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Indigenising Service standards: The role of tikanga & kaupapa Māori in the establishment of Indigenous service protocols

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Abstract:

This paper will focus on the place that Indigenous protocols have on the delivery of services and resources to Indigenous communities in libraries. Ethical codes and protocols act as guidelines as to how we should approach the provision of information resources and services. Ethics particularly is one of the hallmarks of professionalism, where institutions and individuals abide by moral principles that represent right from wrong. Like many other aspects of the information and heritage professions these codes, protocols, frameworks, models, principles, guidelines, etc. have been determined and written without Indigenous input. In determining a new direction for developing guidelines for services to Indigenous peoples, it is necessary to take into consideration the complexity that the diverse range of Indigenous populations presents. This includes ensuring that the customs, beliefs, and values of each community of Indigenous people are not compromised by this process. Using examples from kaupapa Māori, and tikanga Māori, the presenter will consider how the proposed IFLA guidelines and local protocols can work collaboratively to ensure that Indigenous services are delivered in professional, and culturally appropriate approaches.

Every Indigenous population has its systems of beliefs, values, and customs that help to form their worldview and are a critical part of what makes their knowledge systems complete. Examples of all of these can be found in the stories, histories, and traditions that tribal members share in their Indigenous communities. Although the value of these knowledge systems is questioned by non-Indigenous peoples, the content contained within them provides explanations of why certain cultural behaviors, values, and beliefs are important to how that Indigenous community functions effectively. These are part of the ecological and collective relationships that Indigenous people have with the environment and each other. These values should not be generalized from one Indigenous community to another, as each Indigenous group determines its approach to expectations around acceptable behaviors in the context of its values. These are often ritualized and built on a mutual understanding of their importance over many generations. As Indigenous values, they should be viewed as the original lore and unique to the place where they were developed.

This paper considers the role that codes, and service standards have in determining how Indigenous peoples' information needs are met and how they should be created. There will also be a focus on whether service standards are appropriate in every Indigenous related situation. Focusing on Māori (Indigenous people of New Zealand), the paper provides a brief description of the history and cultural development of Māori and the relationship between Māori and non-Māori (critical for understanding why tikanga Māori (Māori customs) is important. It also looks at the implications of service standards for Māori and considers the role that tikanga Māori plays in delivering services in a library context for Māori.

Role of codes and service standards

Within the library profession, ethical codes and protocols act as guidelines as to how we should approach the provision of information resources and services. Ethics particularly is one of the hallmarks of professionalism, where institutions and individuals abide by moral principles that represent right from wrong. Like many other aspects of the information and heritage professions these codes, protocols, frameworks, models, principles, and guidelines have mostly been determined and written without Indigenous input. So lofty ideals like 'all information should be available and free of restriction' doesn't make exceptions for Indigenous information situations where there might be very important reasons for the information not being shared and instead should be kept protected from those who are not entitled to access it.

The failure of these Western authored documents to recognise the needs of Indigenous peoples has led to the creation and development of Indigenous focused statements determined by Indigenous professionals for Indigenous professionals and for protecting Indigenous information for Indigenous peoples. These documents have been created over the past 30 years and have served as touchstones for the protection of resources and delivery of targeted services in their respective Indigenous territories. Only the Maatatua Declaration has been created within a multilateral environment.

In determining whether a uniform set of standards should be created and applied to provide services to Indigenous peoples, it is helpful to look at these different Indigenous focused statements, declarations, and protocols that already exist to determine whether there is a need for further statements to be created.

Knowledge related standards

The Mataatua Declaration on Indigenous Cultural and Intellectual Property Rights (Mataatua Declaration, 1993) was created by delegates from fourteen countries who attended a conference in New Zealand focusing on the cultural and intellectual property rights of indigenous peoples. The Declaration made recommendations to all nation-states, the United Nations, and indigenous peoples. Although primarily focused on cultural and intellectual property rights, one of the key contributions that this Declaration makes is in asserting the rights to self-determination, and sovereignty of Indigenous nations over their systems of knowledge. The principle of self-determination is a critical element of any attempt to identify how Indigenous people wish to engage in any arena in which they are participating and is particularly relevant to any context related to receiving services.

In 1995, the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Library and Information Resource Network (ATSILIRN) published the Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Protocols for Libraries, Archives, and Information Services. These were later updated in 2005 and 2012. The protocols were designed as a guide for library and information professionals to ensure that they provided appropriate services to and managed items about Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander peoples and cultures. The revisions in 2005 and 2012 were made to ensure that changes in the information landscape were reflected in the protocols. Like many other guidelines within the library and information profession, the uptake of the protocols was voluntary. The findings of a 2005 research project (Nakata et. al, 2005) concluded that the protocols were seen as a very useful tool. However, disappointingly their use was not as widespread as ATSILIRN had anticipated.

Alaskan State Library

In late 2000, the Alaskan State Library developed a set of guidelines to assist public libraries and librarians to meet the needs of Native Alaskan clients. These guidelines were revised in 2018 to reflect the changes in service and resource delivery since they were first developed. The guidelines were also thought to be appropriate for application to other ethnicities in Alaska.

