A Digital Bundle: Exploring the Impact of Indigenous Knowledge Online Through FourDirectionsTeachings.com

by

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Abstract

Indigenous knowledge on the Internet is a new cultural form and therefore represents a new capacity for indigenous communities. This thesis examines how online indigenous knowledge sites mediate culture, knowledge, history and subjects into new forms and sets of social relationships (Poster, 1995). Specifically this thesis explores the potential of the Internet and digital technology to serve indigenous resurgence by contributing to the efforts and goals of indigenous nation building. Based on interviews and discussions with active users of FourDirectionsTeachings.com, a website that I created, I propose that online indigenous knowledge projects can be considered as “digital bundles.” Naming online indigenous knowledge projects in this way elevates the cultural protocol and cultural responsibilities that come with such a designation. In addition, the notion of digital bundle grounds online indigenous knowledge projects within an indigenous epistemological paradigm.

Drawing on methodologies and concepts developed by indigenous, cultural studies and social movement scholars, and bridging the fields of indigenous resurgence and internet studies,
this study contributes to new understandings on the role of indigenous knowledge and education in a networked world.

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Chapter 1

Returning to Ourselves

Introduction

In the introduction to her book, *Our Knowledge Is Not Primitive: Decolonizing Botanical Anishinaabe Teachings*, Wendy Makoons Geniusz (2009) writes: “For indigenous people, an important step in decolonization is taking control of research" (p.10). To do this we must employ methodologies that free us from cognitive imperialism (Battiste, 2002). Picking up on the work of Laura Horton at the Seven Generations Education Institute, Geniusz (2009) discusses the meaning of *Biskaabiiyang*, as a methodology for “returning to ourselves.” For Geniusz, Biskaabiiyang approaches to research begin with the Anishinaabe researcher, who must look at his or her own life and how he or she has been personally colonized in order to conduct research from the standpoint of anishinaabe-inaadiziwin (Anishinaabe psychology, way of being). Rather than assuming an unbiased stance to research, a researcher using Biskaabiiyang approaches to research submerges him or herself within anishinaabe-inaadiziwin (Anishinaabe psychology, way of being) and anishinaabe-izhitwaawin (Anishinaabe culture, teachings, customs, history) the very things that he or she is researching. From this position, the Anishinaabe researcher must acknowledge his or her personal connection to the research he or she is conducting because…the protocols of anishinaabe-izhitwaawin (Anishinaabe culture, teachings, customs, history) require that one always explains his or her personal and intellectual background whenever he or she shares aadizookaan (traditional legends) or dibaajimowin (teachings, ordinary stories), {and} such… To do otherwise takes credibility away from the information presented and insults those who gave that Anishinaabe those teachings (p.12).

Therefore, in honour of all the Elders, advisors and research participants that worked with me on this research project, I will begin by introducing and locating myself within a Biskaabiiyang approach, as described above.
However, before I begin I have a note on style: in this thesis the terms “indigenous”, “aboriginal” and “first nations” are not capitalized (unless in a quote), although this is the current general practice in government and other official documents. This choice has been made on the basis of a perspective on these terms that is informed by indigenous perspectives on how we are named. Terms like “aboriginal” do not refer to nations per se, in the sense of nations with common and distinct linguistic, constitutional and other cultural characteristics (such as the Anishinaabek or English).

This is not a government document or official policy paper, so the current general usage of capitalization need not apply here. Furthermore, “aboriginal”, “indigenous” and “first nations” as generally used today in official documents do not refer to peoples with a common territorial or continental identity, as with Asians, Europeans, or North Americans, for example. Even “first nation” is generally a condescension used by Canada to apply to relatively small communities that may number in the hundreds or thousands, and not to whole nations properly. Terms referring to actual nations as defined above, such as the Anishinaabek, or Hotinonshonni, for example, and any other specific nations, are capitalized.

Introducing Myself

Ahnii. Anishinaabekwe endau. Makwa ndodem. Wikwemikong minowa Toronto ndobinjoba. Hello. I am an Anishinaabe (Ojibwe-Potawatami) woman, and a member of the Bear clan. My mother is from Wikwemikong Unceded Indian Reserve in Ontario, Canada. My father is unknown to me. I have been told that he is of Irish ancestry, and from the Maritimes. Genetically I am mixed, but culturally I am Anishinaabe because I was raised with my mother and her extended family. Each year was spent living in the city of Toronto during the school year and living on the reserve during the summer and winter holidays. We would stay at my grandparents’ house on Murray Hill. My grandfather was Potawatami. His family came up from the Wisconsin area. My grandmother was originally a Manitowabi from the Wikwemikong area. She married at the age of thirteen, right after residential school, and took on my grandfather’s name.

I was given a spirit name much later in life. I am still learning what the name means and therefore I am not comfortable sharing it publicly. I am also not comfortable speaking or writing
in the language because I still need to develop my skills. However, I was told by the late Elder Lillian Pitawanakwat to never say that I don’t know my language, because I was raised hearing it and the imprint is still there and is strong. I began learning about Anishinaabe traditional culture in my early twenties, when I was employed as a frontline community worker, in the city of Toronto, for various not-for-profit aboriginal organizations. These included native women and native men’s drop in centers, homeless shelters, and cultural centers. This not-for-profit work inspired the project FourDirectionsTeachings.com, which will be introduced in the next section.

My personal experience of colonization is a very raw presence that I resist daily, inherited from my mother, whose family struggled with poverty, addictions, lack of education, abuse, institutional violence and health issues. Consequently, as the age of twelve, I was placed in the Catholic Children’s Aid Society where I remained in group homes and institutions, and briefly, foster care, until the age of eighteen. I did not graduate with a high school diploma and have generally reached life’s milestones much later than others because of Post Traumatic Stress Disorder.

As a researcher, I do not assume or pretend to have an unbiased stance in relation to research. I am most definitely connected to the work I do because I believe it can help people who, like me, did not grow up with their cultural teachings and have to find them on their own. I believe that cultural teachings are necessary to overcoming the internalized pain of colonization because they offer a connection to healing and an alternative to self-abuse. I also believe that the research work being presented here needs to be discussed by our respective indigenous communities, as we are in a time of great flux, where we are, according to our timekeepers, entering into a new era that will carry us for the next several hundred years.

Research Question

This dissertation explores the impact of indigenous knowledge online through a case study of FourDirectionsTeachings.com, a website that I produced in 2006. I am working with a very specific definition of indigenous knowledge online that I will explain here. I believe there are aspects of indigenous knowledge that have been shared historically in texts, and now online through new interface technologies. When done correctly and respectfully, these aspects of indigenous knowledge are shared and sanctioned by Elders who carry the cultural rights to share
particular knowledge. These cultural rights deserve respect because the Elders holding them have been honored and recognized with the right to impart particular community stories or knowledge. These stories, teachings and other forms of knowledge contain indigenous values and perspectives and therefore reflect an indigenous worldview. By sharing some of these teachings online in connection and development with Elders, I believe that it is possible to reflect some aspects of indigenous knowledge on the Internet and therefore introduce new generations to indigenous knowledge. However, while I believe that aspects of indigenous knowledge online can serve as an introduction to some basic understanding and conceptualization of indigenous knowledge, I want to stress that such knowledge cannot replace the real transmission of deep indigenous knowledge that occurs through indigenous ceremonies and oral teachings that are transmitted person to person, or the connections that are made from being and learning on the land. This working definition of aspects of indigenous knowledge stems from my experience from working within an indigenous paradigm that respects and seeks to understand the cultural protocols of diverse indigenous communities. This means adhering to the values and principles of indigenous communities, which honor relationship building, networking, humility and reciprocity. In discussing these values throughout the dissertation it is hoped that indigenous people will begin a dialogue that speaks to indigenous media practices as a kind of shield against the unethical use, erasure or exploitation of their knowledge – and, as a way to ensure that some way of introducing and bridging to the real sources of indigenous knowledge - on the land and steeped in living languages, communities and cultures – exists for those who might otherwise have no opportunity to even begin to approach such knowledge.

I am proposing that indigenous knowledge on the Internet is a new cultural form and therefore represents a new capacity and a new responsibility for indigenous communities. This thesis specifically explores and questions the capacity for indigenous knowledge online to contribute to the goals of indigenous resurgence and indigenous nation building. The thesis examines cultural protocols and responsibilities entailed in online indigenous knowledge initiatives. It explores the responses of research participants to a series of questions related to indigenous knowledge online. The research participants are all committed to using indigenous knowledge to strengthen their practice and their work in education, indigenous communities and institutions that serve indigenous populations. A semi structured question list is used as a qualitative method of inquiry to engage each research participant. Finally, I use an indigenous
method of analysis, based on indigenous scholarship, to organize the data from the interviews. This information will be elaborated upon later in this chapter, in the section titled “Working from indigenous Context”, and in Chapter Three: “Research Design and Approach.” I will now introduce the website FourDirectionsTeachings.com.

FourDirectionsTeachings.com

FourDirectionsTeachings.com is a website that honours oral traditions by creating an environment where the online visitor is encouraged to listen with intent as each Elder or traditional teacher shares a teaching from their perspective on the richness and value of cultural traditions from their nation. The Elders and traditional teachers represented on the website are: Stephen Augustine (Mi’kmaq); Tom Porter (Mohawk); Lillian Pitawanakwat (Ojibwe); Mary Lee (Cree); and, Dr. Reg Crowshoe and Geoff Crow Eagle (both Piikani Blackfoot).

I was introduced to these Elders through the advisory committee that I established during the development phase of the project. The Advisory Committee for the FourDirectionsTeachings.com project consisted of:

Dr. Marie Battiste (Mi’kma) – Director, Aboriginal Education Research Center, College of Education; Co-author, Protecting Indigenous Knowledge: A Global Challenge (2000); served as co-chair for the UN Workshop on Indigenous Heritage in Geneva.

James (Sakej) Youngblood Henderson – Professor and Research Director, Native Law Centre of Canada, University of Saskatchewan; noted international human rights lawyer and authority on protecting Indigenous heritage, knowledge and culture; member, Sectoral Commission on Culture, Communication and Information of the Canadian Commission for UNESCO, and of the Experts Advisory Group on International Cultural Diversity.

Dr. Reg Crowshoe (Piikani Blackfoot) – Well-known Piikani Blackfoot Elder; Executive Director of the Oldman River Cultural Center in Alberta; pioneered and
initiated cross-cultural programs for institutions across Western Canada; honorary Doctorate in Law, University of Calgary.

**Diane Hill** (Katsitsawaks) – Mohawk nation, Bear clan, Six Nations of the Grand River Territory; Consulted for the past 20 years on various Aboriginal education initiatives internationally and worked to promote culturally-based educational strategies in the field of social work and the area of prior learning assessment with the First Nations Technical Institute; Completing her Ph.D. in Adult Education with a focus on Aboriginal approaches at the University of Toronto.

**Sylvia Maracle** (Mohawk) – Tyendinaga Mohawk Territory, Wolf Clan; involved in Aboriginal Friendship Centres for over thirty years, serving as Executive Director for the Ontario Federation of Indian Friendship Centres for much of that time; served as Vice President of the National Association of Friendship Centres, President of the Native Women’s Resource Centre and Co-Chair of the City of Toronto Taskforce on Access and Equity.

The accomplishments and work of these indigenous intellectuals and activists speak directly to issues concerning the protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge. Their expertise is crucial to a project like FourDirectionsTeachings.com, which charts new territory in indigenous education by virtue of being on the Internet, and raises questions around wider community access to indigenous knowledge, as well as rights related to its protection and promotion.

Not surprisingly, the presence of the advisory group gave me the confidence to proceed with the project because I felt that not only was I working for the community but that the community was involved. Indeed, the advisors were able to open doors to Elders and traditional teachers across the country so that I could discuss the project with them and gauge their interest. Furthermore, the presence of an advisory committee and the referrals that came from them assured Elders and traditional teachers that a community-based process was being undertaken and that a sense of accountability was in place. Upon hearing that Sylvia Maracle had referred me to him, one traditional teacher, Mohawk elder Tom Porter, quipped, “Well, if you are working with her, then you are moving in some good circles.”
FourDirectionsTeachings.com was conceived expressly for the purpose of giving expression to indigenous philosophies, worldviews, and knowledge, through the teachings of Elders and traditional teachers from five distinct indigenous nations. In the mid 1990’s I was trained as an adult literacy instructor by Priscilla George, founder and former Executive Director of the National Indigenous Literacy Association (NILA), an organization that is now defunct. Ms. George brought together Elders and traditional teachers to teach about the value of holistic knowledge derived from first nations teachings. Impressed with how important indigenous knowledge was for our adult literacy classes, I began conversations with stakeholders like Ms. George and Nancy Cooper (an adult education worker and academic on adult literacy) on the value of having first nations teachings made accessible in a respectful manner on the World Wide Web.

The idea was that these teachings would be immediately accessible to frontline workers, who often struggle to find appropriate resources on indigenous knowledge. Furthermore, the teachings would be inspirational because the Elders themselves would impart and share their knowledge. For adult aboriginal learners, an interactive website would provide individuals with a sense of empowerment, allowing them to explore the teachings on their own, building their computer literacy skills while engaged in content that is relevant and important to them. These discussions were undertaken in the spirit of frontline community work, where we were able to envision an exciting potential resource that could be accessed by aboriginal learners in the computer rooms of the many drop-in organizations and friendship centres where we held our literacy classes. Several years later, FourDirectionsTeachings.com became a reality.

Based on my experience as an adult literacy instructor, I had formed some initial impressions that led me to believe that the Internet could possibly lead to greater empowerment for indigenous communities. For example, I believed that the personal and flexible way in which people can explore the Internet is well suited to adult learners who wanted to move and explore at their own pace. I also intuitively felt that such a project might help indigenous communities whose members are dealing with a plethora of learning issues related to literacy, perceptions around learning, and sensitivity to learning styles (George, 2002; Hill, 2010). I hoped that it might also help indigenous people reconnect with their culture, especially those who are disenfranchised from their cultural teachings and the idea of indigenous knowledge.
I am not alone in thinking that the Internet is well suited to introducing concepts around indigenous knowledge and value systems. In *The New Media Nation: Indigenous Peoples and Global Communication*, Valerie Alia (2010) cites Paul DeMain, an Oneida/Ojibway journalist, who states that:

For the first time Native people are on the breaking edge of information technology in terms of computer systems and the internet, which means that we’re going back to an old tradition, the oral visual presentation and the storyteller’s credibility (p. xii).

I believe that DeMain is expressing the idea that the Internet is an ideal medium for expressing oral teachings because it has the ability to present information in both an audio and a visual format, similar to how oral teachings are presented by Elders and traditional teachers who often use visual aids when they are speaking. For example, I have attended many teachings where the Elder refers to an object like a pipe when speaking, or sketches out the four quadrants of a medicine wheel to describe the different relationships between them. In contrast, written descriptions of oral teachings miss the fluidity and flow of the teachings, especially with respect to explaining spatial relationships or representing the layers and connections that can be made, for example, between different medicine wheels.

Like DeMain, I see the Internet as a medium that, in some ways, has finally caught up to aspects of indigenous notions of oral storytelling. According to Alia, others, like Jim Bell, editor of *Nunatsiaq News*, believe that, “…the Internet offers a way of fighting back – a chance to send the information the other way - and therefore can be an antidote to the cultural demolition that has occurred in some other media” (Alia, 2010, p.17), most notably the racist portrayals of “Indians” in film and television (Kilpatrick, J., 1999).

In 2009, FourDirectionsTeachings.com was part of a retrospective exhibition on aboriginal new media called *Codetalkers of the Digital Divide (or why we didn’t become “roadkill on the information superhighway”)*. The exhibition, a collaboration between A Space Gallery and imagineNATIVE, marked the 10th Anniversary edition of the imagineNATIVE Film + Media Arts Festival. Curated by Cheryl L’Hirondelle, a celebrated Métis multi-interdisciplinary artist and musician, the exhibition is a timely contextualization of what aboriginal New Media practices were pre-Internet to what they have become in the current Web
In her curatorial statement Ms. L'Hirondelle quotes the late Ahasiw Maskegon Iskwew,

To govern ourselves means to govern our stories and our ways of telling stories. It means that the rhythm of the drumbeat, the language of smoke signals and our moccasin telegraph can be transformed to the airwaves and modems of our times. We can determine our use of the new technologies to support, strengthen and enrich our cultural communities

- Ahasiw Maskegon Iskwew, Drumbeats to Drumbytes: Origins – 1994

She then goes on to say that,

Aboriginal people have been, since time immemorial, “making things our own” and certainly since the 1960s, finding our own “indigenous aesthetic in digital storytelling.” …Yet as we move as fast as bytes of information, catapulted through time and space and by the imperative of our continued survival, it’s important to hit the pause button, reflect on our history and pay homage to the agency and ingenuity of our pathfinders.

…Like our ancestors before us, we have always been keen to identify new tools to accomplish a necessary survival task. The multi-disciplinary artists honored in this exhibit are renowned masters of this; their example embodies and manifests the imperative of being skillfully adept with a variety of disciplines and media (L’Hirondelle, 2009).

The curatorial statement above politicizes the act of aboriginal storytelling by making it clear that our stories are part of our survival. This is significant to note because it introduces the notion of accountability and responsibility, not only to one’s personal vision of the story, but also to the broader aboriginal community and their vision of the story. I was honoured that FourDirectionsTeachings.com was part of this retrospective in aboriginal new media, and was thrilled that the community embraced the site as “painstakingly researched” and “a gift – a map

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1 Web 2.0 describes Internet web sites that emphasize user generated content and usability as opposed to read only pages.
back to our source” (L’Hirondelle, 2009).

Originally conceived as a national aboriginal education initiative, FourDirectionsTeaching.com was developed so that aboriginal communities across the country, both on and off reserve, could benefit from its content. The idea was to provide a culturally sensitive pedagogical aid that could be easily accessed by aboriginal educators, frontline workers in literacy and community wellness programs, and non-aboriginal people working with aboriginal students or teaching aboriginal curriculum to all kinds of learners. Today, the website has reached far beyond the original target audience and is seen and utilized by indigenous and non-indigenous people in many different contexts as a valuable resource for introducing indigenous knowledge.

While this dissertation takes the position that significant, respectful and accurate representations of indigenous knowledge can be presented online in ways that can help users access and become inspired by such knowledge, it is important to recognize that no mere tool, no matter how well designed or used, can ever replace – or even come close to – oral, person-to-person transmission of traditional cultural knowledge. Any discussion of indigenous knowledge online in this dissertation is presented – and should be digested – with this important principle in mind. While the real transmission of deep indigenous knowledge is not a focus of this dissertation, the implications of this principle stated above in relation to the questions being explored are revisited to some extent further on, and in the concluding chapter.

Inspired by the process of producing the site and seeing its wide uptake, I became committed to exploring the work further, and have since devoted myself to researching the need and potential for culturally sensitive resources that speak to diverse forms of indigenous cultural heritage, and the connections that can be made between modern technologies and indigenous epistemologies. This research requires us to look differently, and it picks up on the work Native on the Net: Virtual Diaspora in the Digital Age, edited by Kyra Landzelius (2006), which asks about the meaning of “Interoperability, connectivity, universality, fluidity, transparency”

– Such are the buzzwords of our digital age. But what do they mean to, and for, peoples outside the mainstream? What do they deliver for indigenous people on the fringes of power; for subaltern minority populations in diaspora? Can the info-superhighway be a fast track to greater empowerment for the historically disenfranchised? Or do they risk
becoming “roadkill”: casualties of hyper-media and the drive to electronically map everything? (p.1)

This dissertation will address aspects of these questions by bringing indigenous people’s opinions, values and interests to the forefront of the discussion about what it means to be Native on the Net.

Unjust occupation

The thing that must be defeated, colonialism, is far beyond being merely an economic or political problem with psychological manifestations. I think of it like this instead: it is the fundamental denial of our freedom to be Indigenous in a meaningful way, and the unjust occupation of the physical, social, and political spaces we need in order to survive as Indigenous Peoples (Taiaiake Alfred, 1999, p.98).

The notion of unjust occupation is ingrained in the hearts and minds of aboriginal people in Canada. It is both physical and emotional, and applies to the idea of cyberspace as well, which is evident in aboriginal discussions of new media, where - to echo Ms. L’Hirondelle - we hear the sentiment of not wanting to be “roadkill on the information superhighway” (personal communication, January 21, 2014). There is a general feeling that if we do not stake out a claim in cyberspace we will become colonized in that space too, by virtue of our absence. Aboriginal people already know what it is like to be invisible, so staking out a claim on the Internet is an act of resistance to further colonization, asserting the visibility and viability of first nations people and therefore subverting notions of colonialism that would have people believe that first nations do not exist. Further, many of the research participants in this project are apprehensive about what kind of indigenous knowledge is presented on the Internet because of the dangers of misinterpretation and appropriation. Their concerns are just and will be discussed at length in the analysis section of this dissertation in Chapters Five to Eight.

Any attempt to represent indigenous knowledge on the Internet involves many different risks, and raises huge concerns for indigenous peoples. Judy Iseke-Barnes and Deborah Danard (2007), in their article Indigenous Knowledges and Worldview: Representations and the Internet, fear that cultural knowledge online will get usurped and turned into a commodity by Western
audiences, and that prevailing discourses on indigenous knowledge are in danger of being
defined by these Western audiences. Such a trend removes the indigenous contexts and
knowledge keepers from the equation, effectively removing the original indigenous knowledge
itself. In discussing this issue, Iseke-Barnes and Danard point to the commodification of the
dream-catcher. Now made and marketed online from China, the original teachings or knowledge
associated with this cultural item are nowhere to be found in that context. Arguing that, "This
removal from history and community ensures continued silencing of indigenous voices" (p. 28),
the authors feel that, consequently,

Cyberspace and information technology are limitless in their potential as the modes of
transmission for the dominant society to continue colonization practices. Information
accessed through the Internet has no context in which to position it and is distanced from
the indigenous peoples that it purports to represent. (pg.33).

Iseke-Barnes and Danard feel that the silencing and removal of indigenous people creates
opportunities for more stereotyping and commodification of indigenous peoples’ knowledge and
cultures, supporting continued western colonization. Their article is just one expression of a
much wider range of concern and controversy over putting indigenous knowledge on the
Internet. Cultural commodification and appropriation by non-indigenous people is very real, and
has done great damage.

Many worry that indigenous knowledge will be denigrated or stolen. Winona LaDuke (1995) of The Indigenous Women’s Network: Our Future, Our Responsibility, states that:

The intellectual knowledge systems today often negate or deny the existence and inherent
property rights of Indigenous people to our cultural and intellectual knowledge by
supplanting our knowledge systems. Industrial knowledge systems call us “primitive”
while our medical knowledge, plants, and even genetic material are stolen (as in the
Human Genome Project) by transnational corporations and international agencies (p. 7).

Issues of intellectual property rights are key in this statement and are discussed in greater detail
in Chapter Two. Suffice it to say here that issues of cultural appropriation and the fear of
usurpation take many forms when thinking about indigenous knowledge on the Internet. Indeed,
some scholars argue that as indigenous people we should not share our knowledge at all as in the
politics of refusal (Tuck and Yang, 2014). Others like Andrea Smith (2005), a scholar of Native American and Indigenous studies, takes the position in her article *Spiritual Appropriation as Sexual Violence*, that, “knowledge about someone also gives one power over that person. Withholding knowledge, then, is an act of resistance against those who desire to know you in order to better control you” (p.97).

Withholding knowledge also protects the sacredness of that knowledge. The need to protect sacred knowledge is reflected in the backlash against depicting the Sundance ceremony online, which I discuss in Chapter Nine with examples of online postings from members of various indigenous communities reflecting on this issue. Providing knowledge about indigenous ceremonies online opens many opportunities for misinterpretation, poorly understood appropriation, and various other forms of abuse. Many indigenous people regard keeping ceremonial knowledge out of public media as a way of protecting that knowledge, and of protecting the right of indigenous people to be indigenous in a meaningful way - that is, to prevent their knowledge from being denigrated, usurped or appropriated by settler society. These arguments represent the opposition to having indigenous knowledge online and are the fodder for providing great caution, hesitation and care when thinking about the potential for indigenous knowledge on the Internet, which speaks to the clash of cultures (Benhabib, S., 2002).

**Indigenous resurgence and the Internet**

Leanne Simpson’s (2008) work, *Lighting the Eighth Fire: The Liberation, Resurgence, and Protection of Indigenous Nations*, builds on the work of Taiaiake Alfred and others who see the revitalization of traditional indigenous knowledge and practices as key to regenerating aboriginal communities and reconnecting indigenous people with their spiritual and cultural power. This emerging field, known as “Indigenous Resurgence” is connected to the field of indigenous knowledge in that writers like Simpson are bringing forward "fourth world theory – theories, strategies and analysis strongly rooted in the values, knowledge and philosophies of Indigenous Nations" (Corntassel & Spak, 2010, p.135). Work done in this area is not necessarily connected with the academic field of new technologies, cyberspace, and Internet studies - and yet there is a direct correlation.
For example, scholars like Kate Hennessy (Hennessy, K & Moore, P.J., 2007) and Linc Kesler\(^2\), who have done extensive work with online projects for aboriginal communities, are concerned with the role of digital technology in the documentation and safeguarding of cultural heritage. This notion of safeguarding cultural heritage is also of great interest to many indigenous communities, who have come to see information technology as an important tool for preserving their traditional cultures for the future (Dyson, Hendriks & Grant, 2007). In fact, early writings on the relationship between the Internet and aboriginal people stressed that computer technologies be used as tools for self-determination and that “We can determine our use of new technologies to support, strengthen and enrich our cultural communities” (Ahasiw Maskegon Iskwew, 1994). These statements speak directly to what is now being called the emerging field of Indigenous Resurgence and they have inspired this dissertation.

**A Digital Bundle: Exploring the Impact of Indigenous Knowledge Online through FourDirectionsTeachings.com** investigates the role of knowledge production in the construction and use of the site. The term “knowledge production” is used in an academic context and also used here; however, this term has different implications when used in the context of “producing” indigenous knowledge online. What is really being talked about here is not the “production of knowledge” in the sense of “creating” knowledge that is new, at least not in the sense of being part of the “progress” of knowledge usually assumed in modern Eurocentric thought (which would be a problematic concept from many if not all traditional indigenous perspectives). “Knowledge production” here refers to the technical production, or really re-production, of *aspects of long-existing indigenous knowledge in new formats, and in relation to new contexts* – in the sense of assembling, representing and creatively configuring this pre-existing knowledge, but certainly not of “creating” it (although creativity is involved, in the lower sense of aesthetic and technical creativity). This thesis discusses knowledge production in relation to the community i.e. how FourDirectionsTeachings.com is taken up by visitors who use the site, and how the site was produced and created within indigenous community cultural protocols.

\(^2\) [http://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/linckesler](http://www.broadbentinstitute.ca/linckesler)
This thesis also examines how FourDirectionsTeachings.com came to be accepted as a legitimate source for indigenous knowledge online by many aboriginal artists, educators and Canadian institutions and organizations that work with aboriginal and other people. The phenomenon of Internet users searching for indigenous knowledge online demonstrates the need for access to indigenous knowledge, and reveals the intentions, experiences and perceptions of indigenous Internet users. The thesis demonstrates how an online indigenous knowledge site mediates culture, knowledge, history and subjects into new forms and into new sets of social relationships (Poster, 1995). As well, understanding what these new forms are and how social relationships are affected is elucidated (Bennett, W.L., 2003). This thesis also explores the potential of the Internet and digital technology to serve indigenous resurgence agendas by contributing to the efforts and goals of indigenous nation building, and aims to bridge the fields of Indigenous Resurgence and Internet Studies (Benkler, Y. 2006), thus contributing to new understandings on the role of indigenous knowledge and education in a networked world.

Finally the conclusion of this dissertation will demonstrate how indigenous knowledge online is contributing in significant ways to the movement of indigenous resurgence and thereby represents a new social movement, a new Internet activism that is propelled and shaped by Indigenous perspectives and values.

Honouring the voices of Indigenous people

Reading the final report of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples (1996), the question that comes to mind is, “How can government and education systems, especially in the domain of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), support and respect what aboriginal communities can offer to their own communities?” The Royal Commission cites Stan Wesley from Moose Factory, Ontario, who states,

Elders told us that they have much more to offer than they are now being asked to give. They can be (and in some cases already are) significant contributors in education, health and social services, land and resource management boards, and efforts to build Aboriginal governments. They can contribute at almost every stage and every level. In education, for example, much is lost if elders are merely brought into classrooms once a year for a
'cultural awareness’ day. They could be helping to reshape curriculum, teaching practices and administration styles (cited in Highlights - RCAP, 1996).

An aboriginal worldview is regarded not only as a viable alternative to colonial knowledge systems but as a liberating, healing force for aboriginal communities wherever they may be found: in the arts, in the field of social work, in the halls of academia or in the actual communities themselves (Baskin, 2005 & McGregor 2005).

Aboriginal worldviews can be seen as antidotes for aboriginal communities who struggle against what Michael Yellow Bird (2004) critiques in his article, *Cowboys and Indians: Toys of Genocide, Icons of American Colonialism*, daily micro assaults where indigenous peoples face the humiliation of American and Canadian colonialism through various media. Yellow Bird examines how aboriginal people are portrayed in popular culture, and how the underlying meaning beneath the images is steeped in white settler conquest that reduces the “Indian” to a thing less than human. He quotes Howard Adams’ statement that,

The colonizer’s falsified stories have become universal truths to maintain society, and have reduced Aboriginal culture to a caricature. This distorted reality is one of the most powerful shackles subjugating Aboriginal people. It distorts all Indigenous experiences, past and present, and blocks the road to self-determination (p. 39).

This standpoint reflects the position of many cultural activists (Brown, M.F. 2003; Lawrence, B. 2004; Palmater, P.D. 2011). My own work as a producer is to overcome these shackles by creating content that is reflective of indigenous community values and knowledge. In this way the work of indigenous knowledge production is more about re-production than new creation because we are showcasing knowledge that has existed for many generations, not creating it. Consequently, I am not interested in deconstructing existing stereotypes and false narratives about aboriginal people. A significant amount of work has been accomplished in this area (Bataille, 2001; Kilpatrick, 1999; Meyer and Royer, 2001). I also feel that such work privileges the standpoint (Hartsock, N, 1998) of the colonizer and therefore agree with McGregor (2005) that the time has come “to create our own positive future, using aboriginal-derived concepts and undertakings, rather than always reacting to negative situations imposed on us by non-aboriginal parties” (p. 75).
I believe that indigenous communities need to work with each other, and that the focus of indigenous knowledge projects is first and foremost for the benefit of aboriginal communities. A solid revitalization of indigenous knowledge within our own communities may provide a basis for such knowledge becoming a meaningful benefit to non-aboriginal communities as well. However, that is not the primary focus or intent of FourDirectionsTeachings.com As a producer I created the site as a resource for aboriginal communities.

As a research academic, I work from and with scholarship that has focused on indigenous knowledge and philosophy (represented by scholars such as Battiste, Simpson, Geniusz, Atleo, McGregor, Grande and Restoule), and work that puts indigenous research and methods at the center of inquiry (L.T. Smith, Simpson, Geniusz, Grande and Restoule). I choose this position because I want my research and cultural work to be proactive and to contribute to dialogue between and across indigenous circles in academia, leadership, knowledge keepers and grassroots movements. To accomplish this goal I take my lead from Dr. McGregor (2005), who states that,

Indigenous people must move beyond a focus on decolonization (which puts the colonizer at the centre of discussion), to one in which “Indigenous theorizing” is both recognized and achieved. (p.75)

Linda Tuhiwai Smith’s (1999) work, *Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples*, has greatly informed my practice and thinking, and speaks to the work I am doing in this dissertation. L.T. Smith states that sharing knowledge is a long-term commitment, which she differentiates from sharing information. She writes,

To me the responsibility of researchers and academics is not simply to share surface information (pamphlet knowledge) but to share the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented. By taking this approach seriously it is possible to introduce communities and people who may have had little formal schooling to a wider world, a world which includes people who think just like them, who share in their struggles and dreams and who voice their concerns in similar sorts of ways. To assume in advance that people will not be interested in, or will not understand, the deeper issues is arrogant. The challenge always is to demystify, to decolonize. (p.16)
It is important for me as an indigenous person and an academic to honor the people who participated in this research by making the work accessible to indigenous communities everywhere. The voices of the research participants, who, except for one, are all indigenous, want and deserve to be heard. Indeed, their voices fill a void in audience reception/Internet studies; the concerns and interaction of indigenous peoples online are not sought-after topics of research (Warschauer, Nakamura). However, while that void is important to address, doing so is not my primary motivation. My motivation comes from the indigenous principles of reciprocity and relationship, which consider the needs of the audience to be an integral component of presenting research (Wilson, p.126). In this way I hope to honor the research participants who generously shared their time and insights with me and I hope to honor our communities by speaking to them in a way that invites them into a dialogue, because without them it is difficult to move forward.

Working from an Indigenous context

Like L.T. Smith, Leanne Simpson (2011), in her work Dancing On Our Turtle’s Back: Stories of Nishnaabeg Re-Creation, Resurgence and a New Emergence, calls for Indigenous Peoples to “…delve into their own culture’s stories, philosophies, theories, and concepts to align themselves with the processes and forces of regeneration, revitalization, remembering and visioning (p.148). As a producer of an online indigenous knowledge project, I have done that work. FourDirectionsTeachings.com delves into teachings from elders/knowledge keepers from five distinct indigenous nations, sharing indigenous knowledge from a variety of cultures. For users who have visited the site and used it in their work, FourDirectionsTeachings.com represents a work of regeneration, revitalization, remembering and visioning. How the site accomplishes these processes will be discussed in detail with reference to the research participants’ interviews. To get there I am going to use an indigenous framework that Simpson develops in her work.

Before discussing her framework, I want to note that Simpson is from my territory – Anishinnabe territory – and works very closely with Edna Manitowabi, who is an Elder from my community, Wikwemikong First Nation. I have known Edna all my life, and in fact, she was the first Elder to bring me into a Sweat Lodge ceremony. Furthermore, my grandmother’s father was Sam Manitowabi. Sam was Johnny Manitowabi’s brother, and Johnny Manitowabi is Edna
Manitowabi’s late father, making us cousins. I state this because I feel very comfortable with Edna’s teachings and trust Edna as an Elder and teacher. So while I have never met Simpson and only know her through her work and her relationship with Edna, I feel a close connection to what she is saying, because she is using teachings and the language from my community and territory. Her work resonates with me on a deeply profound level that can only be described as heart based, because it is rooted in relationships to the land, to the people, to the knowledge and to the spirit of what I would call my community. It is important for me to note this because these principles and relationships will be introduced and discussed further in this dissertation.

Simpson introduces the following indigenous concepts: Biskaabiiyang (to look back); Naakgonige (to plan); Aanjigone (non-interference); and, Debwewin (the sound of the heart). These terms are from the language of the Anishinaabek, the language is Anishinaabemowin. She writes,

I believe we need intellectuals who can think within the conceptual meanings of the language, who are intrinsically connected to place and territory, who exist in the world as an embodiment of contemporary expressions of our ancient stories and traditions, and that illuminate mino bimaadiziwin in all aspects of their lives. (2011, p.31)

Mino bimaadiziwin is living life in a good way, or the good life. I agree with Simpson and L.T. Smith, and believe that we need to work from indigenous contexts, and that this means incorporating indigenous concepts and thinking. So, while Simpson does not purport to offer an indigenous framework for academics, I am respectfully using her four tenets of Biskaabiiyang (to look back), Naakgonige (to plan), Aanjigone (non-interference) and Debwewin (the sound of the heart) to explore and draw out the themes of this dissertation.

I also use L.T. Smith’s Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects as a method to explore and analyze the interview content from the research participants (p.142). These Twenty-Five Indigenous Projects are a mix of methodologies and practices that put indigenous goals and interests at the center of research. By incorporating these indigenous works into my analyses and theoretical approach I hope to make transparent the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented in this dissertation so that indigenous communities who are reading can be invited into the discussion and appreciate the diversity of insight shared by the research participants.
I wholeheartedly believe that our communities need to work together to ensure our survival in a good way. L.T. Smith writes,

What is more important than what alternatives indigenous peoples offer the world is what alternatives indigenous peoples offer each other. The strategies that work for one community may well work for another. The gains made in one context may well be applied usefully in another. The sharing of resources and information may assist groups and communities to collaborate with each other and to protect each other. (1999, p.105)

Having a dialogue across indigenous nations and communities about indigenous knowledge online is crucial to the development of policies and protocols that can protect and sustain indigenous knowledge in the present and into the future. Consequently, this dissertation will demonstrate how indigenous knowledge online is a new cultural form that is propelling new social relations offline and inspiring new “knowledge production” - and thereby actively contributing to indigenous resurgence.

For Simpson, resurgence creates life. It propels and nurtures life. For Smith, themes of resurgence are evident in the way that she envisions communities working together:

The survival of one community can be celebrated by another. The spiritual, creative and political resources that indigenous peoples can draw on from each other provide alternatives for each other. Sharing is a good thing to do, it is a very human quality. To be able to share, to have something worth sharing gives dignity to the giver. To create something new through that process of sharing is to recreate the old, to reconnect relationships and to recreate our humanness. (p.105)

Writing this thesis is an act of resurgence, because it embraces indigenous theories and methods, and because it facilitates the voices of diverse indigenous peoples who want to share their knowledge and experience of indigenous knowledge online, in respectful and responsible ways. The research participants for this project shared their insight with me because they believe that FourDirectionsTeachings.com is a valuable resource that can inspire other indigenous communities to invest in indigenous knowledge projects online as an important part of regenerating the spiritual, creative, and political aspirations of their nations. This dissertation, then, is a concrete example of indigenous people engaged in a project that allows us to draw
insights from each other, and invite others to join us so that we may find new ways of doing things in a good way.

The Internet: A new public sphere?

