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From Marginalization to Accessibility: Classification of Indigenous Materials

Description

For the last century, indigenous materials in Western libraries have remained poorly organized and largely inaccessible. Whether this has been the result of willful negligence or simple ignorance on the part of information professionals, it is an unacceptable situation. The importance of providing access to indigenous materials has gained increasing recognition in recent years as the global community has awakened to the need to preserve indigenous knowledge in order to preserve the cultural and intellectual diversity of the world. This paper examines two indigenous classification schemes and suggests directions for future work in the organization of indigenous knowledge.

Keywords

controlled vocabulary, classification scheme, cataloging, indigenous, Maori Subject Headings, Brian Deer Classification

Disciplines

Library and Information Science

Comments

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From Marginalization to Accessibility:
Classification of Indigenous Materials

Isaac Gilman

“Indigenous peoples have the right to revitalize, use, develop, and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures, and to designate and retain their own names for communities, places and persons.”

UN Draft Declaration on the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (1994)

Introduction

It is often observed that history is written by the victors of battles and the conquerors of peoples. An implicit – and rarely considered – corollary is that it is also the victors and conquerors that collect, organize and provide access to those histories, and to all written materials. Throughout modern history, Europeans and their descendants have been the victors and conquerors (or, perhaps more appropriately, the immigrants and colonizers) of much of the inhabited world. As a result, librarians in the Western world¹ have devoted their time and energies to categorizing, classifying and making accessible the recorded knowledge produced by this ‘dominant’ class of Western society – a class dominated by white, Judeo-Christian men. In accordance, the most widely-used cataloging and classification schemes in Western nations were originally designed – and have been maintained – according to the epistemological framework of the ‘dominant class’ and give little consideration to providing equitably effective access to the recorded knowledge of the first inhabitants of the Western world – indigenous peoples.

For the last century, indigenous materials in Western libraries have remained poorly organized and largely inaccessible. Whether this has been the result of willful negligence or simple ignorance on the part of information professionals, it is an unacceptable situation. The importance of providing access to indigenous materials has gained increasing recognition in recent years as the global community has awakened to the need to preserve indigenous knowledge in order to preserve the cultural and intellectual diversity of the world. As Patrick Ngulube (2002) notes, “The success of

¹ By “Western world,” I mean previously inhabited countries colonized by Europeans, in which the majority of the population today is still of European descent (or in which the government and middle class are dominated by persons of European descent): e.g. the United States, Canada, Australia, New Zealand. (It would also be appropriate to include European countries with indigenous populations, such as Greenland, Norway, Sweden, and Finland, though this paper will focus on the former grouping of nations.)

humankind is going to largely depend on gathering, analyzing, storing, sharing and harnessing what other members of society know” (95).

The most notable recognition of the importance of preserving and providing access to indigenous materials is the UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage*. Adopted in 2003 by the UNESCO General Conference, the Convention defines “intangible cultural heritage” as “the practices, representations, expressions, as well as the knowledge and skills, that communities, groups and, in some cases, individuals recognize as part of their cultural heritage” (UNESCO 2003). While the Convention focuses mainly on oral tradition works and other non-textual expressions of culture, the adoption of the Convention is important for librarians and archivists because it recognizes the value – and the need to preserve and provide access to – *all* knowledge and works that emanate from indigenous societies.

The UNESCO Convention and Patrick Ngulube’s comments underline the dual significance of indigenous knowledge and information. While Ngulube focuses on the need to make indigenous knowledge “available and accessible for the benefit of mankind” (96), the Convention emphasizes the importance of preserving indigenous knowledge and culture for the use, and sustenance, of indigenous people groups. At the UNESCO-sponsored 2004 *International Conference on Globalization and Intangible Cultural Heritage*, Henriette Rasmussen, Greenland’s Minister of Culture, Education, Science and Church, delivered a keynote address bringing together these dual purposes. Rasmussen (2004) observed that increasing globalization has led to a disturbing homogenization of culture and language, which is a clear threat to the continued vitality of indigenous culture, and to the existence of cultural diversity:

“In Greenland we have dozens of names for snow and ice because it is important to the hunters to differ, but to many children today only a few are used. I am told that indigenous tribes in the Amazon have more than 500 names for the colour green. It is important for cultural diversity that green is not just green”.

While librarians and other information professionals may not consider themselves representatives of globalization, the predominant cataloging and classification schemes of Western nations reveal a clear homogenization of language and culture, the product of both biased births and sustained dedication to representing a Judeo-Christian worldview in the categorization and classification of materials. The lack of accommodation for indigenous language and epistemology in cataloging indigenous materials has made these materials virtually inaccessible to indigenous peoples – and virtually inaccessible to efforts to promote cultural diversity, preserve cultural identity, or create accurate history. With the relatively recent adoption of the UNESCO *Convention for the Safeguarding of Intangible Cultural Heritage* as impetus, it is both important – and relevant – to discuss the reasons for the lack of adequate access to indigenous knowledge and cultural information in libraries, to review the efforts that have been made with individual people groups to address this shortcoming (specifically the Brian Deer Classification and the Māori Subject Headings), and to propose directions for future efforts in the classification of indigenous materials.

Access Denied: Western Classification Schemes

At the most basic level, the problem of insufficient access to indigenous materials in Western libraries is a problem of language and of linguistic relationships. Cultural bias in the creation, and maintenance, of the most widely-used schemes of the day – Library of Congress Subject Headings, Library of Congress Classification, and Dewey Decimal Classification – makes it difficult to correctly incorporate most indigenous language, and virtually impossible to incorporate most indigenous epistemology into the confines of the schemes. Though these schemes are incredible achievements in bibliographic control, they are based on specific epistemological frameworks that are largely ill-suited to integration with indigenous frameworks of knowledge. As Hope A. Olson (1998) notes, “Classificatory structures are developed by the most powerful discourses in a society. The result is the marginalization of concepts outside the mainstream” (235). When indigenous information and knowledge is placed within the structure of Library of Congress or Dewey, that information is effectively “marginalized” because it is outside of the framework prescribed by the “most powerful discourse”: the white, male, Judeo-Christian tradition. This marginalization expresses itself in a variety of ways – the exclusion of appropriate indigenous terminology, the use of inappropriate terminology, the creation of inaccurate relationships between subjects – but the result is always the same: indigenous information is rendered inaccessible to users who may search for it using indigenous epistemology and terminology.

