 123). “Indian people are no longer as worried about communicating with ‘out-siders’ as they are about keeping current with Native news and helping stories as well as first languages flourish within the community” (Redfield, 2006, p. 157). Ceremonial performances help awaken the collective consciousness into ways of comprehending culture, power, resilience and being (Madison & Hamera, 2006), initiating a process of becoming. According to Leavy (2009), “Part of modern human experience-when our normative environment becomes highly visual, then the visual becomes a part of how our consciousness develops” (p. 226). Conscientization leads to action (Freire, 2000). Adler (1970) defined performance as the following:

A good performance, like a human life, is a temporal affair — a process in time. It is good as a whole through being good in its parts, and through their good order to one another. It cannot be called good as a whole until it is finished. During the process all we can say of it, if we speak precisely, is that it is becoming good. The same is true of a whole human life. Just as the whole performance never exists at any one time, but is a process of becoming, so a human life is also a performance in time and a process of becoming. (p. 15)

As a way of reclaiming space in the process of becoming, ceremonial performance “contributes to an epistemological and political pluralism that challenges existing ways of

knowing and representing the world” (Denzin, 2003, p. 7). I will present the journey of a digital story through relational autoethnography by engaging in a reflexive and dialogical “conversational method” (Kovach, 2010) that is congruent with an Indigenous worldview between those, who participated in the research including the co-researchers, using performative writing, that will include participant released video and audio clips. Ellis and Rawicki (2013) describe relational autoethnography as “collaborative witnessing,” a way “to evocatively tell the experiences of others in shared storytelling conversation” (p. 366). Ellis and Rawicki also claimed: “Autoethnography is not a way of knowing about the world; it has become a way of being in the world, one that requires living consciously, emotionally, and reflexively” (p. 10).

Relational autoethnography connects voice to a narrative performance that is “ethics-led” as opposed to “method-led.” This means the methodology emerges in response to, and from within, the relational activities under investigation, as opposed to being pre-scribed by the researcher” (Simon, 2013), thus allowing for new knowledge to emerge holistically. In the next section, I will elaborate on the concept of community-based participatory research, an approach that has been used to establish ethical research practices when doing research with Indigenous communities.

Community-Based Participatory Research

At the core of community-based participatory research (CBPR) are sets of principles that reestablish the power relationships between academic and community research partners. These principles include: trust, relationship building, co-learning, long-term commitment, and sustainability of health programs (B. Hall, 1992; Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003; Wallerstein & Duran, 2006). CBPR is a dialogical approach that focuses on social justice and social determinants of health, and because it was developed within the Western scientific tradition, it

requires adaptation for research with Indigenous communities (Simonds & Christopher, 2013). Past research was known to marginalize Indigenous communities. One approach used in Indian Country was “helicopter research” epitomized by the researcher flying in and taking information without leaving anything in return (Minkler & Wallerstein, 2003, p. 33).

CBPR can be traced to the Northern Tradition through Kurt Lewin, a German-American psychologist, who coined the term “action research” (Lewin, 1946) and the Southern Tradition, participatory action research established throughout Latin America, Asia, and Africa. CBPR emphasizes an ethics of care, relationality, and a democratic involvement of participants in research events. Community-based research is in itself a form of collective action that a community undertakes as key to its survival, its empowerment, or its continued effectiveness in encouraging social and political change (Finley, 2008, p. 99). CBPR can integrate Indigenous research methods and be culturally centered. Tribal sovereign nations have the political authority to regulate research on their lands, and the use of CBPR has taken precedence to ensure that ethical protocols are followed; communities are treated with respect and can benefit from the research (Simonds & Christopher, 2013).

Preparing To Share the Corn Pollen

Since the fall of 2011, Brenda Manuelito and I have been working with the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan’s *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery (ATR) program, helping them in various capacities with digital storytelling for health promotion and substance abuse prevention. In the introduction, I briefly introduced our co-researchers and a little history about our combined interest in digital storytelling. In the next section, I refer to them as our *nDigiDreamers* and provide more detail about our co-researchers.

nDigiDreamers (Co-researchers)

Their involvement was critical to the process of CPBR because they grounded our understanding of the language, philosophies, values and ethical principles that were respectful and meaningful for *Ojibwa* tribal members and they also have extensive experience running substance abuse treatment programs or have provided substance abuse counseling. They participated in the entire process including helping us co-facilitate the *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, screenings and interpreting the documentation from the pilot and final study. Their involvement at this level ensures that the tribal community will benefit from the study because the knowledge and process is shared with an opportunity to build upon the existing *nDigiStorytelling* model that was used with *Ojibwa* tribal members. The co-researchers are part of the *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery Program (ATR) that is part of a nationwide initiative to provide choice to individuals who are seeking recovery from substance abuse. They operate under the Behavioral Health Division of the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan (ITCM) that is in partnership with twelve federally recognized tribes and one urban Indian Center. Through out this document, I will refer to them as our ATR co-researchers, co-researchers and *nDigiDreamers*. I will introduce the program director of the *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle.

Eva L. Petoskey. Eva L. Petoskey is an enrolled member of the Grand Traverse Band of Ottawa and *Chippewa* Indians and currently serves as the Program Director for the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan's *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery program. She has 35 years of experience working with tribal communities throughout the Great Lakes region on issues related to wellness, education, evaluation and culture. She is a founding member of the First American Prevention Center; a tribally based organization that has taken a leadership role

nationwide in developing culturally based curriculum and training services for Indian Tribes and organizations. She is the author of the Red Cliff Wellness Curriculum, a culturally based substance abuse prevention and community empowerment model that has been used in over 130 schools and communities in the U.S. and Canada. The Red Cliff Wellness is the only tribally developed model program on the National Registry of Evidence Based Programs and Practices (NREPP). Eva served on the Tribal Council of the Grand Traverse Band for six years, four years as the Vice-Chairperson. She has a long-standing commitment to living her life based on *Anishinaabek* values. Eva has a Bachelors and Masters Degree in Education from the University of Wisconsin. She received both degrees with academic honors. She has also completed extensive coursework for a Doctorate in Educational Administration, Research, and Public Policy at the University of Minnesota. She has been a wonderful friend and a phenomenal leader. She has a nurturing spirit and always leaves the light on for us. Eva and her husband have opened their home to us many times and call us to make sure we got home ok.

Linda Woods. Linda Woods wanted to introduce herself in her own words:

Boozhoo, Wab-Mishe-Ke-Kwe ndizhinikaaz, Wabizhashi dodem, Peshawbestown ndojeba. Greetings, hello, my name is White Turtle Woman, my clan is Marten, and I am from Peshawbestown. I am enrolled as a tribal member of the Grand Traverse Band of *Ottawa & Chippewa* Indians on the western side of the lower half of Michigan, commonly known as the “little finger” of Michigan. I am also known by Linda Woods. I’m retired from a life of serving others . . . first in the military, the U.S. Air Force (1962–1966), then as a ‘social worker’ type most of my life. In 1994, I graduated with my master’s degree in social work. I have been helping alcoholics ever since I got sober in 1969. I’ve remained sober so I could help others. I’ve worked with mostly the Native American population because that’s who I am, an *Anishinaabe Kwe*, and I love seeing my own people learn to turn their lives around and live a good life, *Mino Bimaadiziwin*. That’s all I’ve ever wanted. I am thrilled to see others get clean and sober to discover who they are, as they are creating their story in their life.

Linda has blossomed from a Facebook Grandma into a beautiful friend and digital storytelling co-facilitator. She is humorous and has a young spirit that keeps me rolling forward to the tune of Elvis Presley. Next in line is Arlene Kashata.

Arlene Kashata. Arlene is an enrolled member of the Grand Traverse Band of *Ottawa & Chippewa* Indians in Peshawbestown, MI and has an MA in Educational Leadership/School Principalship and a BA in Psychology with a minor in Indian Studies. During her undergraduate studies she received the honor of being chosen the National Indian Student of the Year for all American Indian/Alaskan Native Students in October 1989 as a single parent of five children. Arlene is a certified Substance Abuse Counselor with 15 years experience and three years experience as a Director of a Tribal Behavioral Health Program. Currently, she is a consultant teaching assistant (TA) for the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan (ATR IV). For the past 20 years she has been a cultural consultant in educational settings. Arlene's personal experiences and childhood challenges have inspired her to help Native people gain knowledge and understanding for changing the outcomes of intergenerational trauma for themselves, their families and their tribal communities. Arlene, a traditional pipe carrier, for the past 25 years, incorporates traditional ceremonies and teachings to promote healing and growth for Native people on their road to sobriety and wellbriety.

Arlene has become a wonderful friend and offered us spiritual guidance every step of the way. She even brings in other family members when we are in a pinch to finish a project. The first time I met her, she kept me up until 4 AM helping her with a digital story because she had to cut her participation at the workshop short because she was scheduled to present at a conference the next day. And hot off the press, she was able to present her digital story. She is also an excellent co-facilitator. Next, is Terri Tavenner.

Terri Tavenner. Terri currently serves as Associate Director/Treatment & Recovery Supports Coordinator for the *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle, Access to Recovery program. She wrote a whole-systems of care model for the *Nbwakawn* Circles of Care Planning Initiative. She managed the *Anishinaabek* Future Leaders program for 14 years, which provided culturally-based leadership camp experiences to Native American adolescents from tribes across Michigan. Ms. Tavenner has extensive experience in planning, curriculum development, facilitation and program design. Originally from the Pacific Northwest, she designed and taught courses, and has written culturally-based curriculum for the Quileute Tribal School in La Push, Washington. She co-authored “The *Anishinaabek* Helping Healer: An Indigenous Model for Improving Access & Retention in Substance Abuse Treatment,” a chapter for an unpublished SAMHSA/CSAT monograph. She has a B.A. in Education Planning and Curriculum Development from Antioch University. For three years she participated in the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of *Chippewa* Indians Community Healing Initiative, which includes learning and practicing Indigenous counseling methods with an emphasis on historical trauma. In 2008, she completed the Great Lakes Addiction Technology Center’s Leadership Institute, with an emphasis on Recovery.

Terri has also been a good friend and she lets us hang out in her A-frame in Pickford, Michigan. Part of this dissertation was written there. She surprised me one morning with freshly picked blackberries. What a delight! She has such a caring heart and has been the backbone on many projects, always making sure things are getting done, organizing and arranging everything. She has also been a great co-facilitator with digital storytelling. I can’t wait for her to start using her writing cabin for those great novels. A fifth person I would like to mention is Clara Fernando. We taught her how to make a digital story in 2010 and she has traveled with us many

times to teach. She is a great friend and our friendship started during her workshop and continued as she kept texting me at two in the morning for technical assistance. She also wanted to introduce herself:

I am an enrolled member of the Pueblo of Laguna in New Mexico. I am Big Sun clan from my maternal side and Small Oak clan from my paternal side. I live in the village of Mesita with my two sons, Takia, 11 and Seneca, 8. I began digital storytelling without any experience and very little computer skills. After the first training, I was confronted with a political issue that would affect my livelihood. I knew I could use this tool [digital storytelling] to help make a statement that would address this issue. In a few days, I completed my second video. When I showed this video at a meeting to determine the outcome of this, it was impactful and helped towards a positive outcome. I was thankful for learning this process and the timing was amazing. I'm also thankful to Brenda and Carmella for always being of assistance and answering my bazillion questions. I participated in the first *nDigiFest* in San Diego and witnessed the impact these stories had on the makers as well as the audience. I have helped in four trainings to date. Each has been a different experience but the Michigan training was more emotional than any of the others. It was difficult because I also grew up in an alcoholic home. So many bits of their stories, I could relate to, but as a trainer, I had to try to subdue those emotions. When I returned home I watched the very first video I made. It is about growing up in Gallup and all the negative images of Native Americans I've had to deal with my entire life. My work in the community, whether it is with youth, development, or politics among many others is essential to my efforts of positive change. I'm thankful for all the opportunities of learning, educating others, and sharing love and happiness.

All of these ladies are outstanding leaders in their tribal communities and a pleasure to work with. They are very professional in their work ethic and are able to balance their tribal community life with work priorities while practicing their cultural teachings. Every time I visit my Anishinaabe sisters in Michigan I feel like I'm going home.

Both Brenda and I have witnessed profound changes to individuals who made digital stories since we started facilitating *nDigiStorytelling* workshops across Indian Country since 2008. Through our close contact and continued relationships with our digital storytellers, we learned about the impact that digital stories were having beyond the workshops for the digital storyteller, at family gatherings, high school forums, community-outreach events, powwows, meetings, clinics, meetings and conferences. Our co-researchers have witnessed changes in

others as well as themselves because they have participated in our digital storytelling workshops too. The first workshop we gave in Michigan was in 2011 with three of them as participants and that is when Eva recognized the benefit that digital storytelling could provide for their clients both by going through the process of making a digital story and sharing them with tribal communities. Arlene created a digital story in January 2012 and shared it at a meeting the day after it was produced. Eva pursued establishing the digital storytelling creation process as a behavioral health service code under ATR III, funded by the Substance Abuse and Mental Health Services Administration (SAMHSA). Recently, SAMHSA awarded them an ATR IV grant to continue the beautiful work they are doing with Indigenous communities.

In November 2013, along with our co-researchers we performed a four-day *nDigiStorytelling* workshop with a set of *Ojibwa (Anishinaabek)* digital storytellers (three men and two women) in Northern Michigan. We explained the nature of our pilot study through a metaphor as “coming together to learn what ingredients go into the making of an Indigenous corn stew” and what happens when “we share the stew.” We explained our *nDigiStorytelling* process: introduction to digital storytelling; thinking about a story idea; script writing; gathering of photos, video and music; voice recording (sacred breath); editing of their movie, and community screening. The digital storytellers allowed us to audio and videotape portions of the *nDigiStorytelling* process; since the story circle is like “a ceremony,” we did not do any audio or videotape recording in the circle. We did ask permission to write notes in the story circle to help us reflect back on the storyteller’s story. They consented to open-ended questions during the process of the workshop. After the workshop was complete, the next day was reserved for a community screening in a meeting room at the local casino, at the request of the storytellers. We had over 50 tribal community members in attendance, which included friends, relatives and

colleagues of the storytellers. With permission, we were allowed to videotape the storytellers as they introduced their digital story, and we audiotaped the “open mike” session at the conclusion of the digital storytelling screening. We handed out surveys to the audience after the screening as a method for learning about their responses and the general interest in digital storytelling.

Brenda and I engaged in “debrief” dialogues with three co-researchers at the end of each evening and audiotaped our conversations. We continued the “debrief” after the community screening as well. We wore many hats during the pilot process (e.g., facilitator, researcher, cook, photographer, computer tech, cabin host, and overall “good relative”).

Sharing the Corn Stew

The pilot study helped us prepare for the final study. We learned about the specific history of the area and its inhabitants, cultural protocols and about their language and songs. Since we held the screening in the middle of the day, many tribal members were unable to attend. From the pilot study, we learned that it is better to have the community screening in the early evening so more community members could attend. We needed a bigger venue and the storytellers were interested in participating in a panel after the movies were screened. They were also interested in screening their movies a second time in addition to the new movies that were created in the final study. We agreed to start the final study with a talking circle to document the changes that occurred as a result of sharing their movies before the new set of *nDigiStories* were made by the new storytellers.

Methods of Inquiry for Information Gathering and Interpretation

The methods of inquiry, illustrated in Figure 1.11, were used to gather information from the storytellers and community were: digital stories, digital story screenings

(Workshop/Community), group and individual interviews, participant observation, surveys, and story tracking (phone/email/text msg/social media).

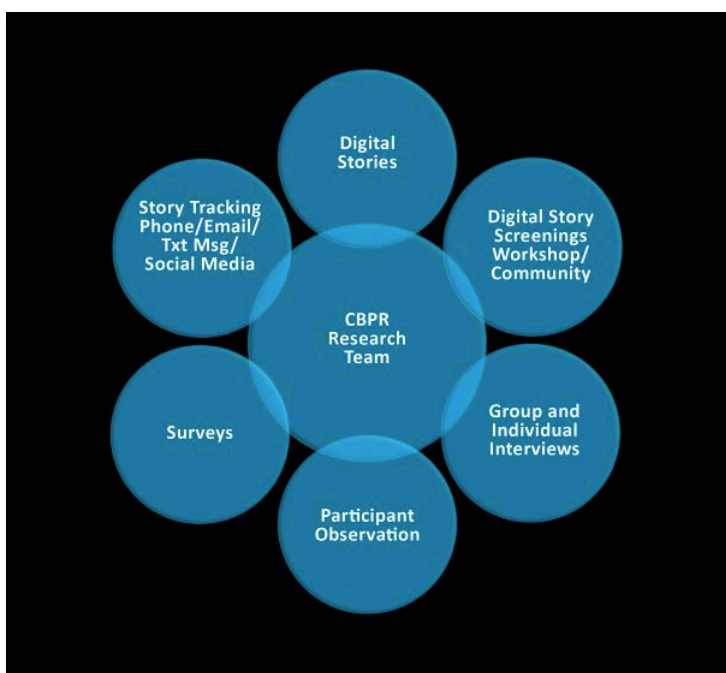


Figure 3.1. Methods of inquiry. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

Ethics

Ethics are of particular concern when it comes to research with any Indigenous community because of prior insults. After much discussion with our co-researchers, Brenda and I have followed Antioch University’s Ph.D. in Leadership and Change IRB guidelines. Based on those guidelines we asked for consent from those individuals that participated in this study. Other considerations are Indigenous protocols that an Indigenous person must make to the land, the ancestors, the spirits that surround the research site and the *nDigiStorytelling* process. From the advice of our co-researchers, we made the necessary tobacco offerings that were respectful for the community of this study. Cora Weber-Pillwax (2001) argues, “the most serious consideration for me as a researcher is the assurance that I will uphold the personal responsibility

that goes along with carrying out a research project that I have decided to work within” (p. 79).

We discussed the topic of written consent forms with our co-researchers and the topic of anonymity. IRBs and written consent forms are sometimes seen as a form of “colonization.” The participants agreed that they did not want to be “anonymous” or use a pseudonym. One participant said:

It would be colonizing all over again to be out there and not be truthful. Everybody has to be truthful in order to go through recovery and to write his or her story. We learn that in our culture you have to be truthful to sit on the drum and to sit in ceremony.” Within our tribal communities there are numerous ethical considerations that are not written about but are “seen” or “felt.” We do not share any information unless we are given explicit permission to do so (*nDigiStoryteller*, personal communication, July 3, 2014).

In cultural anthropology, the insider view or the outsider view is also respectively called emic and etic approaches. This is an interesting subject because there are so many different levels of relationships that are established over time with Indigenous communities. The participants and our co-researchers are Anishinaabe from different communities and have established their own relationship. One of our co-researchers established a different type of relationship with an Elder from the KBIC community over thirty years ago. We established a relationship with our co-researchers over several years and they are ready to share their extended relationships with us based on a system of respect and trust.

In this chapter, we engaged in learning about the bricolage of methods I chose for this study. In the next chapter, we will join the first set of storytellers at the community screening to listen to how the sharing of *nDigiStories* from the *nDigiStorytelling* pilot study, held in Skanee, Michigan, in November, 2013, had an influence on the storytellers, themselves and people that watched their movies.

Shki-Maawnjidwin (First Gathering)

In the third chapter, we engaged in learning why I chose a bricolage of methods for this study: community-based participatory research, performance ethnography and relational autoethnography within an Indigenous framework.

In this chapter, we will participate in the *Shki-Maawnjidwin*, and join the first set of storytellers at the community screening to listen to the experiences of the storytellers as they shared their *nDigiStories* from the pilot study.

The *Ojibwa* word, *Shki-Maawnjidwin*, means the *first gathering*. The *first gathering* is inclusive of place, time, ancestors seen and unseen, and everyone who participated, facilitated or contributed to the *nDigiStorytelling* pilot study in the November 2013.

In a complementary dissertation, Brenda Manuelito will focus on the “story-making” process of the pilot study and this dissertation will focus on the “story-sharing” process, which was described in the introduction as part of the *nDigiStorytelling* Four-Directions approach. Again, the “story-sharing” process begins at the workshop screening in the North direction overlapping with “story-making” and ends in the East direction, which is indicated by the one-quarter blue circle which is illustrated in Figure 4.1.

The first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and community screening or *nDigiFest* (Film Festival) included five tribal members from the Keweenaw Bay Indian Community (KBIC). The “soul-wind” of an *nDigiStory* is breathed into life during the “story-making” process and travels during the “story-sharing” journey (Figure 4.1). Five stories were breathed into life during the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop.

As readers of this dissertation, I invite you to join us in the ceremonial performance on paper and video. You will be following the “soul-wind” of the *nDigiStories* through the voices of

the storytellers as they share their *nDigiStories* and the influences the *nDigiStories* have had on people who watched them.



Figure 4.1. *nDigiStorytelling* Four Directions approach “story-sharing” process. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

I’m using performative writing in these chapters as a way to bring you into the ceremony, what Brenda and I consider to be ceremonial work with *nDigiStorytelling*. It is my hope that you will walk away with a beautiful experience as we did. Many prayers have been shared in support of these stories and for the lives of the people who made them. Before you join us in the ceremonial performance, please take a moment, if you would like to say a prayer for yourself, family, for these stories and storytellers, for all who contributed and for all that is good. I invite you to do that now. *Chi Miigwech* (Thank you)!

***Giiwedínong* (North)**

I’ll never forget the first time I met KBIC tribal members from Northern Michigan, who eventually became part of our *nDigiFamily* in 2013. The first time I heard about their interest in digital storytelling was in September 2011, when *nDigiDreams* facilitated the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop for the Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan’s Access to Recovery program which was the second workshop in Michigan. The first set of stories produced by ATR

staff was in August 2011. They participated in our first digital storytelling workshop in Michigan. They also screened their movies at home and invited relatives and friends to the showing. I remember, Linda Woods asking me for assistance to help her learn how to put her story on her Facebook page. She had me load it before we even had the workshop screening.

R.D., a KBIC tribal member and the coordinator for the KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* research study stated that he was finally ready to work with ATR to make digital stories because at least twelve other tribal members in Michigan had already made one. In November 2013, we had a community screening in Baraga, Michigan, at the *Ojibwa* Casino in the *Chippewa* Conference Room where we screened the first five *nDigiStories* that were made as a result of the pilot study. R.D. shared some thoughts about digital storytelling:

They [ATR] did twelve so far from down state, tribal members from down there. They shared their story. They kept trying to get KB, I kept saying no. Finally I said yea. It wasn't hard to pick these people out. They've been in recovery for a while. I had a good feeling that they would be interested in doing it and sure enough they were.

Being in the *Chippewa* Conference Room reminded me how we met the storytellers that would eventually participate in the pilot study. We met them in the same conference room a day after the 35th KBIC *Maawanji'iding* powwow in Baraga, Michigan.

***Maawanji'iding* (Powwow)**

Brenda and I drove over two thousand miles to Baraga for the powwow in July 2013 (Figure 4.2). That was the first time I had driven so far north in Michigan. When we came over the last little hill on highway 38, I was in awe with the view overlooking L'Anse Bay, just South of the Keweenaw Bay (Figure 4.3). We met one of our ATR co-researchers, Linda at the Best Western Lakeside Inn and then followed each other to the KBIC Powwow Grounds Pavilion. The North Woodland trees and foliage that enclosed the grounds was so thick, I couldn't even

see through them. We parked *nDigiChidi* next to Linda's *Blue Pony* (her car) and started walking to where everyone was sitting.

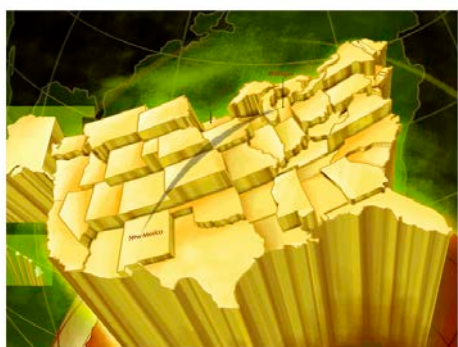


Figure 4.2. 2000 Miles from NM to MI. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 4.3. L'Anse Bay, Baraga, Michigan. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

We met new people every step of the way taking time to shake hands and say hello. We also saw Arlene, another ATR co-researcher, standing next to *Memegwesi*, a traditional drum; she is the drum keeper. It was dinner break for everyone, the drummers, dancers, and guests. We walked to the food area and started looking for delicious food and of course we found some, everywhere! I usually try to find regional food because I like to taste everything. I found wild rice soup and fry bread. Just as I was ready to taste that first spoonful, it started raining and then it rained a little more and then a lot more. We had to cover our soup and run to our cars because we didn't want to get stuck in the mud (Figure 4.4). It rained so much that the community had to move the powwow to an indoor ice skating rink in L'Anse, Michigan across the bay from Baraga. So we followed the powwow convoy around the bay and into L'Anse (Figure 4.5).

After we set up our chairs and sat down, we started to see several people we knew including previous digital storytellers from Michigan and Minnesota dancing. Respectfully, when time permitted, we walked over to say hello and along the way we met several new people

too. We even met people that would participate in a future digital storytelling workshop that was held in Tucson, Arizona.



Figure 4.4. nDigiSister Running with soup. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.



Figure 4.5. Powwow convoy. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.

Back then, we saw them through the photos we took, but now, they are part of our *nDigiFamily*, too. We didn't meet any of the digital storytellers who would participate in the *Shki-Maawnjidwin* at the powwow; instead we met them at the *Ojibwa* Casino the day after the powwow.

First Presentation To Introduce the *nDigiStorytelling* Pilot Study to KBIC

R.D. scheduled a meeting at nine o'clock in the morning in the *Chippewa* Conference Room next door to the hotel restaurant. Brenda and I met Linda and Arlene for breakfast so we could prepare for our presentation. Since Michigan has the freshest blueberries, I ordered blueberry pancakes, the breakfast of champions; at least, I thought so. We showed up a half-hour early to set up the projector so we could give a short presentation and show examples of digital stories. The room had several round tables and when people came in they sat down and we all just started talking. We did a prayer with *Asema* (ceremonial tobacco) before we got started. Instead of trying to give a formal presentation standing at the front of the room with power point

slides, we decided to introduce ourselves sitting around the table. We explained how we have been helping the Access to Recovery program build capacity across Michigan with digital storytelling since September 2011. Brenda used the analogy of “making bread” to explain how we wanted to understand the process of making and sharing digital stories with their community. My mouth started to water thinking about the freshly baked bread as she kept going on and on about “making bread.” She put it simply:

It’s kind of like when you make bread, you teach other people to make bread. What’s so good about bread, I don’t know. We just put it together, but if you start asking the people, what did it taste like, how do you think we made it? We can put the recipe together; we can share the recipe with more people.

One of the men at the presentation really liked the analogy because his mother taught him about life using similar stories about making bread. This is what he shared with us: “When you put love into what you are doing for the people, everything will be ok.”

Brenda explained that we, including Linda and Arlene, have noticed that the recipe of digital storytelling has been helpful to our Indian communities whether it be with recovery, healing or language revitalization. The question becomes how do we make a “bigger batch” and add new things to “the recipe” so that more people can taste it, be nourished by it, and share it. Brenda asked if they would be willing not only to participate in the workshop but also step back with us and look at each step in the process of digital storytelling, from making a story to sharing it. Together, we could learn how to make *nDigiStorytelling* more sustainable and help them build it into their own programs. Brenda told everyone about how storytelling has been a thread of survival for Indigenous Peoples. She said: “Storytelling is in our blood, in our DNA. This is how we survived, through those stories.”

Working in health related fields in the past and attending many health conferences, both Brenda and I have noticed a predominance of negative stories instead of positive stories about

how people have survived adverse health conditions like diabetes, cancer, or alcoholism. Many times, the strength and support that comes from families, and the spiritual and ceremonial aspects of health— the positive aspects, have been left out of stories. We know that those stories exist because we hear them every time someone makes a digital story. How can Indian people make more of those stories and share them?

At our presentation, we screened several digital stories and told a background story for each one. Both Linda and Arlene screened their stories and talked about their experience of making and sharing them and what has happened since they participated in their first digital storytelling workshop. We explained that the process of making a digital story would take four days, and if they wanted to screen them for the wider community we would help with that too. They were excited to make digital stories and to help us learn how to make a “bigger batch” of dough. We shared a common understanding about the history of Indian people from an Indigenous perspective, which is extremely important when working with Indigenous Peoples. A female Elder in the group was concerned about the issue of trust. She was hesitant at first, but because Arlene was at the presentation, and she knew Arlene since she was seventeen years old, the Elder specifically asked that Arlene be the one to help her through the digital storytelling making process. Arlene agreed and then we started talking about preliminary dates to hold the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and first *nDigiFest* for their community. Not everyone who was scheduled to be at the presentation was able to attend, so we scheduled a second presentation at the end of August 2013. After our presentation, R.D. invited us on a tour of the New Day Treatment center in L’Anse, Michigan, across the bay from Baraga. We met the director and several staff members. It helped us get a sense of knowing the area. After that, Brenda and I drove back to Baraga to the Tribal Department of Health and Human Services building to help a

former digital storyteller with changes she was making to her movie. After we finished assisting her, we walked out of the building, and that is when I saw the Eagle come out of the trees that I described in the introduction. I knew everything was going to be beautiful.

We drove south to Peshawbestown, Michigan, about an 8-hour drive and stayed with one of our other ATR co-researchers for about two weeks with a trip to New Mexico tucked in there to give a digital storytelling workshop for the Albuquerque Area Indian Health Board. We met with our ATR co-researchers several times to discuss digital storytelling, and we also made time to take hikes in the North Woodland forest. Together, we attended the Peshawbestown 2013 Summer *Jiingtamok* (powwow) (Figure 4.6) and were acknowledged by the MC of the powwow for the work we are doing across Indian Country. Several people approached us to tell us about how the digital stories that were made in their community had a positive impact on them and how others were interested in making one. We saw people we knew, previous digital storytellers and met new people in the three days we attended the powwow. On the afternoon of the last day we drove North to Pickford, Michigan to stay in Terri's A-frame house (Figure 4.7). Over the years, every time we got together, she started calling us the *nDigiDreamers*, and I really liked that name! Brenda got to ride a horse and I got to eat freshly picked blackberries (Figure 4.8). All six *nDigiDreamers*: Linda, Arlene, Terri, Eva, Brenda and myself met in Pickford for one last



Figure 4.6. Peshawbestown 2013 summer *Jiingtamok*. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 4.7. A-frame in Pickford, MI. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 4.8. Freshly picked blackberries. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

meeting before we drove back to Baraga for our second presentation with the KBIC tribal community members who were interested in making digital stories.

Second Presentation To Introduce the *nDigiStorytelling* Pilot Study to KBIC

The month flew by, I guess because we were so busy. This time R.D. scheduled a meeting at ten o'clock in the morning in the same *Chippewa* Conference Room. This time it was just Brenda and I presenting to a new group of people. One person who attended the presentation had created a video with pictures and music and used it to show at drug-court. She witnessed the emotional reactions of the people who watched it and knew that video could be used as another tool to help people in treatment programs. She was interested in digital storytelling because she wanted to learn more video editing skills. She was in for a treat because we were going to help her learn how to bring personal voice into her digital video. And not just any voice, *her* voice. I felt the excitement coming from the entire group in the room, including myself, that she would be joining us for the digital storytelling workshop. Another person in the group expressed how approachable people become once they share their story. His observation after watching examples of the digital stories was that they could be used with drug-court, youth programs, recovery, cultural revitalization, and to help people open up and break the silence when they need help. Everyone agreed that digital stories might have a higher impact if the community made them with people that are recognizable by other community members instead of strangers. We also described the analogy of making the bread with this group. Basically working together to understand the recipe so we can help more and more people. They agreed. Most of the digital storytellers that were recruited to be part of the *Shki-Maawnjidwin*, work for the New Day

Treatment Center. R.D. asked special permission from the director to allow them to participate in the *nDigiStorytelling* pilot study.

We compromised on a date that would not interfere with football season and we were reminded that the weather is unpredictable in northern Michigan from November to May. It could be sunny or extremely cold with blizzard conditions. To make use of our time while we were still in the Upper Peninsula, we followed R.D. for several hours around the rez looking for a place to hold an *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. After visiting three areas we decided on Aurora Borealis in Skanee, Michigan. The cabins were owned by an older non-Native couple and had been well maintained. They even had wireless Internet throughout the property. They lived in the main house and had four cabins available for rent. I sent pictures to our ATR co-researchers, and they made arrangements to rent three cabins in November 2013. We considered the *Shki-Maawnjidwin* the pilot study, so we explored community-based participatory research using an Indigenous framework while we were learning how to create the “digital storytelling recipe” together. After we were done driving around the rez, we left Michigan and drove to Thief River Falls, Minnesota, to pick up Brenda’s 81-year-old mother because we dropped her off with Brenda’s older sister before we started our trip to Michigan in July 2013. There is nothing like having a mother to keep you company as you drive across the country.

Dagwaagin (Fall)

We drove another two thousand miles back to Michigan in mid-October 2013 and met our ATR co-researchers at Camp Daggett in Petoskey, Michigan. ATR was sponsoring a Peer Recovery Coach Institute Conference that brought together Native peer recovery coaches from all across the state of Michigan. On the final evening of the conference we helped them with their first *nDigiFest*. Six digital stories were screened and discussed with a panel of six digital

storytellers and the attendees of the conference. Two days later, we flew from Traverse City, Michigan to Grand Forks, North Dakota to give a digital storytelling workshop at the Cankdeska Cikana Community College on the Spirit Lake Reservation as part of a digital storytelling pilot featuring local voices for the National Library of Medicine’s Native Voices Traveling Exhibit (Figure 4.9). At the opening presentation, we shared the stage with Dr. Donald A.B. Lindberg, MD, Director of the National Library of Medicine. He presented the videos that were produced for the Native Voices Exhibit, and we screened several *nDigiStories* that were “hot out of the oven” (off the computer). Several of the storytellers were in the audience and we acknowledged them for their hard work and for sharing their stories (Figure 4.10).



Figure 4.9. National Library of Medicine Traveling Exhibit – Native Voices. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 4.10. Spirit Lake *nDigiStorytellers*. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

Several of the stories shown were about suicide, and after the screening several tribal community members approached us to tell us their stories, and one of them asked us for help because she had lost her daughter to suicide. After that amazing second-to-last week in October, we returned to Michigan and prepared for the *Shki-Maawnjidwin* scheduled for November 2013.

On November 4, 2013, Brenda and I drove almost nine hours north to Skanee, Michigan following Arlene in *nDigiChidi* to meet Terri and Linda. Once we got off the highway and onto dirt roads, we found our way by visual memory, since we had been there before with R.D. in

August location scouting (looking for a place to have the workshop). We drove into the forest and found the Aurora Borealis sign and then saw all of the cabins (Figure 4.11). Three cabins sat side-by-side on the North side of the property. Linda and Arlene took the first cabin. It had the biggest kitchen and became the Nurturing Lodge where we took turns preparing and feeding everyone for lunch. Brenda and I took the middle cabin. It had the biggest living area and became the Creating Lodge, big enough to hold a digital storytelling workshop. The last cabin, and the most cozy of them all had the best view of the bay. Terri and Cassie (her dog) took this cabin. This cabin became the Singing Lodge, a special place where the ancestors helped us hold a space for the storytellers to give birth to their stories by recording their voice and singing songs. The view of the bay helped calm emotions when the voice recording was over. Linda finally decided to show up in the dark. She was so close, but took the wrong road and her cell phone signal went out, so we tried to time her arrival by the last text message that we received. A few of the gals drove to the turn off and found her and brought her back home to Aurora Borealis. We prepared everything that evening to be ready for the workshop the next morning (Figure 4.12). Building community relationships starts even before the workshop and is essential for creating “a container” that is real and trustworthy in the present.



Figure 4.11. Aurora Borealis. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 4.12. Preparing for the workshop. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 4.13. KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

Skanee *nDigiStorytelling* Workshop

The workshop was scheduled to start at eight o'clock in the morning. Most of the storytellers (Figure 4.13) showed up on time, and one came in later because she had to drop off her children at school, so we agreed to change the time to start everyday at eight-thirty to help accommodate her schedule. I loved Jerry Lee's old man truck. He parked it next to Arlene's cabin directly across from the biggest cabin on the property, the hunter's cabin. Several men, I'm assuming they were non-Native, rented the big cabin every year; therefore we did not have access to it for the workshop. I made sure to wear bright colors everyday because I forgot my safety vest at home. The hunters were such a permanent part of the landscape that they even installed their own satellite dish and buried cable in the ground leading to their cabin to watch movies. How ironic that these men were killing animals for the sport of it and building a fortress on the porch with their pile of beer cans, at the same time we were praying for the water, the earth, the animals, and all the world around us. We were making movies of survival and healing.

We started the week by walking to the water and making an offering and praying for the journey everybody was going to share with each other (Figure 4.14, Figure 4.15).



