



Effective Solutions, Innovative Strategies

Indigenous-Infused Digital Games

A New Model for Self-Sufficiency and Social Impact

Cook Inlet Tribal Council (CITC) is the primary educational, workforce development and social service provider for Alaska Native and American Indian people (AN/AI) in the Anchorage/Cook Inlet Region of Alaska. As an organization, CITC is striving to be a leader in using social enterprise as a vehicle for financial sustainability and social change. Our goal is to be a forward thinking, proactive organization charting our own destiny.

For CITC, self-sufficiency and sustainability mean developing human and financial resources to effectively fulfill our mission and vision for the future in which “all Our People—especially Our Youth, the stewards of our future—have access to vast opportunities, have the ability, confidence, and courage to advance and achieve their goals, infused with an unshakable belief in Our endless potential.”

CITC has a culture and reputation of reaching out to embrace new ways to connect with and serve Alaska Native people. Looking at the age demographics of Alaska Natives, we want to harness a vibrant new avenue to reach our youth. Through our for-profit subsidiary CITC Enterprises, Inc., (CEI), we have established a business venture to design and market a series of digital games that will showcase Alaska Native culture and that of indigenous people around the world.

WHY GAMES?

Digital games are a way to reach our tech-savvy youth while sharing Alaska Native culture. A well-designed game involves analyzing a situation, making choices and taking action. Education, culture and social change can all intersect in a digital game. Games have also proven effective in teaching 21st Century skills key to success in the modern world: problem solving, critical thinking, iterative design, creativity and collaboration. Games allow for self-directed and self-motivated discovery, creating a relevant, personalized learning experience.

Games are an equalizer. They can work to challenge stereotypes about indigenous cultures. Our strategy is to engage Youth and Elders to work with professional game designers to develop content. This will leverage technology to bridge the generational gap, helping to close the digital divide. Engaging our youth in intergenerational creativity will help them recognize and celebrate the richness of cultural traditions as part of their lives.

CEI’s approach will be to develop a diversified portfolio of indigenous-infused games. The intended audience is not only Alaska Native people, but a diverse community of educators and game enthusiasts. The portfolio will include a slate of consumer, education and workforce development focused games. We are working in partnership with E-Line Media, of New York, an industry leader in game-based learning products for social impact.

OUR VISION

Our vibrant culture will be integral to each game. CITC’s core values of *interdependence, resiliency, accountability* and *respect* transcend cultures and will be embedded in all we do.

But if all we are doing is creating and selling games we have not accomplished enough. To truly have long lasting impact we have to do more. The key elements of our vision for games are threefold:

- Games can help preserve and promote Alaska Native culture and values. Our games will be designed to appeal to broad audiences across cultures.

- Our youth game design initiative will aim to engage Alaska Native youth with fun and relevant content and activities to keep them interested in school. Plus we want to promote the growing field of game design as a viable career choice.
- We aim to build capacity for a new game design industry in Alaska. Our plans include cooperative programs with several educational institutions that will lead to jobs, not just college credit.

A NEW MODEL

The heart and soul of our vision to use games for social impact is focused around education. The intersection of games and learning is an emerging field, making this a particularly opportune time for this initiative. Industry attention is focused on using games to harness the power of peer-to-peer learning, to remove physical constraints (distance learning), to allow kids to learn at their own pace, and most importantly, to make learning more relevant so kids stay motivated in school. There is also a growing movement of public/private partnerships to fund development in this field to regain the nation's competitive edge in the important fields of science and technology.

Our games will be designed to offer learning opportunities that are invitations, not interventions. As we move forward in this exciting field, CITC's education program will serve as a proving ground to measure the effectiveness and impact of our game-based learning products. Feedback received from our youth will provide valuable information and data to optimize and refine the games.

There is a full spectrum of potential games. The opportunities—and challenges—are endless.

OUR PARTNERS

Helping us navigate this new field is our development and publishing partner **E-Line Media**, a recognized industry leader in game-based learning. The company founders, Michael Angst and Alan Gershenfeld, have a deep passion for and commitment to education and achieving social impact through games based learning. E-Line Media has a slate of educational games-related products and services. They have growing momentum in the game publishing business, and they are strategic accelerators who bring clear enterprise value to our project. The E-Line team has expertise in the industry and experience attracting funders to their projects. Their values are aligned with ours and they are pioneers in this field.

THIS IS A STORY OF SELF-DETERMINATION AND SELF-SUFFICIENCY

CITC has a powerful mission and vision of personal, corporate and community self-sufficiency and sustainability. Over thousands of years, Alaska Native people have lived and worked together in challenging environments learning and passing down knowledge, skills and values that have kept communities viable and self-sufficient over time.

We are embracing new technology to share our culture. We are reaching out to engage and motivate our youth in new ways. Profits generated from CEI's indigenous-infused games will help CITC find the right balance between self-sufficiency and relying on government funding.

We are shifting the paradigm.

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