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Innovative Practices

The University of Saskatchewan's I-Portal

Bringing Indigenous Knowledge into a Digital and Community-Based Future Through Open Education Resources

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Abstract

This article will highlight two basic components of navigating the I-Portal as an OER repository or database. The first half of the article, primarily written by the first author Deborah Lee, will explore the history of the I-Portal and the ongoing development of the I-Portal into the database that is currently accessible. The second half of the article, primarily written by second author Sheila Laroque, will explore one librarian's experiences and approaches of using the I-Portal in informational literacy teaching practices. It should also be noted that the I-Portal was re-launched in November 2022 with a new abbreviated name, a new front page, and new software and behind the scenes enhancements now powered by the more robust Drupal content management software. The new portal includes a search feature while maintaining and building upon the same closed and open access Indigenous studies content.

Keywords:

Indigenous Knowledge, Academic Libraries, Virtual Libraries, Open Access

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Introduction

The Indigenous Studies Portal is a home-grown database at the University of Saskatchewan (USask) that went live in 2006 with links to 1500 online records, all related to Indigenous studies ("About the Indigenous Studies Portal," 2023) The initial project leading up to this launch was several years in the making, with contributions by librarians, IT programmers, an Indigenous researcher and library assistants/content assistants with a background in cataloging. The idea was to bring online materials together in one place—this was a big undertaking given the interdisciplinary nature of the Indigenous studies content. Subjects covered include: Indigenous knowledge (IK) (generally speaking, such as living on the land and appropriation of IK), education, health, law, sociology / social issues, politics / governance, literature and visual arts, spirituality, Indigenous science, research methods, history, and economic development.

The focus was originally on content that featured Saskatchewan, the Prairies, and the rest of Canada; however, we also felt that there was a lot of similarity with colonial policies and actions that led to hardship and resistance in the U.S., Australia, and New Zealand. Thus, the geographic range of content was opened substantially to include other colonized countries. With the inclusion of the Master's in Northern Governance program (also known formerly as the University of the Arctic) at the USask, we also added a substantial component of Saami-based articles and resources pertaining to other Indigenous peoples living within the Arctic Circle. This program is now called the Governance & Entrepreneurship in Northern & Indigenous Areas (GENI) program, and it is partnered with the University of Tromsø in Norway.

Additionally, the I-Portal underwent a front-page redesign in 2012. For this project, the focus was to create an image that would decolonize the look and feel of the I-Portal in response to researchers who indicated that the I-Portal had too much text on the front page and that it looked "too linear." After consulting with elders and with assistance from the media productions team at USask, we created the initial turtle image with hues of brown and green, and we placed subject headings or categories on the turtle shell that respected what the elders prioritized in terms of where certain subject headings would appear on the turtle shell. This redesign was very well received by the Indigenous research community, and members stated that this was now a resource "we could call our own."

What is Meant by Open Educational Resources in the I-Portal?

Before discussing collection development in the I-Portal, it is necessary to define what is meant by open access (OA) in the context of the database. When considering the concept of open educational resources (OER) and their accessibility through the I-Portal, our approach has been to focus on public access rather than the full continuum of limited OA. For instance, there are some OER that have a Creative Commons license that allows for complete adaptation of the content or material by others. The I-Portal would not link to or host such resources as we feel that it is not appropriate to adapt IK in every case. Our concern is that IK content could be taken out of context and adapted to some version that the original author(s) would not condone and

would not want their copyright associated with it. Think of the unacceptable appropriation of IK that has occurred with non-Indigenous people conducting sweat lodge ceremonies as a parallel example. The type of Creative Commons license that would be acceptable for linkage to from the I-Portal would be the Creative Commons Attribution – Non-Commercial – No Derivatives license.

We also wanted to provide some examples of ebooks that are linked from the I-Portal where there was never any intention to publish in ebook format for commercial gain. One particularly interesting open education book that was created in the early days of OER is Martin Nakata's e-book, Australian Indigenous Knowledge and Libraries. This conference proceedings title was published as an ebook with the intent of being an OER from the start in 2005, even though it was also published in hard copy as one volume of the *Australian and Academic Research Libraries* journal. It is based on papers presented at a colloquium in Sydney a few months' prior to publication. It made a lot of waves in its day because we had not heard of this kind of publishing before (e.g., a free ebook) and also because it surfaced how libraries should be paying attention to and respecting protocols related to access to IK. Much of the book also discusses strategies for developing IK centres.

