

Beyond Broadcast: Launching NITV on Isuma TV

by [Faye Ginsburg \(/imr/users/faye-ginsburg\)](#) — New York University
May 04, 2009 – 00:56

Before Tomorrow is a co-production of Igloolik Isuma Productions and Kunuk Cohn Productions, the first feature from Iglooliks Anait Video Productions collective, which has been gathering Inuit womens stories since 1991

Feedback

No one has reviewed this post... but you need to [login \(/imr/user/login\)](#) to submit feedback

 </imr/2009/05/03/beyond-broadcast-launching-nitv-isuma-tv/feed>

Related Posts

[Feedback from Michael D Dwyer on Framing Soccer for the Network Era: ABC and the Challenge to Nationally Broadcast the North American Soccer League, 1979-1981 \(/imr/node/901\)](#)
[Framing Soccer for the Network Era: ABC and the Challenge to Nationally Broadcast the North American Soccer League, 1979-1981 \(/imr/2010/11/12/framing-soccer-network-era-abc-and-challenge-nationally-broadcast-north-american-soccer-\)](#)
[Selling Strasburg: Baseball, Broadcast Flow and the Commodity Audience \(/imr/2010/07/08/selling-strasburg-baseball-broadcast-flow-and-commodity-audience\)](#)



Curator's Note

[Igloolik Isuma \(http://www.isuma.ca/home#\)](#), is perhaps the most well-known of indigenous media groups in the world, notably through the global success of their prize winning film *Atanarjuat The Fast Runner* (2000), the first Inuit feature film, created through their distinctive community based production process. Their most recent film (see clip), *Before Tomorrow* (2008, Anait women's collective), is gathering prizes on its festival run. The group formed in 1990, turning televisual technologies into vehicles for cultural expression of Inuit lives and histories, a counterpoint to the introduction of mainstream satellite-based television into the Canadian Arctic. Headed by director Zacharias Kunuk, Isuma engages Igloolik community members while filmmaker and Isuma partner Norman Cohn leads a support team in Montreal. Frustrated by the difficulty of showing work to other Inuit communities, in 2008, they launched a groundbreaking alternative for indigenous distribution, [Isuma TV \(http://www.isuma.tv\)](#), a free internet video portal for global indigenous media, available to local audiences and worldwide viewers. On May 29, 2009, Isuma will launch NITV on Isuma TV, a digital distribution project, bringing a hi-speed version of IsumaTV into remote Nunavut communities where the bandwidth is inadequate to even view YouTube. **NITV** allows films to be re-broadcast through local cable or low-power channels, or downloaded to digital projectors. This live webcast on Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change features Inuit climate activist and Nobel nominee Sheila Watt-Cloutier. In Media Res readers with internet access can attend virtually, 7 PM, EST.

The bigger story here concerns the unanticipated possibilities presented at moments of media innovation. As Cohn explains: "We saw the historical technological 'moment of opportunity' for the internet, the way we saw the analog video moment in 1970, and the Atanarjuat digital/film moment in 1998: the brief window in the technology of communication where marginalized users with a serious political and cultural objective, could bypass centuries of entrenched powerlessness with a serious new idea at a much higher level of visibility than usual in our top-down power-driven global politics. In 2007, internet capacity allowed us to end-run the film industry entirely and launch a video website that could take aspects of YouTube to a much higher level of thematic seriousness, and see what happens. So this is a serious experiment in the history of alternate media experiments since the early-70's, as Isuma has been from the start", helping viewers see indigenous reality from its own point of view.

Comments



[ISUMA TV AND THE DISTRIBUTION REVOLUTION \(/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1433\)](#)

by [Pam Wilson \(/imr/users/wilsonpam\)](#) — Reinhardt College
May 04, 2009 – 11:03

[/imr/users/wilsonpam](#)

Thank you, Faye, for starting the week by showcasing Isuma's groundbreaking work. The launching of the free online portal Isuma TV ([www.isuma.tv \(http://www.isuma.tv\)](#)) less than 18 months ago has revolutionized indigenous media by providing a space for digital distribution by indigenous producers globally.

Not long ago, indigenous films and videos were extremely difficult for seekers to find and expensive for the producers to distribute, but the shift to online distribution has created a global audience for what are usually very localized, low-budget productions. What convergence has done for indigenous media has been to make locally-produced media (formerly only available locally—or very hard to get from across a large nation or across the world) available to anyone at anytime with a click of the mouse.

This digital convergence has lifted much indigenous media from obscure, provincial status into the light of a much larger public, both indigenous and non-indigenous. It has brought the eyes, ears, hearts, and in many cases, funding and political muscle, of interested people from around the world to the perspectives, causes and needs of local indigenous communities and to the visions of local artists and writers.

The increase in opportunities for distribution of native-produced media, either on Isuma TV and other websites or on nationwide television cable channels in Canada (APTN: www.aptn.ca (<http://www.aptn.ca>)), New Zealand (Maori TV: www.maoritelevision.com (<http://www.maoritelevision.com>)), Taiwan (Taiwan Indigenous TV: www.titv.org.tw/about_e1.htm (http://www.titv.org.tw/about_e1.htm)) or Australia (National Indigenous Television: <http://nitv.org.au> (<http://nitv.org.au>)) has kick-started and sparked a political, social, and artistic renaissance of visual media production of new proportions.

Isuma TV, along with YouTube, Facebook, Myspace and other social networking sites, has also provided space for movements defending indigenous rights against states, local communities sharing their media and histories, small communities “broadcasting” their stories to the world, and indigenous artists collaborating from afar.

