

Transcription of Enterprising Australians video

Mikaela Jade – Indigital– Introducing the characters of the Kakadu

The video for this transcript can be found on the Questacon YouTube channel at:
https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=Roil_c6YxVs

Transcription from video:

[intro music]

Isla: So what exactly is Indigital?.

[Image shows Isla and Mikaela sitting on some rocks, talking.]

Mikaela: Indigital is 'Indigenous' and 'digital', and we create mobile phone apps that use augmented reality for Indigenous cultural storytelling.

So, we started with cultural storytelling on bark and ochre paintings, and what we actually do with the app is you hold your phone up to the artwork and the artwork comes alive in three-dimensional storytelling.

[Image shifts to show the augmented reality transforming the paintings into three-dimensional animations.]

We use animation, and the traditional owners who paint the artwork are very involved in how the artwork comes to life in 3D-animation.

[Image shifts to a slideshow of traditional owners and artists working on the project.]

It started because I'm a Cabrogal woman, so my country is actually not in Kakadu, it's in Sydney.

I was standing at a cultural place of significance to our people, and I didn't understand what the cultural site was about, and I really wanted a way to communicate what all these amazing cultural knowledge systems are about.

[Image shifts to Mikaela showing Isla around rocky landscape of the cultural site.]

And, at the same time, I was at the University of Canberra and I saw augmented reality for the first time in 2012.

And, I went home and had a shower, and then in the shower this idea came into my head that we should try and combine augmented reality storytelling with Indigenous cultural knowledge systems.

So augmented reality was very new in 2012, and it's still quite new to people, and explaining what my idea was, was really, really difficult.

[Image shifts to Isla and Mikaela sitting on some rocks, talking.]

I was just making an assumption that everybody had seen augmented reality and they knew what I was talking about, and I actually realised that I had a problem in the way I was communicating my big idea because I did the 'Mum and Dad' test, and my Mum and Dad just didn't really understand what I was doing.

So, I realised then that I needed to refine the way that I had told people: investors, people who might want to get on-board with the idea, about what it is that I'm trying to achieve.

Isla: And who is Indigital, sort of, aimed at?

Mikaela: It's aimed at Indigenous communities, primarily in Australia, but it could be applied across the world.

So Indigenous peoples like myself, we have a lot of trouble engaging young people these days in cultural knowledge translation.

[Image shifts to a slideshow of the development of Indigital and people using the Indigital technology.]

And, one thing that we found through talking to 300 elders from across the world was that traditional owners are proud custodians of humanity's spoken history, but they're most afraid of being the last ones with these knowledge systems, and they're finding it difficult to engage with young people and I asked them, "Why? 'Cause I'm an Indigenous person and I want to know my cultural heritage."

[Image shifts to Isla and Mikaela sitting on some rocks, talking.]

And they said, "Because the young people always have their heads in these devices," and they can't compete with the phones, and the iPads, and digital technologies.

So, one of the things that we wanted to do was combine digital technologies and cultural heritage knowledge systems in the phone where the kids are.

So, we started with these cards in Kakadu working with five senior traditional artists to tell stories from bark ochre paintings which are very traditional, so they're like the artwork you've seen at the cave here.

[Image shifts to close-ups of the Indigital cards and cave artwork.]

They're painted on bark and we've brought them to life in 3D augmented reality.

And, now that the community is very comfortable with what the technology is, they're happy to move to sites like this.

So the next phase of Indigital storytelling is making the app available to tourists that might come to our cultural places, so they can hold their phone up to a site like this and the artwork will come to life for them in their language, so they understand what they're looking at.

[Image shifts to a close-up of the Indigital phone app being used.]



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And the reason that that's really important to traditional owners, they've been explaining to me that they're not always available to be on-country, so it's a really great way for them to be able to share their stories in the way that they want to be told, and also be able to earn an income from their cultural knowledge.

[Image shifts to Isla and Mikaela sitting on some rocks, talking.]

[Image shifts to the Enterprising Australians logo.]