Another was kā-kī-pē-isi-nakatamakawiyahk: Our Legacy: Essays, edited by USask library and archives colleagues Darlene Fichter and Cheryl Avery in 2008. This ebook, which is linked from the I-Portal, was also published in print but was never meant to be sold. It features chapters written by various members of the USask community, including graduate students and myself, Deborah Lee. We primarily wrote about our experiences of researching and learning about the wide variety of archival documents that had been digitized from several cultural and heritage institutions across Central and Northern Saskatchewan in 2007 and 2008. These documents, including photos, diaries, and correspondence, were then made available in open access format through the Our Legacy database, created by University Archives at the USask. The idea for the ebook was to showcase some of the research that could be done with the assistance of the digitized archival documents for speaking truth to power.

A final example is the recent collection of essays pertaining to Mitho Pimatisiwin (or making a good life from the perspective of nêhithawak and Métis graduate students who call Northern Saskatchewan home) and which comprise Volume 53 of the *Northern Review* journal. This collection of essays was initiated by Dr. Bonita Beatty, professor with expertise in Northern governance in the Department of Indigenous Studies at the USask. She had worked with the Gwenna Moss Centre for Teaching and Learning to create an OER that featured exemplar essays by her graduate students and found that publishing the essays through the *Northern Review* journal suited the purposes of everyone involved, but especially for many of the students, supported their publishing for the first time. These examples indicate that their content was never meant to be adapted by others. Consequently, they would fall under the "public access" category as opposed to an "open license" category.

Open Access Content Collection Development in the I-Portal

Early Content History of the I-Portal

The content included within the I-Portal grew to 6,000 records by the spring of 2007, and a dedicated librarian position was recruited for and hired (i.e., Deborah Lee, one of the co-authors of this article) and who began to lead the development and expansion of the I-Portal in 2007. Much of the content prior to 2007 was links to licensed resources, including content such as scholarly articles, book reviews, and theses. A link resolver function had already been added to the I-Portal so that other institutions searching this research tool could get access to these licensed resources if their institutions also subscribed to the content.

Later, the I-Portal team started to digitize print materials, such as back runs of Indigenous-focused journals that had not yet been picked up by database vendors such as EBSCO and ProQuest. Some examples of these digitization projects include:

- Eight years of content from the *Canadian Journal of Native Studies* (digitized with permission from Brandon University)
- Several years of content from *Native Studies Review* (digitized with permission from the Department of Native Studies at USask)
- The early years of the *Journal of Aboriginal Economic Development* (digitized with permission from Captus Press and the Canadian Association of Native Development Officers)
- Two-thirds of the chapters of the book and conference proceedings *Continuing Poundmaker and Riel's Quest* (digitized with permission from Purich Publishing and authors)
- Approximately two hundred Indigenous-related articles and book reviews from the print-only journal, *Prairie Forum* (digitized with permission)

Unfortunately, the I-Portal team was downsized considerably in 2016-2017 when 80% of the staff took retirement packages, and only one of these staff vacancies was subsequently filled. The much smaller team that is now in place has not been involved in any digitization or "harvesting" (as explained below) projects since then. Additionally, the Indigenous librarian position leading the I-Portal was never filled when I (Lee) transitioned to the Indigenous studies liaison and engagement librarian position at Usask. Consequently, the growth of the I-Portal has slowed considerably, particularly in the areas of digitization of content or collection development, as well as the relationship-building activities with publishers and other partners. These areas have not kept pace with the potential of a wide range of Indigenous library and archival materials at Usask, which could be digitized, and the wide range of partnerships for content development that could have been further explored and built upon.