Dewey Decimal Classification

The Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) system has long been subject to critiques of bias and inadequate representation. Though it has undergone a number of

revisions (DDC 22 is the current iteration), DDC still reflects the biases of Melvil Dewey and his professional progeny. The emphases on the United States and on Christianity are understandable given the context of the creation of the scheme; as Olson (2002) observes, all classification schemes “reflect philosophical and ideological presumptions of their cultures” (233). However, as a purportedly universal classification scheme, Dewey’s culturally specific emphasis (and corresponding marginalization of “minority” and indigenous materials) remains troubling. An oft-cited example is DDC’s religion class, 200. Classes 201-289 all deal with some aspect of Christianity, from “Christian Philosophy” to “Other Denominations & Sects.” In stark contrast, Indic religions, Judaism, and Islam are restricted to one class number each. Another notable emphasis is the inclusion of a separate class for “American Literature,” while all other literary forms are divided by language, with no national classes.

The treatment of indigenous peoples in the DDC schedule is extremely cursory, with limited specificity of subjects. Indigenous peoples in North America are classed under 970, “General History of North America.” Facets are given for “North American native peoples,” “Specific native peoples,” “Native peoples in specific places in North America,” and “Government relations with North American native peoples.” DDC Table 5 allows for the addition of subdivisions to books located under a different class number, in order to specify a connection to native peoples. For example, a book on the ceramic arts (738) of Pueblo Indians (--974 in Table 5) would be classed at 738.0974. While these subdivisions allow catalogers to essentially designate any book as native-related through number building, this organization doesn’t allow users to browse a single call

number range (either in an OPAC or on the shelf) to find *all* materials related to native groups.

Another example of the unfortunate division of indigenous topics within the DDC is seen in the treatment of the Māori people of New Zealand. As expected, general information about the Māori is located under the “General history of other areas -- New Zealand,” class number 993. However, information on the Māori language is classed at 499.442 – under “Miscellaneous languages.” For Māori writings and literature, users need to look under 899 – “Other literatures.” Once again, any possible relationship between historical works, linguistic works, and Māori literature is lost because the titles are distributed throughout the scheme, classed under catch-all facets. This seemingly logical topical division of materials would be counter-intuitive to any Māori library user, who would expect all Māori materials to be grouped together. In Māori epistemology, relationships are paramount, and it would be expected that the relationships between forms of knowledge would be expressed in shelving arrangement. Unfortunately, DDC is based on a very different framework, which values the singular nature of an item. This value leads DDC to place each item into a very specific spot – either it is about the Māori (in which case it is classed in 993), or it is Māori literature (in which case it is classed in 899). This paradigm of mutual exclusivity is foreign to many indigenous peoples, including the Māori. As Olson (2000) notes,

“Many cultures do not feel uncomfortable with categories that overlap. One of the reasons that [librarians] choose to employ mutually exclusive categories is to fulfill Charles Cutter’s second object of the catalogue: to gather all works with some common attribute. This gathering is a matter of differentiation. It is through differentiation that cultural authority is established...” (69).

Indeed, by separating materials that would not naturally be separated within the indigenous epistemological framework, the DDC exerts a very real measure of “cultural authority.”

The visible separation of indigenous materials within the DDC schedule is a readily apparent form of bias within the scheme. However, there are many more subtle indicators within the schedules that also point to the inherent bias of the DDC. One example is especially germane to a discussion of indigenous peoples: the placement of “colonization” within the schedule. As Olson (1998) observes, “colonization” is classed at 325.3, with the note “Class here exercise of political dominion over distant territories,” and is also linked to the DDC Index Term “colonialism.” She posits that, while “colonization” seems to be a neutral term, it “is actually one-sided, showing colonization from the point of view of the colonizing power as opposed to the people and culture being colonized” (242). As justification for this statement, Olson points to the scope note, observing that a territory is *not* “distant” to its original inhabitants – it is only distant in the eyes of the colonizers. It is a subtle distinction, but one that reveals a definite cultural bias within DDC.

Library of Congress Classification

Much like DDC, the Library of Congress Classification (LCC) scheme has often been the focus of critiques which allege bias, misrepresentation and exclusion. Some critics feel that the need for revision in LCC has received even less attention than the need for change in DDC, as LCC is used primarily in North American academic libraries, while DDC is more widely used worldwide (Harris & Clack 1979). Whether this lack of scrutiny is a matter of perception or something more, it is certainly true that LCC has

received far less attention than its counterpart, the Library of Congress Subject Headings. However, the lack of attention doesn't point to a lack of problems. As library and information science research demonstrates, LCC falls short in three important areas for classification schemes: naming and the use of language, specificity, and collocation of related topics (MacDonell, Tagami & Washington 2003).

Though critiques have been published taking LCC to task for its treatment of a variety of people groups and regions (e.g. Iwuji 1989 – a critique of Africana in LCC), an overwhelming amount of material has been published on the treatment of North American indigenous groups within LCC. *Class E-F, American History* was the first LCC schedule, published by the Library of Congress in 1901 (Yeh 1971). Despite the intervening century of history and gradual changes in specificity and language, Class E (home to “Indians of North America”) remains problematic.

The use of inappropriate or incorrect language is one of the largest obstacles for indigenous users when depending on a classification scheme to locate materials. When classifying materials about North American indigenous groups, one of the most fundamental needs is to correctly identify individual groups; Warner (2001) identifies this as “naming – consulting with communities to see how they like to name and describe themselves and their experiences, rather than assuming the colonial role of “discovering” and “labeling” others” (171). LCC's efforts at naming are often inadequate. For example, for one western Canadian tribe, LCC uses the anglicized “Kwakiutl,” instead of the preferred “Kwakwaka'wakw” (MacDonell, Tagami & Washington 2003). As MacDonell, Tagami & Washington correctly observe, “the Library of Congress' use of

non-current names may function as a barrier to access, as researchers...may need to learn an outdated, Western-developed vocabulary in order to function within [LCC]" (2003).

In addition to linguistic inaccuracies, Class E also lacks specificity when dealing with certain topics related to North American indigenous groups. While E98.A-Z (Indians of North American – Other topics, A-Z) covers a wide range of topics, there are notable lapses in important areas. For example, E98 T77 is "Tribal government. Politics and government." This is an extremely important topic for indigenous groups living on reservations in North America, and certainly warrants further subdivisions. More than a simple lack of specificity, a glaring omission from Class E is the lack of any class numbers relating to the criminal justice system or legal matters; all materials of this nature are placed in Class K. Just as self government is an important topic for indigenous groups, so is law. Placing materials on indigenous relations with the courts, with legal aid, and particularly with family law, alongside other indigenous materials is vital, given the unique nature of indigenous relationships with the courts in both Canada and the United States. As with DDC, placing these materials in a different class removes the possibility of browsing by class number – and limits access.

