Subverting the universality of metadata standards

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The TK Labels as a tool to promote Indigenous data sovereignty

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"Any materials containing Karuk traditional knowledge are the intellectual and cultural property of the Karuk People, and we will therefore make these materials available according to our Karuk cultural protocols regardless of their current copyright assignment [...] The Karuk Tribe asserts primary ownership of all cultural knowledge specific to our Tribe."

Indigenous data sovereignty:

"the right of an Indigenous nation to govern the collection, ownership, and application of its own data."

Indigenous Data Sovereignty Network

Arizona

US

University of

Indigenous data sovereignty (ctd.):

…It calls for Indigenous people to be involved in decisions about every aspect of the management of their cultural materials – from the research, collection, circulation and access to their traditional knowledge, to controlling their description and documentation.

This presentation seeks to:

1) contextualize issues concerning the histories, politics, and implications of documenting Indigenous traditional knowledge,

2) connect these issues with a brief analysis of the underlying meanings and cultural patterns of the stated roles of two of Dublin Core metadata elements, and

3) introduce the Traditional Knowledge Labels as an anti-colonial, and culturally-appropriate metadata tool that can be used to promote Indigenous data sovereignty.

Background…

- Colonial collecting practices: cultural materials were removed from their homelands and detached from local knowledge systems and contexts.

- materials remain today not only physically distant from the communities of origin but also held within a legal system that refuses Indigenous claims to stewardship and ownership of these materials.

- efficient, interoperable, standardized, and universalist documentation systems tend to assimilate Indigenous cultures into existing schemes designed to treat collections as fragmented and static materials preserving "frozen"

Consequences…

- Indigenous people have been historically excluded from the decision-making processes that determine what information from and about them should be collected, who should gather that information, who should manage it, and who should have access to it.

- Metadata standards fail at taking into consideration Indigenous cultural protocols around ownership and the informed and responsible sharing of Indigenous cultural materials.

Dublin Core Elements

Rights	Contributor	Creator
Subject	Coverage	Title
Publisher	Identifier	Description
Type	Date	Source
Relation	Format	Language

From Dublin Core Metadata Initiative Website

…documentation systems are never neutral – these allegedly value-free tools impose their own rationale and systematic way of seeing the world (Cook and Schwartz 2002) through a universalization that erases differences and localities in ways that continue to embody tacit hierarchies that are inherent to most archival and other information work.

Rights metadata element:

"Information about rights held in and over the resource […] encompasses Intellectual Property Rights, Copyright, and various Property Rights."

RightsHolder extension:

"a person or organization owning or managing rights over the resource."

Creator metadata element:

"an entity primarily responsible for making the content of the resource […] A person, an organization, or a service"

Contributor metadata element and refiner:

"an entity responsible for making contributions to the content of the resource […] A person, an organization, or a service"

Rights element presumes that IP laws are universal, but:

- IP laws were designed to recognize and protect new creations and innovations, and thus requiring the designation of individual 'authors' and 'original' works in order to offer any protection.

- Notion of 'individuality' imposed by Dublin Core conflicts with the ways in which Native communities understand notions of 'authorship' and 'ownership.'

- According to IP laws, the material that records the lives of Indigenous people is legally authored and owned by the person who 'made' the material rather than by the

By defining *Rights* according to western notions of property and ownership, Dublin Core systematically disenfranchises Native communities from describing their own cultural heritage.

Dublin Core's definition of *Creator* has the effect of legally and socially reducing and excluding Indigenous and other non-western cultural forms of attribution, articulation, expression, and association, thus also perpetuating a history of appropriation of Indigenous materials.

Dublin Core ideologically privileges western over tribal systems of knowledge.

Local Contexts
because the 's' matters.

Read More

Local Contexts is an initiative to support Native, First Nations, Aboriginal, and Indigenous communities in the management of their intellectual property and cultural heritage specifically within the digital environment. *Local Contexts* provides legal, extra-legal, and educational strategies for navigating copyright law and the public domain status of this valuable cultural heritage. By providing strategic resources and practical solutions, *Local Contexts* and our partners are working towards a new paradigm of rights and responsibilities that recognizes the inherent sovereignty that Indigenous communities have over their cultural heritage.

