

## **AbTeC CGSA Paper (30 minutes)**

### **Title**

Future First Nations: Rezzing the 22<sup>nd</sup> Century

### **Abstract**

Conversations about the future of First Nations tend to be—for sound, survival-oriented reasons—resolutely pragmatic. This paper presents the work of Aboriginal Territories in Cyberspace (AbTeC), a research network that, among other things, provides a locus through which Native people can explore a more romantic, even radical, future imaginary.

TimeTraveller™ is a series of short machinima productions being shot on location in Second Life, the on-line virtual world. It is the story of Hunter, an angry young Mohawk man living in the 22<sup>nd</sup> century. The series follows Hunter as he uses TimeTraveller™, a device that recreates historical events, to embark on a vision quest that takes him back in time. Each episode takes him to an historical moment of importance to First Nations.

One important goal of the project is to simply depict an Aboriginal person living in the future. Too often, Native people are shown as tragic figures of history who just could not get with the program—particularly, that we could not adopt technology quickly enough to successfully inhabit contemporary society. Another goal is to offer an Aboriginal perspective on historical accounts that are still predominantly discussed from the colonizer's perspective.

The paper will discuss *TimeTraveller*™ within the wider context of the AbTeC research network. This group of academics, artists, activists and technologists share a goal of exploring how Native people can participate in the formation of both the tools and the content that are coming to define our digitally mediated and networked world. As well, AbTeC is interested in investigating ways that digital media can be used to project Aboriginal people into the future from a context in which the past is often a more desirable place to be than the present, and the future is to be feared.