Abstract:

The Endangered Languages Project is an online resource where language communities across the globe can record, access and share samples of, and research on, endangered languages. Users create an account to share knowledge and research and to help keep content up-to-date. Content that has already been uploaded ranges from 18th century manuscripts to modern video and audio language samples, knowledge-sharing articles to word lists and dictionaries. The site is also a place where those working to document or strengthen at-risk languages can share advice and best practices. Once on the site, content can be accessed freely by other users. Launched in June 2012, Endangeredlanguages.com is a work in progress and is looking to community leaders, linguistic scholars and others involved in language revitalization to add content as well as review and update what is already online. Learn more about the Endangered Languages Project and the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity by visiting the site: www.endangeredlanguages.com

Comments:

The Endangered Languages Project website was developed over several months and launched in June of 2012 by four founding partners: Google.org, First Peoples’ Cultural Council, the Linguist List at Eastern Michigan University, and the University of Hawai‘i at Manoa linguistics department. It is now being actively guided by a Governance Council of experts within the field of language revitalization. Ways to participate in the ELP include:

- Sharing content about languages and efforts at revitalization. Each endangered language has a unique page. Members of language communities can create an account and upload content to that language’s page, such as documents, video and audio files.

- Sharing resources that would benefit others involved in language revitalization work, such as best practices. These are shared in the site’s Knowledge Sharing Centre.

- Joining the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity, a global network of language advocates

Use of the site is entirely free and communities can share as much, or as little, information as they choose. Ownership of what they do share continues to belong to them. Accordingly, this open, collaborative process allows the site’s content to be continually updated and to reflect what each community wants the world to know about its language and culture.

Of course nothing can replace the transfer of language knowledge via traditional methods such as in-person contact. That said, technology can play a key role in protecting and reviving languages.