The ability to browse by class number is further crippled by LCC's numerous failings in regards to collocation. If the purpose of a classification scheme is to group similar materials together to enable users to locate those materials efficiently, LCC is not fulfilling its purpose for indigenous users. This is due in large part to LCC's alphabetical organization of subdivisions. In E78 A-Z, Indians of North American materials are subdivided by state, province or region. The states, provinces and regions are listed alphabetically, effectively eliminating any proximate relationship between indigenous

groups from adjoining states or provinces. The same problem occurs in E99 A-Z, where Indians of North America are subdivided by tribe and culture. Again, the tribes are listed alphabetically, which gives no consideration to the relationships between individual tribes. For example, in British Columbia, the Da'naxda'xw First Nation, the Gwa'Sala-nakwaxda'xw Nation, and the Quatsino First Nation are regionally related and are all members of the Winalagalis Treaty Group (Government... 2001). However, no relationship would be apparent within LCC, because they are separated alphabetically. A member of the Quatsino First Nation browsing the shelf for information on fellow Treaty Group members would not find that information in a location that would be immediately intuitive from a First Nations perspective. This failure in collocation of regional and tribal relationships is repeated yet again in E98 A-Z (Other topics), where topics as unrelated as astronomy and basketry are placed together by virtue of alphabetization.

Though the treatment of North American indigenous peoples in LCC is rife with problems, other indigenous groups receive similarly problematic treatment. Much like indigenous North Americans, the Māori of New Zealand suffer from improper collocation of materials and a severe lack of specificity. Under the general heading “Māoris” at DU422.8, there are subdivisions for Biography, General Works, Study and teaching, Special topics A-Z, and Individual tribes A-Z. In accordance with LCC, the special topics are listed alphabetically, nullifying the relationships that the Māori see between certain topics. The range of special topics is woefully inadequate as well, including only the most general terms (e.g. Fishing, Hunting, Jewelry). One of the most important topics for Māori, the Treaty of Waitangi, is not even included – instead, it is placed in Class K (KUQ354, to be exact), with law materials. Any collocation that would

make sense according to Māori epistemology is non-existent, replaced by the linear, hierarchical and alphanumeric sensibilities of LCC.

Library of Congress Subject Headings

While both LCC and DDC are problematic with regards to the actual arrangement of materials on library shelves, it is the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) that receives the most attention for cultural bias and lack of specificity in language; one study (Olson 2000) found “68 critiques on the basis of gender, race, religion, ethnicity and other factors” (54). This level of scrutiny is the result of the widespread use of LCSH around the world. It is the “most comprehensive non-specialized controlled vocabulary in the English language, and, in addition, has become the *de facto* standard for subject cataloging and indexing in circumstances far beyond those for which it was originally designed” (Chan & Hodges 2000, 226). Despite being initially designed for use by the Library of Congress in the United States, libraries in a number of countries, including Australia, the United Kingdom, Canada, South Africa, Singapore, Nigeria, Iceland, Turkey, Malaysia and Portugal, now use LCSH or an adaptation or translation of LCSH (Olson 2000). As part of a classification scheme which claims to be universal, this diverse use of LCSH has left it open to criticisms from a number of people groups who are excluded, marginalized or misrepresented within the headings.

The most common critique of LCSH is that it uses culturally biased or incorrect terminology in the creation of subject headings. Among LCSH critiques, Sanford Berman’s *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People* (1971) is considered the foundational work. Though library and information professionals were divided over the claims of *Prejudice and Antipathies* when it was

published, it brought needed attention to LCSH: “it cannot be denied that [Berman’s] assertions of bias in LCSH were part of a trend within the cataloging profession toward scrutiny about the assignment of subject headings for people” (Knowlton 2004, 126). Among Berman’s suggested changes was the abolition of “native races” (it has been changed to “indigenous peoples”); the deletion of “sexual perversion” cross references to “homosexuality” and “lesbianism”; the creation of a reference from “Chicano” to the accepted “Mexican American”; and changing “Indians of North America, Civilization of” (which has been changed to “Indians of North America – cultural assimilation). These are only a few instances of biased or incorrect language within LCSH; when considering headings associated with indigenous peoples, there are certainly many additional exclusions, marginalizations and distortions.

It is certain that the existence of biased language in LCSH is not intentional. The 1996 edition of the Library of Congress *Subject Cataloging Manual: Subject Headings* contains the following unequivocal statement:

“Avoid assigning headings that label topics or express personal value judgments regarding topics or materials. Individual cataloger knowledge and judgment inevitably play a role in assessing what is significant in a work’s contents, but headings should not be assigned that reflect a cataloger’s opinion about the contents. Consider the intent of the author or publisher and, if possible, assign headings for this orientation without being judgmental.” (Library of Congress, H180, 7)

According to these instructions, there should be no *personal* bias in LCSH. However, this still leaves room for systemic cultural bias, which is rarely intentional but always apparent to those affected by the bias. This bias, rooted in the Judeo-Christian framework that created, and sustains, LCSH, entered the subject headings via a very simple instruction, first written in the 1951 Library of Congress publication *Subject*

Headings: A Practical Guide: “[T]he heading...should be that which the reader will seek in the catalog, if we know or can presume what the reader will look under” (Knowlton 2004, 124). This instruction presumes that there is a singular type of library user (*the* reader). In that presumption is the birth of bias. With the assumption of one general type of library user comes the tendency to look to the dominant cultural framework for an understanding of that user.

Within controlled vocabularies such as LCSH, and within classification schemes such as DDC and LC, there is the need to represent each item in one primary way, with one primary word or phrase. More often than not, the choice of this primary terminology is derived from the dominant cultural framework. This limitation – of DDC, LC and LCSH – is, in a sense, inevitable:

“Classifications are also closed systems in that they represent some concepts and not others. No classification will ever be all inclusive. Since classifications are notationally controlled vocabularies, these inevitably have limits. The question for classification then becomes, What is left beyond the limit? What is excluded?” (Olson 1998, 235)

Upon examination of LCSH, these questions answer themselves. The limitations and exclusions of LCSH as a controlled vocabulary are seen in the lack of appropriate indigenous language to represent indigenous knowledge; indigenous language is spurned for ‘more accessible’ English translations (or, more aptly, mutations). The limitations and exclusions are seen in the lack of specificity when describing indigenous subjects. Finally, the limitations and exclusions are seen in the inability of LCSH to capture the complexity of the relationship between indigenous topics in the limited vocabulary and application of one or two authorized subject headings.

It is the desire to represent each item in one way, with one word or phrase, for one type of user, that renders indigenous materials labeled and organized by LCSH, LC and DDC largely inaccessible to indigenous users. The mutually exclusive, singularly-minded, Judeo-Christian framework of these schemes assumes that library users will be familiar with this dominant epistemological framework, will search for materials in a certain way, and will use certain terminology in the search process. For an indigenous user who possesses a different worldview, conceptual framework and language, this mindset creates often insurmountable barriers between the user and the desired information. This is certainly an infringement of the right of indigenous peoples to “revitalize, use, develop, and transmit to future generations their histories, languages, oral traditions, philosophies, writing systems and literatures” (UN 1994, Article 14). Indigenous knowledge that is ‘invisible’ – in unfamiliar locations, described by unfamiliar language – is of little use.