In writing about difference, Mark Poster (1995) suggests that, “Internet communities function as places of difference from and resistance to modern society. In a sense, they serve the function of a Habermasian public sphere without intentionally being one” (p.13). For Jürgen Habermas, the “bourgeois public sphere” consisted of places like coffee houses and taverns - public places where citizens could meet and have informal discussions. For Poster the Habermasian concept of the public sphere does not really apply to the Internet because the subjects are disembodied and scattered (p.8). Yet, he nonetheless uses the concept because it is imbued with a sense of democracy in its liberal politics. He writes,

The question that needs to be asked about the relation of the Internet to democracy is this: are there new kinds of relations occurring within it which suggest new forms of power configurations between communicating individuals? In other words, is there a new politics on the Internet? (p.5)

Twenty years later we can say unequivocally that there is indeed a new politics. This is evident in the groundbreaking work Alternative And Activist New Media (Digital Media and Society Series), by Leah A Lievrouw (2011), who writes,

Atton defines the alternative Internet as “a range of media projects, interventions and networks that work against, or seek to develop different forms of the dominant, expected (and broadly accepted) ways of doing media.” (Atton, 2004, p.ix as cited in Lievrouw, 2011, p.19)

Lievrouw then recasts the general definition of new media:

To propose that alternative/activist new media employ or modify the communication artifacts, practices, and social arrangements of new information and communication technologies to challenge or alter dominant, expected, or accepted ways of doing society, culture, and politics. Their creators take advantage of the recombinant, networked nature
of new media infrastructure, and the ubiquity and interactivity that they offer users, to create innovative projects in which people extend their social networks and interpersonal contacts, produce and share their own “DIY” information, and resist, “talk back” to, or otherwise critique and intervene in prevailing social, cultural, economic, and political conditions. (p.19)

For Lievrouw the four main features that make new media new are recombination, networked architecture, ubiquity, and interactivity. Recombinant technologies are designed and shaped by users who, for example, combine existing older systems like video with new software innovations like YouTube. Networked architecture refers to the social consequences, impact and circulation activity surrounding a work. Ubiquity is the idea that new media are present everywhere. Interactivity is a necessary condition for social, political, and cultural participation. Lievrouw deduced that this type of interactivity is found in Web 2.0 technology.

The term Web 2.0 generally refers to user interactivity and was coined in 2004 at a conference dedicated to discussing Internet users who interact and collaborate with each other in social media, and who dialogue as creators of user-generated content in a virtual community - in contrast to websites where people are limited to the passive viewing of content. Such interaction was seen as revolutionary because it was immediate and therefore occurred in real time. Perhaps, more importantly, it was seen to provide a truer Habermasian space for users to engage and hence be political and social. Websites that did not have a Web 2.0 feature were seen as passé, outdated and not interactive. Lievrouw writes,

We might think of interactivity as a feature of media infrastructure (articulating artifacts, practices, and social arrangements) and participation as a particular form of action supported by that infrastructure; but one depends on the other. “Interactive” new media offer more opportunities for communicative action, and interaction, than do most traditional mass media formats, and thus more opportunities for participation. (p.15)

I have always thought of FourDirectionsTeachings.com as an interactive web project because it articulates a particular form of teachings that have been combined and designed to impart their

3 [www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0](http://www.en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Web_2.0)
significance through spatial relationships. The Internet user engages those spatial relationships by interacting with each teaching. In this dissertation, I show through the research participants' interviews that FourDirectionsTeachings.com articulates and embodies a very specific “indigenous artifact,” to use the academic term (though this terminology carries some baggage for “over-archaeologized” indigenous peoples). The design of the site supports the participation of the user in very particular ways, allowing for interactive rather than passive viewing because of the way in which it engages the user.

Upon launching FourDirectionsTeachings.com in 2006, members of the new media community in Toronto and Banff, Alberta, dismissed it as not being cutting edge because it was not using the latest Web 2.0 technology. Therefore, it was not regarded as “interactive.” Their definition and my definition of interactive differ greatly: I do not limit interactivity to the content contributing and altering activity of Web 2.0. For me, interactivity is embodied in the way that users can engage with the spatial design of FourDirectionsTeachings.com, and thereby learn a great deal about the holistic nature of indigenous knowledge.

Further, some in the new media community were unable to appreciate the significance of the project's novelty with respect to making indigenous knowledge available online, as they had no reference for what constitutes indigenous knowledge. In contrast this thesis reflects the insight and participation of indigenous Internet users who are able to make very specific distinctions on what constitutes indigenous knowledge, and who can therefore speak with experience and authority about its impact online. Consequently, there has always been a tension between the way in which FourDirectionsTeachings.com is perceived and defined by settler society versus how it is received and taken up by indigenous communities. This tension will be further illustrated in Chapter Three with respect to the choices I made regarding research design and approach.

I will now speak to a finding that has emerged from this research project: how FourDirectionsTeachings.com embodies a new cultural form – or, what cultural studies (Hall, S. 1996) might call a new “cultural artifact” – which I will refer to as a “digital bundle.”
FourDirectionsTeachings.com – A digital bundle?

Based on discussions and input from the people who participated in and contributed to this research, I humbly propose that online indigenous knowledge projects such as FourDirectionsTeachings.com should be considered “digital bundles.” Naming it as such elevates the protocol and responsibilities that come with such a designation, and speaks profoundly to the ways that indigenous communities regard the processes that such a work is contributing to from within an indigenous epistemological paradigm. How FourDirectionsTeachings.com has come to be perceived and articulated in this way will be discussed in Chapters Five to Eight, which focus on the interview data gathered.

For now, I will provide a general definition of a bundle from a community based indigenous perspective. Simply speaking, a bundle refers to a collection of things that are regarded as sacred in some way, and held by a person with care and ceremony. For example, a bundle could be a skin or fur bag or wrapping holding an Eagle wing or feather, rattle, pipe, or other item used in ceremony, along with medicines like tobacco or dried plants for smudging. These are just examples, and there could be a much wider range of more unusual things, like items used in very specific ceremonies. More importantly, these sacred items are highly valued and protected, some transferred onward for the benefit, growth and sustainability of the community.

Some bundles may be handed down through a family. Other bundles are community bundles and hold a great deal of power, as with very old pipe bundles, some of which may even go back to the beginning of a specific revealed ceremony or tradition that supports the whole community. In this case, the person holding the bundle must undergo a thorough process of learning about the meaning of the tradition or ceremony, and how it gets transferred to members of the community. Other bundles may be personal, such as those held by youth who are encouraged to pick up their culture, and who make a bundle with items they can use for themselves in maintaining their path. These items may be as humble as a little smudge bowl and some sage, or people who hold a personal pipe or feather they use with very little to no public exposure. Again these personal bundles are protected and cared for, and regarded as being imbued with spirit. Based on these responsibilities, it can be said that a bundle is a lifelong commitment (or, if not, a commitment that has to be responsibly passed on or otherwise released,
and never simply neglected or discarded in a disrespectful way).

Beyond these definitions, there is a more "metaphorical" and non-physical usage. For example, aboriginal people working in community governance or development in various ways may sometimes refer more loosely to bundles as a collection of knowledge or practice that gets passed on. I have also heard elders talk about how we all carry a bundle, in the sense of gifts we are given by the creator when we arrive. These kinds of usages seem to be colloquialisms that many accept and understand within aboriginal communities. "Bundle" may be defined somewhat differently, then, depending upon the context in which it is used.

Specific cultural definitions of bundles are regarded differently by different indigenous peoples and cultural groups, and therefore will have very particular attributes. As an English word, there is of course no "official" "traditional" indigenous definition or "policing" of the term, although there could be concern from various traditional people if the term were thrown about carelessly - for example, if a “new ager” decided to announce, without any connection to or understanding of any specific indigenous community or tradition, that they held a "sacred bundle", and used it to hold "ceremonies" that they made up or improvised from a book, or mimicked based on attending a few real or fake ceremonies.

Therefore, in thinking about a bundle and what it means, we have to be mindful with the care and passing on of bundles (whether a physical bundle or special bundles of knowledge, or the gifts we bring with us at birth) that these are sacred things, and that there is - or at least could be - a ceremony to go along with that process. For example, when a child is born, there are specific ceremonies for what we do with the placenta; or, when youth take up certain responsibilities for governance through a youth council and are trained by elders, some kind of ceremony has accompanied that process to demonstrate and recognize the sacredness of that new responsibility, whether it is through a metaphorical bundle of knowledge or a physical bundle of items that will help them in their work. Ultimately, all this implies that a "bundle" is most often associated with a physical manifestation of a very important and sacred thing that is spiritual, and not just physical, in nature.

In some ways, FourDirectionsTeachings.com may be considered as a digital bundle because it is a collection of teachings by respected Elders and traditional teachers who are sharing indigenous knowledge that is highly regarded and valued by diverse indigenous
communities. These communities see FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a representation of indigenous knowledge ultimately derived from sacred sources - knowledge that must be cared for, respected and passed down for future generations, and hence, as embodying the attributes of a community bundle. In this sense FourDirectionsTeachings.com represents a new cultural form, a new “cultural artifact,” because it is the first online indigenous knowledge project to be considered and referenced by users in a way that implies it can be seen as a “digital bundle.” How it has achieved this potential designation or recognition will be explored through the research participants’ feedback and contribution, and through the producer’s reflection on creating the website.

As a researcher interested in exploring questions and issues of indigenous people on the Internet and the potential for having access to indigenous knowledge online, I spent a great deal of time reviewing existing literature, which I will review in the next chapter before proceeding with my own work.
Chapter 2
Literature Review

Introduction

In this chapter I first discuss literature that examines the tensions between having a presence on the Internet and protecting and promoting traditional indigenous knowledge (TK). I then turn to work that examines identity, oral culture and transition, which is then followed by a discussion of aboriginal youth and the Internet. My research goal was to find literature that focused on indigenous content on the Internet. As a result I purposely avoided literature that spoke to the development infrastructure, construction and governance of Information and Communication Technology (ICT), especially with respect to driving community and economic development. (Kakekaspan, O'Donnell, Beaton, Walmark, Mason, & Mak, 2011)

I conclude this chapter with a discussion on indigenous artists and the Internet, and Internet activism and cross-cultural knowledge exchange as a way of positioning and distinguishing indigenous knowledge projects online from indigenous artistic endeavors. In so doing I have come to understand that indigenous knowledge sites have the potential to demonstrate that online spaces can be validated and defined through cultural protocol as places where indigenous knowledge is presented. Distinct from digital storytelling through its grounding in cultural protocol, online indigenous knowledge is a new kind of tool or resource – and hence a new opportunity to support the ways that indigenous communities are decolonizing the digital.

To be or not to be online?

Faye Ginsburg argues that the omission of aboriginal perspectives has to do with the rise of the term digital age in relation to new media and the fact that for the western world the digital era has become “naturalized,” in spite of the fact that “only 12 percent of the world was wired as of January 2005 (according to statistics from the 2005 World Economic Forum in Davos,
Switzerland) and only sixteen of every one hundred people on the planet were serviced with telephone land lines” (Ginsburg reprinted 2005). Ginsburg continues:

… language smuggles in a set of assumptions that paper over cultural differences in the ways things digital may be taken up – if at all – in radically different contexts and thus serve to further insulate thinking against recognition of alterity that different kinds of media worlds present, particularly in the key areas such as intellectual property. (p. 289)

The language and privileged economic position of the west definitely puts blinders on regarding cultural differences, but policy is also a key factor in making cultural differences disappear. Victoria Tauli Corpuz, Chairperson of the UN Permanent Forum on Indigenous Issues, writes that:

We are now witnessing the globalization of computer culture whose key proponents don’t care how it affects existing cultures, and the consumers are conditioned to consider this as the most modern stage of evolution. The way the communication and information system is structured is that it is easier for somebody like me, living in the boondocks of the Cordillera, to find out what is going on in Washington, like Clinton and Monica Lewinsky, than to know what is happening in my own village. (1999, p. 3)

Corpuz is not alone in feeling this way. It has been argued that much of the web-based content on the Internet targets white America and does not address the interests of minorities (Nakamura, 2002). So while aboriginal concerns are barely audible in discussions of new media this does not preclude the fact that aboriginal people are very concerned about the impact of the Internet. (Ginsburg, 2002, p. 289)

In discussing what she calls “The second, more skeptical quote,” in her work *Rethinking the Digital*, Corpuz writes:

So seductive is the power of the ICT medium that it might only appear to remove centralized control out of the hands of government and into the hands of the people, giving them the notion of... empowerment. While ongoing struggles for self-determination play a complex role in the drive to bring the information age to indigenous communities in Australia and around the world, it can be argued that self-determination within one system may well be a further buy in to another…. The issue that needs to be raised before any question of indigenous usage of the Internet is addressed is: whose information infrastructure or “info-structure” determines what is valued in an economy – whether in the local community or the greater global economy which they are linked to? …Associated with this is the overarching issues of who determines knowledge within these remote communities and for the wider indigenous populations throughout Australia and beyond? (2002, p. 288)

For indigenous people, issues challenging access to the Internet include low literacy in language and computer skills, and hence an inability to program web pages. As Ginsburg describes, challenges also include little to no access to actual computers or the infrastructure needed to support Internet connections, such as land telephone lines. As a result there are few indigenous people creating content for the worldwide web compared to the general population in Canada and the United States. Victoria Tauli Corpuz (1999) states that…

Technologies should not just be considered as machines but as social relations. If we regard these as social relations then technological systems can be seen as communications systems. Social relationships are organized and structured by technological systems that allow or encourage some kinds of interactions and prevent or discourage other kinds. We should not just look at technology per se but at the way those in power use it to perpetuate their control and dominance. (p. 1)

Here Corpuz echoes the concerns posed by Ginsburg’s work and addresses the double bind of issues of access and issues of control (Burger, J., 2011).

Ginsburg effectively surmises the issues when reflecting upon the quotes she cites from various activists involved in discussions of new media in aboriginal communities. She states:
Fundamentally, they ask who has the right to control knowledge and what are the consequences of the new circulatory regimes introduced by digital technologies. Richard articulates a desire, as an Indigenous artist, to work with digital technologies in order to link Indigenous communities to each other on their own terms, objecting to stereotypes that suggest traditional communities should not have access to forms associated with modernity. Latukefu cautions that one must take into account the power relations that decide whose knowledge is valued, while the statement of the Indigenous People’s Working Group offers a strong warning against the commodification of their knowledge under Western systems of intellectual property. (2002, p. 289)

Ginsburg acknowledges that these positions are not new and that they are reflected in the discussions and work of several people interested in the topic of new media and indigenous communities. With respect to my concerns and interests, I will now specifically discuss the tension between protecting and promoting indigenous traditional knowledge.

Protecting and promoting indigenous traditional knowledge (TK)

TK is understood by indigenous communities and scholars to entail complete knowledge systems with their own epistemologies. Mohawk scholar Marlene Brant Castellano (2000) writes that the sources of this knowledge “include traditional teachings, empirical observation and a sense of revelation” (p. 23). She elaborates on the characteristics of aboriginal knowledge:

Among the small corps of people writing about aboriginal knowledge in the Canadian context there is a measure of consensus on its characteristic content and mode of transmission. Aboriginal knowledge is said to be personal, oral, experiential, holistic, and conveyed in narrative or metaphorical language. (p. 25)

The personal ways in which we connect with the sources of traditional knowledge make TK a challenge for all indigenous communities that share an interest in its articulation, whether they be aboriginal educators, scholars, artists or nations. Issues of authenticity and authority are consistently posed, even at local community levels. Marlene Brant Castellano (2000) specifically asks:
Can the integrity of aboriginal knowledge survive the transition to a literate form?

And what are the tests of authenticity?

Who has the authority to represent aboriginal knowledge? (p. 31)

In only two decades, these questions have moved from the local community level to an international terrain where the term “traditional knowledge” has become legalese for “traditional knowledge, innovations and practices (Gervais, 2001, p. 2). It is understood that this definition “includes a broad range of subject matter, for example traditional agricultural, biodiversity-related and medicinal knowledge and folklore” (Gervais, 2001, p. 3).

In Traditional Knowledge: A Challenge to the International Intellectual Property System, Associate Professor, Faculty of Law, Daniel J. Gervais, provides the background and context for why TK is an issue for WIPO - the World Intellectual Property Organization. He writes that in 1985 WIPO put forward the “Model Provisions for National Laws on the Protection of Expressions of Folklore Against Illicit Exploitation and Other Prejudicial Actions” (2001, p. 3). In so doing they defined folklore as,

…productions consisting of characteristic elements of the traditional artistic heritage developed and maintained by a community or by individuals reflecting the traditional artistic expectations of such a community.4

In the year 2000, only fifteen years later, the current divisive nature of TK is neatly summed up with yet another statement issued by WIPO (2000) that clearly implies the market potential for all forms of TK:

With the emergence of modern biotechnologies, genetic resources have assumed increasing economic, scientific and commercial value to a wide range of stakeholders; traditional knowledge, whether or not associated with those resources, has also attracted widespread attention from an enlarged audience; other tradition-based creations, such as

4 Section 2 of the Model Provisions
expressions of folklore, have at the same time taken on new economic and cultural
significants (sic) with a globalized information society.5

Gervais (2001) elaborates on this statement by pointing out that,

While pharmaceutical and biotechnological companies are looking at ways to exploit
indigenous medicinal knowledge, plants and other resources that are often found in
developing countries, the Internet is progressively allowing creators of folklore or
folklore-based copyrighted material to disseminate their material worldwide at very low
cost. (p. 3)

Gervais insinuates that the Internet is somehow contributing a disservice to the aboriginal
communities by allowing “creators of folklore” access to a medium where “their material is
made available worldwide,” and worse still, they are doing it “at very low cost” (p.3).

Perhaps it is these types of insinuations that are leading aboriginal scholars like Greg
Young-Ing to pursue discussions on the regulation of aboriginal artists and their work. In his
draft paper, Ethical and Legal Issues in the Transformation of Traditional Knowledge Through
Indigenous Cultural Expression, Greg Young-Ing (2006) states that his primary purposes are:

1) to outline and establish principles in the use of TK in contemporary artworks (and
other tangible commercial objects); 2) to establish theoretical frameworks on Indigenous
artists transformation of TK through their practice; and, 3) to develop useful models and
concepts to regulate the use of TK in the contemporary artistic context (and other tangible
commercial objects. (p. 2)

He bases this work on his understanding of an indigenous cultural paradigm that defines
indigenous artists has having “a distinct ethos based on a unique identity that stems from their
history, cultures and traditions” (p.32), which necessitates that aboriginal artists have a
responsibility to their nation. In addition, he states that indigenous people in general have

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5 Meeting statement of the WIPO Inter-Regional Meeting on Intellectual Property and Traditional Knowledge held in
Chiangray, Thailand, Nov. 9 to 11, 2000.
survived cultural genocide because they have adhered to what he calls two important cultural principles:

1) that incorporating new ways of doing things should be carefully considered in consultation with community and Elders and according to Customary Law; and, 2) if it is determined that a new technology or institution goes against fundamental cultural values and/or might lead to negative cultural impact, or breeches Customary Law, then it should not be adopted. (p. 6)

This position is difficult to enforce for many reasons. The most obvious is the notion that there exist widely accepted and clearly defined cultural bodies that speak for the community and thereby have the consensus of the community. However, contemporary first nations communities are complex even when dealing with a particular community. For example, many first nations communities have constituents that live on reserve and others that live off reserve. This separation of physical location creates a division where the politics of the community vary greatly. Further, many first nations are also separated by religious and spiritual beliefs which also inform their views on the use of TK.

Depending on the community, some first nations may not even see themselves as having a stake in TK. Thus, this idea of customary law and elders is not always easily evident. Furthermore, my reading of Meili (1991), Knudtson and Suzuki (1992), Kulchyski, McCaskill and Newhouse (1999), and my personal experience of collecting oral histories from elders and traditional teachers suggest that it is the individual elders who make the decision as to when, where and with whom they share their knowledge. They alone are responsible for making these decisions and do so according to their own beliefs and practices, which may of course include customary laws - but such laws are in no way enforced by a governing body. It is also understood that the person receiving the teachings has a personal responsibility for maintaining the integrity of that knowledge and therefore must be able to hold themselves accountable to the elder and the community.

Obviously, there is a great deal of work that needs to be done regarding cultural protocols and oral knowledge. It is for this reason that I have proposed the idea of a digital bundle for works that express indigenous knowledge online – so that we may continue the dialogue on how
to address cultural protocols and the articulation of indigenous knowledge through new media formats.

In reading Gervais and Young-Ing (2006), I can see the pitfalls of making broad statements that do not take up the specific politics of a community, or worse still, neglect the many impacts that TK has in the areas of health, education, training and employment. The fact that TK is used in so many areas speaks to the importance of its dissemination for community development. For example, Anderson, K; Bedwell, P; Hartley, E; Jacobs, B; Leclair, C; Lindberg, T; Maracle, S; McKay, C; and Monture, P. (2008) write about the impact of grandmothers in *Aboriginal Women’s Reflections on Ethics and Methodologies in Health Research*, where they make the connection between culture-based approaches to health research and how Aboriginal grandmothers are health providers, healers, and health researchers in their own communities.

In *Aboriginal Education: Fulfilling the Promise*, Dr. Marie Battiste (2000) writes that,

> The collection offers models and educational options that place Aboriginal culture, knowledge, and values at the core of learning systems and designs that are based on the experience of practitioners and researchers working in Aboriginal communities, provincial school systems, and post-secondary institutions. (p.12)

Ultimately, these types of collections replace a destructive stereotypical narrative of aboriginal people with new visions and new hopes, rooted in indigenous knowledge. In this way, TK has huge ramifications for uplifting first nations communities that continue to struggle with literacy issues, addictions, and abnormally high rates of suicide, incarceration, children in welfare, diabetes, high school drop outs, and so on. And while this list of problems is not exhaustive, it demonstrates that TK is a complex field. Furthermore, as the collections cited above demonstrate, the issues of the field cannot be confined to intellectual property issues or copyright for individual artists. The genie is already out of the box and has been for a long time. That is what makes having a discussion about customary laws and implementation of TK so difficult and explains why I hesitate to take a position in such a discussion and yet believe that discussions around cultural protocol should continue to be pursued.
Identity, oral culture, youth and digital storytelling

In *The World Republic of Letters*, Casanova writes that a “small nation” is “literarily deprived.” *Litterarisation*, for Casanova, is the transmutation of popular culture and linguistic forms into cultural and literary wealth. She states that, “The litterarisation of the oral language makes it possible not only to manifest a distinctive identity but also to challenge the standards of literary and linguistic correctness” (2004, p. 293). She elaborates that,

The initial purpose of the poets of the Irish Revival, for example, may thus be summed up as the recovery, reevaluation, and diffusion of folklore tales supposed to express the specific genius of the Irish people and to exhibit the country’s literary wealth. … Ancient legends and traditional narratives, unearthed and ennobled, gradually came to inspire countless poems, novels, stories and plays, which in turn completed the *litterarisation* of these sources in their various forms (comedy, tragedy, symbolic plays and rural drama. (p.226)

According to Casanova, manifesting a distinctive identity as a nation is key to literary success and to asserting one’s nation in the international arena. And while indigenous communities have chosen not to “litterarise” their oral cultures, they do resemble the struggles of ‘small nations,’ like Ireland, that have succeeded through the *Irish Revival* in making their presence felt in the world arena.

Indigenous communities today are making their presence felt through TK – and as a result are unleashing the many tensions associated with it in their struggle to gain national authority. In the quest to be acknowledged in the world arena and in the countries where they have been historically subjugated, indigenous communities are struggling with their need to distinguish themselves as distinct through TK while at the same time trying to preserve, protect, and control TK, through national and political mechanisms. The source of the conflict then, lies in the following question: How can TK be in the service of the nation while being policed through Intellectual Property Rights (on an international level) and regulation and policy over aboriginal artists and activists (on a local level)?
To answer this question I want to look briefly at the Maori trademark that was implemented in 2002 by the Te Waka Toi, the Maori arts board of Creative New Zealand, who in consultation with Maori artists, set up the *toi iho maori made* trademark to denote quality and authenticity of Maori art. The trademark was also designed to authenticate exhibitions and performances of Maori arts by Maori artists. The Maori acknowledge that the source and inspiration for their artwork is informed by their cultural heritage, which of course cannot be divested from indigenous knowledge. The *toi iho* (2010) collective state that,

Cultural heritage and the ongoing development of creative and interpretative expression and innovation are of paramount importance to Maori, the indigenous people of Aotearoa New Zealand. *toi iho™* was created to assist Maori to retain control over their cultural heritage and maintain the integrity of their art culture in an increasingly commercialised world.  

In so doing the collective was not only protecting the competitive rights of Maori artists but also protecting content related to TK. It was believed at the time that the trademark would benefit the Maori community overall. However, in 2009 Creative New Zealand decided to no longer invest in managing and promoting *toi iho*:

Creative New Zealand has become increasingly aware, through reviews, market research and artist feedback, that although there are artists who actively use *toi iho™* to leverage their work, many more Māori artists are making successful careers without the need for the *toi iho™* trademark.

For many Māori artists, the quality of their work speaks for itself and this is reflected in a growth of opportunities for consumers to buy Māori art from specialist Māori art and general galleries, the Internet and Māori arts markets. Creative New Zealand has conducted several reviews of *toi iho™* since its inception and a consistent theme was that while the ideas underpinning the brand have considerable merit, it has failed to deliver on

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its promise in terms of increasing sales of Māori art by licensed artists and stockists (retailers).\(^7\)

In the spring of 2010 the trademark was successfully transferred to a new Maori owned entity. The point to be noted here is the fact that Creative New Zealand witnessed first hand how the trademark, a national and political mechanism, failed the community it purported to protect and assist. Maori artists were succeeding with or without toi iho and therefore could not be governed or reigned in by the trademark.

I find this immensely interesting because I believe it speaks to the nature of TK: that it is something that cannot be managed by western intellectual property laws, which is what a trademark represents. According to WIPO (2010),

> The intellectual property system provides that protection by allowing for proprietorship and exclusive rights thus providing the tools for enhancing the competitiveness of enterprises and ultimately of an economy as a whole. …If we look at the market for goods, trademarks were one of the most important means by which manufacturers or providers were able to differentiate themselves and their goods from the competition. Trademarks are any sign capable of distinguishing the goods or services of one enterprise from that of another. (p. 2)

Elizabeth Ellis (2009), former Te Waka Toi Chair and driver of toi iho’s establishment, is optimistic about the transfer of the trademark. She states,

> The world is watching NZ. We led the way with the development of toi iho ten years ago. It's wonderful that so many people have come together, nationally and internationally, to support the mana of toi iho and to be kaitiaki. Our aim is that toi iho will be our taonga for future generations. (http://www.toiiho.co.nz/)

So while I remain skeptical in applying western IP laws over local customary protocols, it will be interesting to watch what happens in New Zealand, as there is still a contingent of people who

\(^7\) Retrieved August 3 2015 from
believe in the value of having a trademark to protect their cultural heritage. I first recall hearing about the Maori trademark a few years ago at a Ryerson conference on copyright that was hosted by the Creators’ Rights Alliance, which Greg Young Ing belongs to. I remember thinking that there must be some political tensions among the various Maori artists and communities in New Zealand around supporting and buying into the trademark. I guess my initial hunch was right, but I would argue that it is logical deduction. Indigenous communities are too diverse with respect to their protocols, elders, traditional teachers, artists, and activists to conform to a uniform, bureaucratic standard. And while I understand and can appreciate why such a standard would be attractive, I believe that cultural heritage/TK cannot be reined in without seriously compromising the indigenous rights and protocols of elders and communities themselves.

This brings me back to the specific questions Marlene Brant Castellano (2000) asks regarding the integrity of aboriginal knowledge and whether it can survive a transition to literate form, and I would add, to western copyright practices. What are the tests of authenticity and who has the authority to represent such knowledge? In asking these questions, Castellano (2000) pegs the very concerns posed by TK with respect to globalization, transnationality, diaspora, cosmopolitanism and multiculturalism. With a first nations population growing nearly three times faster than a non-first nations population, these questions are increasingly becoming immediate for all aboriginal stakeholders.

Aboriginal youth and the Internet

I agree with Castellano when she states that,

The young people no longer have daily access to experiential learning on the land; they have decreasing levels of fluency in aboriginal languages that would keep them in communication with elders; and they spend most of their time in educational institutions that socialize them into dependence on the written word. (2000, p. 32)

In this way aboriginal youth are part of a diaspora within the country in which they live because of the clear delineation made between traditional territories and reserves (generally—but not always—rural), and urban areas, which represent the larger dominant society. For these youth, who represent a minority, access to TK is a little more likely through reserve community
programs. For aboriginal youth who are not status Indians and therefore are not affiliated with a reserve, notions of identity and culture related to TK becomes even more ambiguous as they negotiate how to define themselves and how to access this elusive body of elders and traditional teachers in urban settings.

The issue of access to TK is a real concern for many first nation communities. Castellano (2000) writes that,

There is a real danger the elders who still retain traditional and spiritual knowledge, and who know the context in which empirical observations must be evaluated, will join their ancestors without passing on what they know. (p.32)

And yet this danger seems to directly contradict the premise held by scholars such as Gervais and Greg Young-Ing, who position their arguments with respect to the protection and regulation of TK. For Gervais,

The protection of traditional knowledge (“TK”) is progressively taking center-stage in global discussions concerning intellectual property and trade. There are several reasons for the issues’ move to the forefront. First, a large number of countries (and peoples) believe that up to now they have not derived great benefits from “traditional” forms of intellectual property yet find themselves rich with traditional knowledge, especially genetic resources and folklore. They would like to exploit these resources, and several major companies share this interest. (2001, p. 2)

An employee of WIPO (2010) writes that,

The rules of the game today are no longer what they used to be. Competition is very intense and the knowledge economy rewards those who understand the importance of intangibles and their role in differentiating and adding value to products. The intellectual property system provides the structure and the tools for protecting, managing, exploiting and enforcing the rights arising from such intangibles. (p. 12)

At the heart of western IP issues then, is the notion of economic return, which is ultimately invested in a competitive marketplace. But the marketplace as derived from the historical roots of the Greek agora can also be a place where people meet, communicate and engage with each
other. TK is not merely a competitive commodity but represents the diversity and philosophy of aboriginal people and as a result contributes to notions of cultural development and knowledge exchange even among indigenous communities themselves.

David Suzuki (1992) in *Wisdom of the Elders* also sees the benefit of indigenous knowledge for all future generations:

We need a radically different way of relating ourselves to the support systems of the planet. My experiences with aboriginal peoples have convinced me, both as a scientist and as an environmentalist, of the power and relevance of their knowledge and worldview in a time of imminent global ecocatastrophe. (p. xxxv)

Suzuki (1992) then goes on to explain how the idea for the book became a reality. He writes,

This book became possible when Peter Knudtson expressed similar concerns and hopes. Knudtson had also been trained in science and later encountered Native people in Alaska and California who shaped his appreciation for the power of their knowledge and attitudes. Our shared perceptions and fundamental belief in the validity and power of aboriginal notions of the sacredness of Nature have produced this book. (p.xxxv)

These passages resonate in relation to Casanova’s words, “…each state is constituted by its relations with other states, by its rivalry and competition with them. Just as the state is a relational entity, so the nation in inter- national” (p. 36). For “small nations” the “principal weapons are” as Casanova (2004) writes, “the people and the language (supposed or proclaimed) of the people” (p. 86).

Indigenous communities need to reposition the arguments around Traditional Knowledge in order to make more visible the purpose that it serves with respect to nation building and to how communities need it in all facets of our world – economies, social and justice functions, medicines, politics and education. I hope to make a significant contribution to this repositioning process, and see my work as being driven by an ethical imperative to speak to the community, to other indigenous nations and to the world. It is my hope that this approach will take precedence over the fearful withdrawal into policies and regulations that thwart what Casanova (2004)
would call the ‘genius’ of the people. Of course, this approach needs to be taken while still respecting and protecting what is sacred.

**Indigenous artists on the Internet**

Given the ubiquity of the Internet, cyberspace, like any popular media before it, produces cultural narratives that contribute to our understanding of race (Nakumara, 2007). And yet,

Far less is known about the uses and experiences of ICT’s by groups decentered from the dominant institutions and idioms. This is especially true for indigenous peoples, who have long been delegitimized by ruling cultural norms and isolated (economically, politically, geographically) from centers of influence. (Landzelius, 2006, p. 1)

Nonetheless there is belief that the colonialist notions of the periphery where indigenous communities are said to be located have the opportunity to inform the core, and that this can be accomplished through the Internet (Alia, 2010; Landzelius, 2006). We are challenged to think about this in *Native on the Net:*

How are indigenous voices, in turn, electronically reaching new audiences and creating new horizons for speakers as well as listeners? How do marginalized peoples perceive and position themselves in relation to global computer networkings, and how do these sociotechnical apparatuses figure in local lifeworlds. In what ways are interactive media environments changing the subjectivities and practices, both online and offline, of peoples historically de-centered from “the action”? (2006, p. 2)

These questions are crucial because not only do they support the presence of indigenous people on the Internet and therefore contribute to making them visible, but they speak to the potential impacts that the Internet has for community building. Alia writes that,

The poverty and distortion of mainstream coverage have made it imperative for Indigenous people to develop their own news outlets. They are using satellite, digital, cable, the Internet, cell phones – whatever is at hand. …Radio remains the chosen medium… the Internet is fast becoming the second medium of choice, with websites,
blogs, social networking, chat rooms, mobile phones, and radio intertwined within it. (2010, p. 17).

The Internet, according to Alia, is becoming a vital medium of communication and news for indigenous peoples. This perception is interesting to note, because despite the title “New Media Nation,” Alia’s work for the most part focuses on aboriginal community radio. She devotes little time to Internet content produced by aboriginal communities. In fact, in her chapter Turning the Camera and Microphone on Oneself, she cites only seven website examples, and she appears to have pulled these directly from the catalogue of ImagineNatives’ new media program. This suggests that very little work is devoted to exploring indigenous knowledge online, and this demonstrates that there is a gap in the field of new media and indigenous knowledge. It is my hope that my thesis project will address this gap.

For example recent collections such as Coded Territories: Tracing Indigenous Pathways in New Media Art, edited by Steve Loft and Kerry Swanson (2014) exclusively focus on the work of indigenous artists and curators as a way of speaking to "Decolonizing the Web." Steve Loft states in the introduction that:

…new media production by Aboriginal artists is transformative and transformational: a shapeshifter. It is an act of proprietary self-definition and cultural self-determination. In many ways, the work of Aboriginal new media artists can be seen as the outgrowth of a distinctly Aboriginal visual and oral culture. It represents an aesthetic of nexus based on a storytelling (knowledge transference) tradition, as well as the ongoing participation of Aboriginal artists in visual and media arts culture. Thus, articulation of Aboriginal artistic production becomes a locus for contesting dominant modes of presentation and discourse (2014, p. xvii).

Noting how Mr. Loft positions indigenous artists as shapeshifters is important, especially because he qualifies it as an act of proprietary self-definition and cultural self-determination. The idea of “proprietary self-definition” speaks to the ways in which artists interpret oral storytelling; it is important to differentiate that this does not entail indigenous knowledge transference from within the cultural protocols of indigenous communities. A self-proclaimed
interpretation of indigenous knowledge is an act of proprietary self-definition. It is not a representation or articulation of a teaching based within the cultural protocols of indigenous knowledge transference and therefore must be distinguished from indigenous knowledge projects online. This is where my work and research differs from indigenous new media artists because I do not proclaim or market myself as an artist and while I can appreciate the cultural self-determination of indigenous new media artists, I see that work as being very separate from the work of indigenous Elders and traditional teachers.

Indeed nine years ago Steve Loft edited another collection of aboriginal new media artists in Canada titled, *Transference, Tradition and Technology*, with editors Dana Claxton and Melanie Townsend. Here they write that

The legacy of colonialism on the Aboriginal people of Canada has had profound and often devastating consequences. Aboriginal artists and cultural producers have steadily and increasingly given voice to dissent, creating powerful works that affirm tradition, celebrate heritage, critique contemporary power structures, and reclaim a territory for their vision. (2005, p. xii)

This collection spoke to cultural self-determination from the position of artistic political dissent. It was also one of the first books to provide a comprehensive overview of Aboriginal new media practice in Canada from an entirely Aboriginal perspective. However it did not include a perspective on indigenous knowledge online.

For Alia, alternative media like the Internet and the radio provide a tremendous opportunity for indigenous people to correct what she (refers to as “centuries of media malpractice” (2010, p. 34). She writes that “Alternative” media merit full attention and credibility” (p. 113). Nakumara (2007) writes that: “The Internet is a popular communication medium that is used differently by different racial groups, particularly those produced and consumed by youths of color, which she believe may provide sites of resistance to offline racial hegemonies that call for serious consideration.” (2007, p. 184)

In this way alternative resources like the Internet that profile political works of dissent by indigenous artists, and also offer indigenous knowledge projects online, are key for speaking to Aboriginal youth so that they may come to understand that there are other worldviews besides
the “master narrative” that celebrates Euro-centric domination in North America (and around the world). And while it may be argued that blatant Indian stereotypes of the old Hollywood westerns seem to have faded, these master narratives have only become less obvious, and continue to be both insidious and ubiquitous. For this reason it is important that indigenous communities articulate clearly the ways in which we are present on the Internet.

Internet activism and cross-cultural knowledge exchange

In her work, Lievrouw introduces what she calls “five basic genres of contemporary alternative and activist new media projects: culture jamming, alternative computing, participatory journalism, mediated mobilization, and commons knowledge” (Lievrouw, 2011, p.19). I came upon this work while searching for ways to frame my questions and analysis of indigenous knowledge online. Each of the five genres presented by Lievrouw is distinct and delivered in particular ways that can be inspiring and engaging. Indeed, her work inspired me to acknowledge and recognize that indigenous knowledge online is in itself a contemporary alternative and activist new media project. Yet it is very different from the genres outlined by Lievrouw. Here I will only offer brief descriptions of each genre in order to show how they accomplish very different tasks from those addressed through the presence of indigenous knowledge online.

According to Lievrouw, the goal of culture jamming is to borrow, subvert and comment upon popular culture. Alternative computing involves highly specialized programmers who develop open software or hack into existing software to modify it for public purposes. Participatory journalism is reporting from the margins that aims to subvert mainstream media broadcasts of the news. “Mediated mobilization extends and activates the power of ‘live,’ local social relations and organizing – such as kinship and social support networks, professional affiliations or expert advice networks” (Lievrouw, 2011, p.20). Finally, commons knowledge projects “challenge or reframe the established, expert knowledge classifications of mainstream cultural institutions and disciplines (Lievrouw, 2011, p.20).