Figure 4.14. Walking to Huron Bay.
Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



Figure 4.15. Walking to Huron Bay.
Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

The storytellers gave us permission to video and audio record the digital storytelling process. We opted not to videotape the story circle where everyone shares his or her personal story for the first time. That is a sacred circle, a circle of trust that has to be earned; trust doesn't just happen because it is a circle. As a participant in the circle, it is also about sensing what people need in the circle. What is said in the circle stays in the circle. The storyteller will decide what part of their story will become an *nDigiStory*.

Donnie used a construction company metaphor to describe how we were going to work together to accomplish the task of helping them make *nDigiStories*, and in that explanation he also told us how he felt comfortable with us:

I told that story [personal story] like I run a construction crew because I have to know some guys framing and some guys doing cement, for me and I am all over like that you know and it usually gets done when its suppose to get done. And I don't know if I did that yesterday but I had a lot of trust in you ladies because I could tell you guys walked the walk and we say that in our language as "niwaabakwe nishnaabezeek" you walk the spiritual way of the people and I can tell that and I was very comfortable.

As a facilitator, I had to wear so many hats during this workshop. At the same time I was co-facilitating the workshop, I was also videotaping the process, taking field notes, participating in debriefing meetings every night, making lunch and dinner when it was my turn, running after the storytellers with a camera helping them create media for their movies, teaching Arlene, Linda and Terri advanced digital storytelling techniques, recording voice narration, playing fetch with Cassie, and fixing technical difficulties. We had Internet at the cabins but sometimes it was too slow to download photos. Luckily, the owner of the Aurora Borealis cabins lived several hundred feet away from our cabins. Uncertain if she would let me in her house, I walked over, knocked on the door and asked permission to look at her Internet box. She let me in the house and escorted me up the stairs, at the same time, Brenda saw me through the window, wondering what the heck? I fixed the DSL box so the Internet signal would be stronger. When the Internet signal

became unbearable, the five of us gals (facilitators) took a thirty-minute drive to L'Anse to get an Internet signal at the coffee shop to download photos we needed for the next day.

I was amazed at the meals we conjured up; some were even gluten-free because Linda and I have a gluten-intolerance. Marty, one of our storytellers, teased us all week about, “Gluten this and gluten that.” He even brought it up as part of the introduction to his movie at the community screening on November 8, 2013. Each facilitator brought their own food and we managed to mix and match and prepare the most hearty and healthy meals that I have ever tasted at a workshop. Linda brought *Migizi* to the Creating Lodge, and Donnie, another storyteller, started singing a Female Veterans’ Eagle song (Figure 4.16). We not only helped the storytellers make a digital story, we shared prayers, laughter, food, tears, other stories of life, and happiness every step of the way (Figure 4.17). In our experience, this emerging research approach helps deepen the path to truth telling because it brings together body, mind and spirit holistically.



Figure 4.16. Ogichidaakwe song for Migizi and Linda. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.



Figure 4.17. Sharing good food. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.

Brenda will describe the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and the events that took place with the storytellers during the workshop as part of her dissertation. I will move on to the local screening that didn't take place because after everyone finished their movies they seemed

anxious to leave like they had to hurry and head out to a sporting event. This is when Donnie ran back into the Creating Lodge and gifted us each with an Eagle feather for the work we were doing and then he left. Arlene describes that action as a moment of growth for Donnie: “It’s like all that, he [Donnie] shared about how he treated women and it shows him today, he honored women with a feather.”

I described how Donnie gave us Eagle feathers in chapter one because it is important to underscore the natural development of respect and trust which is core to a positive outcome with *nDigiStorytelling*.

Nobody premiered his or her movie on the big screen for the local screening except Jerry Lee. Jerry Lee had left before everyone else because he had a family emergency, but he came back to the Creating Lodge several hours later. The projector was still setup so we invited him to premiere his movie for us (co-facilitators). We asked him if he would like to introduce his movie and if we could videotape, and he agreed. He was unable to attend the community screening scheduled for the next day at the *Ojibwa* Casino, so it was a blessing that he came back. We wanted him to experience introducing and sharing his movie for the first time. As part of his introduction, Jerry Lee explained how he put his guard down after he met us:

I’ve known three [Linda, Arlene, Terri] of you before, you know, for years. From the start, right from the beginning when I met Brenda and Carmella there was a certain calmness and easiness, I put my guard down then. I didn’t need that fence up around me anymore. As soon as I met you, as soon as I looked at you when I walked in this door. Ah, their good people. Cause, I can feel, I can sense. I sleep with one eye open around some people. But, you guys, no, everything was let go.

We had changed the date for the pilot study previously and Jerry Lee said he was disappointed because he had been excited to make a digital story but he was also anxious because he wasn’t familiar with the process. He waited patiently for us to bring digital storytelling to the KBIC and when the time came, he was surprised with the outcome. He made

this statement about how professional he thought the process was: “It wasn’t what I thought it was going to be; to me this was professional. I thought it would be something with a handheld video thing and you would just sit around and say, ‘Here tell us your story.’”

Before a digital story gets screened at the workshop screening, we give the storyteller an *nDigiBand* for the hard work they put into the process of making a digital story and for becoming a new member of our *nDigiFamily* (Figure 4.18). Jerry thought it was unique to the digital storytelling process. We told him, he was officially part of our *nDigiFamily* and our *nDigiBrother*. What caught my throat was when he said: “Carmella, little sister.”



Figure 4.18. *nDigiBands*. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

We (co-facilitators) cleaned up after the workshop was over, packed the equipment to prepare for the *nDigiFest*, ate dinner and then we had to do post-production (crop photos, fix music and credits, export movie files) on the digital stories to make sure everything was ready for the community screening. We all stayed up extremely late; Linda, Terri, Arlene, and Brenda went to bed at two in the morning and I stayed up until 4:30.

Pilot Study Community Screening (*nDigiFest*)

The *nDigiFest* was scheduled to start at two o’clock in the afternoon at the *Ojibwa* Casino in the *Chippewa* Conference Room. Earlier in the week Terri created a flyer advertising the *nDigiFest*, which was passed around Baraga by hand.

Figure 4.19. *nDigiFest* Flyer. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



We loaded the equipment into *nDigiChidi*, and we all drove separately to Baraga. We had to drive through L'Anse and around the bay. We arrived at the casino and unloaded the equipment into the *Chippewa* Conference Room. The partition between the rooms had been taken down to expand the area into a bigger room. The room on the south side had permanent audio/visual equipment and a screen for presentations. We used their equipment to screen the movies, and we used our Bose sound system and wireless microphone for the presentation and introductions by the storytellers.

To my surprise, the Four Thunders Drum (ceremonial drum) was in the room and people were already arriving for the screening. I acknowledged the drum from a distance because I was not sure what the protocol was for standing near the drum. I was introduced to many relatives of the storytellers. The New Day Treatment Center encouraged several of its clients to attend the screening. We ordered lunch for everyone in the room from the casino hotel restaurant before the *nDigiFest* started. I ordered the whitefish plate. I love the fish from Michigan.

This reminded me of my white fish excursion the first time we drove to Michigan for a digital storytelling workshop in 2011 in Sault Ste. Marie. After the workshop, Brenda had to fly home for a family ceremony, which meant that I had to drive *nDigiChidi* by myself to Billings, Montana, for a digital storytelling workshop for the Montana Wyoming Tribal Leaders Council.

I had two days to get there, so I stopped on the rez and bought a whole smoked white fish from a local tribal vendor. Because it was peak tourist season, to save my life I couldn't find a hotel room on my way to Billings. I ended up driving to Minneapolis in the rain at three o'clock in the morning in order to find a hotel room to sleep for a few hours because I was scheduled to pick Brenda up at the Billings airport on the evening before the workshop. What a drive that I never want to do alone again! But the smoked white fish filled my belly for the entire trip. I was even stopped by police officers for speeding but they let me and my fish go without a ticket.

Back at the *Chippewa* Conference Room, after lunch the Four Thunders Drum sang several songs (prayers) before the screening. I learned about the Four Thunders Drum in the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop because many of the storytellers in the workshop sit at the drum. They included video clips for their *nDigiStories* from a video made several years ago about the Four Thunders Drum, narrated by Jim Williams. So when I walked into the *Chippewa* Conference Room, I was surprised to see the drum because I didn't know it was going to be there, and then Arlene walked up to the microphone and announced its presence: "We gave [them] Asema [ceremonial tobacco] yesterday for the drum to sing a song, so here's to [them], so [they] are going to do our opening for us. *Miigwech*."

Several men— many were our storytellers— were sitting at the drum and several women were standing behind the men singing too, including our eldest storyteller.

I remember, feeling the power and vibration of Donnie's voice when he sang two songs using the hand drum, one for his background music for his digital story, and two for Migizi during the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. It was a blessing to know that the songs were sending prayers to all the people that attended the community screening: their relatives, the digital stories, the tribe, and all that is seen and unseen.

After the last song everyone sat down, and Arlene walked up to the microphone again and welcomed everyone for coming:

Well, good afternoon everyone. Miigwech for coming out today and supporting our new digital storytellers, they completed their stories. It was an exciting week to work with all of them. You're in for a real treat. Miigwech for coming here. Miigwech for all those beautiful songs that bring us all together here. With that I'm going to introduce R.D. Most of you know him but he has a few words for all of us. Miigwech. [audience—Aho!]

R.D. walked up to the microphone, and introduced himself and the digital storytelling project and said:

I'm R.D. Curtis. I work with the outpatient department. There's just a couple of you that don't know me. The Inter-Tribal Council of Sault Ste. Marie, they have been doing this about a year and a half now. [Audience – Almost three.] Three? I'm way behind time. They did twelve so far from down state, tribal members from down there. They shared their story. They kept trying to get KB, I kept saying no. Finally, I said yeah. It wasn't hard to pick these people out. They've been in recovery for a while. I had a good feeling that they would be interested in doing it and sure enough they were. I want to acknowledge Terri Tavenner, where are you Terri? Oh there's Terri. She's from Inter-Tribal Council, and Arlene and Linda. They work with Inter-Tribal Council. I want to acknowledge Brenda and Carmella. They are the ones that helped put this together. Miigwech to the council members that showed up . . . Miigwech for coming guys.

I asked the digital storytellers if it was ok to videotape their introductions and they agreed earlier in the week. I stayed behind the camera. Brenda was running the audio/visual equipment. Terri was monitoring everything from the back of the room, and both Linda and Arlene were looking out for the community. Brenda walked up to the microphone to say a few words:

Yá'át'ééh! My name is Brenda Manuelito and I come from the Navajo Nation. Carmella Rodriguez and I started— we started doing this work in Indian Country about eight years ago. We travel at the request of communities and programs. It is a great honor to be here, in your beautiful community. I wanted to thank R.D. and the community members who came forward to do some digital storytelling. Chi Miigwech! Yá'át'ééh! [introduces herself in the Diné language.] We had a beautiful workshop, and it took us four days and we went on this journey. It was at this place called Aurora Borealis, in L'Anse. I've never seen any one of those. As we were driving, I've heard of Aurora Borealis, I was thinking, a lot of unique gases and things come together to create this beautiful thing in the sky. I was driving back today to come here, I thought about the beautiful people that came together and in those four days we created these beautiful recovery stories, stories of healing and hope. It was a wonderful journey that we took together, those seventeen

inches from our head to our heart. These stories are beautiful; they heal and help each one of us . . . Without further ado, we want to show the stories one after the other. This is the first screening. They [digital storytellers] wanted to come share with your community about the four-day journey. Introduce your movie. Roll it!

Roll It!

“*Roll It!*” is a term we encourage our *nDigiStorytellers* to say to indicate that it’s time to play their movie for the first time, either at the workshop screening or at a larger venue such as with a community screening. They gave me permission to videotape them as they introduced their *nDigiStories* and they gave me permission to share them with you. I encourage you to watch the videos so that you can get a sense for each storyteller and the stories they chose to tell using their own voice, in their own words. The stories were made with lots of emotions and good intentions. The storytellers strongly emphasized their desire to help one more person through the sharing of their stories. I ask you to have the same respect for the storytellers and their lives, so that we may all share in healing. I will introduce the storytellers through my memories of spending time with them during the workshop, through the screenings and just by sharing our lives together. The format for this performance is as follows: I list the name of their movie first, followed by my introduction about the storyteller; then comes the transcript for their introduction about themselves followed by the script from their *nDigiStory*. At the end I applaud each one and make appreciative comments for the courage it took to make and share these stories, and for the hope they give us. I also provide links to their video introductions and *nDigiStories*. The phrase “Play It!” is followed by a link to the video introduction, and the words “Roll It!” are followed by a link to the *nDigiStory*.

Turn off your cell phones please. *Ambe Bizindan Aadzokaan* (come and listen to story).

Chi Miigwech!

Donnie was the first one to introduce his movie at the *nDigiFest*, so let me introduce Donnie and his story, *Nii Wabakwe Omaa Akii*:

Nii Wabakwe Omaa Akii. When Donnie walked into the cabin on the first day of the digital storytelling workshop, he walked arm in arm escorting his older sister into the Creating Lodge. I admired him for the respect and gentleness he had for his sister. Linda brought Migizi (Eagle staff) to the workshop, and on the second day she brought her to the Creating Lodge. As she was dressing her for the day, Donnie saw Migizi and started singing an Ogichidaakwe song (Female Veterans' Eagle song). Both Linda and I paused to honor the song for Migizi and Linda started to tear up. The Ojibwa word Migizi means Eagle. Linda's Migizi is a female Eagle leader as a staff. Migizi accompanies her to powwows, ceremonies, community events, conferences and digital storytelling workshops. Migizi is the only female Eagle staff held by a Native female veteran in the United States. Linda shared a small story about Migizi:

Today, I take care of the Ogichidaakwe Migizi Staff for women veterans and all women. Thus far, she has over thirty feathers on her, which came to me from many people for many purposes. I have one for the women who have died serving our nation, e.g. Lori Piestewa (Hopi), and for those who suffer from PTSD, abuse of all forms, and addiction. I have one feather that represents the two-spirit women for they have suffered in ways I probably cannot imagine. I have feathers from a woman who has adopted six boys with FAS/FAE (Fetal Alcohol Syndrome/Fetal Alcohol Effects), so those feathers are for the children and the mothers who have brought them into this world. I have feathers to represent recovery, AA [Alcohol Anonymous] and the Red Road. There are two distinct feathers that hang in the back [of Migizi]; one represents our sense of profound wounding and the other one, a red feather that represents our process of healing.

It was an honor to have *Migizi* with us during the *Shki-Maawnjidwin*. Later in the workshop Donnie gave Linda that song to use in her digital story when she decides to make one in the future about how *Migizi* came to her. Donnie shares a teaching from one of his teachers about sharing our gifts that Creator has given us: "We are all given a gift on this Earth, and we don't selfishly hold it in. We give it away."

After Donnie recorded the song for Migizi and the background song for his digital story using his voice using a hand drum, I experienced the Singing Lodge moving as if it were breathing in and out from the vibrations that were emanating in the room. It was both spiritual and emotional for me. I was happy to know that I could feel the power of voice and the vibration of the drum. I had my own transformative moment. We took a lunch break and when I returned to the Singing Lodge for the next recording it was still vibrating. I sat with the vibrational energy for a little while before I called the next person to record their voice-over. Donnie, Linda, Migizi, the Drum, the Singing Lodge, the Ancestors and the Female Veteran Eagle's song, Chi Miigwech!

Donnie's nDigiStory introduction.



Media 4.1. Donnie's nDigiStory Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2013).

Donnie's *nDigiStory* introduction *Media 4.1 Donnie's nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/vWUv6DTKoV0>

The transcription of his introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo, Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

My name is Donnie Shalifoe, everybody knows me I think. The movie you are going to see is just a part of who we are. I would like to thank the others that did it with me. I don't think I could have done it if it wasn't for the two guys and two women I did it with, one being my sister. We bonded pretty heavily this week. It is just a small part of what formed us, shaped us, I believe. It's not our whole story, just a little part. I must have talked for one half hour. I wrote it down, 1800 words, they cut it to down to 300. So, they really cut it down. As Indian people we talk too much, anyway, I think. My story like I said is just a little bit of . . . and no I didn't wear the same clothes all week. [Audience laughter] They wouldn't let me go home and change. [Audience laughter] The ladies found out that's how I deal with being nervous, cracking a joke. I would like to thank these ladies too, they work hard and they are good at what they do. Aho, *Miigwech!*

[Audience shouts roll it! – audience – laughter]

Donnie's nDigiStory—Nii Wabakwe Omaa Akii.



Media 4.2. Donnie's nDigiStory (Donnie Shalifoe, 2013). Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix A for example.

Donnie's *nDigiStory Media 4.2 Donnie's nDigiStory* can be accessed online at

<http://youtu.be/B80ZsOZ7GNw>

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* is as follows:

As the youngest child of ten, I felt like an only child. My mom was a big influence with our culture. My dad tried to make me do everything right. I couldn't wait for my older brothers to come home from the service; they were my heroes. At first it was a happy arrival but then it turned into a war zone. The fighting woke me up, and I'd sit in my bed to block it out. Often they took me to the bar, and I stayed waiting in the car for them, watching them beat up other guys. I remember my brothers saying, "Come here boy, let me show you how to fight."

I did not drink when my mother was alive because I didn't want to disappoint her. When I was 16, my mother died . . . they gave me a Valium because I was so shocked and heartbroken. The little pill made me feel better. I smoked marijuana to soothe my pain then later started drinking. When I was out partying and cheating on my wife, I thought I was king.

I was eighteen when my first beautiful girl was born. That night I was celebrating, got drunk and almost crashed my brother's car. My handsome son was born 13 months later. I had a beautiful family. I tried to sober up several times for them, but couldn't. I spent time in jail for fighting and hurting others.

In 1990, my beautiful Indian baby girl was born. She was two when her mother left me; we divorced. I continued the pattern with women and tried to sober up in AA many times, but had trouble with the 'higher power thing.'

I was invited to a ceremony and while singing, I remembered dad told me I was supposed to sing and dance for the people. The drum, the singers, the women singing and the people in the community are my Higher Power. This was my spiritual awakening and *Anishinaabeg Bimadizi* is what I was supposed to do. Many spiritual gifts have come my way since I became sober. My three children and the six grandchildren are the greatest gifts the Creator has blessed me with.

I remember being in Lodge the day before Father’s Day. I could see in the Lodge as if it were daylight. I felt the woman spirit very strong all around me. Why? The next day my baby girl and her boyfriend came by. She gave me a father’s day card and wrote “congrats on being a grandpa.” I looked at her and in that moment it hit me. I said, “I know, it’s a girl, she came to me in lodge last night.”

I have been sober now for twelve years and this is the most beautiful time of my life, the relationships I have with my family is beyond belief. My siblings are all sober now; they are all my heroes. Today, I am dancing and singing for the people: they are my Higher Power.

Thank you Donnie for dancing and singing for the people and thank you for doing that for yourself. Let’s give Donnie a hand for his heartfelt story and for sharing it with us. Next in line to introduce her story is Carrie.

Starting within. Carrie is an amazing young woman who is using her commitment to life to help others in her community, especially her children, to find the beauty that resides in all of them. She is creative and artistic and made her digital story all by herself with very little guidance. She will carry the *nDigiSeed* to help her community learn digital storytelling. We had the privilege to celebrate her birthday with her during the digital storytelling workshop.

Carrie’s nDigiStory introduction.



*Media 4.3. Carrie’s nDigiStory Intro
(nDigiDreams, LLC, 2013).*

Carrie’s *nDigiStory* introduction *Media 4.3 Carrie’s nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/OLu9bAkLGfI>

The transcription of her introduction is as follows:

I’m Carrie Curtis Paquette. Most of you know me as Carrie Curtis. This week was quite the experience, the learning experience; I want to say we all got a little bit closer. We had a common goal to try to help our community by sharing a piece of ourselves. My video is about a very important time in my life, one of the most important times in my life, a spiritual experience that I had that changed my life forever. Thank you. Roll it!

[Audience laughter]

Carrie's nDigiStory—Starting within.



Media 4.4. Carrie's nDigiStory (Carrie Curtis Paquette, 2013). Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix A for example.

Carrie's nDigiStory Media 4.4 Carrie nDigiStory can be accessed online at

<http://youtu.be/U0pq7ylXK-k>

The transcription of her *nDigiStory* is as follows:

“In life, every ending is just a new beginning.”

My ancestors are people who had profound wisdom and great strength. Against all odds, they never gave up the struggle. They always held onto hope.

Unfortunately since birth, alcohol and drugs were not new to me. I was born a generational alcoholic/addict. My addiction began with alcohol and ended with me alone in a jail cell, an IV drug addict. My history of addiction was full of failed attempts. Recovery was not new to me. In that jail cell I reflected on my past and the person I had become. Nine treatment centers, numerous jail stays, and 4 beautiful children without a mother. I had no job, no car, and no education. My marriage was a wreck. I was hurting the people that meant the most to me. I was exhausted and broken. I felt worthless, hopeless, and lost. I was empty inside.

I started to pray like I had done many times before, and suddenly I stopped. I was filled with a mix of great suffering, heavy despair and deep pain. I began to cry. At that moment I gave up faith and condemned myself to die a junkie. I believed I was one of the constitutionally incapable people the program talks about, and I would never have happiness again. I would never achieve successful recovery.

How did my ancestors do it? I knew I came from a long line of survivors. I remembered that I had greatness within me too; I just needed to look inside. I began thinking about my children and how much I loved them. “How did my selfishness affect them? What would they DO without a mother?”

I started to pray again, I prayed to my ancestors. Help me! Help me find the strength inside. I prayed for direction and I surrendered my will. Right there and then I refused to let drugs and alcohol take my life.

I left that jail cell filled with hope, faith and love. I looked back, but I ain't going back! I began to grow and eventually bloom. I kept my faith, no matter how difficult things got,

and I became rigorously honest in every part of my life. Today, I am a recovering alcoholic/addict, but I am also so much more.

“And the day came when the risk to remain tight in a bud was more painful than the risk it took to blossom.”

She is such a courageous woman, thank you Carrie. Please give Carrie a hand for sharing such a strong personal message with us. We should all realize how precious life is, but without the journey how would we know how to appreciate it? Ok, it looks like Marty is next.

Crawling, walking . . . soaring. When I first met Marty I thought he was quiet and shy. Was I wrong! He is quite imaginative and humorous. His second job could be a stand-up comedian, but his first job is even better. He helps people work through their recovery. He learned that honesty probably saved his life. He soars as high as the Eagles in the sky, and it’s always a pleasure to hear his voice coming because I know somehow somehow he is going to make me smile.

Marty’s nDigiStory introduction.



*Media 4.5. Marty’s nDigiStory Intro
(nDigiDreams, LLC, 2013).*

Marty’s *nDigiStory* introduction *Media 4.5 Marty’s nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/kBc-0T6TSUc>

The transcription of Marty’s introduction is as follows:

Well, Monday, Tuesday, Wednesday, Thursday . . . We had a blast out there, me and Donnie and Jerry Lee and all of us. Sometimes me and Donnie and Jerry Lee would get going so much, they would have to tell us to be quiet. They’re trying to work over there; we’re all in the same room. Memories are coming back, and then we forget where we’re at sometimes, I guess. But, I really, I really appreciate the patience you ladies had with us because I don’t know, me and Donnie, I think we’re both the same when it comes to computers. I don’t like them; I resist them as much as I can. Don’t want them. It was so much work, you know, we start at eight o’clock, eight-thirty and work all day. We’re

supposed to be done at four-thirty or five; we're still there at six o'clock trying to get things done. Go home and you're so tired. Poor Janice has to take a nap in-between, [audience laughter]. For me and probably for all of us, working on your project, looking through the pictures and trying to match them up with what you are saying on your notes.

And me, then the computer doesn't work fast enough sometimes. And then it freezes up, and then your going along and you bump something and everything is gone. What happened? Three days and seven hours later, you're still not done, middle of the day. The computer is not working right, or I'm not working it right. I'm going home, I don't want to do this anymore. That was everyday. [Audience laughter] I went home, that's it. I'm done, that's it, I'm not doing it no more. [Marty turns and laughs] stupid computer.

The thing is, the last day when we were done; it was like wah [Crying out loud]. It was like being gone for a week. The people back at home, geez we miss you. Because usually I got to work, come home and that's it. Call them every now and then throughout the day, whatever they need, you know. But we go out to Skanee and do our thing and be out there all day long and before you know it, it's dark out and the drive home; deer running all over. And then they fed us. Geez, maybe we should bring something to eat the first day. But man, they made soup and spaghetti, and this and that, gluten-free this and gluten-free that. [Audience laughter] You got to think of a title for your story now; I was thinking Dances without gluten. [Audience laughter] I'm going out there, I was thinking is it a digital story or a movie? What are we doing? I can't remember what we're doing. We got to get actors together, awe, I don't care, if I cant' do it, can always say I can't do it and I'm done. I don't have to do nothing. It took four days to make a five-minute film or a five-minute story. It seems like it should be longer you know. Good thing we weren't doing it for an hour and a half, we'd be there a long time.

The story I got here, I remember the best I could, young times and through out my life, might be off here and there. I tried to fit it and piece it all together the best I could. Roll it. [Audience laughter]

Marty's nDigiStory—Crawling, walking . . . soaring.



Media 4.6. Marty's nDigiStory (Marty Curtis, 2013).
Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed
Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix A for example.

Marty's nDigiStory Media 4.6 *Marty's nDigiStory* can be accessed online at

<http://youtu.be/4dM1r27yrZY>

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* is as follows:

Grandma taught me how to pray and always fixed me up after hurting myself from playing outside. I saw an ambulance in the yard. It was the last time I saw her. Two years later, I remember pouring cereal, and I had to push all the beer bottles off the table to make room for my bowl. When grandma was here I never had to worry about things like that. I was only seven, and I felt an unsettling feeling inside. Something was wrong. I was the oldest, and mom said, "You have to look out for your younger brother and sisters." Who was going to look after me? Most if not all my relatives used alcohol.

My sister and I were sent to a Catholic boarding school. I felt lonely and the nuns were so mean to us. We came back home and Mom said, "This is Gary." I was confused, what happened to my dad?

Our house had burnt down so we had to live with my Aunt. My first experience with alcohol was when my cousin gave me a drink of vodka and nothing happened. He made me drink the rest, about a pint. I got sick and couldn't walk. I was worried I was going to get in trouble, but I didn't.

We moved back and forth between the rez and Milwaukee and between Milwaukee and the rez. In the city, because I was Indian, I got to participate in drumming and dancing and exhibitions for other schools. I started learning about my culture. I discovered that dancing took me away from all my worries and chaos, even if it was for only a moment.

I started playing basketball and drinking alcohol when I was eleven. Because of the Freedom of Religion Act of 1978, our culture was growing rapidly in our community. I danced and sang whenever I had a chance. Mom couldn't take care of us, so all of us kids had to go into a foster home. I stopped dancing.

I stayed in sports because it gave me a sense of accomplishment and self-worth. By the age of 16, I was a chronic drinker but stayed in school. Me, my brother, and sisters have been through foster homes and were now part of the heavy drinking on our rez.

By my early twenties, I'd been to treatment 4 times and had two kids. Because I had tried so many times to quit, I was convinced that my drinking was never going to stop. Black outs got worse. I made several trips to the hospital because of my drinking. Several times I looked over the bridge and thought about suicide. I didn't want to die but I didn't want to live either.

I woke up in jail again not knowing how I got there. Finally I surrendered to the disease. Feeling guilty, hopeless, scared, and alone for so long, I just gave up. I didn't worry about drinking or not drinking anymore. I didn't care what other people thought of me. I agreed with the judge to go to treatment even though I knew it wouldn't work. Instead of the sheriff dropping me at the treatment center, he dropped me off at the corner and said the judge isn't going to make me go to treatment. I was 27 years old, freezing, standing in the rain. . . . and I had a choice to make . . . a two and a half mile walk in the rain to the treatment center or half a block to the bar.

I chose to go to treatment. I would prove that it didn't work for me, and then I could sit at the bar with no guilt. The only way I could prove this was to follow everything by the

book. Secretly I prayed I would be wrong. 40 days later I was about to graduate and it hit me. Something happened along the way, something had changed. Why did I feel so free and confident? I realized that the one key ingredient that was missing in my life. . . . in anything I did, was honesty, which had nothing to do with anyone else, only me. I also realized if I practice honesty daily, all obstacles in life are possible to overcome.

The same day, I entered treatment I was invited to a sweat lodge and back into my culture. After twenty years it's hard to believe I graduated from high school, attended four plus years of college. I am a certified substance abuse counselor. I'm married and have four kids, two grandchildren, sing on the drum, and participate in ceremony and even go to church once in a while. I am dancing and singing again.

Thank you Marty! What a powerful story, I remember the place in your story when the police officer didn't make you go to treatment but dropped you off in what would be one of the most telling decisions in your life, and I'm glad you chose to walk half a mile in the freezing rain. Let's give Marty a hand for his bravery and for sharing his story. Next is Janice. I'm really glad she decided to come to the digital storytelling workshop and stay. She has helped so many of her relatives just by telling her story.

Grief's healing journey. Janice slowly walked into the cabin on her brother's arm. I could see the doubt in her face and the hesitation in her walk. Arlene really helped her make it through her story, but it was the family support in the workshop that kept her standing. After she finished her voice recording and her son sang a song for her digital story, she was beaming. She left the cabin running like a little girl, catching herself in the middle, realizing that she needed to slow down so she wouldn't fall and hurt herself. If somebody experienced healing that day, it was Janice.

Janice's nDigiStory introduction.



Media 4.7. Janice's nDigiStory Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2013).

Janice's *nDigiStory* introduction *Media 4.7 Janice's nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/cVTsXMmKjfM>

The transcription of her introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces herself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

Welcome everybody. We got together, I think, in August to meet. To see what we were going to do about this. I was asked to see if I could do my storytelling. The storytelling that I'm use to, is long, from my elders and ceremonies and stuff like that. I don't think I want to do that. But someone has always said, keep an open mind and so that's what I did. We attended another meeting and I said yes and eventually ended up with five of us. I still had my doubts. I was very, very afraid, fearful because my story is not pretty. My little brother was there; my brother is on the drum. And little Carrie, I've known you since you were a little girl. I know her grandma real good. She almost lives next door to me. And my children, one of my children couldn't be here today because she is sick with the flu, but her daughter's here and my granddaughter. I'm really glad that they're here. I tend to go towards family, someone that I know because I don't trust very well. I don't think people will like me once they know me inside. This little girl come from downstate and knew my sister for many, many years. I gravitated towards her. Nothing had to do with you girls. Cause I got to know you later and I let you in and I'm happy I did. It was quite an experience out there those four days. Arlene, being as small as she is took me under her wing. She protected me. She was great. From there I could go on. This film is going to be on grief, a healing journey.

I know people from New Day are here. Coming back from a tragedy and not wanting to live, I'm hoping with this . . . I'm going viral with this. That means everybody is going to get this film. If there is one person out there that I can save their life, from trying to do suicide, believe me I was there too. This film was worth it, and my life is worth it cause I know I was put on this Earth and saved to be this old and to be a part of someone else's life. I dedicate this film to my three living kids. They are my life.

I got another one attached to me over there; he's sitting here some place. He wasn't a part of this, oh, there he is. All my family, oh my God, my family, my ma and dad, oh my God, I just owe you lot—a lot and my friend, through my recovery when I was first in recovery is here too. Anyway, what do you call it? I was going to say roll call. [Audience laughter]

Janice's nDigiStory—Grief's healing journey.



Media 4.8. Janice's *nDigiStory* (Janice Shalifoe, 2013).
Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed
Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix A for example.

Janice's *nDigiStory Media 4.8* Janice's *nDigiStory* can be accessed online at
<http://youtu.be/aJr85Q-xfY4>

The transcription of her *nDigiStory* is as follows:

I am *Miigizi Miigwans* Kwe-Janice Shalifoe. I grew up with my mom and dad with 10 siblings in Bear Town. At the age of 6, I lost my Grandma Shalifoe, at the age of 8 I lost my third grade friend and at the age of 11 my Grandma Charlotte died tragically. I cried and cried and cried . . . especially for my Grandma Charlotte.

After I graduated from high school, I moved to numerous cities. I had my first child at the age of 21. I returned home. About a year later, I got married and had three more children. My life was nuts! More dishes to wash, more food to cook, kids getting sick and lots of chaos from drinking and fighting.

In 1966, a fire took the lives of my first three children with one survivor. I lived in a grief-dazed world for days and months and quit drinking for a couple of years. I felt I did not want to live anymore. During this time I found out I was pregnant with my daughter. I had a spiritual experience with her birth because I almost died. I was ready to go home, but the Spirits sent me back to take care of my baby. 16 months later I gave birth to my son. In honor of the children I lost, I gave their middle names—Jean, Louise and Paul—as my baby's first names.

Due to the tragedy I felt I did not deserve any more children and was not a very good mother at times. Trying to numb my grief I began using alcohol sporadically, gambling and eating compulsively. In 1978, I quit drinking. Al-Anon and Overeaters Anonymous gave me my first touch of hope again. In 1985, I ended my marriage of 23 years. Whatever I could get to, I would do it to address my grief, depression and compulsive over-eating.

In 2006, OAHOW became my extended family. They give me the courage, strength and hope to live my life without the overwhelming daily depression. I was set free and made living amends to my children so that I could be the mom I always dreamt of being. On my healing journey, I let go of my Catholicism to follow my traditional Native way of

life. I dance at powwows, attend ceremonies, feasts and celebrations. I also belong to the Four Thunders Drum as a woman singer.

Today, when depression or loss occurs, I just have to hear the songs of the Four Thunders Drum, pray to the Creator and work my OAHOW program to feel better.

Due to OAHOW and my traditional culture, I live a good life with a loving heart. I sing traditional songs, I dream and follow my intuitions, and I love to attend sacred ceremonies. *Chi Miigwech Gitchi Manido* for true abstinence in my life.

Today, my prayer is to live in peace and harmony with all my relatives, to seek my Creator and to live free of all addictions.

There was not a dry eye in the room after watching this story. *Chi Miigwech* Janice for sharing a very difficult part of your life with us. We are glad to have met you too and glad that we were there with you as this story unfolded. Now we are going to hear from Jerry Lee. He was the only one that screened his movie at the workshop screening because everybody else took off, and he had to tend to a family emergency but he came back. So we had the pleasure of having him all to ourselves. Unfortunately for us he could not make the community screening, but fortunate for the little person he helped that day.

Full circle. Jerry Lee reminds me of my foster brother I grew up with from my second foster home (Figure 4.20). He has such a gentle spirit, and when it comes to helping his community there are no limits. He brought a new insight into digital storytelling that I had not seen before, one of transcendence. He compared digital storytelling to the technique used with the Johari window, in which people have a better understanding of relationship with self and others. In his introduction I bring Brenda's voice into the conversation. Only the transcript for his introduction is available.

Jerry Lee's nDigiStory introduction.



Figure 4.20. Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory* Introduction. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

The transcription of his introduction is as follows:

Brenda: Jerry Lee this is your debut, two things – one, if you want to say something about the process and two, introduce your movie to the first audience.

Jerry Lee: I know it [digital storytelling workshop] was postponed a couple of times, I was kind of disappointed, kind of anxious because I didn't know what I was getting into. R.D. texted me, well the dates are this now, I said ok. So, I bide my time. Time came to head out to Skanee, MI. Aurora Borealis resort? [Everyone laughs]

Jerry Lee: It wasn't what I thought it (was) going to be; to me this was professional. I thought it would be something with a handheld video thing and you just sit around and say, "Here, tell us your story." I thought, there is not going to be no hardness to that. I said that's going to be rather easy, lengthy but easy. I was in for a pretty good surprise I guess, it wasn't a negative bad surprise. When I first came in and saw all these cars, and came through the door, I was looking around to see what's going on here, what did I get myself into. They introduced us to each other here; I've known three of you before, you know, for years. From the start, right from the beginning, when I met Brenda and Carmella, there was a certain calmness and easiness; I put my guard down then. I didn't need that fence up around me anymore. As soon as I met you, as soon as I looked at you when I walked in this door. Ah, they're good people. Cause, I can feel, I can sense. I sleep with one eye open around some people. But, you guys, no, everything was let go.

Jerry Lee: So that was the first part and I felt really good about that and then we started getting into it, you started telling us what we were going to do, which I really liked. It's not like you said, ok, cameras on, go. We were walked into this thing, everything we had to do, the process, step-by-step. I really liked that and you guys made it so easy.

