

Cyberatlas Technology in the North: Linking Indigenous Knowledge, Technology, and Science, for Community Research and Action

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Cyberatlas technology is increasingly finding application in rural and Indigenous communities around the world for a variety of uses – from mapping land and resource use, to documenting traditional knowledge, to asserting rights and sovereignty. The technology blends digital mapping capabilities with multimedia to create a highly visual, interactive tool that communities are using for research, education, sharing narratives, decision-making, and more.

Over the last year, the community of Clyde River, in Nunavut, Canada, has been developing a cyberatlas that focuses on the marine environment and brings together Inuit knowledge, science, technology, and visual arts (photography, videography, and drone imaging) to assemble a rich resource of knowledge about the area. The project builds on an open source software platform that incorporates the experiences of other communities and projects while allowing for customization to meet specific needs. The atlas was initiated locally and is managed by young Inuit technicians, artists, and leaders from the community who train and exchange skills with visiting university-based researchers and other technicians.

The nature and rate of social and environmental change in the Arctic and globally is driving interest in how to best discover, make available, and link all kinds of knowledge and information. The Clyde River Knowledge Atlas is one example of how technology, science, and Indigenous knowledge can come together for the benefit of a diverse group of users, but especially a small northern community, putting knowledge into action and supporting Arctic residents in taking control of research and decision-making around their lands and waters in their own way.