For Lievrouw what is core in each of these projects is that they “do not only reflect or critique mainstream media and culture, they constitute and intervene in them (p. 19).” Desperate to find where and how FourDirectionsTeachings.com might fit in this array of
alternative new media usage, I reviewed each genre carefully. However, I came to the conclusion that none really fit how FourDirectionsTeachings.com was conceived or how it works. While there are aspects of mediated mobilization and commons knowledge projects that could be used to describe the work that FourDirectionsTeachings.com is doing, that would be like trying to fit a square block into a round hole.

For example, Lievrouw’s definition of mediated mobilization states that:

Mediated mobilization relates to the domain of political/cultural organizing and social movements. It takes advantage of web-based social software tools like social network sites, personal blogs, flash mobs, and email listservs, as well as DIY digital media, to cultivate interpersonal networks online and to mobilize those networks to engage in live and mediated collective action. (2011, pg. 25)

The Idle No More Movement (an ongoing Indigenous protest movement)⁸ might be described in these terms, as it utilizes facebook, personal blogs, websites and listservs to mobilize community flash round dances in public spaces and therefore engages in live and mediated collective action. FourDirectionsTeachings.com does not facilitate the same kind of public presence in the streets. It has facilitated users to action in that many have reached out to the producer to request more materials, both for online and offline use. For example, communities who don’t have strong Internet access have requested offline copies of FourDirectionsTeachings.com content, or have requested promotional material to hand out within their respective communities. More importantly, the project has also facilitated connection to Elders presented on FourDirectionsTeachings.com for communities who are seeking out their further expertise. The site has granted access to several educational institutions to utilize the site and the curriculum pieces in their classes. However, while FourDirectionsTeachings.com has contributed somewhat to aspects of mediated mobilization, this term does not really describe its design or approach.

With respect to commons knowledge projects, Lievrouw writes that:

⁸ http://www.idlenomore.ca/
Commons knowledge projects reorganize and categorize information in ways that can challenge or reframe the established, expert knowledge classifications of mainstream cultural institutions and disciplines. (2011, p.20)

[This] relates to content of culture itself – the nature of knowledge and expertise, how information is organized and evaluated and who decides. (Lievrouw, 2011, p. 26)

Commons knowledge projects are framed in direct response to established western knowledge constructs and therefore are seen as radical and subversive of dominant power relations. For indigenous communities who have never seen their knowledge appreciated or presented in public spaces, online indigenous knowledge projects like FourDirectionsTeachings.com are radical and antithetical to the colonial education and textbooks used throughout Canada and North America. It could be argued that FourDirectionsTeachings.com is in some ways a commons knowledge project because of the subversive and alternative position it occupies. Yet, I would posit that this genre is too limiting because it cannot fully acknowledge the depth of the work and impact that indigenous knowledge is having online. To acknowledge this impact, I argue in this thesis that we need to think of indigenous knowledge projects online as having their own unique and separate genre.

While I appreciate Lievrouw’s discussion of five basic genres of contemporary alternative and activist new media projects, none are an ideal fit for indigenous knowledge online. However, I am inspired by her thinking around the notion of genres, and how she applies that to activism on the Internet. Indeed, it was her writing on genre that helped me envision the concept of FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a digital bundle.

Lievrouw defines genre as…

…a type of expression or communication that is useful and/ or meaningful among the members of a given community or within a particular situation. Genres have both form and purpose: that is they have typical material features or follow certain format conventions, and they allow people to express themselves appropriately, and to achieve their various purposes or intentions, in a given situation. (2011, pg.20)
As I discussed in Chapter One, FourDirectionsTeachings.com may be considered as a “digital bundle” because it is a collection of teachings by respected Elders and traditional teachers who are sharing indigenous knowledge in very specific ways. Hence, the site is a type of expression and communication that is meaningful to particular indigenous communities. Further, Lievrouw writes that:

Genres have several other important characteristics that are relevant for alternative and activist new media projects. First, they help ‘mediate’ or facilitate communication among members of communities. The authors of an analysis of Web genres note that "Genres are useful because they make communications more easily recognizable and understandable by recipients” (Crowston & Williams, 2000, p.203). …Thus genres are the means for creating and maintaining community and social context, and the cultural products of those communities and contexts. But they can also be specific to a certain group’s worldview or situation that outsiders may not understand them – so genres can also act as boundaries or markers that exclude outsiders and reinforce the power of insiders, ……Indeed, “recognition of a particular genre is one sign of membership in a particular community” (Crowston & Williams, 2000, p.203). (Lievrouw, 2011, pg. 21)

In thinking about indigenous knowledge online as a particular genre, such as a digital bundle, it is possible to see how such projects can mediate and facilitate communication among members of communities. Further, the notion of a genre like the digital bundle only comes to life as a cultural product by the people who recognize and understand it as such and therefore speaks to the notion of a certain group’s worldview - and thus one that outsiders may not understand. For example, outsiders do not understand the impact of FourDirectionsTeachings.com because they have little or no reference point for indigenous knowledge, and consequently tend to ignore (and deny funding for) these kinds of sites.

However, at least some indigenous peoples see FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a sacred collection of indigenous knowledge that must be cared for, respected and passed down for future generations - in many ways embodying certain attributes of a community bundle. Thus the meaning of genre and its implications for insider community membership, as described above, is applicable and will become evident in Chapters Five through Nine, where the research participants share their feedback and insight on the potential for indigenous knowledge online.
That said, the time has come to elevate the work that indigenous knowledge is doing online by naming it and providing it with its own genre. I suggest that 'digital bundle' is an apt name for this genre, as it signals how such projects can act as boundaries or markers that reinforce the power of insiders – indigenous communities for whom the respectful protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge online is of paramount significance and importance!

Finding the language to discuss indigenous knowledge online has been very challenging. The difficulty of the task is not surprising. Upon reading *Subversion, Conversion, Development: Cross Cultural Knowledge and Politics of Design*, edited by James Leach and Lee Wilson, I couldn’t help but notice how the editors summarized the book by stating that:

> This volume has demonstrated the different ways in which modes of life, trajectories of practice, ways of knowing, imaginaries, and particular values feed into and shape alternative uses and reuses of technologies in ways that have the potential to challenge this appropriative knowledge form, the epistemological assumptions, and the social values that guide most ICT production today. (Leach & Wilson, 2014, p.242)

Yet the editors had coordinated a collection of empirical cases and theoretical examinations “that focus on alternative cultural encounters with and around information technologies (alternative, that is, to the dominant notions of media consumption among Western audiences)” (Leach & Wilson, 2014, p.1). To change the appropriative knowledge form and the epistemological assumptions and social values that guide ICT production today, we need to stop positioning difference as alternatives. To truly change is to adopt positions and discourses that are grounded in cultural knowledge that stand alone and apart from the dominant notions of media and consumption preferences of Western audiences. Published in 2014, much of the indigenous content in Leach and Wilson’s collection focused on postcolonial databasing - that is, the preservation and digitizing of indigenous cultural artifacts or indigenous knowledge in various forms. In discussing indigenous knowledge online, methods on how to assemble knowledge from indigenous academics for the purposes of creating new knowledge was coined as an “indigenous knowledge commons.”

While these types of projects are important, I would argue that they are merely picking up western alternative and activist Internet projects and spinning them into indigenous content. Indeed, the editors recognize that the discourse surrounding ICT (Information Communication
Technology) production and analysis is limiting and exclusionary of indigenous concepts and worldviews. In fact, they note an absence of indigenous ICT accounts:

For one thing, rather surprisingly, while global transformations wrought by ICT’s are widely trumpeted, we have remarkably few accounts of ICT initiatives that have meaningfully privileged local knowledge and understanding. The reciprocal effects on the development of these technologies and accompanying social forms in different contexts remain underrepresented. (Leach & Wilson, 2014, p.231)

Reading this work made me realize that my frustrations with Internet studies and the discourse surrounding cyberspace and activism in ICTs are grounded in the contested nature of this space, where settler or western knowledge and indigenous knowledge and perspectives are not always equally well represented, to say the least. As a result, my efforts to retool and refashion ICT for the purposes of indigenous knowledge through FourDirectionsTeachings.com also entail retooling and refashioning the discourse surrounding cyberspace and activism in order to adequately speak to the different contexts that indigenous knowledge online has for indigenous communities.

In order to truly understand the work that FourDirectionsTeachings.com is doing online, and to adequately represent and frame this research, I came to see that I need to draw from the fields of Indigenous Knowledge, Indigenous Resurgence, and Activism in Internet Studies. In doing so I was able to describe the concepts and introduce the language I need as a producer and academic to discuss indigenous knowledge online. It is my hope that my work can contribute to the ongoing dialogue that Leach and Wilson refer to in their conclusion when they state:

We consider an emphasis on ongoing and reflexive dialogue, through making and use, with people in all sorts of places and with different histories and imaginaries can only enhance the positive subversion, conversion, and ultimately development of future technologies. (Leach & Wilson, 2014, p.242)

As I discussed in Chapter One, FourDirectionsTeachings.com may be considered as a “digital bundle” because it is a collection of teachings by respected Elders and traditional teachers who are sharing indigenous knowledge in very specific ways. Further like bundles that are carried by indigenous Elders and traditional teachers, it is transportable and can be accessed when needed,
and activated at particular times and places when alone or with a group. Also like a physical bundle that is carried, the digital bundle stores knowledge and teachings and takes care of them through the process of adhering to cultural protocols.

Eight years ago I wrote that:

The Internet has the potential to reinforce and reinvigorate (without "reinventing" or replacing) traditional forms of thought and ways of interpreting the world around us that are grounded in authoritative and once communally held sources and symbols…(Wemigwans, 2008, p. 35).

Projects like FourDirectionsTeachings.com show how indigenous people are expressing indigenous knowledge online in ways that contribute to the reflection of indigenous ontology and values on the World Wide Web. I will now turn to my own work and how I constructed my research design and approach to reflect and embrace indigenous epistemologies and perspectives.
Chapter 3
Research Design and Approach

Introduction

I begin from the premise that FourDirectionsTeachings.com is a novel cultural form on the Internet that challenges existing dominant social configurations of power. The site does this by contributing to social and political transformation from the periphery of mainstream society through helping to revive the cultural foundations of indigenous communities. To discuss the impact of this project, I employ social theory, cultural analysis and political critique, as well as indigenous methodologies and theories that pull from the work of Gerald Taiaiake Alfred (2009), Wendy Makoons Geniusz (2009), Leanne Simpson (2011) and Linda Tuhiwai Smith (1999).

As I noted in Chapter One, having indigenous knowledge available online is an emergent phenomenon. A culturally appropriate methodology is required to analyze and comprehend the multifaceted features, circulation and effects of indigenous knowledge online. There are tensions between settler society and indigenous perspectives regarding the work of indigenous knowledge online, which I discuss below in the section on Internet activism and cross-cultural exchange. I then discuss my research strategy and design, and introduce Leanne Simpson's (2011) Four Tenets, Biskaabiiyang, Naakgonige, Aanjigone, and Debwewin. In the next section I discuss the relationship I see between these Four Tenets and Taiaiake Alfred's (2009) Five Mantras. I then briefly introduce L.T. Smith's (1999) Twenty-Five Projects as a framework for thinking about indigenous knowledge on the Internet. I conclude this chapter with a discussion on the Recruitment Process, the interviews and my perspective on the interviews as a reciprocal exchange.

Positive inversion

When I produced FourDirectionsTeachings.com I envisioned an online project that embraced the Elders and celebrated indigenous knowledge for indigenous peoples. I did not
create the project to teach non-indigenous people, and yet many use the site. I was pleased to hear that the site was being used to train teacher candidates at OISE University of Toronto. However, I have also received feedback that is less pleasing. For example, a non-indigenous distributor in England who markets teepees for a living wrote to get permission to reference Mary Lee's Teaching on the construction of the teepee in his teepee camps. I recommended that he refer his clients to FourDirectionsTeachings.com, where they could experience the teaching for themselves, refusing to give him permission to take any part of the teaching out of its original context. It is my hope that he will respect my wishes.

When I reflect on what people are doing with FourDirectionsTeachings.com, I think of Mary Lee, who told me that only teachings that are transferred through cultural protocol become the real teachings. Anything else is speculative or, at best, imaginative, as it is processed through a single individual outside of the community and thus, outside of cultural protocol. In some ways this brings me peace. Further, having gone through this intensive process of research I see the project differently because of the people who spoke with me about their experiences, hopes and dreams. Now I see the value in having both indigenous and non-indigenous people access the project.

Still, it is very important for me as an indigenous researcher to speak politically and personally to indigenous communities. So, in the spirit of delving into indigenous philosophy and epistemology, I have constructed my research to reflect the four indigenous tenets that Simpson (2011) introduces in her work, namely: Biskaabiiyang (to look back), Naakgonige (to plan), Aanjigone (non-interference) and Debwewin (heart-based knowledge). I employ these tenets as theoretical principles for discussing indigenous knowledge online and how it produces and contributes to indigenous resurgence through particular processes that Taiaiake Alfred (2005) identifies in *Being Indigenous: Resurgences Against Contemporary Colonialism* as “mantras of a resurgent Indigenous movement: Land is life, Language is Power, Freedom is the Other Side of Fear, Decolonize your Diet, and Change Happens one Warrior at a Time” (p. 613). In discussing these processes and tenets, I also bring in L.T. Smith’s (1999) work on the Twenty-Five Projects/ Methodologies, in order to frame the research data that I gathered for this dissertation.
I combine these multiple lenses, each holding unique views from three diverse and widely acknowledged indigenous scholars, to explore the questions under consideration in this dissertation in a way that connects and juxtaposes interrelated principles and perspectives. The idea is not to achieve coherence or meaning through a linear or literary methodology. However, moving through the ideas in this way, and exploring some of the many possible ways in which they relate and shed light on the issues being explored, might help us to affirm meaning in relation to the questions being considered in a way that ensures a relatively rigorous indigenous perspective.

The Four Tenets: Biskaabiiyang, Naakgonige, Aanjigone, and Debwewin

*Biskaabiiyang* (to look back).

Simpson (2011) defines *biskaabiiyang* as a verb that means, “to look back to recreate the cultural and political flourishment of the past, to reclaim the fluidity around our traditions, to encourage the self-determination of individuals within our national and community-based contexts; and, to re-create an artistic and intellectual renaissance within a larger political and cultural resurgence” (p. 51). I recognized that *biskaabiiyang* is embodied in the project of FourDirectionsTeachings.com, because that project celebrates cultural survival through indigenous knowledge that is grounded in the oral traditions of our ancestors. By sharing this work digitally we are reclaiming the fluidity of our traditions by choosing and adapting how to represent, restore and reframe teachings, so that even an introductory presentation on indigenous knowledge can reach out to communities nationally and inspire individuals to remember and reclaim. In this way, I understand that *biskaabiiyang* is a process of decolonization, because it means that we pick up the things that were left behind. I have heard cultural teachers refer to this as “picking up those bundles” that were left behind, such as our songs, dances, teachings, and knowledge.

In thinking about *biskaabiiyang* I think about vision, and how our vision needs to include all that we know to the extent that we can. I also think about what Simpson says about “…being ethical about our responsibilities for resurgence within a Nishnaabeg ontology…” (p. 147).

As a producer and researcher I can see how FourDirectionsTeachings.com is part of
biskaabiiyang, which Simpson calls “a process by which we can figure out how to live as Nishnaabeg in the contemporary world and use our gaa-izhi-zhawendaagoziyang (that which was given to use in a loving way) to build Nishnaabeg renaissance” (p. 50).

Furthermore, I have come to understand that as the producer of FourDirectionsTeachings.com, and as an academic writing about indigenous knowledge online, I have a tremendous responsibility to respectfully acknowledge and to accurately reflect what the research participants have shared with me. FourDirectonsTeachings.com is more than just a website on indigenous knowledge; it is a gift of teachings and knowledge that carry responsibility for the next seven generations, and indeed resembles important aspects of what traditional knowledge keepers might call a bundle. Acknowledgement of the work in this way implies a huge cultural responsibility, which I will elaborate upon in Chapter Five. Suffice it to say here that biskaabiiyang is an integral theme for thinking about the project, and the roles and responsibilities of a producer, academic and Anishinaabekwe.

Naakgonige (to plan).

In discussing naakgonige, Simpson states that planning is an important process in resurgence: a way of collectivizing, strategizing and making the best decisions possible in any given context (p.147). This principle was central to my discussions with research participants, who all expressed careful consideration and warnings about how to proceed with regard to having indigenous knowledge online. Indeed, many participants were very thoughtful and reflective about indigenous culture in contemporary contexts, and stressed the importance of respect and responsibility, echoing what I read from Simpson, who states that naakgonige means “…to carefully deliberate and decide when faced with any kind of change or decision. It warns against changing for the sake of change, and reminds Nishnaabeg that our Elders and our Ancestors did things a certain way for a reason (p. 56).”

As a producer I had to confront people’s fears about having indigenous knowledge online when I first proposed the project. I did not feel comfortable making these decisions on my own because I understood intuitively that those decisions were not mine alone to make. I sought out community advisors who are seen as people who take the protection and promotion of indigenous knowledge very seriously, to help me with the development of the project. Now, at
this stage in my work, I am seeking out the community once again to engage in a dialogue about next steps based on my research and findings.

I therefore appreciate the way Simpson positions naakgonige as “encouraging one to deliberate and consider the impacts of decisions on all aspects of life and our relationships – the land, the clans, children, and the future [and that it] …requires individuals, clans and communities to carefully deliberate, not just in an intellectual sense, but using their emotional, physical and spiritual beings as well” (p.57). I feel that we are in a place and time where we need to make decisions together as communities regarding the ways in which we are going to support the strengthening of our cultural foundations and regenerate our intent to be indigenous (Taiaiaike Alfred, 2005, p. 614). FourDirectionsTeachings.com is part of this process because it contributes to the strengthening of cultural foundations by providing indigenous knowledge and worldviews online. In doing this work, FourDirectionsTeachings.com helps to regenerate our intent to be indigenous.

_Aanjigone_ (non-interference).

In considering the meaning of respect from an indigenous perspective, Simpson writes that we are to deeply cherish each other - to truly see one another and cherish what we see. She states that, “This teaching flows into _Aanjigone_ (non-interference) in that we are to be very slow to judge one another, very careful with our words and actions to not bring those negative attributes back onto ourselves and our families” (p.125). I understand this to mean that we are to extend patience and kindness and that _Aanjigone_ is a part of claiming and testimonies and negotiating, all of which will be discussed further. With respect to change, Simpson states that

_[Aanjigone]_ ensures that if change or transformation occurs, it promotes Nishnaabeg ways of being and prevents Zhaaganashiiyaadizi (assimilation). It also ensures that the interrogation or critique of decisions – or the consideration of all the possible consequences of a particular decision – is focused on the concept or decision rather than an individual (p.54).

The principle of _Aanjigone_ is very important for thinking about indigenous knowledge online, because it means that we have to set our fears aside and think beyond and outside of ourselves about the next seven generations to come. For Simpson, _Aanjigone_ “means to focus within…to
think carefully and strategically about our responses rather than blindly reacting to (colonizing forces) out of anger” (p.56). I see this process as a meditative space where healing and restoration occur through deep feeling and reasoning. Rather than force change out of preconceived agendas, we try to hear and see deeply what lies behind things so that we can more truly affect them from our common sacred bond.

FourDirectionsTeachings.com emulates this principle by being a space where visitors can experience the teachings at their own pace. Further, the teachings are not interpreted for them; the visitor must come to their own conclusion through active listening. In this way FourDirectionsTeachings.com is a space where visitors can experience indigenous knowledge without judgement and within the indigenous principle of non-interference.

*Debwewin* (truth or heart-based knowledge).

Simpson explains *Debwewin* as the “sound my heart makes”, meaning “our truth” (, p.17). I have heard something similar where *Debwewin* means “heart-based”, or what you know intuitively - that is, your own inwardly derived truth. In writing about *Debwewin*, Simpson pulls from Anishinaabe ethnologist and storyteller Basil Johnston and Anishinaabe law scholar John Borrows to get at the notion of diversity and individuality in the meaning of truth. Johnston explains:

Our word for truth or correctness or any of its synonyms is *wa’dae ’b ’wae*, meaning ‘he or she is telling the truth, is right, is correct, is accurate.’ From its composition – the prefix *dae*, which means ‘as far as, inasmuch as, according to’, and the root *wae*, a contraction of *wae-wae*, referring to sound – emerges the second meaning, which gives the sense of a person casting his or her knowledge as far as he or she can. By implication, the person whom is said to be *da’eb ’wae* is acknowledged to be telling what he or she knows only insofar as he or she perceived what he or she is reporting, and only according to his or her command of the language. In other words, the speaker is exercising the highest degree of accuracy possible given what he or she knows. In the third sense, the term conveys the philosophic notion that there is no such thing as absolute truth (cited by Simpson, 2011, p. 59)
Simpson then goes on to state that, “These explanations are consistent with John Borrows’ explanation of diversity in terms of Nishnaabeg thought. Borrows explains that difference exists within Nishnaabeg thought. Rather than positioning this difference as “tension” or in an oppositional framing, diversity and difference are seen as necessary parts of the larger whole” (p.59). So, while we may recognize a diversity of truths, as captured in the statement “all Creation Stories are true”, we still must strive to reach those insights from a place of Debwewin — truth. The principle of Debwewin is integral to how we write, read, envision, discover and share as indigenous communities, and hence is critical to mobilization. Without it, we would lack a sense of faith and trust in what we know.

Regenerating indigeneity

In the interviews that I conducted, themes of indigenous resurgence, survival, cultural revitalization and transformation were consistently discussed and debated by the participants. Many were not willing to make hard and fast statements; rather, they took care in ways that I believe are related to some of the principles listed above. What did become clear to me through each interview was the work that individual research participants were undertaking to regenerate what Taiaiake Alfred (2005) refers to as “being indigenous.” For him this means “…thinking, speaking, and acting with the conscious intent of regenerating one’s indigeneity" (p.614).

For Taiaiake Alfred there are particular pathways that lead to indigenous resurgence movements. I will now define and discuss these pathways. While some are more applicable than others with respect to indigenous knowledge online, or to how the participants in this research discussed the issues that were important to them, all mantras/pathways are worth noting.

Land is life

Our people must reconnect with the terrain and geography of their Indigenous heritage if they are to comprehend the teachings and values of the ancestors, and if they are to draw strength and sustenance that is independent of colonial power, and which is regenerative of an authentic, autonomous, Indigenous existence.
Language is Power
Our people must recover ways of knowing and relating from outside the mental and ideational framework of colonialism by regenerating themselves in a conceptual universe formed through indigenous languages.

Freedom is the Other Side of Fear
Our people must transcend the controlling power of the many and varied fears that colonial powers use to dominate and manipulate us into complacency and cooperation with its authorities. The way to do this is to confront our fears head-on through spiritually grounded action; contention and direct movement at the source of our fears is the only way to break the chains that bind us to our colonial existences.

Decolonize your Diet
Our people must regain the self-sufficient capacity to provide our own food, clothing, shelter and medicines. Ultimately important to the struggle for freedom is the reconstitution of our own sick and weakened physical bodies and community relationships accomplished through a return to the natural sources of food and the active, hard-working, physical lives lived by our ancestors.

Change Happens one Warrior at a Time
Our people must reconstitute the mentoring and learning-teaching relationships that foster real and meaningful human development and community solidarity. The movement toward decolonization and regeneration will emanate from transformations achieved by direct-guided experience in small, personal, groups and one-on-one mentoring towards a new path. (2005, p.613)

What strikes me about these pathways is how some of them connect and ally with Simpson’s (2011) tenets discussed above. For example, *Biskaabiiyang* (to look back) fits with Taiaiake Alfred’s (2005) pathways of “Land is Life” and “Language is Power.” “Land is Life” is about reconnecting. To reconnect we need to look back and claim, name and reframe the meanings of those territories that are rightfully ours. With respect to “Language is Power”, looking back and picking up the language means making a commitment to language revitalization, restoration of
indigenous worldviews, and creation of ways to learn - which ultimately means being responsible for resurgence within an indigenous ontology. This resurgence also relates to the principle of Naakgonige (to plan), with indigenous ontology as the basis for planning.

In thinking about the notion that “Freedom is the Other Side of Fear”, I can see how this pathway resembles the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) as a way of coping and strategizing with our inmost fears of colonial domination. To even consider Naakgonige (to plan) is to entertain the idea of transformation or change - and yet Aanjigone (non-interference) reminds us that we cannot force this change, that we need to give and allow for the space and time to heal, because that is how we become spiritually grounded. Transformation and change can be planned, but not actualized until we are grounded spiritually through our own healing and insight. Perhaps knowing that transformation is possible is what drives the individual to want to heal and be free from fear.

Finally, the pathway “Change Happens one Warrior at a Time” relates directly to all of the research participants in this project who are working to foster meaningful relationships in their communities. These warriors are seeking Debwewin (heart-based truth) and they are committed to sharing what they find and what they create through the process of mentoring and learning from one another.

In articulating the relationships that I see between Simpson’s four tenets and Taiaiake Alfred’s five pathways, I am making connections to indigenous principles and methodologies as a way of applying an indigenous research design and approach to my work. In keeping with this goal, I will now turn to the work of one more indigenous scholar, L.T. Smith’s (1999) work on the Twenty-Five projects/methodologies. This work will provide a lens for framing the research data that I have gathered for this dissertation.

Twenty-Five Projects/ indigenous methodologies

In Decolonizing Methodologies: Research and Indigenous Peoples, L.T. Smith (1999) devotes an entire chapter to listing twenty-five projects that she explains as being not a definitive list of activities, but rather an attempt to bolster and strengthen indigenous communities, researchers, and activists with the information that there are processes and methodologies that
can work for them (p.161). Published in 1999, the projects listed are still relevant today, and in rereading them they still resonate as powerful methodologies that can provide an indigenous framework for thinking about how online indigenous knowledge contributes to indigenous resurgence.

Just as I have drawn attention to the relationship between Taiaiake Alfred’s five mantras and Simpson’s four tenets, there are definite connections to be made between L.T. Smith’s Twenty-Five projects and Simpson’s four Nishnaabeg principles of Biskaabiiyang (to look back), Naakgonige (to plan), Aanjigone (non-interference), and Debwewin (heart-based truth). I now list the principles below as categories into which I have placed L.T. Smith’s Twenty-Five projects, demonstrating the connections I see between them. I have purposely left the numerical order of each project as it is presented and sequenced in L.T. Smith’s book to demonstrate my reordered of them to reflect the relationships and connections I perceive between the Twenty-Five projects and each of the four Nishnaabeg principles. Needless to say, these categories are not immutable and merely represent guides that I feel work for my dissertation.

Biskaabiiyang (to look back)

3. Storytelling

4. Celebrating Survival

6. Indigenizing

8. Revitalizing

12. Representing

15. Reframing

16. Restoring

18. Democratizing

20. Naming

22. Creating
L.T. Smith’s Twenty-Five projects listed here represent methodologies that are concerned with the broader politics and strategic goals of indigenous research (p.143). As she explains, methods frame and shape the analyses and help to qualify the kind of questions that are being asked. Distinguishing the Twenty-Five projects into the four categories has helped me to develop a
framework that I can apply to the research data. Of course, I want to stress again that these categories are not fixed or immutable, but are rather a way of helping me to organize and frame my analysis using indigenous contexts and paradigms that are specific to this research project. In the analysis section of the dissertation I will discuss each of Smith’s Twenty-Five projects in more detail, along with the connections that I make to the principles under which I have listed them. In the next section of this Chapter I will discuss how I recruited the participants in this research and how I conducted the interviews with them.

Recruitment process

As a researcher I seek to understand indigenous and other users’ responses to online indigenous knowledge projects. Since launching FourDirectionsTeachings.com in 2006 I have received over 100 unsolicited emails regarding the project, keeping a log of potential research participants. I selected individuals who self-identified their profession or role in the community and described how and why they are interested in FourDirectionsTeachings.com.

Quite a range of people have contacted me, such as teachers from elementary, secondary and post-secondary programs and adult education programs. These educational institutions included public schools, colleges and universities. I also received emails from various Children's Aides across the country and penal institutions, interested in using the site to train social workers, foster parents and parole offices. I also received requests from many program managers and workers who were seeking culturally relevant aides for their community based education programs. Generally these people worked in health services, family and social services, penal institutions for indigenous adults and youth correctional facilities. In addition there were also many indigenous community programs operating within drop in centers, and friendship centers where programs on adult literacy, youth mentoring, parenting classes, and life skills and other professional training programs are offered. I also received many emails from individuals both indigenous and non-indigenous people, who just wanted to express their gratitude for having access to an indigenous knowledge site, especially from artists and people who work in the arts, who felt inspired and energized by the teachings.

It was an honor to hear from all of these people. As the years passed, many of the people I originally had contact with moved from their jobs but fortunately a good number of people
were still in reach. In general the highest turn over rate was adult educators who when I tried to contact them had moved on from the organization. Some of the adult literacy/ education programs that were in contract with me originally were Native Women's Resource Centre, Seven Generations Education Institute, Circle of Nations Learning Centre (whom I quoted in an article that I wrote in 2008), the Seniors Education Center for Continuing Education at the University of Regina and the Institute of American Indian Arts distance learning program. In the end, I contacted approximately twenty people and originally had twelve people accept. Unfortunately I was unable to secure any adult educators and will perhaps consider this demographic for a future research project. I also contacted potential participants based on strong referrals from people who were aware of my work as a producer of FourDirectionsTeachings.com.

As an Anishinaabekwe (Ojibwe woman) and the producer of the FourDirectionsTeachings.com project I do have a pre-existing relationship with some of the research participants, and I discuss this in the introductions to research participants in Chapter Four. I made it clear during the recruitment process and through my informed consent letter and letter of information (see appendices A and B) to potential participants that, while I was using FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a way of recruiting people and initiating conversation, the purpose of the interview was to examine and discuss how indigenous online projects are perceived and used, and to reflect upon indigenous knowledge representation and how communities are affected/ impacted (or not) by having indigenous knowledge online.

My goal during recruitment and throughout the interview process was to mitigate any power differential I held as the producer of FourDirectionsTeachings.com by stressing my academic research focus on examining the phenomenon of using online technology to explore Indigenous knowledge.

The Interview as a reciprocal exchange

As a researcher I have always valued indigenous approaches to research that emphasize the importance of and need for reciprocity. Principles and ethics guiding indigenous research stress that one of the main tenets of consideration is how the research work will serve aboriginal communities and demonstrate reciprocity for those who participate (Danard, D.D.; Restoule, J.P., 2010). As a producer of FourDirectionsTeachings.com, I have offered the project freely on the
Internet, where diverse aboriginal communities and groups have engaged with it. In this way a gift has already been presented to aboriginal and non-aboriginal communities, putting me in a unique position as a researcher, because research participants are already using a project that I have helped to provide.

Moreover, I found that using FourDirectionsTeachings.com as an introductory platform for discussion really helped to launch each of the interviews into a wider discussion on indigenous knowledge, the Internet, and the implications of the Internet for indigenous knowledge in the field of education. From the onset of the interviews I found that having a common referent to discuss gave participants comfort and helped guide the interview. I also found that most participants were happy to be involved, seeing their participation as a way of giving back to a work that they personally valued and appreciated. Those who were more reticent about their participation were responding to time constraints, while others were concerned about the public positioning of their voices in the research. I took the time to reassure everyone that they would be given the opportunity to review their interview transcript, and allow them time to correct and edit any information that they felt was not representative of our interview or of what they were trying to convey (see Appendix C for interview questions). I also offered to share the finished thesis with each research participant.

I am honored that all of the participants, with the exception of one, agreed to be identified in this research project. The one person who chose not be identified did so to protect the work they do in the community. All are respected professionals in their field, and the work they are doing is so important to reinstating what it means to be indigenous and what it means to articulate indigeneity and indigenous worldviews to all Canadians. They are passionate about their work, and those who agreed to be identified did so such that they could share and contribute to the dialogue on indigenous knowledge and the Internet. Revealing the participants also honors their roles as change agents, related to what Taiaiake Alfred (2005) refers to as “Change Happens One Warrior at a Time”.

Each interview was semi-structured and open-ended, with the intent of engaging in a dialogue that would elicit discussion around the following questions:

- What sites are being taken up as indigenous knowledge and why?
How do online indigenous knowledge projects contribute to indigenous and non-indigenous communities?

What impact do online indigenous knowledge projects have?

How do sites and resources on the Internet become accepted as legitimate sources for indigenous knowledge?

How do online indigenous knowledge sites mediate culture and knowledge, and how do they create new knowledge projects and relationships? (See Appendix A – Letter of information for key informants: invitation to take part in interview)

Once we had completed initial introductions, the interview moved into a discussion of general Internet use, how and why the participants used FourDirectionsTeachings.com, and whether participants made a distinction between indigenous information and indigenous knowledge online. We then discussed the value of resources online, their impact, and finally, what the participant would like to see in terms of access to cultural resources and why.

I audio recorded all of my interviews and then transcribed each one in its totality, sending the transcribed version to each of the respective interviewees. Many commented that they were too lengthy and needed a more defined direction. I reassured them that this was a natural outcome, as conversations tend to veer off in all kinds of directions, and that they would be receiving a second, coded version presenting the themes I would draw upon, which they could edit and comment upon. Many of the research participants were relieved to see this cleaner, second version of the transcript, and I encouraged them to review it carefully and edit it as they saw fit.

The result of this process was an extraordinary body of information and knowledge that connected online indigenous projects to work in the fields of education, health and institutional systems, and to cultural work in the arena of the arts. Therefore, it is with great pleasure that I introduce the research participants in the following chapter, first as a group, and then each one individually.
Chapter 4
Introducing the Participants

Introduction

I have organized the research participants into three groups: educators, cultural arts workers, and system workers (those who work in organizations/institutions, such as child welfare systems and penitentiaries). My rationale for this is that, through my recruitment process, I noticed that the people who expressed the most interest in FourDirectionsTeachings.com worked in the field of education, were engaged as cultural workers and artists, were employed in organizations and institutions that provided services to aboriginal communities, or provided services to or work directly with aboriginal communities. Generally, the organizations serving aboriginal peoples represented the fields of health, the penal system, and social services. For ease of description I refer to this last group as System Workers, as we often hear people in the community colloquially refer to these fields as being “in the system.”

Ten individuals took part in this research project. I will begin by introducing the educators (four), followed by the cultural arts workers (three) and then the system workers (three). I originally began with twelve participants but lost one person (grouped in the cultural arts workers sector) who left organization and did not leave forwarding contact information. The second person was an individual working in the system workers sector.

I begin with an overview of each research participant, who they are, and how each was recruited for this study. I then introduce what they do and why their particular work was of interest to me as a researcher looking at Indigenous knowledge online. These introductions go in order of each participant’s location, beginning in the east of Canada, where the sun rises, and ending in the west, where the sun sets. I then discuss Being Native on the Net as a way of introducing how each of the research participants uses the Internet to facilitate their own work and project goals.
Educators

Professor Larry Chartrand, Faculty of Law, Common Law Section, University of Ottawa. Professor Larry Chartrand teaches in the Faculty of Law at the University of Ottawa. He is Métis and originates in the prairies going back seven generations. His paternal family was historically displaced from the Red River area. When I asked him if being Métis informed his interest in indigenous law, he said, “Yes, I would say so ….not only for personal reasons but academic reasons too; when I started law school, (I began) looking at aboriginal rights and I have pursued that ever since” (L. Chartrand, personal communication December 5, 2013).

I first became aware of Professor Chartrand’s connection to FourDirectionsTeachings.com when one of his law students emailed me to say that she had just gone through the course syllabus for Aboriginal Legal Mechanisms and saw the website listed there. I quickly emailed her back and asked for more specific information. She sent me a direct quote from the syllabus that read, “Please review each Indigenous Nation’s Tradition as it corresponds to the Indigenous national law descriptions in the Borrows textbook” (Natalia Crowe, personal communication, email February 5, 2012). Upon reading this, I knew that I wanted to interview Professor Larry Chartrand for my research project to discuss the field of indigenous law, and to find out how an online project like FourDirectionsTeachings.com became required reading in a law course.

Before contacting him, I researched Professor Chartrand online and found his research interests posted on the University of Ottawa website, where it states that he takes:

An interdisciplinary approach to Indigenous peoples' issues including work involving Aboriginal rights and Treaty rights as understood from the perspective of Canadian law, International law and Indigenous legal traditions. Main areas of focus currently include Indigenous Identity and citizenship, Métis issues, Treaty interpretation and modern Treaties, Indigenous self-determination and sovereignty, critical Indigenous theory,
decolonization, indigenous justice reform, and Indigenous legal traditions. (Research Information, University of Ottawa)\(^9\)

Upon reading this statement, I was immediately impressed and interested in his work and wanted to know how he incorporates indigenous knowledge into the study of law.

**Angela Nardozi, Project Manager, OISE, University of Toronto.** Angela Nardozi is the Project Manager of the Deepening Knowledge Project, which is facilitated by the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education (OISE) at the University of Toronto. This project reaches out to teacher candidates to help inform them about aboriginal education. I became aware of this project when Ms. Nardozi contacted me to speak about FourDirectionsTeachings.com at a teacher conference at OISE. I was amazed at the number of teachers familiar with the project and actively using it.

When I asked Ms. Nardozi to introduce herself, she began by telling me that she grew up in Markham, Ontario, and had attended Catholic schools. She has a strong background in teacher education, receiving her Bachelor of Education at OISE in 2008 and then working in an aboriginal summer literacy camp in a Treaty Three first nation community, near Kenora, Ontario, for two months. Ms. Nardozi does not identify herself as aboriginal or having any indigenous lineage. She told me that her time in that first nation community “…completely changed my life…. It changed my whole academic direction.” She elaborated, “I’d already been enrolled to do a masters in something completely different, then (decided), no, I want to go back to the community as much as possible” (A. Nardozi, personal communication January 9, 2014).

