About

According to the [United Nations Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#), the right to free expression and to access information in one's native language is one of the fundamental conditions for full empowerment of indigenous peoples. Preserving the vitality of indigenous languages helps to preserve and protect traditional knowledge, which often exists mainly in oral form, and at the same safeguards the culture and identity of indigenous communities.

One of the ways communities are working to exercise these rights is through the use of digital media and internet-based tools. By taking advantage of increasing connectivity and more affordable devices, communities are extending both the reach of content they produce in their native their languages and their access to information and knowledge produced by others, as well as their ability to communicate with their peers in other communities.

At the forefront of this trend are those language digital activists who take a "do-it-yourself" approach to creating digital content, social media campaigns, online educational materials, and communication platforms. The overarching spirit of these activists is one of sharing—of skills, experiences, and knowledge.

The [Los Pinos Declaration [Chapoltepek]](#) prepared at UNESCO's high-level closing event of the 2019 International Year of Indigenous Languages recognized the potential of these activists, recommending the:

> Promotion of networks of digital activists and champions for the teaching and learning of indigenous languages, as well as the exchange of best practices related to the use of technology.

These language communities, however, still face a number of key obstacles to optimal use of the internet and digital media to promote their languages online. These include barriers to access, as well as technical, technological, linguistic, socio-cultural, and even legal or political challenges.

The good news is that many of these challenges are being addressed by digital activists around the world, who are developing effective strategies and solutions which could be adopted and adapted to suit other communities' unique contexts and realities.

Global Voices' [Rising Voices (RV)](#) initiative is partnering with [UNESCO](#) to produce a toolkit for digital activists that builds upon the work of some of the activists, showing users how internet and social media tools could used for the promotion and revitalization of indigenous languages, or other under-resourced or minority languages. Both RV and UNESCO are strongly committed to the protection, support and promotion of indigenous languages online, as demonstrated by the support both organizations continue to assist with critical capacity-building work needed to equip indigenous peoples with the tools, resources, and skills for implementation of their own digital campaigns and projects.

The toolkit will not be a step-by-step guide; rather, it will provide a roadmap for digital activism co-designed in close collaboration with existing and new networks of digital activists and other partners, as preparations continue for the [International Decade of Indigenous Languages 2022-2032](#).

Please see the Process section for more information about how we are planning on engaging a wide range of stakeholders.

Process

The development phase of the toolkit project provides a unique opportunity for us as partner organizations to learn from and co-design alongside our extensive global networks of digital language activists.

The UNESCO-led International Year of Indigenous Languages 2019 gave us a broad perspective on the language-related work of global communities, and we are currently reviewing the strategy documents and recommendations produced by digital activists and their communities.

Building upon the past seven years of close engagement with these communities through in-person events, social media campaigns, and participatory research projects, RV will continue to learn from the knowledge, skills, and experiences being shared by these digital activists.

Yet we also recognize that these communities are facing many new challenges that are also experienced by communities beyond these existing networks. For that reason, we also want to ensure that we invite into this process a diversity of people,

and also open the process to groups and organizations that are working with these communities on their language promotion and revitalization efforts.

Resource curating

We'll be curating a selection of existing resources, such as high-quality guides, tutorials, and manuals on the use of digital tools, for toolkit users. If there's a good resource you think we should know about, please submit it using this simple form.

Inspiring Stories

Do you know of an innovative digital project that's having an impact on languages a local, national, or global level? Let us know here (form).

[Advisory group](#)

We will be inviting digital activists from our networks in Latin America, Asia, Africa, Eurasia, and North America to offer comprehensive input and feedback throughout this process.

[Partners](#)

We've invited many of the Indigenous groups and collectives, as well as like-minded civil society and governmental organizations whom we've been fortunate to come to know, to take part in this consultation process. If you are an Indigenous or ally organization and wish to play a role in this process, please let us know here.

