



Position Statement on Ethical Considerations for the Indigenous Historical Periodical Dataset Project

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This Position Statement on Ethical Considerations is a statement of principles, considerations, and best-practices that informs the [North/Nord Indigenous Works Subgroup's Indigenous Historical Periodical Dataset project stream](#).

With acknowledgement to the [Vision and Mission of North/Nord](#) and the [Statement of Intention of the Indigenous Works Subgroup](#), these ethical considerations underpin the methods, use of tools, and outcomes of the project.

Land Acknowledgement

Canadian lands are the traditional homelands of many and distinct First Nations, Métis and Inuit Peoples. These lands are unceded to colonial powers and some are shared through Treaty agreements between Nations. All of these lands are sacred as is the water that surrounds them. As treaty people, it is our responsibility to understand the historical and ongoing relationship between Indigenous Peoples and the Crown by learning about specific treaty obligations and actively working towards reconciliation.

The creation of newspapers has relied on resource intensive processes such as logging, as well as the energy needed to create newsprint en masse. Further, newspapers and periodicals are typically disposed of after they have been used by the general public. Libraries, however, often retain periodicals in their collections for continued access. By ensuring that access to these materials shares our collective histories, we are also working to interrupt the notion that materials derived from natural resources are disposable. There are many idioms about ‘yesterday’s news’ – another outcome we are working towards is a reconsideration of what entails Indigenous history and Storytelling.

With this land acknowledgement, we ground our work with the knowledge that we have a responsibility of care and consideration of how our work impacts the relationships we have to Indigenous Peoples and to the lands and waters that support us.

To find out more about the treaty obligations where you live, visit Native-Land.ca

Indigenous Data Sovereignty



This work is guided by the [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#) and the [First Nations Principles of OCAP®](#) to guide the use and dissemination of the materials and

related metadata in the Indigenous Historical Periodical Dataset. We recognize the rights of Indigenous Peoples' knowledge systems and their rights to control, access, interpret, manage, and collectively own data about their lands and cultures.

We will consult and work with Indigenous peoples, communities, and organizations that may have published or own the material in the dataset. We will follow their guidance on retention, preservation and the ongoing stewardship of the materials and dataset.

Open Data

We recognize the limitations for libraries in the use of subscription-based proprietor metadata platforms, such as OCLC's Worldshare and their Cataloguing and Metadata services. These systems limit access to community-built metadata by requiring libraries to pay for access to their cataloguing platforms and repositories. Although these platforms can support collaborative metadata and shared print programs through [retention commitments](#), subscriptions to these platforms and programs are cost-prohibitive for many libraries.

We will strive to manage and share records independently from subscription-based proprietor platforms and aim to leverage open-source solutions that will allow us to work collaboratively and will enable libraries to freely access, contribute to, and acquire the project's dataset and related resources.

Respectful Terminology and Inclusive Descriptions

We recognize the detrimental effect of Library of Congress Subject Headings and other controlled vocabularies that are built on colonialist and Euro-centric views. We will not support the use of existing or developing subject heading vocabularies that imbue racist and fascist terminology. The reliance on institutions like OCLC and the United States government's Library of Congress proliferates colonial relationships and tensions in library science, as demonstrated by subject headings that employ the term "Indians of North America".

Recently, both Library of Congress and OCLC have reinforced their colonialist interests with the changes made to [Library of Congress Subject Headings and OCLC FAST headings from "Mount Denali" to "Mount McKinley" and "Gulf of Mexico" to "Gulf of America"](#). In response to these developments and the concerns they have raised, the new Canadian Cataloguing Taskforce will explore a range of activities aimed at understanding and, where possible, mitigating their impact on catalogues and bibliographic records generated by these systems. This work will focus on developing thoughtful, practical strategies to support more accurate and respectful description.

The focus of our project is to make periodicals more accessible and useful to the Indigenous peoples and communities that they are about and authored by. We are also committed to improving the associated metadata for these materials, to ensure that they will employ controlled vocabularies that represent the lands and cultures of Indigenous Peoples. We will consult with groups such as the [National Indigenous Knowledge and Language Alliance](#) and explore the use of Indigenous subject and name vocabularies and classification schemes, such as the [First Nations House of Learning Subject Headings](#) (FNHL) [Brian Deer](#)

[Classification System employed by the University of British Columbia's Xwi7xwa Library](#) and the [Changes to LCSH Indigenous Subject Headings by the Manitoba Archival Information Network](#) (MAIN).

Environmental and Ethical Impacts of Artificial Intelligence (AI)

We recognize the [detrimental environmental and ethical impacts of artificial intelligence](#) (AI) and [acknowledge the extractive practices used to develop AI models](#) and [its perpetuation of colonial power structures and reinforcement of existing inequalities](#).

The Indigenous Historical Periodical Dataset requires considerable metadata refinement to update and validate library holdings, confirm the accuracy of descriptive metadata, and to ensure the application of respectful terminology in subject headings. As AI is increasingly being employed to refine and standardise metadata at scale, we will carefully consider the use of AI approaches in comparison to other tools and methods available, such as those integrated into Library Service Platforms (e.g. Alma's Cloud Apps and python scripts) to refine and validate metadata.

We respect and uphold Indigenous data sovereignty rights and acknowledge the detrimental impacts of AI on these rights. We understand the [detrimental impacts of AI on these rights \(p. 45\)](#) and understand that a "[major risk factor for biased AI is when the design and implementation of the AI system does not include diverse voices. If systems are designed by a homogenous group, they are much more likely to miss potential sources of bias \(p.40\)](#)"

We will thoughtfully and respectfully evaluate any potential use of AI in our work and the specific impacts that its use may have on library staff. Many cataloguing and archival description departments are short-staffed and are becoming increasingly under-resourced, with many technical services departments having limited staff members and no librarian positions. While AI and large-scale machine processing may appear to be a solution for diminishing resources, it is not a substitute replacement for human judgement and verification. We are cognisant of the impact that the use of AI has on staff and its potential to undermine critical thinking skills and cataloguing expertise. While [AI can be used as a tool to increase quality and efficiency, human intervention, both to ensure accuracy and to ensure that descriptions are respectfully applied, is essential](#).

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