Her desire to go back resonated with what she calls “a tugging interest in indigenous issues.” However, up to her time in that first nation community, she had never really had a connection to any indigenous communities. Now that she did, Ms. Nardozi knew her parents would not approve. “My parents being very Italian and strict, I knew they would be nervous about it, because they had a lot of stereotypes. So doing the masters… was my way to justify going back to visit the community a lot.”

\(^9\) [www.uottawa.ca/media/experts-details-998156.html](http://www.uottawa.ca/media/experts-details-998156.html)
Ms. Nardozi succeeded in doing her masters with the permission of that particular first nation community, where she studied “…youth in the community and why or why not they were pursuing post-secondary education.” For a non-native researcher like Ms. Nardozi, to gain the support of an aboriginal community is a tremendous validation of trust and acceptance. It demonstrates an insider status that non-native researchers are rarely granted.

Currently, Ms. Nardozi is pursuing her PhD at OISE, but it was her community experience and the fact that she had been a teacher candidate that brought her into her current role as the Project Manager for the Deepening Knowledge project. Each year Ms. Nardozi, along with her team (mostly indigenous academics) do presentations, outreach, and curate the Deepening Knowledge website. The site states that:

The Deepening Knowledge Project seeks to infuse Aboriginal peoples' histories, knowledges and pedagogies into all levels of education in Canada. The project is a part of the Ontario Institute for Studies in Education, University of Toronto, which is located on the territories of Anishinaabe and Onkwehonwe peoples.

On this site you'll find information about the history and traditions of First Nations, Métis, Inuit and Native American cultures, information about the challenges facing Aboriginal communities today, and curricula for incorporating this information into your teaching practice. Since its inception, the Deepening Knowledge Project has used FourDirectionsTeachings.com in their presentations to teacher candidates and as a resource for teachers seeking aboriginal curriculum. On the current version of the Deepening Knowledge website, FourDirectionsTeachings.com is listed prominently under the Student Resources section, where it states that:

These resources offer students the opportunity to explore Aboriginal topics at a level that is engaging and age-appropriate. Accompanying each resource is a suggested grade

10 http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/
level, indicated in brackets. These ratings are only a guide, and it is up to the individual teacher to determine what is appropriate for her or his classroom.¹¹

This section is a guide for teachers looking for resources that are suitable for elementary and secondary school students. Throughout our interview, Ms. Nardozi informed me how the Deepening Knowledge website and FourDirectionsTeachings.com helps educate teachers and teacher candidates on indigenous worldviews and reassures them that there are resources out there for them to access.

**Dr. Rainey Gaywish, Assistant Professor, Shingwauk Kinoomaage Gamig/Algoma University, Sault Ste. Marie, Ontario.** At the time of our interview, Dr. Rainey Gaywish was the Program Director for Access/Aboriginal Focus Programs at the University of Manitoba. She did her PhD dissertation on the work of Edward Benton Banai, the Grand Chief of the Three Fires Midewiwin lodge, which is focussed on the revitalization of the Midewiwin spiritual tradition through the Three Fires Society. Thus it was not surprising when Dr. Gaywish introduced herself to me as a member of the lodge. She began our interview by saying,

I’ll start formally. **Boozhoo.** My Anishinaabe name is Zhooniyah Waubizee Iquay, Silver Swan Woman. I am a Cree Anishnaabe woman. I grew up in the Interlake region of Manitoba. I am recently Treaty, through Bill C3. Growing up I identified as a half-breed. In my childhood that wasn’t a derogatory term. My family was very proud of our Aboriginal ancestry. And while I don’t speak the Cree language, I am trying to learn Anishinaabemowin, the language of the Ojibwe. I am a member of the Midewiwin Three Fires Lodge and I am Third Degree Midewiwin (Dr. R. Gaywish, personal communication, January 13, 2014).

I became aware of Dr. Gaywish back in 2012 when the Copyright Office for the University of Manitoba contacted me requesting permission to photocopy and distribute the transcripts from the Ojibwe and Cree sections of the FourDirectionsTeachings.com site. I was intrigued to see discover a university course titled “Aboriginal Spirituality”, and that this course was specifically and formally using FourDirectionsTeachings.com. I was also excited to note that the University

¹¹[http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Elementary_Secondary_Students/index.html](http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/deepeningknowledge/Elementary_Secondary_Students/index.html)
of Manitoba wanted ongoing permission so that they could store it on the University’s server for future use. I happily granted them permission but was curious to learn more about the Aboriginal Spirituality course and how and why Dr. Gaywish was using FourDirectionsTeachings.com in her work.

Dr. Gaywish’s work as a Program Director is to develop and offer programs that meet the needs of first nations communities. She states that, “Our mandate is accessible, relevant, accredited post-secondary programs.” To that end, Dr. Gaywish has developed and implemented a number of culturally relevant and culturally respectful certificate and diploma programs, such as the First Nations Community Wellness Diploma. The University of Manitoba website describes the courses in this program in the following way: “Each of the courses incorporates knowledge of ‘western’ concepts and traditional philosophies and knowledge systems of Aboriginal people as they relate to mental health and wellness.”

Here an epistemological binary is clearly articulated between western concepts and traditional philosophies and/or knowledge systems of aboriginal people. In my research interview with Dr. Gaywish we were able to explore in depth the meaning of these concepts and their impact on education.

Dr. John Borrows, Professor and Robina Chair in Law and Society at the University of Minnesota Law School, Professor and Law Foundation Chair of Aboriginal Law and Justice at the University of Victoria Law School. Dr. John Borrows introduced himself by stating, “I am Anishnaabe from Cape Croker/ Neyaashiingmiing. My family all lived there. I continue to keep those associations strong because of that and because of my work. I am a law professor” (Dr. J. Burrows, personal communication, December 19, 2013). I became aware of Dr. Borrows through my contact with Professor Larry Chartrand. It was Professor Chartrand who coupled FourDirectionsTeachings.com with John Borrows’ publication Canada’s Indigenous Constitution. From my research interview with Professor Chartrand, I also learned more about Dr. Borrows and discovered that he actually cited FourDirectionsTeachings.com in one of his books on indigenous law. Dr. Borrows has been teaching law for approximately

twenty-four years. Here is how he was described on the website of the University of Minnesota Law School upon his appointment to the Robina Chair\textsuperscript{13} in Law and Society in 2008:

Borrows was appointed professor and Law Foundation Chair of Aboriginal Justice and Governance at the University of Victoria in 2001. Previously, he taught law at the University of Toronto (1998-01); the University of British Columbia, Vancouver (1992-98), where he was director of the First Nations Law Program; and Osgoode Hall Law School of York University, Toronto (1994-96). At Osgoode Hall, Borrows was the founder and director of the Lands, Resources, and Indigenous Governance Program. He has also been a visiting professor at Brigham Young University, Dalhousie Law School, the University of Waikato Law School in New Zealand, the University of New South Wales in Australia, and Arizona State University. …He writes and speaks prodigiously on such issues as indigenous legal rights and traditions, treaties and land claims, and religion and the law. His research interests include aboriginal, constitutional, and environmental law. …In 2007, he received Canada's highest academic honor: fellowship in the Canadian Society of Arts, Humanities, and Sciences. He also has been honored with a Trudeau fellowship for research achievements, creativity, and social commitment and with an achievement award from the National Aboriginal Achievement Foundation for outstanding accomplishment in the field of law and justice.\textsuperscript{14}

Professor Borrows continues to teach at the University of Minnesota. In my interview with him Dr. Borrows made it clear that he looks “…for sources that pull on Elders’ understanding of what our laws, our values, our stories, our traditions are.” Consequently he utilizes and references FourDirectionsTeachings.com in several of his courses. My specific questions to professor Borrows were: how do online indigenous projects impact the field of indigenous law? In what way are these connections made?

\textsuperscript{13} The Robina Foundation was created by James H. Binger ('41) to fund creative, forward-thinking projects proposed by four institutions—the Law School, Abbott Northwestern Hospital, Yale University, and the Council on Foreign Relations. Funding from the Robina Foundation is intended for exploration of new ideas and transformative new approaches to complex issues.
\texttt{http://www.law.umn.edu/news/borrows-appointment-12-16-2008.html}

\textsuperscript{14} \texttt{http://www.law.umn.edu/news/borrows-appointment-12-16-2008.html}
Cultural arts workers

**Emilie Monnet, Interdisciplinary Artist, Quebec.** I was introduced to Emilie Monnet when she contacted me via email to request permission to link and quote teachings from FourDirectionsTeachings.com for her performance piece, *Bird Messengers*, a project that premiered in Montreal in May 2011. I looked up her website and found a description of *Bird Messengers*:

>A captivating interdisciplinary performance by Émilie Monnet and Moe Clark, where theatre, visual projections and music transport audiences from the symbolic realm of ancestry to a contemporary, living mythology. Created during a residency at the MAI in Montreal, this performance is inspired by Aboriginal storytelling and ancestral teachings.¹⁵

Ms. Monnet was particularly inspired by Mary Lee’s Tepee Pole Teachings and how the seven values in them represent an indigenous worldview related to community and well-being. When I asked Ms. Monnet to introduce herself, she began by telling me about her family: “My mom is an *Anishnaabe* member of the *Kitigan Zibi* Algonquin community in Quebec and my dad is French from France. I grew up in France until I was five. After that my dad would send me and my sister to France every summer so I am really connected to that side, too” (E. Monnet, personal communication, December 13, 2013). As an artist and activist, Ms Monnet explained that she does not want to box herself in because she explores art from an aboriginal contemporary experience that celebrates her aboriginal and French European identity. She is interested in collaborations between artists of different cultures and disciplines. A woman in her thirties, she has travelled extensively and has worked with indigenous communities all over Latin America and Canada.

Ms. Monnet's website states that her “work experiments and creates from a place where languages, Imagination and memory intersect; telling stories with theatre and media art forms that weave the symbolic realms of dreams and mythology – both personal and collective.”¹⁶ Her


goal is to use art as a tool, “…to create more consciousness in people and empower youth and sensitize people to the richness, diversity and resilience of indigenous cultures and worldviews.” Impressed with her mandate, I wanted to learn more about how indigenous knowledge informs her work, where and how she has accessed such knowledge, and what it means to her process as a contemporary aboriginal artist.

Monique Mojica, Actor, Playwright & Performer, Toronto. I have known Ms. Mojica (2008) for many years and actually hired her for the audio scripting for the female Elder voices on FourDirectionsTeachings.com. She narrated the words of both the late Ojibwe Elder, Lillian Pitawanakwat, and Mary Lee, the Cree Elder. When I sat down with Ms. Mojica and asked her to introduce herself, she went beyond the normal introductions, given our familiarity with each other, and elaborated more on the evolution of her identity as an artist:

I’m working on embracing “artist scholar” as a title, and I have written and published several essays on indigenous performance theory. I’ve been a performer all of my life; I come from a theatre family, a performing family. I am third generation of four generations of performers and my mother started me training when I was three years old. I am going to be sixty years old in a week. So I’ve been doing this for fifty-seven years; that’s more than half a century.

Ms. Mojica’s artistic trajectory spans a lifetime of work where she has gone from victim to victor. She writes, “… I cease to identify with my own victimization and no longer recognize my reflection as ‘the victim” (2008, p.165). Instead, Ms. Mojica has become passionate about “finding ways to put indigenous knowledge in the centre of (her) creative practice.” She remains committed to telling stories and exploring work from the experience of indigenous women, which she states is very different from the male perspective and is often not heard. However, her approach to her work has evolved by delving into the heart of indigenous knowledge paradigms, where she seeks to understand the social, ceremonial, and architectural structures and
the cultural aesthetics that inform particular indigenous knowledges, in order to comprehend how they are encoded and how that particular knowledge can be applied to art that is being created now. She writes: “I spent a long time digging around in massacre imagery and now I must call out to other spirits because transformation is a continuum and I must conjure myself into another place on my map” (2008, p.166).

Intrigued with the trajectory of Ms. Mojica’s artistic vision and her original contribution to the FourDirectionsTeachings.com site, I invited her to be a research participant to get her thoughts on FourDirectionsTeachings.com after all of these years. I wanted to know how she works, encounters, and finds indigenous knowledge and get her thoughts on whether such a thing should or could exist on the Internet. As an indigenous artist with over half of a century of experience, the insight and expertise she shared with me was more than I ever could have imagined.

Cheryl L’Hirondelle, Musician, Artist, and Curator, Alberta. I first met Cheryl L’Hirondelle at the Banff New Media Centre’s Interactive Project Laboratory during the Banff Boot Camp in 2003. As one of the first indigenous new media artists that I had the privilege of meeting in person, I was excited to meet Ms. L’Hirondelle and hear about her work. Over the years we have kept in touch: currently, Ms. L’Hirondelle is a sessional faculty member and graduate student at OCAD University in Toronto. She is also a practicing new media artist and new media curator and musician.

When I asked Ms. L’Hirondelle to introduce herself, she began in the language of Cree. She then translated to me that she was “a Cree woman and a boat person, which in Cree is the old way of saying a European” (C. L’Hirondelle, personal communication, January 21, 2014). She also identified herself as Métis and part of the Pekanoe Métis colony, where the city of Edmonton now sits. She says this part of the country is referred to in Cree as “Beaver Hills”, and therefore, she introduces herself in Cree as a Beaver Hills woman.

It is evident from her introduction that Ms. L’Hirondelle has a great affinity and connection to her home. This affinity is the reason why I have chosen to identify her place of being as Alberta rather than Ontario; while she may be currently living and working in Toronto, it is clear that her home, the place that she is connected to, will always be in the province of Alberta - more specifically, Beaver Hills.
Like Ms. Mojica, Ms. L’Hirondelle has had a long artistic career trajectory. It was a challenge for me to decide upon a bio to best describe her work, as there are many available on the Internet. After much deliberation, I finally decided to go back to the source where we first met and selected the bio from the Banff New Media Centre:

Cheryl L'Hirondelle is an Alberta-born interdisciplinary artist of mixed ancestry (Cree / Métis / German / Polish). Since the early 1980s, she has created, performed, and presented work in a variety of disciplines (music, storytelling, performance art, theatre, video, and net.art). She has also worked as an arts programmer, cultural strategist/activist, arts consultant, producer, and director - independently and with various artist-run centres, tribal councils, and government agencies.17

What I like about this bio is that reflects her many talents and abilities but also lists her community-based work as an arts programmer/curator and activist, and her work in artist-run centres and tribal councils. Working within communities with Elders is where Ms. L’Hirondelle’s work began and now, after many years, it is clear that after many years abroad in the arts, she is circling back to community and to the importance and vitality of indigenous knowledge. This return is evident in the way she describes her current arts projects and her work in graduate school.

It was clear from our discussion that Ms. L’Hirondelle has been doing some very deep thinking about the relationship between new media and indigenous communities, and I am grateful to have engaged in a research conversation with her. She introduced me to insights and ideas about custodianship for indigenous knowledge on the Internet and the impact and potential for that type of work for generations to come. I owe Ms. L’Hirondelle a great deal of thanks for her thoughtful and novel insight.

**System workers**

**Donna Bourque, Case Manager, Fort Smith Complex, Northwest Territories &**  
**Priscilla Lepine, Coordinator for Offender Programming, Fort Smith Complex,**

17 Sourced from http://www.banffcentre.ca/faculty/faculty-member/1046/cheryl-lhirondelle/.
Northwest Territories. I was introduced to Donna Bourque back in November 2007, when she contacted me via email to request more material and resources that would help with a new program she was developing for inmates that would focus on healing and cultural awareness for the 98% of inmates that identify as aboriginal (D. Bourque, personal communication, November 22, 2007). I remember being very touched by her email and saddened by the high percentage of aboriginal men in jail. I spoke to Ms. Bourque again more recently when she accepted my invitation to be a research participant, bringing with her Priscilla Lepine, a new hire and the first Coordinator for Offender Programming in the North West Territories. I was happy to include Ms. Lepine in the research interview.

Since 2007, Ms. Bourque has moved from Program Coordinator to Case Manager at the Fort Smith Complex, where she oversees the male inmate population. Her work includes overseeing program referrals and release plans for each inmate. She has been working with corrections for 30 years.

Ms. Lepine has worked for the government of the Northwest Territories for approximately 28 years. She began in the social work field, where she worked for six years, and then moved into teaching at a local college where, for 19 years, she taught social work and then native studies courses on the process of colonization, its impact, and the mechanisms for decolonization, with an emphasis on reflection and healing. With regards to her current position, Ms. Lepine said,

My position here is new. They call it the Coordinator for Offender Programming and there is no position like it in the Northwest Territories in any of the other jails. I work with both the female and male inmate population. My job is to provide professional development for staff and to develop Aboriginal healing programs for inmates (P. Lepine, personal communication, January 29, 2014).

Both women identified their aboriginal identity. Ms. Bourque stated, “I’m northern Cree. My dad is Métis and my mom is Cree, Chipewyan and French. I have some Ojibwe in there too” (D. Bourque, personal communication, January 29, 2014). Ms. Lepine said,

I’m Métis. My family is from Fort Smith; we’ve been here since time immemorial. I have a great grandfather several generations back who was one of the voyageurs that came up to
this area and married my Chipewyan great-grandmother, so became a part of the Chipewyan community, and so I grew up in a Chipewyan community and identify with the Chipewyan people. I also have Cree and Mohawk heritage; however, I did not grow up in those cultures, so don’t have the same connection to them. My dad was from Poland, but he was the only relative I had from there, and since he lives so far away from his homeland our family did not have any connection to that culture. Despite all of these affiliations to different cultures, I am identified as Métis in this community, partly because of how the Federal government establishes Indian identity. As you can see, identity and affiliation can be very complex for a person of mixed ancestry.

Ms. Bourque and Ms. Lepine are very passionate about their work and believe that coming from an aboriginal background impacts how they relate to men who are imprisoned. Ms. Bourque elaborated:

All our guys are majority Aboriginal, so what I find is, because they know I’m Aboriginal they feel more comfortable talking to me; they’re more open, they know that I’ve probably experienced racism and the impact of the residential school system. They’ll say to me, ‘Well, you know what I mean - you’re native. You know how it is,’ so it helps in that way.”

Ms. Lepine adds,

We’re really from a small community and we’re fairly isolated. We’re a community of about 2,500 people. When I was growing up there were about 1,000 people here. Our nearest community is 265 km away and there’s nothing in between but wild land; no gas stations. There are a couple of pit stops, some cabins off the road, that sort of thing. So growing up in a small isolated community, everybody knows everyone else. And growing up in the north is small, too. I went to Akaitcho Hall, a residential school named after a Chief from the Yellowknife Dene. I got to know a lot of people; plus teaching at the college, I got to know a lot of people from the north. So you get lots of connections. When I meet one of the inmates, I ask them where they are from. They’ll tell me, and I’ll say, ‘you know so and so’, because I usually know people in most of the communities. This helps establish a connection between them and me. It is an age-old Aboriginal method of establishing a relationship. The north is small and we know a lot of each other.
It is evident from their descriptions that Ms. Bourque and Ms. Lepine come from a very tightly knit community that shares a collective experience of oppression. During our interview, they discussed the importance of creating culturally focussed programming for the inmates as a way of dealing with low self-esteem and oppression. Both Ms. Bourque and Ms. Lepine have studied and researched indigenous knowledge for several years and are committed to utilizing it in their programs. I wanted to learn more about their process and why they feel it is so important and relevant to bring indigenous knowledge into the prison system in the north.

Janetta Soup, Engagement Liaison, Saint Elizabeth First Nation, Inuit and Métis Program, Alberta. Janetta Soup sent me an email on February 14, 2012 to request permission to link to FourDirectionsTeachings.com and to use some of the animated pieces in one of their projects. Ms Soup explained that it was for the First Nations Cancer Care course, “one of the professional development training courses that we offer to health care providers working within or for First Nation communities” (J. Soup, personal communication, February 14, 2012). She said, “As you are aware, design and development of on-line materials can be very taxing… which is why we want to know if we can reference the work your organization has already created.” I was happy to comply.

In our interview, and in her initial email to me, Ms. Soup identified herself as a proud First Nations Blackfoot woman. She grew up in a small town called Cardston, Alberta. She lived on the reserve side, the largest reserve in all of Canada and home to the Blood tribe. Her current work with Saint Elizabeth involves “…project work in terms of helping healthcare providers that are working within and/or for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities and providing them with resources to deliver services to those communities” (personal communication, February 13, 2014). In relation to this objective, Ms. Soup’s organization works in partnership with different areas within healthcare. She states, “I actually worked on a project that was taking the Canadian Physical Activity guidelines and making them more culturally relevant.”

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18 Email --The delivery of our courses are offered to health care providers working within or for First Nation community members. To date, we have over 1000 users set up on our @YourSide Colleague courses and growing
Currently Ms. Soup and her team are working on a project with the Alberta Health Services and their Aboriginal Health Program. The project involves developing an online course within the realm of Aboriginal Awareness and Sensitivity Learning. This course will be made available for all Alberta Health Services, which has over 95,000 staff, according to Ms. Soup. The vision of the Saint Elizabeth First Nation, Inuit and Métis program is to honour the human face of healthcare. Consequently, the organization has developed the First Nations Cancer course, the First Nations Diabetes course, the First Nations Chronic Obstructive Pulmonary Disease course, the Elder Care course and, most recently, the First Nations Trauma Informed course. This body of work is committed to enhancing and building the capacity of healthcare providers in various First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. Ms. Soup shared that her team works in partnership with various communities and other organizations.

Ms. Soup is one of five Engagement Liaison Workers. The other four are located in Winnipeg, Mississauga, Red Lake, and Montreal. She described to me how they are organized virtually, and that the manager and program assistant are based in Winnipeg. Ms. Soup says, “We’re a virtual program; all our work is done online.” Intrigued by the set up of their organization and the amount of work they are producing and delivering, I wanted to know how much of what they produced relies on access to indigenous knowledge online, and why this is important for the field of healthcare.

Aboriginal Coordinator Community Development – Child Youth Services, Canada.

The last participant chose to remain anonymous, which was an option provided to each potential participant. In respecting this choice, I will not identify the province, city or centre in which this person works, or his/her gender. I will instead refer to this person as the Research Participant or “RP”. RP shared about the child and youth services program where RP has been working for almost 15 years, which provides programs and services to families with children under the age of 18 years old. In addition to working at the family center, RP has been advocating for 30 years for families to get their children back, and supports the Aboriginal Family Defense League and efforts dedicated to murdered/missing women and indigenous people. After sharing this information, RP spoke about family origins:

To honour my mother, I’m part Métis; to honour my father, I’m part Cree/ Saulteaux. I consider myself an urban refugee because I had to move to the city because of lack of
employment in my community. I was taken as a small child to some of the ceremonies. At that time they were still being held in hiding. 30 years later, in the city, when trying to initiate a pipe ceremony or a feast, people from the community would say no because they said it was witchcraft. So we realized we needed to learn more and proceed carefully (RP, personal communication, February 7, 2014).

RP has initiated many programs that are rooted in traditional teachings. One of them is providing Talking Circle training to forensic psychology interns and to families in the communities. RP explained that Talking Circles are a great way for families to do problem solving and to really engage in hearing each other. Sweat Lodges and coming of age ceremonies are also important for aboriginal families. RP also noted that many of the people working in the social services field are not aboriginal, and they require Aboriginal Cultural Awareness training, which RP has also provided.

Over the years RP has had many debates and battles with agency management over creating such diverse aboriginal programming because the management continuously challenges RP on whether such programming has efficacy. RP’s reply to this challenge: “All of our ceremonies would not have survived this many years without being best practice. You may not believe in them but we do. Ceremony is the foundation of our belief system.” I was moved by RP’s struggles and very interested to learn more about how indigenous knowledge informs RP’s work in social services. In particular I wanted to know about the impact or value of indigenous knowledge online for aboriginal families who are accessing social services.

Being Native on the Net

Given the ubiquity of the Internet, cyberspace - like any popular media before it - produces cultural narratives that contribute to our misunderstanding of race (Nakamura, 2007). Alia (2010), a media scholar, writes that the Internet is fast becoming a vital medium for indigenous peoples.

And yet others note that, Far less is known about the uses and experiences of ICT’s by groups decentered from the dominant institutions and idioms. This is especially true for indigenous peoples, who have long been delegitimized by ruling cultural norms and
isolated (economically, politically, geographically) from centers of influence (Landzelius, 2006).

Nakamura also argues that popular Internet studies are not interested in the experiences or analysis of people of color on the net. This is evident in her article “Cultural Difference, Theory, and Cyberculture Studies: A Case of Mutual Repulsion.” So not only is far less known about the uses and experiences of people of color on the Internet, but the theorizing and analyses of such experiences are also marginalized. This dissertation addresses this gap in the literature by introducing how indigenous research participants think about and use the Internet, and thereby privileges and explores the notion of “being native on the net.”

Educators integrate indigenous knowledge into the curriculum

All of the educators who spoke with me use the Internet as a resource in their classrooms and many of them specifically use online websites as resources for introducing and presenting indigenous knowledge. Indeed, Dr. Chartrand (December 5, 2013), who began teaching indigenous law in 1993, noted that, “At that time there were no Internet resources at all. Now it’s the first place students go in the pursuit of knowledge. Books are secondary.” For Angela Nardozi, the only non-indigenous participant in this study, the Internet is a pillar of strength for training teacher candidates. Ms. Nardozi (January 9, 2014) acknowledges that, “The Deepening Knowledge website became a central focus to our work, as it has alleviated teacher fears about not having access to trusted resources.” She emphasizes that,

In our presentations, we actually introduce our website first, as a way to reassure them that we understand and empathize with their fears - that they think there’s nothing out there. We let them know that Dr. Restoule has approved everything on the website and that it can function as their ‘one stop shop’ to research and access Indigenous resources online.

These fears also apply to indigenous educators like Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014) who are concerned with the representation of indigenous knowledge online. She says:
When it comes to preparing higher education that expresses our own indigenous worldview, our own perspectives, our own teachings, and the knowledge of our Elders, we are at a disadvantage, because so much research on our communities has been done by non-Aboriginal people. It is these scholars who present our worldview, our teachings, our history, our everything! Finding anything that's been developed by our own people and that talks about our worldview is like finding a diamond. I highly value those resources.

Both indigenous and non-indigenous educators struggle to address the imbalance of scholarship from an indigenous perspective and the lack of quality indigenous education resources; these are common struggles in the education field. Dr. Gaywish, who teaches the Native Studies, Aboriginal Spirituality and Native Medicine and Health courses for the First Nations Community Wellness Diploma, says that she uses FourDirectionsTeachings.com in both of these courses, “because the content on that site is very relevant to what students should be learning.”

Ms. Nardozi conveyed that they don't tend to highlight a lot of websites on the Deepening Knowledge project but the one that they will call attention to in every single presentation is FourDirectionsTeachings.com. Nardozi states:

We like to show the navigation screen page where it shows icons representing the five First Nations because we have a really hard time communicating to the teacher candidates how diverse First Nations are. When teacher candidates hear that there are so many different Indigenous nations across Canada, they get really anxious and ask do I have to teach about all of them? I tell them no, but you can begin by honoring the territory that we're on. I also tell them that the Four Directions Teachings website will give you some insight into the Anishnaabe/Ojibwe teachings and Hotinonshonni/Mohawk teachings, whose territories make up the province we live in.

Educators like Nardozi have stressed that there is a lack of good quality indigenous knowledge sites online. This sentiment was echoed over and over again by other participants. Dr. Chartrand relayed that,

Although indigenous knowledge has become more and more present online, it’s certainly not a significant aspect of what is available yet. So I have to pull from other sources like
language sites, which are helpful, but they are not geared to teaching the fundamental philosophies and teachings; they are geared toward teaching the language.

Websites that are focused on teaching the fundamental philosophies and teachings that make up indigenous knowledge are so limited that when I asked participants to name other websites that are like FourDirectionsTeachings.com, they could not name any. This was a surprising finding for me as a producer and as an academic, and it led me to question whether there was a distinction to be made between indigenous knowledge sites and indigenous information sites. When I put this question out to the research participants, most agreed that there were more indigenous information sites than indigenous knowledge sites online, which I will elaborate on later.

Most of the websites used by educators relate to their specific fields and, for the most part, are text based. For example, Dr. John Borrows (December 19, 2013) relies on legal databases regarding court decisions, and he also seeks out blogs like Turtle Talk from the University of Michigan State with Matt Fletcher. Borrows notes that there are about six of his colleagues who make regular contributions to this blog, and that there are good links from that blog to other indigenous websites. He also uses the Navajo Nation's website quite frequently because they have a tribal court, and there are decisions listed there. He says,

On this website they talk about how their code of ethics can be practiced before those courts, which is great. I also try to find that kind of information for other tribes, like the Sioux, Leech Lake or Cherokee; many nations in the United States have tribal courts so they'll have that kind of material.

Borrows also visits the Tribal Court Clearing House, which is a site that deals with tribal law more generally in the United States. More importantly, he noted that:

On this site there is also discussion of traditional law. There's nothing graphic like yours or the Nature's Laws website, but it is a great - I guess text-heavy - website, because it gives you access to what people are writing about and what their constitutions look like, etc.
For Dr. Gaywish, sites like the National Aboriginal Health Organization (NAHO) site are great for cultural resources. She says, “They did excellent research and have published many articles. In their archives you can find quite a lot of information on midwifery and traditional knowledge.” Dr. Gaywish uses the past tense because, as she imparts, this organization was axed by the Harper government. She also notes that, 

FourDirectionsTeachings.com is different from other sites that I use, like NAHO, because of the audio-visual design. Most sites I access for indigenous knowledge are text based, and do not offer this rich audio-visual experience. I like the fact that you can still print off the transcripts and have students refer to them, but the real value is the access to the teachings. It is the next best thing…to having an Elder in the classroom with you.

This notion of having an Elder in the classroom was brought up many times by the educators, highlighting a profound desire to have that kind of cultural knowledge and presence in the classroom. Having an audio/visual representation of an Elder’s exact words supports the work of the educators and demonstrates to the students that this knowledge is alive and well, existing in the varied indigenous Elders and traditional teachers living and working in their respective communities. Indeed, all of the educators said that they would like to see more indigenous knowledge projects online that they could access for their classrooms. Dr. Chartrand, for example, said,

I would like to see more nation-specific teachings regarding social order. Or perhaps even a framework for looking at indigenous worldviews as opposed to western worldview perspectives. It would be great to see how the teachings from various First Nations communities are relevant today, but that’s wishful thinking.

Sadly, to have this type of work online right now is wishful thinking, not because it is not possible, as the type of work that Dr. Chartrand envisions is totally doable from an intellectual and technological standpoint, but as I producer, I have found that there are very few funding agencies or organizations that are committed to getting this type of work done, at least not currently. This is a great disservice to the movement of indigenous resurgence nationally, and to the field of education in Canada. I will return to this in the conclusion of this chapter. Now I will turn to the cultural workers.
Cultural arts workers inspired by indigenous knowledge

For the indigenous cultural workers that I interviewed, the Internet is certainly a useful point of entry, access and connection for them as indigenous artists and activists. Ms. Monnet (December 13, 2013) noted that, “The Internet is a big resource for me when researching indigenous knowledge and cultural teachings. The last piece I worked on focused on cultural prophecies. I am also very interested in creation stories so I search for that online as well.” Monique Mojica (January 25, 2014) states:

I find that I am always searching for good photos of clothing from a certain era, or depictions of indigenous tattoos, and those kinds of things that inform my art practice and interests. I also use the Internet to research photographs, books, archives, and maps. I certainly used it to find where all the mound sites are, for my current project.

In reference to the Idle No More Movement, Cheryl L’Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) states that, "the Internet is definitely the way that we find out about things that are happening now." In fact, Ms. L’Hirondelle researched the meaning behind the Idle No More Movement online, because she was curious about the movement's name, wondering where it originated, and why:

I immediately found footage online of a teaching that happened in Alberta with Sylvia Macadam. She was speaking in Cree and mentioned the term Meechquasquo, and the Ogichetaw, the male version ….I was very excited to hear her talking about the Ogichetaw, because roughly translated it means “warrior society”, or “dog soldiers”, or providers; there are so many different attempts to try and translate it. Usually this word is used in reference to the men, so I was surprised to hear it being used with respect to the women. I contacted Joseph, now my adopted brother and formerly my ex, and said, “I'm sending you a link. You got to check this out.” It turns out he knew the woman who was speaking and we were able to discuss it further. It was the first time I've heard about a protest that is based in our history and our worldview and is being conveyed in our language. Being able to learn about Idle No More on the Internet in this way has to be one of the most profound things that the Internet has given me.
The Internet has provided a point of entry for these artists with respect to informing their artistic and activist practice and expanding what they know about indigenous knowledge. This expansion in their thinking impacts their work in their respective artistic fields.

The Internet is also an important point of access and connection. For Ms. Monnet, access to language and community is found in a popular social media site that she resisted for many years, but eventually joined because it addressed her need for access to indigenous language support. Ms Monnet relays,

I found a language dictionary online and quite a few language groups on Facebook. It’s a nice way to share information. I found a link to Basil Johnson doing an interview on the radio because people will also post events and links to other resources. I've been on Facebook for 2 years. I really resisted at the beginning because I was concerned about privacy issues and corporations but I eventually logged on because it is really practical for sharing information and being in touch, and there are a lot of Indians on Facebook!

Ms. Mojica also uses Facebook to access a lot of websites, though she notes, "I forget the names of those sites because I am following links." For Mojica being able to have online access to radio stations like Native America Calling and Indian Country Today means that she can hear the latest news, such as when Carter Camp died, and then Charley Hill right after him. It also means that she can keep up with what is happening, such as the time when she was in London, England, and could get accurate updates from people in Elsipogtog. Ms Mojica said, "I could then talk about this story in Europe because I knew I could trust the information that I was receiving. So it’s about trusting who is doing the reporting, and who are the people being discussed."

Like Monnet, Mojica also is a Facebook user. She states that,

Facebook is a way for me to connect with family and friends that live very far away and that I have not seen for a very long time. I love that I can share Idle No More flash mobs with my family in Panama and that they can connect with me and say, “Hi Auntie, what's going on; What’s happening with Ngobe Bugle?” - which is another nation in Panama.

Demonstrators there were blockading a road and getting killed and being assassinated for protesting Canadian mining. I could see what collaborators and artists were doing in Panama City, so to support their actions and get the word out, I connected them with supporters of Mining Watch Canada. This connection helped them to connect
with people that are on the ground in Ngobe Bugle so that the international community, including Canadians, could be informed. As an activist, I find it’s really important to have this access online, especially because I have community spread out over several continents.

For Mojica, Facebook provides a connection to family across distances, while the Internet helps her to make connections as an artist and an activist. Monnet accesses language groups on Facebook, and this provides her with a sense of extended community. Having access via the Internet means that artists have a sense of connection and access to indigenous communities both locally and internationally.

For Ms L'Hirondelle, a keen observer and scholar of the Internet, access is revealed in ways in which Elders and traditional people interface with the Internet:

A phenomenon I’ve seen online recently is that there are now Elders on Facebook that are putting up daily or weekly postings. I know one of these guys personally and he's by no means a plastic shaman. I am happy to see that he's alive. He's an old man, who’s decided that Facebook is the place where he needs to post everyday or every week. So I think it's really beautiful. I might have had problems with that a year or two ago, but now I'm like, “Wow that's so great.”

What is interesting to note is that access to the Internet is for cultural workers a route - a way to connect to community, whether through Facebook language groups, indigenous news outlets or even Facebook Elders. People are finding ways to reach out and support their collective interests as indigenous people through the Internet. It is for this reason that I think L'Hirondelle does not have a problem with the Elder posting on Facebook. As her comment suggests, the way we think about indigenous knowledge online, and the contributions of Elders and traditional people, is changing.

However, there is still great caution and concern about what gets posted online, how and by whom. Ms Monnet says,

I have found that the information online speaks more to my interests than mainstream media but you always have to be careful. So I always check the sources to see whether
the information is accurate and how knowledgeable the person is who is doing the posting. Where are they getting their information? Are they contributing to cultural appropriation? All these things are important to me when searching for information and resources online.

Monnet echoes the concerns of L'Hirondelle, who clarified that the Facebook Elder that she was referring to was by no means a 'plastic shaman'. So while these cultural workers find great value in accessing indigenous knowledge and cultural information online they also express great caution and concern as to how to read those resources that are found online.

System workers promote indigenous knowledge as a way into community well being

Indigenous people who work in the health care, social service and penal systems suggest that finding indigenous resources online that can support their work to better serve their communities is essential to delivering first-rate programming for their clients. I was deeply moved by how passionate and empathetic the System Workers are, and how hard they must work within their institutions to implement culturally sensitive programming that is appropriate to addressing their clients' needs. For example, Donna Bourque (January 29, 2014), who works with Priscilla Lepine, has been collecting and saving research information on her “favorites list” for years:

I have healing programs and organizations, information on the residential schools, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, and information on native counseling services. Most of the sites I look at deal with healing because that’s been my goal, to have a healing program in the correctional facility here. I've been pushing for this for years. Before Priscilla came, it was just a few staff who would get together and do different programs with the inmates. We would collect resources, and when we weren't sure, we would go and check the Internet.

Likewise, Ms. Lepine (January 29, 2014), who is the first person to work in the newly created position as Coordinator for Offender Programming, Fort Smith Complex, Northwest Territories, has created multiple folders:

19 Internet browsers provide a Bookmarks save file that is also referred to as a favorites list.
I have folders that have sites for Aboriginal corrections, Aboriginal cultures, Aboriginal education, Aboriginal healing and Aboriginal crafts - because I like to use hands-on cultural activities to help foster a healing dialogue for the inmates while they craft. I also have folders on federal Indian legislation, because we’ve all been impacted equally by federal legislations, which is also our common thread today. So under each of those folders I have tons of sites that I go to. I like the Aboriginal Healing Foundation site and go there often for information and links to other Aboriginal organizations.