TK Family (TK F)

TK Seasonal (TK S)

TK Outreach (TK O)

TK Verified (TK V)

TK Attribution (TK A)

TK Community use Only (TK CO)

TK Secret / Sacred (TK SS)

TK Women General (TK WG)

TK Women Restricted (TK WR)

TK Men General (TK MG)

TK Men Restricted (TK MR)

TK Non-Commercial (TK NC)

TK Commercial (TK C)

TK Community Voice (TK CV)

TK Culturally Sensitive (TK CS)

Traditional Knowledge (TK) Labels:

- Enable users to assert data sovereignty: distinct tribal control through the creation of their own locally customized labels.

- Offer a way to add additional and/or missing information to already publicly circulating content.

- Educate non-tribal users about the proper use and access parameters for traditional knowledge.

TK Seasonal (TK S)

Why Use This TK Label? This label should be used when you want to let external users know that the material that is openly circulating has seasonal conditions of access and use. This could mean that some material should only be used and heard at particular times of the year. It could also mean that the environment and land where this material derives also influences and impacts its meaning and significance. This label can be used to help external users know that there are land-based teachings in this material which affect proper use and respectful understanding.
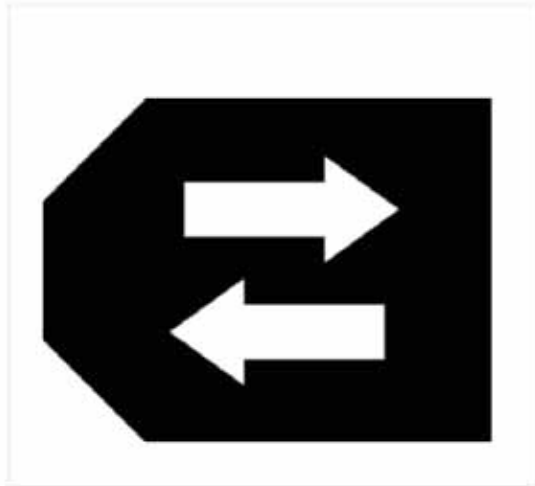
TK Label Description: This label is being used to indicate that this material traditionally and usually is heard and/or utilized at a particular time of year and in response to specific seasonal changes and conditions. For instance, many important ceremonies are held at very specific times of the year. This label is being used to indicate sophisticated relationships between land and knowledge creation. It is also being used to highlight the relationships between recorded material and the specific contexts where it derives, especially the interconnected and embodied teachings that it conveys.

Español / Spanish

Français / French

Listen

TK Attribution (TK A)

Why Use This TK Label? This label should be used when you would like anyone who uses this material to know who the correct sources, custodians, owners are. This is especially useful if this material has been wrongly attributed or important names of the people involved in making this material or safeguarding this material, are missing. This label allows you to correct historical mistakes in terms of naming and acknowledging the legitimate authorities for this material. This label asks for future users to also apply the correct names and attribution.

TK Label Description: This label is being used to correct historical mistakes or exclusions pertaining to this material. This is especially in relation to the names of the people involved in performing or making this work and/or correctly naming the community from which it originally derives. As a user you are being asked to also apply the correct attribution in any future use of this work.

Listen

Example
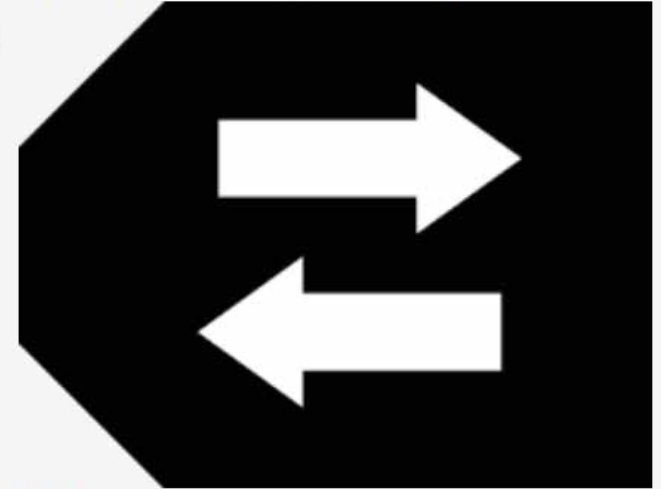
Español / Spanish

Français / French

The *Attribution Label* partially de-naturalizes western notions of authorship and de-legitimizes those who are normally credited as the 'authors/owners' of Indigenous materials, making possible a different kind of understanding about traditional knowledge.