Jerry Lee: That's probably the biggest thing I had, was, I'm going to have difficulty with turning this into a 3–5 minute thing, that's really thinking about too much. They want my life story from first drink to sobriety, in 5 minutes? I was thinking about that you know. R.D. goes, "yes I was too." [Laughter] But, I understand how it's done now. It's a very powerful message, I think, without even seeing it, just reliving these things. I didn't know that I was holding that in for all these years. It wasn't that I was miserable it's just that I never talked about (that) with anybody. Not even treatment. I was in treatment when we did the Johari window, and I did my 5th step and this process, or what I talked about this during that first relationship, that wasn't brought to the surface at all. I didn't want to go there, so I just closed the door, I said, seal her up, you don't have to worry about it again, that part is done. Going through this, hey, maybe you should have talked about it years ago. But, I felt I was pretty good in my life, but now there's kind of a maybe a little bit of heaviness there that I didn't relate to the relationship I had or the loss of it. But I think maybe that was it. I learned there are different degrees of grieving. Like I mentioned earlier, I didn't know that I grieved longer and harder for that relationship than when my mom and dad walked on. Through out this whole process you guys made it easy. I thought I was whole before, but I think I'm . . . the circle is really, really complete now. *Miigwech.*

Jerry Lee: Great coaching and mentoring, and the techno nerds. [Laughter]

Brenda: We have a gift for you, *nDigiStoryteller* leather bands that we give out. So, you might be somewhere and see one of these. You are part of our *nDigiFamily*. That's why we called you our *nDigiBrother*.

Jerry Lee: Unique to the process, huh? [Hugging] Carmella, little sister.

Jerry Lee's nDigiStory—Full circle.



Media 4.9. Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory* (Jerry Lee Curtis, 2013). Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix A for example.

Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory* Media 4.9 Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory* can be accessed online at

<http://youtu.be/IoIXxruKFk4>

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* is as follows:

I was blessed growing up with loving, caring parents in an alcohol-free home. I give thanks every day for how the Creator kept me from witnessing firsthand the evils and pitfalls associated with alcohol.

My first experience with alcohol came at age 14. Friends “introduced” me to a friend of theirs and within a couple of months their friend, Alcohol, became my new best friend.

Before I realized it, ALL of my goals and aspirations for high school went out the window.

For the next 20 years, I left a trail of guilt, shame, embarrassment and dysfunction. However, I remember my mom and dad nagging me about getting an education. My certificates and degree are the few positives in my early life. In 1984, I graduated from Haskell Indian Nations University.

I was a functional drunk. I could hold a job, so I moved east to Washington D.C. and worked for the BIA in the Records, Forestry and the Procurement Departments. I left the BIA and started truck driving. When I messed my leg up in a bar brawl and could no longer drive trucks, I moved back home to Michigan, had my leg repaired and never returned to DC. Losing a job I was passionate about was still not enough to put the bottle down.

In the years I had been away from home, my brothers and some family members had begun to sober up. They had homes, cars, and families, and I wanted that too. “Just put that beer down,” my brother told me. I didn’t.

A year later, my sister introduced me to a woman. For the first time in my life, I knew what love was about. Prior to this, all I wanted from women was companionship for weekends or one night stands.

I also found out how a relationship with a woman would interfere with my relationship with “my new best friend.” I started to get resentful and it wasn’t at the alcohol.

One night, she told me she needed to say something to me, and she would never say it again. She said, “Your drinking scares me!” The next morning, I woke up and she said, “Do you remember what I told you last night?” “Yeah, you said my drinking scares you.” “Anything else?” “No.” “Right! You passed out while we were talking.”

[One year later]

I came home on a Friday with \$900 in my pocket. I ended up in Swede’s Bar on Monday morning, hung over and broke. I looked in the mirror and saw nothing. I called Mike at New Day Treatment, and said, “I’m done, get me in there.” He told me to be there on Wednesday. I charged a case and went home for one last drunk. I popped one and stared at it for a long time. “What the heck.”

I dumped my best friend Alcohol, but harder than dumping the booze was losing my first real relationship. That was the roughest time. I kept thinking about that simple profound statement. Within a year of completing treatment, I got a Dear John letter. I felt like I’d been kicked to the curb.

How do I deal with this? I took a long ride.

[Driving Sequence]

My best decision was not picking it up again.

Today . . . I have come full circle. I am an administrator at New Day, the same treatment center where I started my recovery. I have a beautiful wife, 5 grown children, and 14 and three-quarters grandchildren. We provide a loving alcohol-free home for them. If I had never gotten sober, I would never have heard my granddaughter sing the White Eagle song. That’s the same first *Ojibwa* song I learned.

Thank you *nDigiBrother* for letting us travel on that journey with you and what a journey it was, following you around as you were walking and driving all over town in the dark but you

managed to find the light. Let's give Jerry Lee a big hand for being excited about digital storytelling and working patiently to complete an amazing story. *Chi Miigwech!*

After Jerry Lee's digital story was screened, Brenda asked the audience if anybody wanted to make a comment or had a question. Several people walked up to the microphone one at a time and expressed their gratitude for the stories, and they also talked about the connection between sobriety and the New Day Treatment Center. Here are a few comments they shared with us.

Female audience member: The stories are really, really heartfelt and I can see a lot of us that are really, really good . . . Eva Petoskey said, "You guys have got a lot of sober people in your community, in this area." It was kind of unbelievable the numbers. And I told her that treatment center has been there many, many years. And it affected a lot of people. I want to say *Chi Miigwech* to this community for the New Day Treatment Center. You have helped a lot of people. You have given back and I'll say for myself, I'm truly grateful for that. I know there are other ones too, where you guys have opened up your community to help a lot of people. *Chi Miigwech* KBIC.

Tribal council member: Good afternoon everybody. I just got to tell you, I really appreciated coming over here and checking these nDigiStories out. It's really encouraging to see what New Day treatment has done for this community over a few decades. It's been here for a long time. As I reflect back, it just touched me how many people New Day Treatment has helped. And when people say that this community is sober, it's because of all the hard work of those people that are working at New Day Treatment Center. I'm very grateful for those people, taking it upon themselves and passing that good life on to other people who want that good life, *Mino-Bimaadiziwn*. And (I) also wanted to share with you that after watching some of these stories, I didn't know some of the stories behind a number of most of all the people that sat here and told stories this afternoon. I was really touched by those stories. Every one of the stories did [bring tears to my eyes], that brought some emotions deep from in.

Female Elder: Being in a family, in this family has been the greatest gift that I've been given as a sister and to listen to them tell the sadness and what that hard life was about. If you don't have family, if you don't have their love, I always say, you don't have nothing. My family has been through death; I say the worst—murder—and we survived. As powerful as love has been if we didn't do that, I don't believe any of us would have made it through that. I attribute that to my mother and my dad. They taught us well; that's what it's all about.

Commitment and love for family and community has saved many lives and people continue to pass on the good life, *Mino-Bimaadiziwn*. Arlene closed the screening with a few parting words,

Boozhoo! [Introduces herself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

My English name is Arlene, being here brought back a lot of memories. I was here when I was 17 years old working on this rez and became a part of the Shalifoe family. We take care of Mert when she is in Traverse City and in our part of the country. So it was a lot of good memories. It was really a beautiful, beautiful week to be here, a lot of healing, a lot of laughter, a lot of tears, a lot of joking around, a lot of seriousness, a lot of sharing of a lot of sacred things that we carry around in our hearts. That's why I enjoy working with this team. It's work but it's fun. I was sitting there watching these; we've been working on them for days. At two o'clock this morning, we had to hurry up and get them done. And to see them, and actually see them on the screen is amazing, to see those pictures, and those words and the voices and the music actually come to life. We did ceremony before we started these everyday. I really think that those spirits take us where we need to be and help us to heal and to say those words we need to say to each other—and to those out there still hurting, so that when they watch the story, it's going to help them and pull them in, and say I want that. And they did; I can do it. And that's what I see in the beauty of these stories. It is our people telling our stories to each other to help one another. I want to say I was really honored to be up here in Indian Country and having fun and working with an awesome group of ladies that I have the utmost respect and love for. And honestly, thank you Janice, I'm still emotional, thank you for allowing me to walk with you.

The Four Thunders Drum closed the screening with a traveling song for everyone to take back with them on their journey. Our ATR co-researchers handed out a four-page survey with nineteen questions to the digital storytellers. An example of the survey is located in the Appendix B. The survey collected demographic background, technology, recovery and digital storytelling process information. We had a total of five digital storytellers, two females and three males; one between the ages of 30–39; one between the ages of 40–49; two between the ages of 50–59; and one over the age of 60. They were all from the same tribal community and were all blood relatives either maternally or paternally. The number of years of being in sobriety ranged from one year to over twenty. They have all shared their sobriety story within a group setting such as

with self-help groups and treatment centers. Most found it extremely important to share their personal story as a digital story and agreed that digital stories could effectively inform family, friends, and community. They plan to share their digital story with family, friends, community, co-workers, the *Anishinaabek* Healing Circle, at conferences, drug court, Facebook, and on YouTube. Everyone felt that making a digital story was extremely helpful with his/her own recovery and healing journey. They strongly suggested that they chose to share their movie to help other people who are struggling with recovery. One storyteller stated that she chose to share it to spread hope and healing.

ATR also handed out a one page survey to people that attended the community screening. Twenty out of fifty people returned the survey. An example of the survey is located in the Appendix C. Overall, most of the viewers indicated that watching the stories was an excellent or very good experience. Ninety percent indicated they learned something they will be able to use. Eight people are thinking about making a digital story. Twelve people said that watching the digital stories helped them to think about quitting alcohol or drug abuse. Listed below are a few of the written responses from the audience from the community screening surveys:

Real people with real stories.

Positive Native people that are sober.

The stories were put together very well, only wish they were longer.

It was all very eye-opening, a lot to think about.

Hearing the hope.

Listening to their struggles with addiction.

Miigwech to my family and community for sharing very powerful, their strength is amazing!

Has me thinking of my home alcoholic life.

It was candid, to the heart of addiction and recovery, and very well produced.

It was awesome!

They made a few suggestions for improvement:

Make more. [*nDigiStories*]

Keep showing cooperation between everyone in order to get sobriety!

Could be a little longer stories, I like it.

More comfortable tables / chairs.

Opening prayer.

Following the community screening, the *nDigiDreamers* (Arlene, Brenda, Carmella, Linda, Terri) headed to Java by the Bay in L'Anse, Michigan. The irony about the location of this coffee shop is that it used to be Swede's Bar, one of the bars in Jerry Lee's movie. We needed a lot of java after five days of digital storytelling. The *nDigiDreamers* purchased large cups of coffee and pastries and then headed to the back of the coffee shop where our tired bodies just melted into the cozy red couches. We had a post-*nDigiStorytelling* debrief one last time. Linda had another function to attend so she left from the screening as soon as it was over and did not join us at the coffee house. We reviewed all the surveys reading each one out loud to each other. We reflected on the times that had been most poignant during the workshop and the reactions of the digital storytellers and audience at the community screening. The *Chippewa* Conference Room was filled with anticipation and emotion at the screening. About fifty people were in attendance and many were related to the storytellers. There was not a dry eye in the room most of the time. Relatives ran out of the room at times just to catch their breath while watching the stories. Our ATR co-researchers were watching over the audience and storytellers. They provided comfort and support to several people during the screening. Those that ran out returned

to the room because they didn't want to miss any of the movies. We heard the audience react to several of the stories like the time the rose opened at the end of Carrie's movie or the butterfly flying around in Janice's story. We discussed the liberation expressed from both of Janice and Carrie as they watched their movie on the big screen. After we were finished debriefing, we headed back to the cabins.

ATR reserved the cabins for an extra day because they knew how exhausting the process was going to be. Brenda and I had a long drive back to Thief River Falls, Minnesota, so sleep was mandatory. Once we got to Thief River Falls, we planned a trip back to the *Cankdeska Cikana* Community College to have a follow up gathering with the digital storytellers who made stories in October 2013. Then we drove to Minneapolis to fly to Bethesda, MD because we were asked to present on digital storytelling for the National Institutes of Health's National Native American Heritage month. We shared the stage with Dr. Ted Mala, MD, MPH, South Central Foundation's director of traditional healing and tribal relations. We screened several stories including Jerry Lee's from the *Shki-Maawnjidwin*. Before we screened the digital stories, even though we had prior release to show the stories, we contacted the storytellers and asked permission to show them at the presentation. The Lipsett Auditorium was filled with about 125 people, and when we first walked in, strangely enough, they were playing Peyote music. Those are songs that are sung during a Native American Church ceremony. Brenda and I turned to each other and said, "All is good." The audience in the Lipsett Auditorium reacted the same way that I have seen other viewers react to Jerry Lee's movie. It seemed, as they were all thinking, "don't do it." I know this because I have talked to several people about his movie after they watched it. I still react the same, and I've seen it a dozen times. We told the audience that the ATR program in Michigan made digital storytelling a service code. They asked the question about

evidence-based practice. That is when Brenda talked about the honor of receiving an Eagle feather and it represented evidence from the tribal community.

In summary, the storytellers who created *nDigiStories* were impressed with the outcome of their digital stories. Across the board, their original intent was to help one more person struggling with addictions by sharing their digital stories. The response of the people who attended the community screening— exhibited by their reactions as they watched the digital stories and the information on the surveys— indicated on an individual and community level, that *nDigiStorytelling* could be a valuable resource for hope and healing for recovery with this community. Originally we considered doing research with two distinct communities in Michigan, but because of the interest in making more stories from the surveys, we decided to follow the seed that we planted collaboratively. In January 2014, we had a conference call with our ATR co-researchers, Jerry Lee and R.D. Having a second workshop in the same community had enormous benefits compared to starting all over again with different individuals and a different community. We had the opportunity to ask the question, “What did we learn from this experience, and how do we build upon that knowledge and wisdom for the second workshop?” On two follow-up phone calls, we asked Jerry Lee and R.D. about the pulse of the community after the screening. They both said that the community was excited, and they personally could see how the stories could be used as an educational tool with their treatment center and recovery programs. Jerry Lee said the digital stories were a testament because for the first time people opened up about things that family or the community did not know. R.D. had already started a list of people that might participate in the second workshop. We talked about potential dates and venues that would be appropriate for the workshop and community screening. Back in November, even before the community screening took place, Jerry Lee had mentioned that he

wished they could hold a second community screening at a larger venue in the fall. On the call, I reminded him about that idea and asked, if he was still interested in a larger *nDigiFest*. We could combine all the movies from the first workshop and any new movies from the second workshop for a longer showing for the community. He liked that idea but wanted to make sure the new digital stories would be screened first so the storytellers could enjoy the same excitement experienced by the first group. We decided to have an evening community screening one day after the workshop was scheduled to finish. They wanted a time that was feasible for families to attend, so we agreed on Friday evening at six o'clock. They also suggested using the gymnasium at the Keweenaw Bay *Ojibwa* Community College for the screening. It had all the chairs and tables they needed and it had a kitchen to cook a community dinner. It could easily hold one hundred people. Jerry Lee was worried about finding a projection screen. I assured them that we could bring everything else. We continued corresponding with everyone mainly by email, text and Facebook messaging. The *nDigiSeed* we planted at the *Shki-Maawnjidwin* (first gathering) grew into the *Ekwo-Niishing Maawnjidwin* (second gathering). The pilot study created an enormous amount of energy for the final study.



Figure 4.21. Pilot study *nDigiStorytellers* and workshop facilitators. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

The next chapter describes the *Ekwo-Niishing Maawnjidwin* (second gathering) of *nDigiStorytelling* with the same community with an emphasis on the “story-sharing” process as part of the final study. I reflect on moments during the “story-making” process because, similar to the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, I was also a facilitator for the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. The relationships that developed in the first gathering between the storytellers, community continued to grow with the second gathering including with the new storytellers. The workshop screening and community screening did not happen in a vacuum; they happened because of the *nDigiSeeds* that were planted and nurtured by everyone.

Ekwo-Niishing Maawnjidwin (Second Gathering)

Your power comes from the songs. (Ethel Wilson, Cowichan).

If you do not know any of the songs, ask an Elder to teach you. Get yourself a drum. When you sing a song and play the drum, you'll be surprised how your mind, body, and spirit will react. Everything becomes calm and joyful. Our bodies love the songs. The songs allow us to touch the hand of the Creator. When we sing and touch the Great Spirit's hand, he gives us power. Songs are another way to pray (Whitehawk, 2014, Women of Wellbriety Facebook).

In the fourth chapter, we joined the first group of storytellers from the pilot study at a community screening to listen to their *nDigiStory* introductions and learn about how they plan to share their stories.

In this chapter, we will join the first set of storytellers from the pilot study and the second set from the final study to learn about how the sharing of *nDigiStories* had an influence on the storytellers and people that watched their movies.

Nmebine Giizis (Sucker Moon/May)

The Friday night community screening or *nDigiFest* (Film Festival) came to a close around nine-thirty in the evening at the *Keeweenaw Bay Ojibwa* Tribal Community College in Baraga, Michigan on May 9, 2014. The men sitting on the Four Thunders Drum waited for the women to gather around the drum including women from KBIC and the four of us, *nDigiStorytelling* co-facilitators, before they sang the last song of the evening, the *AIM Song*. That song remains a symbol of survival and has been sung at many protests since the 1970s.

Arlene, our ATR co-researcher expressed these words about the men at the drum:

The men sit at the drum and sing, the women stand behind them, even though they are strong [women]. The men are being the leaders in that community. They are really taking care of their women because it's in our teachings that women are sacred and strong. The women are respecting the men. The men are helping and are healthy. They take the drum out for everything.

Two nights prior to the *nDigiFest*, relatives of our storytellers invited us to a fish dinner in their home. The men in our *nDigiStorytelling* workshop are avid fisherman and luckily it was trout season. They stayed out until three in the morning spearfishing to catch us fish. They waited for us to finish our digital storytelling day, which was around eight o'clock in the evening. Two storytellers in different automobiles met us at the casino hotel and escorted us to dinner, one driving in the front of us and one driving behind us, to make sure we didn't get lost. We didn't have far to go— less than five miles on a straight road, one turn right and one turn left. Simple right? But yet they felt compelled to escort us. We arrived and met many family members of our storytellers all at once— children, spouses, and even grand children. Sitting on the counter were two large trout that had been grilled to perfection. We prayed before sharing our dinner and since we were the invited guests, we were encouraged to eat first. We enjoyed good food and conversations with everyone. The trout and homemade mint tea was fabulous and we were even given dried tea as a parting gift. After dinner our storytellers called for the Four Thunders Drum. They put it in the middle of the living room. I was so excited to be sitting within several feet of the drum. I felt honored and respected by this gesture of sharing. I imagined how many seen and unseen that have heard this drum and the number of times it has helped someone. I met the drum from a distance at the first *nDigiFest* in November 2013. In-between the songs, the men took time to teach us about the songs. The men gave us permission to videotape and take pictures of the drum. The storytellers made use of the pictures and video the next day during the editing phase of the digital storytelling workshop. Our co-facilitator from New Mexico, Clara, was so honored about how men in this community respect women. Listen to her impression:

I was just so impressed with the drum, with the fact that the men cooked for us, and drummed for us, and explained the songs to us. To me, that is such an honor where we come from. To have men treat you with that respect. And for them to just welcome us so

easily into their hearts and share their love of this life is purely, purely a spiritual experience and I'm so thankful.

Being invited to dinner and being invited to stand by the drum at the community screening was an honor. I walked over to the drum with my video camera in hand only because I had asked permission to videotape before the *nDigiFest* began. I set the camera and tripod on one side and walked to the other side because I did not want to witness the experience behind the lens, but instead I wanted to participate in the experience. As the men started singing the *AIM Song*, I experienced coming home.

Coming Home

*The time had come for my vision,
the vision of the drum,
to reveal itself.
To show a face and have a place.
for me with it.
I allowed my two feet to sink into the floor.
My ears, my heart and my spirit listened intently.
I closed my eyes, opened my mouth,
and I began to sing.
I could feel again! I could feel again!
I touched the hand of the Creator.
I felt the power of the men's voices pull mine.
As our voices swirled together, in that moment,
I knew the healing power of the
Four Thunders Drum (C'Rodrigo, 2014).*

It had been a very long evening that started as early as six o'clock. This was the second community screening that was scheduled with KBIC. It was scheduled to start on the dot, at six, but Clara, Linda, and I didn't get to the college until five minutes before six o'clock. Originally,

I set aside two hours to set up and test the screening equipment. Over the years, I have learned that you test your equipment before you pack it and then again before you use it. As a video producer, it is my job to think of everything that could go wrong and have a plausible solution for a successful outcome. We couldn't get to the screening any earlier because Brenda and I were helping two of our storytellers finish their digital stories. One of them became ill before he could finish his movie and the other one decided to make two digital stories, both extremely important stories. Four o'clock passed and minute-by-minute the clock kept ticking. Clara and Linda returned from the rez tour scheduled by two of our other storytellers. Unfortunately, Brenda and I could not make it, but we appreciated the good time had by the others. They saw many wonders of the world, roaring rivers, icebergs floating on Lake Superior and even an Elvis impersonator. When they returned, Linda helped prepare the gift cards and Clara helped me load *nDigiChidi* with the equipment for the film festival. When we were done, all three of us jumped in the van and drove all the way to the tribal community college, several hundred feet away. Brenda and I, along with two storytellers, had previously scouted the screening location the day before to check the space and electrical requirements. We met several tribal community members in passing, and they addressed us as the "digital storytelling gals."

It was affirming to know that digital storytelling was present in the minds of the community. It is my recommendation to always scout the location prior to a community screening. This will help the screening run much smoother. As soon as the three of us arrived on the scene, our storytellers ran outside and helped us carry the equipment into the gymnasium. As I grabbed the last microphone stand and closed the hatch door to the van, I turned around and saw our eldest storyteller being dropped off at the door. She participated in the November 2010 *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. With equipment in hand, I ran over to her side and gave her the

biggest hug. It was a blessing to see her again. She couldn't make the gathering we had on May 4, 2014 with the other November storytellers. I wasn't sure if she was going to make the screening either. I told her, "I'm so happy to see you, thank you for coming." I gave her a gift bag I had been holding for almost a week. It contained a 3.53 oz. bottle of Mount Hagen Organic Instant Coffee, two organic sweet potatoes and one pound of blue corn kernels for homemade stew.

After our hug, I walked into the gymnasium and it was packed with about seventy-five people patiently waiting in their chairs to watch digital stories. Behind the chairs were tables filled with people waiting to eat, and behind them, sat the Four Thunders Drum. This experience was shaping up to be quite different from the community screening we gave in Washington State in association with Antioch University in Seattle.

We had scheduled that screening in January of 2012 to coincide with the Antioch PhD in Leadership and Change residency in Seattle so that students and faculty could also attend the screening. It was held at the Duwamish Longhouse and Cultural Center and their staff helped us advertise to the local tribal community. Seattle was hit with a heavy snowstorm that year, and we had to cancel the screening. Brenda and I have worked extensively in Washington State giving digital storytelling workshops. We heard through the moccasin telegraph that the tribal community was disappointed that the event had to be cancelled; so because the work we do across Indian Country is so important to us, we rescheduled for March. Two months later, we were back on a plane flying from the Southwest back to Seattle. Unfortunately, members of our Antioch cohort and faculty could not be in town to attend the screening. I took a head count thirty-minutes before show time and I only saw twenty people sitting on the cedar benches. Ten minutes before the screening, I looked again and the house was packed with over one hundred

people. The average attendance of an *nDigiFest* held in the past has been about seventy-five people of all ages. At the longhouse in Seattle, I was setup one hour before the screening. But that did not happen in Michigan, oh no!

It was nearly six o'clock, and I was standing with all the unpacked equipment in the front of the room looking directly into the eyes of a hungry crowd. I gathered the *nDigiDreamers* (co-facilitators) along with several storytellers and we set up the equipment while our guests were invited to eat a wonderful dinner that was prepared by the wife of one of our digital storytellers. The Four Thunders Drum had already played several songs permeating the room with prayer. I was so nervous and Linda, one of our ATR co-researchers pulled us into a circle. She reminded us that the evening was, as it, was supposed to be. She is an elder and brought wisdom and calmness to the circle, so I followed her lead. I asked the coordinator's permission to film the event. He checked with several people and said it was ok. I didn't have time to eat, but I asked the cook to save me a bowl of stew. She made two of them, one with blue corn and venison, and the other stew was made with hominy and ham hocks. Believe me, I thought about the blue corn stew all night long. Brenda walked into the gymnasium with the last story on a jump drive and as I was loading it onto the computer, I had a flashback about the two thousand miles we traveled in order to have the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and community screening. We drove straight through and passed the 45th parallel north on the evening of the second day of driving. We have passed the 45th many times, and from a latitudinal perspective, time seems to stop so far north (Figure 5.1). The 45th parallel north is the halfway point between the Equator and the North Pole. Just like Linda said, the evening was, as it, was supposed to be. Even though we were late setting up for the film festival, we were all connected by a thread in time, similar to how the 45th parallel is the halfway point between the Equator and the North Pole.

*Figure 5.1. 45th Parallel.
Reprinted with permission of
nDigiDreams.*



45th Parallel

*Grandfather Sun wakes me in the morning
by saying boozhoo, boozhoo!
He stays up past his bedtime and inspires me to stay up too.
Standing at the 45th, in an instant,
I am connected to the rest of the world by the angle of the sun,
similar to the way
Indigenous Peoples are connected
by the beat of the drum (C’Rodrigo, 2014).*

Flashing back to the week before the screening, Brenda and I had a gathering with our ATR co-researchers, Eva, Linda, Arlene, and Terri in Peshawbestown, Michigan (Figure 5.1). We started with a ceremony and prayers. Then we discussed the May 2014 *nDigiStorytelling* workshop and *nDigiFest*. Collectively, we also continued working on a video that visually, artistically and informatively describes the process of *nDigiStorytelling* from the “story-making” to the “story-sharing,” based on the real experiences of the storytellers. We call it the *nDigiStorytelling* Visual Logic Model. It was completed in September 2014 and clips from the ATR *nDigiStorytelling* workshops were included to illustrate the outcomes of digital storytelling.

Figure 5.2. ATR and *nDigiDreams* collaborators. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.



After Brenda and I finished our meetings with our co-researchers, we picked up Clara, who is from Laguna Pueblo, New Mexico, at the Traverse City, Michigan, airport so she could help us co-facilitate the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. We helped her make her first digital story in April 2010. The next day we packed *nDigiChidi* and headed North to KBIC, but first we picked up our Facebook Grandma, Linda, in Traverse City. She is also one of our ATR co-researchers. We loaded her suitcases into *nDigiChidi*, drove off and then we had to turn back. We realized we had forgotten something very important on our trip: Linda's Elvis music CDs.

One should never leave home without Elvis. But, in reality we really did forget someone who is important to all of us, Migizi. I had to apologize to Linda and Migizi because we didn't make enough room for her. Migizi was at the first workshop in November 2013 and she should have been at the second one in May 2014. In the first workshop, she stood in the Creating Lodge watching over all of us and I know she was watching over us from Traverse City. I'm sorry Linda. I'm sorry Migizi. I want to share another small story that Linda wrote about Migizi because I think it is important for setting the spiritual context of this final study:

In November 2013, I brought Migizi to the KBIC *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. She watched over us as we worked and her presence was clearly felt in ways that is not easy to explain. She is Sacred; she is not 'just' an eagle to display; she has a job to do and she does that with her healing presence. It is hard to describe but as I've been told by many people over the past two years, the healing is real. Something happens 'within' when

people look at her. Often we do not speak of ‘spiritual’ matters while in the academic world but for us Native people, our spiritual ways is our foundation of life, how we have survived all these centuries. It remains first in our lives, and then the rest of life is based upon that strong foundation.

I want to take a minute of silence to honor the healing work of Linda and Migizi. [pause]

Thank you. As we continued driving North on highway 31 past Grand Traverse Bay and into Charlevoix, Linda told us about how, long ago, hundreds of canoes would drift ashore bringing tribal leaders from all over for great council meetings. She spoke of the story as if she could see the canoes still sitting there on the bay. After Charlevoix, Linda asked if we could stop by the Indian Hills Gallery. I said, “But of course.” *nDigiChidi* usually pulls off the road when she sees an Indian gallery or trading post. She also enjoys music and since Elvis was in the CD player, *nDigiChidi* danced and swayed all the way even over the Mackinac Bridge. We saw a beautiful rainbow over the water before we got to the small town of Manistique. We spent one night there before reaching our final destination.



Figure 5.3. Trippin’ with the Girls.
Reprinted with permission of
nDigiDreams.

In the morning we gathered for breakfast in the hotel breakfast area and Brenda panicked over the newscast that came over the television set. The local news station reported that icebergs, at least eight feet tall, had hit the shore, exploded over the highway crashing into homes on the other side of the bay near our final destination. Brenda thought the roads would be blocked, and we wouldn’t be able to hold our workshop and community screening. I have to admit, I was a bit

worried myself, but faithfully, I told everyone, “Don’t worry, the day is beautiful.” One half hour before we arrived at our final destination, an Eagle flew over us. Linda yelled out, “Stop the van.” We stopped and made a tobacco offering. It was a sign, the roads would be clear and life would be good.

We arrived safe and sound in Baraga, Michigan. Indeed, the icebergs came to shore about forty-five miles north of our location. The cold weather, the wind and the movement of water created optimal conditions for *Ice Mountains* and ice caves to form. In fact, Ken Scott, a local Suttons Bay photographer was able to publish a new book in time to be published and available the Summer of 2014, called *Ice Caves of Leelanau, A Visual Exploration by Ken Scott*. Nevertheless, we checked into the *Ojibwa* Casino Hotel and were given rooms upstairs, which was fine, but we had several cases of equipment that we needed for the workshop that weighed over sixty pounds each, and there was no elevator. I had to rebook our rooms downstairs and thank goodness graduation season was over. All the hotels in the area were completely booked a day before our arrival. We unpacked our luggage and prepared for the gathering we scheduled that same evening with the storytellers from the *Shki-Maawnjidwin* (First Gathering) or the November 2013 *nDigiStorytelling* workshop.

Theory of Truth

It had been exactly six months since the storytellers from the pilot study started the *nDigiStorytelling* process. We brought them together to learn how the “soul-wind” of their digital stories had traveled or how their stories had been shared since the November 2013 workshop and community screening. Three of the five digital storytellers arrived on time; one brought his spouse and friend; one arrived with his granddaughter and the fourth arrived late. The fifth storyteller had to attend a family function and did not join us. The coordinator from

KBIC for the *nDigiStorytelling* workshops also joined us. We greeted everyone with a hug and introduced our co-facilitator from New Mexico. Several of the storytellers were already familiar with Linda because they have known her since the early 1990s and she helped co-facilitate the first digital storytelling workshop in Skanee, Michigan. Everyone sat around the tables in the *Chippewa* Conference Room and we started talking and laughing immediately. We were excited to hear about their recent trip to Denver for the White Bison Wellbriety Gathering. As everyone was deep in conversation, I passed out gifts to the storytellers. We gave them each a package of blue corn kernels from the Southwest because we wanted to continue the theme of cooking together, but instead of making bread we decided on using the corn stew metaphor. We ordered dinner for everyone from the fabulous restaurant in the casino hotel. The restaurant notified us that dinner would take an hour to prepare because a very large group ordered a few minutes before us. We shrugged our shoulders and said, “Oh, ok” and just laughed. We moved to the other side of the room to join in a talking circle. One of our storytellers started the circle with a prayer and then we all sat down. I asked permission to audio-record our conversation and they all agreed. It had been six months since I had seen them and it was exciting to be in a circle with them again. I asked them two simple questions. “How did they share their *nDigiStories*? And, how did sharing their stories influence them and the people that watched their movies?” We spent an hour in the story circle reflecting on the journey of their *nDigiStories*. The conversation was audio-recorded and transcribed. Jerry Lee was the first one to speak about what he had experienced, and then the others followed.

Jerry Lee: Mine was uh . . . every now and then I still get somebody that will send me a, PM me, is that what they call it, a private message? [Laughter] and say hey that is pretty cool. I didn't know you guys were doing it [making digital stories]; I gave them the background on it. I tell them about you guys. For the most part there has been a few, some family members, my great nieces; ones that I really, really didn't think would maybe show interest; I hoped they would, they are the ones that call me and write me and

say hey, “That’s awesome unc, I didn’t know you went through that.” So that’s pretty cool in itself their; a couple friends from high school who saw it online and they said, “it’s amazing what you are doing now.” Just getting some accolades now and then from people just for coming out and telling your story; I didn’t know it could be done in that many minutes, 30, well . . . [Laughter] minutes. . . well I mean 3 days; it could have been a mini-series. I am glad you [Brenda, Carmella, Linda, Arlene, Terri] came through. The most powerful thing for me out of this was the healing that Janice got, and the years she had been holding that in there. And she just let it go. That’s the thing that impressed me the most, just for her and in that regard, I think that’s how it helps people.

Donnie: [Janice] Being my sister, I’ve seen it, lived it and seen it.

Jerry Lee: Very powerful. I can’t imagine that [what Janice went through]. Yeah, for me that was the most gratifying for me was to see the healing for her [Janice]. Letting it all go, come out.

Donnie: She is a strong force for me; anytime I need strength I go and talk to her.

Jerry Lee: I think just about everybody in the community does that really. [goes to talk to her] . . . she’s there for everybody. . . whether they know her or not.

Brenda: You guys were there [First presentation to introduce *nDigiStorytelling*] and I’m thinking back to when we were first in here [*Chippewa* Conference Room] and Janice had seen Arlene. “You know, I have a story I want to tell. I think it’s ready to be told.” and when she saw Arlene she says, “You’re going to help me with it.” Some people will say, “I know I’ve been needing to tell this story.” What is it do think that happened that made that healing? Was she ready or the story was ready; or because all of you guys were there supporting and opening your hearts?

Jerry Lee: It’s a little bit of all of that; mainly for me, I’ll ask when I’m doing my prayers in the morning and at night. If I am dealing with something or about to deal with something or maybe something I can’t put a thumb on, something in my past that I am trying to work on, I say, “Give me a signal . . . something to let me know that the way I am going is okay . . . if not get me on that road that will take me to what I am looking for here.” I think that is what . . . there was some kind of connection that she had, she felt good at the right time about doing this; that’s what I related to . . . she got that message from the Creator, “Okay, that is what you have been asking for . . . here it is,” that was the coming together and everybody being around her.

Donnie: I think it was, doing it with us because we are a family; I think that was a special connection; and Arlene just brings that out in people. [Laughter]

Carmella: Arlene is very special. One experience that I remember—we had just finished recording her [Janice] voice. Her son came all the way to Skanee to drum for her digital story and she was so excited. It had been lightly snowing and it was a little slippery on those decks and she came out of there [Singing Lodge] and she started running to the next

cabin and she stopped herself and she said, “Oh, I better be careful.” She realized that she was running [like a little girl], that’s how excited and happy she was after she did the voice recording and heard the drum . . . but that was a very special moment, to see her, she was so light, she was just happy, just happy.

The storytellers gave permission to the Access to Recovery Program, Sowing the Seeds Initiative to post the digital stories on their website. Several of the storytellers posted and re-posted them on Facebook.

Donnie: All the local people [tribal community members] flooded me with messages. They have actually seen me, us grow up around here and didn’t know we went thru all that. And they’d say, “Wow that took a lot of strength and courage to do all that.” One guy actually messaged me and said, “Wow that makes me proud to be sober. I have been sober for 5 ½ years and you are getting the respect that is due.” I didn’t know quite what he meant but I am humbled by that . . . Guys like you . . . I am just another guy . . . I just look at myself as grandpa [laughter].

Jerry Lee: A couple of non-Native high school friends of mine who I hadn’t talked to in years saw it on Facebook, “you are doing so good, you are doing so good.”

Brenda: Was there any comment that surprised you?

Jerry Lee: Yeah, Some guy from Florida, I went to school with him. I hadn’t talked to him in probably 30 years and he saw that. I am coming up this summer and we are going to hook up.

Marty: Not to the bar anymore . . . [laughter]

Jerry Lee: No, he is sober too! It was a good experience, all together. I am just amazed with what you guys did with a couple of minutes.

Jerry Lee: I told Carmella . . . about that scene when I walked over the footbridge and I had to go through the woods; I was totally gone from there. I was in a different time.

Carmella: You kind of took us [Terri and Carmella] out of the woods too. [laughter] That night I thought I was just going to take a picture of the truck and you in the truck and then you took off. I told Terri, got to go, we got to go. So we are following you and I’m videotaping you and it was almost like you were reliving that experience. You took us to every place you thought about, really deep places for you, especially over there near the water. You were trying to make that decision.

Jerry Lee: And at that store too [Liquor store]. When I was looking in that cooler, I was right there!

Carmella: What was that like for you, going back to that store?

Jerry Lee: Well any store, I had someone ask me in one of the groups I did about ten years ago. They were just starting and they were probably abstinent for about a month and another one went back in and said, "well, I have trouble going into that store and just walking by all those shelves, all the liquor, don't you have trouble too?" I said, "No." And he asked, "Why, what do you do?" I said, "Well, picture this, you go down the aisle with all this soap and home remedies and at the end is usually there's a section with rat poison or DCON." I said, "When you walk by that DCON do you ever think about ingesting it or eating it?" He goes, "No." I said, "Why?" He said, "That shit will kill you!" I said, "Well put that on alcohol now. That is how I treat that stuff and that is how I get by that stuff. It 's DCON to me; it's rat poison." So anyway I have no problem with that but going back and reconnecting to that feeling back then, there was no effort to that. As soon as I walked to that cooler and knew what it was there for . . . Whew! Wow! And then to grab that pop and cruise down to the beach . . . I was back there.

