

## Future First Nations: Leaning Forward

### For Indians 4.0 : Indigenous New Media Art

#### Abstract

Aboriginal communities have many ways of talking about the past. We retell the stories of our ancestors, we celebrate the heritage of our people, and we argue with everybody—ourselves, academics, settler culture in general—about our history. We do all of this, often, which is necessary and good. What we do not do much is talk about our future. We make plans to keep everybody alive for the next few years, and we strive to stay mindful of the seventh generation, but we don't spend much time imagining what our communities will be like in one hundred, two hundred or five hundred years. I cofounded the research/creation network Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace to support and encourage such future imaginaries.

The Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (AbTeC) work can be divided into three categories: the creation of original artworks that illustrate possible future paths; the instruction of Aboriginal youth in tools and techniques for producing media work with new technologies; and the creation of curricula that emphasize the integration of Aboriginal stories and storytelling techniques into creative new media. This essay will reflect on both the process and result of a number of AbTeC projects, using these examples to argue for the fundamental importance—culturally and intellectually—of striving to consciously imagine a future for ourselves.

Jason Lewis