Pam Wilson

Reinhardt College

PSW@reinhardt.edu



</imr/users>

[/michelle-raheja](/imr/users/michelle-raheja)

FAYE'S DISCUSSION OF ISUMA (</IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1434>)

by **Michelle Raheja** (</imr/users/michelle-raheja>) — University of California, Riverside
May 04, 2009 – 12:55

Faye's discussion of Isuma TV inaugurates Indigenous Media week in an important and compelling way. Thanks, too, to Pam for expanding on the conversation by placing this new media outlet in its broader transnational and historical context. From language pedagogy to boarding school survivor's testimony to Inuit narrative, documentary, and experimental film, Inuit TV provides free access and local and international coverage of events and issues in and around Nunavut.

One of the most intriguing things about this clip from *_Before Tomorrow_* is how the filmmakers “people” the Arctic against a literary and visual field that has rendered the far north relatively empty of human imprint and culture. The non-diegetic sound—a heartbeat—serves to strengthen this connection between the community and the landscape.



</imr/users/amalia->

LATIN AMERICAN ONLINE VIDEOS- STILL LIMITED (</IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1435>)

by **Amalia Cordova** (</imr/users/amalia-cordova>) — New York University/Smithsonian National Museum of the American Indian

[cordova](#)

May 04, 2009 – 14:48

Greetings,

Thanks to all for this generative space.

A few notable indigenous-produced works from Latin America are online, but are widely dispersed on the web.

Several projects have chosen to upload their work to IsumaTV (works from Video nas Aldeias, based in Brazil), and others to MySpace or YouTube; for example, there are several clips and a full version of the Ecuadorian Amazon video "[I am the Defender of the Forest/Soy Defensor de la Selva](#) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=g4u8HjLqOdu>)", on YouTube (trailer) and ([full video, with English subtitles](http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEFYnLxKwY) (<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AEFYnLxKwY>)). This work, although posted and English-subtitled, is not in distribution. The video is available on the 2005 Anaconda Festival Awards DVD, or by direct contact with the producers.

I'm pleased that Isuma has taken a global approach and know they have taken language divides into account. Thanks Faye!

Amalia Córdova

Latin American Program Manager | Film and Video Center National Museum of the American Indian | One Bowling Green, New York, N.Y. 10004
| www.nativenetworks.si.edu



[HIDVL](#) ([/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1436](http://IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1436))

by [Nick Mirzoeff](#) ([/imr/users/nickmirzoeff](http://imr/users/nickmirzoeff)) — NYU
May 04, 2009 – 20:20

[/imr/users/nickmirzoeff](http://imr/users/nickmirzoeff)

[/nickmirzoeff](http://imr/users/nickmirzoeff)

Hi—do check out the [Hemispheric Institute Digital Video Library](#) (<http://www.hemisphericinstitute.org/eng/hidvl/index.html>). It's not all indigenous work but there's a good deal of interesting material there from across the Americas

very best

Nick



[WHAT A TERRIFIC WEBSITE!](#) ([/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1459](http://IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1459))

by [Lorna Roth](#) ([/imr/users/lorna-roth](http://imr/users/lorna-roth)) — Concordia University, Montreal
May 07, 2009 – 02:19

[/imr/users/lorna-roth](http://imr/users/lorna-roth)

[/lorna-roth](http://imr/users/lorna-roth)

Lorna Roth, Associate Professor Department of Communication Studies Concordia University - Loyola Campus 7141 Sherbrooke Street West - CJ 4.325 Montreal, Quebec H4B 1R6
514-848-2424 Ext. 2545 lorna.roth@gmail.com

Thank you for pointing this out. It will be very useful to me and I'll pass the url on to others.

Best regards,

Lorna Roth



[THE HUG: A MOMENT DURING ARNAIT'S OAXACA SCREENINGS](#) ([/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1437](http://IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1437))

by [Nancy Wachowich](#) ([/imr/users/nancy-wachowich](http://imr/users/nancy-wachowich)) — University of Aberdeen, Scotland, United Kingdom
May 05, 2009 – 07:56

[/imr/users/nancy-wachowich](http://imr/users/nancy-wachowich)

[wachowich](#) A beautiful clip and a wonderful way to instigate discussions about indigenous media projects and their many potentials. Thanks Faye. I have been conducting anthropological fieldwork in Igloodik since 1997. In February/March of this year, my four year-old son and I travelled with members of Igloodik's Arnait (Women's collective) crew and the Arctciq (Igloodik Circus) group on a fieldtrip to Mexico. We were sitting on orange plastic chairs in a village hall late one night, all of us, after an 'Inuit cultural performance' and screening of Before Tomorrow. The village we were at was Capulálpam de Méndez, a Zapotec mining community set in a valley three hours northeast of Oaxaca. The purpose of our visit was to exchange knowledge with community members, mining activists and indigenous media makers in the region. People in Igloodik are currently negotiating with a Canadian junior mining company over the proposal of a multi-billion dollar iron-ore mine in their territories that, if successful, will drastically alter their environment and lifestyles. This trip to Mexico was a chance to meet with other indigenous peoples who had lived with, and actively fought against, mining development for generations.

The film had just finished. The final closing (and particularly moving) scene had just been shown. Sitting a few rows in front of us was a woman, about 50 years old or so and wearing a woven shawl that she had wrapped her husband and young son in the folds of during the show. When the lights went on in the hall, she unwrapped herself from this family huddle and walked directly over to Madeleine Ivalu, an Igloodik elder and principal character in the film, who was sitting just a few feet behind me. They both reached out and held each other's hands for what seemed like a very, very long time. They hugged. With tears in her eyes the woman thanked Madeleine in Spanish. Madeleine answered in Inuktitut (the Inuit language). They hugged again. Then, holding him by the shoulders, the woman walked her sleepy son over to this Inuit grandmother so that he too could to thank her and receive a warm embrace. Her husband and then other people from the village formed a loose line-up behind the boy.