Linda: Arlene and I did a workshop in Mt. Pleasant for the MIEA. They asked us to come down and I showed your story and people in the audience had tears in their eyes. They were saying, "I was just hoping he wouldn't." They were on the edge of their seat. "No, don't!" Because when you brought that bag out, everyone was in suspense. It really gripped a lot of people, I think.

Jerry Lee: I thought about that too because I knew what the end result was.

Linda: But nobody else did and it really gripped a lot, I think.

Linda: We also showed Janice's story and there was a woman in the audience and she could not stop crying. It must have triggered something in her as well because of what Janice suffered through. It probably did. We had to hurry and get out of the room so we didn't really get a chance to talk to anybody that saw the stories. They are very powerful.

Jerry Lee: The main reason for doing it . . . is to help someone heal . . . give them courage.

Carmella: You bring up a very good point Linda and that is, how people connect to watching your stories. There are similarities that we have all experienced or we know of somebody who has experienced that. There is something going on for the person watching that story. How do we continue to build these stories and share these stories? There are many things these stories can do. I noticed it at the community screening [November 2013], people wanted to also talk about their stories. What was interesting to me was how New Day kept coming up when people stood up to talk, after they saw the stories. It was almost like there was a relationship between maybe the history of New Day and also the stories and the healing. There was a link that was happening between the two.

Donnie: Along those same lines, I think it was the second or third time I went to treatment, I was in Ashland, WI and the first time I was in group. I said I wasn't going to be compliant, and just pour my heart out. So, I started telling my story about my father and myself, [our] relationship and it was a circle like this in group. There was a guy sitting with a tight lip. My counselor said wait a minute, there is something happening over here. The guy was over there just sobbing and shaking and it turned out that guy was in treatment for two and half weeks and never said anything; so when I got there and said I could do nothing right with my father, it must have triggered something in him. It is powerful [sharing stories].

Linda: I think it is a spiritual connection, that's what it is, and Creator knows when it is the right time and the right person, to touch each one of us and he uses us in that way. Sometimes we don't even know, because we are doing our own thing and its actually helping someone else out there, we don't even know. We need that, it's that human touch we need with each other and that's what helps, that's what helps us.

Donnie: Exactly!

Carmella: Any one else? Carrie or Marty?

Carrie: Yeah, after I got my CDs [DVDs] the first people that I showed other than here [community screening] was my family and I think it really helped my relationships with my mom, my grandma and my sisters because I don't think that they realized the emotional war that was happening inside me at that time; so to tell my story and to put it in these pictures and all of this visual feeling. They were like "Wow," they could really understand. "We're so proud of you." I think they know you more. I think it was hard on them . . . me being a recovering IV drug addict. I think it was hard for them to know what that's like or understand it at all. Alcoholism, smoking pot was all real common in their era and to see me dealing with this, it was real hard for them and after having them see my video, I think it really helped them to really understand. And then Lots of people have come up to me on my street in our community and said, "I've seen your video, it's so awesome and I can't believe it." You can tell from the looks on their faces that they think and they said it takes a lot of strength to be able to do that. I had a guy tell me and I think this meant the most to me. He said, "I thought it was crazy when you were telling people that you were an addict, an IV drug addict . . . I thought it was nuts! I can't believe she's out there telling people that, oh my god!" It's crazy. [Laughter] . . . and then he said, "I know now, you're an inspiration to me. There's are a lot of people that won't say that this is what's going on inside" and the fact that I did, I told my story about it has been an inspiration to other people to be able to come up and tell me, "I need help and this is what is going on for me." So I think that was my purpose in making this story . . . to kind of give hope and to help people who have a similar problem and that it's ok to ask for help. You don't have to live with the shame and guilt. So when he said that I said, "Really!" [Smiling laugh] It was great and I didn't know I was doing that and I didn't know that was happening.

Jerry Lee: You now know the power of it.

Carrie: Yeah, people think it should be hidden away. I think a lot of people are suffering. That war, inside, that emotional tug-a-war.

Brenda: So Carrie you mentioned you told your mom this story but it was something about the visual . . . your voice and the emotion in your voice? What was it about that digital storytelling that made that shift? What do you think?

Carrie: I think it was the visual and me telling the story because they know it, they lived it with me, they watched it, but I don't think they really knew. I didn't like always just be, like this is what is going on inside of my head right now. It usually came out like crazy behaviors or like totally avoiding them all together or pretending I'm not doing this. For them to see it, it was the visual and you telling verbally how I was feeling during that time, with wanting to just give up, completely but then again, wanting to fight, to go on. Then it was a year and a half later, so for them to see where I'm at now and know how I felt then and to see how I committed to my recovery. I think it was the emotion and visuals and emotions in my voice and the story itself, that really impacted them.

Jerry Lee: What was your mom's response when she first saw it? Did she watch it with you?

Carrie: Yeah, we had a small little get together and it was like, "I want to show you something." And they said, "Oh, okay." And I said, "I made this." I was telling them all about it and I popped it in and everybody was quiet. I don't think they expected this but I was like, "Yup this is what is going to happen." I showed it and we all watched it and my mom said, "I am so proud of you" and my sisters. You could tell they understood because they all hugged me and they told me how proud they were of me and how it was a really good video. There was not much dialogue after that but it was the unsaid, I could tell and they could tell, it was meaningful.

Brenda: What was that like for you on your own path, to have that moment, we live through this, but when we write our story or put photos in it . . . how was that for your own self-healing or self-reflection when you were going through that, thinking back six months ago?

Carrie: It makes things clearer. I really hadn't thought about the exact moment and everything that happened all the time. But to sit down and actually go through the moment and think about a year and a half later . . . It did a lot for me. I re-felt the feelings and it made the experience a lot clearer, what was going on. It was therapeutic, actually! Now even still sometimes, seeing it . . . I still get teary-eyed. I still re-felt how I felt even then. It helps me grow every time I look at it. The video that I chose to make was one that I committed to recovery. It's my moment! The story I picked was my moment! It is important to me and now I will have it forever in a video!

Carmella: Have you showed it at New Day?

Carrie: ATR (Access to Recovery) has shown it.

R.D.: Yeah, we have this ATR class on Mondays and Wednesdays . . . and someone has been doing it and we do it every six weeks for the community. The community, they've seen it.

Carrie: And they love it [tribal community] because we are all community members and for them to see it, all of our stories like that . . . has meant a lot to them. Because I've had them say, "Wow, I can't believe, ATR." They identify with someone they see in the community all the time . . . it means something for them instead of someone from across the country who they really don't know . . . it hits home!

Carmella: So the bigger screening on Friday with all the movies, it is going to be exciting to bring more faces and people who can attend that and it will be really nice to have you guys in the dialogue.

Linda: Can you imagine? Even, if you are not there. You are planting seeds with people out there and I bet they are discussing it within themselves and they're starting to think "Wow" starting to help them look at their own lives and say, "You know what, What am I doing? What am I doing?"

Carmella: I was looking at Eduardo Duran's book called *Healing the Soul Wound*, and he mentioned the soul wound and also the soul healer. The story is in places where you don't even know where it is helping people; part of that is soul healing. That reminds me you (Donnie, Jerry Lee) need an extra copy of your DVDs.

Donnie: I gave mine away. The other day, just like you were saying . . . it brings me to tears again. I was listening to the audio, I didn't even have the video, I still have the audio and in the opening when my son is singing; it brings me right back.

Carmella: I have a question about the music. When you put your own music compared to others with a generic background [common – music soundtrack], how does putting your own song in it, make a difference?

Jerry Lee: The songs.

Donnie: Because we know what they are. Most of our songs are prayers, and are healing and are for the people. We are told to use those songs but to use them in the correct way. That is what I was taught.

Brenda: Donnie share some more about your story, how you shared it? Are there particular points in your story, like Carrie said she had some clarity? Was there anything like that in your story?

Donnie: My oldest daughter was still in Wisconsin. Since, she's moved back. She was in Wisconsin at that time, she seen it and she was just crazy proud and she said I didn't realize that was happening even though she seen me grow up drunk.

Carmella: Marty have you . . . [Shared your movie]

Marty: No, I haven't showed anyone my movie [laughter] . . . I was like these guys. . . . people would say, "I saw your movie," and I would say, "What movie? . . . It is invoking people to start talking. One thing that happened is, there is this guy I played against basketball in high school and we grew up together playing against each other and really had some good times. His wife, who is a tribal member and she goes, "I seen your story, wow, and she said here is what happened to us, what happened to my husband . . ." for some people alcohol is taboo and they don't want anyone to know about it and they'll take care of it. But she was telling me. . .she let it pour out. . .I didn't get a word in edgewise . . . for 20 minutes. . .and she said, "Yeah, you and my husband should have coffee." . . . Others would say, "Hey, I saw your story. . . ." and I forgot about it and they would start telling me, "And here is what happened with me. . . ." It is almost like they need to release it, so I would sit there and let them.

Donnie: That is cool, though maybe they needed someone they could relate to.

Marty: Yeah they got some healing out of it and they weren't even involved; I mean what we did was heal people out there without even knowing it.

Jerry Lee: Five work at New Day . . . if they get there or even if they don't get there so many think the problems they are having is unique to them like nobody else knows what I am going through, until they open up and realize how related we really are in terms of our addictions.

Donnie: You are not alone.

Linda: I still remember the first time I heard someone else and I couldn't say it out loud but inside I was saying, "Wow, me too!" I thought I was the only one who did this horrible stuff!

Jerry Lee: Or this happened to me too!

Linda: Yeah, oh my god. It is so freeing.

Carmella: Do you think digital storytelling could ignite the process? Like you are saying it is okay to talk about it. Like you were saying there is this war going on inside; [buzzing . . . oh it is the phone . . . Marty . . . I thought someone was doing some healing? The Medicine man next door? Linda . . . I thought it was the drum . . .] so it is providing an opportunity for people to feel to share their story and whatever they went back with, they took that with them and do you think that digital storytelling can help through that process . . . of helping people to come to that place or that center or continue to go thru healing and sobriety? Is it a tool that can be beneficial?

Jerry Lee: Yeah, it has already proven to be. It is there!

R.D. [new storyteller]: That is what I was thinking about to myself. Mine [digital story] for me is going to be like a 5th step. Me and Marty have known each other thru the 8th grade and we consumed a lot of beverages. [Laughter] . . . anyways after I saw his story I learned some stuff about him I never knew, . . . we didn't talk about that because we were so busy playing ball . . . yeah, it was an eye opener.

Marty: One thing that I was thinking about after it was over and you guys were gone a couple months down the road; after I was done and I thought, I wonder if we were able to . . . like for me I didn't know if it was appropriate to put in the traumatic stuff you went through and I thought maybe I shouldn't put stuff in that I grew up with and watched. I mean I grew up with so much stuff in Milwaukee that no kids should ever see like guns blood fights and all that . . . and for me I think I contribute that to just Native people being very resilient. For me, when I watched the movie and then I went home and showed it to some of my family members and I would always think man, if I looked at it as a third person, if I was to step back and look at it myself and look at me, I would say, "Wow, how the heck did you get through that stuff . . . how come you're not on medication?" I've heard it a lot of times, "You should be proud of where you come from" and back then I'd say yeah, yeah, I am. For me that's just the way I was. Thank God I grew up being a resilient kid. I grew up with all this stuff and I was able to move past it. Maybe I stuffed a lot of it down and maybe that's why I ended up drinking . . . there was so much stuff, I didn't talk about and put it in that movie and I don't know if I should have.

Linda: So many of us have been through so much and I think we, at least for me, numb out certain feelings.

Marty: It even invoked a lot of memories I forgot about. It brought up stuff I hadn't forgotten about.

Carrie: It was really freeing for me, to put Junkie on the screen . . . or that one graphic of the spoon and needle. I didn't know if I should put this up there. And I think I asked Janice, "Do you think this is too graphic? [Laughing] Because people are going to be like you know, what will people think?" "Holy!" To me, when I looked at it, [big sigh], she said, "That's it." And it was freeing; I was at peace with myself even more. I accepted myself more.

Jerry Lee: It is real!

Donnie: That took a lot of strength.

Tim [new storyteller]: I wrote up a quick draft and had my wife typing it up and it is something I did not tell her and she didn't know. Yeah, that is part of the healing, part is the whole world will know about it. You don't think about those things until, I was writing longhand and something sparked my mind and I'd write a note on the side, it was good.

Brenda: Why is it important to tell that story to be real or to be honest? Why does it make it more healing?

Marty: Here is my theory. Everybody in recovery for a number of years, it took being honest to get to that point. If you are still in recovery and telling the story, you're still in the mind frame, it's a life or death thing. When I finally sobered up, I had been to treatment four to five times and I didn't know what it meant to be honest. It didn't have anything to do with anybody else, that's what it took. It was stubbornness that made me be. It was my stubbornness and that is what kept me drunk. When I went to treatment it wasn't to stop drinking, it was to prove it didn't work, and that is what my story was about. If I go to treatment and do everything I was supposed to, I could drink in peace. Through them six weeks of treatment because I was trying to be perfect as far as the program told me you're suppose to be. I was apologizing to myself every other day—oh my gosh. Six weeks later, there was a light that went on, no nothing. Solutions and suggestions to questions I had all my life, all of the sudden were there. And that was because of being honest. And that is where I am at today and it is my theory, people got to be honest.

[Knock, knock . . . the door opens, you guys waiting for food?]

Group: For an hour. [Laughter]

Brenda: I remember when Linda made her story in 2011 and said, "I am used to telling my story." Was it the photos or the visual piece? What is it that makes it different, is it the digital storytelling? By having a group from the family it was a support . . . you are already honest and on healing path . . . was there now a 5th and a quarter and showing visuals and will reach people maybe in a different way?

Jerry Lee: I just wanted to share it. You feel so good when you've been in recovery; you've been sober. You wish you could bottle it. Living it is fine and trying to be the example is fine. A part of you just wants to share it. And I think this helps us . . . or helps me, this way.

Linda: I definitely think it was the visual; I lived through it also, I told my story a hundred times, but seeing the pictures when I was a little girl and what was going on. Seeing my mom and dad when they got married and remembering how they drank and all of that. Just seeing the pictures, the images we used throughout. If I didn't have a picture for it, we found it. Putting up their favorite drink and I thought, oh my God, wow! It just moves at a deeper level somehow and I've been sober, heck for a long time. [Laughter] Really long time! But it touched my spirit in such a deep way, and I think I even mentioned when we were going through it, dang I need a meeting [laughter].

Jerry Lee: You go back and see it; I know I did it when I poured the alcohol down the sink and then when I saw it on film I thought, "Wow, holy cow, I really wanted to quit," when I looked at it like a third party perspective.

Linda: When you see it at the end and we were working so hard and we were looking at the details, the words, the pictures, we could focus on all of that, but when I finally saw it up there on the screen that's when I started to break down. I started to cry . . . the finished product is what really . . . I just played it again a few days ago, because I was thinking of my grandma and it triggered me, oh, yea, I have my story [Digital story] . . . I put it out there [Facebook]. I have new people now who are commenting on it who hadn't seen it before.

Brenda: It's almost like you were saying, Jerry Lee, you bottled it up. I've heard people say, it takes a lot of energy to tell that story, but when you told it, it has such a beautiful message of surviving, being resilient and coming through all that. Then, you give it out in doses, you put it out on Facebook and again you put it out on Facebook. It's going to keep healing in that way, being that soul healer. Part of it is we are still connected to it, because it's our breath, our story, our voice, our song, our blood, sweat and tears when we are putting it together.

Our dinner finally arrived. I adjourned the circle to the square tables and everyone made their way back to eat where we continued our conversation with much laughter. Brenda left the group thinking about visual sovereignty before we broke for dinner. She explained it to them as the ability to tell your own story in your own way, retaining ownership and deciding how you want to share it, if at all. As people were opening their styrofoam boxes, she asked the group, "How do we use it [*nDigiStorytelling*] as Native nations?"

Several men at dinner attended the White Bison Wellbriety Conference in Denver, Colorado in April 2014, and they took the Four Thunders Drum with them. Jerry Lee mentioned that the Wellbriety group talked about how to reach out to more people. The founder of White Bison, Don Coyhis, touched on the number of Native Peoples that are registered in groups on Facebook, like Sober Indianz and said, "that is an ideal place if you have something to share." Sober Indianz has over 24,000 members. Several women in the group mentioned the Facebook group, Women of Wellbriety, with over 2,000 subscribers. Linda is a member, and the conversation we had together inspired her to load her digital story on both sites. I joined both groups on Facebook in May 2014 and when you join, you have to be validated. The person that

validated me for the Women of Wellbriety Facebook page happened to be a former digital storyteller that I helped in Denver, Colorado in 2010 and the person that I validated for the Sober Indianz Facebook page was a recent digital storyteller from a workshop that took place in Washington State in May 2014. What a connected world we live in! Imagine 24,000 digital stories playing on Sober Indianz.

The group talked about how sobriety is rippling through the tribal center, the new administration's priority is sobriety and the New Day Treatment center. I asked the group if they thought digital storytelling would be beneficial to their community and if they were interested in building it in their community. They were way ahead of us. They talked amongst themselves about the sustainability of digital storytelling in their community after the November workshop. The community is growing, and they are looking for ways to bring the community closer, and they think digital storytelling could help. R.D. was concerned about the four-day commitment, but I explained that when you have your own program you have the flexibility to work within the community constraints and can spread it out over weeks if needed. Jerry Lee compared the commitment of only four-days versus twenty years of drinking. Good point! Marty was convinced that once community members get involved in making a digital story, they will be inspired to finish because they can't wait to see the end result. Carrie felt that the stories are very motivating when you watch them and see the end result. Jerry Lee mentioned that other people in the community were interested in making a digital story but didn't know us that well so they opted out. This is a valid concern and having a digital storytelling program within the community could make it accessible and convenient to the needs of the community. We discussed the benefits of working with a group of people all making a digital story at the same time versus one person at a time. They were excited for the next set of storytellers to make their digital stories.

Everyone in the group agreed to show their digital stories at the community screening scheduled for Friday night. We ended our evening around nine o'clock, one hour past our scheduled end time. Jerry Lee's wife volunteered to make dinner for the evening *nDigiFest* after she convinced everyone to hand over his or her blue corn kernels. It was a long evening and I was inspired by the stories I heard. The *nDigiDreamers* (co-facilitators) prepared the room for the next day because we were using the same conference room to hold the four-day digital storytelling workshop.

***nDigiStorytelling* Final Study**

I helped Brenda facilitate the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop from May 5–8, 2014, and she helped me MC (master of ceremonies) the community screening on May 9, 2014 for the final study. Similar to the pilot study, Brenda will focus on the “story-making” process of the final study in her complementary dissertation and in this dissertation I will focus on the “story-sharing” process, which was described in the introduction as part of the *nDigiStorytelling* Four-Directions approach. I will share how the “soul-wind” of the story traveled and influenced people on its path. I introduce the storytellers and their *nDigiStories* as part of the local and community screening. I introduced the first five digital storytellers in the fourth chapter. They also participated in the community screening that was held on May 9, 2014, with the four new digital storytellers.

The second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop took place at the *Ojibwa* Casino in Baraga, Michigan and started on May 5, 2014. I was concerned that the workshop wouldn't provide the personal privacy and connection to land and water that the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop did at the Aurora Borealis cabins but instead, we were surrounded by clashing icebergs that created beautiful sounds orchestrated by the wind. The digital storytelling workshop ended on Thursday

afternoon, May 8th and included a local screening with the storytellers. We put healthy snacks on the table everyday for the storytellers and I made them coffee with my Keurig coffee pot. R.D. recruited five digital storytellers including himself. Unfortunately the only female participant became ill and could not participate, so we ended up with four healthy, vibrant, handsome, and outgoing men to make digital stories. We had lunch brought in everyday for the storytellers and facilitators from the casino hotel restaurant. Often we had the pleasure of extra guests including relatives and friends of the storytellers, previous storytellers and even the tribal president. We had one storyteller who made two digital stories so we ended up with five digital stories as part of the final study. All eight of us (four facilitators and four storytellers) finished making the *nDigiStories* (corn stew) together and it was time to share them at the workshop screening. The workshop screening is the point in the process where the “story-making” ends and the “story-sharing” begins. The stew is made by individual contributions by all the cooks in the kitchen, and this is metaphorically and literally the point in the process where all the cooks are ready to formally taste it together, in essence this is where Brenda handed me the ladle.

Tasting the Stew

We had the workshop screening in the same *Chippewa* Conference Room as the digital storytelling workshop. The other side of the room was reserved for a different group so they came knocking on the door asking to partition the big room in half. Our room became smaller and more intimate. Every storyteller was present except for one. He was ill and didn't attend the last day of the workshop for the final editing of his movie. We made special arrangements to help him finish his movie the next morning, the same day of the community screening. The youngest digital storyteller invited his wife to the screening. She had already previewed his movie on the computer before it was shared on the big screen and shed many tears. I asked

permission to videotape the local screening and all the storytellers agreed. Everyone was exhausted, anxious and couldn't wait to see the digital stories. Each storyteller personally introduced his movie before we played it. The room was full of emotions, laughter, tears and gratitude. They could not believe they had worked that hard for a three minute movie, but they were so proud of what they had accomplished using technology, and even more proud for their accomplishments in life. After each storyteller introduced his movie, I presented each one with a leather *nDigiBand*, a small gift we give them for engaging in the process of making a digital story and sharing their lives with us; then I gave each one of them a hug.

As facilitators, we didn't have to wear as many hats as we did when we did the first workshop in the Aurora Borealis cabins and we had a better Internet connection. The restaurant was excellent! The location was center to everything we needed. The pilot study guided the momentum we needed for the final study, and the first set of storytellers helped prepare the second set of storytellers. All the male storytellers sit at the Four Thunders Drum, so they already had a close bond with each other. The visitors that came during the lunch hour during the workshop provided additional support for the storytellers. During the workshop, the men (storytellers) did not spend a lot of time on their cell phones text messaging or on Facebook; in fact, they didn't even answer their phones when they rang. They put 100% of themselves into their projects. Tim was always punctual and all of them stayed until the end of day. On occasion, one or two had to leave to attend to a work or family function. One became ill on Thursday but we managed to catch him up on Friday. We had one that came in late a few times because he had been fishing until three in the morning, trying to catch us fish, so he was excused. We have given workshops in cabins, hotels, private homes and hogans. Every situation has a purpose and will be different, as Linda says, "It is, as it, is supposed to be."

Swing and Sway the *Anishinaabe* Way

After the workshop screening ended, we (co-facilitators) were so energized we had to call Eva (ATR co-researcher) and have a quick debrief about our experience with the digital storytellers and the tribal community. She is always so grounding (helps us remain calm and focused) for us.

We weren't sure if she would answer the call because it was late in the evening. Ring, ring, and ring . . . she finally answered, "Hey." [Pause] I said, "Hey." [We all laughed] The four of us on the other end of the phone could barely breathe. Eva asked, "Is everyone there, how's it going?"

Linda: Everyone is here. We want to debrief and we want to bring you into the circle.

We started giving Eva a play-by-play list of everything that had happened until Tim interrupted us. He asked us if we were still going to Wal-Mart with Jerry Lee. We were so excited that we forgot about Wal-Mart. Oops, we needed to go shopping for the *nDigiFest*. We told Tim we would be ready in thirty minutes. Eva asked if we were done with all the movies and we replied, "Sort of." We explained that one person was sick on the last day of the workshop and another storyteller made two movies, so that meant Brenda and I would forego the rez tour and live vicariously through Linda and Clara's experience with Jerry Lee and Tim, driving them around Baraga and the surrounding areas. I explained that we spent a lot of time in the story circle because the storytellers needed that amount of time to process their stories. This was the first time we had a 100% men in the story circle. They gave us a warm welcome and we laughed non-stop through out the workshop. I was amazed at the storyteller's interest to share their digital stories.

Carmella: The guys shared a lot of beautiful things with us. They felt safe and trusted us. They also gave Linda a very big complement. It was beneficial to have somebody here

that is part of the family, an *Anishinaabek* woman. She came in with a lot of knowledge, knowing who they are, knowing about the teachings, bright, humorous, and balanced everybody out. They just complemented us a lot. That was a beautiful thing they had to say, “You guys really helped us through this.” They were all interested in sharing their stories. All of them have expressed that they want to help at least one other person. Last night the storytellers and tribal community members honored us with a trout dinner and the Four Thunders Drum.

I’ll never forget, and just after we ended that beautiful evening of listening to the drum and eating trout, driving back to the casino hotel, the sky lit up with lighting flashes bolting across the evening sky, so powerful that they even blew out the power in L’Anse, across the bay. Next in line to talk to Eva was Brenda. She got on the line and talked about how the momentum for the final study started in the November at the last workshop and asked the question, “How do we document this?”

Brenda: We had an amazing time with this group. I was also thinking of the momentum we are building, in the first workshop. I can’t stop thinking about the very first time we came down, how warm that reception was, but also how there was a need, who are these ladies? What is digital storytelling again? We keep talking about our *nDigiDreams* Team. They are starting to call us *nDigiSisters*, giving us food and laughter and everything. I feel very much at home. I always wonder, “How do you even document any of this? Carmella and I were talking about this last night. There is no way anyone . . . would totally understand the context, the relationship, the trust, everything, the humor, the food, the family, the network, gift giving, everything that we’ve experienced. In the closing, when they were introducing (*nDigiStories*), these beautiful men, seeing them cry in the story circle, my father was like that. He was a very gentle, loving man, he would tear up every time he talked about his mom, I kept feeling like I was around these fathers, brothers and it was really warming. It all seems to me to go back to that drum, all of that, both of the workshops go back to that drum.

Because Tim referred to Clara, Brenda and myself as the *Desert Trio*, I told Eva and Linda that the two of them including Arlene and Terri were the *Aqua Girls*. We just all laughed again. It was Linda’s turn to give Eva her feedback about the week.

Linda: Well Eva, my dear friend, I’ll tell you; we have been on so many, many adventures. I’ll tell you, how can it get any better? I just don’t know, really, honest to God, we’ve gone through a lot, we’ve been through a lot, I’m so honored to be here with our relatives. When we were here in November, what the guys said the first night we were here, “The biggest impact that was made back then was Janice’s healing.” She’s an

Elder who carried a bucket of grief of 30 years or so, to see her laugh, smile, skip and run, try to run and she caught herself. “Oh my God, I’m running!” Oh my God, she was just so free, that rubbed off [on others] . . . These men, it was meant to be, it makes me appreciate men that are so good, so spiritual . . . So warm and yet we laughed, OMG did we laugh . . . We had so much fun . . . These guys had such a sense of humor . . . I forgot about being tired.

We invited Clara to jump in and share her thoughts.

Clara: I wanted to share [teary] how beautiful this community is, how it feels so good to go somewhere and automatically be accepted. I know that you have paved the way for that to happen, and I’m so thankful for all your knowledge and for bringing me here to experience this. I will take this back home to my family and to my community, and to continue to work on their behalf because I see the possibility here. I met some amazing tribal leaders, community members that are just outstanding in their roles. And it really gives me focus to go home and to continue our fight to bring that to our homes . . . I just can’t express how much I learn every time I’m with Brenda and Carmella, now Linda. And all the teachings I could never probably pay enough to teach me, because it’s beyond the books, it’s beyond life. It’s that spiritualness that we all carry, that we share. That we enjoy with each other, and how it relates to us as Indigenous people and how we need to keep that fight alive, no matter what.

Eva has a beautiful way of always bringing balance to any situation. She added a few words to our conversation:

Eva: Let me add something from way over here. I wasn’t able to go last time either. I kind of lament that. I always think, wow, I could be there. And I’m not. I can feel the joy, I can feel the excitement and the love . . . I can just imagine being there with the drum. I saw that [picture of us and the storytellers] on Facebook last night. Wow that is awesome Twenty-one stories I guess; just from this initiative that we’ve been working on right here, even a little more than that. How about that picture of life, people are healing in their own words, their own voice, their own music sometimes, their own pictures, what a beautiful picture of this time. How we are living in this time? What an amazing thing. It’s so much more than my box of pictures and yet it has that power. If you look back, think about the big picture of where people have come from and other people looking back at some point in time. I hope these stories will live like that. Not only now but across time that we could convey to our future generations what we were thinking and what we were praying about and how our prayers were answered, they were answered together. People came together and beautiful gift of telling that story. It’s just awesome. *Miigwech. Miigwech. Miigwech. Miigwech.* I was praying for you . . . I appreciate, thank you for involving me in your processing and sharing your joy and your stories.

Linda: Swing and sway the Anishinaabe way.

After we hung up the phone, we started breathing again. We packed everything we needed to take back to our rooms, and the *desert trio* met Jerry Lee and his wife for a short trip to Houghton, Michigan.

Houghton

We met Jerry Lee and his wife at the west entrance of the casino hotel because it was raining, and the building had an awning where we could load into the car without getting too wet. Houghton is a small town with about eight thousand people and has a Wal-Mart. It took about twenty minutes to get there, driving from Baraga – only if Jerry Lee is driving, otherwise, it might take forty minutes. Clara, Brenda and I sat in the back seat while Jerry Lee took the driver seat, and his wife was in the front passenger seat. Because of the rain the roads were wet and foggy, and it was very dark. From the middle of the back seat I could only see the fog from the headlights of the oncoming cars. It felt ominous and surreal, straight out of a scene from a thriller movie. I looked up at the rear view mirror and saw a feather hanging from it similar to the one Brenda and I have hanging in *nDigiChidi*. Next to the feather was the *nDigiBand* we gave to Jerry Lee in November. I felt honored that he respected the digital storytelling process so much that he placed the band next to his feather. Half way to Wal-Mart, we stopped at the local boat launch. It was peak fishing season and many of our storytellers and their relatives go spear fishing late at night. We witnessed non-Native fishermen refusing to honor the fishing rights of the tribal community. They had prevented tribal fishermen from launching their boats by locking the gates. We learned that this had been an ongoing issue, and the tribe had town hall meetings with the non-Native community to resolve the conflict, but several of the non-Native community members were still refusing to negotiate. After we left the boat launch, we continued to Wal-Mart and bought all the paper goods and everything we needed for Jerry's wife to make the

stew to feed the guests at the community screening (*nDigiFest*) scheduled for Friday evening, one day away. Oh, yes, we also bought hot dogs because we learned that the little boy in Jerry Lee loves hot dogs. I was so grateful to Jerry Lee's wife for cooking the corn stew for dinner, which turned out fabulous. When we returned to the Southwest we sent several people fresh tortillas and red chile from New Mexico, including Jerry Lee and his wife.

I can feel the audience waiting for us. I think I should get back to my story about the community screening.

Final Study Community Screening (*nDigiFest*)

Since, all the storytellers agreed to present their *nDigiStories* at the community screening, I decided to share only the introductions from the bigger screening since they were similar to the workshop screenings. We had permission to videotape the introductions and they were transcribed. A total of ten digital stories were screened: five stories from four of the storytellers that participated in the May 2014 workshop and five from the storytellers that participated in the November 2013 workshop. Typically 95% of our workshops are filled with women, but in this case the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop was filled with 100% men. All together, we had seven men and two women.

All the storytellers showed up for the community screening. After I finished setting up the equipment, I walked around shaking as many hands as I could before the screening started. I met brothers, sisters, spouses, children, grandchildren and even teachers – all related in one way or another to the digital storytellers. Three of the storytellers wore beautiful ribbon shirts. Many ribbon shirts are hand made and are worn for ceremonies and celebrations. R.D. in particular was wearing a beautiful ribbon shirt with the color of the four directions and bears embroidered on

the front and back of his shirt that represented the Bear Clan. He came up to the microphone and introduced himself and thanked everyone for coming:

My name is R.D. Curtis; I work at the KBIC outpatient department. And also I'm a tribal council member. Back in November, last year we had five tribal members do their stories and this week there was four of us.

He introduced Linda, who works with the ATR program. She spoke about ATR and the relationship that has been built with *nDigiDreams* to increase the capacity of digital storytelling within the *Sowing the Seeds of Recovery* intuitive.

Linda's introduction.



Media 5.1. Linda's intro
(*nDigiDreams*, LLC, 2014).

Linda's Introduction *Media 5.1 Linda's Intro* can be accessed online at
<http://youtu.be/7517oFgdt7c>

The transcription of her introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces herself in *Anishinaabemowin*.] Very honored to be here this evening with this beautiful, beautiful community. *Chi Miigwech* for all of your hospitality and the warmth and love that we felt this week and what we felt back in November. It's been a beautiful journey doing this. I'm supposed to talk a little about Access to Recovery loving referred to as ATR. What that means is a grant to help our people get sober and gives us many benefits by being in this program. We started seven years ago and we are winding down; in September will be the end of ATR as we know it. So what we've done with this program is we have collaborated with *nDigiDreams* gals/ladies from New Mexico; part of our recovery process has always been sharing our story and how can we get the word out to help our own people, right. They brought this gift to us and I started working with them about 3 years ago in 2011, I think, yeah and I made my own digital story. And then, I wanted to learn how to create more. And what it is . . . the Access to Recovery program helped us. So, currently we have, if we include the four stories that we finished this week, we will have 22 stories on the *Sowing the Seeds of Recovery*, on the ATR website. It's stories from all across Michigan. And we're going to continue to do more as much as we can. I'm learning how to do it, and I might just do it out of my own vehicle, so I might go on the road. It's been an awesome, awesome

journey, and particularly this week. It's a long process and it is an involved process and you wonder, well these stories are only 3–5 minutes, but it takes 3 to 4 days and what we do, we go through our story, whatever it is that we are going to share. They bring in photographs from home and they begin to compile their story. But, first they have to write their story, write it down and they share it. And we edit and we edit and we edit, [audience-and we edit some more] and we edit some more. And then we start to add in our pictures. All of this is an emotional process because some of us haven't shared our story that way. And it's very heartfelt; it's very exhausting; it's emotionally draining as we are going through this. And most of us come back to finish the story because we want to see the finished product. Most of us want to see it like right now, but there is a process we have to go through. So then after, we add pictures to the story. They're your own pictures from your family albums. Then we record the voices of the people who are sharing their story. So the stories you see this evening in their own voices; and they'll be sharing with you. Then its breathed into life—the story itself is the heart and breathed into life as they begin to share what they are going to share. And then they sing or they will bring in music and it's their music. It's what they have selected. All of these storytellers; we have nine of them with us. Well, minus one, I think he's coming later. We have nine storytellers right from this community. And they bring their music however they choose. It's their story and they can choose what they want to do with these stories. They can share with the world or they can share just with their family. Whatever they want to do, it's their story. Then we do the recording and we do a lot of other mixing of the music with the photos and narration; and it is lengthy process but it is a healing process. It's a powerful healing process. I know for myself, I had shared my story many times but I never saw it. There's something about seeing our story—that, brings tears but it brings joy. And then, what I did, I immediately put mine on Facebook, so the whole world knows my story, cause I want to help people, I want to help people. I've been in the substance abuse field for a long time. And this is another tool that we can use to help our people, and it's told from our hearts. So, I hope you enjoy yourself this evening.

This is Brenda Manuelito. And she's one of the co-founders of *nDigiDreams*. They go out all over Indian Country, from Montana, California, to here. Once they are on the road, they're gone. It's a powerful thing they are doing by sharing their skill, their talent with all of us.

Linda handed the microphone to Brenda and then she introduced herself.

Brenda's introduction.



*Media 5.2 Brenda's Intro
(nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).*

Brenda's introduction *Media 5.2 Brenda's Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/udIviLe0UzU>

The transcription of her introduction is as follows:

Yá'át'ééh! [Introduces herself in the *Diné* language]

Hello my relatives, good evening. My family used to say that whenever we speak our sacred language, we make it beautiful. This evening we want to make it all beautiful because we've met some beautiful people in this community. My name is Brenda Manuelito and Carmella Rodriguez is standing to my right. We started a dream that we had. Creator works through each of us to bring our gifts back to the people. I worked in public health. I used to teach at my tribal college on the Navajo Nation and Carmella worked in videography and also for her community. We also brought another digital storyteller. Clara, can you stand? Clara Fernando and Linda were some of the seeds we planted. She's from Laguna Pueblo. And we planted seeds here and that was the vision we had. Like all good medicine, we're just helpers. We came; we were invited by ATR to come into Michigan three years ago. It's with that love and hope of wanting to share, help the people share these beautiful stories of hope and resilience because out there, we don't hear a lot of that. We're like this dying breed or vanishing. It's unfortunate they have that because they don't know what we have here in our communities. The beautiful people, the beautiful words, the beautiful stories that are ours. And this day and age when we use this tool that Creator also gave us, just like he gave us all these things. There's a crystal in that computer, there's silica sand, there's Earth elements. And through that, somehow brought the two of us along with others to start this way of healing. And we don't know very much about anything but what we know we have the love for the people and the stories. We want to help to share those beautiful positive stories of survival. We met an Elder in California that said you know this is about sovereignty. Because sovereignty starts with yourself and being able to tell your own story, not someone to come in and tell it for you. You tell it, you make it, and you own and then you decide how you want to share that. And so when Linda was talking, she said we did this and the we is all of us, all of the digital storytellers. We're just like midwives. One woman in Montana, Fort Belknap, she goes, "You guys are like midwives. We're just struggling having a hard time creating these and your like 'just calm down, it's going to happen. It's going to turn out beautiful'." And they do. Because we do it with prayer, we do it with ceremony, like all good things, and we do it with a lot of good food, a lot of good humor and a lot of persistence. Because we know that when you want to make something good, you have to show the effort and the dedication. And we are so excited to be here in Michigan, to have Clara join us. And we wanted to welcome you tonight for this beautiful evening of dinner and a movie. Dinner, and ten movies, KBIC (*Keweenaw* Bay Indian Community tribal member) style. We have nine producers that are going to come up, afterwards and you can ask each one of them how did you do that? Why did you do that? I want your signature. I want your autograph before they go to Hollywood. Ok. You're going to have a chance to do that. So let me have Carmella say a few words and then we're going to start with the first set of stories. We're going to ask each digital storyteller if you could

please come and share this beautiful birth, if you may and even men have births too. They just don't know it. These beautiful creations that they're going to share and introduce, and then they are going to tell us to roll it and then we're going to put it in. Your movie. Ok, thank you.

