Little notice has been paid to the fact that email, Internet Relay Chat (IRC) and World Wide Web (WWW) have a central role in communication among many indigenous communities throughout the world. This has been especially so among the indigenous communities of Euroamerica, but they have increased in importance across the world and also in Melanesia. Today, these means of communication provide powerful channels of political lobbying and expressing the community’s viewpoints to the outside world, but through the Internet migrants, for example, have also been able to maintain their ties and social relations with their relatives and the wider community at home. In terms of agency over their own affairs, this should be seen as a notable improvement in their socio-political circumstances. There have emerged intra-communal social networks based on the Internet that surpass geographical, temporal and even social distances, and connect an increasing number of communal members on a daily or regular basis, disregarding their location. Personal news travel effectively via email and communal websites provide for a for public discussions, alongside other advances - local news and other databases, bulletin boards, link portals, etc. Even the rural areas in Melanesia are gradually becoming connected to these wider electronic networks and benefit from them directly and indirectly. Such local usage of Internet in communication may be expected to enhance communal agency and autonomy, and contribute to the maintenance of tradition and distinct cultural identity amidst modernisation and societal change. For example, Solomon Islanders are building their People First Network that develops locally oriented Internet applications and tries to bring Internet connections even in remote villages across the country. The paper discusses these developments with attempt to evaluate their local socio-cultural consequences.

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