Harvesting Archival Content

Similarly, significant amounts of archival content was added to the I-Portal by "harvesting," a practice well-used by digital humanists (Van de Sompel et al., 2004). The digitized records of the Our Legacy website, a homegrown database developed by the USask

Archives through considerable grant funding in 2007-2008, was a collaboration between cultural heritage institutions in Central and Northern Saskatchewan, including Pahkisimon Nuyea?h Library System, Saskatoon Public Library – Local History Room, and the Prince Albert Historical Society, with content coming from 11 institutions in total and in a variety of formats.

Additionally, we harvested content from the Indian History Film Project, originally archived by the Canadian Plains Research Centre and then transferred to the University of Regina (UofR). The UofR then provided permissions for the I-Portal team at the USask to harvest these records. The film project consisted of more than 1,100 transcripts of interviews with Indigenous elders in Saskatchewan and Alberta during the 1970s and 1980s. These oral histories were originally captured on film, but they became quite fragile over the years, so the transcripts were created to preserve the content. As a result, these transcripts are now searchable and available both through the UofR institutional repository and the I-Portal, and they contribute to a rich and important collection of publicly accessible research materials.

Grey Literature Content

Grey literature is an important source of research information, particularly for graduate students and faculty. By definition, it is information that is published or produced in ways that are different from traditional publishing and distribution methods. For example, grey literature does not include peer reviewed journal articles, book reviews, and theses found through searching mainstream databases but includes harder to find information such as government or non-governmental organization reports. This brings us to another unique project for adding content to the I-Portal (via the Our Legacy website), which was the digitization of the transcripts of the Roundtable Hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (RCAP). These transcripts had been donated by RCAP to the Native Law Centre at the USask, which then transferred them to the University Archives. Once they were digitized through the archives, they were added to the Our Legacy website and harvested by the I-Portal team.

Another type of open access grey literature that has been added to the I-Portal includes the many government and non-governmental organizations (NGO) reports; these have been searched for by skilled I-Portal content assistants. These reports include commissioned research projects by various federal government departments as well as from Indigenous political organizations, such as:

- the Assembly of First Nations (AFN)
- the Metis National Council (MNC)
- the Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK)
- the Pauktuutit Inuit Women’s Association
- the Native Women’s Association of Canada (NWAC)
- Women of the Metis Nation

In addition, records from many similar provincial organizations (such as the Federation of Saskatchewan Indian Nations, now known as the Federation of Sovereign Indigenous Nations;

the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs; the Metis Nation of Saskatchewan; the Metis Nation of Alberta Association; etc.) were also added to the I-Portal.

Publications of the Indian Claims Commission of Canada (ICC), including reports on Treaty Land Entitlements, were also added to the I-Portal based on files transferred by the ICC to the I-Portal for this purpose before the Commission was shut down in 2009. Similarly, Indigenous health reports can also be found in the I-Portal. These include important research reports by the now defunct National Aboriginal Health Organization (these reports have often been preserved by the Internet Archive, a non-profit digital library offering free digital access to billions of webpages and other documents). Through a collaboration with Mary Jane McCallum, a faculty member at the University of Winnipeg (UofW), students from the UofW digitized the content while the I-Portal team added more than 40 digitized Indian Health Services Annual Reports published by the Canadian Department of Health and Welfare between 1945 and 1992. These are important and unique open education sources for Indigenous historical health researchers. Overall, more than 12,000 grey literature reports are currently made available through the I-Portal.

Additional types of grey literature formats that can be found in the I-Portal are the examples of media content, particularly films and videos. These include conference presentations (such as the Daniels: In And Beyond the Law Conference held just after the Daniels' legal decision in 2016 and the Think Indigenous Education Conference, etc.), guest lecturers including, Pam Palmater, Don Worme, Tanya Talaga, and Jody Wilson-Raybould, as well as free-streaming films from the National Film Board and other distributors. Historical radio clips from the Canadian Broadcasting Corporation (CBC) can also be found in the I-Portal.

