



Kahnawá:ke Ratítsénhaiéns

Mohawk Council of Kahnawake

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Enhsakotò:kénhte Nitiotié:ren Tsi Ietsenhaintákhwa

Tsi Nahóten Karihwanákere No'nenk - News Release

Statement on MCK/Microsoft Project

For immediate release

(Kahnawá:ke – 27, Onerahtókha/April 2005) The MCK acknowledges that it shares the responsibility with the entire community to restore, enhance and, most important, support our language. It has set goals to have staff use Kanienkeha in the workplace and offers Kanienkeha lessons on an on-going basis. It is in this spirit that an innovative initiative was undertaken between the MCK and the Microsoft Corporation.

Ideally, the Kanienkehaka Onkwawén:na Raotitiohkwa (KOR) would be the organization that would move the project forward and carry it through to completion. They were approached at the very beginning but ultimately chose not to take ownership of the project.

In the interim, some people have chosen to perpetuate a false image of the nature of the project. We must be clear: the ONLY motivation behind this initiative is to create a system in which our people can work IN OUR LANGUAGE when working on their computers. It is in the form of a Language Interface Pack, which you install onto your computer – like Microsoft Word, Excel or Publisher.

Microsoft will NOT - nor will they *ever* - own the intellectual property rights to the Mohawk language. They would only own the rights to the program(s) they develop. To use a related example, Webster's owns and defends its right to its name and the work involved in creating its Webster's Dictionary but does not (and cannot) claim ownership of the English language itself.

Kahnawa'kehró:non should know that there are literally hundreds of organizations that have already made the language available, either for free or for sale. Not all are based on Aboriginal territories; as a matter of fact, some are located overseas. Interestingly, the KOR is among those organizations that have language lessons for sale. We strongly support their right to do so and applaud those efforts.

We all must pull together and do what we can to support efforts being made to have Kanienkeha return to its rightful place as the living language of Kahnawá:ke – not just a language used by a precious few.

Nia:wen,

Chief Tiorahkwathe Gilbert

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