New Directions: Indigenous Classification Schemes

It is clear that schemes such as DDC, LC and LCSH are presently inadequate for the purposes of describing, and providing access to, indigenous materials that do not easily conform to the strictures of Western epistemology and language. Given this knowledge, however, information professionals are still left to search for the means of remedying the problem. Chief among the questions that must be answered are these: Is it possible to integrate indigenous materials into existing “universal” collections and classification schemes while making them accessible to both indigenous and non-indigenous users? Or is it necessary to create separate collections for indigenous materials with unique controlled vocabularies and classification schemes?

Fortuitously, librarians and information professionals grappling with these questions have existing work in the field to look to for inspiration and guidance. While efforts have been made to organize and classify indigenous materials from Australia to Africa, two of the most notable efforts to provide access to indigenous materials come from Canada and New Zealand. Each represents a different approach to the problem of providing access. The Brian Deer Classification scheme, used for First Nations materials in Canada, is a unique, specialized classification designed for use with First Nations² collections. The Māori Subject Headings, still in their infancy, are designed to be used with existing classification schemes to provide greater subject access to Māori materials. Despite the difference in approach, however, both the Brian Deer Classification and the Māori Subject Headings provide valuable insight into the considerations that must be made when developing controlled vocabularies for indigenous materials.

Brian Deer Classification

In 2004, Library and Archives Canada issued the *Report and Recommendations of the Consultation on Aboriginal Resources and Services*. In this report, a number of recommendations were made for the continued improvement of library services to First Nations peoples in Canada. While the recommendations range from community liaisons to national initiatives, one recommendation stands out in the context of this discussion:

“Recommendation no. 10

That the development of appropriate cataloguing and subject guides be considered a priority in the long term to address the deficiencies of the current subject heading guides and cataloguing practices.

Rationale

There is a need to re-teach the “experts,” such as cataloguers, about the terms used to describe Aboriginal peoples. Issues of

² “First Nations” is often a general term applied to any number of indigenous groups worldwide. Here, I will use it to refer to specifically to indigenous peoples in Canada.

racism and ignorance are raised by present cataloguing standards and terminology. Some argue that geographic classification should not be used and that pre-contact naming practices should be followed. In some cases, though, geographic references provide an effective point of access. Developing a thesaurus or other guide could alleviate some of the difficulties with access and organization.”
(Blake, Martin & Pelletier 2004, 23)

As this recommendation shows, the issues of bias in classification, and of the need for equitable access to First Nations materials, are finally receiving some of the official attention that they deserve. However, the need for “appropriate cataloguing” has been apparent to First Nations librarians for over three decades.

Though librarians working with collections of First Nations materials have long made efforts to adapt DDC, LC and LCSH to meet the needs of their users, few have met with much success (Hills 1997). The inherent biases and limitations of the existing classifications have made them resistant to the successful integration of First Nations and non-First Nations ideologies and organizations of information. As Ann Doyle, Head Librarian at the First Nations House of Learning Xwi7xwa Library at the University of British Columbia notes, “Adapting LC and DDC is just replicating a dominant worldview – possibly structurally and certainly conceptually...and, language-wise, is replicating something we don’t want to replicate (2006).

In 1974, A. Brian Deer, a First Nations librarian working at the National Indian Brotherhood (now the Assembly of First Nations), began to develop a classification scheme that reflected both a First Nations epistemological framework and appropriate First Nations language (Hills 1997). Rather than adapting LC or DDC, Deer chose to create, “from scratch,” a scheme that would fulfill the needs of the National Indian Brotherhood. As he moved to different libraries, he created new schemes for each one,

accommodating the specific collection he was working with at the time. The Brian Deer Classification schemes in use today by First Nations libraries are likely versions of the National Indian Brotherhood scheme, or the scheme Deer created while a librarian at the Mohawk Nation Office, Kahnawake Branch, which included original subject headings such as “Border Crossings,” “Condolence Ceremony,” “Great Law” and “Wampum” (MacDonell, Tagami & Washington 2003).

Deer’s identity as a First Nations member has been integral to his scheme gaining credibility, and use, within First Nations collections around Canada. A frequently cited difficulty in First Nations members’ library use is that non-indigenous librarians do not understand the significance or relationship of certain First Nations terms and concepts – leading to an unsatisfactory information-seeking interaction. Similarly, only a classification scheme designed by a First Nations member can include the subtleties of the First Nations worldview and language. As a First Nations member, Deer inherently possesses an understanding that could not be gained with years of study: “This understanding is not one that comes with living near another culture, or even living among its people to study the culture; rather, it comes from a person who lives the culture and recognizes the nuances and symbolism...” (Bauerle 2003, xx).

Though Deer’s scheme is widely recognized as a preferable alternative to DDC and LC, it does not currently appear to be widely used. This is slightly surprising, considering that “within the context of Canadian provision of library and information services to First Nations users...one long-standing aim, at least since the middle of the 1980s, has been to develop ‘a single standardized Native library classification scheme’” (MacDonell, Tagami & Washington 2003). However, it is important to bear in mind that

Deer's scheme was created as a means of organizing specific collections and was never intended to be used as a universal classification. While it "has been the basic scheme on which others have patterned their work," (Hills 1997, 138) the Deer classification would require further work before becoming the "single standardized" scheme.

Despite Deer's limited use in Canada (among other places, it is used at the First Nations House Resource Centre at University of Toronto, the Assembly of First Nations Resource Centre, the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs Library and Resource Center, and the Xwi7xwa Library at the University of British Columbia), it is welcomed by those who use it as a step in the right direction.

Depending on the library in which it is used, Deer has different benefits. At the Xwi7xwa Library, where the mission is to "echo indigenous perspectives," Deer allows librarians to organize information in a way that reflects (echoes) a First Nations worldview – and also reflects the "economic, political and legal realities for First Nations people in Canada" (Doyle 2006). Where DDC and LC both fall short in the use of language, in specificity, and in the collocation of related topics, Deer offers a more successful alternative.

The use of language is one of the most important considerations for First Nations collections. Language and worldview are often inextricably linked – as one First Nations writer observes, "In the two-fold process of translation, the verbal or physical act of translating from one language to another is accompanied by the theoretical or mental translation of meaning from one worldview to another" (Bauerle 2003, xx). Though the Deer classification is in English, the terminology used has been translated by a First Nations' member (Deer) with an understanding of indigenous epistemology, which

makes the use of English less problematic. The decision for the classification to be in English, while apparently a concession to the dominant culture, is highly pragmatic: English provides a common language for all First Nations linguistic groups, and all non-indigenous users.