Brenda handed me the microphone and I introduced myself to the beautiful people of KBIC.

Carmella's introduction.



Media 5.3. Carmella's Intro
(nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).

Carmella's introduction *Media 5.3 Carmella's Intro* can be accessed online at http://youtu.be/Tk_m9tr9uA8

The transcription of my introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [The crowd roars] You know, I have the privilege of learning lots of different languages, not the languages, but learning a small amount of words with all the different places that we travel. My name is Carmella Rodriguez and I'm from New Mexico. Just recently I found that I have relatives from the San Ildefonso Pueblo and Navajo. I grew up in foster homes so I didn't have the opportunity to learn my language but I'm very grateful to all the languages I'm hearing and people are sharing with us, they're absolutely beautiful. And they're so important. These digital stories, when I started in 2008, [I raised my hands up] I have these skills, and I don't know what to do with them, but here, I'm of service and I want to help, I want to help. My message must have been heard because when I was doing my own training, I couldn't feel the ground for an entire week as I was learning how to do digital storytelling and work with people, and that's when I met Brenda. We have been traveling non-stop since that moment, and its because we are one hundred, ten, twenty, thirty, forty percent committed, and it's the love and the compassion we have for our people, for healing and for bringing justice, for bringing advocacy, education, everything we can through stories. And since we have technology now, we found a beautiful way that you can bring the two together and be able to share that in so many different ways, and it just continues to go out. It has a ripple effect. I don't know how many people have Facebook in here but you've seen the communication, you've seen how people share with each other. Imagine if we share these stories of healing and wellness and creativity. How wonderful, I appreciate Linda. When we did our workshop with her. She's like; "I want to put it on Facebook. And how do I do that"? So we helped her do that and I have seen her post and repost, and I've seen new people,

new people always coming in and asking her questions about her story, asking her to go and speak, asking her how do we do this. How do we use this too? And I have the privilege of working with Janice and Donnie and Carrie and Marty. In November, it was an amazing workshop out here and the drum. The drum just blew me away. Because when I was a little girl, I used to hear a drumbeat and when I decided to do digital storytelling, I heard many, many drumbeats. It was like drumbeats coming from all over the world together creating this beautiful strength, so when I heard the Four Thunders Drum, thank you [touching heart]. Thank you for drumming for this event. Very, very special. And the new people we met this week, incredible, incredible, Don and Robert, and R.D. R.D. kept us late working over there, that's why we were late, he was making a second movie, cause he just couldn't have enough. And Tim, had me rolling all week, I just couldn't get out of there without laughing. Tim was a blessing with the humor and love and everything he brought to the workshop, incredible group of people? And I appreciate you all, and I hope you enjoy these digital stories, and we passed out a little paper. I'm hoping that after you watch the movies you can write a little bit about what you've seen and what you feel and if you've seen them and how they could be shared. Because we want to help, we really want to help figure out ways to grow it larger so everybody can make a digital story and tell a personal story. So with that, I thank you and I thank the cooks, Cindy and [the woman] who made the fry bread. I haven't tasted it yet but it smells really good, and I hope you got something to eat. That you enjoy the food as well because like Brenda said, the workshop, anything that we do, anything, its not just the activity, it's the people, the humor, the place, the air, the rain that we get everyday, it's all of it. All of it is important. If we just remember that in our hearts, we're always going to be surrounded by love. So I think we are going to show a digital story now. And I think the first person is Don. And would you like to introduce your movie?

Roll It a Second Time!

I hope you enjoyed the first set of stories from the *Shki-Maawnjidwin* in the fourth chapter. You have witnessed the beauty, strength and courage of the storytellers that made them. You have also heard the diversity of their stories and voices. We invite you a second time to hear four new voices, five movies and eight introductions. Even though the first five have already introduced their movie from the November 8, 2013 community screening, they also did it a second time at the community screening on May 9, 2014. Listening to their voices a second time gives us a chance to hear their beautiful voices again and hear change they experienced in their lives over a six-month period from the time they first completed their *nDigiStories*. And the new voices are just as beautiful and the stories are just as courageous. So, again, you as a reader and

viewer have been invited by our digital storytellers to be part of the ceremony. The next set of digital stories has also been made with lots of emotions and good intentions and the circle you are joining is held with lots of prayer and love.

The storytellers gave me permission to videotape them as they introduced their *nDigiStories* and they also gave me permission to share them with you. I encourage you to watch the videos so that you can get a sense for each storyteller and the stories they chose to tell using their own voice, in their own words. The storytellers strongly emphasized their desire to help one more person through the sharing of their stories. I ask you to have the same respect for the storytellers and their lives, so that we may all share in healing. I will introduce the storytellers through my experience of spending time with them during the workshop, through the screenings and just by sharing our lives together.

The format for this performance is similar to the performance in the fourth chapter. It is as follows: I list the name of their movie first, followed by my introduction about the storyteller, then the transcript for their introduction about themselves, followed by the script from their *nDigiStory*. The scripts for the first five *nDigiStories* that were made in the November workshop are listed in the fourth chapter already and will not be included in this chapter, however I will provide the link to their movie in case you want to watch it again and get to the link quickly. I will start with the new storytellers first. At the end I applaud each one and make appreciative comments for the courage it took to make and share these stories, and for the hope they give us. I also provide links to their video introductions and *nDigiStories*. The phrase “Play It!” is followed by a link to the video introduction, and the words “Roll It!” are followed by a link to the *nDigiStory*.

Turn off your cell phones please. *Ambe Bizindan Aadzokaan* (come and listen to story).

Chi Miigwech!

Every time a digital story was screened, the emotions in the room peaked and because we created such a bond with the storytellers, instinctively all four of us (co-facilitators) felt the need to hug each storyteller after their movie played. No wonder the *nDigiFest* ran longer than we expected! It may seem strange for a mainstream film festival audience but this was an Indigenous film festival, a ceremony, and a celebration of life. Our hugs showed the compassion and love we have for our communities and the good intentions we have for the wellbeing of this community. A sincere hug provides nurturing that promotes additional healing and support for the storytellers. We believe that when each story is created it is breathed into life as Linda mentioned in her introduction; it has a spirit. So after you read the transcription for the digital story or watch it please keep that in mind. We clapped after every story and exchanged hugs. I keep gratitude in mind as I have written these pages containing their introductions and digital stories. Don was the first storyteller to introduce his movie. Don, please take it away!

Alcohol the wrong road. Don wasn't feeling well during the workshop and had to miss one day. He felt better by Friday and was ready to finish his movie. Even though the workshop ended on Thursday, because he was willing to come in an extra day, I was willing to help him. I have to apologize to Don because earlier in the week it was his birthday. While I was at the restaurant ordering food for everyone, Clara came running in, "It's Donnie's birthday!" I had just finished a video interview with Donnie so I knew he was still around. I ordered a dessert and hid it behind my back as I walked into the conference room and located Donnie sitting at the tables where everybody was eating lunch. I snuck around Brenda and Don as they were working on his digital story and starting singing happy birthday to Donnie. Donnie looked at me and laughed,

“It’s not my birthday!” Brenda looked at me, pointed at Don and said, “It’s Don’s birthday!” I was so embarrassed! I turned around and walked towards Don. I gave him the dessert and sang him happy birthday. The whole group started laughing again! So, I was really glad when Don felt better to finish his video. He wanted to add a picture of himself on his Harley Davidson, and I suggested a video of him actually riding around the bay. So on Wednesday night, we drove over to the south of the bay and had one shot because the sun was going down. He offered me a ride on the back of his Harley, but I had to take a rain check because I was making everybody late for the fish dinner. But the next time I see him, I’ll be sure to catch a ride. Together, we inserted the shot at the end of his movie and after he watched himself ride away on his motorcycle, I felt the heaviness of his week ride away too. Don participated in another film project that was made by a non-Native producer. Don said the producer didn’t know a lot about Don’s culture and he had to correct him many, many times. Don was undecided whether he wanted to attend a fundraising for the other film project that was scheduled at the same time as the community screening. He decided to attend the *nDigiFest*. I was so happy because he completed our circle. Don was the first one to introduce his movie. I sat next to him part of the time at the screening and the rest of the time I was running to sit in front of the camera so I could film the introductions.

Don’s nDigiStory introduction.



Media 5.4. Don’s Intro
(*nDigiDreams*, LLC, 2014).

Don’s introduction *Media 5.4 Don’s nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/IFOjP4j28SY>

The transcription of his introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! Welcome everybody, *Chi Miigwech* to these ladies that helped us. Their commitment and work is inspiring. It was awesome. We worked on these for like 4 days, I worked on it for 4 days. Some worked 5 days. But it took a lot of time. There was a lot of emotional things going into these movies, to tell the stories to go back where we came from, how we came to be who we are. These stories. Some of it was hard to think about. You know, if anybody can relate to it or it helps one person then it's all worth it. I'm glad I got to share my story. And being with my brothers sharing their story. The drum and the food, life is good tonight. Thank you. Roll it.

Don's nDigiStory —Alcohol the wrong road.



Media 5.5. Don's nDigiStory (Don Stolp, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix E for example.

Don's nDigiStory Media 5.5 Don nDigiStory can be accessed online

<http://youtu.be/EL0qVO6hn-I>

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* is as follows:

Alcohol was a thief of my happiness. I let him in and made him my friend. I went to him for comfort and he gave it . . . temporarily.

My mom drank beer every day and took me with her to the bars. Now and then, she'd make me drink some of her beer. I'm not sure why, maybe it was so we wouldn't like it when we grew up.

I was a very good student in elementary school, but I was ridiculed for wearing shabby clothing and being Indian. You see, in Milwaukee, everything wasn't integrated until 1969. But, even then, I still felt like I was on the outside looking in . . . when I was with the white kids, I was "the Indian," when I was with the skins, I was too light.

I either joked with or physically fought those who made me feel inferior. In my report cards, my teachers always checked that I had "behavioral problems." Instead of focusing on my straight A's, my mom would sit me down and ask me over and over, for what seemed like hours: "Donald Francis, why are you such a bad boy? Why can't you behave?"

Seeing my mother drunk, I said to myself, "I'll never drink!"

In junior high, rebellion took over and things got worse . . . I would do anything to stay out of school . . . I'd hang out in apartment hallways, laundromats, and the library . . . anyplace to stay warm.

At 14, I started to smoke pot and cigarettes. During the mid-70s . . . I started doing LSD and other drugs. I also started drinking a lot. I hung out with older kids who had cars, money, drugs, and alcohol to help me escape.

I was good at it . . . at escaping, at partying. It was “normal.” Everybody I knew did it. Yet, there was still that voice inside me saying, “Hey, I thought you said you’d never drink.”

This led to 20 years of a horrible life filled with drunkenness, violence, and guilt. My life sucked BIG TIME . . . I wanted out of it, but didn’t know how.

One day, while in court, a lawyer asked, “Do you have a problem with drinking?”

“Well, this is my 8th DWI . . . I think so.”

“If you want help, I can help,” he said.

After that, I got popped again. Another DWI. This time I reached out to the lawyer. I asked him, do you know a good psychologist? Because I think I need psychological help. He chuckled and said, “If you stop drinking . . . all your troubles will go away!” I thought, no way, just to quit drinking, I’m in too much trouble.

A few weeks later, I started attending meetings while in jail. 90 meetings in 90 days! When my first son was born, I started thinking that I didn’t want him to go thru the same hell as I did. It was a strong motivator to quit.

A month into my sobriety, while I was walking around the city I heard a voice say to me, loud and clear. “Hey Don, you don’t have to drink any more!”

That blew me away! I stopped and thought, “Wow, I don’t have to drink any more?” In December 2014, I will celebrate 23 years of this new way of life! I recognize alcohol for what it truly is . . . a thief. I am no longer letting it rob me of my happiness! I am . . . A TRUE HUMAN BEING.

This is where I belong . . . and this is what I was always looking for.

Let’s give a big hand to Don for being the first one to screen his movie. *Miigwech* Don for deciding to come to the *nDigiFest* and sharing your life with us. I can’t wait for that ride on your Harley. Next is R.D. with his first *nDigiStory*.

Beware of cross addictions. R.D. coordinated the first and second gathering for us. He recruited the storytellers from his community and found the locations for each workshop and

community screenings. He was a pleasure to work with, and I am grateful for his professionalism and friendship. He had two very important stories to tell, and at first they started out as one story. In order to make it easier for him to work on his story, I suggested that he make two stories and split the script. Since we had a storyteller drop out because of illness, I thought we could accommodate both stories. It made Friday a little tougher than I had hoped especially since I couldn't set up the screening equipment early, but I am glad we did it, and his stories are being shared to help other people become aware of cross addictions.

R.D.'s 1st nDigiStory introduction.



Media 5.6. R.D.'s 1st *nDigiStory* Intro
(*nDigiDreams*, LLC, 2014).

R.D.'s 1st *nDigiStory* introduction *Media 5.6 RD's 1st nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at on <http://youtu.be/ynavmzFFb3k>

The transcription of his first *nDigiStory* introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! I made two movies this week; unfortunately I became addicted to gambling. It got out of hand and started causing problems at home. Being an alcoholic I knew if I didn't do something about, it would get a lot, lot worse. I went to treatment February 4th. I was gone for 30 days, 30 day program, I completed March 6th, so my first story was on gambling, that's what we are going to watch now, go ahead.

R.D. 1st nDigiStory—Beware of cross addictions.



Media 5.7. R.D.'s 1st *nDigiStory* (*R.D. Curtis*, 2014).
Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed
Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix E for example.

R.D.'s 1st *nDigiStory Media 5.7 RD's nDigiStory* can be accessed online at http://youtu.be/Xz_3Z-UIrDQ

The transcription of his first *nDigiStory* is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

My name means spirits all around, and I am Bear Clan. My English name is R.D. Curtis.

My 26 year-old son, Ty, my 8-year-old son, Robert, and their mother, Helen, are very important to me. I love them dearly.

On May 26th, 2014, I will have 23 years of sobriety. It was a long road to get there. I'm a certified alcohol drug counselor. I help people get into treatment and teach them about alcohol and drug education. I remember my counselor telling me, "People who have addictions can become cross addicted. Meaning that if you have been an alcoholic, you can easily be tempted by anything else, gambling, overeating, smoking etc.

In 2010, I threw in the first twenty, and I could walk away. Then I started throwing the second and third twenty, and I couldn't stay away. I became preoccupied with gambling. A year later, I was still working for KBIC, elected on tribal council, and appointed as Chairman of OHA Housing. I looked for every opportunity to get to the casino as an excuse to distress my busy life.

As I became more preoccupied with gambling, I chose to walk away from the drum and ceremonies. The drum is sacred. I knew what I was doing wasn't right, and I didn't want to disrespect the drum, our ceremonies, or our people.

I became powerless with my gambling addiction; I was dishonest with Helen about the amount I was spending and the time I was gambling. My experience of being an alcoholic taught me that if I kept on gambling I would loose everything.

I accepted I had a gambling problem. It took courage to admit it; I wanted to do something about it. I tried outpatient counseling, but it didn't work because I needed more than outpatient. I found Project Turn-about, which is a residential program for gambling and also substance abuse treatment. I completed the thirty-day program. It was the best thing I ever did for my gambling addiction.

My counselor discussed my preoccupation with gambling and asked that I find something else to do that I enjoy. I started fishing and hunting again, and I love it!

I'm making strides to get back to my traditional ways, the drum and ceremonies. I attend AA regularly and started a GA meeting on Monday nights. Fortunately, my first addiction taught me how to recognize a second addiction, and I could get help before it

could destroy me. If gambling is a second addiction or even a first, there is hope and there is help. If I can do it, so can you.

Chi Miigwech for deciding to share that story. It was an important story to tell and it is going to help so many people. The next storyteller is Robert but most tribal members call him Rajac.

Sacred and sober. Robert is an amazing and wise young man. Besides his contagious laugh he has a beautiful voice and knows a thousand songs. He is that dedicated to his learning, teaching and helping his community. After Robert recorded his narration, he was trying to think of a song to sing for his background music. Even though he knew a thousand songs, he couldn't think of one. I told him to think about it like giving birth. If he were singing to his baby being born, what song would he sing to her? He said it was funny I mentioned that because he sang to his little girl all the time before she was born. After she was born she wouldn't stop crying so he sang to her and she smiled. At that moment he knew what song to sing. He plans to use digital storytelling with his archery students, and I will help him with whatever he needs. He has a beautiful wife and two daughters.

Robert's nDigiStory introduction.



*Media 5.8. Robert's Intro
(nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).*

Roberts's introduction *Media 5.8 Robert's nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/Ey-rssN28Vk>

The transcription of his introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

R.D. is the one who approached me with this. He asked me if I wanted to do a short movie. I kind of hemmed and hawed about it. It was like, I don't know, oh what the hell why not. [Laughter] When I showed up the first day, Monday. I was thinking about how I wanted to do my story. I had a completely different idea. But when we started doing the talking circle, it came out a different way. And I started thinking about my story a little bit more. And, I thought about a friend that passed away, and [pause, tears] ah, and I couldn't get it out of my head. I wanted to honor him and do this for him. And in hope of saving one more life out there. One of the women that was helping us said, it is like giving birth. I agreed with that. But I put it in my own terms, as in building that sacred fire. Start with that small ember, you blow on it a little bit and it begins to smoke. And you keep feeding it and blowing it a little more, until that flame comes to life. And that's how I felt when we completed this movie, this video. And like everyone else, I was impatient; I wanted to see it now. I want it now. [Laughter] But, it was a good experience. I will continue doing this with other projects. Hopefully it can help other community members. Aho! Roll that beautiful B footage.

Robert's nDigiStory— Sacred and sober.



Media 5.9. Robert's nDigiStory (Robert Rajacic, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix E for example.

Roberts's *nDigiStory Media 5.9 Robert's nDigiStory* can be accessed online at http://youtu.be/XLRTr3hZ_ZA

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* is as follows:

Boozhoo! Beemoisaii magizi diizhnikos, wabshka miiangan dodem

My name is Robert Rajacic. I grew up in Michigan. Alcohol was always around.

When I was eight, I accidentally tasted my first beer. I remember being at camp with my little brothers, we got thirsty, and opened a can that looked like soda. After our first few sips, we started feeling a little funny . . . we liked it. My dad found us drunk as hell. "What am I going to do, your mother is going to kill me." When I woke up he said, "Don't tell your mother what happened! Brush your teeth, your breath smells." I didn't know whether to laugh or cry.

During family parties sometimes fights would break out, and I would start drinking whatever was left over. Four years later my dad left after a fight, and it hurt me, like it was MY FAULT.

At 16, he called me. “Hey, sonny boy!” I broke down and smashed the phone. I started drinking and mixing drugs. A week later, I got caught stealing and was fired! Angry and frustrated, I started physically and verbally abusing others until mom sent me away for two weeks. When I came home, my stuff was packed in garbage bags. I felt unwanted and unloved. So, I moved in with my sister.

Something I never thought would ever happen did . . . my dad moved back. I was angry . . . I panicked . . . I ran off and got drunk. After sobering up, I talked to him. With tears in his eyes, he said, “Bobby boy, I’m sorry.” We both broke down and hugged each other.

My addiction continued until August 23, 2004. I looked at myself in the mirror. I didn’t recognize myself. It slowed me down, but I didn’t stop till my senior year. Since I was a young boy, school has always been my “safety zone”—I always had good grades and excelled in sports.

To graduate, I had to complete a senior project. Growing up, I danced at our summer powwows, but I knew very little. That’s when the drum called me, that’s it, the drum. I’ll do my project on it!” I found a local medicine man who agreed to help me on one condition. He said “This is an alcohol and drug free drum” . . . hum, okay.

After school, I spent weeks looking up information and talking to my mentor. I started recognizing the people around the drum, people who had been a part of my life. They were the ones that taught me to be Anishinaabe. I began to learn songs and the rhythm of the drum. We laughed, made jokes and enjoyed our time together . . . I liked it!

When I introduced my senior project, my teacher had tears in her eyes. She told me, “Robert, it was beautiful to see you learn your culture and hear your voice on the drum . . . it really moved me.”

Today, I walk the Red Road by sitting on the drum and dancing in the circle. I married my high school sweetheart; Olivia and we have two beautiful daughters.

Recently, I was diagnosed with bi-polar. I take my meds and attend a men’s group. When I work with my hands, making bows, fletchings, beadwork, and leatherwork, I feel at peace. By talking about it and recognizing it, it helps me realize it is a part of who I am.

My dream is to build an indoor archery range to teach people of all ages how to shoot. I think it helps people relax and focus on the task at hand—I know it helped me.

It’s okay to ask for help.

We’re not perfect, but can grow one day at a time.

I offer tobacco and give thanks for one more day of sobriety. Miigwech.

Robert, thank you for your persistence to finish your digital story and for dedicating it to your friend. You taught me that there are alternative ways of healing and meditating such as beading. Tim is our next storyteller to introduce his movie and as he described it as, Aha, known only as his moment.

Aha. Tim, Tim, Tim! I have never laughed so much in my life as I did with both digital storytelling groups, but Tim made me laugh the most. If I have a hard a day, I play the video from the panel at the community screening, and I laugh again. It makes me think about how important laughter is in our lives especially when we have experienced traumatic events. Every smile and every laugh makes it just a little bit easier.

Tim's nDigiStory introduction.



Media 5.10. Tim's nDigiStory Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).

Tim's *nDigiStory* introduction *Media 5.10 Tim's nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/YvTr1dbyZF0>

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

I'm black squirrel from the Wolf Clan. [Laughter] My tribe is from Sault Ste. Marie. This story, when R.D. called me about making a story, I didn't really know much about it, so I went on the computer, to their website and checked it out, to see kind of what it was about. You know, the stories weren't very long. There this long, I figured, it's going to take me five days to talk for 5 minutes. Holy cow. I can't believe that's going to take me that long to do that, but it did. It took that long because it's a process— this process that we went through with these lovely ladies. A lot of credit goes to them because they made us look good. Aho! Miigwech ladies. [Audience claps] But this story that I [pause, tears] this story, this week was as just an unbelievable week of emotions, sad, happy, pissed off. There were a lot of things, but they were all great feelings. I really enjoyed them, even

though it makes us sad sometimes to talk about these things. It brings up a lot of old memories, things we are not really comfortable talking about.

My story is about addiction as well. You will see the importance of youth—how youth got me sober. I didn't attend any AA classes or any programs. It came from my son. You will see in this story. I really enjoyed doing it. It made me feel good. Roll it.

Tim's nDigiStory—Aha



Media 5.11. Tim's *nDigiStory* (Tim Derwin, 2014).
Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix E for example.

Tim's *nDigiStory* *Media 5.11* Tim's *nDigiStory* can be accessed online at
<http://youtu.be/ZoDCsIzKsvg>

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

Amuck aday agee da moo inii indignacause myingnum doodum bawiting indungaba. My English name is Tim Derwin. I am black squirrel from the wolf clan and am Sault Ste. Marie *Chippewa*. I have been married to Peggy for 37 years. We have a son and daughter, and 5 grandchildren.

I was born 57 years ago to ERNIE and TILLIE DERWIN. We always knew that we were Native but we did not live in a traditional way. We were *Ojibwa* from my *Mishomis* on my father's side and German from my mother. I went to a Catholic school and it was 8 years of hell.

When I pass on to the spirit world I will be in a great place because I have already done my time in hell. I was punished and humiliated by spankings, kneeling on pencils, and eating a lot of ivory soap. I learned to hate the Catholic religion.

I remember spending a lot of my childhood with my *Mishomis* and *Nokomis*. I loved being outdoors hunting and fishing with my *Mishomis*. I did not learn any native teachings. My *Nokomis* was from the boarding school era when many of our people were told not to be Native . . . but we knew we were. My parents are in the spirit world. I miss them. My father was very funny and a good provider. My mother was a loving homemaker. I have 2 brothers and 3 sisters. Despite being a very close family, alcohol was a big part of our life.

I was 16 the first time that I used alcohol and drugs and continued for the next 25 years. My addiction got so bad that I was missing a lot of family gatherings. Spending time with my fellow drinkers was more important. Our 13-year old son started getting into trouble. My wife knew some native students and asked if he could attend the drumming. One day he asked me, “Dad how about coming with me to drumming?” I said sure. I thought it was just another opportunity to drink. Then he said, “You know, Dad this is a traditional drum and to be involved you have to be sober.” At first, I thought “no way” but after some thought, I felt sad and ashamed because he had to ask me to be sober.

This was my AHA moment. Enough is enough. Him asking me to do this was important. I went feeling confused, scared, and still in denial. All these kids around the drum were sober. At first I went for him, knowing nothing about sobriety, but since, I have learned that I must do this for myself. I have been clean and sober for 22 years. The red road has taken me on many beautiful paths, and it has made me a better husband, father, and Mishomis.

I am involved with our traditional culture. I love and respect this way of life. I have chosen this beautiful way of life and would love to see more of our people do the same.

Chi Miigwech! What a beautiful story you shared with us. Thank you for sharing your row of supporters you brought with you to the nDigiFest. The next person to introduce his second movie is R.D.

Addictions don’t discriminate. R.D. celebrated twenty-three years of sobriety this year and I was able to congratulate him using Facebook. Technology is helping us stay connected if we use it in the right way. I had the opportunity to meet the mother of his children and one of his sons. He has climbed out of a very dark place and he has survived. He is helping other people in his community do the same because he knows what it was like, and he also knows that it takes one day at a time.

R.D.’s 2nd nDigiStory introduction.



Media 5.12 R.D.’s 2nd nDigiStory Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).

R.D.'s 2nd *nDigiStory* introduction *Media 5.12 RD's 2nd nDigiStory Intro* can be accessed online at https://youtu.be/mkc_44gUUTk

The transcription of his second *nDigiStory* introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

Ok, this one is about alcohol. It was shared earlier. It was a long week. There was a lot of emotions, up and down, sad, happy. This was . . . [long pause, emotional] this was rough. I wish I could turn back time. [Pause] I heard this one person say, addictions suck. It causes a lot of dysfunction. But I'm not that same person anymore. You know, on the 26th, I'll have 23 years of sobriety. It's been good. I want to acknowledge these ladies too. They are awesome. They know what they're doing. It's hard to believe for a 3-minute video, you have to do it for four days. I hope this does help somebody. If I can do it, I know other people can do it. You just got to want it and work it. With that you can start it.

R.D.'s 2nd nDigiStory—Addictions don't discriminate.



Media 5.13. R.D.'s 2nd *nDigiStory* (R.D. Curtis, 2014). Permission granted by storyteller through the Informed Consent Form and verbally. See Appendix E for example.

R.D.'s 2nd *nDigiStory* *Media 5.13 RD's 2nd nDigiStory* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/rkX9cHhFAYo>

The transcription of his second *nDigiStory* is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

My name means spirits all around, and I am Bear Clan. My English name is R.D. Curtis.

The first time I got drunk was in elementary school, with my cousins in Zeba. We bought a bunch a beer and I got really sick, I didn't like it. The cops came and we got into trouble. I was really scared; gram shook her head and said she was disappointed. That bothered me.

I started smoking marijuana before 8th grade and drinking in the 9th grade. I quit school in the 11th grade and moved in with dad. Drinking progressed and I even drank with him.

When I was 16, we both went to treatment at New Day. I went to AA and listened to everybody. They lost their families, jobs, and freedom. I didn't lose anything. I took off and bounced around and finally moved in with gram.

I went to jail when I was 18 for assaulting my dad. As soon as I got out, I started drinking heavily. I terrified gram during a blackout, and during the next one, I woke up to bars. Gram didn't want anything to do with me.

I needed treatment and started immediately at New Day. Who knew, walking out of the elevator, I would meet the future mother of my boys, Helen. After treatment, I stayed clean for almost two weeks. I didn't listen to my counselor, and I gave into peer pressure. I didn't want to be labeled as stuck up or too good.

I kept on drinking, got my head sliced and almost lost my life. I entered treatment a third time. I took off again, moved to Kansas and eventually moved back to Michigan and hooked up with Helen. She got pregnant and we got married. My son, Ty, was born two days before I completed treatment the fourth time.

I stayed sober for two months but then started drinking heavily. I regret putting Helen through mental, verbal, and physical abuse.

We split, she took off for school, and I left for treatment again.

Helen's car pulled up to the grocery store. I was buying alcohol with a buddy and she saw us. My son, Ty started waving at me from the front seat. I ignored them. A couple days later, Helen told me, Ty was so happy to see me and because I didn't acknowledge him, he was heartbroken. I was tired of being sick and tired.

I was homeless, jobless, familyless and in and out of jail many times. I was a chronic alcoholic and a drug abuser. My heart was broken too. I wanted Ty to have a good father.

Even though I was doing it for him, I knew I needed to do it for myself first.

I went into treatment for the sixth time at re-entry halfway house in Kingsford, MI and completed 8 months.

At New Day, I saw Mike Jenson for aftercare outpatient treatment and eventually started working there with Mike's help for three years. I really liked working at New Day because helping other people reminded me of the way I used to be.

After I sobered up, I started fishing, hunting, and getting into the traditional ways. Ten years later, I started drumming. I was around good people and I felt good emotionally, mentally, physically and spiritually.

In 2003, I started working at the KBIC SAP outpatient department. Within two years, I became a certified alcohol counselor. I'm helping my community, and I attend AA meetings regularly. I have a second son, Robert, who was born on March 2nd, 2006.

Addictions don't discriminate; they don't care about your age, race or gender. But there is hope . . . if you put half the zeal into your recovery as you did your drinking, life will be good, one day at a time.

Oh my gosh, R.D. You are so resilient! You have been a gift and we appreciate the time you spent helping us coordinate the digital storytelling workshops and screenings. *Chi Miigwech*. *Chi Miigwech* to all the new digital storytellers. Let's turn our attention to the first group of storytellers as they introduce their digital stories a second time at the second community screening but first; let's hear a few words from our MC, Brenda.

Brenda: What we are sharing tonight is . . . we've survived five hundred years of historical trauma, and today we're seeing historical greatness in your stories. We see historical greatness coming here, being a part of your families as you survive, not only survive but also thrive.

Starting within. Carrie had to leave early and could not introduce her movie a second time. We played it with her permission and you couldn't hear a pin drop in the audience. The last words we heard from Carrie were in the Theory of Truth section, and she went to the heart of how telling and sharing her story has influenced herself and especially her family. The transcription for Carrie's introduction and *nDigiStory* can be found in the fourth chapter.

Carrie's nDigiStory introduction.

Carrie's *nDigiStory* introduction can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/OLu9bAkLGfI>

Carrie's nDigiStory—Starting within.

Carrie's *nDigiStory* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/U0pq7yIXK-k>

Nii Wabakwe Omaa Akii.

Donnie made a point to visit the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop everyday for lunch except for the last two days. He provided support to his brothers who sit on the drum. We joked,

laughed and ate lots of Ribs. Donnie acknowledged everyone who was involved in creating the *nDigiStories* for his community.

Donnie's nDigiStory 2nd introduction.



Media 5.14. Donnie's nDigiStory 2nd Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).

Donnie's *nDigiStory* 2nd introduction *Media 5.14 Donnie's nDigiStory 2nd Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/NPYiMx8uitA>

The transcription of his second *nDigiStory* introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo, Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

Watching you guys do all these movies is way cool. I grew up around here and I grew up with each and everyone of these guys. And ah, the strength and courage it takes to do this is remarkable. I'm proud of each one of yous. Um, when they first starting working, when the ladies first started working with these guys, they said yeah, I'm going to keep them from 8am-4:30 pm and I laughed. [Humorous tone] [Audience laughs] Cause I was like, she's lying right off the bat. [Laughing] [Audience laughs] Cause each and every one of us knows, we didn't get home till 8, (or) 9 o'clock at night. So, yeah, they work you hard but its worth it. The message we are sending across Indian Country is powerful. To share your stories, to create a bond with these ladies and with each other, that we didn't know we had, sometimes. Even though we do know each other. Like, wow, I didn't know that. You know. That's way cool. And Robert, yours was dumb. [Smiling] [Robert laughs] That's my defense for when I get emotional and like that's dumb. But any ways, I guess you can roll it, *Miigwech!*

Donnie's nDigiStory—Nii Wabakwe Omaa Akii

Donnie's *nDigiStory* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/B80ZsOZ7GNw>

The transcript for his *nDigiStory* can be found in the fourth chapter.

Grief's healing journey. The light and liberation I saw in Janice's eyes filled my heart so much, that I have plenty more love to share with others.

Janice's nDigiStory 2nd introduction.



Media 5.15. Janice's nDigiStory 2nd Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).

Janice's *nDigiStory 2nd introduction Media 5.15 Janice's nDigiStory 2nd Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/TCH0oMtW8IU>

The transcription of her second *nDigiStory* introduction can be read below.

Boozhoo! [Introduces herself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

I'm Janice and I'm also Donnie's oldest sister [Laughing]. When I first went in, I was asked by my little brother. Where is he? R.D., to see if I would do my story. And I was really scared at first. I don't have a pretty story either, and I can relate to most of you about how drinking affected my life and how I grew out of it. And where I'm at today. And I also have another addiction called compulsive overeating. And my life today is awesome. I'm totally free. I may look my age, but I don't feel it. And this is only going to be for a little while, this here thing [holds up a cane] because I'm going to be operated on the first part of next month, to get a new knee, so I can dance again. Yeah, cause I'm also a traditional dancer and singer on the Four Thunders Drum. And my son practices this way of life, and he's been very strong in my recovery. We're not the usual mother and son people, we are Native. My mother taught me the Native way of life, of what she could, and my dad. I've taught my kids the same way. I've been called in to do some teachings in the community. And I've always been shying away from that stuff, you know, because I've been too into myself, my way of life.

So, what this movie did, and what oh, this wonderful woman helping me. I miss Arlene, I didn't see her tonight. She was the one tailgating me all the way through the five days that I was there. And it was long hours. I'm not going to say hours though. [Laughing] [Audience laughing] But, I gained a lot of more courage and hope. And to save another person's life by telling that story about myself, and I got a lot, a lot of support from the girls and the guys. Oh God, we just became a family. The guys and I and the girls that were there. And I had my first cup of coffee there, the first morning and I said, "Oh I love this coffee." Pretty soon, a couple of days later, I was planted with the bottle of the coffee, take this home Janice. I came here tonight, didn't expect anything here but hugging and "Hi how are you?" and all that, that was really neat. Well I got another bottle of coffee, these people like me. [Laughing] [Audience laughing] Thanks for

sharing your stories with me, with all of us, especially with me. Especially with Jerry Lee, Donnie and the others that were with me. Carrie, God that girl is something else, isn't she? These young ones, Rajac, wholly. I encourage all you young ones to do your stories because you're going to help each other out. I'm hoping that I can help someone else that's going through the problems that I did. Because I do have multiple addictions. Another one is gambling. Ehhh! It is a problem, boy; it will rob you of everything too. I just kept, I held onto my sobriety. But I knew if I didn't quit, I was going over that crap again. Thank God I didn't, thank God I got a son again that raised hell with me. And that one too, ok, I decided to do something about it. What do they say, roll em.

Janice's nDigiStory—Grief's healing journey. Janice's nDigiStory can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/aJr85Q-xfY4>

The transcript for her nDigiStory can be found in the fourth chapter.

Full circle. Jerry Lee is the big brother I always wanted. He also helped recruit and coordinate the digital storytelling workshops. He welcomed us, drove us around to Houghton to go shopping for the *nDigiFest* and set up a tour for us on the rez. Brenda and I had to miss the tour but he promised the next time we visit him, he would take us to Zeba.

Jerry Lee's nDigiStory 2nd introduction.