With more and more open access content becoming available through the I-Portal, we also felt it would be helpful and democratic to provide a search engine function that would allow searching by open access materials only. That way we could promote the I-Portal as a community resource so community members who were not affiliated with USask could access much of the content of the I-Portal. This was one way to make up for historical wrongs in which Western researchers were benefiting from doing research with Indigenous peoples and communities through their published work with little benefit going back to our people; not even a copy of these published works, and no opportunity to vet the content of these publications. This act of reciprocity has been appreciated by many community members, including USask alumni who no longer have robust access to research materials. More specifically, at any point in time, about two thirds of the I-Portal content has been open access, which is a substantial portion of the collection. Currently the I-Portal links to nearly 54,500 open access resources.

Given these many sources of grey literature that comprise the I-Portal collection, it is clear that searching in the I-Portal is not just for first-year undergraduate students. Academic and community-based researchers from a variety of disciplinary fields, including but not limited to Indigenous studies and history, can find a wealth of information within the I-Portal collection, including many resources related to legal and treaty issues, as well as a wide range of topics related to the social determinants of health.

Teaching Information Literacy—One Librarian's Experience

Part of the joy of teaching students how to use the I-Portal comes from both what it is, and what it is not. When introducing the I-Portal in a classroom setting, one of the first things I (Laroque-Bear) usually mention is that this resource was created with the needs of Indigenous researchers in mind. It is at this point that I usually describe the I-Portal as developed and maintained by the USask Library, so there are many links to it throughout the library's resources. However, researchers do not need to be affiliated with USask in order to use the I-Portal, and no account is required to access the portal or the many OER contained therein. By establishing a positive relationship with learners during their time in post secondary school, the I-Portal can become a gateway to lifelong learning as we continue to include more OER. I see this as setting up new post secondary students to become lifelong learners with access to Indigenous information that will go beyond their time at university. I also see this as the potential for people who have had troubling schooling experiences, whether that be from Indian Residential Schools (IRS) or otherwise, and enabling self-directed and more empowered learning. All community members with internet access can search the I-Portal. Think of it as "Indigenous Google."

I spend more time discussing the *open* part of this OER than I might otherwise, because having a resource created with the needs of Indigenous peoples in mind is a rarity. Grasping the differences between publicly available and open access and seeing this on a continuum is an important concept for students to understand. While many of the USask courses I am invited to teach are on the main campus, many more are in satellite programs across the province. For example, the Northlands College has many programs and courses for students in Northern Saskatchewan, including the ability to take university degrees across five different campuses ("Courses," 2023).

As Indigenous studies is one of the options for a Bachelor's of Arts (B.A.) through Northlands College, I am often invited into these courses via Zoom. Many of the I-Portal features have a more immediate and meaningful impact for students who can remain in their communities as they attend university. Often, I find myself telling students, "If anyone has ever said to you 'Can you please look this up for me, my girl?' You can show them the I-Portal. We made it for everyone." At this point, I will usually get knowing nods from several students, accompanied by questions. These questions do not come up every time during class, but I will often get follow up emails asking for help both with their current research for course work, as well as help in finding information for and about their communities.

An important feature of the I-Portal is the "Browse by Community" function, which used to be simply "Maps." By accessing this, researchers are brought to a map of Canada with the current colonial provincial boundaries. People are then able to search for a particular community within the search bar feature or else navigate geographically by zooming in and out and across different territories. This feature underlines the relationship that Indigenous peoples have with land, as well as Indigenous community-building.

For instance, if we select the Lac La Ronge Indian Band in Saskatchewan from the list of communities, we are able to bring up geographical information about their location, as well as the ability to click on "View Matching I-Portal Records" ("Lac La Ronge"). At the time of this writing, there are 25 results for I-Portal records that match with Lac La Ronge, and of those, 15 are directly related to land or culture dating back to 1972. Lac La Ronge was chosen for this example because this is where one of the campuses of Northlands College is and a real example that I have been able to use with students. Due to the effects of colonization, many people have lost their connections with communities.

These ties have been disrupted, and researchers are often now engaging in rebuilding efforts along with their university coursework. Many communities have changed their names over time, and entire communities have been forced to move in order to make physical space for the "progress'' that was to come. By being able to access all of the documents in the I-Portal about a community by geographic location, there is space for both Indigenous history as well as joyous Indigenous futures. There are materials related to community events, as well as resources for how communities are leveraging their own experts to continue nation-building activities. More traditional academic databases are likely to surface materials based on what gets published. Human nature often dictates that people are more likely to click on negative information; but this is not where Indigenous potential rests. Having more nuance tied to a geographic location, that shows both so-called "good" and "bad," is closer to a "truth" than what might come from another resource.