Having access to this kind of information helps Ms. Bourque and Ms. Lepine do their job. With an almost 100% indigenous incarceration rate, it seems justifiable that these resources would be offered through the prison institutions themselves, but that is not the case; and people who work in penal institutions with an indigenous population must find these resources on their own and bring them in. For this reason, Ms. Lepine states that, "Like Donna, I also keep up online with what is going on down south." Searching online to see what is happening "down south" is important, not just for correction staff but for organizations that focus on aboriginal programming. For these women, keeping up with what is happening "down south" is staying on top of what is current. Ms. Lepine elaborates:

The Internet is very useful to us because we are in an isolated community, and while we do have access to a local library and a college library, they are only as good as the people that order the books and resources. I know from working at the college, if I want to get an interlibrary loan - from say the University of Saskatchewan - by the time the book or video gets here, it would have to go back in the mail because of the length of travel time. Plus, it's really hard to find good resources on DVD. There's a lot of really old stuff that's out there now and not a lot of new stuff being made. I see this especially when I visit the library. What I like about the Internet is that you can find archives, video clips, and current content.

The Internet helps facilitate access to materials that Bourque and Lepine would otherwise have difficulty accessing because of their location in the north. Furthermore, it is understood that the popularity of DVDs has waned, and that not a lot of new content is being offered through that medium, most likely due to the expense of production and distribution. The nature of content
delivery is changing, and new releases can now be offered via the Internet through downloads and streaming.

Lepine and Bourque acknowledge that while there is a lot of online content on aboriginal policy, federal legislation, and aboriginal cultures, there is not as much on traditional knowledge or Métis teachings. In fact, Lepine says,

It would be great to have more traditional knowledge from Aboriginal perspectives online. Gabriel Dumont Institute has a lot of Métis traditional knowledge on their site, presented through testimonials and that sort of thing. So I've gone there quite a lot because that's one site that I have found that has teachings about Métis culture. Other than that, there's not a lot on the Internet. There seems to be a lot on the medicine wheel, but there could be more detailed descriptions on it. I make Métis sashes, which I use as a teaching tool to explain the culture. One of the things I was just researching online and emailing my contacts about was the pattern for Louis Riel’s sash. I am also interested in Métis women’s shawls. So those types of resources are specific things that I look for which are really hard to find on the Internet.

So while Bourque and Lepine are able to access some indigenous resources online, there is a sense from them that this is only the tip of the iceberg. It is clear that they feel more could be done. In this they are not alone.

Janetta Soup (February 13, 2014), who makes online resources for the health-learning field, states that, while she can generally find First nations perspectives online, she has a more difficult time locating Métis and Inuit perspectives. In discussing her work, she says:

There are multiple ways that I research information in regards to indigenous knowledge. When I was researching Elder abuse, I started with a Google search on First Nations Elder abuse. I took a look at the organizations and then went deeper by reading various documents that the organizations put out. From there I looked at the reference guide to see what else is out there. Personally, I find that I can access quite a bit of information from a First Nations perspective, but trying to find information from a Métis or Inuit perspective is far more challenging.
This disparity of information on Métis and Inuit perspectives is a concern for Ms. Soup, because the mandate of the Saint Elizabeth First Nation, Inuit and Métis Program embraces a national scope and approach to issues of indigenous health that are inclusive of all indigenous peoples in Canada. As a result, Ms Soup explains that,

   It is important for our project work with Alberta Health Services to include these perspectives as well. There is actually a wisdom council and an Aboriginal Health Program, and there are a few council members with Métis and Inuit backgrounds. So we also work with them to access additional information and recommendations.

Access to resources that are informed by indigenous perspectives and teachings rooted in indigenous knowledge is key for indigenous system workers who are providing and creating programming and training for respective clients. As a result, it is very common now to have Elder councils and traditional councils affiliated with such programming, as a means of ensuring that indigenous perspectives are respected and reflected appropriately. Indeed, I feel that such councils are also a requirement for online indigenous knowledge resources, which I will discuss at length in later chapters.

RP, the indigenous social worker who is providing services for indigenous families, believes that innovative grassroots programming that is being created by indigenous communities eventually gets distributed to the larger mainstream society. RP (February 7, 2014) states,

   Online, I found the Aboriginal Mental Health Resource unit. It was really good because they looked at Aboriginal approaches and explained it so that non-First Nations people could understand it. So the ripples of what we are doing in the community is being shown out there as well.

As a frontline social worker working with many non-indigenous people, RP often feels the stigma of having to defend, explain and educate on indigenous approaches and knowledge in his/her programming. So for RP, having indigenous approaches that reach mainstream settler society is necessary for indigenous frontline workers and community well-being because it promotes cultural understanding and respect.
RP is proactive about accessing indigenous resources on the Internet and, when possible, distributing them to his/her clients. However, sometimes even good resources are challenged by communities because of their content, even though they "are useful for the community." RP discusses one of the sites in particular:

Sean Mayer has done comic books throughout the years. He's got a web page called healthy aboriginals.net, and I use it quite a bit. His comics were really cool and we would distribute them to our community so that kids could take them home. Eventually families would be talking about the topics of suicide and bullying, or gangs, and stuff like that, so his comic books brought up really important issues. I was sort of upset when he pulled his suicide comics because of people’s feedback. It was like our community was saying, “Don't talk about it again”, and I was like, no, those comic books provided an opportunity for parents to understand that, potentially, some of their kids may be having suicidal thoughts. Hiding the issue doesn't mean the issue is going to go away.

I am sure that RP is not alone in his/her thinking, but how do such controversial issues get discussed? It would be unfortunate if Sean Mayer felt bullied by a small community to give up his content on suicide. Obviously, not everyone in the indigenous community feels the same way, but how we deal with controversy online or how we address what should be discussed publicly is not clear. There are no parameters or protocols for such discussions and conflicts and perhaps there needs to be, in order to ensure that everyone in our respective communities feels heard and invited to the table. Obviously, RP raises some very important concerns regarding what gets profiled publicly online.

Conclusion

There is a belief in new media scholarship that the periphery, where indigenous communities are said to be located in colonialist theory, has the opportunity to inform the core, and that this can be accomplished through the Internet (Alia, 2010; Landzelius, 2006). As I have noted throughout this chapter, participants in this study are active about utilizing indigenous knowledge on the Internet to educate and perpetuate indigenous worldviews as a means of education for indigenous and settler societies, and as a means for indigenous resurgence and resistance. However, it is evident that such work faces many challenges. Professor Chartrand
captures this well when he says, "It would be great to see how the teachings from various first nations communities are relevant today, but that’s wishful thinking." Professor Chartrand is not alone in his desire to see more indigenous knowledge online. Educators like Nardozi also stressed the need for more indigenous knowledge sites online, as did Lepine, Bourque and RP. Furthermore, RP strongly believes that having indigenous resources online that reach mainstream settler society is necessary for promoting community well being, cultural understanding and respect.

So, why is such work considered unattainable? As I have suggested, one answer is that the political will does not exist currently to push for such work. To bring it about, indigenous communities need to come together and discuss indigenous knowledge online as a viable and necessary education strategy for our people. Further, settler/mainstream educators, policymakers and government bodies need to be educated on the importance of indigenous knowledge and what it constitutes, as they currently have no reference point for it as a rule, and therefore generally remain unaware. Canadians in general also have no reference for what constitutes indigenous knowledge. This ignorance and subsequent lack of support will be demonstrated in the next chapter in a discussion of issues related to reframing and naming.

In Native on the Net, we are challenged to think about a range of questions:

How are indigenous voices, in turn, electronically reaching new audiences and creating new horizons for speakers as well as listeners? How do marginalized peoples perceive and position themselves in relation to global computer networking, and how do these sociotechnical apparatuses figure in local lifeworlds? In what ways are interactive media environments changing the subjectivities and practices, both online and offline, of peoples historically de-centered from “the action”? (Landzelius, 2006, p. 2).

The following chapters will address these questions from an indigenous analytical perspective by employing Nishnaabeg principles of Biskaabiiyang (to look back), Naakgonige (to plan), Aanjigone (non-interference) and Debwewin (heart-based). These four principles help to articulate how indigenous people use, perceive, envision, and dream new dreams for an Internet that lights new fires for indigenous knowledge.
Chapter 5
Biskaabiiyang (to look back)

Introduction

In writing about *Biskaabiiyang*, Simpson (2011) draws from Wendy Makoonz Geniusz (2009), the Anishinaabe scholar and respected language teacher who was introduced in Chapter One. Quoting from Geniusz, Simpson writes, “Through Biskaabiiyang methodology, this research goes back to the principles of anishnaabe-inaadiziwin (culture, teachings, customs, history) in order to decolonize or reclaim anishnaabe-gikendaasowin (that which was given to us in a loving way)” (p. 50). Here we see how notions about claiming, restoring, reframing, and many of the methodologies that L.T. Smith (1999) describes, are all themes that resonate within the meaning of *Biskaabiiyang*.

In this chapter I will explore the indigenous principle of *Biskaabiiyang* (to look back) as a way of providing important cultural insights into how the research participants encountered and processed FourDirectionsTeachings.com and other indigenous knowledge websites. As discussed earlier, I will connect this concept with L.T. Smith’s methodologies, particularly those of Storytelling, Celebrating Survival, Indigenizing, Revitalizing, Representing, Reframing, Restoring, Democratizing, Naming and Creating. Through this approach I hope to demonstrate how indigenous voices are reaching new audiences through the net and how computer networking and interactive media are impacting the practices and thinking of diverse indigenous and non-indigenous peoples in Canada. The perspective I develop here also draws from Taiaiake Alfred’s (2005) pathway of “Land is Life” which entails reconnecting and looking back in order to claim, name, reframe and ultimately restore and create ways to learn - which results in contributing to indigenous resurgence from within an indigenous ontology.

*Storytelling* and precedence for indigenous knowledge

L.T. Smith’s (1999) notion of *Storytelling* sets precedence for indigenous knowledge:
Story telling, oral histories, the perspectives of elders and of women, have become an integral part of all indigenous research. ... For many indigenous writers stories are ways of passing down the beliefs and values of a culture in the hope that the new generations will treasure them and pass the story down further. (p.145)

Storytelling can even set precedence in the legal sense of the term. Dr. John Borrows (personal communication December 19, 2013]) told me that he uses FourDirectionsTeachings.com in every indigenous law course that he teaches. He believes that indigenous teachings and traditions provide an opportunity to have a conversation, and more importantly, to deliberate around what they tell us. Indigenous teachings and traditions, then, provide the standards for judgment. They are the authorities; they are the guidelines, and therefore the precedents. Dr. Borrows explained that they are the criteria that we can access in making decisions and resolving disputes today.

As a producer and academic I had no idea that FourDirectionsTeachings.com or indigenous storytelling more generally were being taken up in these ways. Of course, after engaging with Dr. Borrows, this notion of teachings in a legal context made perfect sense, in that the values and beliefs that are inherent in these stories inform cultural mores. Dr. Borrows elaborates:

Indigenous and Anishnaabe knowledge are those authorities, those standards for judgment, as they are the criteria by which we measure what we are doing and whether or not it’s appropriate. I see these traditions, these stories, as a precedent, and they therefore require a sense of deference from us. As we look to the elders, we look to the teachings, the traditions, to be able to guide our behavior today. So law isn't just something that's said in a legislature or produced in a court judgment, although it can be those things. It is more broad than that; it is our way of understanding what we should be doing in the world because of the teachings and knowledge that have been passed on to us by our ancestors through our elders.

Dr. Borrows’ definition expands the notion of indigenous storytelling and its importance for future generations beyond the realm of being cultural treasures. In his view, indigenous stories attain the status of legal precedents that beckon us to consider them seriously as standards or principles for making decisions about the way we live as a society, and how we take up our
responsibilities as individuals in a community. Consequently, it is important for Dr. Borrows that students understand that, "as they practice law, that they can take these teachings and use them in how they work to serve community, and to see that these stories of growth and reciprocity are a part of the values that they should be taking on as Anishinaabe or indigenous lawyers."

The curatorial work of Cheryl L'Hirondelle (2009) likewise suggests how her practice intuitively embraces long-held indigenous notions of growth and reciprocity as values that she employs when thinking about her projects, and in how she presents such work to the community. For her, the highest value of indigenous work online is to give back to the community (rather than merely being about the individual artist’s self-expression, for example). Ms. L'Hirondelle was a participant in one of the first North American think tanks around indigenous people and the Internet, held in January 1994 at the BANFF Centre. This gathering was a pivotal moment for Ms. L'Hirondelle and has stayed with her:

When I had the opportunity to curate for ImagineNative, I wanted my first curatorial project to be an homage to that first think tank at Banff. It was there that I remember hearing from Dr. George Baldwin (an Osage sociologist and a technologist) and Randy Ross (Cherokee) that, “We don't want to end up road kill on the information super highway.” They were the creators of Indian Net BBS and active with native communities in the United States about getting into technology, because they believed that otherwise, we will end up road kill on the side of the information super highway. So as an homage to that first think tank, and to some of the first websites and examples of technologies that bowled me over and made me realize that technology was an important tool for survival, I curated ten outstanding works.

\footnote{Marjorie Beaucage, and Loretta Todd spearheaded the initiative with the late Ahasiw Maskegon-Iskwew, a sort of technical consultant at the time. Sara Diamond, a Banff Centre Director, supported the initiative, which by the early 90s became known as Drum Beats to Drum Bytes.}
Ms L'Hirondelle still has a powerful connection with these ideas she faced in her first encounters with issues around indigenous digital technology. In her current projects she sees the value of having indigenous content on the Internet as an important tool for the **survival of indigenous peoples**.

In reflecting upon her own work as an artist and producer of new media projects, she says,

After I made *Dene Cree Elders Speak* and presented it at an elder's gathering in northern Saskatchewan, something really interesting happened after the presentation. People began to come up to me and say, “I’ve got a story to tell you”, and they'd just start telling me their story right there and it took me about a couple of minutes to realize what was going on - and then it came; they wanted to have their stories told on the website. “I want my children to hear this story.” It was so amazing. It was like I reached them on another level where they could understand that computers could be more than just “avoidance machines”. That phrase comes from a senator from the Saskatchewan Federation of Indians, an ex-chief, who said he used to be able to walk into the band office and have a conversation with people but now with computers people have their backs to the door, so the computers just become a way for people to avoid talking. My presentation made those elders feel hopeful that technology could be a good thing and used in a good way, that isn't just shutting them out but is actually putting them back in front of their grandchildren.

Indigenous storytelling, then, is a political act of survival because it connects the values and beliefs of the past to the present. This realization is growing on Elders and technology dissenters who first saw the Internet as part of the world of “avoidance machines.” For Borrows and L'Hirondelle, to be able to look back, to practice *biskaabiiyang* through accessing indigenous storytelling on the Internet, means that they can rekindle culture, teachings, customs and history for their students and audiences. In doing this work they are actively contributing to indigenous resurgence by privileging the act of indigenous storytelling and recognizing its value as a precedent for indigenous knowledge.
Celebrating survival and indigenous worldviews

L.T. Smith (1999) states that Celebrating…

Accentuates not so much our demise but the degree to which indigenous peoples and communities have successfully retained cultural and spiritual values and authenticity. ...Events and accounts which focus on the positive are important not just because they speak to our survival but because they celebrate our resistances at an ordinary human level and they affirm our identities as indigenous women and men. Celebrating survival as an approach is also a theme running through the collections of elder stories. .... Gregory Cajete writes that 'celebrating is a natural outcome of spiritual sharing and it too can take a diversity of forms. It is an individual and communal process that celebrates the mystery of life and the journey that each of us takes. Celebration is a way of spreading the lights around.' (p.145)

As a full time artist, Emilie Monnet (personal communication, December 13, 2013). is committed to bridging her two interests, which are "how art processes can foster transformation and empower the youth, and how art can sensitize people to the cultural richness, diversity of teachings and resilience of aboriginal worldviews." Through her artwork, Ms. Monnet celebrates survival in a positive way that embraces the main tenets of Biskaabiiyang (to look back). For example, her award-winning work, Bird Messengers, is inspired by "aboriginal storytelling and ancestral teachings." She also directed Songs of Morning and Songs of Life, "a performance that looked at the imprints of genocide on aboriginal and Rwandan communities, and the power of the drum to heal and contribute to the process of mourning" (personal communication, December 13, 2013). In this way, Ms. Monnet draws upon the cultural and spiritual values of indigenous communities that she engages with to inform and inspire her artwork.

Ms. Monnet wants to create bridges internationally with indigenous communities in Columbia. She states that, "Being able to work with youth and create opportunities for the transmission of knowledge and skills is also very important to me." It is heartening to hear that Ms. Monnet is doing this work and that finding and accessing indigenous knowledge online contributes to her practice. The fact that Ms. Monnet believes "that our worldviews are a treasure for the whole of humanity" means that she will spend her lifetime contributing to
indigenous resurgence through celebrating survival in her artwork and in working with indigenous youth.

**Indigenizing** privileges a politics of indigenous identity

In writing on her notion of *Indigenizing*, L.T. Smith (1999) makes a connection with political and cultural change:

> The term centres a politics of indigenous identity and indigenous cultural action.
> (pg.146)

For Professor Chartrand (December 5, 2013), "The whole field of Aboriginal rights and treaty rights is fundamentally racist and discriminatory, because it is based on the doctrine of discovery."²¹ As a result, Professor Chartrand is committed to teaching his students to learn how to think critically about the rights of aboriginal peoples, especially given the historical context and the fact that Canadian history is a one-sided story. He also teaches indigenous traditions and principles from a variety of indigenous nations. His intention in doing so is to inspire students to pick up - that is, to look back and practice - *Biskaabiiyang*, in order to bring forward what was left behind. In this way, Professor Chartrand centres and privileges a politics of indigenous identity in order to inspire indigenous cultural action.

His broader goal is to indigenize law school and to eventually have an indigenous law department that will explore ways in which indigenous law can be reinstated in the mainstream public sphere. He states that, "So much of the teaching that I do is about how we can get Canadian law to recognize the validity of indigenous law again. What principles and reforms do we need to undertake to achieve that end?" Like Borrows, Chartrand utilizes FourDirectionsTeachings.com in his law courses, and sees indigenous knowledge online as a huge benefit to his work and vision, which is clearly related to the notion of indigenous resurgence from a legal perspective.

²¹ A rule of principle or theory based on acquisition or attainment of that which was previously unknown.
Revitalizing language to better comprehend indigenous knowledge

A good example of Revitalizing as a healthy way of looking back is seen in the recovery of critical aspects of indigenous cultures found in indigenous languages.

*Indigenous languages, their arts and their cultural practices are in various states of crisis. …The indigenous language is often regarded as being subversive to national interests and national literacy campaigns. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.148)*

Revitalizing indigenous languages is a key concern for many of the research participants. For example, Monique Mojica (January 25, 2014) said that she would like to see world indigenous languages on the Internet. Ms. Mojica states that, "Language is so important, because it encodes perception, and if we're talking about putting indigenous knowledge(s) in the centre, you have to know the language. Even simple things in a language tell you a lot about a culture."

Cheryl L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) echoes Ms. Mojica's statement:

Language resources are critical for future generations, because they need to know that our languages are Earth-based languages. So through our languages you're talking to the Earth; you're talking to the elements; you're talking to the plants, animals and bugs when you're speaking in one of our indigenous languages. Language is also inherent in our ceremonies, and our ceremonies are part of the alchemy, that unquantifiable alchemy, that keeps the earth spinning.

It is implicitly understood by these women that language encodes indigenous worldviews. I found it interesting that Ms. L'Hirondelle referred to indigenous languages as earth-based languages, and that she – like Ms. Mojica – sees how language encodes our perceptions and understanding. Indeed, Ms. L'Hirondelle explains how the Cree worldview is built on the metaphor and autonomy of the Cree language. She says,

That is why it is important that we continue to learn our languages, our ceremonies and our teachings. Otherwise it’s a real conundrum if we don’t, because we will no longer be able to recognize the source when it is in plain sight. That is why in native communities
people are recognized and valued when they see someone who had dedicated their life to a particular knowledge. That’s how we start to know what we carry in this world.

Being able to recognize the language and understand its meaning is key for accessing indigenous knowledge. It is also understood that it takes dedication and commitment, over a lifetime, to be recognized as a knowledge keeper.

Dr. John Borrows (December 19, 2013) elaborates on this point when he discusses the importance of the Ojibway language and being able to have access to respected community knowledge keepers. He says,

Other cultural sources that inform my work include referencing Anishnaabemowin. I find there's lots of information packed in the etymology of words. So going to people who know the language, like Basil Johnston - he is a person that lives in my community and that I talk with; he himself is a source of knowledge, not just for knowing the language but for carrying an understanding of the teachings and history as well - so accessing people from the community is important too.

Like Ms. L'Hirondelle, Dr. Borrows acknowledges that it is people from the community who dedicate themselves to particular knowledge that must be respected. Learning is not done in isolation or outside of the community. It is immersive and entails building relationships. It is for this reason that people must identify their community - otherwise they lack a foundation from which to speak and engage from.

It is not surprising, therefore, that language resources are something many of the research participants said that they would like to see more of online. Ms. Monnet combines online language learning with offline learning as a way of being proactive in teaching herself the language:

The Golden Lake website has a lot of resources where you can hear how to pronounce words. They also share a lot of materials on how to learn the language and songs. These sites are important to me because they support my learning. More and more, I am incorporating indigenous languages into my projects. These sites also help me to find words that I can bring to my language teacher, so that we can discuss the root of the word
and have a discussion about its uses. So having access to language helps to start a dialogue.

Like Monnet (December 13, 2013), many of the research participants use online language resources to extend their grasp of indigenous knowledge. They understand that indigenous languages inform our understanding of ceremonies, and that ceremonies are key to discerning indigenous knowledge.

Unfortunately, in discussion with Alan Corbiere (personal communication, September, 2014), a respected Anishnaabemowin language teacher and researcher, there are very few good beginner indigenous language sites online, and there is a lack of coordination for comprehensive language learning that links beginner, intermediate and advanced learners. Funding for such projects is very scarce. As a producer who has tried to include indigenous languages in current online projects, I have been turned down numerous times when applying for resources to support such projects. As L.T. Smith indicates above, there is a lack of will to support indigenous language campaigns.

Nonetheless, the individuals who spoke with me are proactive about seeking indigenous knowledge resources both on and off line. Indigenous language resources online would benefit many people, and would really help address the crisis of losing indigenous language speakers. However, developing such resources needs to be a coordinated effort, requiring the political will to fund online projects that can connect existing indigenous language sites and categorize them for learners into beginner, intermediate and advanced levels. This would aid users so they don't get lost and frustrated on the World Wide Web.

More importantly, new online resources have to be developed to address language-learning gaps, of which there are many, according to language expert Mr. Corbiere. Like Chartrand's suggestion for indigenous knowledge sites, indigenous language sites that accomplish these goals could become a reality with the political will and adequate funding required. By providing such projects online, indigenous communities would be actively contributing to indigenous resurgence through Biskaabiyyang, looking back, to pick up their language and by virtue of this action, their indigenous knowledge.
Representing indigenous knowledge via indigenous people

The act of Representing is inextricable from the need to hear the voices of indigenous peoples:

Indigenous communities have struggled since colonization to be able to exercise what is viewed as a fundamental right - that is, to represent ourselves. The representing project spans both the notion of representation as a political concept and representation as a form of voice and expression. In the political sense colonialism specifically excluded indigenous peoples from any form of decision making.

States and governments have long made decisions hostile to the interests of indigenous communities but justified by a paternalistic view that indigenous peoples were like children who needed others to protect them and decide what was in their best interests. Paternalism is still present in many forms in the way governments, local bodies and non-government agencies decide on issues, which have an impact on indigenous communities. Being able as a minimum right to voice the views and opinions of indigenous communities in various decision-making bodies is still being struggled over. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.150)

Representation is also a project of indigenous artists, writers, poets, filmmakers and others who attempt to express an indigenous spirit, experience or worldview. Representation of indigenous peoples by indigenous people is about countering the dominant society’s image of indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems. It is also about proposing solutions to the real-life dilemmas that indigenous communities confront and trying to capture the complexities of being indigenous. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.151)

Ms. Mojica (January 25, 2014) spoke about how early in her current dramatic project the dramaturge identified the tension in her work between the invisibility of indigenous people and the invisibility of the effigy mounds. Ms. Mojica elaborates:

For example, there's a huge burial mound in Scarborough; over 500 people are buried there. It’s in a nice little residential round about where people have their suburban homes
surrounding it. The mound is enormous; there's even a plaque at the top, and yet it's invisible on the landscape.

Ms. Mojica notes that these earth works can be right in front of you - they're everywhere - and you don't see them if you don't know they are there. She explains,

So the tension here between duration and invisibility is overwhelming. Much like how our hyper-visibility is being displayed in ethnographic congresses and human zoos, which have morphed into Hollywood - and yet the duration of who we are as a people remains invisible, just like the mounds.

This tension is exemplified in how colonialism has excluded indigenous people from representing themselves, and hence their true forms remain invisible - despite their presence and duration, like the earth mounds. Instead, what is made visible through colonialism is the distorted and inhumane caricatures of indigenous people.

It is for this reason that Dr. Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014) feels that there's room for a lot more sharing. She believes that having access to tools like FourDirectionsTeachings.com is helpful for educating indigenous and non-indigenous people about what it means to be indigenous, and therefore is a way of responding to colonialist stereotypes. She says, "I always come back to the Prophecy of the Seven Fires, which tells us that there will be new people who will emerge and will pick up what's left on the trail." For Dr. Gaywish, having indigenous production teams working carefully and respectfully with Elders and traditional teachers to put indigenous knowledge on the Internet is an example of new people emerging to pick up what was left on the trail.

Dr. Gaywish believes that such work is not only important for indigenous people to access but for non-indigenous people as well. She elaborates,

We know that we need good allies who understand. We also know you can't address racism if you don't touch people, really reach out and connect with who they are. Teaching tools like FourDirectionsTeachings.com help to accomplish these goals. It helps people to learn that understanding doesn't just exist in your head. You have to feel
it. It is personal. It is emotional. It is what we call heart-based learning. Any knowing that has any real staying power is heart-based, and that is also how we know it is good.

In the prophecy of the Seventh Fires it is understood that the bundles are knowledge bundles and that when we pick them up we are picking up and retrieving our indigenous knowledge. This is why FourDirectionsTeachings.com is referred to, in this dissertation, as a digital bundle – because, for the research participants, it embraces and embodies important aspects of indigenous knowledge, and therefore is in many ways representative of a knowledge bundle.

In contemplating this notion, I questioned whether research participants distinguished between indigenous knowledge and indigenous information sites online.

For Ms. Mojica, indigenous knowledge cannot really be found online. She explains:

When I look at a website that is presenting indigenous knowledge I consider that to be ultimately indigenous information because of the medium through which that knowledge is being filtered. In order to be a recipient of indigenous knowledge, that knowledge has to be transmitted through a one on one or shared communal experience. Indigenous knowledge is transmitted through ceremony, and I don't think that indigenous knowledge can be transmitted over the Internet.

I also believe that indigenous knowledge is transmitted through ceremony, and that certain types of indigenous knowledge must remain in the ceremonial realm. However, I also think that there are many ways to introduce people to indigenous knowledge online so that they can begin to learn and have some basis to find a context for deep understanding and knowledge transmission. Ms. Mojica echoes this sentiment when she says,

In my opinion the best way the Internet can function is by being a landmark showing you which way to go and which questions to ask, and providing you with the insight to know that in order to dig deeper, you have to go out and seek the knowledge. You have to participate in ceremony to be a recipient of indigenous knowledge. How and where you find these ceremonies is another question.

As a producer of an online indigenous knowledge project, I would never propose that the Internet become a repository for indigenous knowledge. Indeed, I believe it could never fulfill that
function because I agree with Ms. Mojica - that people must go into their community and engage with their elders and traditional people and language and ceremony to truly learn about indigenous knowledge. That is why in the introduction to FourDirectionsTeachings.com we say that here you will find a mere introduction to some of the teachings.

Where I differ from Ms. Mojica is in my belief that some aspects of indigenous knowledge can be effectively transmitted through the Internet. To digress for a moment, I want to share a touching story from a hospice worker that my family knows personally. Shortly after FourDirectionsTeachings.com had been launched, this hospice worker told us that a young Mohawk man who was dying of AIDS in his care had been watching Tom Porter's Mohawk teaching over and over again. He had observed that the website seem to bring the young man so much peace so close to his death and that he watched it repeatedly, surfing back and forth and really exploring the concepts. The hospice worker also shared that the young man had experienced a significant degree of alienation from his own culture. I don't know who this man was, but I believe - based on the hospice worker's story - that Tom Porter's teaching touched this young man's heart.

We are taught from an indigenous point of view that learning is not just in our heads but in our hearts too. I always think of this man and wonder what he would have said about being able to receive a teaching through the Internet. Was he a recipient of indigenous knowledge? Or was he comforted by something he may have known, remembered or just learned? We will never know. All I can know is the process that we used with the Elders and traditional teachers to share their knowledge was done in a good way, and that this seemed to allow the beauty of the words and ideas to touch the heart of this young man.

I posed the question of whether research participants differentiated between indigenous knowledge and indigenous information sites. Eight of the ten research participants for this study affirmed FourDirectionsTeachings.com as an indigenous knowledge site, whereas only two - Ms. Mojica and Dr. John Borrows - related differently.

Ms. Lepine (January 29, 2014) was one of the eight. She notes that there are few indigenous knowledge sites but a plethora of new age cultural sites that appropriate indigenous knowledge. She says,
There are more indigenous information sites than indigenous knowledge sites. I also think there are too many new age cultural appropriation sites, which is scary. Who holds the traditional knowledge and who has the right to transmit it is important to consider. I don't like to use the word “own”, but I guess that's kind of how it's described, so yeah, for sure one of the things I am always cognizant of when I'm going on the Internet is, “Who is running this site?” So I like to find out who created the site and who's running it and where their information is coming from.

In thinking about cultural appropriation Ms. Lepine asks: “Who has the right to transmit traditional knowledge?” She relates that this is a fairly complicated topic to talk about because not everyone has the same idea of what it means. Traditional knowledge is a fairly new topic for many people working in government and education. Ms. Lepine states,

I've been to quite a lot of meetings around the territories, when I was working in education, to discuss how to incorporate traditional knowledge into the college. At this point in time, the government has been developing policies that say they can't hold traditional knowledge or anything to do with traditional knowledge because it belongs to the culture and the holders of the knowledge. So it's a very intricate topic to be dealing with on the Internet and in meetings.

Indigenous knowledge is a complicated topic. It is not something that can be regulated by western policies and guidelines. It is governed, rather, by the protocols of the community, and because indigenous communities are distinct, each having their own set of cultural protocols, a blanket policy cannot be applied. Each community must be respected and their cultural protocols adhered to, so that indigenous community values are regarded and deferred to when discussing and presenting indigenous knowledge.

Ms. Lepine notes that, although there are more indigenous information sites, there are not enough in her particular field. When she is online she searches for sites that can help her achieve her professional goals. She says, “I am in the helping field. So I'm looking for information that can help people with healing, and with finding themselves, and validating their story; to feel like they have a place on this Earth.”
For Ms. Lepine, having access to more information on aboriginal healing and methods online can help her with programming for the inmates she works with. Currently, her program provides seasonal programming – for example, bringing inmates out onto the land for a fish camp. For such programs, she invites knowledge keepers from the local community to work with the inmates at specific times of the year, noting that "Being out on the land is a big component of our programming, and something that we are trying to develop and expand."

Further, she notes,

Sometimes funding is an issue, because it costs money to bring in traditional teachers and elders. It also costs money if we decide to go out and see them. We have to cover travel costs, per diem, honorarium, etc. So being able to access some cultural knowledge on the Internet would be effective because of funding issues.

For Ms. Lepine, having access to indigenous knowledge online would help to offset some of these costs, while at the same time fostering culturally relevant programming. Further, Ms. Lepine points out that the era of residential school curriculum is not behind us. She says,

Today we talk about residential schools as if it was in the past but our school system still delivers a curriculum that is no different than what was in the residential schools. In terms of education, we are moving at a glacial pace with respect to including Aboriginal ideology in the curriculum. I think that is also the big thing that's missing on the Internet - that is, access to Aboriginal curriculum nation-wide.

With respect to issues of representation in the education system, the right of indigenous peoples to respectfully contribute to curricula is still being denied by a paternalistic education system. If the political will existed the existing curricula could be overhauled and revitalized in a timely manner. Instead, the government funding and will to support such work results in reluctant change that, to use Ms. Lepine's phrase, "moves at a glacial pace." As a producer of indigenous content, I agree with Ms. Lepine and believe that advances in indigenous curriculum could be provided nation-wide and delivered through the Internet.

Ms. Bourque (January 29, 2014) also offers a critique of indigenous peoples’ representation in the education system, and like Ms. Lepine, sees the Internet as a potential space to address the oppression, racism, and ignorance that has been perpetuated by colonialism:
Further, Canadians are not educated on what has happened to Aboriginal people. We need to have more sites online that teach people about the treaties and about history from an Aboriginal perspective. We need these resources because they are not offered in the schools. These historical truths are not offered anywhere. Even if we had just one site that says, “This is what happened, this is why treaties were signed, this is what was understood.” It is so very important to have good resources, especially now when Aboriginal people are becoming more vocal with movements like Idle No More.

Indigenous people are desperate to have their say, to represent themselves. Movements like Idle No More, as Ms. Bourque notes, bring indigenous voices into the public sphere - but with little context to support their voices, their message gets lost in a sea of Canadian racism and ignorance. Ms. Bourque explains,

Sadly, Idle No More has brought racism to the forefront in Canada and has demonstrated that racism is alive and thriving, which is evident when you read posts online in response to Idle No More. I’ve read, “Indians all want something for nothing. They get everything for nothing.” Yet, these very people, who make these hateful and hurtful comments, will turn around and talk about Nelson Mandela and slavery and the Holocaust of the Jews with such compassion - but they won't take the time to learn about what happened to Aboriginal people in their own country. Education is so desperately needed. I am a treaty Indian. I get $5 a year. I've never had a free house in my whole life. I pay taxes and I've worked full time for 30 years.

I agree. Online resources that depict and address historical truths are desperately needed. Furthermore, these resources need to exist in plain sight so that Canadians can stop hiding behind their ignorance. In today's world it is unacceptable to meet a person with a high school education who doesn't know about Nelson Mandela or hasn't heard of the Holocaust (although this may happen). The same needs to be said regarding indigenous treaties, colonial history and colonial oppression; it is unacceptable that Canadians should be ignorant of these topics, and demonstrates a failure to be a responsible citizen of this country. To end racism, oppression, and rebuild our communities, Ms. Bourque says, "People [Canadians] need to be educated and the Internet is the best place to do it!"
Representation of indigenous history and treaties on the Internet, especially if leveraged into public education systems, could contribute to a real life solution to ending hostile relations between indigenous people and Canadian settler society - or at the very least provide a reference point for dialogue and hopefully intelligent engagement that would go beyond the tiresome reproach of "Indians getting everything for free." Such online work would challenge these racist statements and engage in the project of decolonization, which would ultimately contribute to indigenous resurgence. This type of work would present a much-needed corrective history from an indigenous worldview. How it is done would constitute whether it is indigenous information or indigenous knowledge.

Dr. John Borrows (December 19, 2013) explained that he doesn't really differentiate between indigenous information and indigenous knowledge when researching online. He says,

I can see how it would be separate and I can understand the arguments that would be made in that way, but I don't really filter the world that way. What I do is look at the people. So it was because of Sakej, and knowing about Reg and Lillian, there's still this sense of being led by people, as opposed to categories of knowledge. So it's somewhat an older way, I guess, of filtering information for me, which is still relational, personal.

Dr. Borrows makes an important point here with respect to filtering knowledge through relations and through personal insight. Indeed, many of the research participants identified these same themes when asked about how they validate indigenous information and knowledge that they find online. This feedback is discussed in relationship to L.T. Smith's methods on Claiming/Testimonies, Returning, Networking, Protecting and Negotiating - all of which are outlined in Chapter Seven, where I discuss the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference). I included their feedback in those sections because they specifically speak to methods and approaches that they used either consciously or unconsciously when making knowledge assessments. However, I chose to keep Dr. Borrows’ feedback here because he is challenging the representation of indigenous information and knowledge as a whole. Dr. Borrows explains:

I don’t really see Indigenous knowledge as separate from anything in the world. So when I go online I am not filtering what I find there as either Indigenous knowledge or Indigenous information. [He discusses Indigenous Language websites] …Again, looking at these websites, I'm not asking the kind of question that you are, or that I'm
thinking that you're posing. Its just I'm wanting to learn about the language, and there could be indigenous or non-indigenous peoples producing it with different kinds of perspectives, and if it feels good, I take it in.

For Dr. Borrows, knowledge is attained through his intuitive ability to relate to the content and to trust within himself to choose to accept or reject a particular content. Still, he also considers his networks and looks at the community relationships and community context as a guide for gauging his trust:

Like FourDirectionsTeachings.com, I trust it because of the people who are speaking, and the people who are involved as consultants in the project. Of course I've never met you before now but I'm getting a sense of the good things you're doing as well.

Issues of representation, then, are critical for how indigenous people discern voice, that is: Who is doing the representing, and why are they representing? In discussing the feedback provided by the research participants, it is clear that issues of representation are tied into Biskaabiiyang (to look back) because that is where we find indigenous knowledge, indigenous language and indigenous cultural information.

It is this type of content that counters what L.T. Smith (1999) calls the dominant society's image of indigenous peoples, their lifestyles and belief systems. Grounding new images of indigenous peoples in the knowledge, languages and cultural information of indigenous peoples is at the core of addressing representation by indigenous people. Taking this content and representing it on the Internet requires that we confront the paternalism still present in many forms of government, local bodies and non-government agencies that would decide on issues which have an impact on indigenous communities: "Being able as a minimum right to voice the views and opinions of indigenous communities in various decision-making bodies is still being struggled over" (p.150).

