

**Human Subjects Application: *The Tribal Digital Village:
Technology, Sovereignty, and Collaboration in Indian Southern California***

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1. The study will take place on the 18 San Diego County Indian reservations, at tribal halls, offices, libraries, and learning and resource centers, and at the facilities of the Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association (SCTCA) and its Tribal Digital Village project (TDV). A limited portion of the study may take place at the homes of tribal members or at school facilities where members or their children are involved.
2. Participation of the Principal Investigator in the Tribal Digital Village project began in September, 2000 with planning and visioning meeting with SCTCA and tribal representatives, and other institutions and agencies interested in applying for a Hewlett-Packard "Digital Village" grant. Direct participation and participant observation has continued to the present. Formal discussions about research permission for academic publication began in the Fall of 2002. The current stage of research and interviews will take place through March, 2004. Connection to the project through the manuscript preparation stage is anticipated until the end of 2004. Formal research contact with the community will likely indefinitely continue beyond March 2004.
3. The Tribal Digital Village project seeks to implement an ambitious plan of building distributed, networked technology access into the fabric of 18 sovereign Indian nations in the San Diego. The desired results look for local and collaborative developments in the areas of Education, Culture, Economic Development, and Tribal Operations. While many of the achievements of the project can be considered using descriptive and quantitative reports and other external documentation, ethnographic observation and participant interviews provide the best means of understanding the social and economic meaning of technology to the tribes, the community perceptions of the effectiveness of the Tribal Digital Village project within a tribal context, and tribal perceptions of whether the Tribal Digital Village organization, process, goals, and community involvement hold important insights for regional collaboration and development among Indian nations in Southern California. The central tenet of the Tribal Digital Village project was to make digital technology tribal, and hence this research must incorporate their story at a fundamental level.
4. The San Diego region reservations have a population of approximately 7,675, residing in isolated and scattered communities stretching from the California-Mexico border into Riverside County—an area encompassing 150 miles and requiring 4.5 hours to drive. The current patchwork of reservation lands springs from a history of forced removals, resettlements, and the consequent impoverishment that has come with the loss of lands and lifeways. These historical processes fractured family lineages that once moved widely over the region while functioning as coherent distributed Kumeyaay, Luiseño, Cupeño, and Cahuilla communities.

This legacy has marked the reservations with a number of indices defining an "underserved" population. About 59% of the population has a high school diploma. Most reservations experience an average of 50% unemployment rate, and 75% of Indian students qualify for free or reduced-cost school lunch programs. Recent federal reports have shown that rural Americans and tribal areas will lag behind others in gaining access to advanced telecommunications services if deployment is left to market forces alone — a finding that means San Diego tribal communities are doubly disadvantaged. Further, although many individual programs function to address portions of these problems, the fragmentary nature of the community results in a non-uniform delivery of services among the various tribal reservations.

On February 14, 2001, Hewlett-Packard Philanthropy awarded the Southern California Tribal Chairman's Association (SCTCA) \$5 million over 3 years to build a "Digital Village", a collaborative project to bring computer technology and services to serve a vision for the future developed within this community made up of 18 Indian nations. This project forms the research site for the current research project.

Central to the appeal of the vision to Hewlett-Packard and tribal members was the recognition of the historical connection between the current patchwork of reservation lands, and the larger goals of the Tribal Digital Village. Just as these historical processes fractured family lineages that once moved widely over the region while functioning as coherent distributed Kumeyaay, Luiseño, Cupeño, and Cahuilla communities, the Tribal Digital Village application proposed to use computer technologies to create a distributed digital community that mirrors and amplifies the community and kinship networks that have historically sustained and still connect these tribal communities.

This study will document the development of the Tribal Digital Village from vision to reality. It will explore TDV as a window into the development of tribally-directed, collaborative projects, the exercise of tribal sovereignty in 21st century Southern California, tribal views on the appropriate uses of technology in a globalizing world, and recent historical change among Southern California Indian communities.

An analysis of the Tribal Digital Village will speak to issues of technology as a globalizing force, modern citizenship within a tribal context, and tribal community-driven development within American Indian Studies, American Studies, and Ethnic Studies; it will address issues of current and historical concern for tribal, institutional, and government policymakers; and it will add to the literature on the history and culture of the Native American nations in Southern California.

5. Principal Investigator has worked as a participant in the Tribal Digital Village project in the capacity as a member of the "core" team and coordinator of the TDV Cultural Program since the Fall of 2000 with no negative affects to the TDV staff and consultants or tribal representatives and members. The effects of having a non-tribal member in this position is regularly discussed at TDV project meetings, meeting of tribal representatives, and other forums.
6. A good portion of the data used for this project comes from written reports and other information and participant observation by the Principal Investigator. New data from

Human Subject interaction will consist of interviews of people drawn from the SCTCA and TDV staff, TDV Tribal representatives and alternates, Tribal Chairs or Council Members, and other tribal members or tribal staff as designated by the tribes that participate in TDV. Hewlett-Packard executives involved in the eInclusion initiative that provided the initial grant for TDV will also be interviewed, as well as other non-tribal partners in the project.