By engaging with OER in this manner, Indigenous students are effectively becoming ambassadors for the potential of academic resources in their communities. The instances of academic researchers doing harm to Indigenous communities are vast. For instance, in her seminal work *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples,* Tuhiwai Smith (2021) recognizes that:

> It was a process of systematic fragmentation which can still be seen in the disciplinary carve up of the Indigenous world: bones, mummies and skulls to the museums, artwork to private collectors, languages to linguistics, 'customs' to anthropologists, beliefs and behaviours to psychologists. (p. 66)

Every aspect, from the design of the I-Portal to how we introduce the learning opportunities that are within it to students, will create an additional node or touch point for community engagement. When more Indigenous people are engaging with the I-Portal's resources, we are creating a turning-point in the relationship between Indigenous peoples and the academy. In conversation with students, faculty, and community-based researchers, I make sure that it is known that this resource is dynamic rather than static. If there are access issues or temporary glitches, it is possible for library users to make these known to the team—who are more approachable than the workers for another academic database. As we have already made note, the I-Portal is increasing the content that is available on a daily basis. In terms of educational practices, this can be seen as embedding the practice of "widening our circle."

Indigenous peoples have regularly been seen as subjects of study rather than experts in their own right. For instance, Battiste and Henderson (2000) note that anthropologists were seen as the experts regarding Indigenous cultures in the following passage:

> Contemporary anthropologists have focused on developing a critique of ethnocentrism in both academic theory and popular culture, and have sought to develop participatory and collaborative research methodologies based on the assumption that anthropological texts are the product of dialogues between researchers and research subjects, rather than the authoritative, objective accounts of individual experts. (p. 37)

Similarly but from another angle, L. T. Smith (2021) also informs us of research being done by Indigenous peoples as experts when she writes about articulating an Indigenous research agenda, including projects which are closely tied to self-determination activities and community action projects. Early in this chapter, she states,

> Community action approaches assume that people know and can reflect on their own lives, have questions and priorities of their own, and have skills and sensitivities that can enhance (or undermine) any community-based projects. (p. 48)

Also, Leanne Betasamosake Simpson (2017) takes the conversation on research and Indigenous peoples further by centering Indigenous (and in particular, Nishnaabeg) brilliance and expertise throughout her book, starting with the first chapter when she talks about working with her community elders as a youth. Smith states, "Those Elders gave me my first glimpse of Nishnaabeg brilliance—theory, methodology, story, ethics, values all enmeshed in Nishnaabeg politics and encircled by the profound influence of the world" (p. 15-16).

By engaging with IK starting from a place of respect and partnership, the I-Portal embodies what is unexpected in academia. We do not expect Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being to be incorporated into academic database designs, let alone being the foundational basis. It is what becomes "unexpected" that makes the I-Portal special while at the same time becomes a teachable moment. Often, discrimination and outright racism can be "built in" to the information systems and other technical products that we use on a day-to-day basis without much forethought. In addition to racist terminology used in Library of Congress Subject Headings (such as the term "sweat baths" for Indigenous "sweat lodges," thereby erasing the ceremonial and spiritual nature of them), Noble (2018) informs us of the "algorithmic oppression" of mainstream search engines like Google, "a process that reflects a corporate logic of either willful neglect or a profit imperative that makes money from sexism and racism" (p. 5).

The I-Portal, thus with its Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being built in, is a refreshing change for Indigenous users from mainstream databases. It is once we change our ways and try to do things differently do we begin to realize that maybe this new way of thinking should have been considered long before. Unfortunately, for generations, Indigenous students have not always felt empowered in their education, let alone the ability to make suggestions for additional materials to be included. The "Contact us" feature for suggesting a site can seem insignificant; however, combined with a respectful approach to providing access to Indigenous knowledges, this is a way that students can feel that their voices are being heard. We are not

"giving" students a voice but rather showing that we care about what they might suggest to us for learning and demonstrating our willingness to listen.