The most important linguistic difference between Deer, DDC and LCC is the use of different language for the names of First Nations groups. For example, while names in LCC use older, anglicized spellings, names in Deer are taken from the language of the specific group. For example, LCC E99 T78 refers to the “Tsilkotin,” while the corresponding Deer class, BNM, is for “Ts’ilhqot’in.” It is reasonable to assume that “the inclusion in the Brian Deer schedule of the names that First Nations groups use to refer to themselves enables access to materials” (MacDonell, Tagami & Washington 2003).

The specificity of the Deer classification in regard to topics of interest to First Nations users is a vast improvement over LCC. While the LCC schedule has one entry for “Fishing” under “Other topics A-Z” (E98.F4), the Deer schedule³ has a variety of classes dealing with fishing:

- FS Fishing rights
- FSH Fishing and Fishing Rights
- FSK Fishing – Commercial
- FSQ Samonoid enhancement programs
- FSR Sports fishing
- FST Fishing – Canada
- FSU Fishing – United States
- FSX Fishing – International

³ Examples for the Brian Deer classification are taken from the version in use at the First Nations House of Learning Xwi7xwa Library at the University of British Columbia. For the full schedule, please see Appendix A.

Another important topic for First Nations users is “Health.” The LCC schedule is no entry under this topic, and instead has scattered several potentially related topics throughout the “Other topics A-Z” class: “Diseases” (E98.D6), “Liquor use. Alcohol use” (E98.L7), “Narcotics. Drugs” (E98.N5), and “Sexual behavior” (E98.S48). In stark contrast, Deer includes a class for health related topics in each province, in addition to these specific classes:

- SB Health conditions – General [including hepatitis]
- SBT Health conditions – Tobacco
- SBD Health conditions – Diabetes
- SBC Health conditions – Cancer

- SC Alcohol and drugs
- SCA Alcohol and drugs [British Columbia]
- SCF Fetal alcohol syndrome
- SCH HIV/AIDs

It is obvious even from these few examples that there is a greater emphasis in the Deer classification on specific topics which are of interest to First Nations users than there is in LCC. This is a great boon for First Nations users – it means that specific topics that may have been ‘hidden’ in broader headings, or even misplaced, in an attempt to fit them into the LCC schedule, are fully visible in Deer. And visibility can only lead to increased accessibility.

Closely related to the issue of specificity is the issue of collocation. Many First Nations collections are of modest size – especially those in community centres – and shelf browsing is the primary point of access for users. In this situation, collocation is especially important (though it is of great importance for any collection, whether in a community centre or university library). The vast difference in collocation decisions

between LCC and Brian Deer reveals just how important it is to consider indigenous epistemology when classifying materials.

As noted in the earlier discussion, LCC employs a linear, alphabetical approach to classifying many First Nations topics, sacrificing meaningful relationships between subjects for ‘rational’ functionality. This approach negates the fundamental importance of relationships in First Nations epistemology, “the belief that everything is interconnected and related and has an impact on everything else” (Bauerle 2003, xix).

At a basic, geographic level, Deer expresses the relationships between tribal groups that LCC negates by listing them alphabetically. For example, the Haisla, Comox and Squamish groups are placed together in the Deer classification, making it easier for a First Nations user – or any user doing First Nations research – to identify the relationship between these groups. Beyond these geographic relationships, however, Deer expresses more important conceptual relationships. Whereas LCC lists special topics for First Nations alphabetically, Deer places topics in close proximity to other related topics. For example, Health Conditions, Alcohol and Drugs, Fetal Alcohol Syndrome, HIV/AIDs, Family Life, Nutrition, Psychology and Welfare/Social Services/Poverty are all located together. If all of these topics existed in the LCC schedule (not all of them do), they would be separated on the shelf by alphabetically ordered Cutter numbers. In a similar manner, Fine Arts, Music/Dance, Language, and Teaching Methods are located together in Deer – a collocation that makes perfect sense from a First Nations viewpoint, but would be impossible in LCC.

While the Deer classification is a preferable alternative to LCC in terms of language, specificity and collocation, it is not without its own problems. As with any

classification scheme, Deer reflects the context of its creation – and the Deer classification was created as a simple scheme to order a limited amount of material. Collections using Deer today, such as the Xwi7xwa Library, have needed to adapt the scheme to meet the needs of their collections. Even with these adaptations, the scheme doesn't always allow for the breadth of description that librarians might like; at Xwi7xwa, there aren't enough classes in Deer for the material in hand, especially indigenous legal materials (Doyle 2006). As MacDonell, Tagami & Washington (2003) note in their research, the simplicity of Deer, while helpful for inexperienced catalogers and users, is a clear deficiency of the scheme.

Though one of the main purposes of Deer is to provide access to materials by First Nations authors, another deficiency of the scheme is its lack of accommodation for First Nations scholarship. In a 2003 interview, Ann Doyle of Xwi7xwa suggested that this is due to the fact that Deer was created before First Nations scholarly publishing became a regular occurrence. Since the 1970s, the number of First Nations students and faculty in Canadian universities has grown, and with the increased academic presence has come a growth in scholarship. Because Deer was first created in the early 1970s, it isn't able to accommodate First Nations research and publishing that reflects new theoretical approaches (e.g. post-colonialism) developed in the latter decades (MacDonell, Tagami & Washington 2003).

These shortcomings – simplicity and lack of accommodation for certain topics – are indicative of a broader concern: the ability of Deer to adequately represent an overarching Canadian First Nations epistemology. Though it has been adapted with some success to meet the needs of individual user communities, the Deer classification is

presently unable to represent First Nations epistemology on a national level. For this to be possible, changes would need to be made, reflecting the input of First Nations librarians, communities, knowledge keepers, cultural groups and First Nations scholars from across Canada (MacDonell, Tagami & Washington 2003).

Despite its present limited application, Deer is an excellent tool for First Nations librarians who wish to organize modest collections of materials. It also provides an excellent starting point for discussion about the development of a broader First Nations classification standard. By its very existence, the Deer classification highlights the need to organize First Nations materials according to First Nations conceptual framework and language – and most importantly, highlights the importance of involving First Nations librarians and community members in the organization of those materials. As Ann Doyle (2005) notes, whether those materials are in an academic library or “in a community with a roomful of boxes” that need to be organized, it is important that the tools exist to aid in the organization of the materials – tools “that were created/influenced by indigenous perspective, and are respectful of it.”