**Reframing culture and teachings for education purposes**

*Reframing is about taking much greater control over the ways in which indigenous issues and social problems are discussed and handled. ...The framing of an issue is about making decisions about its parameters, about what is in the foreground, what is in the*
background, and what shadings or complexities exist within the frame. The project of reframing is related to defining the problem or issue and determining how best to solve that problem. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.153)

L.T. Smith also talks about:

The constant need to justify difference experienced by many other communities whose initiatives are about changing things on a holistic basis rather than endorsing the individualized programme emphasis of government models. The need to reframe is about retaining the strengths of a vision and the participation of a whole community. (p.154)

The Deepening Knowledge Project at OISE, University of Toronto, is all about reframing how teachers in the mainstream education system teach about indigenous people in Canada. Ms. Nardozi (January 9, 2014), the initiative’s Project Manager, explains that teachers do not feel comfortable teaching about indigenous people in Canada for many reasons - including the fact that they intuitively feel that the curriculum is outdated, and, more importantly, that they do not feel equipped to teach in this area because of a lack of adequate teacher training. They lack confidence and knowledge, as well as access to good resources. To better understand why teachers intuitively feel that current curricula are outdated, one only needs to reflect on Ms. Nardozi's experience of mainstream education, and the ways in which she was taught about indigenous people:

I remember growing up in high school. I was a pretty smart kid. I got a lot of A's and yet I came away from high school thinking that native people worshipped animals. I only graduated 10 years ago, so what does that say about the curriculum in our schools? Now I see teacher candidates who are completely surprised by the fact that there are so many diverse indigenous nations in Canada. They have internalized the notion that there is only one kind of indigenous person and that is the stereotypical image of the native with the plains war bonnet and the teepee. So what they are learning is very new for them.

Ms. Nardozi elaborates that "My work with teacher candidates has shown me that many people have had similar experiences, learning very little and very inaccurate information about indigenous peoples while going through school." Current curriculum on indigenous histories and
people is in desperate need of a revamp, and teachers’ understanding of history from a social and political context that is able to shed light on current issues is also desperately required.

The Deepening Knowledge Project takes control of the misinformation by providing teachers with resources that they can trust. The project seeks to reframe responsible citizenship in Canada by emphasizing that we are all treaty people. Ms. Nardozi acknowledges that the training that they are doing with teachers is very new for them. She says,

We encourage them to think about how they can teach current events and history from a social justice perspective that acknowledges and respects the rights and sovereignty of indigenous people. So many teacher candidates are really starting from scratch. The level of not knowing is intimidating for them. That is why I’m always encouraging them to first start with the Deepening Knowledge site because we've collected so many resources there, which will help them to think through all of the issues and information they are digesting.

Moreover, we emphasize that in the particular territory where Toronto is located, we are all treaty people - so what we are learning about is not just for indigenous people, but for all of us, as active and responsible Canadian citizens. Our work takes a tiny step toward de-colonizing a curriculum that is so out of the date that even teachers feel alienated by it. So while our work is a small step, we feel that it is clearly not enough; there is so much more that can be done.

The fact that FourDirectionsTeachings.com and other indigenous knowledge sites are contributing to the Deepening Knowledge Project, and that the success of the Project is predicated on the Deepening Knowledge website, demonstrates how educators in the community are utilizing online indigenous knowledge projects to reframe past wrongs. Here, Biskaabiiyang (to look back) is helping to reframe culture, teachings and history in a good way, helping teachers to differentiate between a colonial curriculum and approach and a de-colonial curriculum and approach. Having allies like Ms. Nardozi who are committed and sensitive to such issues, and visionaries like Dr. Jean Paul Restoule, who leads the project, are necessary and of great value to the goals of indigenous resurgence.
Restoring from brokenness through indigenous knowledge

Indigenous peoples across the world have disproportionately high rates of imprisonment, suicide and alcoholism. Some indigenous activists regard these rates as the continuation of a war. ...Restorative justice in Canada, for example, applies concepts of the ‘healing circle’ and victim restoration, which are based on indigenous processes. These systems have been discussed widely and used to motivate other societies to develop better ways of dealing with offenders and victims. ....Restoring is a project which is conceived as a holistic approach to problem solving. It is holistic in terms of emotional, spiritual and physical nexus, and also in terms of the individual and the collective, the political and the cultural. Restorative programmes are based on a model of healing rather than punishing. .... Health programmes addressing basic health issues have begun to seek ways to connect with indigenous communities through appropriate public health policy and practice models. (L.T. Smith, 1999, pp.154-5)

For Donna Bourque (January 29 2014), having programming that is focused on healing is very important for helping inmates restore themselves from the brokenness they have experienced. Ms. Bourque is aware that many inmates come from the far north and therefore are Inuit, Innu and Dene, and yet she says they are more open with her (even though she is northern Cree), "probably because they understand that I have experienced the same racism and fallout of residential schools as they have." Understanding that they have a shared experience of colonialism and oppression supersedes the lack of indigenous resources that they have to speak to each group's particular cultural background. Ideally, it would be great to have all of those particular indigenous resources, but just being able to start bringing in some indigenous resources has proven to be an ordeal. Ms. Bourque elaborates:

We've got a long way to go, and that is why for years I've been advocating for Aboriginal healing programs in the correctional facilities - because we need to target our inmates. We need them to begin to believe in themselves and to be proud of who they are and where they come from; because it is the only way that they are going to be able to build up their self-esteem and move forward in life.
Ms. Bourque uses indigenous knowledge resources and information that she finds online to help her with restorative justice programming. She realizes that not all of the resources she has can be culturally specific to each inmate, but she also notes that inmates appreciate using indigenous resources even though they may not be from their own particular culture. Ms. Bourque referred to the Ojibway Medicine Wheel and Cree Teepee Pole Teachings on the FourDirectionsTeachings.com site in her interview:

We used the medicine wheel as a part of the case plan for the inmates and the Alcohol & Drug Counselor used it as part of the release program. She would do a medicine wheel with the inmates. So we would go on the site and check out the medicine wheel. We used that one quite a bit, but we also used the Cree teepee pole teachings. These teachings helped the inmates to visualize their plan in terms of how they would take care of all aspects of their self - emotional, physical, mental and spiritual - when back in the community and in daily life. The inmates enjoyed doing it. Toward the end of their release, we would always have a case conference where program staff, probation officers and the offender would meet. Here the inmate would present their medicine wheel to the probation officer and explain their plan and commitment for reintegrating into the community.

For many inmates, taking care of all aspects of self often means finding ways to address addictions, deal with anger issues, and confront how to begin a healing process that is restorative for them and their respective communities. The teepee pole and medicine wheel teaches address all aspects of the self from an indigenous perspective. According to Ms. Bourque, this indigenous perspective and approach is deeply appreciated by the inmates, even though it may not directly reflect their own culture.

Just as the experience and impact of racism and colonial oppression have united diverse indigenous groups in the north, so has restorative programming - which seeks to apply a holistic approach to problem solving by working on the emotional, spiritual, mental and physical well being of individual inmates, and also in terms of the collective experience of decolonizing from political and cultural oppression. Ms. Bourque is committed to restorative programmes that are based on a model of healing rather than punishing, because, as she says, "It's the only way we are
going to build up their self esteem and see them move forward in life." To do this work Ms. Bourque acknowledges that indigenous resources are key to restorative programming.

Democratizing reinstates indigenous principles of collectivity

Democratizing in indigenous terms is a process of extending participation outwards through reinstating indigenous principles of collectivity and public debate. (L.T. Smith p.156)

Both Dr. John Borrows (December 19, 2013) and Professor Larry Chartrand (December 5, 2013) feel that is it important that indigenous lawyers understand what it means to be indigenous and to serve their community as a lawyer; that is, to fully understand their ethical obligations. As a result, Dr. Borrows teaches about treaty protocols as a way of reinstating indigenous principles of collectivity and public debate. His classes on the Two Row Wampum, the Twenty Four Nations Belt and the Bowl with One Spoon discuss how indigenous people use treaties as ways of settling disputes amongst themselves. Dr. Borrows states that,

These treaty protocols were then applied to the English, French and Dutch when they came along. Tom Porter's teaching on the peacemaker demonstrates that there are internal mechanisms for peace and order. The story of the Hotinonshonni working through conflict within their community is derived from these teachings on the Peacemaker and the wampum belts as treaties. The Anishinaabe people also use these belts. Maybe they got it from the Hotinonshonni. So they became something we also used in trying to work through internal conflict.

By bringing this knowledge into the classrooms of law schools, Dr. Borrows is democratizing indigenous terms - like the treaties listed above, and teachings on the Peacemaker - to extend participation to the students in his classes by engaging them in an indigenous discourse that explores protocols for dealing with conflict through indigenous methods.

Likewise, Professor Larry Chartrand states below that access to more indigenous knowledge online would not only increase the viability of such knowledge but would facilitate social order and re-inscribe indigenous values. He says,
I would like to see perhaps more in-depth sites of relevant legends and stories of particular Nations, whether it is the Dene or the Coast Salish, because one of the most important aspects of a viable legal tradition is to ensure its accessibility to those who are expected to be bound by it. And so the Internet can certainly offer a means of increasing that viability and legitimacy through accessibility. A lot of the worldviews and philosophical principles, our principles, can be thought of as principles for facilitating social order; and that is what law is all about.

Sharing this information on the Internet not only benefits indigenous communities but non-indigenous communities as well, and therefore extends participation outwards through reinstating indigenous principles of collectivity and encouraging public debate. Democratizing, then, is successfully employed when using the practice of Biskaabiiyang – looking back at our original treaties and reinstating their value and meaning for the world today.

**Naming** is a strategy for cultural survival

*This project takes its name from Brazilian educator Paulo Freire, whose saying, ‘name the word, name the world’ (which was about literacy programmes), has been applied in the indigenous context to literally rename the landscape. This means renaming the world using the original indigenous names. ...Naming applies to other things as well. It is about retaining as much control over meaning as possible. By ‘naming the world’ people name their realities. For communities there are realities which can only be found in the indigenous language; the concepts which are self-evident in the indigenous language can never be captured by another language. (L.T. Smith, pp.157-8)*

Naming is about power. Historically colonized indigenous people were not even given the right or dignity to keep their original indigenous names due to the fact that colonial bureaucrats could not pronounce or spell them and changed the names to suit their own needs. Using original indigenous names is about returning dignity and power back to the rights of indigenous people. It is also, as L.T. Smith (1999) contends, about retaining as much control over meaning as possible. For Dr. Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014), scholarship pertains to these issues because research and authorship are very much entrenched in the act of naming. Dr. Gaywish notes,
When it comes to preparing higher education that expresses our own indigenous worldview, our own perspectives, our own teachings, and the knowledge of our elders, we are at a disadvantage, because so much research on our communities has been done by non-Aboriginal people.

Dr. Gaywish was specifically referencing FourDirectionsTeachings.com and the importance of having indigenous scholarship in higher education. She emphasized that she highly values resources developed by indigenous people because they are few and far between, and that much more work still needs to be done.

I believe naming is very important in looking back because we can find that language and apply it today. In doing so we are naming the word and naming the world, as Paulo Friere says (1970). I also believe that modern English words used in an indigenous context can have power. For example, the name Digital Bundle refers to a very specific indigenous context that comes from the acknowledgement and roots of the traditional bundle. The traditional bundle has very specific meaning as described in chapter one, and would most likely be recognized and acknowledged only by indigenous people who are informed culturally. The context of the term bundle would, I believe, be lost on those not informed by the indigenous cultural meaning. In this way, as L.T. Smith (1999) states, "by naming the world people name their realities" which, perhaps more importantly, allows for the “retaining [of] as much control over meanings as possible" (p.157-8).

Naming is also intensely personal, especially for indigenous people who straddle two worlds, those of the indigenous and settler societies. Being able to name and articulate experience is both empowering and healing. Ms. Lepine (date) eloquently captures this experience:

I know one of my biggest frustrations going to university years ago was that I didn't know how to articulate the experiences that I had growing up in a cross-cultural world that wasn't very friendly. However, my experience in native studies was like going through a healing program where I began to understand how to articulate and validate my own story. Learning how to communicate with people that are not from your culture can be very empowering. So I think the teachings on the FourDirectionsTeachings.com site could do the same thing for the inmates. It could help them see that there are other
Aboriginal groups that think the same way they do. Other Aboriginal groups might use different words and different symbols, but the ideas are the same. To me that's a huge self-awareness moment.

Being able to name and understand contextually the indigenous meaning behind the naming is key. For indigenous people, understanding the naming contextually can cross over to diverse indigenous cultures; as Ms. Lepine points out, "Aboriginal groups may use different words and symbols but the ideas [or worldviews] are the same." Recognizing the similarities can be a point of healing, especially for inmates who don't yet have access to resources that speak specifically to their cultural background.

Finally, naming is about unlocking context and meaning, and is about survival. Ms. L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) explains how she used YouTube for indigenous music research, which she then compiled into a long document of YouTube clips that she presented to her supervisor. She states that,

There is so much encoded in each song, like when all of a sudden a dancer comes up with an eagle whistle, or the drummers play another push-up or two of that song. I know what that means, because it is imbued with significance. So YouTube is quite a good source for indigenous music, even though it doesn't explain the relevance and meaning to you. I had to explain to my supervisor the meanings of each song, and the different contexts of each song, and what it means and what type of song it is. So I had to vet the music and explain it; otherwise my supervisor would never know the significance of what he is seeing.

Indigenous music is also a source of indigenous knowledge. Ms. L'Hirondelle alludes to this when she speaks of how much information is encoded in a song. I found it extremely insightful that if Ms. L'Hirondelle did not name and explain the songs, her supervisor would not know the significance of what he is seeing. This inability to see is true for most of us who are not versed in indigenous music and therefore miss the out on the symbolism, language, timing, etc. Having this naming provided is another source of indigenous knowledge that would require us to look back and learn in order to make transparent the relevance and meaning of indigenous songs.
Creating fosters new discourses, approaches and dreams

According to L.T. Smith (1999), creating:

Is about the spirit of creating which indigenous communities have exercised over thousands of years. Imagination enables people to rise above their own circumstances, to dream new visions and to hold on to old ones. It fosters inventions and discoveries, facilitates simple improvements to people’s lives and uplifts our spirits. Creating is not the exclusive domain of the rich nor of the technologically superior, but of the imaginative. Creating is about channeling collective creativity in order to produce solutions to indigenous problems.)

...Indigenous peoples’ ideas and beliefs about the origins of the world, their explanations of the environment, often embedded in complicated metaphors and mythic tales, are now being sought as the basis for thinking more laterally about current theories about the environment, the earth and the universe.

Communities are the ones who know the answers to their own problems, although their ideas tend to be dismissed when suggested to various agencies and governments. (L.T. Smith pp.158-9)

In writing about resurgence, Simpson (2011) states that vision alone isn’t enough. “Vision must be coupled with intent: intent for transformation, intent for re-creation, intent for resurgence" (p.147). When I first envisioned the online project FourDirectionsTeachings.com, a lot of people that I love and respect told me it would be near to impossible to do. I listened, but felt compelled to push forward with the project even though people close to me were not confident it would work out. When the time came to build the project I followed my instincts and shared in a collective creativity that brought forth a project with staying power. At that time I understood intuitively that the vision for this project was coupled with intent to transform, but I had no idea how indigenous knowledge online would do that work.

Today I see the fruits of that creation, and the links between indigenous knowledge online and the intent for resurgence, transformation and recreation through the many endeavors and fields of the research participants. I am excited by the vision of working with the concept of
a traditional bundle and recreating and transforming it to name online indigenous knowledge
to projects as digital bundles, as a way to distinguish the work of indigenous knowledge online. I
am also continuing to learn through engaging indigenous people and communities on what it
means to be involved with the visioning of indigenous knowledge online - and on how that will
have impacts for generations to come.

For example, Dr. Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014) relayed the Prophecy of the Seven
Fires, which she says, "tells us that a new people shall emerge, and that they will pick up what
was left on the trail." This statement can be interpreted to say that the new people would be
using new ways and therefore would create for the purposes of survival and solutions to
indigenous problems. Dr. Gaywish explains:

Using the tools that a higher education provides may be a way of helping our people on
their journey, to pick up what was left on the trail. With that little bit of knowledge they
can then go back and talk to their grandparents and elders and traditional teachers. They
can go back to their communities and experience the ceremonies, the feasts, and the
sweats with some confidence, because at least they will have learned a little bit about
what to expect when they arrive. Teaching tools like FourDirectionsTeachings.com are
very valuable to introduce that basic knowledge, especially for aboriginal people who
feel disenfranchised from their culture. It can help them feel empowered enough to
explore more and ask questions. For non-aboriginal people, access to indigenous
knowledge shows them that we are not a vanquished people. We've got a strong history,
culture, and traditions that are rightfully ours, that we can teach to them in places like the
universities - a good way to raise awareness and respect for aboriginal people and their
communities.

Dr. Gaywish clearly sees FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a solution for helping disenfranchised
indigenous people find a sense of connection. Broken communities can find new tools to help
them heal and to connect, whether it is through native programs in higher education or online
indigenous knowledge projects. Creation of these new ways to learn, as L.T. Smith (1999) states,
"enables people to rise above their own circumstances, to dream new visions and to hold on to
old ones. It fosters inventions and discoveries, facilitates simple improvements to people’s lives
and uplifts our spirits" (p.158). Finally, it is well understood that communities know the answers to their own problems.

Ms. L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) suggests that communities know the answers. This is why, with respect to discussing indigenous knowledge online versus artistic online projects, she says,

I think we need to figure out the work-around. We need to figure out how to regroup as fast as we can, because there is still a lot to do. I do sometimes think that, when you have cultural knowledge and traditional knowledge, really deep knowledge, it's access to that work-around. It's access to that thing that wasn't plain to the human eye; it isn't in plain sight. So it's where your strength becomes your weakness and your weakness becomes your strength. Maybe if Drum Beats to Drum Bytes had continued, we would have worked through these issues, but after Ahasiw passed so did the Drum Beats to Drum Bytes gatherings. It’s heartbreaking when you lose someone who is so pivotal to the community; a hole exists where that person used to be.

Figuring out the work-around and regrouping in indigenous new media is also an act of creating. It will involve being imaginative and thinking outside of mainstream constructs of new media and ICTs. It will involve fostering new discourses that come from indigenous meanings, contexts and languages. This work-around will be a collective effort that will welcome everyone and will not judge or limit participation to the technologically advanced only, or to those projects that are profitable, or to those people who have cultural capital as artists. Regrouping will be about channeling collective creativity in order to privilege indigenous peoples’ ideas and beliefs about the origins of the world, and their worldview. To do this, we need to look back at the work we have done, and then - together as a community - move forward.

**Conclusion**

*Biskaabiiyang* (to look back) is critical to indigenous learning because looking back to our storytelling, ceremonies and languages reveals and emancipates indigenous knowledge. For Taiaiake Alfred (2005), the pathway of “Land is Life” is a way in which we can reconnect with the terrain and geography of our indigenous heritage. In so doing, he believes that we will be
able to draw strength and sustenance that is independent of colonial power, and which is regenerative of an authentic, autonomous, indigenous existence. I appreciate his thinking in a very practical sense, in that indigenous knowledge is rooted to the land of our ancestors and knowledge keepers. To learn and engage in all the projects/methodologies described above we have to connect with our communities and knowledge and keepers because they are rooted and connected to the land of our ancestors.

Practicing *Biskaabiiyang* entails deep reflection and mobilization or help from the spirit world (Simpson, 2011, p. 147). In reflecting on this notion I thought about Ms. Mojica (January 25, 2014) and her work with the earth mounds. She told me that,

Research is ceremony. You've got to put yourself on the land. You've got to protect yourself, you've got do your feasting for your purpose, and you've got to know how much to open yourself and allow the energies from those sites and those guides [spirit and animal] tell you what you need to know; and then you've got to trust it.

Here the idea of “Land is Life” comes up again, along with the idea that the land is tied into our cultural processes and protocols. Indeed, when we set out to begin production work on FourDirectionsTeachings.com, the first Elder we visited, Ms. Lillian Pitawanakwat surprised me by putting our project team through ceremony, putting us out on the land and bringing us back to our mother (in the Sweat Lodge) so that we could begin the project in a good way; thus was the project launched within the cultural protocols of our community. So research, ceremony and land all become intertwined as we practice *Biskaabiiyang* (to look back).

In this chapter I have examined how the research participants utilize indigenous knowledge and information online to inform and strengthen their work and their communities. I made connections between L.T. Smith's (2011) decolonization projects and the research participants' work and to my own work as a media producer. These connections have been reflected through considering them in relation to the principle of *Biskaabiiyang*. Through *Biskaabiiyang*, we are able to enact and embrace the decolonization projects so eloquently stated by L.T. Smith. Finally, I have discussed how resurgence is related to the vision and intent of the research participants in the ways they take up indigenous knowledge online. My goal was to demonstrate how indigenous voices are reaching new audiences and how computer networking and interactive media are impacting the practices and thinking of diverse indigenous and non-
indigenous peoples in Canada. I accomplished this task through an indigenous analytical perspective, which privileges the principle of *Biskaabiiyang* as a way of honoring indigenous ontology and contributing to indigenous resurgence in academic theory. In the next chapter I will turn to the principle of *Naakgonige* (to plan).
Chapter 6

Naakgonige (to plan)

Introduction

With respect to “Language as Power”, Taiaiake Alfred (2005) states, "Our people must recover ways of knowing and relating from outside the mental and ideational framework of colonialism by regenerating themselves in a conceptual universe formed through indigenous languages" (p.613). This pathway is closely related to the process of Naakgonige (to plan). For Simpson (2011), Naakgonige requires that we take time to deliberate carefully before making any concrete decisions. All aspects of the self must be engaged in such deliberation: the emotional, the physical, the spiritual and the intellectual. Only in this way can we ensure that we are engaged and fully present in the decision making process. Working in this way is a fairly stark contrast with modern, Western “colonial” planning processes, which have a strong tendency to distinctly utilitarian ends, and to much shorter sighted decision-making, in relation to artificial pressures and deadlines (versus natural cycles).

In this chapter I will discuss how the principle of Naakgonige (to plan) is present in the ways in which the research participants discuss their work with indigenous knowledge online. L.T. Smith's (1999) projects on Remembering, Intervening, Connecting and Gendering will be utilized as a framework for discussing the information shared by research participants. So while it is evident that these projects are not language based, I see a connection between them and Taiaiake Alfred's pathway – “Language as Power” - in that these projects encourage us to think and act in ways that are free of colonialism, and instead generate a discourse based on indigenous worldviews, which are encoded within indigenous languages. This chapter will reveal how research participants resist colonial agendas by deeply contemplating their plans and responses to indigenous knowledge online.
Remembering for the purposes of healing and transformation

Remembering for L.T. Smith (1999) involves a deep, even resuscitative, recollection process:

*This form of remembering is painful because it involves remembering not just what colonization was about but what being dehumanized meant for our own cultural practices. Both healing and transformation become crucial strategies in any approach which asks a community to remember what they may have decided unconsciously or consciously to forget. (p.146)*

To remember is to utilize our emotional, physical and spiritual selves in addition to intellectual thinking. Remembering is painful because it brings up all aspects of ourselves, which is required when deliberating because it means that we are present in heart and mind. Remembering the past and articulating it is part of the healing process. We need to feel the pain of the past with our heart and mind and then find ways to move forward. In moving forward from the pain, Naakgonige (to plan) becomes a crucial strategy and approach to healing and transformation because it puts the power to decide and to choose back with the people who have been dehumanized.

Ms. Lepine (January 29, 2014) states that, "We have lived through a long period of time where we were ashamed of who we are, and many still haven’t healed from that period of oppression and hate." Likewise, the Research Participant “RP” (February 7, 2014), who wishes to remain anonymous and works with indigenous families in distress, relays that in the first couple of family sessions, "We talk a lot about healing. I say, we're going to spend some time looking backwards, but we're not going to get stuck there, because too many people are stuck there." To remember, then, is painful - and for many indigenous people who have suffered and embody the impact of dehumanization, the risk of immutability and immobilization is very real.

Ms. Bourque (January 29, 2014) outlines some of the historical and social factors that have contributed to the continued suffering of so many indigenous communities in the North. She states that,

The Northwest Territories had the highest amount of residential schools across Canada. For a population of approximately 25,000 - 30,000 people we had 14 residential schools,
which means that many of our people have had the residential school experience and have suffered greatly for it.

I am sorry to say this, but in the north we were raised dysfunctional. It began in residential school and then that dysfunction was brought into our family homes. We have a high rate of alcoholism and a high rate of suicide. We also have a high rate of FASD [“Fetal Alcohol Spectrum Disorder”].

We also have a very high crime rate in the Northwest Territories and our people are overrepresented in our jails. There are three men's jails and one women's jail and in each jail the population of inmates is 99.9% Aboriginal.

Looking at the statistics on incarceration, suicide and the impact of addictions, it is clear that the Northwest Territories continue to be plagued by the violence of the past. Remembering here is extremely painful work. For Ms. Bourque, remembering is frustrating. She finds that “the north is always a few years behind the south. Especially when you look at aboriginal communities in southern Alberta. Those communities are very strong in their beliefs, and they're bringing back their culture.”

Ms. Bourque wants to revive indigenous culture and knowledge in the north, but as she notes, “Some aboriginal people claim that the Sweats and cultural practices are the devil's work because they were taught that in residential school. Others are very rigid in their Catholic orientation, which is another unfortunate repercussion from residential school.”

Ms. Lepine (January 29, 2014) echoes her colleague:

So, in corrections, we are dealing with low self-esteem, low self-worth, low self-confidence and issues around having pride in Aboriginal identity. I also dealt with all these things when I worked in the college, because students who graduated from high school still felt misunderstood by people in higher learning and in the mainstream community. It is so important that we work on these things, because everyone in this country has a right to feel pride in their culture, especially the First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples.
For Ms. Bourque, the fact that "aboriginal people have lost their way, and in some ways have lost their culture" means that we need a plan for healing and for education:

So, until we can educate ourselves about our culture, and the treaties, and why residential schools happened, we cannot begin to come to terms with healing. We need resources to do this, like aboriginal healing methods, cultural knowledge, and history from an aboriginal perspective. We need to know where we came from in order to move forward.

Ms. Bourque and Ms. Lepine believe that having access to indigenous knowledge online can help facilitate these goals and that more resources are desperately needed.

RP is also very active in education for the purposes of helping non-aboriginal and aboriginal people understand the true history of Canada. RP notes,

I will do classes sometimes at universities, and the first things I write on the board are “history” - and then beside it I write, “Our story.” There's a lot of stuff that was hidden from this society, and that was not even covered in the schools. I remember taking a history class as an adult that was really great because the teacher focused a lot on First Nations history, but I was shocked when she pulled out a poster that was sent to England that said, “Land for Free.” That sent me into a tizzy. I couldn't believe it. I don't think many people have seen stuff like this. This land wasn't for free!

For RP, remembering is about getting the history right! Misinformation about indigenous peoples and their history is a common factor in mainstream educational institutions. Having aboriginal and non-aboriginal people acknowledge this fact is key to planning. In order to move forward, RP stresses that we must forgive, and therefore never turns anyone away from parenting classes on indigenous cultures and beliefs. RP says,

We want to move to the present, so that everybody can have a future; and so we talk about forgiveness in many forms. We then move on to teachings. We start with the cycle of life and the conception of Elderhood, and grief and loss. We discuss traditional values and teachings like the teepee teachings and the seven grandfathers. When discussing traditional beliefs we discuss dance, song, kinship, language, ceremonies, laws, and storytelling and humor. I combine these topics because it’s a way to show
them how they are all interconnected. At the end I ask them to consider what is meant by “It takes a village to raise a child.” By then they know the answer.

When RP states that "by then they know the answer", it is important to stress that they know the answer from an indigenous perspective that draws upon indigenous knowledge like that found in the teepee teachings, the seven grandfathers, and others mentioned above. As a result, RP greatly values resources online that can help with her/his vision for educating all people in Canada. RP elaborates:

FourDirectionsTeachings.com is part of putting us on the map, but it is also so much more. You are facilitating knowledge, and so you are part of the knowledge transfer - so I think it’s important that you have Mishooms and Kookums who are guiding you. I know that to have Elders speak with you and trust you is a gift. Back in the 1980s, we tried to talk to our traditional people, but they weren't willing to talk or allow their voices to be taped, or their pictures to be taken. So it’s nice to see these old people that are sharing their teachings, because their teachings are going to go on forever through some of the writings that have been made into books, and some of the videos that have been created online.

I have always believed that the Elders on FourDirectionsTeaching.com are part of a vanguard for indigenous knowledge online. But listening to RP discuss the 1980’s and the Elders’ responses back then really drives home how the Elders on FourDirectionsTeachings.com are now in the forefront of a strategic and carefully considered acceptance of the need to reach people through new media. I also deeply appreciate RP's insight on me as a producer being part of the knowledge transfer, because again, I intuitively appreciate how Doug Anderson (Content Developer/ Director) and I contributed to the project in shaping the content, but I have never really found the words to express what that contribution has meant. Fortunately, through the process of this dissertation I am being challenged to think of this notion of contribution through an indigenous perspective, which truly is a gift that has been provided to me via the research interviews, which I will discuss later.

Remembering is an approach, a strategy that is important to planning, not only for the research participants but also for me as a producer. In order to move forward we need to understand where we have come from - both the good and the bad. So to remember is to probe
what we may have decided to unconsciously or consciously forget as a community, as L.T. Smith (1999) says. Communities located in different geographical areas may be engaged in different kinds of remembering depending on their social and cultural needs. So remembering means different work for different communities because of their own social and physical contexts. What is evident is that remembering is integral to moving forward and therefore is a part of the process of Naakgonige (to plan). In remembering we can find ways in which we can heal and transform our communities for the better. Having access to indigenous knowledge online facilitates this process of remembering and planning and challenges users to think outside of an oppressive colonial discourse.

**Intervening through the use of indigenous knowledge online**

*Intervening takes action research to mean literally the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for change. Intervention-based projects are usually designed around making structural and cultural changes. ... intervening is directed then at changing institutions which deal with indigenous peoples and not at changing indigenous peoples to fit the structures. (L.T. Smith, p.147)*

I consider intervening to be part of the process of Naakgonige (to plan) because it entails that we take research to mean, as L.T. Smith points out, the process of being proactive and of becoming involved as an interested worker for change - which involves a great deal of planning and deliberation. Ms. Soup (February 13, 2014) embodies this role in her work with the Saint Elizabeth First Nation Inuit and Métis program:

> I have been working with the Saint Elizabeth First Nation Inuit and Métis program for three years. The goal of our project work is to help healthcare providers that are working within or for First Nations, Inuit and Métis communities. We help them by providing resources that are specific to the communities that they work in. This work includes trying to break down barriers and address any concerns that they may have with respect to delivering services to First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities.

As a worker for change, Ms. Soup seeks to make changes in the delivery of healthcare in First Nations, Métis and Inuit communities by training healthcare providers to be more culturally
aware of the communities they work in. As a result, Ms. Soup and the Saint Elizabeth First Nations Inuit and Métis program are actively engaged in research that privileges indigenous knowledge and perspectives.

The Saint Elizabeth First Nations Inuit and Métis Program is engaged in intervention-based projects by virtue of intervening in the health institutions that deal with indigenous people. Ms. Soup elaborates on some of their projects:

A couple of months ago, I worked on a project that was taking the Canadian [Physical] Activity Guidelines and making them more culturally relevant. What we did was come up with a very new interactive online resource. We also mailed out the booklet that's available online.

Currently I am working with Alberta Health Service and their Aboriginal health program. The project involves developing an Aboriginal awareness and sensitivity learning strategy. There are a number of key objectives. The first is to develop an online course that will address all of the Alberta Health Service staff - approximately 95,000 people. We began by working with the project management team that they have on their end. Together we identified what their needs are and what resources and tools they have been using. This information helped us to do a learning needs assessment with them.

In doing an assessment of learning needs, the organization demonstrates that their intervention-based projects are holistic in scope and approach, and that their work seeks to engage organizations and not proselytize. Further, the organization's intervention projects are ultimately accountable to indigenous communities themselves, which is evident in their process. For example, Ms. Soup notes that the Aboriginal Health Program affiliated with Alberta Health Services has their own cultural helpers on their team. Ms. Soup says that when the time came for review, she and her team went to the cultural helpers provided by the Aboriginal Health Program. However, she also notes that,

In addition, we also seek out healthcare providers from different regions across the country to provide feedback on our work. It is important for us to ensure that we validate our work. So we'll find external reviewers who will provide feedback on a course.
Consequently, we have a pretty comprehensive process when developing healthcare courses. Further, the resources that we offer are national in scope, so we have to be aware of the diversity of First Nations, Métis and Inuit peoples across the country.

Being aware of the diversity of indigenous people in Canada is central to their intervention based projects and vision as an organization. Ms. Soup states that,

There are a number of ways that we develop resources. For example, about two years ago I started working for the first time on developing our First Nations Elder Care course. This course has different modules, which cover the basics of gerontology. The course has three different parts, beginning with the role of an Elder. So we began by identifying who an Elder is, and what are some of the roles and responsibilities they have within their community. We used FourDirectionsTeachings.com to explain and present examples on the important relationship that exists between Elders and the youth.

Having access to online indigenous knowledge resources is key to the organization's work, especially because the training resources they create are offered online. As a result they do a lot of research online and post links whenever possible for their online courses. Finding indigenous resources online that can help them do their job is greatly appreciated. Ms. Soup elaborates on how FourDirectionsTeachings.com assisted them with their First Nations Elder Care course:

The visuals and the information from the beginning to end were ideally suited to the Elder Care course. Diversity is so important, and something that we stress to people: that every First Nations culture is unique and has their differences in terms of teachings, practices, protocols, and even worldviews. There are approximately 630 First Nations communities, with every single one being unique. We know that we cannot possibly represent each one, but it is important to provide examples from the different cultures. So we are grateful for FourDirectionsTeachings.com, because it represents the diversity of the First Nations.

Knowing that online indigenous knowledge projects are contributing to such important health initiatives on a national scope is truly inspiring, because it is a demonstration of how a range of widely held misconceptions (such as the notion that there is only a singular “aboriginal culture”) are aptly dealt with in one carefully-framed online tool. In this case, an intervention is being
made which brings a carefully deliberated indigenous perspective and standard into the context of widespread organizational change – in places where careful deliberation in the full sense of the term “Naakgonige” is very difficult to achieve. Effectively, agencies that have a long history of perceiving people bureaucratically are at least having their bureaucratic notions widened somewhat through the application of indigenous perspectives.

Another example of an intervention-based national project is the Idle No More campaign. Ms. Mojica (January 25, 2014), who teaches at the post secondary level, notes that since the explosion of Idle No More in 2012 everyone wants the “cultural low-down.” Ms. Mojica felt relieved to have FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a resource to refer the many queries she was receiving:

So rather than teach “Indian 101”, I say there's this website that will introduce you to some indigenous knowledge teachings. One gets tired of explaining these things or being asked to comment on things that are not mine to teach.

So it’s important to have a place where I can send people who need to do their homework. I think it takes a load of responsibility off of me and I don't have to be so smart; I don't have to know it all. There's a place where some of this knowledge has been deposited.

For Ms. Mojica, indigenous knowledge resources that are available online embody the act of intervening for her. In this way, the ethno-stress (D. Hill,1992) she would normally experience as a result of having to be a personal cultural teacher to everyone who requests a cultural intervention into their institutional context is alleviated. Ethno-stress refers to 'ethnicity' linking to the roots of Aboriginal identity and 'stress' to the impact and reality of social experience as it is connected and related to identity (Hill, 1992, p2). More importantly, Ms. Mojica makes the distinction that some indigenous knowledge and teachings are not hers to teach:

For example, I don't have the rights to teach the medicine wheel. So when students or people that I meet want to know these things, I send them to the website. I think a lot of people out there are telling stuff they don't have the rights to. So it's good to have something like FourDirectionsTeachings.com, because it has been vetted.
This distinction is very important to note, as it is in keeping with indigenous knowledge practices that emphasize accountability and responsibility for indigenous teachings. Indeed, one must have the rights - that is, understand and know the cultural protocol - before proceeding or attempting to relay a teaching. So Ms. Mojica makes a very valid point when she states that she does not possess the right to relay certain teachings.

In thinking about the act of intervening, I want to end with Ms. Mojica's statement: I think we have to be in control more and more about what’s there and how it’s going to be deposited, because we've never been in control before. There's a lot of stuff written about us - but from whose point of view?

Intervening is also about the process of Naakgonige (to plan) because we need to know how are we going to move forward with indigenous knowledge online. To intervene is to plan in a way that is responsible and accountable for the next seven generations. Intervention requires deep and careful deliberation, which is integral to the process of Naakgonige.

**Connecting** via indigenous presence and knowledge on the Internet

> Connectedness positions individuals in sets of relationships with other people and with the environment. Many indigenous creation stories link people through genealogy to the land, to stars and other places in the universe, to birds and fish, animals, insects and plants. To be connected is to be whole.

> ...Forced adoption and dehumanizing child welfare practices were carried out in many indigenous contexts. Being reconnected to their families and their culture has been a painful journey for many of these children, now adults. Connecting also involves connecting people to their traditional lands through the restoration of specific rituals and practices. (L.T. Smith, p.148)

> Connecting is related to issues of identity and place, to spiritual relationships and community wellbeing. There are other challenges in relation to the project of connecting. Researchers, policy makers, educators, and social service providers who work with or whose work impacts on indigenous communities need to have a critical
conscience about ensuring that their activities connect in humanizing ways with indigenous communities. It is a very common experience to hear indigenous communities outline the multiple ways in which agencies and individuals treat them with disrespect and disregard. Connecting is about establishing good relations. (L.T. Smith, p.149)

Relationship building positions people in sets of relationships with others; this is vital for creating community well being. In his law classes, Professor Chartrand (December 5, 2013) states that he gets a range of students: "some are indigenous and are well entrenched in their cultural teachings and other students have never met an indigenous person before." Chartrand states that having access to indigenous knowledge online helps him to reach all of his students. For example, he appreciates how FourDirectionsTeachings.com is able to provide basic information to his students about some of the first nations in Canada. He says,

The site really benefits them by giving them an introductory understanding of indigenous worldviews and perspectives through the lens of the teachings. The teachings become an accessible reference for all of the students, so that they can actually have a meaningful discussion within the class. So it’s a valuable resource for all of us.

Having indigenous knowledge resources that he can bring into his law classes helps to educate his students about the diversity of first nations and the connections that can be made to identity and place for indigenous peoples.

Similarly, Dr. John Borrows (December 19, 2013) feels that sites like FourDirectionsTeachings.com really help students to open up their imagination. He says, "It's one thing to read; it's another thing to hear me tell a story; but then to actually have a visual attached to that story, it really captures their imagination." Borrows elaborates:

I’ve always been impressed with the graphics - for example, the opening with the Thunderbird and the world and the lightning. That image and accompanying script is the very kind of thing that I wanted to talk about in the class, that our Elders still have these ways and that they exist across North America and that we can still learn about these ways.

