



FOR IMMEDIATE RELEASE  
May 16, 2016

## **FPCC Launches Ground-breaking New Indigenous Language Keyboard App, the First of its Kind**

Brentwood Bay, B.C. – FPCC is excited to announce the latest ground breaking FirstVoices innovation – an Indigenous language keyboard app for Apple and Android mobile devices. FirstVoices Keyboards allows Indigenous speakers of more than 100 languages to use their mobile devices to write emails, send text messages and create other documents in their own languages using Indigenous language keyboards.

Most Indigenous writing systems use unique characters previously unavailable in mobile technologies. FirstVoices Keyboards was developed in response to multiple requests from First Nations youth who wanted to be able type in their own languages on their mobile devices.

“We are so excited to be able to offer this new keyboard app, which is the first of its kind in the world to allow easy communication on a mobile device across so many languages,” said Tracey Herbert, CEO at the First Peoples’ Cultural Council. “We were able to leverage our previous work in language technology to create this entirely new app, and are proud to share it at no cost in the spirit of Indigenous language revitalization.”

The app contains keyboard software for every First Nations language in Canada and New Zealand, plus some Indigenous languages in Australia and the USA. It ensures that Indigenous people can use their languages in their daily lives, which contributes to language revitalization.

“Language revitalization continues to be a top priority of B.C. First Nations and the New Relationship Trust (NRT),” said Cliff Fregin, CEO of the New Relationship Trust. We are pleased to continue to partner with the First Peoples’ Cultural Council to support British Columbia First Nation Languages; this new FirstVoices keyboard app is an excellent example of combining innovation and technology to support First Nation’s communication in all aspects of their everyday life.”

A social media campaign on Twitter and Facebook from May 16 to May 20, 2016 invites people to download the app and tweet in their languages using these hashtags: #FVKeyboards and #nameofyourlanguage (E.g. SENĆOŦEN, Cree).

### **How to download:**

iTunes download: <https://itunes.apple.com/ca/app/firstvoices-keyboards/id1066651145?mt=8>

Android download: <https://play.google.com/store/apps/details?id=com.firstvoices.keyboards>

### **How to use:**

When FirstVoices Keyboards is installed on an Apple or Android mobile phone or tablet, any one of more than 100 plus custom keyboards can be activated in any application on the device. Users are able to select their keyboard(s) of choice within their email, social media, word processing, or other apps, enabling unlimited communication in their mother language.

FirstVoices Keyboards was funded by the New Relationship Trust.



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**About the First Peoples' Cultural Council:**

The First Peoples' Cultural Council is a First Nations-run provincial crown corporation with a mandate to support the revitalization of Aboriginal languages, arts and cultures in British Columbia. The organization provides funding and resources to communities, monitors the status of First Nations languages, develops policy recommendations for First Nations leadership and government and collaborates with organizations on numerous special projects that raise the profile of arts and languages in B.C., Canada and internationally. FPCC is the key source of current and accurate information on the state of First Nations languages in B.C. For more information, visit: [www.fpcc.ca](http://www.fpcc.ca)

**Join us on social media!**

Facebook: <https://www.facebook.com/firstpeoplesculturalcouncil>  
Twitter: [https://twitter.com/\\_FPCC](https://twitter.com/_FPCC)

**ADDITIONAL QUOTES:**

"We were excited and proud to be able to work with FPCC to develop this new keyboard app for 100 plus Indigenous languages. Today, more people than ever use a mobile phone as their primary form of communication, and this project has made it possible for Indigenous people to continue to communicate in their own languages using the latest technology."

-Marc Durdin, Founder of Keyman

"I raise my hands up to FirstVoices and the First Peoples' Cultural Council for making this keyboard app available for both Apple and Android, making our languages available everywhere and all the time, and helping us to respect and honour the alphabets that the people have designed for their languages."

-Dr. Lorna Williams, Chair, Salishan Institute, President of FEL Canada and Professor Emeritus at the University of Victoria

"This new keyboard app is a wonderful example of innovative technology being used to support the revitalization of Indigenous language. Language is one of the building blocks of our culture and identity, and this new app puts the power to communicate in the hands of the users. I applaud the work of the First Peoples' Cultural Council for being a leader in its field to seek out new ways to support and promote Indigenous language."

-John Rustad, Minister of British Columbia's Aboriginal Relations and Reconciliation