

DATA SERVICES FOR INDIGENOUS SCHOLARSHIP AND SOVEREIGNTY

(DSISS)

Report on the DSISS 2022 Workshop

PREPARED BY:
CAROLE L. PALMER
MIRANDA BELARDE-LEWIS
SANDRA LITTLETREE
IISAAKSIICHAH ROSS BRAINE
KAITLIN SRADER

THE INFORMATION SCHOOL
UNIVERSITY OF WASHINGTON

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DSISS PROJECT OVERVIEW

In response to the imperative for Indigenous data governance and sovereignty, a groundswell of activity has emerged on the ethical care and stewardship of digital Indigenous data. To date, however, there is little guidance for libraries and repositories on how to implement Indigenous data principles within their existing research data services (RDS). The Data Services for Indigenous Scholarship & Sovereignty (DSISS) project, funded by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation, is collaboratively creating an Indigenous Data Services Framework of practical strategies for guaranteeing data protections and data services aligned with the [CARE Principles for Indigenous Data Governance](#). DSISS aims to set the ethical and technical foundation for RDS to support the unique research methods and principles of data sovereignty integral to Indigenous scholarship and knowledge, while advancing Indigenous perspectives, values, and protocols within data services in libraries and repositories.

DSISS Team

Based at the Information School (iSchool) at the University of Washington (UW), DSISS is a collaboration among scholars of Indigenous culture and language, librarians, metadata specialists, and experts in data curation and infrastructure for sensitive data. The team is led by Carole L. Palmer, Miranda Belarde-Lewis, Sandra Littletree, and Nic Weber at the iSchool, in partnership with Indigenous academic librarians at the Xwi7xwa Library at the University of British Columbia and experts in the curation of sensitive qualitative data from the Qualitative Data Repository (QDR) at Syracuse University. The collaboration includes scholars from the UW Department of American Indian Studies, librarians from UW Libraries Research Data Services, and the Local Context project, based at the Washington State University.

DSISS WORKSHOP OVERVIEW

The guiding statement for the workshop was: **Stewarding Indigenous research data with CARE**. Our approach to the CARE Principles in RDS prioritizes the values and norms of stakeholders within their specific contexts, in accordance with the concept of contextual integrity. DSISS is deriving its understanding of how to implement CARE (Collective benefit, Authority to control, Responsibility, and Ethics) through engagement with Indigenous scholars and data professionals invested in putting the principles into practice. While RDS tends to prioritize data access and sharing, our emphasis in DSISS is on preservation and governance based on Indigenous scholars, community needs and goals.

By design, DSISS depends on input from scholars, who create and work with Indigenous data, and library professionals who are responsible for developing and providing data services for scholars. For this foundational workshop, participants were invited that represented the interests of both scholars and libraries. Scholar participants represented the Indigenous methods and the data practices, needs, and aspirations of active Indigenous culture and language researchers, both Native and non-Native. Library and repository participants represented the perspectives of librarians, curators, and developers in data services in library and repository environments. The following workshop objectives provided direction in the development of the program and activities.

Objectives

- > **Identify scholar priorities** based on research methods, data practices, and “contextual integrity” factors
- > **Identify challenges and tractable steps for libraries and repositories** for supporting scholar priorities and the CARE principles
- > **Examine potential of Traditional Knowledge (TK) labels approach** for application to Indigenous research data.

See Appendix 1 for the full program and packet, including a list of participants. Slides from selected presentations are appended in Appendix 2.

WORKSHOP HIGHLIGHTS

Planning

The design of the workshop was informed by Indigenous research methodologies that center on relational accountability, as well as Indigenous self-determination (Smith, 2012; Wilson, 2008). This approach privileges Indigenous knowledge, voices, and experiences, and it acknowledges that research can contribute to the survival of Indigenous people, languages, and cultural practices. For example, the Participant Introductions session, described below, was modeled on Indigenous modes of interaction. All sessions were recorded for documentation and analysis purposes, with formal informed consent from all participants.

Participants

Through careful consultation and planning, we convened a gathering of participants with vital expertise and perspectives—Indigenous scholars and local tribal experts in language and culture revitalization; librarians responsible for data services, digital scholarship and publishing, special collections curation, and ethnic studies liaison; as well as our

collaborators with expertise in Indigenous academic library services, qualitative data curation, and Indigenous content management and metadata. Tribal community perspectives were represented by two native language collections experts from the Nisqually Language Resource Center.