Māori Subject Headings

Born in the early 1970s, the Brian Deer classification scheme was created before the widespread use of computerized library catalogs. Though Brian Deer did use a computer to aid in the creation of his own “subject Library Catalogue” (Hill 1997, 137), physical collocation of materials was still a paramount concern for all catalogers of the time, including Deer. It wasn’t until the 1980s that the combination of MARC records and increased computing power made it possible to depend on the ability of computer catalogs to search for, and bring together, material on a specific subject (Coyle 2005).

Over the last two decades, advances in OPAC design and search capabilities have resulted in a greater emphasis on computerized recall than on physical collocation. Though shelf-browsing is still an important consideration in classification theory, the ability of online catalogs to reflect multiple relationships between items has generated increased interest in the creation of more coextensive controlled vocabularies for use in catalogs.

Not surprisingly, this shift is reflected in the most recent efforts to provide more equitable access to indigenous materials. Instead of creating specialized classification schemes to organize indigenous materials, indigenous librarians have focused on creating controlled vocabularies that reflect indigenous language and epistemology – but that can also be integrated into existing online catalogs as a means of improving access. It is recognized that the language and organization of these controlled vocabularies – subject headings, thesauri, taxonomies, etc. – have “evolved beyond being indexing and searching tools to become ‘knowledge representation systems’, ‘patterns of knowledge’, or ‘semantic networks’” (Ngulube 2002, 98). Just as classification schemes betray the epistemological framework of their creators, so too do subject heading lists – and in this lies the possibility of more accurately representing indigenous materials and making them accessible to indigenous users and researchers.

The recent creation of the Māori Subject Headings in New Zealand reflects a recognition of the ability of controlled vocabularies to create increased access within a previously established classificatory system by providing greater computer-based coextensiveness. The Māori Subject Headings Working Party (MSHWP) was launched at the New Zealand Library and Information Association conference in 1998 as a joint

venture between the National Library of New Zealand (NLNZ), Library and Information Association of New Zealand Aotearoa (LIANZA) and Te Rōpū Whakahaui (TRW – Māori in Library and Information Management). The MSHWP was commissioned to research and develop subject headings in the Māori language that could be used at libraries – public and academic – across New Zealand to provide better access to Māori materials. The first group of authorized subject headings was published in September 2005.⁴

The necessity of the Māori Subject Headings is best understood within the context of the Māori relationship with libraries. Māori constitute approximately 14% of New Zealand's population, a figure which is expected to grow to 21% by 2051 – making the Māori a significant demographic consideration when organizing library services (Wareham 2001). More important than their quantitative presence, however, is the history of the Māori relationship with the *pakeha* (non-Māori European immigrants).

The Māori have lived in New Zealand for over one thousand years, arriving at the turn of the millennia from eastern Polynesia. A variety of tribal groups (*iwi*) are dispersed throughout the country, and though there is a shared culture, there are linguistic variations between different *iwi* and *hupu* (family groups). Prior to the arrival of European missionaries and explorers, the Māori had a solely oral tradition. Soon after their arrival, however, the missionaries created an orthography of the Māori language, and taught the Māori to read and write their 'own' language. This resulted in a tremendous growth in Māori authorship throughout the 19th century, and the creation of a significant body of textual Māori material (Szekely & Weatherall 1997).

⁴ These subject headings can be access online through the National Library of New Zealand: <http://mshupoko.natlib.govt.nz/mshupoko/index.htm> .

Though colonization by Europeans in the 19th century had the expected negative effects on the Māori population, including depopulation and urbanization, the British government signed a then-radical treaty with the Māori in 1840. The Treaty of Waitangi guaranteed the Māori the right self-governance, guaranteed redress for past wrongs (including wrongful property seizure), and dictated that the Crown had an obligation to protect Māori interests and rights. The Treaty sought to foster a spirit of partnership between Māori and pakeha in the governance and society of New Zealand (Wareham 2001). Today, that spirit of partnership has been largely institutionalized, and is a part of the mandate of all public organizations in New Zealand, especially libraries and archives.

This mandate, coupled with recent efforts to revitalize the use of the Māori language (only 23,000 Māori adults speak Māori fluently (Szekely & Weatherall 1997)), has made providing equitable access to both Māori and pakeha materials a priority for librarians in New Zealand. There is a wide variety of Māori material held in New Zealand libraries and archives, but it has remained largely inaccessible to Māori library users because of the classification schemes and subject headings used to describe it. (The use of culturally biased description is often further compounded by misunderstandings between Māori users and pakeha librarians during reference interviews).⁵ This has been understandably frustrating for Māori users who want to research genealogy, substantiate land claims, or simply find materials to aid in Māori language education.

Public libraries in New Zealand use DDC and academic libraries in New Zealand rely heavily on LCC and LCSH for the classification of their materials. While the epistemological frameworks of the classification schemes (DDC and LCC) are certainly

⁵ For a discussion of library services to Maori, see articles by Jane McRae and Roy Carroll in *New Zealand Libraries* (46) no. 7/8 (December 1990).

problematic for Māori users searching for Māori materials, the use of LCSH terminology has proved to be especially problematic. The use of English, the lack of specificity, and the general inability to faithfully represent indigenous knowledge in Māori materials with the Library of Congress headings is a specific point of frustration for Māori users, who feel that “the description of Māori material should be informed by its intended meaning, rather than a simplistic translation of inappropriate terminology” (Simpson 2005, 14). The following quote, from a Māori library user, typifies the problem with classifying Māori materials according to Western concepts and terminology:

“See in terms of English all of our stories get called ‘Myths and Legends’ but for Māori, that is not a good thing at all because a lot of that is about whakapapa [genealogy; relationships] – that’s right – they’re not myths at all – for Māori they’re not – like if you don’t really know what they are, you think ‘oh they are myths and legends’, but when you’re actually learning about them you realize they’re not – They’re the basis of most tikanga [ways of doing things; traditions] – because you know that most of the things about Maui are in the ‘Myths and Legends’. Well we all know as Māori that Maui, we are descended from him, so how can he be a myth?” (Simpson 2005, 50)

Māori library users would never think to search under the subject heading “Myths and Legends” for information about Maui, because for Māori, Maui is a very real part of their genealogy and history. It is exactly this kind of problem that the MSHWP hopes to eliminate with the Māori Subject Headings, which reflect Māori epistemology in both their language and structure.

Western classification schemes and controlled vocabularies generally utilize a linear/hierarchical framework – as seen in DDC, LCC and LCSH. Those topics that aren’t related through the use of facets are usually related in terms of alphabetical or numerical relationships (that is to say, through no meaningful relationship at all).

Western frameworks also usually incorporate a ‘binary’ methodology, which requires at least a certain level of mutual exclusivity when placing an item within that framework. This requirement, which forces catalogers to think in very rigid terms when describing materials, runs contrary to Māori epistemology.

