

# Strengthening Allyship to Protect Data Sovereignty in Inuit Communities

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In Canada, protecting data sovereignty presents evolving challenges emerging from foreign laws and jurisdictional barriers. These complexities parallel the enduring struggles for sovereignty experienced by Inuit in Canada. This presentation aims to explore pathways for aligning discussions on data sovereignty in the Arctic with the advancement of self-determination for Inuit communities.

Historically, the introduction of written Inuit languages, influenced by Moravian missionaries, aimed to convert Inuit communities to Christianity, raising questions about spiritual sovereignty and self-determination. From this historical backdrop emerges a narrative of resilience and adaptation, where Inuit communities have utilized written languages to reclaim cultural identities and address historical injustices, as evidenced by the findings of the Qikiqtani Truth Commission. Carrying the complexities of historical truths and reconciliation, this presentation advocates for a partnership model guided by the Inuit concept of *Saimaqatigiingniq*, which emphasizes collaboration and mutual understanding between two parties who were once adversaries.

In strengthening allyship with Inuit communities and advancing self-determination, Pinnguaq's initiatives in Nunavut prioritize principles of design justice, co-design, and the development of digital skills, supporting Inuit in sharpening the tools required to thrive in a technology-driven world. Through capacity building and community-driven governance, Pinnguaq's initiatives offer a model for a robust allyship network that has the potential to bolster Indigenous sovereignty and resilience in the era of digital innovation.

This presentation calls for a nuanced approach to data sovereignty that recognizes historical legacies, fosters allyship, and supports Inuit and Indigenous communities to assert control over their data and future pathways. By embracing these principles, allies can navigate the complexities of data governance in northern Canada while advancing the cause of Indigenous self-determination.