




What We Heard: Indigenous Priorities for Digital Skills, Training, and Technology Leadership

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British Columbia's technology sector is one of the largest and fastest-growing in Canada. Yet, Indigenous People in BC's tech sector remain underrepresented. Although they make up nearly 6% of the province's population, their share of the technology workforce has been reported to be less than 1%.¹ New research from the First Nations Technology Council shows strong interest in tech: 63% of survey respondents reported being very or somewhat interested in a tech career. This gap highlights both the urgency and the opportunity to strengthen Indigenous pathways into BC's tech sector.

In Summer and Fall 2025, the Technology Council conducted research to better understand Indigenous perspectives on digital skills and technology careers in BC.² The research explored career pathways, training experiences and preferences, barriers to access, and opportunities related to artificial intelligence (AI). The Technology Council will use these findings to develop and update our training courses and delivery methods over the next three years.

Key Insights



63%
of survey
respondents
expressed
strong interest
in technology
careers

Community-Centred Motivations


Participants consistently prioritized using technology for community empowerment, cultural preservation, and Indigenous self-determination rather than individual advancement alone. Language revitalization, digital storytelling, and data sovereignty emerged as key motivators driving youth interest in careers in technology.

Diverse Technology Interests

Survey respondents showed strong interest in building both foundational digital skills and more advanced creative and technical abilities. Demand ranged from basic computer use (43%) and workplace technologies (48%) to media creation (49%), running social media (47%), and website or app development (50%).

¹"Addressing the Challenge of Indigenous Representation in Tech", BC Tech Association, 2022, wearebctech.com/addressing-the-challenge-of-the-indigenous-representation-in-tech/.

²Data was gathered through an online survey with 159 respondents, 8 one-on-one interviews and 25 focus group participants with Indigenous People across BC. OCAP® (Ownership, Control, Access, Possession) principles guided data handling for all engagement methods.

77% 
of survey respondents
expressed interest in
AI learning

Perspectives on Artificial Intelligence (AI)

Cautious Optimism

Three-quarters of survey respondents (77%) expressed interest in AI learning, with half (51%) wanting to use AI safely and responsibly. Participants saw AI's potential for efficiency, content creation, and language revitalization.

Cultural Protection Priorities

Participants expressed concerns about cultural misappropriation, environmental impacts, and data sovereignty, while highlighting the need for Indigenous-controlled AI development that respects cultural protocols and prevents unauthorized access to traditional knowledge.

AI and Market Disruption

Participants expressed concerns about AI's potential to eliminate entry-level positions, create barriers to the hiring process, and make skills obsolete.

Support Needs

Flexible Programming

A majority of respondents (58%) needed flexible scheduling, including evenings and weekends, to accommodate work and family responsibilities. Hybrid delivery models, which combine online learning with periodic in-person sessions, also received strong support.

Experiential Learning

Paid work-integrated learning ranked as the top support needed (45%), followed by affordable training access (42%). Participants noted that hands-on, project-based learning is essential for building competitive skills and professional networks.

Systemic Barriers

Financial Constraints

Training costs represented the primary barrier (57%), compounded by equipment needs, living expenses during training, and geographic isolation requiring travel or relocation. Many participants said they cannot afford to participate in fully funded programs that cover tuition but not living costs.

Infrastructure Challenges

Participants expressed connectivity and infrastructure barriers faced by rural and remote communities that affect both training access and remote work viability.

Vision for Success

Systemic Transformation

Participants envisioned moving beyond individual career access to Indigenous ownership and leadership in technology companies. They aim to develop new systems that align with Indigenous values, rather than merely gaining access to existing structures.

Community Impact

Seven in 10 survey respondents (69%) prioritized learning skills applicable in their communities, with focus group and interview participants highlighting values of collective benefit and local problem-solving over individual economic advancement.



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