While Western schemes are predicated on the idea that each item can be described as having a specific, singular identity (and place), Māori thought emphasizes the relative nature of each item’s identity. Relationships are primary in Māori thought and expressions. The Māori believe that every person and every thing has *whakapapa* (which roughly translates to “genealogy”):

“For Māori, relationships are everything. The whole world is described in terms of relationships. Your standing in it depends on your whakapapa; your relationship with the environment depends on your whakapapa connection to it; you relationship with your peers, your relations, your friends and your foes depends upon those whakapapa connections” (Simpson 2005, 28).

This idea of relationship extends even to words and language; words only have meaning through their relation to other words. Assigning only a primary subject heading (or even multiple subject headings that are not expressed in relationship to one another) to an item fails to express the richness of a Māori understanding of that item. Māori “subjects” need to be expressed in relationship – which can’t be done with LCSH and present online systems. Ideally, a catalog search for a Māori Subject Heading term would yield some form of the relationship in Figure 1:

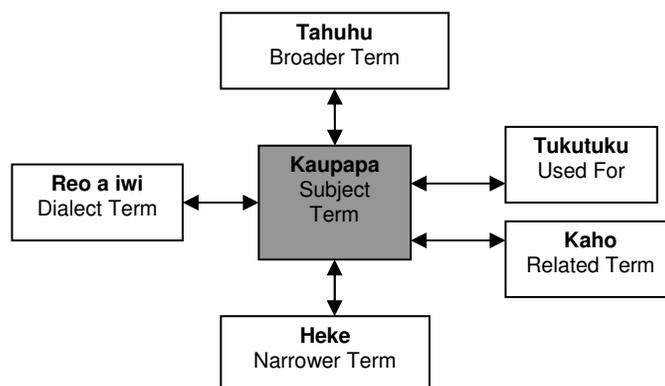


Figure 1. (MSHWP)

Currently, OPAC search results for subject headings result in alphabetical listings of subject headings, with possible links to authorized terms. If an online access system were to fully accommodate Māori epistemology and Māori Subject Headings, subject search results would show the sought-for authorized term in relation to each of these other terms. As it stands, however, these relationships are only visible in the Māori Subject Headings list.

The importance of expressing relationship in subject headings is seen even more clearly when another aspect of Māori epistemology is considered. While Western classification theory assumes that every item can be described as having a singular, absolute subject ('this is what the item is *about*'), especially with non-fiction material, Māori epistemology doesn't subscribe to such an absolute view. In Māori thought, 'facts' don't exist; there are multiple truths/facts. What is true for one iwi or hapu is different for the other – it is a matter of perspective, and each perspective is equally valid. For example, if members of different iwi observe the same incident and describe it differently, based on their individual perspectives, each account will be seen as equally true. This difference in perspective is even reflected linguistically – different dialects have different terms for objects or events, depending on their perspective. Research into the Māori Subject Headings emphasizes that it is important for the headings to reflect these differences when describing materials:

“With the renaissance in acknowledging dialectical differences in te reo Māori [Māori dialect] between tribal areas it is preferable that these differences be organized within Māori subject headings. The manner in which the language and terminology are used by a particular tribal area varies considerably and to ignore these differences denies the uniqueness of each tribe”
(Simpson 2005, 30).

The need to reflect dialectical difference is reflected in the assignation of dialect terms (reo a iwi) in the Māori Subject Heading authority files. However, the individual subject terms (kaupapa) are more general; in the words of the MSHWP Draft Guidelines, they are the terms that are “in current use and commonly used” (2001). This is potentially problematic, depending on who decides which reo a iwi is most “commonly used,” but the inclusion of dialectal terms in the authority files is a step in the right direction.

Currently, there are only 500 authorized Māori Subject Headings. These terms have been chosen through literary warrant – assessing the topics that appear in Māori materials. In the view of the MSHWP, “Māori materials” are: a) works written in te reo Māori, or which are bilingual, with one language being Māori, b) works for which the word “Māori” appears in the assigned LCSH, or c) works in which at least 20% of the content is for and/or about Māori (2001).

The Māori Subject Headings are available for use by librarians and the public through an online database of authority files, organized with a thesauri structure. Though the headings are organized relationally through the inclusion of related terms (Broader, Narrower, Used For, Dialect, etc.) linked to in the authority files, there is also a hierarchical element to the structure. At the top of the structure is a group of the broadest/most general terms, which each incorporate the three overriding concepts in Māori thought: the spiritual (*wairua*), the physical (*tinana*), and the psychological (*hinengaro*). Each term (*kaupapa*) is linked to these broad terms, as well as to narrower terms, dialect (iwi/hupu specific) terms, used for terms (generally English or unauthorized Māori terms) and related terms (see Figure 2 below).

<p>Entry for WAKA:</p> <p>(a) Boats USE Waka moana Canoes USE Waka moana</p> <p>(b) Rangatira RT Rangatiratanga</p> <p>(c) Waka</p> <p>(d) Here are entered works that combine the two concepts of transport and ancestral canoes. Works on canoes primarily as a form of transport are entered under Waka moana.</p> <p>(e) SA individually named waka, e.g. Te Aurere</p> <p>(f) NT Waka moana Waka tīpuna Waka whenua Wakarererangi</p> <p>(g) Waka moana UF Boats (LCSH) Canoes</p> <p>(h) BT Waka NT Waka ama Waka taua</p> <p>(i) --Te ao hou --Te ao tawhito</p>	<p>Key to entry:</p> <p>(a) Term not used as a subject heading with a direction to the authorized heading.</p> <p>(b) RT = Related Term – a valid subject heading that is related to the heading in the entry.</p> <p>(c) Authorized subject heading (kaupapa).</p> <p>(d) Note defining the scope of the heading. Includes the English language equivalent of the heading and the LCSH equivalent where one exists, identified by LCSH in parentheses e.g. Boats (LCSH). Where an LCSH equivalent is given, this MSH heading may be applied similarly to the LCSH.</p> <p>(e) SA = See Also – a general reference to related subject headings.</p> <p>(f) NT = Narrower Term – valid subject headings representing kinds or parts of the heading in the entry.</p> <p>(g) UF = Used For – shows topics covered by the term in the entry. These topics are not valid MSH headings. UF will also include the English language equivalents.</p> <p>(h) BT = Broader Term – a valid subject heading that is more general than the heading in the entry. The opposite of NT.</p> <p>(i) Subdivision – representing an aspect of the subject. The subdivisions in this example represent traditional and contemporary practice. Subdivisions are described in more detail below.</p>
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Figure 2. (MSHWP)

Once subject terms have been established, subdivisions can be used to increase specificity: perspective, time, place, and form. The perspective subdivision indicates the approach taken to a topic: traditional (*tea o tawhito*), modern (*tea o hou*) or pakeha (*tauiwi*). This subdivision is particularly important for use with Māori material (such as genealogies) which may be embedded in colonial documents (Nicolas 2005). The time subdivisions present time from a Māori concept, rather than a Western concept. Place subdivisions are used to denote the Māori names for geographic locations. Form subdivisions are taken from LCSH, though they are translated into Māori, and reflect the material type. Though following a LCSH model for subdivisions (and for other aspects of structure, e.g. “Used For” and “Related” categories) may initially appear to

compromise the “Māori” integrity of the headings, Māori librarians and library users approve of building on established cataloging practice, with the important provision that it not limit the expression of Māori language and epistemology (Simpson 2005).