The I-Portal Is

I have witnessed firsthand the growth of the I-Portal; as an undergraduate student, a graduate student in library and information science, and then further still as a librarian. I vividly remember receiving the emails introducing the new iPortal (the original abbreviation, prior to the 2022 revamp) for Indigenous studies research and realizing what an important tool this was back in 2006. I had never considered the possibility of becoming a Métis librarian for myself, let alone to be teaching and writing about the I-Portal in my future career. When we create our own systems and ways of doing things, we are also creating an educational path for others to follow behind us.

As folks begin on a post-secondary journey, it is important for librarians to consider that they might be teaching and creating connections with their future colleagues. I have asked co-author Deborah Lee if she considered this possibility while she was doing the hard work to get the I-Portal growing, and while she did not have this possibility in mind, that is certainly what ended up happening about 10 to 15 years later. With every teaching opportunity, whether big or small, it is also worth considering that those involved in these teachings are not just students, but they can also be future colleagues. Therefore, in what is hopefully the not-too-distant future, the I-Portal can be thought of as an imaginable or a potential template for the inclusion of IK within an OER framework.

The I-Portal is important because it highlights Indigenous contributions to a variety of disciplinary fields from both within and outside of the traditional academy. It proves that not only have Indigenous contributions to knowledge always been present, but also that IK is created and shared in many forms. This is probably one of the first instances in which teaching with the I-Portal can be viewed as building upon what students already know. By the time they arrive at university, Indigenous students already know through their lived experiences that IK does not always come in scholarly, peer reviewed articles. IK is so varied, and it comes in multiple forms.

By having multiple formats including archival materials, blogs, ebooks, maps, transcripts, podcasts, websites, and statistics, we are beginning to scratch the surface of what IK looks like using contemporary digital media. By including a variety of resource types or formats within our databases, we hope to reinforce the idea that not everything needs to come in a peer reviewed article in order to be taken seriously or seen as "legitimate" or worthy of study. Further, many Indigenous studies professors are happy to accept the inclusion of other formats, such as archival materials and recordings of conference presentations and for students to cite them in their research papers.

The I-Portal Is Not

When discussing best practices for finding Indigenous information through libraries, the topic of appropriate terminology inevitably comes up. While teaching how to use the library

catalogue or other mainstream academic databases, I find that terminology is one of the first things that I will bring up. Especially for first year Indigenous and non-Indigenous students, it is important to know that library classification systems were not designed with IK in mind. While many universities have worked very hard to simultaneously "Indigenize" and "decolonize," this has yet to be reflected within our knowledge organization systems within the library. In building the I-Portal, the team designed it to reflect common synonyms (i.e., "Native," "Aboriginal," and many others) for Indigenous topics. The I-Portal also reflects an understanding of inappropriate terminology that does not reflect the language used by people now but that might be important when conducting research about a historical time period.

For instance, the I-Portal has always used the term "Northwest Resistance" rather than "Northwest Rebellion," the latter of which is used in mainstream cataloging. This is another example of how teaching about the I-Portal showcases what is unexpected in other repositories but is the standard in this database. When discussing subject terms and classification for Indigenous peoples, I often find myself telling Indigenous students, "If your search terms aren't working at first, start thinking like a racist and see how that changes the results." While this phrasing is dramatic and intended to garner attention, it shows that the historical worldviews ingrained into library classification systems are inherently problematic for Indigenous peoples.

Too often, the desire to change classification systems becomes stagnant and reliant on the lack of desire to do the hard work to make the necessary changes, particularly with larger library organizations but especially with the Library of Congress that determines subject headings for most academic libraries through their world catalog. For instance, the work of Littletree et al. (2020) furthers the concepts of IK, data, and Traditional Knowledge (as well as organizing them), and complicates the relationship between what might be considered *open* for an educational resource or not. Who benefits from the labor that it takes to ensure that educational resources are *open* needs to be examined and contested. Littletree et al. (2020) state,