Native American Archival Protocols

In 2006, the First Archivist Circle developed these protocols to guide libraries and archives to ensure that libraries and archival institutions are providing culturally responsive care of Native American archival materials and provide culturally appropriate service to Native American communities.

International Indigenous Librarians' Forum (IILF) Manifesto statements

The first gathering of IILF occurred in 1999 in New Zealand. Delegates came from Australia, New Zealand, Hawaii, Canada, the USA, and Northern Europe. It has since met every 2 years. Before the creation of the IFLA Indigenous Matters Section, IILF was the only opportunity for Indigenous librarians to meet to discuss important matters.
Each forum has had a theme, and this has contributed to the statements/remits they have published at the end of each gathering. These series of statements have become collectively known as the IILF Manifesto (IILF, 2009). These were added consistently until 2009 (outcomes from later fora have not been added to the manifesto)

New Zealand

Unlike Australia, Alaska, and the United States, New Zealand has not created a list of Indigenous protocols specifically for libraries, archives, or the broader information professions to be guided by. The Library and Information Advisory Commission (2004) has published a statement on Mātauranga Māori. However, this does not address the same issues that the other statements issued by Indigenous groups from other countries. Instead of developing a standardized statement, I would suggest that any document outlining protocols, declarations, or statements in the New Zealand context would have to be steeped heavily in tikanga Māori (Māori values) and be applied to both the care and delivery of resources and services. The rest of this paper relates to outlining who Māori are, what Māori knowledge is, the role that tikanga Māori has in Māori society, and the intersection of tikanga Māori,

kaupapa Māori (Māori focused agenda), and mātauranga Māori have in determining how information related resources and services should be delivered to Māori.

Māori

Māori are the Indigenous people of New Zealand having progressively migrated from Eastern Polynesia approximately 800 years ago (Anderson, 2009). Having lived in relative isolation until the 17th-century visit by the first of a succession of European explorers, Māori were eventually colonized by people from Great Britain. The catalyst for colonization was the signing of Te Tiriti o Waitangi in 1840 (Orange, 2021). Te Tiriti is an agreement between rangatira Māori (Māori chiefs) and the British Crown. This agreement is still a significant reference point in the relationship between Māori and non-Māori. Its application however has been contestable due to differences between the English version and the version written in te reo Māori (Māori language). During the remainder of the 19th and 20th centuries Māori culture, language, and beliefs were seriously impacted by assimilationist policies and actions of successive governments. By the beginning of the 20th century, the Māori population was in serious decline having reduced in size from approximately 100,000 (estimated by Captain James Cook in 1769) (King, 2003: 91) to 45,000 in 1901 (King, 2003: 325). The decline in numbers was attributed to the impact of illnesses introduced from Europe, casualties of war, and a falling birth rate. Population recovery commenced throughout the 20th century, and in 2023, the Māori population in New Zealand is estimated to be 891,600, or 17% of the country's overall population of 5.2 million. (Stats NZ, 2022)

Structure of Māori society

Māori identity is self-determined, with the only requirement being that any person identifying as Māori be descended from a Māori. In te ao Māori (Māori world) this is expressed as whakapapa (ancestral links). The translation of whakapapa is to place one layer upon another layer (Stewart, 2021: 85). This can be understood through how genealogical trees are structured, where an individual is represented by their descent from their parents, who are then descended from their respective parents. Whakapapa is tapū (sacred) knowledge, due to its representation as an individual's link to their ancestors, atua (the gods), and the celestial realms. The relationship to the atua is an important aspect of identity, as it links people to the environment and all other living things due to the common descent from Ranginui (Sky father) and Papatūānuku (Earth mother) (Barlow, 1991).
The critical social structures in Māori society are, whānau (extended family group), hapū (sub-tribe -group of whānau), and iwi (tribe – group of hapū). Māori when identifying themselves normally affiliate to an iwi (sometimes plural – due to descent from both parents/grandparents), as well as geographical features that are important due to their spiritual significance, and often afforded human status and treated as an ancestor.

Māori knowledge systems

Mātauranga Māori is the term that is used to describe Māori knowledge systems. However, the complexities of Mātauranga Māori go beyond this simple definition. Esteemed Māori scholar Sir Hirini Moko Mead defines it as encompassing:

> *all branches of Māori knowledge, past, present, and still developing. It is like a super subject because it includes a whole range of subjects that are familiar in our world today, such as philosophy, astronomy, mathematics, language, history, education, and*

> *so on. And it will include subjects we have not yet heard about. Mātauranga Māori has no ending: it will continue to grow for generations to come*" (Mead, 2016:337-338).

Mātauranga Māori evolved from the knowledge that the first Māori settlers brought with them from East Polynesia, and new knowledge was created through the interaction with the new environment they had to adapt to. Māori translates as 'normal' or 'ordinary' and was a term that was used to describe the difference between themselves and Europeans. As mentioned on the previous page, Māori affiliate to iwi, and Doherty (2012) similarly associates mātauranga by differentiating between mātauranga Māori, and mātauranga-a-iwi or knowledge that is specific to a particular iwi. Regardless of whether mātauranga is derived from an iwi or is more generic, it contributes to the development and application of tikanga Māori (Māori cultural customs).

