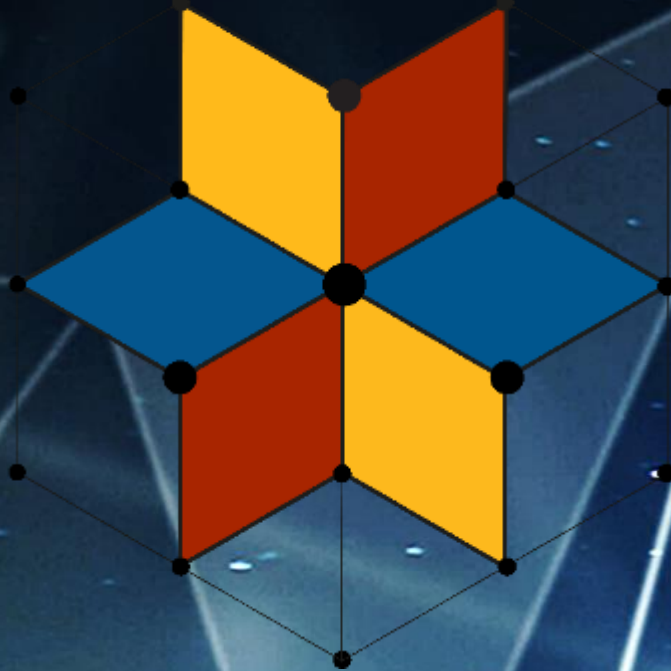


OVERVIEW ON THE 2019 NIITA SYMPOSIUM



NATIONAL INDIGENOUS
INFORMATION
TECHNOLOGY ALLIANCE
L'ALLIANCE NATIONALE
AUTOCHTONE DE LA
TECHNOLOGIE DE
L'INFORMATION



PREAMBLE

The goal of the National Indigenous Information Technology Alliance (NIITA) is to support First Nations IT Systems by collaborating at a national level. NIITA hosted an IT Symposium in Winnipeg on November 5-7, 2019. The attendees were IT professionals from across Canada who are employed by First Nations organizations and who provide IT support to First Nations health centers. This national gathering was devoted to First Nations IT personnel and was the first of its kind. This report is an output of that gathering and written with First Nations leadership in mind.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

The following sponsors, technology leaders and IT professionals made the symposium possible.

SPONSORS

Indigenous Services Canada (ISC)/eHealth Program provided support and funding for the Symposium which was flowed through the First Nations Health and Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM). Representatives from FNHSSM and the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority (NITHA) of Saskatchewan Co-chair NIITA.



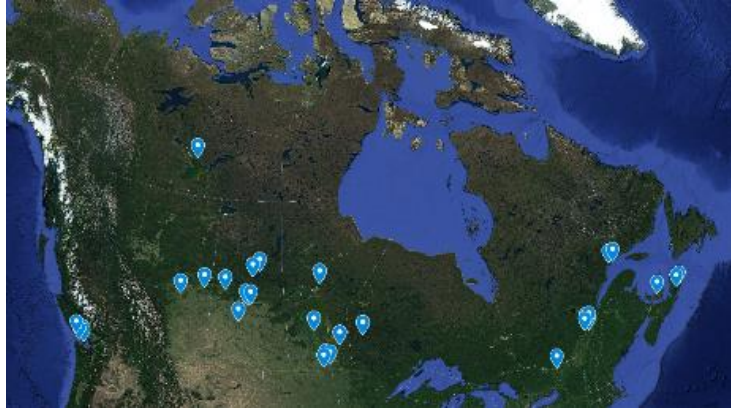
TECHNOLOGY/INDUSTRY LEADERS

Keynote speakers from First Nations IT Businesses, the FNHSSM eHealth Program, Industry Leaders and the National Research Council of Canada presented on current IT/eHealth initiatives and technology innovations.



FIRST NATIONS IT PROFESSIONALS

Over 30 First Nations IT professionals from across Canada attended the Symposium to exchange knowledge, provide insight about IT systems and to learn about technology innovations.



EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

On November 5-7, 2019, a *National Indigenous IT Alliance (NIITA) Symposium* was held in Winnipeg, Manitoba. Over 30 First Nations employed IT professionals from across Canada who support the First Nations health system attended this event. This was the first national IT event dedicated to the First Nations IT professionals.

The objectives of the symposium were to give exposure to the newly formed NIITA, to provide a forum for networking and knowledge exchange, to provide an opportunity to learn about technology innovations and trends, and to gather information about the current state of First Nations IT systems.

Valuable information was collected through five workshops:

- What kinds of IT services and components are provided to First Nations Communities
- What are the competency requirements necessary to provide the various IT services
- What are the challenges with providing IT services to First Nations Communities
- What are the various IT service models and their pros and cons
- What services could NIITA provide in the future and what are the next steps for NIITA

First Nations are applying IT solutions and innovating but are generally still behind. The essential IT services and the competency requirements are well understood but there are the usual challenges with delivering underfunded IT services to remote Communities. Some Communities manage their own IT services, but most are aligned with other Communities and 2nd level First Nations organizations. There are advantages when Communities work together with 2nd/3rd level organizations such as access to IT professionals with advanced competencies and bulk purchasing discounts.

The attendees found the Symposium beneficial and see the potential of NIITA as a national body for IT support in the areas of:

- Procurement
- Training
- Networking and Communications
- Policy and Standards Development
- Technical Services
- Regional Based Advisory Committees

ABOUT THE 2019 NIITA SYMPOSIUM

BACKGROUND

At a National First Nations Digital Health Advisory meeting hosted by the AFN in November 2018, interest was expressed to create a forum or working group for First Nations IT professionals. The First Nations Health & Social Secretariat of Manitoba (FNHSSM) volunteered to lead an initiative to develop a national forum. With funding by Indigenous Services Canada (ISC), the National Indigenous Information Technology Alliance (NIITA) was created and a representative from the Northern Inter-Tribal Health Authority (NITHA) of Saskatchewan was asked to Co-chair NIITA.

The immediate goal of NIITA was to have two national meetings with IT professionals from across Canada. Since NIITA was a newly formed entity, a national symposium was determined to be the best means of introducing NIITA and bringing First Nations IT professionals together.

Planning for the symposium began in February 2019 and a website¹ was created to inform IT professionals. The Symposium was held in Winnipeg on November 5-7, 2019 and a second Teleconference meeting is being planned for January 2020.

It was determined the following requirements must be met for NIITA membership:

- ✓ Must be an IT professional
- ✓ Must be employed by a First Nations organization
- ✓ Must provide direct/indirect IT services to First Nations Health Centers

OBJECTIVES

The objectives of the Symposium were to:

- Provide exposure for the newly formed NIITA
- Bring First Nations IT Professionals together to network and exchange knowledge
- Bring in Industry Leaders and present on technology trends and innovations
- Gather information from the IT professionals about First Nations IT systems
- Discuss the future of NIITA

The symposium gave credence to NIITA. Over 30 First Nations IT professionals attended and were enthusiastic about the event. The following keynote speakers and industry leaders made presentations and demonstrated support the First Nations event:

- Katlo Tech
- International Business Machines (IBM)
- Microsoft
- McAfee
- Facebook
- Broadband Communications North (BCN)
- National Research Council
- TELUS
- Amazon
- Powerland
- Hewlett Packard (HP)

The NIITA Symposium had five (5) workshops. The purpose of the workshops was to gather information from the IT professionals and produce a credible report about First Nations IT systems.

The Symposium agenda can be found in APPENDIX “A”, and outputs from the workshops and information about the future of NIITA are detailed in other sections in this report.





