# HITnet: An innovative IT-based approach to enhancing health literacy and local capacity in remote populations

## Researchers

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## Summary

HITnet (www.hitnet.com.au) is a Queensland-based collaborative initiative which researched, developed, and implemented innovative approaches to complex Indigenous health priorities through the use of touch-screen technologies, such as information kiosks.

A range of challenges were confronted during the project for which solutions were identified and implemented, but which significantly constrained the evaluation. These collateral outcomes related to expanding technical applications, cultural processes, systems capacity, and cost effectiveness analysis.

As well as contributing to the overall development of HITnet,  funding provided for the development of innovative, narrative presentations of AUDIT (the Alcohol Use Disorders Identification Test module), material utilizing the same presentation style as the health education modules but allowing for personalised health information feedback. This involved adapting the key elements of the consequential harm questions of the AUDIT to a multimedia photo-narrative journey (‘Grog Story’), in which consequences of on-screen alcohol-related choices were reinforced.

Feedback is given on the basis of three categories of risk. In addition, because alcohol consumption during pregnancy is now recognized as a major Indigenous public health concern, prior to information feedback, users who identified as being female are asked about pregnancy status, and relevant information regarding alcohol and pregnancy is provided.

## Outcomes

This project demonstrates the effectiveness and benefits of touch-screen interactive technology in improving health literacy in relation to diabetes, alcohol use, healthy eating, and sexual health.

By March 2009 the network had been extended to 26 sites established, with 30 more planned or proposed; giving coverage in Queensland, Western Australia, South Australia and the Northern Territory. Content is expanding, with modules on other community health issues such as mental health and smoking.

[view the report](/wp-content/uploads/AERF-Final-Report-JULY06.pdf)