Tikanga Māori

Tikanga Māori is simply translated as Māori customary values and practices (Stephens and Boyce, 2013). Marsden (2003: 66), associates it with "the right way of doing things". However, this simple translation does not reflect the epistemological or ontological complexities encapsulated within the protocols that determine order and values in wider Māori society. As such, tikanga Māori is one of the core components of mātauranga Maori along with te reo Māori, and other forms of cultural and artistic expression.

Mead describes identifies the role of tikanga Māori as controlling *"interpersonal relationships, provides ways for groups to meet and interact… Tika means to be right and thus tikanga Māori focuses on the correct way of doing something … and involves moral judgments about appropriate ways of behaving and acting in everyday life… It has correct ways of behaving and with processes for correcting and compensating for bad behaviour"* (Mead, 2016: 13-14).

Although tikanga Māori provides cultural guidance and governs behaviour, particularly in Māori settings, such as marae, it is however not enforceable by New Zealand's laws. Although tikanga Māori can be viewed as the first lore of the land, it is primarily practiced by Māori in culturally important places and ritual interactions. Knowledge of how tikanga Māori is applied is not restricted to Māori, many non-Māori also have a rudimentary understanding of it, although it is not universally understood or necessarily accepted as valid by all New Zealanders.

Although derived from ancient knowledge, tikanga Māori has continued to evolve similarly to mātauranga Māori and continues to provide the framework for human behaviour, decision-making, and developing relationships. As a framework, it continues to be a critical component of Māori identity, and the inter-generational transmission of knowledge.

Kaupapa Māori

The concept of kaupapa Māori like tikanga Māori draws on the knowledge found in mātauranga Māori. As a concept, it distinguishes between situations where the agenda is set by non-Māori values, and where activities are Māori focused. Therefore, kaupapa Māori is recognized as creating an environment where 'being Māori' is prioritised, "It assumes taken for granted social, political, historical, intellectual and cultural legitimacy of Māori people, in

that it is a position where Māori language, culture, knowledge, and values are accepted in their own right" (Smith, 2021). Kaupapa Māori, therefore, provides a framework for Māori to succeed as Māori. In a kaupapa Māori framework, many of the same principles and values are applied as those that constitute 'normal' behaviour in a tikanga Māori sense. However, like the other concepts of mātauranga Māori and tikanga Māori, applying one set of principles for all kaupapa Māori related situations would be wrong, as these are subject to variation depending on where the activities are occurring and whose tikanga is being applied. If service standards for Māori are developed some critical questions need to be addressed.

These include:

What are the needs that these standards are addressing?; who are the standards intended for? How will these standards be created and by whom?; how can we ensure that these standards are not standardized across institutions?; and how can we ensure that they are interpreted correctly?

In answering these questions, it must be understood that context is critical. The answers will vary from one Indigenous focused situation to another and should be worked through between an institution and the Indigenous community that they have a relationship with.

Applying tikanga Māori

When considering how tikanga Māori can be applied in a service setting, it is important to come back to principles involved in the rituals of encounter, and the responsibilities of being a good host. Some general tikanga Māori values feature in these areas. These include: Whakapapa (Charting connections), Rangatiratanga (Self-determination), Manaakitanga (Respect for others), Whanaungatanga (Building relationships), Māhakitanga (Humility) and Kaitiakitanga (Guardianship).

As tikanga Māori principles these concepts are interdependent, but how they are applied should first be dictated by the customs of either the mana whenua (customary owners of the land) for a territory or by agreement with the Māori group being engaged with. Libraries must establish strong connections to the mana whenua in their area. This relationship will place the library in a strong position to build trust with their local hapū and iwi, it will also provide a platform for the mana whenua to identify what their resource and service needs are, and to work with the library to develop an environment that ensures that access to knowledge, and its preservation for future generations is guaranteed. In developing these understandings, it is important that in a cultural context, the library respects the aspirations expressed by mana whenua, and acknowledges the need for them to be able to succeed as Māori. Once protocols have been determined, these must be understood and delivered by all staff in the institution. However, many non-Māori in New Zealand do not have the necessary cultural skills to truly understand what these tikanga Māori values are, and how to apply them. It is also critical that institutions do not fall into the trap of using the tikanga that has been developed in another library, as it will not necessarily comply with the needs of their own Māori community. An integral solution to this occurring is for every institution to ensure that the right cultural training is in place for all staff to develop a critical understanding of tikanga Māori, and the distinctiveness of any local variations in the way it is applied. As new staff members join the institution, their induction must be inclusive of the tikanga Māori values that form the basis of the services delivered to Māori.

Conclusions

Indigenous peoples like other users of libraries deserve excellent service. However, this paper has demonstrated that any attempt to develop a set of standards aimed at providing Indigenous services should be developed in partnership with Indigenous people. Although appealing, it would be wrong to attempt to standardize any code or set of standards and apply them in a broader context. Any institution seeking to provide excellent services to their local Indigenous people, then they must ensure that the voices, values, and requirements of those people are at the forefront of any standards that are developed.

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