

## **MEDIA ALERT**

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### **Cherokee company helps tribes use Nintendo DSi to save endangered languages, also releases first ever app at iTunes Store to teach an endangered language.**

Cherokee-owned Thornton Media of Banning CA has created software, free to tribal clients, that allows them for the first time to program their indigenous language onto Nintendo DSi handheld consoles. The software, called "Language Pal" can program audio recordings in multiple dialects from multiple speakers. It allows the ability to program electronic flashcards, archived recordings, multiple-choice games, and tens of thousands of audio files with searchable database for use on the Nintendo DSi. Thornton Media's Language Pal software is not an official Nintendo title, but 'homebrew' software created by an Authorized Nintendo Developer. Thornton Media has begun the process of becoming a licensed Nintendo developer.

"Our approach to language tools has always been to make language learning fun" said Don Thornton. "Your kids will be playing with video games anyway, they might as well be learning their language." Thornton noted that two keys to language revival are; to teach kids, but also to teach other members of the family to put the language back into the home. "Your community can have a million speakers but if the kids aren't learning the language then your language is in trouble. Kids today grew up in a world of handheld devices and video games. Often the technology competes with traditional culture. The technology is not going to go away so we need to use it to help retain our various languages and cultures. Our technologies are adaptable to any tribal language."

Thornton Media has also been busy with iPod app development. "You can now download a free Cherokee app from the iTunes store, the first endangered language app ever in the iTunes Store!" says Don Thornton, president of Thornton Media. Cherokee Lite is a small sample of words and phrases. Cherokee Basic is a much larger selection and will also be available for download at \$9.99. "Our indigenous languages are in trouble," says Thornton, "We are leading the way in creating these cutting-edge technologies to revive languages. And we are entirely self-funded"

The Cherokee Basic app consists of 467 audio files, including words, common phrases and 84 syllabary sounds. The app also has a "zoom-able" Cherokee syllabary chart. Thornton notes that Cherokee OK dialect is the only language that his company offers for sale. They don't sell the languages of other tribes simply because their clients make all distribution decisions. "Three of the five speakers are my mom, my grandma and my aunt in Tahlequah, OK." The other two are expert speakers from the Cherokee Nation and the Keetoowahs."

"We can produce a whole host of apps for any endangered language", said Thornton. "Our upcoming apps include Cherokee Baby Flashcards, Animated Storybooks in Cherokee, How to Write the Cherokee Syllabary (using stroke animation). We can create these apps for any endangered language. The stories we create in the storybooks can be for example "Three Little Pigs", "How the Coyote Got His Tail" or your tribal creation story.

"Whether or not tribal members can speak and understand their heritage language has long been considered by United States courts an important indicator of the "authenticity" of the tribe."  
<<http://www.falmouthinstitute.com>>

"As time passes the ability to keep or revive your language will become an important tool in retaining the nation-to-nation status of Indian tribes." Said Thornton. Our languages and cultures make us who we are". Thornton Media also created RezWorld, a revolutionary 3-D full-immersion video game that teaches indigenous languages. RezWorld is full indigenous language immersion in a virtual world, also the first technology of it's kind with 3<sup>rd</sup> party studies to prove its effectiveness.

In 1995, Thornton Media became the first company in the world to offer customized hi-tech tools to revitalize Native languages. Since then they have worked with more than 110 tribes and First Nation clients in the US and Canada. Their website at [www.ndnlanguage.com](http://www.ndnlanguage.com) has youtube videos for all of their products.

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