Resources

The following list is only a sample of some of the resources that we have started to collect for continued learning. We recognize that there are many more useful guides, manuals, tutorials, and other resources useful for new language digital activists. If you have a suggestion for a resource we should know about, please share it [here](#).

GUIDES AND TOOLKITS

- [Indigenous Languages and Knowledge on Wikimedia Projects Toolbox](#) Wikimedia, (English, Spanish, French, Arabic, Russian, Chinese, and Others), 2020
- [Indigenous Languages: Zero to Digital](#). A guide to bring your language online Translation Commons, 2019

- [Indigitization: Tools for Digitizing and Sustaining Indigenous Knowledge](#) First Nations of BC, University of British Columbia, University of Northern British Columbia, 2020
- The [Language Sustainability Toolkit](#), Living Tongues Institute for Endangered Languages, Wikitongues, 2020
- [Openspeaks Multimedia Toolkit](#) The O [Openness] Foundation, India, 2019
- The '[Digital Language Survival Toolkit](#)' (English, Spanish, Basque, French, Breton, Finnish, Karelian, Italian), 2018
- [Guía de revitalización lingüística: para una gestión formada e informada](#) LinguaPax, Universidad Autónoma Benito Juárez de Oaxaca, 2020
- [Check Before You Tech, First Peoples' Cultural Council](#), 2020.

DECLARATIONS

- [European Charter for Regional or Minority Languages](#)
- [African Union's Cultural Charter for Africa](#) (1976 [1990]), Articles 17 and 18 calls for development and teaching of African languages.
- [African Charter on Human and Peoples' Rights](#), African Union (1982 [1986])
- [Convention for the Safeguarding of the Intangible Cultural Heritage](#), UNESCO, 2003
- [Convention on the Protection and Promotion of the Diversity of Cultural Expressions,](#) UNESCO, 2005

CHARTERS, ARTICLES, AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- Article 13 – [Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples](#) (United Nations)

  Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.

- Los Pinos Declaration [Chapoltepek] – Making a Decade of Action for Indigenous Languages ([Español](#), [English](#), [Français](#))
- [Report of the Special Rapporteur on the promotion and protection of the right to freedom of opinion and expression](#), A/HRC/17/27, paragraph 87 United Nations, 2016