Themes

Following from the workshop's primary theme, Stewarding Indigenous research data with CARE, the presentations and activities were organized around two additional operational themes:

- > Indigenous Scholarship and CARE for Data - Day 1
- > Challenges to CARE in Libraries & Repositories - Day 2

Indigenous modes of engagement

Indigenous approaches to engagement were prioritized.

The DSISS team is composed of unique representation with specialized expertise in American Indian, Alaska Native, and Indigenous communities. This expertise includes Indigenous systems of knowledge, Indigenous knowledge organization, community engagement, research methods, truthful information sharing, recruitment to post-secondary educational programs, traditional knowledge and teaching, and tribal sovereignty.

The expertise and established relationships expedited scholar outreach and workshop planning. The relationships between researchers, scholars, and community members are long standing connections created over years which demand constant stewardship. The trust between scholar and participant is cradled in the three relationality Rs of responsibility, respect, and reciprocity.

> **Welcome** - The workshop began with a welcome to the territory by a Puyallup tribal citizen participant.

> **Introductions** - Building on an Indigenous approach to relationality, each participant introduced themselves and briefly talked about their background, the institution they were representing, and their interests in the DSISS initiative. More importantly, participants were asked to end their introduction by turning their remarks to another participant they knew personally or professionally, as a transition to the next introduction. Some participants told a brief story of how they met the other person or shared other personal anecdotes of their knowing each other, revealing some long-standing connections and some more casual or distant relationships. The content and connections shared brought clarity to the range of people and professional perspectives in the room as well as the connections through a variety of different channels and networks. The exercise reinforced existing relationships and opened up the opportunity to build new ones based on shared expertise or interests.

> **Dinner gathering** - The workshop dinner was held at the Burke Museum, which specializes in Northwest Native art, plant, and animal collections with Native cuisine, catered by Seattle's first Native restaurant, Off the Rez. It was a casual event focused on expressing gratitude to participants and workshop coordinators, with an open mic that resulted in some unplanned remarks and songs.

Day 1: Indigenous Scholarship and CARE for Data

To meet the aim of determining scholar priorities for the DSISS framework, Day 1 included both presentations and breakout discussions. To build a shared awareness of a range of Indigenous research methods and data practices, four Scholar Case Reports were presented by collaborating scholars, modeled on those in the Indigenous Research Data Case Study (Palmer, Belarde-Lewis, Hohn, & Teuton, 2022). Narratives describing the scholars' case projects were also provided in the workshop program (Appendix 1).

SCHOLAR CASE REPORTS

Indigenous Language Revitalization - Tami Hohn (Puyallup)

> Salish Language Research Guide (UW Special Collections)

Hohn detailed her work on a Salish Language Research Guide that documents the critically endangered Southern Lushootseed language and other Salish languages, curated across multiple tribal jurisdictions through a living document of links, words, translations, citable sources, and traditional memory. This case of Salish cultural history and language revitalization research for scholars and Salish native communities emphasized the potential of collaborations with library special collections to build awareness of data resources. It also has a valuable new data component produced through the research and compilation process.

Pueblo Knowledge Scholarship - Miranda Belarde-Lewis (Zuni/Tlingit)

> Map Art Project

Belarde-Lewis shared perspectives on her scholarship aimed at protecting and documenting Zuni Pueblo history, highlighting map artworks as research sources. The case highlights the importance of the provenance and linkages among different sources that work together to reveal contextual understanding of cultural significance. Sensitivities might be pronounced in the context for a particular component of a data source or introduced by the dynamic relationship between complementary sources.

Indigenous Cultural History - Chris Teuton (Cherokee)

> **Cherokee Earth Dwellers: Stories and Teachings of the Natural World – Ani Tsalagi Elohi Anehi**

Teuton discussed his book project that constructed Cherokee ecological knowledge, through storytelling traditions and oral history narrative, forms essential to Cherokee selfhood and cultural belonging. The case is a model of Indigenous methods, seen in the author's long-standing collaboration with a Cherokee elder and family, where collaborators are both research partners and knowledge authorities.

Reconnecting Archives to Indigenous Communities- Katie Bunn-Marcuse

> **ḲAN'S HIŁILE (MAKING IT RIGHT)**

Bunn-Marcuse's focus examined her work on an interactive, media-rich publication, *Ḳan's hiłile (Making It Right)*, that explores the performative context of Kwakwaka'wakw customary dance traditions, as documented historically and as current cultural expressions. This case braids together aspects of Indigenous knowledge, data sovereignty, cultural protocols, traditional ways of being, with cutting-edge issues regarding digital stewardship and public sharing.

Full group engagement on the Scholar Case Reports took place in Q&A sessions after the presentations, followed by smaller group conversation in breakout groups.