Arnait and Isuma's media projects, it seems to me, are often more about forging and fostering these connections than they are about the beauty of the final cut. The images and scenes are stunning, but what is frequently more compelling is their ability to bring people together (in the settlement, Nunavut-wide, nationally and internationally) to identify and work towards common goals. They could be personal, political, economic or aesthetic; it doesn't seem to matter so much what kind or combination of because making the connection, forging the relationship itself is what is most important. Will Madeleine and the woman with the shawl collaborate together on a future mining activism or media project? Probably not. But perhaps members of their respective villages, or neighbouring ones, will? And now, this free Internet portal for global indigenous media could set the scene for future unexpected and creative innovations on that sentimental hug that took place that night.



BEYOND BROADCAST ([/imr/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1438](#))

by [Kim Christen](#) ([/imr/users/kimchristen](#)) — Washington State University
May 05, 2009 – 09:08

[/imr/users](#)
[/kimchristen](#)

Faye's post is a great way to start this week dedicated to Indigenous media. Isuma TV is certainly at the forefront of Indigenous movements to sprak global connections between Indigenous media producers and others. I don't know how much outreach they do, it would be interesting to chart the growth of this globally to see where the blind spots are — those missing out on these connections—and how or if those places are connecting in other or varied ways.

Having just used Wilson and Stewart's book "Global Indigenous Media" in my Exhibiting Culture grad class this semester, I find the quote at the end of Faye's post one that sums up the focus on Indigneous media globally. These projects do so much more than tell stories about the past, indeed so much is present focused that it forces people out of their often-held assumptions that indigeneity is lodged in the past and that Indigenous media will be "traditional." In fact, what these projects show is the linkages between past-present-future as well as the conscious and strategic negotiation of these temporalities within video

production, digital archive movements, television, etc.

Kim Christen

ARNAIT (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1442)

by **kathleen buddle** (/imr/users/kathleen-buddle) — university of manitoba
May 05, 2009 – 12:31

I think the point Nancy makes regarding the relation-creating capacities of Arnait's filmmaking is critical – and one certainly made by Faye herself in her earlier work on aesthetics. Arnait's alternative application of filmmaking – i.e., as a means both of participating in every day political processes such as alliance building, and of achieving commercial valorization, highlights a filmmaking context in which multiple socialities are operative. Arnait's films seem to make both generative and intersubjective interventions. The clip Faye features was also employed as an interstitial piece between the featured films at the 2008 ImagineNative gathering in Toronto – the largest Indigenous film festival in the country, where members of Arnait, invited guests, 'hosted' questions from the audience. That the producers are able to occasionally accompany the film on its travels seems to afford them the discursive space to acquaint themselves with each audience in its locality. Despite that theirs and Isuma's films are often referred to as "ethnographic film" (much to their chagrin) the real work of ethnography appears in their gauging of audiences, in their capacities to read them and to compensate for the sorts of missing information that continually impede a recognition of the uniqueness of their labours and intentions. It is almost a like a radioizing of film.... Where the film travels without them, on the other hand, it seems to take on the lives of its audiences. Kathleen Buddle



THE TRAVELS OF INDIGENOUS MEDIA (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1444)

by **Pam Wilson** (/imr/users/wilsonpam) — Reinhardt College
May 05, 2009 – 14:50

/imr/users/
/wilsonpam)

I'm fascinated by this discussion and am grateful to all who have contributed so far. It's opened up for me a new way of conceptualizing the transcultural journeys of these media pieces. Thanks for your insights, Kathy.

Whether they travel digitally and without cultural interpreters (as they do when they are viewed online by dispersed viewers who may or may not be able to fully understand their cultural meanings, but who nonetheless are often able to ascribe some meaning to them) or accompanied/hosted by their producers as part of a cultural encounter (as so richly described in Nancy's post) or at an indigenous film festival, the broadening of the audience at a global level for these works is unprecedented today. The net is cast widely.

And the impact of the relationships created by the very act of participating in viewing and making meaning of each film cannot be fully known. Even those unhosted and uninterpreted viewings have the potential to change hearts and lives.



OVERCOMING BANDWIDTH ISSUES (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1450)

by **Amahl Bishara** (/imr/users/amahl-bishara) — Tufts University
May 06, 2009 – 09:45

/imr/users/amahl-
bishara)

First of all, this is a riveting clip! I'm now really looking forward to seeing *Before Tomorrow*. I think it's interesting how Igoolik Isuma is taking advantage of digital technologies in a way that also takes into account digital divide issues, such that the digital divide is hardly a reason to take projects off line, instead it's an impetus to think creatively about how to use these technologies, and thus to introduce a project like NITV. Thank you for this post, Faye.

Thanks also to all of the posters who presented links to different online media sources - I will certainly be using them in my fall class, Media, the State, and

the Senses.



THIS IS INDEED A FANTASTIC (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1452)

by **Ramesh** (/imr/users/srinivasanucla) — UCLA
May 06, 2009 – 22:07

(/imr/users
/srinivasanucla)

This is indeed a fantastic example of how the outlets by which we access divergent cultural expressions have diversified more than ever, now facilitated by website aggregators, streaming systems, and more. Two key questions for all of us to consider as we write about, enable, and critically consider this dynamic:

1. How does this power of authorship and release of content actually impact distance audiences, given that the explosion of information available has made only what is known that which we can find via systems like Google, Youtube, Flickr and so on? Considering how indigenous agendas diffuse forces us to consider important issues like classification, findability, and search. We need to examine the political questions inherent in how information that may be authored by an indigenous author could still be buried within existing infrastructural and algorithmic regimes. What would an alternate reality look like where an indigenous discourse could stand side-by-side with a scientific, technocratic, or bureaucratic approach? My colleagues and I are currently working on an NSF sponsored project in partnership with the Zuni of New Mexico to explore multiple ontologies in digital museum systems.