Media 5.16. Jerry Lee's nDigiStory 2nd Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).

Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory 2nd introduction Media 5.16 Jerry Lee nDigiStory 2nd Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/4IBN4cYXnUk>

The transcription of his second *nDigiStory* introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

That's Zeba Helen, Zeba [personal joke] [audience laughs]

I was approached; yeah I took the girls to Zeba today. They experienced it. [Smiling] [Audience laughing] In daylight hours. [Laughing] I forget who I was approached by for

this, to do a story. Eva, and the ITC group I think, ATR. And I thought about. And I said sure, as long as it is going to help somebody and that was my intent. Actually, its for these little ones here, hopefully they don't have to go through what we did you know, and my family and for all those groups that are here, that are on that path, you got those tools, just take it and run with it, it's a different life. And there's the general. He is one of our staff members at New Day. It was a pretty exhausting experience there and pretty trying. So, I know what you all went through. It was more exhausting mentally, emotionally than it is physically. Like I said, if it is going to help just one of these young ones here, then our job, you know, part of it is being done. But this is certainly a different way of life, and I wouldn't trade it. I think my brother Paul, once I heard him say this about month ago. And I never heard it said before. We had a graduation group, he told all the seniors. He said, his worst day sober far out does his best day drunk. You know, that really hit home with me. That was the first time I heard it. But anyway, my picture, or my story will probably explain itself. But I too didn't know, they said it is going to be about a three, four, five-minute movie. I looked at them and said, I got 24, and you guys say there, I quit when I was 34. I had 20 years in, 20 years of boozing since I was fourteen. And they are going to tell me their going to do my story in three minutes. The hell, what are you talking about here. [Laughing] But anyway it was a great experience. I wouldn't trade this life in for anything. So, take it away.

Jerry Lee's nDigiStory–Full circle. Jerry Lee's *nDigiStory* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/IoIXxruKFk4>

The transcript for his *nDigiStory* can be found in the fourth chapter.

Crawling, walking . . . soaring. Marty was late to the community screening but he made it up with his long introduction. He also came to check on his relatives and brothers on the drum during the workshop. He also played a few practical jokes a long the way.

Marty's nDigiStory 2nd Introduction.



Media 5.17. Marty's nDigiStory 2nd Intro (nDigiDreams, LLC, 2014).

Marty's *nDigiStory* 2nd introduction *Media 5.17 Marty nDigiStory 2nd Intro* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/e2jBjbldeh8>

The transcription of his *nDigiStory* second introduction is as follows:

Boozhoo! [Introduces himself in *Anishinaabemowin*]

Wow, I didn't know I would have to come up here and do a speech and everything. I thought we were just going to watch movies. Ah, well, I guess my experience, I was more curious of how it was going to be done. I've told my story a few times, actually a lot of times. And then they wanted to put it in a digital, a story of some kind. I had to put pictures to it. I had to go find pictures. Geez, I got pictures scattered all the way from Spokane Washington to Milwaukee, to . . . So, a, but you know what, it all came together, half way, I think we went and started on Monday, I think we were done on Thursday. But by the time we were half way through Wednesday. I'm like Man, this is awesome. I could see it start coming together, everything, I had no idea. When I thought of it, I thought it was impossible. But on Wednesday, it was all coming together. Man, I can't wait. I want to get some more pictures to really signify the things I was doing, what I thinking, how I was feeling. After it was done, and a couple of days ago, this past Monday, we talked about it again. I thought about the stories we did from the day we quit all the way until now. I thought of the specifics, how bad it was, the details of a certain time when it was really bad, it was really bad. Did I want to put that up there? Do we want this a PG movie or an R movie. [Audience laughter] R-3, Steven King or something. [Audience laughter] Boy did we have fun. We laughed from Monday until we were done. I was trying to get her over there, the artist. I knew I said if they were beads, I wrote rattlesnake beads on the envelope, I knew she would look at them. And then nosey over there came over, let me see. Go ahead, yeah, there number 6 beads. [Audience laughter] This is my story. Again like Jerry Lee said, you are going to put all this in 7 minutes. Boy, I had to do all kinds of stuff, chop this off, and edit this and edit that. They put music to it, man, it all fell together. I couldn't wait to watch it myself. And I made it. [Laughing] I hope you enjoy it.

Marty's nDigiStory— Crawling, walking . . . soaring.

Marty's *nDigiStory* can be accessed online at <http://youtu.be/4dM1r27yrZY>

The transcript for his *nDigiStory* can be found in the fourth chapter.

Miigwech. Miigwech. Miigwech. Miigwech.

Giwetashkad (Circle)

Having an *nDigiFest* is ceremony, coming full circle. We are connecting to each other surrounded by lots of prayers and good intentions. We are each healing in different ways at different levels. We try to include everyone in that circle that wants to participate. We invited the audience to participate in a conversation with the digital storytellers. We had several community members that engaged with the audience by walking up to the microphone at the afternoon

nDigiFest in November. The audience at the second *nDigiFest* did not have any questions or comments except for one woman who thanked Janice for telling her story because she had already felt an impact on her life, and a one question for Tim about the Internet. A survey was handed out to the audience before the *nDigiFest*. There were about seventy-five people in the audience and thirty-four people responded to the questions on the survey. This is how the audience chose to engage in the circle. I will share their insights and recommendations after I share the conversation from the *nDigiPanel*.

Originally our plan was to create a big story circle and invite everybody that came to the *nDigiFest* into the circle. Because of time and logistics that became impossible, so we settled for a semi-circle with the storytellers. We had a microphone that was hard-wired and needed to be closer to the speaker. The digital storytellers agreed to be on the panel and videotaped. The videotapes were transcribed. It was getting late and about half of the audience stayed to listen to the storytellers on the panel, which lasted approximately one half hour. The storytellers expanded beyond their introductions and talked about the process of making the stories; what they experienced emotionally, physically, mentally and spiritually; how they have shared their digital stories and how they plan to share them in the future. Carrie had to leave early, so she was unable to participate in the panel. She shared very poignant stories in the gathering with the first set of storytellers described in the *Theory of Truth* section of this chapter. I was glad that I had the chance to meet her husband before they left. We have had Facebook conversations since I left Michigan. She has shared her movie with family, on Facebook, YouTube, people she works with and she plans on sharing it this summer with people in a group counseling setting. She has been asked to participate in a documentary about her life, and she has high aspirations of helping her community. Healing is happening and opportunities are opening up for her because she

shared “her moment.” Thank you Carrie for the wonderful work you are doing and for bringing hope to others in this world. I can hear the rest of the panel anxiously waiting for us. A video link is provided below each storyteller’s conversation. Going from left to right we started with R.D.

R.D.: I’m glad its over, and now I get to share it with everybody. It was a long week. Like I said, up and down emotionally. Hopefully this will help somebody. I was in treatment 6 times. At one point, I was homeless, jobless, and familyless, that was my own doing, because I was so powerless. It’s hard to believe it’s going to be 23 years. I said that before. If you would have told me 23 years ago, RD, if you sober up, it’s going to be good. You going to be a counselor, you going to be on council. I would have told you to kiss my . . . you know, cause I wouldn’t believed you. It’s happened. It happened. It’s a good thing. It was not hard to call all these individuals. They are all good people. I’m blessed that I know them and they are in my life. And *Miigwech!* Access video clip *Media 5.18 RD’s nDigiFest Panel* online at http://youtu.be/JQR4uQ_Lu5k

Robert: Like everyone has said before it’s been an emotional rollercoaster. A lot of tears were shed, but there was a lot of laughter too. I mean, almost every night we were all holding our stomachs, hoping no one would tell another joke. [Laughter] [Audience laughter] My family on the drum and off the drum. They are huge supporters of the way I’m living now. And in my story, I said, it started in school. I didn’t think I would be this far as I am today. I figured, school project, pssh. [Laughter] But, I wouldn’t change this way of living, cause, this feels right to me. It feels, this is who I should be. A big thanks to my wife, my 2 daughters, my sister, my nieces, nephew, cousins, . . . aunties, uncles, everyone. Aho! *Miigwech.* Access clip *Media 5.19 Robert’s nDigiFest Panel 1* online at <http://youtu.be/8HdBR7d-fD8>

Marty: Ok, hum, what are doing, now? [Laughter] I was hoping my niece would be here. [She was] [Audience laughter] She was? [You didn’t come until she left] I’m glad these ladies are sticking around and planning on coming back again, I’ll have something planned for one of you guys again. [Laughter] [Audience laughing] But I’m highly grateful for this opportunity. She said she did one in a couple of days [Clara] cause she had an issue come up in her life that needed some addressing. I think this a good chance, this is a good time. I think if we learn more how to do this, we can do this on our own, we can do this anytime we want, not just when you guys come up, you know. But although it’s nice when you come up and visit us once a year. But, I would just like to say thank you, again. Access video clip *Media 5.20 Marty’s nDigiFest Panel* online at <http://youtu.be/xE-9PbeRBMM>

Donnie: *Boozhoo.* I was just telling this story the other day about, somebody was saying, well he’ll never change, he’ll never change, he’s a worthless drunk, worthless drug addict. And the job I got now, I got a lot of people talking about that way. I just tell them, I’m surrounded by miracles myself. From each and every one of these people, miracles, walking miracles. You seen by their stories, we were the dregs of society at one time. We’re out there teaching and walking the walk, talking the talk. All of that sobriety, we

have together, we have a lot of years right here. A lot of years in this room. I'm surrounded by brothers, nephews, and sisters. I love each and every one of them.

Miigwech for sharing. Aho! Access video clip *Media 5.21 Donnie's nDigiFest Panel 1* online at <http://youtu.be/o8pQDeR98jw>

Don: *Miigwech*. I thought when she said this was a gift certificate to a restaurant; I thought it would be for that restaurant in Albuquerque with the good tortillas. And I thought man, how are we going to get way out there? [Laughter] [Audience laughter] But thank you. It has been a wild ride this whole week, telling my story and going through some of them photo albums, got pretty hard at times, you know. It was a dark place to look through all of those pictures. Alcohol was in 'em all, you know. I wasn't enjoying it when I was doing it. So many emotions hit me. Anger, shame, pain. I almost felt like backing out at one point. But I know that my story isn't unique, you know. A lot of us up here have experienced the same thing. And like Marty said in his video, I thought I was destined to go to my grave drinking. You know, I thought that's just the just the way I thought it is. Quit trying to quit. But some how some way, there was another plan, and I'm very grateful and very grateful to be surrounded by all these people tonight.

Miigwech. Access video clip *Media 5.22 Don's nDigiFest Panel* online at <http://youtu.be/HQBEP4x5qW8>

Janice: *Boozhoo*. I just want to talk about my family. There are 10 of us children in our family. My sibling family, each and every one of us is sober today and we had one pass on and he was sober too. We are one strong family of sobriety. And to all my relatives out there, and I know I have a lot of them, with our children, and their children and their children. Some of them are parents, some of them are uncles, some of them are cousins still out there using and abusing. I sure hope you heard this message today because uncle and I are here. We are strong people that kept our sobriety for a long time. That's hard work. It just hurts my heart hearing, seeing. I hear everything. It's like my kids, you know, when they were young; by the way all my kids are sober too. My kids in my young days, they would say. Ma, how do you know those things? I have somebody telling me all the time, and I do, I'm a reformed social worker. So I know a lot about each and everyone of these families in the community. I'm not kidding you, It just comes to me, I'm sorry. I hope I don't hurt your feelings. I love you very, very much but we have a lot of drunks and drug addicts in our family. I'm one of them but I'm a survivor and you can be too, and lead a good life. Thank God for my kids, you know. I did that basically to do my amends. I dedicated that whole film to my kids, my 3 kids. They are the ones that put up with me through that awful young life that I was leading. And then when I sobered up, it was the same thing, they had to see ma healing. Well, heck, I'm trying to give them the best life they have now, I'm dedicated. My daughters aren't here but my son is and I'm very, very grateful. *Chi Miigwech*. Access video clip *Media 5.23 Janice's nDigiFest Panel 1* online at <http://youtu.be/vb1sZ2SbVPM>

Tim: Ditto [laughter] [audience laughing], what she said. This was an amazing week. I got to tell a little story about my computer guru that helped me with my program, sister Linda. [Laughter] [Audience laughter] As you know, I didn't have a lot of pictures, so we do a lot of searching on the Internet for pictures we put in our thing. So, we were talking

about nuns, Catholic Church, and spankings that I got. So Linda gets on the computer and the guru she is and puts spanking nun in the search engine, [audience laughter] it wasn't pretty [audience laughter]. I would still be in Catholic school if . . . Not only was I scared by the spankings and other stuff, I'm scared by that website. [Laughter] [Audience laughter] Oh, but God it was fantastic. I appreciate all these ladies but Linda was my person who worked with me a lot on the computer. We had a very enjoyable time, I think. It made the week go by fast. Like all these people on this panel or whatever you want to call it. Yea, I'm proud to be a part of this group. They are just great. I hope more of you can follow this way. It's a beautiful way of life. I enjoy this way of life and I don't look back. Since now, I'm moving forward on with this forever. So thank you for everyone that's being here. I thank you for all my row of supporters. My children are the ones far away . . . so they couldn't be here tonight, but I know they are here in spirit. But I have a lot of my other sisters, are all here, and nieces. I appreciate them being here. Again Miigwech. My four new sisters, 3 from New Mexico anyways and 1 from Peshawbestown. So maybe we'll run into each other at Myers in Traverse City some day. Outta girl. Ok, *Miigwech*, thank you very much. Access Video Clip Media 5.24 Tim's *nDigiFest* Panel 1 online at <http://youtu.be/vstZXXRK3GM>

Jerry Lee: You noticed in my story. The scene where I was talking about that relationship, not with the alcohol but with that woman that I was involved with. I didn't talk about that when I did my 5th step or even when I was in treatment. I just buried it. If I didn't touch it or go there, then I wouldn't have to worry about it. That wasn't the case when we sat out there and started talking about the things that we did, you know. I didn't know how hard it was that I was trying to maybe hide that or didn't want to go there and touch it. But my sister Janice, the thing she went through and the way she was disclosing some of those things. That's why I figured to stand and touch on them things, the deep hurt I was going through. I didn't know I was hiding it. You know, in a direct way. I just thought, well, geez, if I don't talk about it, it won't be there. That's not the case. When Janice started talking about her story. How long has it been since she had a peace of mind I guess. Some true serenity. Until she was set free, until she spoke about that tragedy, she didn't have any freedom, I guess. Full freedom. And that was my same case with me, but I didn't know until I heard her talking about that.

There's that scene when I was starting to walk across that bridge. Carmella was following me with the camera. [Carmella: I'm always following Jerry] You're following everybody. [Audience laughing] But anyway, I crossed that bridge and then I went right back to this place I've been with this lady when she first moved here. I was totally gone. I don't know where I went from the time I crossed that bridge to the time I got back to that cabin. I had some tobacco, some Asema in my hand. But I was dealing with some inner feelings there and she was filming this, and I didn't even know she was there, I just kept walking, but then I got back by to the cabin, and I heard somebody behind me. It was her. And that's how focused I was if you want to say that. I went back to that place that I didn't want to be. But thanks to my sister over there, her courage and her strength, I was able to do that. I hate using this word closure, but I had some resolve there with my own feelings. It's something I buried for a long time because of the hurt, and I can't say I compare to the stuff that Janice was going through, but, she opened that door for me, all

these guys talking about their stories, you get some inner strength, so that's what I want to tell you, some of the guys that are here now, maybe struck with something, whatever that may be. You got to deal with it, handle it. Don't carry it around; don't keep that baggage there. I thought I was good for 20 years, but I didn't know how good I was until I let that crap go. It's a just a powerful feeling, but to be unaware of it, and just go, its like, I was in a time warp. I went back about 20 years. A 30-minute walk, 20-minute walk, stopped and prayed, stopped and prayed. But now, I feel free. The things you got to do that you don't want to do. You live in this life that is where you get your strength from. I just pray everyday that these little ones, or these ones that are just entering treatment that they don't have to go through what we did. Take what you've got and run with it. If it's your first time, or your sixth time, your seventh time, put that crap down and live the good life. That's all I can say. I wouldn't trade this for anything. If somebody would come in that door right now and said here, and I give you a million dollars and take this and drink a beer. I know there wouldn't have to be a choice. I wouldn't have to think about it. That's the way I feel. It's just a new life and a new way of living. Being around that drum. I know enough not to be around the cultural, the circle when you are using. I didn't know how much I missed it, how much I learned, and continue to learn. It's just brings a peace of mind, there is a certain serenity that comes with that drum in the circle and living a sober and drug free life. You can't explain it unless you live it, unless you feel it yourself. Don't carry that baggage around. It will tear you up. Let it go. *Miigwech*. Access video clip *Media 5.25 Jerry Lee's nDigiFest Panel 1* online at <http://youtu.be/W0bnfTkdnNo>

Robert: The first person I shared it with was my wife and my daughters. [Laughter] I tried to get as many people that I could that have been a part of my life here tonight. And the ones I was hoping were going to show up didn't. I want to make copies of the disc [DVD] that I have and present it to them, so they can watch it by themselves. That tragedy really affected me [losing a friend to suicide]. I felt like a part of me died when he walked on. And I know the family, and they are still hurting right now, and I understand why they didn't show up because they haven't healed yet. I do plan on sharing this video with other people. Maybe doing it on Facebook, or YouTube, or even ATR. I said, go ahead use my video for whatever purposes you need it for as long as it helps somebody. *Miigwech*. Access video clip *Media 5.26 Robert's nDigiFest Panel 2* online at <http://youtu.be/Xb46Tqxf72k>

Tim: Can you repeat the question? [Audience laughter] I want to take this show on the road. We got nine strong people here. I would really love to go with these people to different reservations or any places and put these stories up and show these stories. Invite people in and have them see these stories and show that there is hope. There are a lot of different scenarios here that touched lots and lots of different people in the same way that we affected people's lives with drugs and alcohol and addictions. So, I can't make movies, but use the movies you guys made for us. Hopefully that can still touch people and help somebody get clean and sober. So that's what I plan on doing. They could put it on Facebook if they want, I don't know anything about it. You are welcome to do it. My wife can put it for her or whatever. But we talk about that, are going to see technology today, you put that on Facebook and just imagine the people that are going to see you get

clean. These stories are inspirational. So, that's what I plan on doing. So, pack your bags. [Laughter] [Storyteller-let's get a grant] We get a grant and we have a trailer to live in [laughter] and it has an outside kitchen, so I'm in Heaven. [Audience member, I think this is great especially for the younger ones.] Yeah, but he's the only young one, but the rest of us are all old. [Audience member, you don't look old] Anything, if I get requests somehow or if we get requests. I want us to go and bring these stories out. Well let's do it. It will be exciting to do it. [Storyteller-Spanking nuns.com] spanking nuns.com [audience laughter] sister Linda [audience laughing] I'll tell you what. I was embarrassed. I was embarrassed [audience laughing] to speak. More times than I can remember. And I'm harder than heck to get embarrassed. But some of the things Carmella was bringing out this weekend. Goodness gracious, I turned as red as those chairs. [Audience laughter][Audience member: Are you going to visit that site again?] Don't look at my favorites. [Laughter] We are laughing like this. I'll tell you, this group right here, oh my God, that's all we do. When we are around that drum, it's just I can't describe how much love, laughter, joy and hope is around, when these guys are here. It's just fantastic. Get involved with your culture. Be proud of who you are. Get rid of them drugs and alcohol. They make our minds goofy so . . . I better stop talking. Access video clip *Media 5.27 Tim's nDigiFest Panel 2* online at <http://youtu.be/WaTleA1WvGM>

Donnie: You asked how we were going to get them out there. We actually talked a little bit with Carrie and the talent she has. I don't like talking about somebody that's not here and she's not but I think she would appreciate it. We actually talked about making her own storytelling, and since our November movie making ordeal, KBIC in their infinite wisdom put me in a position that maybe we can do that now. Hopefully we can start our own with that spark that the fire keeper over there was taking about. Make that fire a little bit bigger and stronger in everybody's heart. Miigwech. And stop that drinking. Access video clip *Media 5.28 Donnie's nDigiFest Panel 2* online at <http://youtu.be/GNBboykRFCg>

Janice: How I shared my story was through my family. We watched it together. Paul has this great big screen. I gave permission to the girls to put it on ATR and all through out the United States. I have gotten feedback on some of that, and they were amazed. It was amazing. They thanked me so much. The people in the community that have seen it. My real thing is, because I'm in a precious program right now, I'm really grateful for. I going to retreat next weekend and I plan on bringing that to share with my fellowship of compulsive overeaters. [Smiling excitedly] I just wanted to let you know that. I really liked Tim's idea and my brother trying to put that together. Also, Carrie, because, I don't know if any of you know this but Carrie made that herself and got a few hints from the girls that she really needed. So she's done this before, and she did it on her own. She did a really magnificent job. I wish she was here so we could thank her personally. *Chi Miigwech* for being here. Access video clip *Media 5.29 Janice's nDigiFest Panel 2* online at <http://youtu.be/d1OBYsI8Y54>

Figure 5.4. nDigiFest nDigiPanel of storytellers. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.



Chi Miigwech, for joining the storyteller panel (Figure 5.4)! I hope you found it interesting and inspirational. Now, I'm going to share the audience responses to the digital stories and *nDigiFest* through the Digital Story-sharing survey. The survey was anonymous and contained five open-ended questions to carry the emerging conversational theme. A sample of the Digital Story-sharing survey is listed in the Appendix D. The audience was intergenerational and many families were present. Clara handed out the survey with a mechanical pencil to each audience member who was seated. People who came after the presentation began did not receive a survey. The audience sat quietly and attentively watching and listening to each storyteller and their movie. Everyone involved with the digital story gatherings has a voice and makes an important contribution to understanding how to make the "recipe" and share the stew. The audience did not engage in verbal conversation, but they did engage by filling out the survey. Let's join their conversation so we can hear what they were feeling and thinking as they were watching their own community present digital stories. Our prayers are for everyone including the audience members. So, just like the storytellers, we must open our hearts and listen to the audience too. I think it is important to review all the responses in order to gain a broader understanding of the audience. After watching the digital stories, one audience member listed personal contact information on the survey. That person is interested in bringing digital storytelling to their tribe. Personal information from the audience members will not be published.

Tables 5.1–5.5 contain the survey responses that were gathered at the end of the second community screening or *nDigiFest*. The tables are color coordinated by question:

- Table 5.1 (blue) contains the responses for the first question in the survey: *What did you experience after watching the digital stories?*
- Table 5.2 (pink) contains the responses for the second question in the survey: *Do you think digital storytelling can be beneficial to your community?*
- Table 5.3 (green) contains the responses for the third question in the survey: *Did you learn something from the stories that will be helpful to you?*
- Table 5.4 (mauve) contains the responses for the fourth question in the survey: *What other ways could digital stories be shared?*
- Table 5.5 (orange) contains the responses for the fifth question in the survey: *Is there anything else you would like to share?*

Table 5.1

nDigiFest Story-Sharing Survey Responses for Question 1

1. What did you experience after watching the digital stories?
An overwhelming sense of "wow" towards the very brave and very special people who shared their stories. Wow! God bless them and you for working at and wanting to help others. Thank you.
A heartfelt relief that I am not alone & sadness at the pain the storytellers went through.
Sadness to see the affects that drugs & alcohol have on our people but it's important that the young see the turmoil that our people have gone through-hopefully they can see that recovery is a good thing!
Pain, recognition, hope, joy - never give up. Pray to the Creator.
Warmth & Admiration & Hope! So happy that these storytellers had the courage to tell their stories.
It made me look @ my own addictions.
Relief - when I did mine it was pretty scary & I had a lot of support & love.
Unity, motivation.
Unity, motivation!

1. What did you experience after watching the digital stories?
They were addicted to alcohol.
Blank
I experienced strength and hope to battle my addiction issues after watching the stories of my brothers and sisters.
It's comforting to know you're not alone w/this bad thing that robs us of our life and hurts so many, so bad, for so long. It gives you hope.
Thought's that these people's stories might help someone struggling with addiction.
I like it. I'd like to do one, so far I'm 8 m.Hhs sober/clean.
New found deep meaning to recovery, specially seeing family share.
Gave me a little peace to know how everyone gave it all.
That everybody has a story of their own. That everybody is unique and an individual. That everybody has a gift of helping by sharing.
Good advice & direction for struggling people.
Very emotional, eye opener
That not to drink and when they say I want & they do.
I could relate to a lot of the stories, helped to really see who they are and where they came from the hard times they went through.
A lot about addiction.
Emotional and amazed. Each story hit me with warmth for each one of my brothers & sister.
I'm a recovering alcoholic - I could relate to each story.
Hope, faith, never to give up.
Like my story. I went through the same.
A desire to be as strong as they are and hope for the red road for my children.
Blank
Grateful for sobriety.
As a recovering addict, I saw my own story in so many of the videos. I laughed and cried, I felt shame for my own indiscretions and pride for all the accomplishments. I have wanted to tell my own story and I now feel inspired to do so! Finally, I feel thankful!
Hope, that even though some people's lives have hit rock bottom they have stood up and rose above it all to create better lives for themselves.
There is hope for everyone who wants & needs help.

1. What did you experience after watching the digital stories?

A sense of hope. Gratitude for the storytellers and the group that came to help make the movies for sharing.
--

Table 5.2

nDigiFest Story-Sharing Survey Responses for Question 2

2. Do you think digital storytelling can be beneficial to your community?
--

Yes, I think digital storytelling would be beneficial for my sister, and her friends. Maybe she'll think of this, because she was here too.

Yes, it is helpful in grasping the attention of younger generations. Also helpful to people that need audio & visual learning.
--

Yes, it would be lovely to record our Elder stories.
--

Very much so. The customs & language is dying out to fast. With todays technology we must keep & record all elder teachings before it is to late. Also kids today are being engulfed with technology via DVDs, CDs, cell phones,
--

Yes, It helps those who watch realize they share some of the same feelings as the storytellers.

Blank

Yes. History-making w/individuals. Help another w/their lives.
--

Yes, these videos tell all about yourself.
--

Yes! These were so beautiful.

Yes, because it will help all the people that are addicted to alcohol.
--

Yes, they could help us youth.

Blank

Yes, definitely. That's how we grow by sharing our life w/others that also how we learn.
--

Yes, the stories are uplifting and can give hope to those who are feeling hopeless and helpless.
--

Yes.

Yes, relate very well w/others specially those in need.

Yes! Maybe the younger generations will realize what it does to them.

Yes. A small community like ours where "everybody knows each other" has a better affect personally to individuals.
--

Yes. Personal experiences are more meaningful. Easier to relate.
--

2. Do you think digital storytelling can be beneficial to your community?
Yes, because it'll help the younger generation.
NO
Yes. To show other people they are not alone that still struggle everyday with all kinds of addictions. Showing are young. People its not fun all the time to party.
Yes. It would help the youth & the people who use now
Yes. If one person can relate to one of the storytellers or he able to save them.
Yes, but I think these events could use more promotion. A lot more people needed to be here.
Yes, they can be used with are youth and other adults.
Yes
Yes, it is quite inspirational, give hope. Presents that there is a problem and takes it out of the closet.
Yes, My Tribe is in the process of actually developing a treatment facility for our people which I think should be completed within the next year or so. We definitely suffer from a lot of alcoholism in our tribal community. Sharing
Yes, a story not told is a story not heard.
I see how digital storytelling has helped my small circle of acquaintances, family and friends, the community at large is found to gain from it as well. Bring the community together.
These will be very beneficial. These stories will show others struggling with addiction or substance abuse that they are not alone and that there is always help out there.
Yes, it shows that people need people, if it helps just one person its worth all the work the people that did their stories worth while.
It would be inspirational for community members to see the stories.

Table 5.3

nDigiFest Story-Sharing Survey Responses for Question 3

3. Did you learn something from the stories that will be helpful to you?
Yes. I learned about the pain that others have endured, and how they have made it through. God Bless.
Yes. I'm not alone, there is other people in the same town even going through similar struggles with addiction. There is hope & people can overcome.
Yes. Heart warming stories from our Elders.
Yes. Never give up.
Yes. To accept my faults, use my beliefs to overcome them one day at a time. (There is always hope!)

3. Did you learn something from the stories that will be helpful to you?
Yes.
Yes. Telling my story in a story book setting.
Yes.
Yes. I am not alone. It's ok to feel.
Yes. It will help me not drink.
Yes. Your not by yourself if you have a problem.
Blank
Yes. I shared the same feeling w/ a number of the participants. I am given help for my own recovery.
Yes.
Yes. I'm not alone.
Yes. deep meaningful
Yes.
Yes. You grow a larger respect knowing a part of somebody's life.
Yes. It gives me hope to hang in there for others I am trying to help.
Yes. It inspires me to keep sober.
Yes. It is because that most of them say I'm not going to drink but they end up to and they end up in jail.
Yes. that you can overcome these addictions
Yes. With there addictions. How it helps me.
Yes.
Yes. Recovery is possible for all addicts
Yes. To not give up hope, that family will be there if you need them!
Yes. Broke the mare's back
Yes. That everybody has their struggles even those who came from sober homes.
Yes. They're all touching and I truly believe all of them when they say that they're living a lot better life and feel more at piece with themselves

3. Did you learn something from the stories that will be helpful to you?
Yes. how strong our people are
Yes!! Courage is only taking a step. These men and women are normal and yet heroic. We all have our heroic stories to tell!!
Yes. I never realized there were so many recovery treatment centers in our community. These stories showed me that there is always help to those who want and need it.
Yes. All the storytellers are awesome. Takes a lot of courage.
Blank

Table 5.4

nDigiFest Story-Sharing Survey Responses for Question 4

4. What other ways could digital stories be shared?
To high schools?
Online: YouTube, Facebook, online blogs, twitter
Shared outside of the Indian community; HISTORY classes; televised on "Indian Report" - PBS Channel 13 (a flower drawing on the left side)
Upload to Internet: Facebook, u-tube, twitter, blogs, slide shows for schools etc...
Blank
Blank
Home, on videos, community events, treatment.
Tell what you use to do.
Blank
Facebook, twitter.
and as community
Blank
on DVD, I guess.
Social media, DVD, CDs, Websites
YouTube, facebook, AA/NA (Native American Church) Meetings
Long

4. What other ways could digital stories be shared?
Some of this would help see what this does to them when they indulge
I think an open public presentation like this is very personal and emotional, gets the point across
Blank
on the computer
They could be shared in booths in concert
YouTube, Facebook
Movies, DVD, Internet
Internet, Education in schools & treatment centers
This forum was good
There treatment centers, schools
do more the same
Sharing with our family members who weren't able to be here
Maybe traveling conferences
internationally
YouTube, facebook, through the seeding of the community perhaps others will be inspired to create and talk-tell more stories.
More through social media sites as well as showing them in treatment centers for others to see
More presentations like this one
Blank

Table 5.5

nDigiFest Story-Sharing Survey Responses for Question 5

5. Is there anything else you would like to share?
Thank you for this amazing experience! I'm honored to have been able to witness the stories. Thank you!

Thank you for starting something so personal & helpful in helping to fight addiction & the people who suffer everyday, struggling to just live life with the demon addiction in the back of their mind trying to get let out.
Blank
Our customs; language is very important. I am wondering how to reach those that need help- my brother & father lost the fight... my two nephews also. Kids today need so much help. I believe this is a beginning a very good beginning. Thank you for giving me hope.
I really enjoyed this evening.
This was a very enjoyable evening!
I loved to it. One remarkable experience ever. I'm glad I did it. Chi-miigwech girls.
Blank
These were beautiful.
No
Nope
Blank
Chi Megwetch
Blank
No
Thank you, means a lot, I am about to graduate from New Day treatment.
No! Just that I am glad I attended this. I enjoyed the evening.
Megwetch for this experience. Again.
No.
I'm a alcoholic and drug addict.
No.
I enjoyed watching these stories
I've been sober for 3 years
Blank
The person & the story together makes a difference

Blank
Blank
I am grateful for what has been done here
I truly believe my tribe would be really interested in partaking in this sobriety storytelling that you ladies have created. I'm not exactly sure who should be contacted within my tribe. I'm currently under going treatment here in Maybe have sage on hand to help people who get emotional
Thank you Brenda, Carmella, Clara & Linda for taking time to do this project! Freedom is possible! (smiley face)
This is a wonderful thing you are doing for so many people.
Good luck & God Bless all the storytellers
Blank

I was breathless after I read the responses. I kept thinking about one in particular, “a story not told is a story not heard.” I thought about the twelve hundred people we have helped make a digital story. Some of them have passed into the spirit world, but I still remember our conversations, or the times they had a tear falling down their cheek or the big smile on their faces when they saw their digital story on the big screen or the embrace we shared before they left the workshop and the very simple words, “thank you.” The three to four days we have traveled with our storytellers sometimes cannot be described by written words or even videotape. The relationships created between one another will last a lifetime. I am grateful! That is why I call them my *nDigiBrothers* and *nDigiSisters*. We are *nDigiFamily*!

Chi Miigwech for taking the time to listen to the many voices on these pages. *Chi Miigwech* to all the storytellers that stepped forward to make their stories heard. *Chi Miigwech* to the Aqua Girls/co-researchers/*nDigiSisters*. *Chi Miigwech* to our Desert Trio *nDigiSister*. *Chi Miigwech* to all the people that traveled on this journey with us. *Chi Miigwech* to all the places that welcomed us, the Eagles that flew over us, the rainbows that appeared, the plants and

animals that fed us, the water that nurtured our thirst, the thunder beings, and the Four Thunders Drum.

Zhawanoog (South Direction)

The tribal council was having a special meeting the day after the *nDigiFest* and they invited us to join them for breakfast. The meeting was in the *Chippewa* Conference Room, the same place we had the second digital storytelling workshop. I stayed up late packing all the equipment for our trip back to Peshawbestown, another eight-hour drive. We were determined to see our digital storytellers one more time at breakfast, so the *Desert Trio* and one *Aqua Girl* got up early to make sure we were not late. Brenda led the way to the tribal building outside the casino hotel. We followed her like little ducklings into the building, but it was dark inside and no one was in the building. Then we saw one of our *nDigiStorytellers* walk into the casino hotel so we lined up and followed him like little ducklings. Sure enough, tribal members were filling up the *Chippewa* Conference Room and the council was preparing for their meeting at the front of the room. Our favorite restaurant had prepared a buffet breakfast, and we were ready to eat again! Before the meeting started, we saw many of our digital storytellers and gave them morning hugs. One in particular stood two feet taller and had a glow about him as if weight was lifted from his shoulders. He gave us a big hug and said, “*Boozhoo.*” We finished eating and stayed for a few minutes after the meeting started. It started with prayers from the Four Thunders Drum. Silently I told the drum good morning and *Chi Miigwech!* Then we headed out, loaded *nDigiChidi* and drove off into the sunset . . . just kidding, we drove to the bay hoping to see one last iceberg. Can you tell we are from the Southwest? No wonder, Tim called us the *Desert Trio*. Linda, Brenda, Clara, and I walked to the water and made an offering of tobacco, and then we turned to the shore and we were greeted with small chunks of ice (Figure 5.5).

Figure 5.5. Water offering.
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nDigiDreams.



We headed south and made one more stop before Traverse City, at the *Odawa* Casino Resort, owned by the Little Traverse Bay Bands of *Odawa* Indians. It's a beautiful resort just under three hundred thousand square feet. Linda asked us if we would like to see it. We all wanted to check out the gift shop, so we said, "Yes." As we were walking into the back of the turtle, I asked the doorman if he would take a picture with us?" He said, "sure." Brenda took the camera, and the rest of us jumped in the picture. I wanted to take a picture with him because he was dressed like a security guard, and we had been teasing the whole trip about needing an Indian lawyer. He was really tall, and he was dressed in black all day. I didn't realize that I was in direct correlation to his left armpit. Needless to say we quickly took that picture. Next, we took a ride up the escalators to grab a cup of coffee, but the coffee shop was closed so we walked down the corridor of the hotel and Brenda recognized one of the women in a photograph that was on display and she said, "Hey Linda, who is this, she looks familiar?" It was Linda's grandmother. We remembered her from the pictures Linda used in her digital story. Several hours later we were hungry again! We had dinner in Traverse City and dropped off Linda at home and the next day we dropped Clara off at the airport to fly back to New Mexico, and we rested for the remainder of the day. After our day of rest, we spent three days reviewing the pilot and final study documentation with our co-researchers.

When the co-researchers that did not trail with us to KBIC in May had tears in their eyes when they heard the additional *nDigiStories* and conversations from the *nDigiPanel*, in that moment we all knew how the information we collected from the study needed to be interpreted. We had to continue the presence of ceremony, spiritual continuity, relationality, and cultural teachings by way of the *Anishinaabe-Ojibwa* world-view. It's a world-view that could appropriately guide us to look deeper at the digital storytelling experience, for meaning-making with *Anishinaabe-Ojibwa* tribal communities.