When I asked him how he felt about having indigenous teachings online he said,
As a teacher, I felt great because that was what I was trying to do with the course. I wanted the class to see that these traditions are living traditions. They are not just once upon a time things. They can be applied in contemporary settings. So to the extent that Four Directions Teachings.com helps students see these teachings as living and going into tomorrow, it really felt like it helped me to do my job.

In reflecting upon Borrows and Chartrand's input one could easily discuss their experiences in various projects that L.T. Smith (1999) lists, such as representing, creating, celebrating, and reframing. There is so much richness in what they convey. That is why I stressed that the categories I created are merely to assist me in my analysis and do not represent fixed ranks, because there is so much fluidity. That having been said, I chose to discuss their insights here because for me, these insights really resonate with the strategy of connecting - through relationships between students and between the teacher and the students, which I see as establishing good relations.

Establishing good relations is important for education. People need to feel safe to learn. Ms. Nardozi (January 9, 2014), who trains teacher candidates, knows that learning is also about connecting and that connecting promotes community well being. However, Ms. Nardozi, an Italian Canadian, notes that a lot of people don't know how to make that first connection with an indigenous community or with an indigenous Elder or person. For Ms. Nardozi, having FourDirectionsTeachings.com offers non-indigenous people a stress-free introduction. She says,

I feel that the lesson plans and the site have been created so that non-native people can also access the content. I really try to communicate this point to teacher candidates that this site is made for you, because many teacher candidates are really confused about what to teach, especially very early on; they are thinking, “Okay, now I have to teach a culture.” We really try to impress upon them that teaching culture is not the expectation or the goal.

Ms. Nardozi's insights illustrate how non-indigenous people can begin to learn about indigenous people in Canada and how teacher candidates are not responsible for teaching cultural knowledge but rather can teach about Canada's relationship with indigenous peoples through understanding the Indian Act, the Treaties, the Residential School System, etc. Again, such educational approaches could fit with L.T. Smith's projects on democratizing and intervening,
but I chose connecting because I feel that Ms. Nardozi's underlying message is about the ethno-
stress that non-indigenous teachers experience when thinking about their approach to teaching
about indigenous people and history in the classroom. Here, building relationships begins with
that first connection to beginning to learn about and understand indigenous communities and
worldviews through online indigenous knowledge projects. Appropriate presentation of
indigenous knowledge online can be a doorway, a transition into connection where none existed
before.

Learning helps people to know how and what to ask, and therefore fosters connecting in a
respectful way that is sensitive to cultural difference and issues of identity and place. Emilie
Monnet (date) knows this intuitively and applied it after she spent time learning about the Cree
teepee pole teachings on FourDirectionsTeachings.com. Ms. Monnet states:

Based on what we learned… we were able to form our questions and approach two
communities. We chose seven values that we wanted to discuss, and met with
Anishinaabe individuals and Blackfoot people and Siksika Elders, and asked them: What
is love? What is respect? What is gratitude? So we asked these questions and they
provided us with some answers and we kind of incorporated that into the Bird
Messengers story.

For Ms. Monnet, having access to indigenous knowledge online provided her with insight into
spiritual and community values. She was then able to approach communities and connect with
them based on her understanding. This ability to connect helped to inspire the Bird Messengers
story, which was then shared with larger audiences, both indigenous and non-indigenous.
Connecting, in this case, is like a pebble dropped in still water: it ripples outward.

Cheryl L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) dropped a pebble into cyberspace when she
created what she called a very simple database, All My Relations. She built this site because she
wanted to list all of her relations, including people who were adopted. She says, "One day, I got
an email. The subject header said my name is Whispering Wind; do you know who I am? I was
shocked because Whispering Wind was one of my ex’s five children." Ms. L'Hirondelle helped
her ex to raise three of his five children because two of his children were adopted out. She says,
"I immediately recognized the name."
Whispering Wind emailed her to ask if she could help him connect with his family. He wanted to know who his family was and whom he was related to. Ms. L'Hirondelle shares,

It was just a really beautiful moment for me, because, as an artist working in new media, I had to confront a lot of doubt and skepticism at the time in native communities about the kind of work that I was interested in. So it was just such a beautiful moment for me to realize that this technology could be life affirming, to know that this could be something that connects people and connects families, and I just felt honored and so grateful that I had made this silly little website that had caught his eye. So I think that's beautiful, that *All My Relations* brought together all of my relations.

More than ever, being able to connect is crucial for aboriginal youth and children. Cindy Blackstock, a child advocate and activist, states that, "We have never had more First Nations children in child welfare care than we do at this moment." The numbers are staggering. According to Blackstock, 65% of the kids in care in provinces like Alberta are from first nations. In British Columbia it is 53%. "So if you take those two provinces alone, we're talking about 11,000 First Nations children living in foster care," Blackstock says. Being able to reconnect to family through the Internet is potentially a viable strategy for many adoptees today. However, for indigenous children who have been removed from their families, being able to access indigenous knowledge online may also help them to rebuild those lost connections to who they are and where they come from.

RP (February 7, 2014), who works in social services with families at risk, specifically uses the Ojibwe and Cree teachings on FourDirectionsTeachings.com to convey indigenous knowledge and values. RP says, “I know our nations have differences, but we also have commonalities. I like that we can talk about the teepee teachings on the site and then go into the Ojibwa teaching and talk about the Seven Grandfathers.”

It is clear that these teachings really affirm the work that RP is doing in the parenting class, and that further, having the teachings online contributes to learning beyond the classroom:

When I do my parenting class I tell everybody that you can’t get all your learning done in one place. I stress that we all have to accept responsibility for our own individual learning. So projects like FourDirectionsTeachings.com are great because it is something that families can continue to use and share outside of the class.

RP acknowledges the value of the site for indigenous families because it reconnects them to indigenous values and knowledge, and offers an alternative worldview. RP also sees how indigenous knowledge sites online have the potential to educate and sensitize people in social services. RP states:

I also refer the website to people that we may be working with, and have shared it with all of the staff in our office. It’s great because they can peruse the site on their own and refer families in their caseload to it. Other online resources that we recommend are the Anxiety page (blocked name/confidentiality), because we work with youth, and the Aboriginal Portal this site is now down and the Aboriginal Healing Foundation Research pages.

In this way RP hopes that such sharing will, to echo L.T. Smith (1999), ensure that their activities connect in humanizing ways with indigenous communities. RP knows first hand that social services need to be sensitive to the impacts of colonization. However, to achieve that cultural sensitivity means connecting through sharing knowledge in a way that establishes good relations. Indigenous knowledge projects online provide this opportunity for indigenous and non-indigenous communities alike, and therefore open a door into Taiaiake Alfred's (2005) pathway, “Language is Power”, through providing ways of knowing and relating from outside of colonialism.

**Gendering** as a strategy for representation on the World Wide Web

*Colonization is recognized as having had a destructive effect on indigenous gender relations which reached out across all spheres of indigenous society. ... a key issue for indigenous women in any challenge of contemporary indigenous politics is the restoration to women of what are seen as their traditional roles, rights and responsibilities. (L.T. Smith, p.152)*
L.T. Smith's project on gendering is very important to consider, especially in thinking about the ways in which indigenous women are exploited violently through western notions of gendering and racism (Andrea Smith, 2005). Some of the research participants alluded to gender but the topic was not fully explored in any great detail. Ms. Mojica (January 25, 2014) discussed issues of gender with respect to the sharing of the Sundance, but I will discuss her insight later, as it relates to the Sundance specifically and not to gender online.

The one interview that directly addressed perceptions of gender online was the one I held with Dr. John Borrows (December 19, 2013), who mentioned it when discussing his student's responses:

I did get some students that were worried about the *Nature's Laws* website because they thought that gender wasn't well represented and that sometimes women were placed in second class roles in the way that some of the teachings were being represented and interpreted. Your site doesn't do that; it's very good at working through those kinds of complexities.

Dr. Borrows relays that as time went on, he relied less and less on the Nature’s Laws site, as he found FourDirectionsTeachings.com more gender friendly and more accessible because of the visuals. Dr. Borrows’ students have an analysis of gender that is critical and cautious of how colonization has shaped the roles and rights of indigenous women, and this critique enables them to look carefully at how gender online is being represented.

In moving forward with indigenous knowledge projects online, it will be important for indigenous communities to carefully consider how gender is presented. This consideration will involve thinking outside of destructive colonialist frameworks and regenerating what Taiaiake Alfred (2005) calls a “conceptual universe formed through Indigenous languages.” In this way, indigenous communities can engage with the principle of *Naakgonige* - to plan how we can better represent indigenous men and women in healthy ways that acknowledge their humanity, strength and contributions equally.
Conclusion

In this chapter the research participants have demonstrated how they resist colonial agendas by deeply contemplating their plans and responses through L.T. Smith's (1999) methodologies of remembering, intervening, connecting and gendering.

In discussing Naakgonige (to plan), Simpson (2011) says,

Rather than blindly accepting the colonizers’ truths or acting out of fear, Naakgonige and Naanaagede’enmowin (heart must help to guide the mind) demand presence of mind and heart, engagement, thorough analysis, and a critical evaluation of the long-term impacts of decision making in terms of promoting mino bimaadiziwin (good life) and preventing Zhaaganashiiyaadizi (assimilation) – which in my mind, is what resistance is all about (p.58).

In reflecting upon the research participants, it is evident that they are engaged in the principle of Naakgonige (to plan) in that they consider their actions with all aspects of their being, and think about the impact and consequences for their present communities and for the next seven generations. They are careful and deliberate about not acting out of fear or blindly accepting the colonizers' truths. They are proactive about recovering ways of indigenous knowing and sharing these ways of knowing in their work. For this reason I have included Taiaiake Alfred's pathway, “Language is Power”, with the principle of Naakgonige - because indigenous languages encode knowledge, and indigenous knowledge is implicit to the principle Naakgonige.

In the next chapter, I will discuss the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference), which has great implications for ideas on change. To implement community change is a huge responsibility, and can only be contemplated after a long and deliberate process, which speaks to Simpson’s (2011) statement that, "Naakgonige (to plan) in resurgence is an important process as a way of collectivizing, strategizing and making the best decisions possible in any given context" (p.147). In considering change, the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) is vital to ensuring we are cautious and responsible for the next seven generations.
Chapter 7

Aanjigone (non-interference)

Introduction

The principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) is important because, according to Simpson (2011), "it ensures that we tread carefully," and that we "deliberate to the best of our abilities and act out of tremendous love [and regard] for our lands, our peoples and our culture" (p.147). This principle reminds us that healthy change and transformation for indigenous peoples are possible as long as they promote Nishnaabeg ways of being and prevent Zhaaganashiiyaadizi (assimilation) (p.54). For Taiaiake Alfred (2005) indigenous people "must transcend the controlling power of the many and varied fears that colonial powers use to dominate and manipulate us into complacency and cooperation with its authorities" (p.613). This statement is located in his third mantra/pathway, “Freedom is the Other Side of Fear”. The principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) reaffirms this mantra by reminding us that change is possible, that we can overcome our fear and build up our confidence by returning and reclaiming the strength of our communities through the resurgence of indigenous knowledge.

In considering the meaning of this principle I thought about L.T. Smith's methods on Claiming/Testimonies, Returning, Networking, Protecting and Negotiating - all of which speak to the ways in which the research participants negotiate their experiences with indigenous knowledge both on and off-line. It became apparent in their responses that the research participants are extremely careful and deliberate in their consideration of how indigenous knowledge is represented, conveyed, shared and transmitted; and that they ultimately adhere to the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) while they are doing the work of deliberation. Aanjigone is a meditative process where, as I stated earlier, healing and restoration occur through deep feeling and reasoning. This process is crucial to moving forward and a vital aspect of indigenous resurgence.
Claiming and testimonies are about how indigenous knowledge is affirmed

Testimonies intersect with claiming because they are a means through which oral evidence is presented to a particular audience. There is a formality to testimonies and a notion that truth is being revealed under oath. Indigenous testimonies are a way of talking about an extremely painful event or series of events. ...A testimony is also a form through which the voice of a 'witness' is accorded space and protection. It can be constructed as a monologue and as a public performance (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.144).

L.T. Smith speaks about oral evidence being presented to a particular audience in real time and in person. This is important to note because with projects like FourDirectionsTeachings.com, oral teachings, which can also be considered part of oral evidence, are transmitted via audio and images electronically and are open to anyone on the Internet who chooses to visit the site. Yet, the site resonates on a deeply profound level for indigenous visitors as a place for Claiming/Testimonies.

For example, Emilie Monnet (December 13, 2013) says that she felt that the site was really rooted in indigenous worldviews, and that there aren’t many sites that do this. She elaborates:

The way it was crafted felt like there was just a lot of respect and protocol taken into consideration, especially with regard to intellectual property. The feeling I got was that you could really feel the generosity of the speakers. I don't think an elder would share anything that wasn't genuine. It also feels like the real thing when you can hear the voices of the Elders. They are so generous. To be generous like that you have to take real ownership over what you are sharing.

Monnet echoes L.T. Smith's sentiments on a sense of truth being shared and the significance of voice that is the person who is doing the sharing. In really feeling the generosity of the speakers, Monnet was able to connect to the teachings through the experience of claiming/testimony. In this way she opened herself up to important aspects of values embedded in Aanjigone (non-interference), in the sense that she deliberated on what she saw and heard through deep feeling and consideration.
Professor Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014), like Monnet, also noted that a great amount of care was taken to share some of our indigenous values, worldviews and teachings. In a sense, both Gaywish and Monnet are practicing claiming/testimony because they are choosing to make strong statements that share how they identify and relate to FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a site for indigenous knowledge. Their reaction to the work brings the site to life through the practice of claiming/testimony.

Professor Gaywish notes that students visiting the site are able to see for themselves the intrinsic values and perspectives across Turtle Island, in the way that different Elders from different nations share their teachings. For Gaywish, being able to process the diversity of indigenous people is key because, “They also learn that differences between First Nations and their teachings are to be respected. To quote a teacher I respect, Edward Benton Banai, ‘All creation stories are true.’”

Sharing the site with her students as a place for learning about the diversity of teachings demonstrates that Gaywish is actively claiming the site as place for indigenous knowledge. However, she does not do this lightly and states, “I am very careful when I find new information that's interesting. I actually review it thoroughly to make sure that what’s being shared is something that I see as having legitimacy.”

The notion of legitimacy here again relates to the practice of claiming/testimony because the person hearing and interacting with the content has to find the truth being conveyed. In this way, the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) comes into play as Gaywish, like Monnet, deeply considers and meditates upon what she is seeing and hearing.

Returning is about the impact of indigenous knowledge online

This project intersects with that of claiming. It involves the returning of lands, rivers and mountains to their indigenous owners. It involves the repatriation of artifacts, remains, and other cultural materials stolen or removed and taken overseas. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.155)

Adopted children, for example, are encouraged to seek their birth families and return to their original communities. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.156)
In this section, the notion of returning will be framed with respect to how it intersects with claiming - that is, how research participants interact and engage with indigenous knowledge online as a way of recovering or returning to cultural knowledge, in the form of teachings that were historically forbidden from being shared. Emilie Monnet (December 13, 2014) relays her experience of looking for teachings when she was researching for her *Bird Messengers* project. She says she spoke to Cheryl L’Hirondelle about the Tee Pee Pole teachings and that Cheryl referred her to FourDirectionsTeachings.com. Upon her first visit to the site, Emilie recalls,

> I checked it out and was like WOW, this is really inspiring. I remember listening to Cree Elder Mary Lee over and over again on the website and I was just really thankful to have access to this information - like the time I learned about the Mohawk peacemaker story; I was so moved, and really just wanted to hear more! More First Nations Elders sharing from the many more nations that exist. I just wanted more teachings. I remember just feeling really thirsty for more of this kind of knowledge.

Returning for Ms. Monnet is about access to more teachings. She stresses her thirst for more indigenous knowledge, acknowledging her awareness that there are many more teachings and many more first nations that exist and need to be represented. Monnet is not alone in her longing for the return of indigenous teachings; many of the research participants also expressed the same thirst and desire.

Others, like Angela Nardozi (January 9, 2014), were moved to hear that the project followed certain indigenous protocols. Nardozi recalls,

> I remember, when you presented at our conference, saying that tobacco was given and ceremony was initiated for the site. I remember thinking that this means that the site was done in a really good way and that this just wasn’t an information website; it was actual teachings, which is a really important distinction.

Hearing about the development and preproduction process for the site signified for Nardozi a passage to returning, because indigenous protocols were employed throughout the process. Here, returning signifies that picking up of bundles where work and process are considered and
deliberated from indigenous perspectives and values. Returning is integral to the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference), as it promotes Nishnaabeg ways of being and prevents Zhaaganashiiyaadizi (assimilation), and therefore provides a sound methodology for contemplating the viability of indigenous knowledge both on and off-line.

For Ms. L'Hirondelle, returning is connected to ways in which indigenous people experience their culture and take pride in claiming what they find there. She expresses this notion when she describes how she watched a young Blackfoot couple spend a couple of hours at the computer terminal engaging with FourDirectionsTeachings.com:

I remember when I curated it watching people who generally don’t go to galleries come in and sit for an hour or two. [They] spent a significant amount of time on the Blackfoot teaching. When they were done, it was so beautiful, because you could see that they were so full of spirit. They were so full of a sense of pride and sense of self. It was like something had shifted from when they first walked in. It may be that they knew the teaching, or were familiar with it, or recognized aspects of it, but it was like they belonged. They were part of something in this gallery space.

Ms. L'Hirondelle acknowledges that she didn't interview this couple afterwards but it was clear to her that something had shifted. In reflecting on this moment, she was reminded of Whispering Wind and his need to return to his birth family. Overcome with a deep sense of humility and empathic emotion, Ms. L'Hirondelle shared,

When you have moments like that you just know that the works exist for a reason. It is just so beautiful to witness that somebody you might never get to know has experienced something wonderful. It is the same feeling of connection that I had when Whispering Wind contacted me and I reflected on what would have happened if I hadn't made that site. How would he have found his relatives? Or the time that I showed a project of mine that translated a story into the Dakota language, and my Dakota friend, an adult man, wept when he saw it. He wept because he was so grateful to hear a story in his language and to have all of the work and effort put into it. To be a part of these experiences is such a privilege and so profound because we get to do that for our community.
Over the years I have had similar experiences and have found, like Ms. L'Hirondelle, that indigenous people online are just so grateful and moved to find projects that have had a tremendous amount of effort and time put into them. It is the ultimate sign of respect - not just for the work, but for the heritage itself - because it involves a returning and claiming of knowledge that was once forbidden. It is therefore not uncommon to have people react emotionally, because they intuitively feel the notion of returning and all that it entails.

Consequently, as we come to experience this returning we must all be mindful of the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) so that we can afford each other the space, respect and time needed to process all that was stolen or removed. Aanjigone (non-interference) affords us this quiet dignity where we can experience the realm of emotional upheaval, both good and bad, so that we can experience returning safely. This is how people can really change and learn, and return: when they are given the freedom to do it each in their own way, from the level of their own heart.

Networking: A way to validate and authenticate indigenous knowledge online

*Building networks is about building knowledge and data bases which are based on the principles of relationships and connections.* (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.156)

*Networking by indigenous peoples is a form of resistance. People are expected to position themselves clearly and state their purposes. Establishing trust is an important feature.* (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.157)

...*Networking is a process which indigenous peoples have used effectively to build relationships and disseminate knowledge and information.* (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.157)

When it comes to discerning indigenous knowledge online, networking becomes an important strategy for validating and authenticating such work in cyberspace. Further, networking is employed by the research participants as a way of overcoming isolation and building up their confidence and trust in sharing indigenous knowledge online – all while contributing to their learning processes.
For Monique Mojica (January 25, 2014), working on indigenous projects is a form of networking that builds knowledge because she is able to make connections between past and present work. For example, Ms. Mojica says that FourDirectionTeachings.com was one of the first projects she worked on that intentionally takes indigenous knowledge and creates something accessible on the Internet. Ms. Mojica states,

It wasn't entertainment and it wasn't a documentary. The project was influential to my way of thinking because of the teepee pole teachings that I narrated. The teepee pole teachings made it very clear to me how we can use indigenous structures and apply them, for example, to performance structures. Floyd Favel had talked about this way back and I didn't get it then; but having to read and understand what Mary Lee was saying in her teaching crystallized for me what Floyd was trying to say so many years prior.

Making the connections between her projects and her networks helped Ms. Mojica to deeply reflect upon the teepee pole teachings and to embrace them as a uniquely indigenous structure informed by indigenous values and knowledge. In doing this she was able to revisit prior knowledge and build upon it through her relationships and connections.

For Janetta Soup (February 13, 2014), being able to recognize and identify Reg Crowshoe on the FourDirectionsTeachings.com affirmed for her a sense of trust and regard for the site. She says,

The level of trust that I had for the site really came from the fact that I recognized Reg Crowshoe. He is one of the Elders from southern Alberta, and he's very well known. That prior connection, and the fact that he validated the work on the site when I was speaking to him about other queries, helped solidify my trust in the site.

Ms. Soup based her deliberation over the site on her relationships and community connections. She was able to trust the site as a valid source of knowledge because of her networks. These networks are rooted in the principles of relationships and connections that are acknowledged and privileged in indigenous communities. The result is that Ms. Soup actively uses the site as a resource for indigenous content in her work and makes referrals to it whenever somebody is looking for cultural resources.
Many of the research participants rely on their networks when deliberating over online indigenous knowledge sites. For example, Professor Chartrand (December 5, 2013) says, "One of the reasons I've used FourDirectionsTeachings.com is because the site was referenced by John Borrows." Both men work in the field of indigenous law in Canada. Professor Chartrand elaborates on this connection:

> I trust John's work quite a bit. He is a leading scholar in the field of law and he's indigenous himself. He understands indigenous teachings and (their) relationship to the law. If he's recommending a website in a text I am going to give that website a lot of credibility, and won't even necessarily inquire any further, given that endorsement.

Here Professor Chartrand is identifying John Borrows as part of his scholarly network. This network is used to effectively disseminate, as L.T. Smith (1999) indicates above, knowledge and information. Professor Chartrand values his database/networks for guiding his work as an indigenous law professor. He explains,

> Other sites I am a little bit more leery of when surfing the net. I'll look very carefully to see where it’s coming from. I'll do background research on the people who've created it to get a degree of comfort with the work or teachings. If it is something that is dramatically new and different then I will do rigorous research on it.

It is obvious that online sites that cannot be verified through networks or through indigenous community connections and relationships are held at arm's length. The notion of networks, then, is key for indigenous people as they contemplate the validation and authentication of online cultural resources.

Both indigenous and non-indigenous Internet users interviewed for this dissertation apply this philosophy of networking. Ultimately the research participants draw upon their personal encounters, which represent their networks. For example, Angela Nardozi (January 9, 2014) recognized Tom Porter, who shares the Mohawk teaching on FourDirectionsTeachings.com. She says,

> How can you not trust Tom Porter? He's very respected, and I’ve read his book Grandma says… Iroquois Teachings and it really touched me. And I know he has a lot of ancestors
behind him and never claims the knowledge belongs to him. So I was really happy after I read his book and then saw that he was on the site as well.

So like Janetta Soup, Nardozi recognized an Elder on the site that she could verify from her own experience. However, she also had professional referrals to the site, which also greatly affirmed her trust. She says,

I immediately trusted FourDirectionsTeachings.com, when I first visited the site because Dr. Jean Paul Restoule referred it to me. I have a tremendous amount of respect and trust for Dr. Restoule. I also know that he has worked with you. I've also heard you speak about this site and how you put together an advisory committee. I think that's really important: the fact that the Elders on the site have been selected by people from the community - especially when there are people who want to co-opt that position by proclaiming themselves to be Elders.

The fact that Ms. Nardozi warmly embraces, defers to and accepts the advisory committee of FourDirectionsTeachings.com as being people who are knowledgeable and able to vet the Elders on the site, demonstrates that she knows that such a network is based in indigenous principles of community connections and relationships. She therefore understands that this network is able to safeguard against self-proclaimed “shamans” and Elders. Here networking, as L.T. Smith (1999) says, is a form of resistance because it helps to establish trust and ensures that people position themselves truthfully.

Moreover, networking is about relating on a personal level and making those connections in your own life. Ms. L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) shares that as a musician and as an artist, she has traveled around Canada and has had the pleasure of visiting many native communities. She says,

It was really exciting for me to see people on the website like Reg Crowshoe and Mary Lee, who I recognize from my travels. I know that you went to the source because I know who these people are. Piikani Elders that I have spoken to are always talking about the significance and importance of place. So the fact that you went to those places, you went and visited the people who are intrinsically dedicated and connected to those places, is very respectful and thorough.
Ms. L'Hirondelle takes the notion of networking and connecting beyond relationships to people and extends it to relationships to land and place. For her, seeing the Elders that she recognizes on the FourDirectionsTeachings.com website is profound because she sees how place and land are integrated and reflected in the teachings on the site. Having visited many of these places in person, Ms. L'Hirondelle is drawing upon her life's journey as a way of networking and connecting to the teachings, elders and the land.

Networking is a vital strategy for indigenous people and can be utilized in a variety of ways, as demonstrated above. Ultimately, it is a personal strategy that is rooted in one's experience and therefore fits with the process of Aanjigone (non-interference), because it requires that we be respectful of each other's processes and that we consider carefully and perhaps withdraw quietly from networks that might not be our own. Networking is also extended to the ways in which the Internet connects people who may not otherwise ever meet face to face.

**Protecting** entails knowledge of indigenous cultural protocols

*The project is multifaceted. It is concerned with protecting peoples, communities, languages, customs and beliefs, art and ideas, natural resources and the things indigenous peoples produce. The scale can be as enormous as the Pacific Ocean.... Or as small as an infant. It can be real as the land or abstract as a belief about the spiritual essence of the land.... The need to protect a way of life, a language and the right to make our own history is a deep need linked to the survival of indigenous peoples. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.158)*

Protecting for indigenous people is a huge responsibility and commitment. It cannot be taken lightly and involves deep contemplation and consideration. Many indigenous people intuitively practice the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) when deliberating on the notion of protecting, as a safeguard for not being too judgmental or too quick to circulate negative energy lest it should come back, as Simpson notes, onto ourselves and our families. When the discussion turned to the protection of indigenous knowledge, research participants were very careful, deep and passionate about their responses.
Emilie Monnet (December 13, 2013) made a distinction between information and knowledge sites based on how protocols and ethics were enacted. She said that:

An indigenous knowledge site must deal with ownership and respect of the knowledge being presented, whereas an indigenous information site does not have to address these concerns. FourDirectionsTeachings.com, I feel, is an indigenous knowledge site because it gives a voice to knowledge keepers and respects the diversity and protocol of the various first nations.

This distinction is important to note with respect to the notion of protecting, because it signifies that when it comes to indigenous knowledge there are specific cultural protocols and ethics that must be adhered to. This is in contrast to indigenous information sites, where adherence to cultural protocol and ethics is not so much of an issue. Monnet notes that, in her observation of online sites, there are definitely more indigenous information sites than knowledge sites. Given the protocols and ethics for indigenous knowledge this is easy to understand. This distinction then, with respect to protocol and ethics, aptly speaks to why online indigenous knowledge should be regarded as different and distinct from online indigenous information.

Dr. Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014) also discusses the cultural validity of Indigenous knowledge resources online. For her, protecting means asking the right questions and contemplating the answers carefully. She says:

When I look at a potential resource I ask the following questions: What does this have to offer? Does it have consistency? Does it have validity? Is it useful? Do I have to spend time explaining it? Is it problematic in any way?

For Dr. Gaywish, these questions provide her with a specific framework for assessing and hence protecting the validity of indigenous knowledge resources. Further, Dr. Gaywish considers the community context for such resources very carefully. She says:

The fact that FourDirectionsTeachings.com was put together using well-respected elders and teachers who have credibility in their own communities was extremely important. There are a lot of charlatans who don't have the respect of their own communities - or
who are not even connected to a community - that try to pass themselves off as respected elders.

Protecting is keeping constant vigilance against imposters or “wannabe” Elders/ Traditionalists, who self-proclaim their wisdom, abilities, titles to clans and so on, without any real community connections or context. This type of cultural appropriation is a huge concern for many people and often is central to discussions around protecting indigenous knowledge.

Donna Bourque and Priscilla Lepine (January 29, 2014) also stress the importance of online indigenous knowledge sites being trustworthy. Again, community context is vital to ensuring that the people who are speaking are clearly from the culture and community that they are speaking about or sharing from. This means for Ms. Lepine that, “These people were raised or learned at some point in their life, about the culture, and are obviously not someone from outside of the culture, trying to sell it as a means for profit.”

Prior to her work in corrections Ms. Lepine taught at the college level. She shared how she was adamant about teaching her students how to make distinctions online about indigenous knowledge: “As an instructor at the college I brought students to websites to show them new age non-Aboriginal people who were selling Aboriginal culture. I did this to teach them how to identify cultural appropriation.”

Protecting is multifaceted, as L.T. Smith (1999) states. Protecting indigenous knowledge is concerned with protecting languages, customs, beliefs, ideas, and natural resources; to do this means that indigenous Elders and traditional teachers who transmit this knowledge need to be identified and authenticated through and within a community context.

Ms. Soup articulated the centrality of Elders in the transmission of indigenous knowledge: “Elders who provide oral teachings, or guide how the indigenous knowledge is being articulated, I would validate as indigenous knowledge - because it comes from a particular knowledge source steeped in tradition.”

This tradition is rooted in an oral transmission that adheres to particular cultural protocols, and most often has been transferred via ceremony. As a result, when asked about the status of sites online, Ms. Soup notes that we have more indigenous information sites than
indigenous knowledge sites. She distinguishes indigenous information (versus knowledge) as being that which is created by an individual ego (perhaps even a relatively healthy and balanced one):

For example, how do you validate the information and perspective that you are seeing? For me, blogs are not representative of indigenous knowledge because they are an individual’s point of view, so I would not validate that as Indigenous knowledge.

However, Ms. Soup is careful about making any claims or advocating for any more indigenous knowledge sites online. She says,

I feel that there is definitely a fine line with respect to putting traditional knowledge online. I almost don’t even feel comfortable answering that, because it is such a fine line of “How deep do you go?” You have to be careful not to go too deep, otherwise you may cross a line that will cause disrespect. Even if you have been given the rights, it does not necessarily protect you from making mistakes that could denigrate the knowledge. So I don’t even feel comfortable in answering that question, “What kind of cultural sources should be online?” It’s a huge question.

Ms. Soup is right. Having cultural sources online raises some important questions, and in many ways these questions were the impetus for this dissertation. We need to have dialogue around what should be offered online across indigenous communities. Hopefully some of the ideas presented in this thesis will help to frame and start a national discussion that will be rooted in indigenous perspectives and values.

The research participants have demonstrated the importance of protecting by acknowledging how indigenous knowledge must connect to community ownership and respect for that knowledge, which includes presenting who the knowledge keepers are, and the ways in which they are involved and adhere to the cultural protocols of their community. Indigenous knowledge resources are considered very carefully and therefore adhere to the principle of Aanjigone (non-interference) as they are deliberated and contemplated.
Negotiating is thinking strategically about indigenous knowledge

Negotiating is about thinking and acting strategically. It is about recognizing and working towards long-term goals. Patience is a quality which indigenous communities possess in abundance. Negotiations are also about respect, self-respect and respect for the opposition. Indigenous rules of negotiation usually contain both rituals of respect and protocols for discussion. The protocols and procedures are integral to the actual negotiation and neglect or failure to acknowledge or take seriously such protocols can be read as a lack of commitment to both the process and the outcome. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.159)

...The continued faith in the process of negotiating is about retaining a faith in the humanity of indigenous beliefs, values and customary practices. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.160)

In this section I want to discuss how research participants negotiate their trust and understanding of indigenous knowledge both online and offline. Negotiating here describes an internal process that is rooted in thinking and acting strategically. So while I am not discussing actual negotiations taking place between parties, the focus is still on a type of negotiation that acknowledges protocols, procedures, and a commitment to indigenous processes, all of which are outlined above in L.T. Smith's statement.

Dr. Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014) has been following a traditional spiritual way for 40 years. When she evaluates a potential indigenous resource she not only considers her own inner knowledge, but also assesses the kind of negotiating that is present within the parameters of the project itself. For example, Dr. Gaywish notes that FourDirectionsTeachings.com clearly presents the elders and teachers from the Mi’Kmaq, Ojibwa, Cree, Mohawk and Blackfoot nations. She says, "We know exactly who these elders are and what they are presenting. Their bios also explain their community connections." Dr. Gaywish elaborates:

It is obvious that our cultural protocols are being practiced on this site and that the people who developed this site have the same kind of values and perspectives. I also looked at
who's on the advisory committee and could see that they are also well-respected educators.

Here Dr. Gaywish notes the cultural protocols with respect to connecting Elders to their communities, but she also indicates the value of indigenous networks and the fact that the advisory committee is made up of well-respected educators.

Ms. Monique Mojica (January 25, 2014) discusses how, as an indigenous artist, she must continually negotiate the projects she works on. She says, "For me, it is always a question of balance; how much do you put out there, and what do you put out there?" Given that question, I asked her how she felt about working on FourDirectionsTeachings.com. She said,

I had an initial comfort level with your project because you explained very clearly that you had the Elders’ consent and that you were informed about the parameters that they were comfortable with. So projects that I work on have to be evaluated issue by issue, question by question, project by project, and going in and doing it with non-indigenous people is probably something that at this time I would say I can't do. I have been burned too many times.

Ms. Mojica points to the negotiations with the Elders on FourDirectionsTeachings.com and the relevance of that. She also states the issues she’s experienced working with non-aboriginals because of a lack of accountability to indigenous protocol and negotiations in these scenarios. In reflecting upon her own barometer for negotiating indigenous projects, Ms. Mojica relayed what a very dear clan mother from Onondaga said: “You don't expose those things that are collectively private.” Ms. Mojica adds to this:

What is collectively private to one community might not be as private, or might even be more private to the next community. I think the Elders that you worked with were very clear about what could and could not be presented. There was a sense that this work could pose a risk - I almost said with what non-indigenous people would do with it, but it also concerns indigenous people who aren't connected to why such knowledge has to be respected. What will they do with it? That’s an ongoing bone of contention.
Thinking strategically about cultural privacy is important not only because it can protect against cultural appropriation, but also against cultural exploitation. Indigenous people who may not appreciate that "knowledge has to be respected" cannot be accused of cultural appropriation, if indeed that is their community. However, they can potentially exploit knowledge that they may not really understand or respect. As Ms. Mojica states, this is a bone of contention for many indigenous communities who want to make indigenous knowledge available to their communities, but in a way that demonstrates respect for the protocols and responsibility for that knowledge. As a result, Ms. Mojica says,

You have to think about the balance and the risks every time, with every project, with every character, with every aspect of the work. It's not like you do it once and you're good forever. You can't be inoculated against exploiting your own culture. It's daily maintenance.

Negotiating the pitfalls of indigenous knowledge exploitation is a rigorous job and I agree with Ms. Mojica that it is indeed daily maintenance, and impossible to be safeguarded against the risk of exploiting your own or other indigenous cultures.

I can therefore appreciate Ms. Angela Nardozi (January 9, 2014), who has extended her indigenous network to social media as a way of conducting due diligence to get the right information and avoid contributing to the exploitation of indigenous knowledge or indigenous peoples.

When I look at indigenous content I look at where it’s coming from. For example, someone might tweet out a resource, and if Taiaiake Alfred says, “This is great”, then I will look at it. It's amazing to get informed information, because there's no place to get good {accurate} news, so I'm on Twitter all the time. Especially when big things happen, like the conflict in Elsipogtog First Nation around fracking. I found I was online all the time, literally minute by minute, watching the conflict, as an alternative, to mainstream news.

Ms. Nardozi noted that before she got on Twitter it was very hard for her to know what to trust. Now she follows so many people from indigenous communities across Turtle Island that she is overwhelmed by the quantity of good sources out there. She elaborates,
I also follow indigenous scholars, indigenous community members, news groups, chief and councils, and indigenous organizations. I check on Wind Speaker news, the Two Row Times - I use that a lot - and I use the CBC site, the Eighth Fire, which is amazing. I found that it was really cool and helpful. There's also a lot of blogs; Chelsea Vowel writes one, and so does Dr. Palmater at Ryerson.

Prior to the advent of contemporary social media, Ms Nardozi says that when she was left to her own devices, she would use Internet search engines to find indigenous content. She shares,

I would use Google and found that there's a lot of crazy stuff out there. Like new age pink wampum beads that mean love, yellow means happy - very incredible stuff. This type of misinformation must be really intimidating for someone who doesn't know, because when you are on these sites and you read something, you don't know who's writing this. Where are they from? You have no idea. So yeah, there's a lot of weird stuff out there. I don't think a lot of people want to put indigenous knowledge on the Internet and when they do, you never know if it's going to be some airy-fairy made up stuff.

Negotiating what one sees and finds on the Internet is critical to preserving and maintaining the integrity of indigenous knowledge online. It involves having some basic understanding of indigenous values, beliefs and customary practices, as a way of recognizing indigenous protocol – or, as Ms. Nardozi has shared, it involves building up one's indigenous network online in order to access qualified indigenous resources that are respectful of indigenous knowledge and communities. For Ms. Nardozi, sites like the Deepening Knowledge website are key resources because they have been vetted by people with specific knowledge on indigenous history, culture, social, political, and educational issues, and current events, all of which are pivotal to protecting and negotiating indigenous knowledge online.

**Conclusion**

In negotiating their use of online indigenous knowledge projects, it is clear that the research participants practice a form of negotiating that is rooted in *Aanjigone* (non-interference), in that
they consider deeply and passionately the content under review, which is key for discerning indigenous knowledge online.

As L.T. Smith (1999) indicates, negotiating from an indigenous perspective involves an understanding of indigenous protocols and responsibility – and, "Negotiating is also about thinking and acting strategically," as demonstrated by the research participant's responses. Negotiating entails *Aanjigone* (non-interference), as it involves a tremendous amount of respect both for one's own understanding and position as well as the understanding and position of others, including the opposition.

