

Kodiak Alutiiq Students and Australian Aborigines Meet Online

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{audio}/images/stories/mp3/121227.alutiiq-australia_xchange.mp3{/audio}

Jay Barrett/KMXT

Kodiak Island Borough School District students recently got a couple unique opportunities to conduct cultural exchanges with indigenous students on the other side of the world. Though the Aborigines in Wagga Wagga, New South Wales, Australia, and the Alutiiq in Kodiak have existed separately for tens of thousands of years, several classes met for the first time using the most modern of technology: the Internet.

In a report by an Australian broadcaster, one participating elder found the two-way video connection very impressive. And an Australian administrator and another elder talked about how the exchange has strengthened both cultures.

There were some similarities evident between the two disparate cultures. Weaving grass baskets is an important craft for both the Aborigines and Alutiiq.

The school kids, first from high school and then from the elementary grades, also took the opportunity to teach each other Native dances from their respective cultures and held question and answer sessions to get to know each other better, and, given the season, about how the other celebrates Christmas.