But before we move on to the sixth chapter to look at the interpretation of the study, I want to rewind a few minutes before the Four Thunders Drum closed the community screening with the *AIM Song*. I want to honor all the storytellers that participated in the digital storytelling process and close the circle. After the *nDigiPanel*, the KBIC storytellers honored us with gifts. Donnie made sure we opened our gifts before the evening was over.

Donnie: We would like to present some gifts to four amazing women that helped us bring our stories out. We had the stories inside of us but you ladies brought it out, with the help of our family and friends. You pulled it out of us. It takes a lot of courage for you all to help us and help our people that way, which is very amazing. *Miigwech*.



Media 5.30. Closing Ceremony (*nDigiDreams*, LLC, 2014).

Access the closing of the ceremony video clip *Media 5.30 Closing Ceremony* online at <http://youtu.be/m66Sd1VioKQ>

Chi Miigwech for being present in the ceremony with us. Let's give thanks to these beautiful storytellers one more time (Figure 5.6).



Figure 5.6. KBIC *nDigiStorytellers*. Reprinted with permission of *nDigiDreams*.

In the sixth chapter—Finding *Mino-Bimaadiziwin: The Good Life*—I will present the interpretation of the pilot and final study.

Finding *Mino-Bimaadiziwin*: The Good Life

The Great Flood

The first people lived together in harmony with all of the Creation. The moment came when men and women fell out of respect, quarreling, arguing, brother against brother. It saddened the Creator, *Gitchie Manito*. With no hope left, he decided to purify the Earth. A flood came upon the Earth.

(Silence)

Waynaboozhoo, the spirit of the *Anishinaabe* saved himself by resting on a giant log. Other animals found their way to the log too, taking turns to rest. *Waynaboozhoo* swam to the bottom of the water to grab a handful of Earth, hoping to create a new land with the help of the Four Winds and *Gitchie Manito*. He never reached bottom because the water was too deep. The loon tried, then the helldiver, mink, otter, and even the turtle. It was hopeless; no living thing could reach the bottom. The muskrat stepped forth, "I'll try." Everybody laughed at him.

Waynaboozhoo told everyone, "It is not our place to judge." The muskrat dived down. He was gone for a long time, too long! He eventually floated to the surface. *Waynaboozhoo* said, "Our little brother is gone." They all sang a song of mourning and praise as his spirit passed to the next world.

"Look," spoke *Waynaboozhoo*. "He has something in his paw." Muskrat sacrificed his life to begin anew on the Earth. *Waynaboozhoo* put the piece of Earth on the turtle's back. The wind began to blow from all Four Directions. The tiny piece of Earth grew and grew, sitting in the middle of the great water.

Waynaboozhoo began to sing a song, and all the animals danced in a circle around the growing island, Turtle Island. (Interpreted from Benton-Banai, 1988, pp. 29–33)

We [humanity] were born into "the good life" and sometimes we trip, sometimes we fall, and like the muskrat we dive deep into the water and make sacrifices, but when we finally emerge, we find "the good life" again. And share what we brought back. Eight *Anishinaabe Keweenaw* Bay Indian Community tribal members and one *Anishinaabe* tribal member from the Sault Ste. Marie Tribe of *Chippewa* Indians shared what they brought back. In their hearts, they carried wisdom, love, respect, bravery, honesty, humility, and truth. Through *nDigiStorytelling* they traveled viscerally into the past to reflect about recovery from alcohol and drugs, and then

came into the present to share their experience of living clean and sober, continuing to live the way of *Mino-Bimaadiziwin*. Through the “soul-wind,” they brought something that was of great value to all the people; they brought back healing and hope. Together, we sang a song, around the Four Thunders Drum, a song that symbolizes not just the journey of surviving, but also the journey of thriving.

This short video clip *Media 6.1 nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model* illustrates the process of how *nDigiStorytelling* has helped storytellers to keep the fire burning within, healing and having hope. This clip was a collaborative effort by the *nDigiDreamers*: Eva, Terri, Linda, Arlene, Brenda, and Carmella. Click on the link to watch the clip.

<http://youtu.be/4LxSHZQ1Pm0>



Media 6.1. nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model (Kashata, Petoskey, Woods, Tavenner, Rodriguez, Manuelito, 2014). Permission granted by the co-producers. See Appendix H.

In the fourth chapter, we listened to the first set of *nDigiStorytellers* from the pilot study tell us how their *nDigiStories* had an influence on themselves and the people that watched their movies.

In the fifth chapter, we listened to the second set of *nDigiStorytellers* from the final study tell us how their *nDigiStories* had an influence on themselves and the people that watched their movies.

In this chapter, I will be presenting an interpretation of the information that was gathered during the “story-sharing” process of this research study. In a complementary dissertation, Brenda Manuelito painted literary portraits about the “story-making” process of creating *nDigiStories*. It is my hope that this dissertation created a deeper understanding about *nDigiStorytelling* through the “story-sharing” process.

Introduction

I approached this study using an Indigenous framework that asserts that story is central to the functioning of Indigenous communities (Episkenew, 2009). Words are spoken with a sacred breath and intention; they are alive (Dufrene & Coleman, 1994; Einhorn, 2000; Garrouette & Westcott, 2013; Lewis, 2011; Silko, 1986). Stories invite the ancestors and weave the future; sharing stories are considered sacred and powerful, and they have a healing influence (Banks-Wallace, 2002; Silko, 1986). I used a Community Based Participatory Research approach, with a group of Anishinaabe tribal members from Michigan. Together we engaged in the process of selecting the site, co-designing the process, co-facilitating the *nDigiStorytelling* workshops, co-presenting at the community screenings, and interpreting the information from this study. Their involvement ensured that we grounded ourselves in their language, philosophies, values and ethical principles that were respectful and meaningful, and there was an opportunity for their tribal communities to benefit from the study. I performed a phenomenological study to enhance our understanding of what the storytellers experienced when they shared their *nDigiStories* and the people that watched them. I used research methods such as

performance ethnography, relational autoethnography, and performative writing to allow a conversational tone and privilege the voices of the storytellers, their community, and co-researchers.

All together, nine storytellers produced ten *nDigiStories*. Information was gathered from the stories, group and individual interviews (talking circle gathering, *nDigiFest* introductions, *nDigiFest* panel); phone, email, text and social media conversations; and surveys. They agreed to be audio and videotaped throughout the entire process for both “story-making” and “story-sharing” process. They also gave permission for the media recordings to be a part of this dissertation as well as usage of their personal names.

Emerging Research Design

Three-days after the second community screening in Baraga, Brenda and I met with our co-researchers in Peshawbestown, Michigan. We brought the love, gifts, *nDigiStories*, video and audio clips, surveys, debriefing notes, and notebooks to our three-day gathering.

On the first day, everyone brought healthy snacks to eat and Arlene brought a full-size cooker full of wild rice soup for lunch. Terri and Cassie (Border Collie) drove all the way from Pickford, near Sault Ste. Marie, Michigan; Linda and Arlene drove thirty minutes from Traverse City and Brenda and I walked several hundred feet from Eva’s tree house. We started our morning with hugs, smiles and warm conversations and then everybody moved to the living-area graciously provided by Eva. Brenda, Linda and I were a bit tired from the *Ekwo-Niishing Maawnjidwin* but we were excited to share with everyone about the experience. Eva was the only one we had talked to about the final outcome. Terry and Arlene couldn’t wait to hear about it too. We started our gathering with a ceremony and then Brenda presented the information she collected about the “story-making” process from the workshops and interactions with the KBIC

tribal members. Even though everyone had seen the first set of *nDigiStories* made in November, we showed them again. On the second day of our gathering, I presented the information I collected about the “story-sharing” process and showed the community screening video introductions and panel. On the third day we discussed future implications of the research study. This may seem like a short timeline for interpretation, but we have been having dialogical interactions interpreting digital storytelling with our co-researchers since 2011, before they became our co-researchers.

The emerging research design developed from the participatory aspect of the study, and it was based on collaboration with our co-researchers. Eva has been involved for some time with developing prevention programs that incorporate Indigenous methodologies. After listening to the stories and observing the influence that sharing of the stories had on the storytellers, we all agreed that the interpretation of the study needed to remain within an Indigenous framework that started the initiative. As well stated, “The time has come for Indigenous Peoples to develop and assert the use of our own research methodologies—ones that honour our cultures and traditions” (Goudreau, Weber-Pillwax, Cote-Meek, Madill, & Wilson, 2008, p. 74.). Thus, it was appropriate to use cultural teachings of the *Anishinaabe* to interpret the information from the pilot and final study.

We had lengthy discussions about how all things around us are imbued with spirit, are living, and subject to constant change (Little Bear, 2000). Collectively, we recognized that *nDigiStories* are a living entity, have a spirit, and even acknowledge the ancestors. According to both the Diné and *Anishinaabe* belief systems, our breath is sacred; it is our “sacred wind,” our “soul-wind.” When we breathe our “soul-wind” into our stories, they are birthed having a spirit, and they carry the intention of our thoughts (Schwarz, 1997) and hearts. Petoskey (1992) has

explained, “Stories are alive. Stories have a life of their own. That’s how they work. . . . Stories come alive when you tell them” (p. 9). Our co-researchers helped us look at the deeper meaning of *Mino-Bimaadiziwin*, “the good life.” To understand the meaning of any word or phrase, we must understand where it derived from including the people, community, culture, history and the place. Arlene contacted Rhonda Hopkins (*Odawa-Ojibwa*), an *Anishinaabemowin* fluent language speaker from *Wikwemikong*. Rhonda graciously provided the meaning of *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* for us, explaining the following:

‘Mino’ – means ‘good’ (state of being), now you can take the ‘min’ from the proverb of ‘mino’ and that ‘min’ is the ‘seed.’

‘Bi-maadiziwin’ – means ‘life,’ remembering the ‘bi’ part is addressing the ‘spirit.’ The ‘maadizi’ part is the ‘movement.’ Think about it, what gives you life? Well, you can’t have ‘movement’ without something that gives you that life so you can equate that to your breath, your heart, from everything that is within you. The ‘win’ part makes the whole word a noun.

The *Anishinaabe* practice *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* on a daily basis and use the *Anishinaabe* Seven Grandfather Teachings as a guide on how to conduct themselves with others. The testimonials from the storytellers succinctly conveyed the *Anishinaabe* Seven Grandfather Teachings. Using the *Anishinaabe* Seven Grandfather Teachings to interpret the information would benefit the community because the research can be described using a way of life and value system that is familiar versus a non-Native system that is not. What better way to explain the relationships, the trust, humor, food, family, the network of connections (Grandma Rita’s Web), the gift giving and the love that was built along the way, but through the same teachings.

In the introduction, I introduced *nDigiStorytelling* through the Diné Cornstalk Teachings and the *nDigiStorytelling* Four Directions Approach. This model of digital storytelling privileges Indigenous ways of knowing. Relationality, spirituality and ceremony (prayers) are foundational principles that are practiced throughout the *nDigiStorytelling* process extending from the

“story-making” into the “story-sharing” and back. As part of this holistic point of view, each person is born into the “good life” and has a spirit and may fall out of balance anytime during the levels of maturity of growing older. Often times they will find themselves relying on family, community, and cultural teachings, such as the Seven Grandfather Teachings, to re-establish harmony and balance. The Seven Grandfather Teachings are spiritual gifts and work best when used in conjunction with the others. In the fifth chapter, Linda spoke about how the *Anishinaabe* people’s spiritual ways are their foundation of life, and it is that which has helped them survive for centuries. The Seven Grandfather Teachings are listed below in Figure 6.1. We agreed upon using Benton-Banai’s (1988) interpretation of the Seven Grandfather Teachings from his book, “*The Mishomis Book, The voice of the Ojibwa*” (p. 4) for the interpretation of this study.

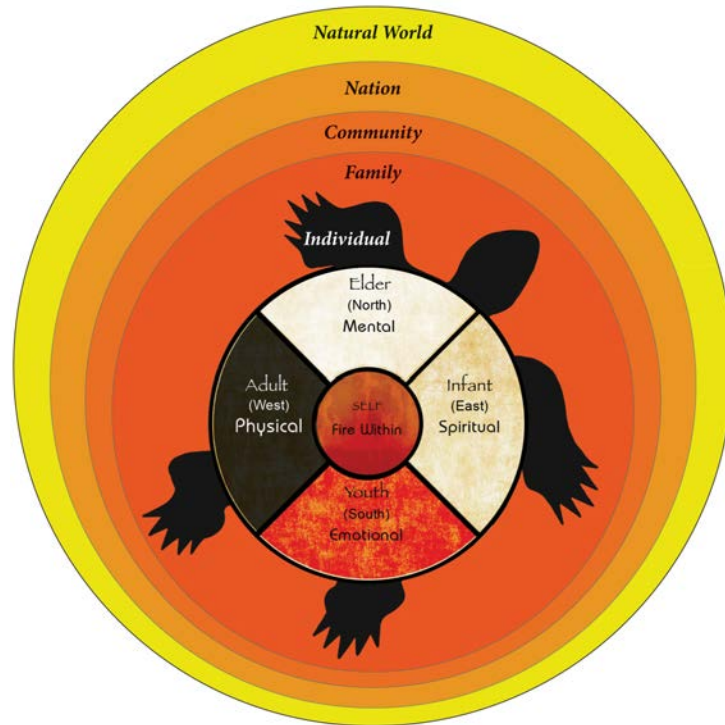


Figure 6.1. List of the Seven Grandfather Teachings. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.

Figure 6.2 illustrates the relationality between an individual, family, community, Nation, and to the Natural World (L. Archibald & Dewar, 2010). People must live in balance with their

culture to enable healing for themselves, the land, family, community and the natural world. This is a useful image of how balance comes out of the integration of the individual and the collective, the interior life and that of the culture.

Figure 6.2. We are all related. Reprinted with permission of nDigiDreams.



Gakina-awiiya (We Are All Related)

The concept “we are all related,” reflects a worldview of interconnectedness and acknowledgement that all parts of the universe are alive and it is held as a foundational principle for many Indigenous Peoples around the world. A holistic worldview stresses balance and harmony in an interconnected world starting with the individual and the four ways of being: spiritual, emotional, physical, and mental; extending out to family, community, nation and the natural world (L. Archibald & Dewar, 2010).

An Indigenous holistic worldview is necessary here because it regards everything as imbued with a living spirit, and everything as interconnected. These basic principles underlie the interpretation of this study. I intend to interpret the information using the Seven Grandfather

Teachings. I have highlighted several words that have a direct relationship with the interpretation of the Seven Grandfather teachings, such as *Mino-Bimaadiziwin*, and words of significance for the KBIC and co-researchers. I suspect the bold words will have a performance of their own, standing individually, but knowing they are connected and supported by the rest of the sentence. They know they are part of a larger system because they exist. The “story-sharing” of *nDigiStorytelling* is not only related to the “story-making” process but to every one of those words shining intermittingly through time, like the stars that twinkle throughout the nighttime sky. One way to understand this is that the ancestors sent those words for us to use, and it is up to us to make meaning with them. I want to acknowledge that relation, and make note that prayers were put in motion for this entire process. We have been offering prayers and participating in ceremony with our co-researchers since 2011, before they became our co-researchers, and we have been participating in ceremony through *nDigiStorytelling* with the KBIC since 2013. When I use the words, we, co-facilitators or us, the relation extends beyond just a small group of people; it reaches out into the community, our animal relatives, the elements: earth, water, fire, and air, and our ancestors. All are present. The relationships and offerings started a long time before we arrived on the KBIC reservation, and they will continue far into the future. The relationships extend beyond a week of giving a digital storytelling workshop. Shall we dive-in deep and see what we bring to the surface? Just like the muskrat did in the story, the *Great Flood*, presented in the beginning of this chapter, where we didn’t expect the muskrat to help save “the people.” Let’s go for a dive and hear about all the places a digital story can travel, where they get shared and the kinds of influence they can have on the people who made them and on the people that watched. Dive in!

Story-Sharing

A really good example of living in balance is knowing when you are out-of-balance and then being **honest** about it. The **Four Thunders Drum** is **sacred**, and you have to be **sober** to sit at the **drum**. Several of the male storytellers acknowledged this **truth** and were **wise** enough to **respect** the **drum** for the **love** of their community. They mentioned this during group conversations or in their *nDigiStories*, their new living relative.

The first mention of love came from a tribal community member who attended our first *nDigiStorytelling* presentation in August 2013. We used the analogy of making bread, and when you make bread you put lots of love into it so that the person who eats it will feel the love you put into making it. The tribal member said, “When you put **love** into what you are doing for the people, everything will be ok.” It was **humbling** to hear him make that comment so early on in the process.

Trust is not listed as one of the teachings, but it is worth mentioning because trust is an important issue that needs nurturing, especially with Indigenous Peoples because of historical trauma, and past research practices, many of which, have been unethical. It is very important to build trust with people you are performing research with. Trust is a basic ingredient whenever trying to help someone make a digital story. When Jerry Lee came back to the cabins for his solo screening he told us that he knew Linda, Arlene, and Terri but that was the first time he had met Brenda and me. It was interesting to hear his response because we don’t usually get time to talk to the storytellers about trust, we know they trust us if their energy has changed since the first time they walked into the workshop. For Jerry, it was pretty quick. He said, “Right from the beginning when I met Brenda and Carmella there was a certain calmness and easiness, I put my

guard down (**trust**) then.” And in the first *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, Donnie compared our work ethic to his with his construction company and said, “I had a lot of **trust** in you ladies because I could tell you guys walked the walk . . . you walk the **spiritual** way of the people and I can tell that and I was **comfortable (trust)**. **Humor** can be considered another form of **trust**, when tribal members start joking and laughing with you, it’s a sign. Many people will refer to **humor** as “**good medicine**.” **Humor** helped many Indigenous people survive turbulent times. Janice, the eldest of the storytellers mentioned **trust** at our first meeting. She admitted to having fear and was concerned about the content of her story. She had known Arlene since Arlene was a teenager and put **trust** in her to be the guide she needed to make it through the workshop. She kept an open mind and joined the other storytellers. She overcame her fear eventually and also let Brenda and me into her **heart**. This is what she said in her introduction, “I still had my doubts. I was very afraid, fearful because my story is not pretty . . . I tend to go towards family, someone that I know because I don’t **trust** very well . . . and I let you in (**trust**) and I did and I’m happy.”

Donnie gifted the co-facilitators from the first workshop with **Eagle feathers** and said, “Thank you for the work you are doing.” We were **honored** for our work and that was a sign of **respect, trust** and **love**, evidence that the process works. Arlene described that as a moment of growth for Donnie. It exemplified the **respect** he has for women compared to how he treated women many years ago according to his *nDigiStory*. The KBIC **honored** us with **songs** from the **Four Thunders Drum** at the opening of the first community

screening. **Songs** can be analogous to **prayers**. During the second workshop, we were **honored** with a fish dinner and **songs** from the **Four Thunders Drum**. The gesture of the dinner and **songs** illustrated **love, wisdom, respect, bravery, honesty, humility** and **truth**. It also meant that **healing** had extended into the community from the **sharing** of the first set of *nDigiStories*. The KBIC **honored** us with **songs** from the **Four Thunders Drum** at the closing of the first community screening with a **traveling-song**. The co-facilitators were **honored** after the second workshop when two of the storytellers took them on a tour around the rez, again celebrating **love, wisdom, respect, bravery, honesty, humility** and **truth**. The KBIC **honored** us with **songs** from the **Four Thunders Drum** at the opening of the second community screening. We were **honored** a seventh time for the work we did after the second community screening with Pendleton blankets, a significant sign of **respect, trust** and **love**. The KBIC **honored** us with a **song** from the **Four Thunders Drum** at the closing of the second community screening and invited us to **stand around the drum**. The eighth time we were **honored** was when our storytellers invited us to the tribal council meeting to join them at breakfast the day after the second community screening. After we finished breakfast, we headed south to Peshawbestown but first we stopped at the bay to offer **prayers** to the **water** and for the **ceremony** we shared through *nDigiStorytelling* with our new *nDigiFamily* in Baraga. The drum has always been a symbol in my life; from the visions I had as a young girl and then when I heard them beating when I started digital

storytelling and now throughout my *nDigiStorytelling* experience. Significantly, nine of the ten *nDigiStories* mentioned the **Four Thunders Drum**. I recognized it as a **healing drum**. It has called the **ancestors** and people forward who carry the voice for the **drum**. I have been so **honored** to be around this **drum**. I want to share what Arlene and Clara have expressed about the **drum** and the men that sit at the **drum**. Arlene said, “The men sit at the **drum** and **sing**, the women stand behind them, even though they are **strong** (women). The men are being the **leader** in that community. They are really taking care of their women because it’s in our teachings that women are **sacred** and **strong**. The women are **respecting** the men. The men are **helping** and are **healthy**. They take the **drum** out for everything.” I have witnessed that they take out the **drum** for everything because it is a **healing drum**. Clara shared her impressions with us during a debriefing after the second workshop: “I was just so impressed with the **drum**, with the fact that the men cooked for us, and **drummed** for us, and explained the **songs** to us. To me, that is such an **honor** where we come from. To have men treat you with that **respect**. And for them to just welcome us so easily into their **hearts** and **share** their **love** of this life is purely, purely a **spiritual** experience and I’m so thankful.” I really appreciated hearing Clara’s response to the process because it helped confirm what Brenda and I also experience in our own work.

There is always **love** and **respect** when you **share songs, prayers, laughter**, food, tears and other stories. We **prayed** every day while we were in Baraga. **Sharing** the **drum** and **songs** are part of a very important teaching that was passed down

from the **Creator**. Donnie **shared** that teaching with us when he was recording his background music. He said, “We are all given a **gift** on this Earth, and we don’t selfishly hold it in. We **give** it away.” He **gifted** the *Ogichidaakwe Song* (Female Veterans’ **Eagle song**) to Linda and *Migizi* (**Eagle Staff**). In his *nDigiStory* he stated, “I was suppose to **sing** and **dance for “the people.”** The **drum**, the singers, the women **singing** and the people in the community are my **Higher Power**.” Arlene made an offering with **Asema** (ceremonial tobacco) to the **drum** for the **songs** at the first community screening. We also made an **offering** to the men that sit at the **drum** for the second community screen. We **gifted** the KBIC with two *nDigiStorytelling* workshops and they are helping us understand how *nDigiStorytelling* is influential with **healing** at both the individual and the community level. We also **gifted** the storytellers with *nDigiBands* for **sharing** their stories with us during the workshops and **gifted** them with food everyday. When we really look at the gift gifting, it is much more than just a workshop. Another chapter would need to be written to understand the depth of what was really shared between all of us. **Sharing** is always a dynamic exchange and becomes more powerful when you **share** your **gifts** as we have with digital storytelling. In the introduction, I mentioned how the programmers gifted the world with free ‘apps’ on the Internet, mainly because they were out of work, but they shared their gifts. We can see the influence of sharing, if we just look at the magnitude of people on the Internet communicating with each other.

This group of storytellers talked about **sharing** their stories “all over the place.” Marty was the first one to mention that people become approachable once they **share** their story, a form of **bravery**. Many people were influenced by watching the *nDigiStories* and told the storytellers they were **brave** and **courageous** for sharing. Carrie mentioned that too: “Jerry Lee received Facebook messages from people telling him, ‘That was pretty cool, I didn’t know you guys were doing it (making *nDigiStories*).’” His nieces told him he was “**awesome**” for learning how to create a digital story, but what they realized is that they didn’t know he struggled with alcohol. They had the opportunity to experience a completely different man compared to the person he was in the beginning of his movie. Many of his friends saw his *nDigiStory* online and affirmed his **bravery** for making it. One of his friends of thirty years ago saw it, and since then they have reunited their **friendship**. What was really affective for Jerry Lee was watching Janice **heal**. He said, “The most **powerful** thing for me out of this was the **healing** that Janice got, and the years she had been holding that in there. And she just let it go . . . I think that’s how it **helps** people.” She held onto her story for decades, and now she is **fearless**. Even her brother witnessed her **healing**. He mentioned, “Being my sister I’ve seen it, lived it and seen it.” Many people ask why she decided to tell that story now? Jerry Lee suggested, “There was some kind of **connection** that she had, she felt good at the right time about doing this . . . she got that message from the **Creator**.” Linda agreed with Jerry Lee and thought there was a **spiritual connection** saying, “**Creator** knows when it is the right time and the right person.” Later on in the text, Arlene will talk to us about

how the **spirits** will take us where we need to be. For Janice, she kept that story inside for about thirty years, until one day in the Singing Lodge; she let it go and was free like the fluttering butterfly in her *nDigiStory*. The story was free and so was she. Janice was approached at the second community screening by an audience member who said Janice's story **helped** her. Janice got really excited and talked about her next *nDigiStory* debut, an OA (Overeaters Anonymous) retreat.

Many of the storytellers got flooded with electronic messages from the community and even from outside the community. They recognized the strength (**bravery**) and **courage** it took to share so openly. Donnie felt **humbled** that so many people contacted him and recognized him for who he really is, a **loving** sober grandpa. I had the pleasure of meeting his granddaughter on several occasions, and she **loves** her grandpa. The first place Carrie **shared** her *nDigiStory* was with her **family**. She said, "The Visual feeling . . . and me telling the story . . . helped my **relationships** with my mom, my grandma and my sisters . . . I think it really **helped** them to understand." Carrie's family said, "Wow, we're so **proud** of you." Her **family** stayed **hugging** her after they watched the video. Sometimes the **human touch** is more **healing** than we know. And then Carrie said, "Lots of people have come up to me on my street in our community and said, 'I've seen your video, it's so **awesome** and I can't believe it.' You can tell (they think it takes a lot of **strength**) (**bravery**) to be able to do that." Carrie had one man come up to her and tell her he thought she was nuts for telling people, but then he told her, "I know now, you're an **inspiration** to me."

There's a lot of people that won't say that this is what's going on inside." Carrie's story has been an **inspiration** to a lot of people. They have opened up to her to tell her what is going on for them. She said, "So I think that was my **purpose** and that it's ok to ask for **help**. You don't have to live with the shame and guilt . . . when he said that (told her she was an **inspiration**), I said, really? It was **great** and I didn't know I was doing that and I didn't know that was happening." Carrie thought the experience of making the video made things clearer for her. She said, "Going through the moment and thinking about it a year and a half later . . . it did a lot for me. I re-felt the feelings and it made the experience a lot clearer, what was going on? It was **therapeutic**, actually! Now even still sometimes, seeing it . . . I still get teary-eyed . . . **it helps me grow** every time I look at it. The video that I chose to make was one that I committed to **recovery**. It's my moment . . . It is **important** to me and now I will have it forever in a video!" Several people have asked about relapse, if people re-feel the feelings won't they relapse? That's a valid question and one of concern. In Carrie's case she was surrounded by her entire family at the workshop and because we treat *nDigiStorytelling* as a **ceremony**, we are calling upon the **ancestors** and also creating a **healing, nurturing** space for the storytellers where they can be **authentic** and **honest** with themselves and in their stories, if they choose to be. In traditional **ceremonies**, that's what people do. They act out of **authenticity** and **honesty**. They are there to get **help** and hold space for everyone else that's present. *nDigiStories* have become a **legacy** for many families, and they are very grateful the stories exist, if just to hear that person's voice again and to know the **strength**

they had and the opportunity to pass on to the next generation. Carrie thought that people in her community could **identify** better with someone from their own community: “It means something for them instead of someone from across the country who they really don’t know . . . it hits home!” Marty said, “Digital stories could be used with drug-court, youth programs, recovery, culture revitalization and to help people **break the silence** when they need **help**.” The storytellers agreed that digital stories might have a higher impact if the community made them with people that are recognizable by other community members instead of strangers. Marty said, “It is (*nDigiStory*) invoking people to **start talking** . . . it is almost like they need to **release it** . . . They got some **healing** out of it and they weren’t even involved. I mean what we did was **heal** people out there without even knowing it.” The *nDigiStories* **help** people know they are not alone and that people have similar issues but have found ways to work through them. Carrie was acknowledged for keeping her video **real**, and for the **bravery** it took to make it. Carrie was contacted in the spring from film producers out of New York. They were interested in making a documentary about her life. They agreed to let her have full creative rights. Her community recognized her ability on the computer and started developing a strategy to continue making *nDigiStories* in their community. They have a community goal of **encouraging sobriety 100%** across the **rez**.

Donnie spoke to the **songs** that are added to *nDigiStories*. He said, “I was listening to just the audio (from *nDigiStory*) . . . it brings me to tears again . . . the opening when my son is singing: it brings me right back.” A lot of the music that is added to *nDigiStories* comes from the storyteller, their relatives or friends. Often times it is regional

and speaks to the traditions of that particular community. The difference between the music Donnie is talking about and stock music (generic) is that regional **songs** typically have a generational (tribal generations) source and follow a long line of **tradition** and **ceremony**. They have a **purpose** and **resonate** with anyone who is familiar with them. Donnie continued telling us about why their own **songs** make a difference for the *nDigiStory* and the storyteller: “Because we know what they are (**songs**). Most of our **songs** are **prayers**, and are **healing** and are **for the people**. We are told to use those **songs** but to use them in the correct way.” Donnie’s response spoke to all of the Seven Grandfather teachings: **love, wisdom, respect, bravery, honesty, humility** and **truth**.

People who worked at the New Day Treatment Center got special permission to attend the *nDigiStorytelling* workshop. The storytellers expressed that their **relationships** had increased with the other storytellers, family, community and strangers after **sharing** their *nDigiStories*. Donnie mentioned, in his introduction for the community screening: “We **bonded** pretty heavily this week,” and Carrie stated, “I want to say we all got a little bit **closer**. We had a common goal to try to **help** our community by **sharing** a piece of ourselves.” Jerry Lee compared the *nDigiStorytelling* process with the Johari window used with **recovery**. He implied that with *nDigiStorytelling*, “People have a better understanding of **relationships** with self and others.” The process increases a person’s **wisdom** and acknowledges their **relation** as a **sacred** part of the **Creation** through **humility**.

The storytellers gave us permission to audio and videotape everything, which took tremendous **trust** and **bravery**. Additionally they gave us permission to include their *nDigiStories* and introductions in our dissertations with full personal reference. They wouldn't have anonymity. Using the term "anonymous" or using fake names implies that the decolonization efforts it took to make their voices heard could be reversed. They are proud of who they are and they conduct themselves through the Seven Grandfather Teachings: **Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth**.

Besides the storytellers having to work hard, they also had **fun** as Marty explained: "We had a blast (**fun**) out there." **Patience** is a virtue teaching digital storytelling. When I first started teaching *nDigiStorytelling*, a previous storyteller, Theda New Breast grabbed my hand when it was on the mouse and told me, "When you work with elders, they don't know what you know, slow down and have **patience**." I had a computer background and was trained to do everything fast but I agreed with her. She taught me one of the best lessons I have learned in life. Our storytellers comment all the time about our innate **patience**. It always makes me smile to know I'm doing something right. Along these same lines, Marty acknowledged us in his introduction, "I really appreciate the **patience** you ladies had with us because I don't know, me and Donnie, I think we're both the same when it comes to computers." Our **patience** wasn't enough for Marty, he had to also complement the food that we conjured up during the first workshop by stating, "And then they fed us. Geez maybe we should bring something to eat the first day. But man, they made us soup and spaghetti, and this and that, gluten-free this and gluten-free that." Providing food is always a **gift**.

Jerry Lee recognized that his participation wasn't just about the experience but also about being in the experience through the *nDigiStorytelling* process. This is a major difference between traditional film and *nDigiStorytelling*. We didn't put a camera in front of his face like he expected. We appreciated his comments: "It wasn't what I thought it (was) going to be; to me this was professional. I thought it would be something with a handheld video thing and you would just sit around and say, 'Here, tell us your story.'" This is a misnomer associated with the history of traditional film and Indigenous Peoples. *nDigiStorytelling* is "visual sovereignty," what Raheja (2011) refers to as a creative act of self-representation. The storyteller has taken the power back to make their own film and decide how they want to **share** it.

The most meaningful words that resonated across the workshops, gatherings and at the community screenings, on surveys, and in the *nDigiStories*, introductions and panels were: **hope, healing, freedom, liberation, and saving another person's life.** After Janice got over her fear, at the first community screening, she yelled out, "I'm **hoping** with this . . . **I'm going viral with this**. That means everybody is going to get this film. If there is one person out there that **I can save their life**, from trying to do suicide, believe me I was there too. This film was **worth it**, and **my life was worth it**." At the gathering, Jerry Lee stated, "The main reason for doing it . . . is to help someone **heal**— give them **courage**." Tim jumped in there and added, "Part of the **healing** (is that) . . . the whole world will know about it." Marty had a theory about **honesty**. If people want to move forward with anything, they need to be **honest**, a kind of transparency. It was because of **honesty** that Marty is living a **clean and sober** life today. Jerry Lee thinks *nDigiStories* should

be **shared**. He said, “I just wanted to **share** it. You **feel so good** when you’ve been in **recovery**; you’ve been **sober**. You wish you could bottle it.” Linda felt her *nDigiStory* moved her to a feeling of a deeper level, and she has been sober for over forty years. She said, “It touched my **spirit** in such a deep way.” Several storytellers mentioned that even though they made a first-person story, they got to a point where they could watch it from a third-person perspective, and they were surprised that they were the person in the movie. It was their struggle and they **survived**. Developmentally, this shift in perspective from first person to third person is another sign of **healing**. Not just **surviving**, but also **thriving**.

Sharing the *nDigiStories* in a community setting was also powerful especially because we created a **ceremonial** space for everyone to be their **authentic-self**. We celebrated life and the accomplishments of the storytellers instead of focusing on ruptures, disparities and negative statistics. The community had an opportunity to voice comments in public or through a written survey. One audience member stated that she felt the stories were, “Really **heartfelt** and I can see a lot of us are really, really good.” She recognized the **strengths** and **resilience** of herself, family and community through the *nDigiStories*. Many audience members and storytellers from their *nDigiStories* recognized the accomplishments of the New Day Treatment Center being responsible for helping so many people get into sobriety. This member of the audience was **brave** for standing up and speaking and she recognized the **love** the community has had for **helping** other people. In her exact words, “**Chi Miigwech** to this community for the New Day Treatment Center. You have **helped** a lot of people. You have **given** back and I’ll say for myself. I’m truly **grateful** for that. I know there are other ones

too, where you guys have opened up your community to **help** a lot of people. **Chi Miigwech KBIC.**” Another community member in the audience, actually a tribal council member, also confirmed the work of New Day; “It’s really encouraging to see what the New Day Treatment Center has done (**helped**) for this community over a few decades.” Decades mind you; the *nDigiStories* turned people’s attention to a beacon in the community that is the center for so many lives. The tribal council member expressed gratitude and recognized the example of **Wisdom, Love, Respect, Bravery, Honesty, Humility, and Truth** displayed by the storytellers through their *nDigiStories*. He addressed them by making this statement: “I’m very grateful for those people, taking it upon themselves (**bravery**) and passing (**humility**) that good life onto other people who want that good life, *Mino-Bimaadiziwn.*” Part of getting to know your community is the ability to **authentically listen** to your community.

nDigiStories helped audience members and the storytellers learn more about themselves, their community, and about **strengthening community relationships**. The tribal member added, “I didn’t know some of the stories behind a number of most of the people that sat here and told stories this afternoon. I was really touched by those stories. Every one of those stories did bring tears to my eyes, they brought some **emotions** deep from in.”

Arlene, who helped Janice, our eldest storyteller create her digital story introduced the first community screening, and it was her impression that the process opened up, “A lot of good memories. It was a beautiful week to be here, a lot of **healing**, a lot of **laughter**, a lot of **tears**, a lot of joking around, a lot of seriousness, a lot of **sharing** of a lot of **sacred** things that we carry around in our **hearts** . . . It’s work but it’s **fun**.” Arlene was embodied with the

nDigiStorytelling experience; she recognized and participated with **love, wisdom, humility,** and **respect** in creating the elements that are essential with *nDigiStorytelling* for her *Anishinaabe* relatives. Arlene has seen *nDigiStories* come to life, including her own. She acknowledged the **connection** of the **ancestors** that exist within the *nDigiStories* and how the **spirit** of the *nDigiStory* travels, as it is needed for **healing**. This is what she said: “Those words and the voices and the music actually come to life (**living-being**). We did **ceremony** before we started these (*nDigiStories*) everyday. I really think that those **spirits** take us where we need to be and **help** us to **heal** and to say those words we need to say to each other – and to those out there still hurting, so that when they watch the story, it’s going to **help** them and pull them in, and say I want that . . . **It is our people telling our stories to each other to help one another.**” Arlene’s last statement falls in line with Beverly Singer’s (2001) ideas about “cultural sovereignty,” using old traditions and adapting them to new ways in current day situations realizing the power in adaptability to any new challenges. Singer’s idea of cultural sovereignty related to *nDigiStorytelling* increases the influence of healing through *nDigiStories*. *Cultural sovereignty* is another reason to use emerging research designs that favor tribal communities’ traditions and Indigenous worldviews. As of this writing, there are over five hundred sixty-six federally recognized tribes in the United States. Many have similarities, but there are also very unique differences, which speak only to that particular tribe. To create effective healing programs through digital storytelling, we must recognize and **respect** those differences, and in order to accomplish this, we must authentically listen to the community voices.