TK Attribution Label (TK A) 1.0

tâaraha - (verb) to have, to own

This Label seeks to restore, retain and maintain karuk'áraaras, or "upriver people," as the rightful owners and custodians of our collective traditional knowledge. Any materials containing Karuk traditional knowledge are the intellectual and cultural property of the Karuk people. The Karuk Tribe is the central decision maker for providing guidance relating to the appropriate and respectful use of Karuk traditional knowledge. Regardless of the legal status of this material, future reference and citation should always name the Karuk Tribe. For further information please visit us at Sipnuuk: www.sipnuuk.mukurtu.net and/or contact us at: sipnuuk@karuk.us

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE LABELS:

TK A

TRADITIONAL KNOWLEDGE

TK A

TK O

TK NC

AUTHOR:
admin

TK Attribution Label (TK A)

Elehtasik Nit

(this is how it is done, this is the right way)

This label is being used to correct historical mistakes or exclusions pertaining to this material. The name of this Label, Elehtasik Nit, means 'this is the right way; how it should be done'. When using material with this Label, please use the correct attribution for this material. This may include individual Passamaquoddy names, it may include Passamaquoddy as the correct cultural affiliation or it may include Passamaquoddy Tribe as the tribal designation. For further advice please contact: Donald Soctomah <soctomah@gmail.com>

Main title
Passamaquoddy War song ; Trading song [sound recording] / sung by Peter Selmore.

Published/Created
1890-03.

Request this Item   ↓ Where to Request

MUSIC RECORDING

LCCN Permalink   https://lccn.loc.gov/2015655578

Description   1 sound cylinder (2:45 min.) ; 3.75 in.

Rights advisory   Rights are held by the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.

Access advisory   Access to recordings may be restricted. To request materials, please contact the Folklife Reading Room at http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/folklife.contact

Local shelving no.   Cylinder 4260
AFS 14739: A1
RKF 0006
AFC 1972/003: SR29

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⬇ SAVE RECORD

✉ EMAIL RECORD

❝❝ CITE RECORD

MARCXML Record
MODS Record

Report Record Errors

MUSIC RECORDING (PART OF COLLECTION)

Passamaquoddy War song ; Trading song = Esunikanen

Full Record   MARC Tags

Main title

Passamaquoddy War song ; Trading song = Esunikanen [sound recording] / sung by Peter Selmore.

Published/Created

1890-03.

[Request this Item]   [↓ Where to Request]

🔊

MUSIC
RECORDING

LCCN Permalink	https://lccn.loc.gov/2015655578
Description	1 sound cylinder (2:45 min.) ; 3.75 in.
Rights advisory	Traditional Knowledge Label: Non-Commercial - Mayutmonwasiw (not for sale, this can't be bought) Rights are held by the Peabody Museum of Archaeology and Ethnology, Harvard University.
Access advisory	Traditional Knowledge Label: Attribution - Elintwasik Nit (this is how it is done, this is the right way) Traditional Knowledge Label: Outreach - Ekekimway Yut (learn from this) Access to recordings may be restricted. To request materials, please contact the Folklife Reading Room at http://hdl.loc.gov/loc.afc/folklife.contact

🖨 PRINT RECORD

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✉ EMAIL RECORD

❝❝ CITE RECORD

MARCXML Record
MODS Record

Concluding points:

- Taken together the TK Labels are examples of differing scales of interventions that seek to upend and disrupt the colonial legacies of collecting and documenting traditional knowledge.

- Important turn towards privileging the multiple forms of owning and stewarding traditional knowledge, as well as the relationships of rights and responsibility to heritage materials that span generations and contexts from an Indigenous perspective.

- TK Labels function to localize (as opposed to universalize)

TK Labels:

- Work as a mechanism that refuses to erase the hegemonic condition of standardized metadata fields, leaving those exclusionary terms visible and evident.

- Promote the education of information practitioners and users, developing a capacity for critical reflection about the fixed, universalist, and marginalizing order of information standards rather than correcting them.

- Allow Native communities to finally regain control of the data that was collected from and about them and removed from their tribal nations, promoting tribal cultural and data

Thank you