Interviews will be open-ended, centering on participation in the Tribal Digital Village, including training, use of computer and other digital equipment provided through TDV, attitudes towards technology and its uses, perceived need for digital technology and the reasons underlying these perceptions, issues of tribal control and sovereignty, and other related topics. Appendix I lists a beginning set of questions areas and an interview outline. The Principal Investigator or Tribal members will conduct the interviews. The Principal Investigator will be present during interviews where appropriate.

7. A large percentage of potential interviewees are Native American members of the 18 Tribes in San Diego County. Judging from the general participation characteristics for TDV activities, at least 50% of interviewees will be women. The San Diego region reservations have a population of approximately 8,000, residing in isolated and scattered communities stretching in an arc from the California-Mexico border into Riverside County—an area encompassing 150 miles driving distance. About 2-thirds of this number are enrolled tribal members – the other third are non-enrolled or non-Indian who live on the reservation. Health status is not a factor in determining interviewees, but all those interviewed will be in generally good health.
8. The 32 TDV tribal representatives and alternates will be sent or given a letter explaining the purpose of the interview and the proposed procedure. They will be informed that the interviews are voluntary, names of individuals or tribal affiliations will not be used without approval indicated on the informed consent form, and that a copy of the material will be given to the interviewee. Another copy will be deposited with the tribal library or other archive if desired. Each contacted person will be asked whether they wish to identify other people as desirable interviewees for the research project and that they may be involved in giving these interviews. Each person contacted will be invited to write a statement or article to be included in the proposed book developed from this data.

The same procedure will be used for SCTCA and TDV staff members. In addition, a letter and FAX will be sent to each Tribal Chair with a request that the Chairperson, Tribal Council members, or other tribal members that wish to be interviewed or contribute in writing to the research material identify themselves to the Principal Investigator. All data collected through this process will be given and asked to sign the Informed Consent form.

Letters of communication to these groups of prospective interviewees are attached to this submission.

9. There are no physical risks involved in the interview process. Interviews will be sanctioned at a number of levels, the interviewer has been a part of the projects from its beginning, and the subject matter is not especially controversial, so the social and psychological impact of being interviewed will be minimal. However, in the context of

relatively small tribal communities, information concerning other community members can cause social difficulties and perhaps emotional stress if that information became public. At the same time, there is considerable pride in what the San Diego county tribal communities have accomplished relation to TDV and elsewhere, and many interviewees want the story told with their part in it acknowledged. Copies of interview materials given to interviewees as described in 8. above will be placed out of control of the Principal Investigator.

10. Each interviewee will fill out a the appropriate audio or video consent release form (attached). Responses will be coded in order to reflect the level of permission obtained for each interview. To protect the information collected from unauthorized or involuntary breaches in confidentiality, all research materials and archival media in digital form will collected through interviews will be stored in a locked location, all interviews will be held confidential and will be coded for anonymity. Keys to coded information will be secured in a separate location, all under the sole control of the Principal Investigator. At the end of the research project, archived information will be retained by the Principal Investigator, with copies or the originals deposited in a tribally sanctioned archive according to the advice of the Board (tribal chairs) of the SCTCA. Within written work that comes from this research, actual names will only be used with written consent. A question and signature line has been added to the Research Subject consent form.
11. This research allows tribal community members and other participants in the Tribal Digital Village to record their experiences in the project. As such it will document a unique and important tribal undertaking that the Tribal communities take pride in, and at the same time think about the motivations and context for the introduction of technology into aspects of tribal life. Interviewees and those who submit written contributions will likely gain by feeling that they have contributed to telling their story, and they and their tribe will gain from the addition of a written history that includes their voice, as there are limited published works that do so.
12. There is little risk in the interviewing of consenting research participants. Tangible benefits, such as publications that will be available to the community, and intangible benefits, such as a feeling of pride and general knowledge of what has been accomplished, and why it was undertaken, and where obstacles were encountered and may remain, will result from the product of the research. This information will be available to the communities from which research participants come. For these and other reasons, the benefits of this research greatly outweigh the possible risks.
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14. Expenses for travel undertaken as a part of my participation in the tribal Digital Village project are paid by TDV. I personally pay for general research supplies and expenses. I am in the process for applying for funds to employ a graduate research assistant to help transcribe the interview materials.

15. Attached.

16. Attached:

- a. Interview script for TDV staff
- b. Interview script for TDV participants
- c. Interview script for HP personnel working with TDV
- d. Permission letter to SCTCA Executive Director and Board
- e. Sample permission letter to Tribal Chairperson
- f. Sample permission letter to TDV Tribal Representative or Alternate