2. How do we consider carefully the different types of audiences that these indigenous filmmakers are attempting to reach through such media? Often new media is used to catalyze local connections (within geographically proximal locations), or transnational networks that are still local in that the intended recipients are peoples of the same nation or ancestry. These types of authorship dominate in contrast to the neoliberal mantra of 'information wants to be free'. This needs to be considered carefully. Yet also at times communities have other objectives, focused on actively circulating and positioning their discourses to 'public', 'free' audiences. Such is a different act, and indigenous peoples hold agency to act in these multiple manners, each of which must be carefully respected for what it is by our scholarly community.

Great discussion all. I look forward to continuing to participate!

Assistant Professor Department of Information Studies and Design|Media Arts UCLA



ON THE MAINSTREAM (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1453)

by **Sigurjon Baldur Hafsteinsson** (/imr/users/ziggy) — University of Iceland
May 06, 2009 – 19:55

(/imr/users/ziggy)

Thank you Faye for an interesting post and others for participating in this stream. During my fieldwork, I asked people at APTN (www.aptn.ca (<http://www.aptn.ca>)) about the mainstream media, and they usually answered by saying that APTN was not seeking to become mainstream, at least not as it is normally conceived of today. On the other hand, the same people stated that they wanted to become mainstream. The mandate of becoming mainstream, while retaining an Aboriginal perspective, became the fundamental goal of the network: to reach its potential audience pool, and at the same time, to provide them with an alternative model of what mainstreaming should mean. Aboriginal scholars have pointed out that mainstreaming in the Eurocentric sense of the word implies that people and institutional practices try to achieve norms in their assumptions, opinions and behavior. In this case, the mainstream is constructed as one main stream. That is not, however, what the conception of the mainstream should be for Aboriginal people. Rather, the mainstream should take into account that there are multiple streams that should be perceived together, collectively, in the imaginary construction of the mainstream.

ps. like tremendously the coloring and movement of the camera in the video!



PARALLEL MEDIA VOICES (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1458)

(/imr/users
/lorna-roth) by [Lorna Roth \(/imr/users/lorna-roth\)](#) — Concordia University,
Montreal
May 07, 2009 – 02:05

What a wonderful conversation. Thanks, Faye, for starting it. I hope it continues long after this week's posts are relocated to the In Med Res archive.where to begin - maybe a bit of broader historical context.

Having distantly engaged in the development of indigenous media for decades now, it is so interesting for me to observe how it is currently evolving. I'll take Canada as an exemplar to explain what I mean because this is where I'm situated and where I've focussed my studies. Since the operationalization of the Anik Satellite in 1973, First Peoples in Canada have always carefully surveyed media fields to find openings in which to insert their voices, struggles, images, identities, and perspectives. In the early seventies, with the assistance of the National Film Board of Canada, it was film to which Northern indigenous peoples turned. This was followed by community-based media. As more and more people developed media skills by the eighties, regional radio and television production and dissemination evolved with the negotiated support of the federal and territorial governments. This was fortunate, but at the same time, established some creative restrictions regarding the type of programming permissible: funded programs were required to reflect indigenous cultures and reinforce spoken languages.

Policy has always mattered in Canadian First Peoples broadcasting media because it is on the basis of legislation, i.e. enshrining aboriginal communication rights into law, that indigenous peoples could professionally join the public mediasphere as national citizens and it was important for them to be out there, profiled and represented both in front of and behind the technologies, management systems, etc.. Several phases took place in media development in Canada which culminated in the establishment of the Aboriginal Peoples Television Network, licensed in 1999. It is currently central to the dissemination of indigenous news, documentaries, and current affairs programming to native, Inuit, and cross-cultural audiences. However, APTN is a product-oriented institution under Canadian Radio-television and Telecommunications regulation. The number of voices it broadcasts is restricted due to time and financial constraints; production is costly; response to feedback is not immediate. Despite these challenges, it forms a baseline, first national indigenous service delivering 24 hours of native-perspective programming to all Canadian households receiving satellite and cable services. Its license was recently renewed for another seven years.

Although already digitized and available around the world on the web, I suspect that APTN will eventually join forces with other aboriginal broadcasters and form a global indigenous public service broadcaster, likely to be comparable to that of CNN, BBC, TV5, and Al Jazeera English.

Igloolik Isuma Productions is complementary to APTN. It has carefully created a niche for Inuit drama and story-telling. It does not have government policy restrictions imposed on it by a national regulator, but rather operates in the freer sphere of the creative arts. Started as a feature film unit, and having received prestigious awards for their work, Isuma not only exhibits in conventional mainstream venues, but has also innovatively created Isuma.tv to showcase their own and other aboriginal broadcasters' work from around the world. Their latest initiative, NITV, will have even greater impact on opening up distribution resources to international cross-cultural audiences for the cost of access to a service provider. NITV is where Isuma will be contributing to a major shift in digital access options to remote communities.

I love the provocative issues that Ramesh has raised, as well as the stimulating discussion taken up by others. Personally, I'm still left with a few naive questions: Who among First Peoples and others actually listens to web-based voices? Who engages in interactive conversations? What about those in remote

and isolated communities with NITV (as of May 29) but who don't have access to phones, computers or the literacy skills to use them? Is there still a value to traditional media such as television, radio, and print? How are new media affecting old media markets, users, and producers?

The movement toward the digitization of almost everything will no doubt continue among First Peoples participating in the Web 2.0 world. How the next generation of aboriginal youth will collectively contribute to a shifting international mediascape will be of great interest to those involved in more traditional media, who are seeking ways to draw them back to First Peoples' cultural, social, and political corridors of power. The impact of the next generation's alternative mediated explorations on the positive transformation of the quality of life in their communities remains to be seen.

Lorna Roth, Associate Professor Department of Communication Studies
Concordia University - Loyola Campus 7141 Sherbrooke Street West - CJ 4.325
Montreal, Quebec H4B 1R6 514-848-2424 Ext. 2545 lorna.roth@gmail.com



I LOVE THIS CLIP! I AM ALSO ([/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1460](#))

by [Ellie Rennie](#) ([/imr/users/ellie-rennie](#)) — Swinburne University
May 07, 2009 – 03:32

[/imr/users/ellie-
rennie](#)

I love this clip! I am also very interested in the alternative distribution platforms that Isuma TV is using...