BREAKOUT CONVERSATIONS

Groups were aligned with case studies and composed to have representation from Native and non-Native peoples and participants with varying professional roles. Each group had at least one professional librarian, an expert collaborator, and a core DSISS team member, with the scholar and their case study serving to anchor the conversations, guided by the following questions:

- > What details of the case stand out?
- > How could they be addressed in data stewardship?
- > What data and other materials need to be preserved?
- > What context needs to be described?
- > What are the critical governance considerations? Who makes those decisions and how is that communicated?

The rich stories presented by the scholars on their research with Indigenous communities and materials surfaced significant implications for implementation of the CARE Principles in data services. The interactive segments generated a mix of perspectives across the group, surfacing additional considerations in the complex and delicate work of enacting #BeFAIRandCARE in a way that directly represents the priorities of Indigenous scholarship and Indigenous communities. The conversations also covered several additional areas beyond the scope of the DSISS project, including more general aspects of Indigenous data

sovereignty, information repatriation and rematriation, and the cultural significance of Indigenous Knowledge.

PLENARY SESSION

Local Contexts: Labels and Notices for Indigenous Data - Kim Christen

Introduced work of the Local Contexts initiative and their work to ensure proper recognition and inclusion of Indigenous cultural authority in Indigenous collections and Indigenous data. Provided a basis for DSISS to begin assessing potential application of TK Labels or Notices—digital markers that define attribution, access, and use rights for Indigenous cultural heritage— to types and formats of qualitative research data.

Closing Discussion – Tied together the contributions across the day and the complexity of applying CARE Principles to the positionality and the roles of researchers, librarians, and institutions.

Dinner speaker - Simon Neame, Dean of UW Libraries

Dean Neame offered a unique perspective from the point of view as a new dean at UW who led initiatives aimed at preserving Indigenous knowledge in a previous position as Associate University Librarian at the University of British Columbia.

DAY 2: Challenges to CARE in Libraries & Repositories

The second day was designed as a set of discussion and working sessions with the library and repository representatives, with scholar representation from one of the case studies.

Protecting and Securing Sensitive Data - Nic Weber and Sebastian Karcher

Considered scope of potential data sensitivities and affordances offered by the Qualitative Data Repository (QDR) architecture, CoreTrustSeal certification, expertise, and networks. Highlighted the importance of “safe” people, projects, settings, data, and outputs, as well as technical aspects of authenticating users based on pre-established credentials, mediation of request and access process, and customized governing of data access and reuse to allow QDR and Indigenous scholars to design complex documentation and agreements.

CARE in Library Research Data Services - Liz Bedford

Provided an overview of research data services (RDS) advances made in academic libraries and the particular manifestations at UW. Considered the current limitations in practice in relation to the expectations of CARE, outlining a set of questions that represent key challenges for RDS realization of CARE, ranging from how to work with researchers and

IRBS to creation of tools, curriculum, and memorandums of understanding (MOUs), and prioritizing ethical over frameworks.

GROUP DISCUSSIONS

Two final discussion sessions were used to deepen exchange on potential next steps.

Opportunities with TK Labels and Notices was focused on learning more from Kim Christen about the advantages, limitations, and specific requirements for application of TK Labels and Notices.

Toward a roadmap for research libraries and repositories was led by Carole Palmer to close up the workshop. She redirected attention back to issues emphasized in Day 1: the range of data content discussed by the scholars, the critical primacy of context, and the many dimensions of governance. The group identified areas for further study and assessment as priorities for DSISS.

- > Development of a checklist for curators for engaging with scholars with Indigenous data
- > Comparative curation demonstration to illustrate how data could be represented in different repository environments, such as QDR and ResearchWorks.
- > Adapting QDR metadata schema for rich contextual description
- > Engagement with Indigenous publishing platforms to support and extend Indigenous methods and data products
- > Raise campus awareness on campus level MOUs through the Office of Research / Tribal Relations

NEXT STEPS

The transcripts from the workshop have proven to be a rich source for analysis of factors that need consideration in developing a framework for CARE into practice in RDS. The preliminary analysis surfaced a number of significant areas for further consideration, including the complexity of nuanced data practices within Indigenous methods and the need to attend to relationality across diverse communities. It also made evident the considerable overlap among the individual elements of CARE. Priorities for further investigation:

- > Complications with ownership and responsibility within and across nations, communities, and families
- > Significant trust barrier between institutions and Indigenous peoples
- > Centrality of relational accountability on the part of both researchers of Indigenous knowledge and information professionals charged with the care of Indigenous materials