There is great hope among Māori librarians and library users that the Māori Subject Headings will lead to increased access to Māori materials. The use of Māori language and efforts to express the relational nature of subjects, pursuant to Māori epistemology, are certainly a vast improvement over general LCSH headings such as “Architecture, Māori.” However, the success of the headings will rely largely on their application – which is dependent on the integrated library system in each library. Māori catalogers may assign a variety of subject headings to an item, but if the online catalog can’t reflect that variety – or the inherent relationships – the headings lose much of their intended power. There also remains the problem of the physical collocation of items; shelf-browsing for Māori users will not be improved until the relationships reflected in the Māori Subject Headings are also reflected in the classification scheme of the library. Hopefully, as the majority of research interactions today take place within the confines of the library OPAC, the presence of more appropriate subject headings in catalog records will at least partially compensate for the existence of poor physical collocation.

The Future of Indigenous Classification

The Māori Subject Headings and Brian Deer classification represent two very different approaches to increasing the accessibility of indigenous knowledge. Taken together, however, they provide a wealth of instruction for librarians and information professionals who work with indigenous materials.

It is clear that, for indigenous materials to be made accessible to indigenous users, the materials must be described and/or organized in a manner that is consistent with the individual indigenous epistemology. While established cataloging and classification practice should not be wholly disregarded, using the framework of existing schemes – i.e. DDC, LCC, LCSH – fails to account for what is an integral difference between these schemes and many indigenous groups' conceptual framework: an emphasis on a relational, holistic view of information, as opposed to a linear, mutually exclusive view. While epistemologies will naturally vary from group to group, there is clearly a relational aspect to much indigenous knowledge that is lacking in Western thought.

Closely related to the consideration of individual epistemology is the need for indigenous schemes to correctly incorporate indigenous language. It is difficult, if not impossible, to separate language from epistemology; language inherently carries the worldview and ethics of its users (Doyle 2006). When indigenous concepts are translated into English – or any other language – there is always the risk of losing the meaning of words. Further complicating the issue, of course, is the existence of tribal dialects and linguistic differences within the same broad indigenous group. Both the Deer classification and the Māori Subject Headings have made some effort to accommodate dialectic differences, but it can be impossible to accommodate every difference if a scheme is meant to organize a wide variety of materials.

With the use of indigenous language, another important issue is raised: who is qualified to create – and administrate – an indigenous classification scheme? The acceptance of the Deer classification in First Nations libraries has been largely dependent on the identity of its creator; in the same way, the Māori Subject Headings Working Party

includes Māori members, and has been extremely careful to consult repeatedly with Māori librarians and library users. The integrity of an indigenous scheme is wholly dependent on the involvement of indigenous peoples in its creation.

The application of the scheme in describing and classifying materials brings similar issues to the fore. First Nations members in Canada and the United States have repeatedly stressed the importance of using indigenous interviewers when recording oral histories, as non-indigenous interviewers can only understand the ‘surface’ of the interview (Blake, Martin & Pelletier 2003 ; Bauerle 2003). It could be said that catalogers conduct ‘interviews’ of their own when assigning subjects to indigenous material – which would make it imperative for indigenous peoples to catalog indigenous materials. The ideal cataloging situation would be to have a cataloger who possessed “community knowledge, lived experience and academic background” (Doyle 2006). However, there is currently a shortage of indigenous people in the library and information profession – though numbers *are* on the rise, especially among Māori. If it is not possible for a library to employ a qualified indigenous cataloger, the most preferable option is to hire a non-indigenous cataloger with a thorough LIS background in subject analysis and substantial cultural knowledge.

Beyond this, librarians must also consider the nature of the collection in which the scheme is to be used. Are the users primarily indigenous, or are they non-indigenous researchers? Is it a browsing collection or a closed collection? In the case of a browsing collection, the use of a unique indigenous classification scheme is merited to aid in shelf browsing through proper physical collocation. For a closed collection, or one which is primarily searched online, the addition of indigenous subject headings to an existing

catalog may be most appropriate – if the catalog is capable of reflecting the proper relationships between subjects.

The decision of the relative merit of creating either a unique classification scheme or a unique controlled vocabulary reveals a final obstacle in providing access to indigenous materials – or, indeed, to any materials. As noted earlier, recent years have brought increased emphasis on the use of integrated library systems to organize materials, and increased reliance on the abilities of such systems to collocate materials in the ‘ether’, through subject or keyword searches. As it becomes ever clearer that the creation of a truly universal classification scheme – which will effectively and faithfully enable physical collocation of the world’s knowledge – is an impossible dream, the use of indigenous-authorized subject headings to provide access to indigenous materials appears to be the most viable option. The ability of an online catalog to ‘collocate’ materials in response to search requests will always outstrip the ability of physical shelving to represent a multiplicity of relationships between materials, a fact illustrated by the breadth of relationships that Māori users wish to see reflected in their Subject Headings.

As much as online catalogs are able to do, however, materials still need to be placed on the shelf – and many library users still depend on browsing and serendipity to locate relevant materials. For public and academic libraries, this demands the use of a universal classification scheme, while in special libraries, more specific schemes are needed. In short, libraries will never be able to fully depend on the online organization of their materials, but must also seek to reflect appropriate terminologies and relationships in the organization of the classification schemes which dictate the physical location of their materials. With this ever-present duality of need, there is a need for librarians

working with indigenous materials to continue working diligently to create both controlled vocabularies for use in online systems and classification schemes for the physical collocation of materials. The Brian Deer classification and the Māori Subject Headings illustrate the difficulties – and possibilities – of each approach.

It is clear that there is a need to faithfully classify indigenous materials – not only for the survival of indigenous tradition and culture within individual groups – but to make indigenous materials accessible to all who desire to find them. By working closely with indigenous librarians, indigenous organizations and indigenous communities, it should be possible to provide this access: to shed light on formerly invisible materials, and to light the way for the sustainability of indigenous cultural heritage and global intellectual diversity.

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