There are a few online Indigenous video projects happening here in Australia (Indigitube, Nyurru Warnu). The Australian government recently announced a plan that will take broadband into remote Australia, so these initiatives are important.

As a researcher, however, I am finding myself increasingly drawn back to digital broadcasting policy issues. Cost issues around internet access means that online media may never supersede free to air broadcast out here (phone billing has proven to be a perpetual problem). Moreover, until satellite broadband improves or wireless mesh networks/smart radio etc are given serious consideration, broadband speeds are likely to be slow or non-existent in many areas. Then there's digital literacy and maintenance to think about... I'd say there's no real hurry with any of this, except that analogue TV will be switched off in 2013 and the government currently has no plan as to how digital TV will work in remote areas.

The government preferred model for TV seems to be satellite direct to home in remote areas (which will have cost and maintenance issues too!) Because of the nature of this technology, we may see the end of the local/regional model of remote Indigenous television.

I am not talking about NITV here... NITV (the Australian version) is not aimed at remote Indigenous people, but mainstream audiences. It is more like public service broadcasting than the community model that came before. I support NITV but it is a national channel which does not address the language, social and cultural needs of remote people. While some communities are using their community television licences to insert local footage over NITV, these kind of 'making do' options will not be possible with digital broadcasting...

I think that in the long term we are looking at a range of novel, unique media systems to serve remote Australia. However, I am not confident that ad hoc local innovation can address all the issues - and I don't think the Indigenous media

sector believes that either.

It is a confusing time for media policy. And, as always, remote Australia has been left til last.

MAORI TELEVISION AND VISUAL FUTURES (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1461)

by [April Strickland](/imr/users/april-strickland/) — New York University
May 07, 2009 – 06:55

Thank you to Faye and Pam and all those who have contributed. I appreciate how rich the ideas, stories, and examples being shared from all over the world are.

In my research on Maori media, I've noticed a focus upon integrating technologies. Maori Television's newly revamped website (www.maoritelevision.com (<http://www.maoritelevision.com>)) now provides several of its programs for viewers to watch online and on demand. While proprietary laws limit broadcasting the network's complete lineup, the increasingly blurred lines between television and internet content are modifying the young station's programming, circulation, and distribution patterns. They also allow for increased viewer participation and interaction. For instance, for this year's Waitangi Day events, Maori Television created its own layer on Google Earth titled "Where on Google Earth will you be on Waitangi Day?" Viewers were invited to send their locations, written stories, and video testimonials from around the world to share with their friends and whanau (family) across the world. Using this very contemporary technology, the television's website became a global space for enacting, creating, and reaffirming community for its Indigenous and non-Indigenous viewers across the world.

A potential challenge to participating in these online communities is internet access. Faye Ginsburg (2205) has written about the "digital divide" created between those who are able to access the technology necessary to be online and participate in the multiple communities available electronically and those who do not have this access. Here in Aotearoa New Zealand, the situation is perhaps even grayer than this online/offline divide. Even if one has access to the internet in her home, broadband coverage is rationed by subscription plans. Unlike other parts of the world where individual broadband usage is unlimited, in New Zealand, subscribers buy monthly plans based upon bandwidth amounts — usually 3GB, 10 GB, and 20 GB plans. Streaming video requires extensive bandwidth, and individuals often have to decide whether the online clips they want to watch are worth filling up their bandwidth quotas. Larger and perhaps unlimited amounts of bandwidth will most certainly be available to New Zealanders in the years to come, yet in the meantime, this restricted access curtails the participation of many potential online viewers.

Regardless of these current restrictions, Maori Television's recent increase in online and on demand content signals that the network is planning for a future that incorporates wider viewer participation and larger amounts of readily available bandwidth. With a dedicated following, the network's online and televised efforts have the potential to create visual futures that go beyond broadcast and borders.

April Strickland, Program in Culture and Media, New York University, april.strickland@nyu.edu



</imr/users/alexandra-halkin/>

LATIN AMERICAN INDIGENOUS MEDIA ISSUES (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1465)

by [Alex Halkin](/imr/users/alexandra-halkin/) — Chiapas Media Project/Promedios
May 07, 2009 – 12:48

Thanks Faye for inviting me to participate in this interesting discussion. I'd like to make some comments regarding some of the issues brought up by Ramesh.

Just to give folks a little background, the Chiapas Media Project (CMP)/Promedios has built four Regional Media Centers with the Zapatista communities that provide video production, post-production, audio recording equipment and

satellite internet access. The project is now 11 1/2 years old and we are currently distributing about 30 productions worldwide.

The vast majority of the Zapatista video productions are for an internal audience, in their language. These productions range from documentation of meetings, celebrations, local projects, events etc. When they make videos available for an international audience a lot of consideration goes into that decision. First, is there anyone in the video who will be put in danger by having their image made public? Since the Zapatista's live within the context of an on-going low intensity war with the Mexican government, this is an important consideration. We have seen in other low intensity conflicts in Mexico (Oaxaca, Atenco, Guerrero etc.) how government authorities use video productions and photos posted on the internet to identify individuals or groups that they feel are a threat to state power.

Latin America indigenous video is many times used as a way to document and denounce human rights abuses committed by the state against indigenous peoples. These producers, communities and organizations in the vast majority of circumstances are not receiving support by their governments for their productions. I think the question of how indigenous media is being funded deserves some attention because it is very difficult to compare Maori TV or APTN or indigenous producers in Canada and the US who are receiving government grants to the vast majority of indigenous producers in Latin America who scramble just to have enough money to buy video tape.