Feeding the People

In this section, I will review the responses from the audience members who attended the second community screening (*nDigiFest*) and filled out surveys, which were illustrated in the fifth chapter. Even the youngest person that engaged in the community screening had something to say. Many of them wanted to see the *nDigiStories* in their schools. The audience at the second community screening was appreciative for the screening and thought it was a useful way of sharing the stories. Other sharing venues they mentioned were at home, high schools, YouTube, Facebook, online blogs, public television, AA/NA, Native American Church Meetings, conferences, treatment centers, and internationally. They expressed an overwhelming feeling of gratitude for the storytellers and thought they were very brave for sharing their stories and wanting to help others, and for bringing healing and hope to the people. The *nDigiStories* helped them look at their own addictions; they could relate to the stories. Many were motivated to change and not drink. Some felt a sense of relief, motivation, inspiration, peace, unity, and emotion. One audience member recognized how far you have to dive sometimes to be a hero. Another said, “Hope, that even though some people’s lives have hit rock bottom they have stood up and rose above it all to create better lives for themselves.” And then another person expressed they had a desire to be strong and have hope for the red road for their children. Some mentioned the *nDigiStories* could benefit their families, friends, engage the younger people, and be helpful to people who learned better with an audio/visual format. Another audience participant said it was “history making and could also be used with traditional customs and language revitalization.” And another said, “Personal stories that have been made within the community can make the experience more meaningful. This comment really stood out for me: “A story untold, is a story not heard.” It takes just one story at a time. Many recognized that *nDigiStories*

could help bring the community together. They realized that people are not alone. They expressed that the stories were meaningful, everyone struggles but they are strong and courageous. Some became aware of the treatment centers in their own community. They were grateful for the experience and in their own language, they said *Chi Miigwech!* They thanked us for bringing the project to their community and realized, “Freedom is possible!”

In closing, I want to share a poem collage created from comments made by the *nDigiDreamers* in regard to the *nDigiStorytelling* experience by participating as *nDigiStorytellers*, co-facilitators, mothers, community members, and being Indigenous.

Healing In Our Own Words

*I can feel the joy,
I can feel the excitement and the love.
Part of our recovery process has always been sharing our story.
We've survived five hundred years of historical trauma.
We're seeing historical greatness,
not only to survive,
but to thrive!
They brought this gift to us.
This is another tool that we can use to help our people.
It's a powerful thing they are doing by sharing their skill, their talent.
Whenever we speak our sacred language,
we make it beautiful.
Creator works through each of us to bring our gifts back to the people.
The story itself is the heart and breathed into life.
It's told from our hearts.
These are beautiful stories of hope and resilience.
They are beautiful positive stories of survival.
Sovereignty starts with yourself,
and being able to tell your own story,
it's going to turn out beautiful.*

*We do it with prayer; we do it with ceremony,
 like all good things.
 We do it with a lot of good food, a lot of good humor,
 and a lot of persistence.
 How about that picture of life,
 people are healing in their own words,
 their own voice, their own music sometimes,
 their own pictures, what a beautiful picture of this time.
 Not only now but across time,
 that we could convey to our future generations,
 what we were thinking,
 and what we were praying about,
 and how our prayers were answered,
 they were answered together.
 I could never probably pay enough,
 because it's beyond the books, it's beyond life.
 It's that spirit that we all carry, that we share,
 that we enjoy with each other,
 And how it relates to us as Indigenous people
 And how we need to keep that fight alive,
 no matter what, no matter what.*

Miigwech. Miigwech. Miigwech. Miigwech (C'Rodrigo, 2014).

I suggested in the introduction, that digital stories have a spirit and are living beings, not mere objective “artifacts” or “products” as mentioned in the digital storytelling literature. The KBIC community echoed my understanding many times. I’m not aware of any literature that specifies digital storytelling with Indigenous Peoples in a spiritual or ceremonial context. The storytellers spoke about historical trauma, being in the struggle and moving out of it with healing and hope. They spoke about resilience through strength; courage and bravery, not just surviving but thriving, always connecting them back to their ancestral roots through spirit and ceremony, looking forward to the next generation. Resiliency factors were not just based on an individual

but on the relationships that started with self and extended into the family, community, nation, and natural world. At the beginning of this chapter was a short film, which was a collaborative effort with our co-researchers. We made it together in the heart (location) of the *Anishinaabe* people. We performed a ceremony before we began to work on it and throughout the process. During the research process we discovered that film creation needed a collaborative approach for “meaning-making.” The result of that film explains both complementary dissertations in eleven minutes expressed through the teachings of the *Anishinaabe*. We carried that skill into creating short videos with their cultural assessment modules and it was very successful. Through this research I realized how sacred and powerful our “soul-wind” really is, and how we must nurture and appreciate it. When I started thinking about the film literature, I posed this question, “Is an *nDigiStory* only a film or is it a visual medium that the spirit has chosen to represent itself, in order for healing to happen?” Through my research and experience as an *nDigiStorytelling* practitioner, I have come to believe the answer is much more than merely a film. Indigenous peoples are sharing stories, which are making them strong again, like Grandma Rita mentioned in her story, which I presented in the introduction. The “soul-wound” is being recognized and yes people have had to dare to dive to the bottom like the muskrat, but they are rising to the surface as the soul-healers bringing something back with them. They are bringing back “good medicine.” They are planting *nDigiSeeds*; the corn-pollen is spreading and the storytellers are helping these new sprouts grow within their communities. We are sharing the corn stew. As Robert mentioned in the fifth chapter when he introduced his *nDigiStory*, we all have to keep blowing on the ember of the fire to keep it growing.

In the next chapter, I will describe future implications for this study.

The Eighth Fire

The Healing

*Our voices are intrinsic, beautiful and unique.
To silence them is inhumane, accomplishing only pain.*

Freedom is liberating and freedom is healing.

I am his or her [storyteller] birthing mother.

I gently care for them as they speak each word.

I help them birth a story

*that had been living as a sharpened edge
crystalized shadow deep within their being,
inflicting so much pain.*

*Their very first breath reignites with origin
bursting the solidified rock crystals into waterfall-like flowing tears.
Drop by drop; each one is as sacred as the next, each one is healing.*

Take a deep breath, take a deep breath.

The “soul-wind” has been born; the “soul-wind” is living (C’Rodrigo, 2014).

In the Beginning

During the voice recording, I usually tell our storytellers about my theory of the “soul-wind.” As an *Anishinaabek* man and Firestarter/Firekeeper, Robert shared his own theory at the small group sharing and the second community screening. He said:

As I’m building that sacred fire, it starts with that small ember; you blow on it a little bit, and it begins to smoke. You keep feeding it and blowing on it a little more, until that flame comes to life. And that’s how I felt when we completed this movie [*nDigiStory*].

His interpretation of creating an *nDigiStory* was based on his *Ojibwa* teachings. As a Firestarter/Firekeeper, it’s his responsibility to keep the sacred fire going. In the case of the *nDigiStory*, he [Robert] implied it was his responsibility to keep sharing his story and teaching: as he stated at the community screening, “I will continue doing this with other projects. Hopefully it can help other community members.” Through the talking circles, introductions and *nDigiStories*, the *Anishinaabe* storytellers shared how they are living *Mino-Bimaadiziwn* according to the Seven Grandfather teachings balancing the four elements of health: physical, mental, emotional and spiritual. Robert’s story as a Firekeeper also relates to the Seventh Fire. The *Anishinaabe* believe we are in the era of

the Seventh Fire. If the human race lives in accord with *Mino-Bimaadiziwn*, the Seventh Fire will light the Eighth and Final Fire, an eternal Fire of peace, love, brotherhood and sisterhood. *Ojibwa* Elders handed down the Seven Fires Prophecy of the *Anishinaabe* a long time ago before the European invasion. Each Fire referred to a particular era and represents key spiritual teachings based on respect.

Seven Fires Prophecy

Benton-Banai (1988) described the Seven Fires prophecy in his book, *The Mishomis*

Book: The Voice of the Ojibwa (pp. 89–93):

First Fire: The first prophet said to the people, “In the time of the First Fire, the Anishinaabe Nation will rise up and follow the Sacred Shell of the *Midewiwin* Lodge. The *Midewiwin* Lodge will serve as a rallying point for the people and its traditional ways will be the source of much strength. The Sacred Megis will lead the way to the chosen ground of the Anishinaabe. You are to look for a turtle-shaped island that is linked to the purification of the Earth. You will find such an island at the beginning and end of your journey. There will be seven stopping places along the way. You will know that the chosen ground has been reached when you come to a land where food grows on water. If you do not move, you will be destroyed.”

Second Fire: The second prophet told the people, “You will know the Second Fire because at this time the nation will be camped by a large body of water. In this time the direction of the Sacred Shell will be lost. The *Midewiwin* will diminish in strength. A boy will be born to point the way back to the traditional ways. He will show the direction to the stepping stones to the future of the Anishinaabe people.”

Third Fire: The third prophet said to the people, “In the Third Fire, the Anishinaabe will find the path to their chosen ground, a land in the West to which they must move their families. This will be the land where food grows on water.”

Fourth Fire: The Fourth Fire was originally given to the people by two prophets. They came as one. They told of the coming of the Light-skinned Race. One of the prophets said, “You will know the future of our people by what face the Light-skinned Race wears. If they come wearing the face of *nee-kon’-nis-i-win’* (brotherhood), then there will come a time of wonderful change for generations to come . . . You will know the face of brotherhood if the Light-skinned Race comes carrying no weapons, if they come bearing only their knowledge and a handshake.” The other prophet said, “Beware if the Light-skinned Race comes wearing the face of *ni-boo-win’* (death). You must be careful because the face of brotherhood and the face of death look very much alike. If they come wearing a weapon . . . beware. If they come in suffering . . . they could fool you. Their hearts may be filled with greed for the riches of this land. If they are indeed your brothers, let them prove it. Do not accept them in total trust. You shall know that the face they wear is the one of death if the rivers run with poison and fish become unfit to eat. You shall know them by these many things.”

Fifth Fire: The fifth prophet said, “In the time of the Fifth Fire there will come a time of great struggle that will grip the lives of all Native people. At the waning of this Fire there will come among the people one who holds a promise of great joy and salvation. If the people accept this promise of a new way and abandon the old teachings, then the struggle of the Fifth Fire will be with the people for many generations. The promise that comes will prove to be a false promise. All those who accept this promise will cause the near destruction of the people.”

Sixth Fire: The prophet of the Sixth Fire said, “In the time of the Sixth Fire it will be evident that the promise of the Fifth Fire came in a false way. Those deceived by this promise will take their children away from the teachings of the *chi'-ah-ya-og'* (Elders). Grandsons and granddaughters will turn against the Elders. In this way the Elders will lose their reason for living . . . they will lose their purpose in life. At this time a new sickness will come among the people. The balance of many people will be disturbed. The cup of life will almost be spilled. The cup of life will almost become the cup of grief.”

Seventh Fire: The prophet of the Seventh Fire said, “In the time of the Seventh Fire a *Osh-ki-bi-ma-di-zeeg'* (New People) will emerge. They will retrace their steps to find what was left by the trail. Their steps will take them to the Elders who they will ask to guide them on their journey. But many of the Elders will have fallen asleep. They will awaken to this new time with nothing to offer. Some of the Elders will be silent out of fear. Some of the Elders will be silent because no one will ask anything of them. The New People will have to be careful in how they approach the Elders. The task of the New People will not be easy. “If the New People will remain strong in their quest, the Water drum of the *Midewiwin* Lodge will again sound its voice. There will be a rebirth of the Anishinaabe nation and a rekindling of old flames. The Sacred Fire will again be lit. “It is at this time that the Light-skinned Race will be given a choice between two roads. If they choose the right road, then the Seventh Fire will light the Eight and Final Fire—an eternal Fire of peace, love, brotherhood and sisterhood. If the Light-skinned Race makes the wrong choice of roads, then the destruction which they brought with them in coming to this country will come back to them and cause much suffering and death to all the Earth’s people.”

New People of the Seventh Fire

After discussing the Seven Fires prophecy in his book, Benton-Banai (1988) asked an imperative question, “Are we the New People of the Seventh Fire?” (p. 93).

Hundreds and hundreds of *nDigiStories* that have been created over the last six years speak to the cup of the grief that has spilled over; the “soul wounding” (Ivey, 2006) of historical trauma (Brave Heart, 2003) that is directly linked to colonization practices, policies and institutions of assimilation; suppression of cultural traditions, ceremonies, spirituality and

languages; destruction of Indigenous family systems; removal of land and children. And at the same time, these *nDigiStories* also speak to processes of truth telling and resistance to colonial encroachments, movements to reclaim, restore, and regenerate homeland relationships (Corntassel, 2012); hope and healing. The passing of the American Indian Religious Freedom act in 1978 ignited a cultural resurgence among tribes to practice traditional religious and cultural practices. The drum, the songs, the prayers and the dancing have called many, many, *nDigiStorytellers* to retrace their steps to find what was left by the trail and to hear the voice of the drum.

Room for Growth (Gaps)

The research on resilience that uses ethnographic methods such as key informant interviews, focus groups, journaling and surveys to generate narratives of historical identity, has focused more on the traumatization and victimization of the storytellers. A gap exists in the empirical literature because the focus was placed more on the ruptures of cultural continuity and less on the strengths of individuals and communities. The ethnographic methods used with resilience research did not include digital storytelling as a narrative inquiry method and could have benefited from the “depth” and “breadth” disclosed directly from the storytellers. *nDigiStorytelling* could expand the research on resilience with Indigenous Peoples and provide healing benefits for them at the same time.

The current body of literature on “visual sovereignty” is limited and is an important concept in maintaining self-determination and self-representation, especially in the digital age. *nDigiStorytelling* can be used as a method to promote “visual sovereignty” as long as the producer has the authority to tell their own story, retain ownership over their story and share it where they want it to be seen. *nDigiStorytelling* is a tool that can be used to start that

conversation with Indigenous Peoples and expand on Indigenous scholarship and “visual sovereignty” literature in general.

Literature on research involving Indigenous Peoples and community-based participatory research utilizing digital storytelling as a narrative inquiry method is lacking especially in the area of inclusion of Indigenous frameworks for the infrastructure of the study and the final analysis. Our study can help researchers learn how to work more inclusively and respectfully with Indigenous peoples.

Research with Indigenous peoples using digital storytelling has objectified the stories into “artifacts” to be analyzed through a Western hegemonic lens. Our study is important in its ability to help researchers understand that the “living-breath” of these stories is sacred and that the stories themselves are living. The context of the story is often lost when it travels out of the community and into an academic institution where it is clinically objectified, where there is a lack of respect for traditional values, and analyzed based on the disabling bias of the researchers.

Scope and Limitations

This study may have been a small sample size but it exemplified the longitudinal liberation discourse that is practiced across Indian Country, “taking a critical eye to the processes of colonization that have had a deep impact on the identity of Original Peoples” (Duran, 2006, p. 1) and with the help of *nDigiStorytelling* emerging with a new narrative of healing. The meaningful and heartfelt “soul-wind” and “living breath” of these *nDigiStories* have the potential to be shared— and continue to heal lives—for generations to come.

Most of the participants were from the same community and 80% were men. This can be viewed as a limitation and as an advantage. But I see it more as an advantage because the first set of storytellers informed us about change that occurred within a short amount of time—six

months—because both workshops and community screenings took place within the same community. Typically most of our storytellers are predominantly Native women. This was the first time that it was predominantly Native men. There is a good chance that their stories will motivate more Native men to step forward and Native families to heal.

Mixing my life's work (digital storytelling) and research has the potential to create an ethical dilemma or bias based on previous knowledge. Previous knowledge can guide the design of the study but should not interfere with the study. The emergent design and community-based participatory collaboration was essential in creating space that was neutral and allowed the art of digital storytelling to be shared with tribal members.

Future Research

This research study was a blessing! We (*nDigiDreamers*) were able to create a ceremonial space that was respectful, inclusive and healing for the storytellers and their families. We privileged an Indigenous framework and by the suggestion of our ATR co-researchers, used *Anishinaabe* teachings to make meaning of the many voices we heard and the stories that were created and shared. The study was rich and meaningful for the storytellers, their families, community, our ATR co-researchers and us [Brenda and I]. The week after we completed the second *nDigiStorytelling* workshop, we met with our ATR co-researchers face-to-face to discuss future directions for *nDigiStorytelling* with Indigenous communities.

It has been our experience that healing does not end with the workshop or the final community screening. It needs to be nurtured so the storytellers and community can continue to heal and create strength-based relationships. We have many questions on how to develop a support system after people have experienced such a deep and personal way of sharing a significant part of their lives. Eva made the analogy that Janice is probably still peeling back the

layers of an onion. Since she is an Elder, she has many years of her life to reflect upon and process. How would a support system be set up to address the complexities of the stories and any age differences? All of the participants of the study were from the same community except for one, and they were all related except for one. How would the study differ with participants from different tribal communities? This is an interesting question and can diverge into many directions based on the location of the workshop, tribal affiliation, and cultural beliefs. Even though *nDigiDreams* uses a Diné philosophy of conducting digital storytelling workshops, this study illustrates the adaptability of the content by an Ojibwa community based on their cultural teachings. We share foundational principles based on a four-directions approach and a living belief system that is based on respect, love and relationship to all things.

The Community-Based Participatory Research process we went through as co-researchers was unique: it was formal and informal, and was inclusive of Indigenous knowledge and protocols such as elaborated and ongoing consulting with our co-researchers. Because of the interest in digital storytelling, the research actually started informally through conversations. When our ATR co-researchers formally agreed to collaborate on this project, the process became more structured. The formality did not change our interactions or conversations; instead it brought an awareness of acute listening and deeper searching. Further exploration into the process of this research study is another area that can be explored to help both Native and non-Native researchers learn how to work with Indigenous communities.

From a recovery program standpoint, Eva suggested following a person's recovery journey with *nDigiStorytelling* at different periods during their recovery and comparing the different states of change over time, perhaps creating an Indigenous Change Model using *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* and the Seven Grandfather Teachings; thereby privileging Indigenous

knowledge. The Indigenous Change Model could be modified per tribe based on the tribe's own traditions and teachings.

My Personal Learning

This educational journey was similar to making a documentary. While I have produced many films, I have not personally produced a documentary, but I participated as a cameraperson in one that cost the producer a lot of money and took about five years to make. In any case, one must have a passion for what they are doing; have lots of patience and lots of energy for late-night hours. I found I had to expect the unexpected and imagine the unimaginable. In the introduction, I talked about how I love learning and have used education as part of my survivance, ignoring my spiritual self. During this study, I learned that my intellect and my spirit are connected and can ride side-by-side on the same journey. My education is not just for me; it is also for my *nDigiFamily*. I never imagined how big my *nDigiFamily* would grow to be. I'm so grateful for everything each storyteller has taught me. When Brenda and I started *nDigiDreams* and the doctoral program, we started with ceremony. Having moved through so many obstacles over these last two years, and experienced the power of traditional ways and prayer, I do not believe I could have done either, any other way.

I received a phone call in the spring of 2014 and the young women on the other end of the receiver asked me, "What is the difference between digital storytelling that other people teach and *nDigiDreams*." I paused for a minute and said:

I don't know how other people teach digital storytelling. Digital storytelling is a simple process; you put photos, videos, music and voice narration together on a computer. *nDigiDreams* uses a Four-directions approach that is based on a *Diné* philosophy of teaching. Our model of digital storytelling is called *nDigiStorytelling* and celebrates a circular process that privileges Indigenous worldviews and celebrates the lives of Indigenous Peoples. Everything starts with prayer and ends with prayer; and in the middle are tears, laughter, food and love. We are invited by the community to work in the

heart of the community where generosity is a given and everyone benefits.

This journey taught me how important storytelling was as a survivance tool and how *nDigiStorytelling* is a healing tool, but just as important were the methods that were used to allow the storytellers to make meaning about their own life experiences through their own eyes as stated by Wilson (2008):

Stories and metaphor are often used in Indigenous societies as a teaching tool. Stories allow listeners to draw their own conclusions and to gain life lessons from a more personal perspective. By getting away from abstractions and rules, stories allow us to see others' life experiences through our own eyes. (p. 17)

Brenda and I have been planting *nDigiSeeds* and nurturing the new sprouts, so they will continue to grow; so, that one-day we can all share the corn stew.

Implications for Leadership and Change

This study used an emerging design that was inclusive of an Indigenous framework, and performance and interpretation in order to bring the real life stories and voices of the people that had been silenced through colonializing practices forward in new ways into a present day conversation. The information we gathered confirmed the dynamic quality of this type of inquiry. We must recognize that Indigenous research paradigms are always evolving because like *Mino-Bimaadiziwin* they are living and always-in motion. Community-Based Participatory Research was critical in uniquely positioning Indigenous knowledge and teachings in order to make meaning of the findings and for the future development of practice and methods for the sustainability of programs that focus on health instead of disparities and go beyond negative stereotypes. Wilson (2008) suggested that in order to develop theory, practice and methods that are uniquely Indigenous, we must stop comparing Indigenous research with mainstream research but develop a complementary framework that is internally validated (p. 16). It illustrates the development of that framework and signifies the contribution that Indigenous research can

provide for leadership and change. This study is a good example of emerging methodologies and complementary dissertation research.

Appendix

Appendix A: Pilot Study Informed Consent Form

Pilot Study Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form
For Carmella M. Rodriguez's
Individualized Learning Achievement – A, Pilot Study
Antioch University, PhD in Leadership & Change program
October 2013

The title of the Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study is:

The Journey of a Digital Story

The name and contact information of the facilitator/researcher:

Carmella Rodriguez,

The purpose of the Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study:

The purpose of this Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study is to explore how American Indian, Alaska native and First Nations communities are using emerging technologies such as digital storytelling to share lived experiences and how movie viewers perceive the digital stories that are publicly screened. The storyteller has the power and authority to produce and edit their digital story, own it, and decide if they want to share it. Outcomes from the pilot study will be shared with the storytellers and communities that participate in public screenings along with suggestions for future community programming involving digital storytelling.

The requested time requirement:

The time requirement involved, at a minimum, is about one to hours in a public setting. The public events will be recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy of the information. If additional follow up is required, with your approval I will schedule additional time.

The protection of privacy:

With your permission, information you provide will be included in a written and video format as part of my Individualized Learning Achievement final essay and if you agree I would like incorporate that same information into my doctoral dissertation. I'm also seeking permission to include our work in my future presentations and publications.

Risks & Benefits of participation:

The risks to you are considered minimal; there is a chance that you may experience emotional discomfort in the reflection of the digital storytelling process. Participating in the reflexive process may help further understanding of your lived experience and open dialog with community. Additionally, it may help ignite ideas for community programming that involves digital storytelling.

There is no financial remuneration for participating in this organizational change project. You may discontinue participation from this study at any time without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, information provided by you will be withdrawn from the pilot study.

If there are any questions, concerns or complaints about the organizational change project, please contact: Dr. Carolyn Kenny, IRB Chair, Antioch University, PhD in Leadership and Change Program,

Please sign the informed consent form, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this Individualized Learning Achievement Pilot Study and future sharing of what we have learned in subsequent gatherings.

Name of facilitator/researcher (please print)

Signature of facilitator/researcher

Date

Name of participant (please print)

Signature of participant

Date

Appendix B: Pilot Study Survey for Storytellers

Survey given to storytellers at the end of the pilot study *nDigiStorytelling* workshop.

**Anishnaabek Healing Circle
Sowing the Seeds of Recovery
Digital Storytelling Survey**

0 months (Immediately following the digital storytelling workshop)

Your story of recovery will give hope to the many people who still struggle with the spirit of addiction. We are asking you to evaluate your storytelling experience so that we can make the storytelling an easier experience for those who follow you. We also want to understand what it is about making a digital story, and sharing the story, that is such a powerful healing experience. Please share your thoughts and feelings, and feel free to add whatever comments you have.

Chi Miigwetch for making a digital story with us!

Participant ID # _____

Name (optional) _____

Background

1. Are you male or female?
 - Male
 - Female
2. Which category below includes your age?
 - 17 or younger
 - 18-20
 - 21-29
 - 30-39
 - 40-49
 - 50-59
 - 60 or older
3. Are you White, Black or African-American, American Indian or Alaskan Native, Asian, Native Hawaiian or other Pacific islander, or some other race?
 - American Indian or Alaskan Native
 - White
 - Black or African-American
 - Asian
 - Native Hawaiian or other Pacific Islander
4. If you are an American Indian or Alaskan Native what tribe are you?
 - Keweenaw Bay
 - Little River Band
 - Saginaw Chippewa
 - Hannahville
 - Lac Vieux Desert
 - Pokagon Band
 - Sault Ste Marie
 - Huron Band of Potawatomi
 - Bay Mills
 - Match E Be Nash She Wish
 - Little Traverse Band
 - Grand Traverse Band
 - Other Tribe What tribe? _____

Technology

5. How experienced were you with computers before making your digital story?
- Extremely experienced
 - Very experienced
 - Moderately experienced
 - Slightly experienced
 - Not at all experienced
6. How experienced were you with video editing before making your digital story?
- Extremely experienced
 - Very experienced
 - Moderately experienced
 - Slightly experienced
 - Not at all experienced

Comments on Technology:

Recovery

7. I started my sobriety and healing journey :
- Less than a year ago
 - One to five years ago
 - Six to ten years ago
 - Ten to twenty years ago
 - Over twenty years ago
8. I have shared my recovery story in other settings:
- Yes
 - No
9. If yes, with whom and how: (Check all that apply)
- Family
 - Friends
 - Community
 - Co-workers
 - At a conference or event
 - On the internet
 - Other Describe: _____

Comments on Recovery:

Digital Storytelling Process

10. Did you make a digital story with other storytellers in a group?
- Yes (If so, approximately how many? ____)
 - No
11. How beneficial was it to you to create your digital story in a group setting?
- Extremely beneficial
 - Very beneficial
 - Moderately beneficial
 - Slightly beneficial
 - Not at all beneficial
12. How important is it for people to create and share their personal story?
- Extremely important
 - Very important
 - Moderately important
 - Slightly important
 - Not at all important
13. How effective do you think digital stories are in communicating information to your family, friends, and community?
- Extremely effective
 - Very effective
 - Moderately effective
 - Slightly effective
 - Not at all effective
14. Do you think that photos were helpful in telling your story?
- Extremely helpful
 - Very helpful
 - Moderately helpful
 - Slightly helpful
 - Not at all helpful
15. Are you interested in making another digital story?
- Extremely interested
 - Very interested
 - Moderately interested
 - Slightly interested
 - Not at all interested

16. How helpful has making your digital story been for your recovery and healing journey?

- Extremely helpful
- Very helpful
- Moderately helpful
- Slightly helpful
- Not at all helpful

17. Did you have any insights into your life through this self-reflective method of doing digital stories? If so, when and where did it occur in the process (i.e., in the story circle, while looking at photos, recording voice, screening my movie for the first time, etc.)? Could you describe the insight you had, if any?

Digital Story Sharing

18. With whom and how do you plan to share your digital story? (Check all that apply)

- Family
- Friends
- Community
- Co-workers
- Anishnaabek Healing Circle
- At a conference or event: Where/When _____
- On the internet
- Face Book
- YouTube
- Other Describe: _____
- Not interested in sharing.

19. If you checked above, why did you choose to share your digital story?

Appendix C: Pilot Study Survey for *nDigiFest* Audience

Survey given to the audience at the end of the pilot study community screening (*nDigiFest*)

Participant (optional): _____
Date of session: _____ Location (Tribe/Place) _____
Facilitator(s): _____
Check: __ Individual __ Community Event __ Recovery Support Group __ Training __ Other: _____
(Facilitator should pre-fill this box.)

Sowing the Seeds of Recovery Digital Story Viewer Evaluation

Please rate your experience by checking the appropriate spaces and adding your comments. Miigwetch for taking the time to tell us what you liked and did not like about the digital stories.

	Excellent	Very Good	Good	Poor	Needs Improvement
Overall, the experience of watching the story was	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
How would you rate the digital story(s) _____	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Content was helpful and useful	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Facilitator(s) covered material clearly	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Time allotted was adequate for discussion	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
The stories were effective at communicating information	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

Have you learned something that you will use?

Yes

No

Would you like to make a digital story?

Yes

No

If you have never abused drugs or alcohol, did watching the story help you decide NOT to use? Yes No

If you have ever abused drugs or alcohol, did watching the story help you think about quitting? Yes No

What part of the session did you find most helpful?

How could this session be improved?

Any other comments or suggestions:

Appendix D: Pilot Study Six-Month Follow-Up Questions

Pilot Study Six-Month Follow-Up Questions

Questions used to promote dialogue in a talking circle with the storytellers from the pilot study six months after they made their *nDigiStory*.

1. How have you shared or plan to share your digital story?
2. What did you experience when you shared your digital story?
3. What was the reaction of the person(s) who watched your digital story?
4. Do you think digital storytelling can benefit your community? If so, please explain.
5. What other ways could digital stories be shared?
6. Do you have any questions you would like to ask or do you have anything else to share?

Appendix E: Final Study Informed Consent Form

Informed Consent Form
For Carmella M. Rodriguez's
Dissertation Study
Antioch University, PhD in Leadership & Change program
May 2014

The title of the Dissertation Study is:

The Journey of a Digital Story Among American Indians in Michigan

The name and contact information of the facilitator/researcher:

Carmella Rodriguez,

The purpose of the Dissertation Study:

The purpose of this dissertation study is to explore how an American Indian community in Michigan is sharing digital stories and how the digital stories have influenced the people that watch them.

The requested time requirement:

The time requirement involved, at a minimum, is about one to two hours for the local screening (*nDigiFest* or Film Festival) and two hours for the community screening. The public events will be recorded and transcribed to ensure accuracy of the information. If additional follow up is required, with your approval I will schedule additional time.

The protection of privacy:

With your permission, information you provide will be included in a written and audio/video format and if you agree I would like incorporate that same information into my doctoral dissertation. I'm also seeking permission to include our work in my future presentations and publications.

Risks & Benefits of participation:

The risks to you are considered minimal; there is a chance that you may experience emotional discomfort in the sharing of your digital story. Participating in the reflexive process may help further understanding of your lived experience and open dialog with community. Additionally, it may help ignite ideas for community programming that involves digital storytelling.

There is no financial remuneration for participating in the digital storytelling screenings. You may discontinue participation from this study at any time without negative consequences. Should you withdraw, information provided by you will be withdrawn from the dissertation study.

If there are any questions, concerns or complaints about the dissertation study, please contact: Dr. Carolyn Kenny, IRB Chair, Antioch University, PhD in Leadership and Change Program, ckenny@antioch.edu, Telephone: 805-618-1903

Please sign the informed consent form, indicating that you have read, understood and agreed to participate in this dissertation study and future sharing of what we have learned in subsequent gatherings.

Name of facilitator/researcher (please print)

Signature of facilitator/researcher

Name of participant (please print)

Signature of participant

Date

Appendix F: Final Study *nDigiFest* Panel Questions

Questions for the storytellers at the community screening (*nDigiFest*) were basic and were used to provoke dialogue with the storytellers. A storyteller introduction and panel format was used and videotaped with the permission of the storytellers.

1. For introductions, please introduce your movie?

1. For the panel, please tell us about your experience making the nDigiStory?
2. For the panel, please tell us how you shared your movie?
3. For the panel, what other ways could digital stories be shared?
4. Do you have anything else to share?

Appendix G: Final Study Survey for *nDigiFest* Audience

Survey given to the audience at the end of the final study community screening (*nDigiFest*)

Digital Story-sharing

Miigwech for attending the digital storytelling screening (*nDigiFest*). This survey is anonymous and we appreciate you taking the time to join the conversation about digital storytelling by answering a few questions.

We are interested in learning what people experience after watching digital stories.

1. What did you experience after watching the digital stories?
2. Do you think digital storytelling can be beneficial to your community?
If so, please explain.
3. Did you learn something from the stories that will be helpful to you?
Yes No If yes, please describe.
4. What other ways could digital stories be shared?
5. Is there anything else you would like to share?

Appendix H: Copyright Permissions



Copyright Release form for Images, Artwork, Audio, Video, Trademarks

DATE: December 31, 2014

nDigiDreams, LLC hereby grants Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to use copyrighted material such as photographic images, graphic illustrations, audio / video clips, and trademarks that are property of nDigiDreams, LLC, for use in their dissertations including digital and online formats.

Healing Our Communities One Story at a Time® is a registered trademark of nDigiDreams, LLC and is included in those permissions.

Carmella Rodriguez
Co-Founder
crodrigo@ndigidreams.com
303.916.5213

Brenda K. Manuelito
Co-Founder
bkay4@ndigidreams.com
520.591.9986



Subject: RE: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our Dissertations
From: "Arlene Kashata"
Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 9:38 am
To: "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> ([more](#))
Options: [View Full Header](#) | [View Printable Version](#) | [Download this as a file](#) | [View as HTML](#) | [Add to Address Book](#)

Good afternoon,

Yes you have my permission to use the Visual Logic Model in your dissertation.

Miigwetch!

Arlene Kashata

> Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2015 09:32:18 -0800
 > Subject: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our
 Dissertations
 > From: crodrigo@ndigidreams.com
 > To:

>
 > Hello ladies!
 >
 > Thank you for co-producing the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model. Great
 > minds, compassionate hearts and an abundance of creativity can create a
 > beautiful and meaningful outcome.
 >
 > During the nDigiStorytelling "story-making" and "story-sharing" study we
 > asked verbal permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic
 > Model in our dissertations and everyone agreed.
 >
 > We are asking you the same question in an email so we may include a
 > written response in the Appendix section of our dissertations indicating
 > your approval.
 >
 > Do you give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to
 > include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in our dissertations?
 >
 > Thank you and have a beautiful day!
 > Carmella and Brenda
 >
 >
 >

Subject: RE: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our Dissertations
From: "Eva Petoskey"
Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 9:47 am
To: "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> ([more](#))
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I give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to include
 the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in their dissertations?

Eva L. Petoskey, MS
 Director, Anishnaabek Healing Circle
 Access to Recovery
 Inter-Tribal Council of Michigan
 2926 Ashmun
 Sault Ste. Marie, MI 49783

Subject: RE: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our Dissertations
From: "Linda Woods"
Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 11:26 am
To: "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> ([more](#))
Options: [View Full Header](#) | [View Printable Version](#) | [Download this as a file](#) | [View as HTML](#) | [Add to Address Book](#)

of course, that's why we did all that hard work... you guys are awesome!

> Date: Fri, 13 Feb 2015 09:32:18 -0800
 > Subject: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our
 Dissertations
 > From: crodrigo@ndigidreams.com
 > To:

>
 > Hello ladies!
 >
 > Thank you for co-producing the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model. Great
 > minds, compassionate hearts and an abundance of creativity can create a
 > beautiful and meaningful outcome.
 >
 > During the nDigiStorytelling "story-making" and "story-sharing" study we
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 > written response in the Appendix section of our dissertations indicating
 > your approval.
 >
 > Do you give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to
 > include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in our dissertations?
 >
 > Thank you and have a beautiful day!
 > Carmella and Brenda
 >
 >
 >

Subject: RE: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our Dissertations
From: "Terri Tavenner"
Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 3:09 pm
To: "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> ([more](#))
Options: [View Full Header](#) | [View Printable Version](#) | [Download this as a file](#) | [Add to Address Book](#)

Yes, I give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to
 include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in their dissertations.
 Terri Tavenner

-----Original Message-----
 From: Carmella Rodriguez [<mailto:crodrigo@ndigidreams.com>]
 Sent: Friday, February 13, 2015 12:32 PM
 To:

Subject: Permission to Include nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in Our
 Dissertations

Hello ladies!

Thank you for co-producing the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model. Great
 minds, compassionate hearts and an abundance of creativity can create a
 beautiful and meaningful outcome.

During the nDigiStorytelling "story-making" and "story-sharing" study we
 asked verbal permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model
 in our dissertations and everyone agreed.

We are asking you the same question in an email so we may include a written
 response in the Appendix section of our dissertations indicating your
 approval.

Do you give Carmella M. Rodriguez and Brenda K. Manuelito permission to
 include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in our dissertations?

Thank you and have a beautiful day!
 Carmella and Brenda

Subject: Permission to Use nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model
From: "Brenda Manuelito" <bkay4@ndigidreams.com>
Date: Fri, February 13, 2015 11:56 pm
To: "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com>
Options: [View Full Header](#) | [View Printable Version](#) | [Download this as a file](#) | [Add to Address Book](#)

I give Carmella Rodriguez permission to include the nDigiStorytelling Visual Logic Model in her dissertation.

Brenda K. Manuelito
nDigiDreams, LLC

On 2/13/15 10:30 AM, "Carmella Rodriguez" <crodrigo@ndigidreams.com> wrote:

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>Carmella and Brenda
>

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