> Over a century later, Native and Indigenous individuals educated in western institutions of higher education are often still thrust into positions of representation, taking up the labor of evaluating Native 'information'—implements, dress, ornaments, and manuscripts—naming it, preserving it, and creating aids to access that information across epistemological and ontological differences, are often not toward the benefit of their Indigenous peoples, but in service to the nation-state. (p. 412)

Indeed, this work has a "focus on relationality as the core organizing principle when it comes to the identification, discernment, creation, and continuation of Indigenous systems of knowledge" (Littletree et al., 2020, p. 413). In order to understand the intention around the I-Portal's adoption of an Indigenous-centered approach to Indigenous Knowledge Organization (IKO), "[w]e must acknowledge the fact that mainstream Knowledge Organization Systems (KOS) uphold colonialism" (Littletree et al., 2020, p. 414). Colonialism is ingrained into nearly every aspect of systems such as academia, and we must work hard to ensure that we are not replicating this, even down to how *open* our educational resources are. As Laroque (2018) has noted in the past, "it is

not enough to simply put in additional efforts for 'including Indigenous peoples,' but rather to build relationships with Indigenous peoples" (p. 2).

Excuses such as "We have always done it this way" or "We do not have the resources to tackle this right now" have become an easy way out of taking action. By showing us a new way forward (i.e., as per Littletree et al. (2020) and their relational way forward) and a reimagining of subject headings in-practice, we hope that this can inspire change throughout many different seemingly ingrained and unchanging systems.

Increasingly, a large part of "who" makes up the audience or users of the I-Portal are people who have been referred to as "digital natives" (Prensky, 2001, p. 2). This term is meant to signify people who have grown up with technology such as the internet; yet it feels crude at best and colonial at worst. There has been much critique about who is actually included in being a digital native. Dirksen (2020) also reminds us that when we are thinking about big technology in systematic terms, stating,

> Behind the sleek glass and metal enclosures of our lithium-charged lifelines are people: the technology sector's evolution (from its militarized roots to today's growing surveillance state) reflects the values and beliefs of those people who craft the code that powers our digital age. (p. 25)

Stopping to consider other socioeconomic factors for people who are the age of a "digital native," we realize that we are likely discussing people from a more affluent and likely White background. Considering this, we can also create another opportunity for change in expanding who we actually consider to be a "digital native." By utilizing the image of a turtle for content layout, and by placing a range of topics as facets on the turtle's back, the I-Portal incorporates Indigenous knowledges into the visual and digital experience as well.

Users are able to click on each of the broader topics, which allows for narrower topics to also be surfaced. It is these so-called "diving in" and "surfacing" actions of a researcher that replicate the behavior of a turtle as they dive to the bottom of water and surface what they need, such as food. Browsing the I-Portal content in this way includes seeking what lies just beneath the database's surface and having the choice to select what researchers need. This way of "browsing" allows for a more analog experience within what is an online platform. Some of these OER documents were born digital while others were physical and now have been made available digitally, either by the I-Portal team or other digitization projects conducted by other folks.

It is this back and forth blending of both physical and digital resources that blends both analog and digital counterparts. From this exploratory experience, we are able to facilitate a seamless transition between physical and digital, and this facilitates learning across generations. People do appreciate the opportunity to "browse" the I-Portal, similar to how they might "browse" shelves in a physical library space. We are drawing upon previous physical experience in order to facilitate a space of learning that allows users to learn in a manner that works for them. By expanding what we might get considered to be part of a "digital Native" experience, we are again able to speak back to the systems that have not always served Indigenous researchers

effectively. It is within the process of highlighting the potential absurdity of terms that have been used previously that we are able to think about and realize what would be more appropriate and effective as we create learning tools for the future.

Conclusion

We hope that this article has inspired the reader to think more broadly and comprehensively about the concept of OER and some of the intricacies of the behind-the-scenes activity and thought that goes into curating them in a database such as the I-Portal. As well, we have discussed the importance of what is involved in teaching and learning how to access and discover these open access resources via a library-related repository. Too often, OER are difficult to track down, especially for Indigenous materials, but with nearly 50,000 of these to choose from for Indigenous studies content, combined with a design and structure that makes searching easy and conscious of Indigenous Ways of Knowing and Being, the I-Portal is a great place to find and house OER.

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