STREAMS ... ([/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1466](#))

by [Lucas Bessire \(/imr/users/lbb232\)](#) — New York University
May 07, 2009 — 13:12

[\(/imr/users/lbb232\)](#)

A wonderful and lively discussion, a great film clip, an inspiring project. This obviously raises a lot of thorny and productive questions.

Watching it I was struck by concerns similar to those raised by Lorna and April about the divisions / fault-lines between 'old' and 'new' media technologies.

NITV is a remarkably innovative application of new media technology, and one with breathtaking potential for native cultural projects in isolated communities. It is particularly adept for media projects that are visually based, in which the 'internet' represents a stream-lining of technological infrastructure and material circuits necessary to reach a specific audience. Such a technological synergy could also be useful for archival or witnessing purposes, and in some cases, could conceivably reduce overall budgets for mass distribution.

Such projects, however, don't necessarily need to overwhelm or encompass the established circulatory systems they parallel. Radio, in all of its many guises, remains a favored medium for vast numbers of people on the south side of the digital divide precisely because it can provide many of the same features of internet streaming — democratic access, interface, minimal infrastructure, instantaneous compression of space/time over vast distances — at a fraction of the cost. There is also a particular radio experience that is not replicable in video streaming. I'm interested to find out more about the ways internet streaming may be changing radio use alongside video practice in these communities ...



HELLO ALL -- JOINING IN THE ([/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1475](#))

by [Ernesto Ignacio de Carvalho \(/imr/users/ernesto-de-carvalho\)](#) —
New York University
May 08, 2009 — 09:06

[\(/imr/users/ernesto-de-carvalho\)](#)

Hello all — joining in the conversation a little late here — and thanks Faye! Isuma is indeed a great point to start talking about indigenous

media. Picking up from Lucas:

Working in a very different meridian, with Video nas Aldeias (Video in the Villages), in Brazil, we've come to see Isuma as a consistent, organized strategy of broadcast and streaming distribution. Video nas Aldeias joined Isuma and started to post some videos there, and there's also an effort gone into a Youtube channel. One of the main questions I see concerning these strategies for distribution over the web is connected to the production model of much of what the indigenous filmmakers are doing in Brazil. In the "documentary" approach to making audio-visual, there's this notion of a finished film, to be packaged in DVD's and Tapes, and to be sent to festivals, sold, or shown in other villages or schools. This is always the result of a several month long effort, and it is very much the paradigm. It has worked great, but there's a need to discuss other forms, faster, more dynamic, and that channels like Isuma (or Youtube) articulate so well. It's not the type of packaging that TV programs made everyone used to over the last half century, but it is not this feature (or mid-length feature) format that the festivals take up. With this in mind we are trying to organize at Video nas Aldeias a workshop for June to work exclusively with short pieces, maybe use left-overs from finished documentaries, or help filmmakers that have ideas for short films. I hope some of it may end up in Isuma.

Now, thinking about the "digital divide", there's something interesting to note about the history of radio in Brazil. Because the so-called "alternative radios" (pirate, unofficial etc) were so persecuted in Brazil during the 80's and 90's, it occurs that the internet, when it was popularized, was taken up as a space that the radio had in many other Latin-American countries. In many place, and for many constituencies, this was an eager encounter with a democratic means. And there are in fact many intense and wide-spread programs for taking Satellite internet connections to remote localities, including many communities working with Video nas Aldeias. In this sense, Radio, because it is low-fi, is not necessarily more available than internet in many states in Brazil (not counting its more commercial version).

Video in the Villages' Youtube channel: www.youtube.com/user/VideoNasAldeias

Ernesto Ignacio de Carvalho www.videonasaldeias.org.br



NITV LAUNCH (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1477)

by **Lisa Stefanoff** (/imr/users/lisa-stefanoff) — NYU PhD 2009
May 08, 2009 – 10:13

</imr/users/lisa-stefanoff>

Just a little note to say that some of us here in Central Australia are trying to set things up to be virtually present as a group at the Isuma NITV launch on May 29th... See you there! Lisa



HI-SPEED VIDEO IN LOW-SPEED COMMUNITIES (/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-1489)

by **Norman Cohn** (/imr/users/norman-cohn) — Isuma University
May 13, 2009 – 10:40

</imr/users/norman-cohn>

Thanks to Faye and others for interesting feedback to IsumaTV and internet for Indigenous media. I'd like expand on and clarify a few points.

First, anyone can visit IsumaTV's new 2.0 'beta' version now even before we launch officially May 29th. Use the URL www.isuma.tv/beta (<http://www.isuma.tv/beta>) for the next two weeks as we complete final fine-tuning of the new site. IsumaTV 2.0 allows more interaction and networking enabling users to join and upload content to one another's channels. 2.0 also accepts all media content, not only videos, but audio, radio, documents, photos and text.

Any Indigenous media content or archives can be uploaded any time. Our project for Digitizing the Inuit and Aboriginal Media Archive (DIAMA) preserves audio and video archives recorded over the past 40 years on deteriorating or obsolete magnetic tape formats in danger of being lost. DIAMA can set up a channel and digitize up to five sample videos for free, and then co-sponsor with the archive a search for funds to digitize and upload the rest. Please contact me or

write info@isuma.tv

I wanted to add to the discussion of old vs. new media and how internet may or may not be useful to remote Indigenous communities where access to bandwidth and computers is so poor that many cannot use it? At present, Inuit and other Indigenous people are on the brink of being left out of the most important new communication technology since the printing press. Almost everything in the 21st century will be conducted at least partly by internet. Being left off, even for another decade or two, is like a linguistic, cultural and economic death sentence. Isuma's commitment to create IsumaTV even in the face of these disadvantages is our recognition of how access to the internet cannot be 'negotiable' for Indigenous communities struggling to survive. This is particularly the case since the new 2.0 multimedia internet actually offers a practical tool especially suitable for oral cultures in remote regions. Unlike the literary medium of print, or the 1.0 print-based internet which is all about reading, in which oral cultures traditionally have been disadvantaged by participating in their second languages, the 2.0 audiovisual internet advantages people using sophisticated aural and visual skill-sets in their own first languages. In Nunavut, for example, the new Inuktitut Language Protection Act requires public and private sector agencies to improve their services in Inuktitut. So far, this is interpreted to mean providing Inuktitut syllabic translations of English-written documents, including syllabic website pages as an alternative to English. However, Inuktitut is an oral language for sophisticated storytelling over four millennia. Syllabic Inuktitut was invented by priests a hundred years ago to translate the Bible, and more recently government-language web pages and position papers that make no sense at all when transliterated into written Inuktitut. Everyone who speaks Inuktitut knows that very few Inuit who read will choose to read Inuktitut translations of English texts rather than read the English itself or not bother at all.