  Where the infrastructure for Internet access is present, the Special Rapporteur encourages States to support initiatives to ensure that online information can be accessed in a meaningful way by all sectors of the population, including persons with disabilities and persons belonging to linguistic minorities.
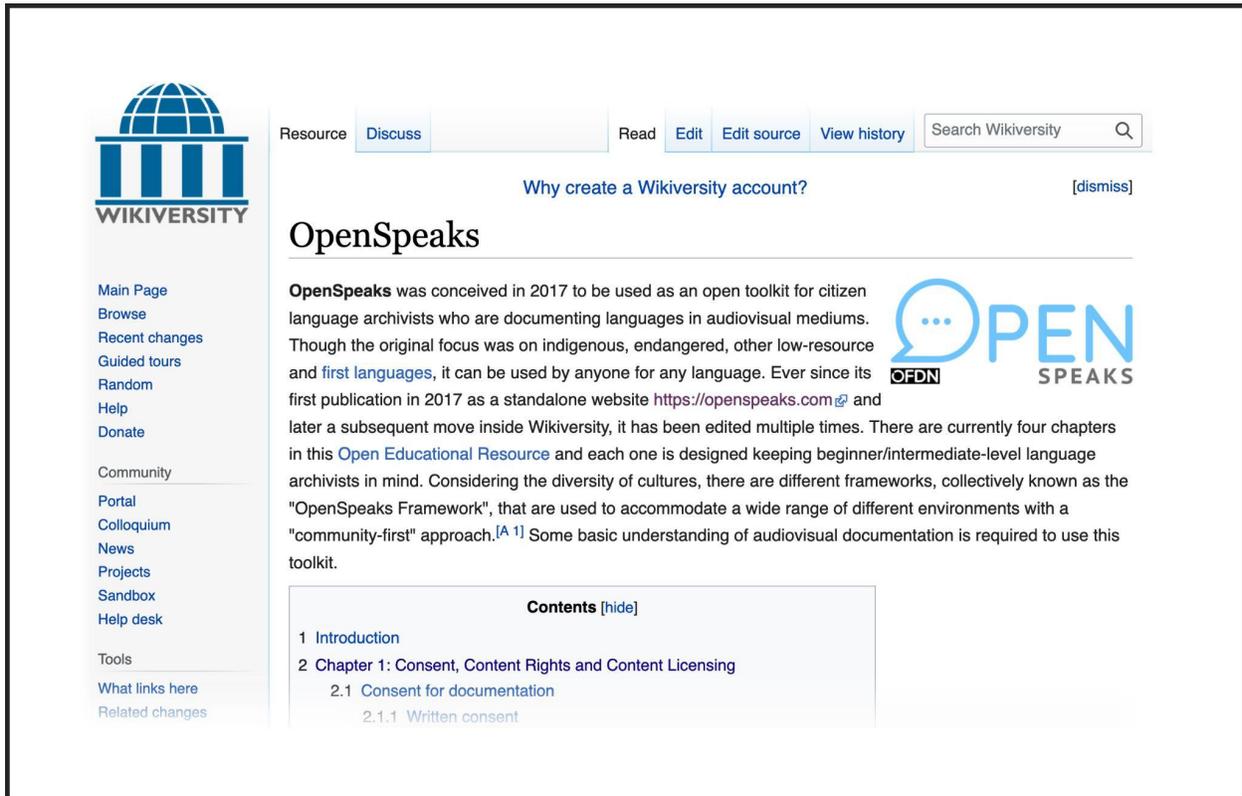
- [Standards for a Free, Open and Inclusive Internet](), Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression of the Inter-American Commission on Human Rights, 2017 (paragraph 48), 2017

  The Office of the Special Rapporteur for Freedom of Expression has emphasized that "In order for Internet access to constitute an authentic instrument to increase informational pluralism and cultural diversity, it is necessary to guarantee the participation of linguistic minorities, as well as the availability of local content on the Internet. As the Inter-American Court has indicated, the right to freedom of expression necessarily includes the right of individuals to use the language of their choosing to express themselves." States should take measures designed to reduce linguistic obstacles in order to make literacy viable and ensure access for all people under equal conditions. They should also "promote original local and indigenous content on the Internet.

- [El multilinguismo en ciberespacio, lenguas indígenas para el empoderamiento,]() UNESCO, 2015 "6.2.1 Elaboración de contenidos y sistemas multilingües."
- [Local and indigenous content in the digital space: Protection, preservation and sustainability of creative work and traditional knowledge](), Internet Governance Forum, 2018
- Inclusion – [Democratic Principles for an Open Internet]() (Internet Rights and Principles Dynamic Coalition of the UN-IGF)

  Cultural and linguistic diversity on the internet must be promoted, and technical and policy innovation should be encouraged to facilitate plurality of expression

OpenSpeaks: Accessibility

OpenSpeaks is a toolkit (*a collection of Open Educational Resources*) that help citizen language archivists document languages as audio and video, particularly indigenous, endangered and other low-resource languages. WATCH MORE ▶

OpenSpeaks (https://en.wikiversity.org/wiki/OpenSpeaks) was conceived in 2017 to be used as an open toolkit for citizen language archivists who are documenting languages in audiovisual mediums. Though the original focus was on indigenous, endangered, other low-resource and first languages, it can be used by anyone for any language. Ever since its first publication in 2017 as a standalone website https://openspeaks.com and later a subsequent move inside Wikiversity, it has been edited multiple times. There are currently four chapters in this Open Educational Resource and each one is designed keeping beginner/intermediate-level language archivists in mind. Considering the diversity of cultures, there are different frameworks, collectively known as the "OpenSpeaks Framework", that are used to accommodate a wide range of different environments with a "community-first" approach.