A 2.0 interactive multimedia internet allows bureaucracies as well as citizens to speak to one another in Inuktitut through audio-video uploads, and be spoken back to by users or clients in their own first language. Innovative thinking about an audiovisual internet may well free oral cultures from feeling, and being treated as, 'illiterate' and everything that follows from this kind of stereotyped misrepresentation.

People for whom minority language preservation is a priority have no choice but to invest in the internet immediately and find new solutions to current obstacles. No centralized satellite television channel ever can address the multilingual needs of Indigenous people for whom language preservation remains a cultural necessity. APTN in Canada, for example, programs fewer hours per week of Inuit or Aboriginal language programming in 2009 than it had ten or twenty years ago. The linear pressure of showing only one program at a time, no matter how many people may be watching, allows APTN to broadcast no more than 24 hours of 'unilingual' programming (that is, only one language at any given moment) in any 24 hour day. In contrast, IsumaTV has over a thousand films in 28 different languages simultaneously available to anyone at any time. APTN's still prohibitive cost of satellite access, infrastructure and overhead for a single centralized channel showing only one program at a time forces programming choices towards the mainstream, that is, majority English and French language programs, to attract the widest possible audience. No centralized pressure leads IsumaTV toward the mainstream since our website is simply a delivery platform for an infinite number of different channels all available at the same time; people watch whatever they choose, in whatever language they prefer. APTN is one channel, offering one program in one language at a time, for a cost of \$20 million a year. IsumaTV holds an infinite number of channels in as many languages as people speak, in which any one film can be chosen by any viewer at any time of any day. Compared to YouTube or Vimeo or IsumaTV, conventional satellite channels like APTN or Australia's NITV will soon seem like General Motors SUV's, or even worse, oversized Cadillacs from the 1950's and 60's.

On APTN, Inuit Broadcasting Corporation has been cut back to three hours per week of Inuktitut-language time slots, the least since the 1980's. Meanwhile IsumaTV's DIAMA is digitizing hundreds of IBC programs from the past 25 years which will be available to any viewer any time they ever want to see it on IBC's

channel on IsumaTV.

25 years ago, in *For a Cultural Future*, Eric Michaels made the same point about the impossibility of a single satellite channel to mesh with existing Aboriginal information structures. He cited the 22 Aboriginal languages spoken in Australia's central footprint area that represent not simply different dialects but different cultural formations.

Michaels distinguishes between Aboriginal and contemporary mass communications systems. Modern mass media, particularly satellite TV, is centralized, homogenized, archival and impersonal; whereas Aboriginal media is dispersed, heterogeneous, personal and current. Michaels explains:

"Video with its dispersed and loosely coordinated distribution and dissemination system when used in conjunction with low powered community TV transmission of the kind employed by Francis Jupurrurla represents a contemporary accommodation of tradition to the 'electronic' age. In contrast the direct broadcast satellite with its single point to multi-point transmission (centre to periphery) broadcasts the same message throughout the footprint. Consequently it will not only tend to broadcast in a common lingua franca but will seek generalized forms of address. A consequence of this must be to diminish the power and the importance of the communities, their languages and rituals within the footprint area."

IsumaTV is one technological destination of Michaels' logical imagination. Today's 2.0 multimedia internet permits multi-point to multi-point transmission, including Live webcasting, making it possible for the first time for "dispersed and loosely coordinated" community-based videos employing the economic efficiencies of a shared technical platform to empower communities, languages and rituals across a global footprint.

The reality that remote Indigenous communities currently lack equal access to the internet must not be used to justify ignoring this potential and making current inequality permanent. Instead, it should be a call to action towards any innovative solutions that improve internet services immediately in remote communities around the world. Nunavut is a 'good' (that is, bad) example. Nunavut's government-subsidized QINIQ service is 325 times behind national Canadian standards in cost-per-KB/sec. QINIQ's fastest high-speed service downloads at 768 KB/sec for \$400/month; this is 65 times slower at five times the monthly cost of Montreal's Ultimate 50 MB/sec service for \$80/month. Nunavut's digital divide doubles every year as southern bandwidth increases rapidly while remote bandwidth remains stagnant.

Rather than see this discrepancy as an excuse to feel LESS urgency about internet innovation in Nunavut, the opposite is required. How long do Inuit have before the catastrophe of unequal internet access in their own language wipes out what remains of a still living Inuktitut language and culture in the 21st century? Or conversely, how quickly can people USE the internet to defend these languages for the first time through this powerful modern technology?

NITV on IsumaTV offers a compromise available immediately to provide the benefits of high-speed internet in communities with little or even no internet service at all. We achieve this by loading the complete IsumaTV website into a 'local server' which is a hard drive or even a laptop. The server then is installed in a community school, library or other host building with a powerful wireless router. Then, the entire IsumaTV website of, say, 1000 films, is fully accessible wirelessly to any computer at ultra high-speed, since the content once already downloaded to the local server and stored there, doesn't need to be downloaded again each time a film is viewed.

While this version of IsumaTV is frozen in time, that is, on the day it was loaded into the local server, it can be updated automatically and continuously through even a modest internet connection by synchronizing the local server and IsumaTV in cyberspace. In this way, new content added daily to IsumaTV 'in space' by uploads from users around the world, or from local communities where servers are installed, gradually get downloaded to the local servers where they become accessible locally at high-speed. By up- and downloading NEW content only, the local server requires far less bandwidth to keep IsumaTV current than if every user downloaded the same 1000 films again and again.

We also recognize that many Indigenous homes may have TV but not computers, although this is probably temporary as computers or handheld video devices become less expensive and as widely available as ordinary TVs. In the meantime, however, IsumaTV also can broadcast locally any of its 1000 films through the community cable system or by a low-power transmitter. A local video VJ, similar to a community radio DJ, can program a full broadcast day of selections from IsumaTV for broadcast to a local channel on home TVs. And finally, the local server can deliver selected films directly to a digital video projector allowing local movie projections in schools, community centres or any makeshift digital 'cinema.'

Of course, this solution does not immediately address the wider problem of digital equality to the WHOLE internet for remote communities, although it certainly encourages it by demonstrating the need for and benefits of having it. High-speed access to IsumaTV's Indigenous media content through local servers does not deliver YouTube, Facebook or YouPorn to remote communities. However, in the meantime IsumaTV WILL deliver thousands of Indigenous films, video, radio and other media content in as many languages as people around the world are willing to work to maintain.

We hope to install NITV on IsumaTV in at least seven Nunavut communities this fall. At the same time, any community anywhere could install the same system in its own location and use IsumaTV to deliver its own content in its own language to as many communities as have the local server installed.

Anyone who wants more information about NITV on IsumaTV, please contact me at cohn@isuma.ca (<mailto:cohn@isuma.ca>). Please also investigate isuma.tv/beta to consider how it may be useful to you or to people with whom you work. And finally, please join us at 7:30 pm EST May 29th at www.isuma.tv (<http://www.isuma.tv>) for the webcast of Sheila Watt-Cloutier's lecture from Iqaluit on Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change, Live on IsumaTV.



BEYOND BROADCAST REDUX, 2010 ([/IMR/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-2402](http://imr/2009/05/03/BEYOND-BROADCAST-LAUNCHING-NITV-ISUMA-TV#COMMENT-2402))

by [Faye Ginsburg](http://imr/users/faye-ginsburg) ([/imr/users/faye-ginsburg](http://imr/users/faye-ginsburg)) — New York University
November 24, 2010 – 18:42

([/imr/users/faye-ginsburg](http://imr/users/faye-ginsburg))

Since 2009, the tundra has not grown under Igloolik Isuma. In October 2010, their latest film, Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change — the world's first Inuktitut film on this topic, exploring the Inuit experience of a warming Arctic — premiered in Toronto at the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival, while simultaneously streaming online to viewers around the world. At the festival, filmmakers Zacharias Kunuk and environmental scientist Ian Mauro took questions from the audience in the theater as well as via Skype, from Pond Inlet in the Arctic to New York and Sydney, Australia. Today, November 24, 2010, the Council of Canadians will be screening the film on Parliament Hill, anticipating the next round of climate negotiations in Cancun starting on November 29, where the documentary will also be shown. Igloolik Isuma's director Zach Kunuck will participate by Skype. As Norm Cohn of Igloolik Isuma explained, "these kinds of interactive screenings are taking the traditional concept of theatrical film presentation and converging it with an interactive

website so that distribution of timely content is not out of date." For those who want to see Inuit Knowledge and Climate Change, please go to: <http://www.isuma.tv/hi/en/inuit-knowledge-and-climate-change> (<http://www.isuma.tv/hi/en/inuit-knowledge-and-climate-change>). Their "beyond broadcast" efforts that I reported on 18 months ago just prior to the launch of NITV on Isuma TV are evolving with a new project, Inuit IQ + 2.0 Interactive Media = Cultural Survival, designed to help bring northern Indigenous/Inuit audiences into the digital age on their own terms, despite the lack of sufficient bandwidth in many northern communities. Their service – using a low cost package of three media players installed in Inuit community schools and libraries interfacing with a laptop – will allow these local groups to immediately have a growing interactive library of over 2000 indigenously produced films in 41 languages, and in particular over 200 titles in Inuktitut. Their design for this project is the next logical step in developing an adaptive and resourceful media strategy for Canada's indigenous, northern communities in the digital age. Interestingly, for most of these groups, community two-way radio in their own language has been the dominant and most popular media form to date. The new project builds on principles similar to community radio, providing access to media by and about Inuit lives, and in their own language, but using audio visual media with the capacity for locally produced material to be uploaded to the server as well. In particular, Igloodik Isuma hopes this project will be a resource for Inuit and Aboriginal youth who are "part of a global multimedia youth generation using the internet as its communication backbone." Igloodik Isuma is a group that has always stayed ahead of the curve, finding ways to adapt and indigenize new technologies – from analog to digital video, from theatrical circulation to online distribution, to new approaches to digital production and delivery. Their new project is a comprehensive, systemic solution to a 'perfect storm' of obstacles that have blocked northern media development. Unfortunately, one of those obstacles is a recent turndown for funding from the Canadian Media Fund's Experimental Stream. Astonishingly, Igloodik Isuma were told that their project was "not sufficiently innovative" despite the fact that this remarkable effort to rethink media distribution in the digital age from an indigenous point of view is the first of its kind in the world. Moreover, Igloodik Isuma has creatively imagined a way to provide indigenous communities in Nunavut with opportunities to view work from their own world, despite the lack of broadband equity. Now it looks like their creativity must extend beyond the screen and beyond technology, to finding new sources of funding to help them launch this new project. Thus far they have only rolled out media players in Iqaluit and one other Inuit community but expect to reach many more in 2012. Luckily, Igloodik Isuma is documenting the process, the subject of their next film that will allow those of us who don't live in Nunavut to watch how this important new experiment in indigenous media develops.