In his mantra, “Freedom is the Other Side of Fear”, Taiaiake Alfred (2005) states that the way to confront our fears is head-on through spiritually grounded action: “contention and direct movement at the source of our fears is the only way to break the chains that bind us to our colonial existences” (p.613). L.T. Smith's projects provide an ideal framework for spiritually grounded action via Claiming/Testimonies, Returning, Networking, Protecting and Negotiating, all of which we have seen are enacted through the principle of *Aanjigone* (non-interference), which challenges us to consider all aspects of a decision, and - as Simpson (2011) states - to focus on the concept or decision at hand rather than the individual. In considering the decision at hand rather than the individual we avoid colonial contentions that employ divisive strategies based on jealously, rivalry, power and greed, all of which have been used to divide communities.

*Aanjigone* (non-interference), then, is an ideal process for ensuring that we help to make changes that promote indigenous ways of being and prevent assimilation and cooptation by colonial agendas. However, to achieve change or transformation requires a connection to *Debwewin* – heart based knowledge - which I will turn to in the next chapter.
Chapter 8

Debwewin (truth as heart-knowledge)

Introduction

It can take several years to achieve a way to speak about a particular meaning from within the indigenous context of Debwewin – truth. Simpson (2011) explains this when discussing her experiences as a mother, and her experiences of creation ceremonies and stories (p.44). She says,

It can take many years after hearing a story to know the meaning of that story in one's heart – for it to become a truth – yet the process of it becoming heart-knowledge or Debwewin is the process of integrating that echo into one's experience (p.104).

Debwewin (heart-knowledge) is what you know intuitively, but it is also what you acquire over the years in terms of coming to understand certain meanings or truths. The meaning of truth in an indigenous context is what you know in as far as you can know it. In this way, Debwewin (heart-knowledge) is your own truth. This concept of truth is very distinct from how western concepts of truth are often framed; rather than implying that one or another individual’s truth must compete with or be exclusive of the truth as held by others where they “disagree”, indigenous understandings of truth generally build in a recognition of the fact that no individual human can hold or perceive absolute truth – and that diverse and different aspects of truth that appear incompatible are part of the larger whole (Borrows, 2010).

In talking about strawberries as heart berries, Simpson (2011) references the late Anishnaabe Elder Lillian Pitawanakwat's teaching on the FourDirectionsTeachings.com site, to explain the significance of working together in a good way, and the importance of working through conflict in a manner that doesn't hurt one another (p. 95). Simpson writes,
Odeminan (heart berries) remind us of the destructive nature of conflict and of the value of peace. They remind us that the heart is the compass of life and the things that really matter in life are relationships, knowledge and experiences of the heart (p.95).

*Debwewin* – heart-based knowledge - is essential to peace and to achieving a good life. Without it we are lost. Simpson writes that heart-based knowledge represents our emotional intelligence, an intelligence that traditionally was balanced with physical, intellectual and spiritual intelligence to create a fully embodied way of being in the world (p. 94). She states,

> If we do not live our stories and our teachings, the echoes become fainter and will eventually disappear. When the land is not being used in a respectful and honorable away (sic), the power of her teachings are lost. Healers know that plants will disappear if one takes too much, and also if one does not use them at all. (p.105)

Living and learning from our stories and teachings is a political strategy for survival because, should we fail to learn, we will lose them entirely. In acquiring indigenous knowledge, *Debwewin* (heart-based knowledge) is critical to mobilization because it facilitates the trust and faith to carry on, and is therefore integral to L.T. Smith's projects on Reading, Writing, Envisioning, Discovering and Sharing. These projects frame the ways in which the research participants cultivate a sense of faith and trust in what they know, which is essential to moving forward. *Debwewin* (heart-based knowledge) provides this foundation, this internal compass for each individual to negotiate their experiences, relationships, and understanding of knowledge, to the point where we finally acquire and fully embrace that knowledge as ours.

*Debwewin* (heart-based knowledge) is also integral to Taiaiake Alfred's (2005) fifth mantra, “Change Happens One Warrior at a Time”, where he states that,

> Our people must reconstitute the mentoring and learning-teaching relationships that foster real and meaningful human development and community solidarity. The movement toward decolonization and regeneration will emanate from transformation achieved by direct-guided experience in small, personal, groups, and one-on-one mentoring towards a new path (p.613).
In this chapter, Taiaiake Alfred's vision will be demonstrated as we observe the ways in which the research participants take up the projects of Reading, Writing, Envisioning, Discovering and Sharing, to impart indigenous knowledge as a way of contributing to community building - and ultimately fostering indigenous resurgence.

**Reading indigenous knowledge**

*These origin stories are deconstructed accounts of the West, its history through the eyes of indigenous and colonized peoples. The rereading of imperial history by post-colonial and cultural studies scholars provides a different, much more critical approach to history than was previously acceptable. It is no longer the single narrative story of important white imperial figures, adventures and heroes who fought their way through undiscovered lands to establish imperial rule and bring civilization and salvation to the ‘barbaric savages’ who lived in ‘utter degradation’. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.149)*

**Writing indigenous knowledge**

*Indigenous people are writing. ...In a localized context, however, writing is employed in a variety of imaginative, critical and also quite functional ways. ...The boundaries of poetry, plays, song, writing, fiction and non-fiction are blurred as indigenous writers seek to use language in ways which capture the messages, nuances and flavor of indigenous lives. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.150)*

In this section, I am combining L.T. Smith's (1999) projects of Reading and Writing to frame how indigenous knowledge online creates opportunities for alternative indigenous reading and writing. For research participants, access to indigenous knowledge online can be an excellent aid for creating and complimenting resources that affirm and speak to the notion of indigenous resurgence.

Janetta Soup (February 13, 2014) states that she was really happy to see FourDirectionsTeachings.com online, because it was one of the first resources that she found when she began to research indigenous knowledge on the Internet. She says,
We were typing in Google searches on “First Nations teachings,” or one of those key words, when we came across FourDirectionsTeachings.com. We were so happy when we found it and really just in awe, because it represented the diversity of cultures that we needed to express. So finding that there were five diverse cultures presented on the site was amazing.

Ms. Soup and her team referenced the project in their work on Elder care. She said it really helped them to define and demonstrate the diversity of first nations in Canada for health care workers. She also stated that she appreciated seeing Reg Crowshoe on the site, because she is reminded of his teaching on indigenous diversity, which explains that a lot of indigenous cultures are different but the factors that they have in common are venue, action, language and song. She says that she always keeps this teaching in mind. So, while Reg Crowshoe does not offer this particular teaching online, Ms. Soup, in her reading of the site and her consequent translation and writing about the site for others, demonstrates her prior knowledge, which resonates in a sense of truth – *debwewin* – that enables action from an indigenous perspective.

In reflecting upon FourDirectionsTeachings.com, Emilie Monnet (December 13, 2013) said, "It felt good to be on the site." She then goes on to explain what she means by this based on her intuitive reaction. Ms. Monnet said she felt that:

From the get-go the elders had given their permission and were part of a collaborative process. I don’t know this for sure, but I feel that the content was decided with them and that they chose what they would share. I feel this intuitively because I know my process is to work collaboratively with knowledge keepers as well.

Here it could be argued that Ms. Monnet is simply projecting her own artistic process onto the work, but she goes on to clarify her reaction:

Again, it comes back to the work and the success or failure of it. A good work comes from a good process. I remember all the different uses of the circle, especially in the introduction and how the visuals and symbols all came together with the voices of the Elders. It was like listening to an oral teaching, which, given the form, was really inspiring.
Responding to the fact that the oral teaching was online, Ms. Monnet feels nonetheless engaged in the work and that her reading/response is guided by her heart-based knowledge, where her emotional intelligence is connecting with her intellectual and physical sense of being.

Donna Bourque (January 29, 2014) said that when she listened to the Elders on the site she got a sense that they were proud of what they were talking about and that they were speaking with sincerity and confidence. She shares that when she first started learning about the Cree culture, she remembers hearing about the woman being the head of the teepee, and about the medicine wheel, and the sacredness of children. She says, “when I saw these same teachings on FourDirectionsTeachings.com, they resonated with me on a spiritual level, where I was able to validate what I was seeing and hearing.”

In speaking about the spiritual level, Ms. Bourque evokes the principle of Debwewin (heart based knowledge) as a way of validating what she is seeing and hence reading.

For Cheryl L'Hirondelle, connecting to indigenous knowledge means identifying that knowledge from its source. Ms. L'Hirondelle explains,

I'm always filtering what I see through what I know about a pre-contact worldview, and what is nation specific. For example, I know of Leroy Little Bear and have heard him speak several times. I have also listened to elders like Maliseet, or Wolastoqiyik Elder Shirley Bear. I have also been exposed to Mi'kmaq Elders, Hotinonshonee Elders, and Anishinaabe elders. So I filter information based on what I have learned from the Elders and their worldview.

In this way, the flow of Debwewin (heart-based knowledge) is circling from the Elders to the learner (Ms. L'Hirondelle), who draws upon what she has learned from the Elders and their worldview to make those connections to indigenous knowledge.

Priscilla Lepine (January 29, 2014) talked about how indigenous knowledge sources that celebrate diversity are healing, especially because she notes how indigenous communities in the north can be quite divided. Ms. Lepine therefore appreciates how diversity can be celebrated. Ms. Lepine, like the Elder Reg Crowshoe, also notes that there are similarities between indigenous nations. She says,
It was interesting to see the differences between the Blackfoot, Mohawk and the Cree, and to see the different backgrounds. It’s nice to see the different cultural groups and how they are all validated, even though each group applies different meanings but have a similar ideology. I found that the people speaking were genuine and that they've learned their culture. It is clear that they understood what they are saying, and that it wasn't something that they were just trying to impart.

Here, Ms. Lepine acknowledges that she is hearing a truth that is deeply felt by the people that are speaking. Again, the intuitive understanding of truth is present in Ms. Lepine's statement. She is drawing upon her own internal compass to negotiate Debewin – heart-based knowledge.

For Professor Larry Chartrand (December 5, 2013), being able to access indigenous knowledge online means that he can teach people how to read those resources with respect to the legal principles that they embody. He states,

A lot of indigenous peoples reference indigenous teachings and don't actually identify them as legal principles, but in effect they operate that way. I am trained in the discourse of law. So I am trained to see how legal principles can be derived from legends and stories.

Like Dr. John Borrows, Professor Chartrand understands the value and meaning of oral traditions from a legal perspective and is determined to impart that knowledge to his students. He says, “As a law teacher, I try to bridge the gap between technology and primary law with indigenous teachings. If I can do that then I feel I have achieved something worthwhile with my students.”

Learning how to read (in the sense of being able to read indigenous legal principles into various legends or stories) is a strategy for law students who are interested in indigenous law. To be able to find the legal principles and values of a community in an oral history requires strategies that are different from analyzing the legal principles of a print based culture. For law students, and any learners interested in indigenous knowledge, learning about indigenous cultural protocols and how to read them in a work is key to validating the work they are seeing.
For educators like Ms. Angela Nardozi, having indigenous knowledge online that has been vetted by the community and that adheres to cultural protocols is a gift for non-indigenous teacher candidates. She shares,

Having access to Indigenous knowledge online demystifies the knowledge. When we discuss creation stories from diverse First Nations, and demonstrate how to use the smudge, teacher candidates begin to see the commonalities in Indigenous knowledge and how it makes sense. They begin to understand that it is a philosophy and epistemology for how to live better on the land, and with each other, and how to connect people to the land. Once they start making the connections on their own, you can literally see their faces light up.

Ms. Nardozi's reference to "making the connections" on their own demonstrates an act of reading and interpreting on the part of the teachers. The teacher candidates are learning how to read the symbols, like the use of the smudge, and signifiers that are presented in the diverse creation stories and what those mean. In this way, they are beginning to have an introduction into an indigenous worldview, which, as Ms. Nardozi points out, demystifies the knowledge and makes it more approachable for teacher candidates.

FourDirectionsTeachings.com provides an alternative form of writing for Internet users who are interested in learning about indigenous knowledge. Some of the teachings even represent a deconstructed account of history. For example, Ms. Lepine notes that the Mi’kmaq teaching feels more cultural whereas the Blackfoot teaching gives more information on the Dominion of Canada and therefore feels more ideological, because it differentiates between aboriginal people and compares it to how Canada was set up. For Ms. Lepine the Blackfoot content is less about traditional knowledge and is more about aboriginal ideology and western ideology. In thinking about indigenous knowledge online, Ms. Lepine references sites that offer a rereading of Canadian imperial history; she says components of sites like the Royal Commission on Aboriginal People (RCAP) and the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) have aboriginal knowledge.

In reflecting upon the research participants’ responses, it is evident that the task of reading is different for everyone. What is gleaned from reading and then transmitted is also different because of individual contexts and needs. As a result, I believe reading and writing is
based on each individual's process of Debwewin (heart-based knowledge), and that what is learned and shared now evolves and grows over time. The principal of Debwewin respects the fact that we all have our own truths. It is not based on relativity, but rather a profound sense of respect - a belief that each individual is a capable and responsible member of a larger community. These individuals then make contributions to that community based on their heart knowledge. Reading and writing is a part of this process, especially now in an information society, where we must learn to discern, decipher and integrate what we have perceived into Debwewin, because then we can confidently help one another and our community to move forward.

**Envisioning ways for indigenous knowledge to flourish online**

One of the strategies which indigenous peoples have employed effectively to bind people together politically is a strategy which asks that people imagine a future, that they rise above present day situations which are generally depressing, dream a new dream and set a new vision. ...Similarly communities who have worked to revitalize their language or build a new economic base or renegotiate arrangements with governments have worked on the basis of a shared vision. The power of indigenous people to change their own lives and set new directions despite their impoverished and oppressed conditions speaks to the politics of resistance. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.152)

The participants in this study are actively engaged in envisioning through the changes they are making in their work and through the dreams they have for their respective communities. Many of them have expressed visions of having more indigenous knowledge sites available online. Given their diverse body of work, each has their own reasons for dreaming new dreams.

For RP, who works in social services, the Internet is a potential gateway for indigenous children and youth who are searching for cultural knowledge and asking questions about who they are and where they come from. RP states,

We have another generation of kids that are coming up. A lot of them are not going to be raised traditionally. For some the Internet is going to be the only way they're going to get access to some of that cultural information. Youth are dealing with identity issues and
don't know who they are. There are some things that they aren’t going to be able to learn in a native studies class, so they will have to do their own learning. Parents can help by showing them where to find the resources.

For parents who are not familiar with community resources and who have limited resources themselves, access to Elders and traditional teachers becomes a daunting task. However, RP notes that some families have computers in their home, and others have access to computers at different drop-in centers. RP adds, “Knowing that there are resources online like FourDirectionsTeachings.com makes me feel like we're noticed. Our world is being presented and our values are being affirmed. Our culture is being affirmed!”

RP shares with students in the parenting class that "the only way our culture is lost is if we don’t pick it up." It is for this reason that RP says,

I think it is important that First Nations people have a presence on the Internet because, oh my God, if we're not online, we're gone; we're extinct! There would be no trace of us. The genocide would be complete. Even though it still goes on daily. Every time they take one of our children, that’s genocide. If we are not on the web, then we are not in the world; it's like we don't exist. And the reality is that we have to show people that we still do exist, and that we are not all the same, and that we are strong, diverse nations.

It is evident that education is central to RP's work, especially around the issues of indigenous diversity and indigenous knowledge. Consequently, RP states, "I also never refuse a non-first nations person admittance into anything as long as they understand my approach is from a first nations approach." For RP, education from an indigenous perspective is key for everyone and not limited to just indigenous people.

For Ms. Angela Nardozi (January 9, 2014), who works in training non-indigenous teacher candidates, access to more indigenous knowledge would enrich the learning experiences and education potential for everyone, indigenous and non-indigenous alike. Yet Ms. Nardozi is aware that not all indigenous knowledge should be posted online. She says,

I do wish that the Four Directions Teachings site was much bigger. It would be great to have a teaching for every nation, and have each teaching go deeper. Of course, that's
very selfish of me because I know there's a lot of teachings and some should only be told at certain times of the year and should be told only to certain people depending on their role and clan and responsibilities; but because I know this, I understand that we are only scratching the surface, and that there is so much more that we could be learning without infringing on the sacred.

I agree with Ms. Nardozi and acknowledge that there is a wealth of indigenous knowledge that could be introduced online. Doing so certainly would not infringe on the sacred. Indeed, I believe that sometimes people operate from a perspective of scarcity and think that there is only so much indigenous knowledge and they are therefore afraid to expose it. However, having been exposed to many Elders all over North and South America, I know the well of knowledge runs deep, and that much of it is encrypted in indigenous languages - which is a form of protection in itself, because learning the language takes time.

Many of the research participants know the importance of indigenous languages, and have articulated how important they are to learning indigenous knowledge because they know that language encodes the worldview. For this reason many indigenous people are eager to learn indigenous languages as a way of embracing their heritage, culture, knowledge and worldview - but it has to be done right. Ms. Emilie Monnet (December 13, 2013) relates,

Ideally I would like to see more language resources online and more teachings. I can find a lot of stories/ teachings online, but checking the source is frustrating. Sometimes I feel it's not really shared by somebody from the culture, and if I am not sure, then how can I trust myself to be inspired? So having access to knowledge that I can trust is important. It would be nice if you developed your site to include more teachings and languages. So having more sites like that online would be really awesome.

For Professor Larry Chartrand (December 5, 2013) there could also be broader perspectives online that demonstrate, for example, the social, political, and legal impact and recognition of Hotinonshonee law. For him, envisioning indigenous knowledge online would change how we view indigenous relations in Canada. He says, “These perspectives would of course demonstrate a legal framework. For a law professor that would prove quite useful, especially if that existed for every First Nation and their legal traditions. You're talking revolutionary reform here!”
I agree with Professor Chartrand and believe that such work would open up the ways we think about law, history, citizenship, responsibility, and much more. To think about how such online indigenous knowledge projects could function is mind boggling - especially since, as a producer of one of the first indigenous knowledge projects online, I could never have imagined the impact it was going to have. Indeed, I am inspired by the research participants’ responses and feel bound, as L.T. Smith (1999) says, "to imagine a new future, and rise above present day situations, which are generally depressing, and set a new vision" (pg.152)

In this envisioning I am not alone, as the research participants have challenged me to dream a new dream. For example, in our discussion, Ms. Cheryl L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) reflected on the process of creating FourDirectionsTeachings.com and said,

I also really appreciated the fact that you sought those Elders and teachers out and created lifelong relationships with every single person you interviewed. That exchange is something we know that happens in our communities when we're dealing with cultural and ceremonial knowledge. It’s not just knowledge that you take for granted. You don't purchase it and then walk away. It's not a transaction. It's a lifelong commitment.

Ms. L'Hirondelle elaborates that the teachings on the site tell us that you just don’t get given these gifts and that's it. It is your life now. She says,

So this site is your life. It is a part of you for the rest of your life and you have to be responsible for sharing it with future generations because the knowledge shared on the site is so deeply profound. It will never be, “Oh, that old site.” Indeed, there may be questions that you might face in the years to come about how to transport and maintain that information for the future. It’s a gift that you've been given.

Up until this moment in Ms. L’Hirondelle’s interview, I had never really thought about the site being my life; but after my interviews with Ms. L'Hirondelle, RP and the others, I began to realize that FourDirectionsTeachings.com was more than just another website. They taught me that it is a valuable and cherished indigenous knowledge site. Ms. L'Hirondelle herself posed the question, "How does work being done today survive for tomorrow?" After thinking about it, she shared,
I have a music publishing company for the songs that I'm writing with the women in prison. I told my nephew, because he's a young budding musician, I said, “You know, you're probably going to inherit this company one day.” I am also talking to one of my daughters (through Joseph), and I said, “This is going to be something that after I die, you're going to have to upkeep. So I'm going to start educating you on music publishing, so you can take care of these songs.”

Ms. L'Hirondelle notes that these young people are going to have to understand the responsibilities of being lifelong custodians who will pass this knowledge on to their children, and then onto the next generation. Coming back to the discussion of indigenous knowledge online, Ms. L'Hirondelle says,

So that's an interesting kind of notion, to consider how work like FourDirectionsTeachings.com is going to be inter-generationally continued, because those stories need to be kept; they don't just end with you. So how's your son going to know that this is the legacy of his parents and that he has to care for it?

I never thought about being a cultural custodian for this project. However, after listening to Ms. L'Hirondelle and the others I began to understand that FourDirectionsTeachings.com may be the type of project that can be presented as a digital bundle. As a producer of the project I cannot declare this to be the case. It is really up to the community and to the Elders and respected knowledge keepers to ponder such distinctions. All I can do is put it forward and ask: if FourDirectionsTeachings.com is going to be considered as a digital bundle, then what kind of ceremonies need to be considered for transferring and maintaining this digital bundle for the future?

RP - who develops programming and course work for classes on indigenous knowledge, cultural values and approaches to parenting from an indigenous perspective - also considers the future of this work, and notes that the Elders’ teachings on FourDirectionsTeachings.com will also outlive me. RP says,

Their teachings will be immemorial, and will go beyond me and will go beyond you. The teachings will be out there long after we’re gone. We're going to leave a legacy for
another generation of kids that will be raised without access to traditional teachers and Elders.

For RP, being active now about how we approach indigenous knowledge online is key to the survival of future generations. For this reason RP states emphatically,

So what we have to do now is what that old man said: we have to take all their laws, all their words, and use it against them. So a lot of this stuff is legislation based, and if we don't start changing and incorporating a part of what we want in legislation, they're still going to do it for us. And they're not going to help us in a good way. Not at all!

Indeed, funding does not exist for online indigenous knowledge projects. It is not mandated for education, social services, or areas of health, even though it is evident through this dissertation project that online indigenous knowledge projects impact all of these fields and more. So like RP, I urge our communities to be active and join in a discussion about how we are going to move forward and make such projects table worthy, because if we don't do it, the government certainly will not. Indeed, the government cannot do this thinking for us because - as noted by Ms. L'Hirondelle and others - we have our own cultural protocols and perspectives on these matters. We need to be having these discussions; and, as Ms. L'Hirondelle pointed out, we also need to be asking ourselves as a community: “Where do we want to be in the future?”

Envisioning is a strategy, as L.T. Smith (1999) notes above, for binding people together politically in the ways in which we dream new dreams and set new directions. Through engaging each other we become the impetus for the transformation that Taiaiake Alfred (2005) references in his mantra, “Change Happens One Warrior at a Time.” Indeed, not only have I been challenged through this dissertation to think about how my partner and myself are potential custodians of an online digital bundle, but also how such work online requires consideration from indigenous protocols that privilege acts of reciprocity: how are we bound together through these visions?

RP introduces this notion when relaying experiences in working directly with people from the community. RP shares,
I did a class the other night with youth and at the end a young lady asked me if she was supposed to tobacco me. I said, well, I'm not an Elder, but for knowledge transfer purposes, sometimes people have tobaccoed me, because they've never had this knowledge before, and it's the first time they're hearing it, and it's a way for them to say thank you.

In another class, RP says a young man came up and said, “Put out your hand.” He put tobacco in RP's hand. RP said, "It made me feel so humble." RP felt that nothing RP had done had really warranted this action, but understood that for the young man it was a way of validating what was shared. RP imparts,

I was worthy. This giving of thanks is the natural way that our community lets us know: “Yep, I got it; I got your information, and that was good for me.” So that good feeling is passed to you when they give thanks. They need to fill you up too, and that’s true reciprocity.

In saying this RP elaborates,

So when people visit your website, there is no way that they can pay you back, unless you put something on there. Maybe they can fill out something after they're done, so that way they can give you something back for what you have given them. Do you understand what I'm getting at? It’s about reciprocity. You are part of the knowledge transfer; it's not for free, you give something for it.

RP is not talking about money, but about how indigenous reciprocity is about giving back to each other, acknowledging each other in a kind and good way. It is for this reason that RP says,

It would nice to let the Elders know how people feel about their work online. Send them those good words that people say, because it will fill them up too. They gave us a gift for nothing. You might have gone through ceremony and protocol to do it, but for us out here, we forget that there is that reciprocity exchange, and that it doesn't come for free. You can pay for it in different ways, even if all you're teaching at the end is to go and offer tobacco for what you've learned today.
I found it interesting that RP makes the assumption that I went through indigenous ceremony and protocol to access the knowledge on FourDirectionsTeachings.com, because I did not relay this information. Yet, it was implicitly understood by RP that I would have done so, in accordance with indigenous protocols of reciprocity and knowledge exchange. I note this because indigenous people with cultural knowledge infer this automatically, while for non-indigenous people such reflections are generally not considered or important. For RP, acknowledging and practicing indigenous protocol is extremely relevant and important. RP explains why even a humble tobacco offering is important: “Giving tobacco and offering thanks is the first act of humility that we teach people. When you offer tobacco you are accepting responsibility for the things you have learned.”

For RP, this need for reciprocity extends to knowledge learned from an online indigenous knowledge site. RP is envisioning ways that we can bring our cultural protocols and indigenous values to the Internet through the ways we personally choose to engage. We must, RP says, “encourage our community to still follow protocols, even through the Internet. If you received teachings over the web, go and offer that tobacco and say thank you.”

I was personally humbled to hear RP say this, and I couldn't help but reflect on how the site resembles a digital bundle for so many people - and that in treating it that way, we are inclined to act in ways that reflect this important cultural distinction, as RP notes.

Listening to the visions of the research participants was such a gift, and a humble and valuable learning lesson. It demonstrated for me that envisioning is indeed a political strategy, as L.T. Smith (1999) notes, because it binds us together in new dreams, in new potentials. To get to this place, the principle of Debwewin – heart-based knowledge – is needed, because to dream new dreams is to have faith. To have faith is to have courage, trust and belief, which in my mind ultimately strengthens us in order to be Taiaiake Alfred's warriors for change.

Discovering how the Internet can foster indigenous development

This project is about discovering Western science and technology and making science work for indigenous development. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.160)
Science has been traditionally hostile to indigenous ways of knowing. Science teaching in schools has also been fraught with hostile attitudes towards indigenous cultures, and the way indigenous students learn. This debate is over the notion of constructivism, and concerns the extent to which knowledge is socially constructed or exists ‘out there’ as a body of knowledge which students simply learn. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.160)

In discussing L.T. Smith's (1999) notion of discovering, we have to first understand that the Internet is a relatively new technology and that it is an invention of western science. This paper looks at how indigenous people are utilizing the Internet and making it work for them via access to indigenous knowledge online. As demonstrated so far, many of the research participants for this project believe that access to more indigenous knowledge online – making this technology work for indigenous development - would be of great value.

Professor Larry Chartrand (December 5, 2013) states that by increasing access to indigenous knowledge online, more people would actually have the resources to meaningfully engage students in learning about first nations people. He believes that this type of education is necessary and that,

Such discussions would gain greater prominence and respect for recognizing Canada as a truly pluralist society that embraces indigenous nations and their laws, and not just the common law of the English or the civil law of the French. Canada would be a multifarious or multi juridical state where the laws of indigenous peoples are equally relevant to contemporary western law.

Consequently Professor Chartrand believes that “Indigenous knowledge resources on the Internet can facilitate that kind of reform and contribute, I think, to positive change in Aboriginal-Canadian relations.”

Professor Chartrand sees the value of the Internet for facilitating better political relationships and understanding between the settler nations and existing indigenous nations; such a usage of the internet is discovering in the sense used by L.T. Smith: finding ways to utilize western science for the advancement of indigenous communities.
For Ms. Nardozi (January 9, 2014), accessing indigenous knowledge on the Internet is also discovering new ways to utilize western approaches to advance indigenous worldviews. Ms. Nardozi explains:

Teacher candidates generally come with a sense of social justice, of wanting to make the world a better place. Through our presentations they begin to see how they can teach the next generation of Canadians. They begin to understand how sites like FourDirectionsTeachings.com offer an introductory window to indigenous knowledge - and how that type of knowledge then opens a door to discussions on sustainability in a way that is inclusive of everyone.

Ms. Nardozi states, "In my mind, FourDirectionsTeachings.com stands apart from time. It is not rooted in a specific historical moment. It can be used by anybody." Ms. Nardozi believes that this is ideal for teacher candidates, and notes that we don’t have anything comparable to it in Ontario. She says,

FourDirectionsTeachings.com is very different from other websites, because it brings together diverse teachings in a comprehensive and coherent way that respects the diversity of each nation represented. I get the sense that the Elders were able to share their teachings in as much as they felt comfortable. I don't find that a lot online, I really don't.

Acknowledging how little exists on the Internet regarding indigenous knowledge is a point of discovery that Ms. Nardozi laments. More indigenous knowledge sites have the potential to contribute in a healthy and positive way to both non-indigenous and indigenous peoples. Ms. Nardozi explains:

I remember after we gave a presentation on plants that are indigenous to Ontario and spoke about teachings and knowledge of the land from a First Nations perspective, people responded by saying, “I need to learn more because this is where I live.” The land connects people because it is something that we all must take responsibility for in this day and age. The land is a way to unite people and makes it less of an “us and them” thing. It is a way for non-indigenous people to respect and learn from indigenous people, which is really positive and healing.
For Ms. Nardozi, this dialogue between indigenous and non-indigenous people contributes to healthy relations that are founded upon respect, and a desire to care for the land on which we all live. Some people may disagree with her, as not everyone sees the land in the same way. For some people land is a commodity to be exploited, and for others, particularly indigenous communities, it has being with which we need to cultivate a relationship. Nonetheless, what is central for Ms. Nardozi is that a dialogue begins. She says,

When we tell the history of how indigenous knowledge and ceremonies were outlawed and did not resurface until 1954, when first nations communities were given the right again to practice their ceremonies after being denied for years, people are literally shocked. In fact, the older they are, the more they're shocked, and they question, “Why has this been kept from us?”

This is the trillion-dollar question that can be answered through the Internet. Indigenous people can educate and initiate discussions with Canadians on responsible Canadian citizenship through indigenous knowledge sites via the Internet. Indeed, Ms. Nardozi has witnessed first hand the potential for dialogue between Canadians and Indigenous people through her many teacher candidate workshops. She shares that people are eager and willing to learn:

The result is that teacher candidates begin to say, “Hey, this might be a way forward in terms of responsible and active Canadian citizenship.” This change in their thinking is what we are aiming to do with our work. So rather than just being critical and breaking down their notion of Canada and what it means to be a Canadian citizen, we focus on how to build it back up in a different way; because at the end of the day, we are all treaty people in this territory, and therefore we must all take responsibility. This is how we deepen our knowledge.

There is still much to be discovered between indigenous and non-indigenous people. Discovering here goes beyond the notion of constructivism and opens up a dialogue that explores the context of knowledge. What is it that we know about Canada? And why do we know it? Exploring these questions within an indigenous context and a settler context will certainly lead to new insights that will challenge what it means to be a Canadian citizen. Hence, the project of discovering, as L.T. Smith (1999) locates it, fits with the principle of debwevin – heart-based knowledge - because it entails a cross-cultural confidence, a much deeper sense of truth if you
will, in making western science work for indigenous development and understanding that knowledge is context specific.

**Sharing** how indigenous knowledge can change the world

*The final project discussed here is about sharing knowledge between indigenous peoples, around networks and across the world of indigenous peoples. Sharing contains views about knowledge being a collective benefit and knowledge being a form of resistance. Like networking, sharing is a process which is responsive to the marginalized contexts in which indigenous communities exist. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.160)*

*For indigenous researchers sharing is about demystifying knowledge and information and speaking in plain terms to the community. (L.T. Smith, 1999, p.161)*

As positioned here by L.T. Smith (1999), sharing is a political strategy for resistance. It is also a political strategy for resurgence because through sharing across networks of indigenous people we fortify our knowledge, our principles, and our collective abilities. Consequently, Elders and traditional teachers are in great demand as their communities seek them out to advise, consult and teach on a variety of matters. Allies of indigenous communities like Ms. Nardozi (January 9, 2014) understand this great demand and responsibility. She acknowledges:

Teacher candidates are always saying to us, “Why isn't there an elder coming into our classrooms?” They don’t really understand what an Elder with a capital E means. It may be that they think that anyone who is elderly and indigenous is an Elder - or if they do understand what an Elder is, that they have a right to meet with them. I don’t think that most people understand that Elders are doing very important work and are not readily available for our classrooms. Elders are needed in their communities and because of indigenous cultural resurgence are exceptionally busy people.

Consequently, Ms. Nardozi acknowledges that the Internet is an ideal way for sharing indigenous knowledge in classrooms because it alleviates demands on local indigenous communities. She explains,
As an Italian Canadian woman, I don't always get to hear teachings but I have been fortunate over the years to hear some because of the communities I have worked with. So having access to teachings on the Internet is a gift because it provides non-native teachers with access to cultural teachings that they otherwise would not get. It also circumvents their notion of privilege by discouraging them from making such demands on local Elders and native people.

Many indigenous community leaders, activists, Elders and traditional teachers are over-worked and stressed out by the responsibilities and demands of their own communities. Finding time to visit schools outside of these communities would be tremendously difficult given their time and work loads. Consequently, the Internet alleviates this pressure by providing an alternative cultural resource that schools can use that won't overburden local indigenous communities. In this way online indigenous knowledge projects are a gift that goes both ways.

For Ms. Cheryl L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014), FourDirectionsTeachings.com is a gift of good storytelling and knowledge all combined in an enjoyable package. She shares that anyone who has spent time in a native community learns that there are some people who are considered to be custodians while others are knowledge keepers. She says, "The people on the FourDirectionsTeachings.com site are clearly knowledge keepers." Being a knowledge keeper may sound dry and boring but it isn't. It involves sharing a good story layered with indigenous teachings. Being an artist, Ms. L'Hirondelle is passionate about stories and greatly appreciates the art of good storytelling:

Everybody needs a good story. Everyone needs to sit back with a cup of good tea and let somebody narrate a good story. It's relaxing, refreshing, and good for the imagination and the soul. I could send anybody to FourDirectionsTeachings.com. You want to know a little bit about gift economies? Check out Four Directions Teachings. You're interested in ecological issues, and want to understand why indigenous people are connected to the land? Look at the site and then we can talk about why Bear Butte is in the background, or why the Piikani always talk about the significance of four things, and how one of those things is place. So there are many different levels, and we know that you never finish a good story.
It is evident that Ms. L'Hirondelle has spent quality time on the site, as she recognizes the subtleties of place like Bear Butte in the Piikani territory. Indeed, much time was spent on graphics and imagery to capture the subtleties of the knowledge being shared. For Ms. L'Hirondelle the subtleties of image and placement add to the user experience:

I remember I spent a lot of time just really enjoying and taking my time with FourDirectionsTeachings.com. It was just such a joy to have something on the Internet that was highly informational, robust and “as all get out”, as my mom would say. It was also so multi-layered, and aesthetically really pleasing as well. The information on the site flows really well from one thing to the other. It’s not like a lot of websites, where you click a button and all of a sudden you end up on a whole new page and you don't know how to go back to that first page or to get back to were you were. So even the most scattered brained among us can just slow right down. The design is very clean, streamlined and easy to use. I love that there's an HTML version, because I remember seeing someone use it in education as a handout, and I recognized that the pages were from FourDirectionsTeachings.com.

To experience a rich interactive website on indigenous knowledge is clearly a gift for many people and one that is honored and treasured by communities because of the dignity and respect it gives to indigenous content and teachings that were once denied, ridiculed and outlawed. It is important to understand this, because the act of sharing the site between indigenous users and non-indigenous users is more than a reference to be shared; it is a gift of dignity and pride.

Like many of the other research participants, Dr. John Borrows (December 19, 2013) wants to see the work developed further. He is dismayed by the fact that the site has not been developed since its launch in 2006, which for him represents a gap in knowledge production. He explains:

I think that people need to recognize and understand the many uses that a project like this has. I also think that it takes people like myself or other educators coming forward and saying, “Well, what kind of resources do you need to develop another set of modules that would address this gap in production, and how can we work with you, either through SSHRC grants or corporate sponsorship, or whatever it might be, to continue production on something like this?” I believe that this type of work would not only be accessible
and beneficial to my class, but obviously, because the framework is so broadly accessible, other people might look in and say, “Well, I'm not interested in law, but I'm really interested in X, Y, and Z”, and this resource would be available for them and for their purposes as well.

It is evident that Dr. Borrows sees how online indigenous knowledge projects can be shared and networked across indigenous communities for a variety of tasks and purposes. Sharing knowledge in this way then becomes, as L.T. Smith states, a collective benefit, with knowledge being a form of resistance or - for the purposes of this paper - a form of resurgence.

Consequently, Dr. Borrows says,

I’d like to see what you've done to be taken further, and developed, and deepened, and applied to more nations. I would like to see the content made even better and broader by building and adding to it. For instance, we're trying to develop an indigenous law degree at the University of Victoria. I would love to have 26 classes of material available there, where we can access Anishnaabe laws, with different elders from different parts of Anishinaabe-akiing, in different ways, with songs and stories and language and visuals.

Hearing what Dr. Borrows said, I was deeply humbled that such a project was, in his mind, worth fighting for. It made me think of Professor Chartrand (December 5, 2013), who also has visions of sharing indigenous knowledge online as a way of teaching indigenous law. To expand the project FourDirectionsTeachings.com will require a collective community effort, as funding for such projects does not exist. I am therefore humbled and inspired by the visions of these scholars, activists and community workers who have shared with me their desire to see FourDirectionsTeachings.com expanded. Indeed, Dr. John Borrows feels that,

To be able to access a robust and diverse cultural resource like that online would change the way we think about law and authority in the country. It would change the curriculum in Canadian law schools because there are lots of people who don't grow up on reserves, or who are not native, and they want to learn more about these things too. As someone who is knowledgeable in the field, I can introduce this to them and make it accessible. However, having access to such a robust cultural resource like this can help people in general to start to thinking about how they can use the teachings in their own lives.
For Dr. John Borrows cultural teachings shared by various Elders can be applied to family, relationships, individuals, and personal struggles. Cultural teachings can help someone deal with issues of addictions and how they have arrived there, or with existing challenges in the law. The opportunities for change and implementation of indigenous knowledge online are endless. Dr. Borrows shares:

For example, I could see how this would help me implement our treaty, or deal with the storage of nuclear waste, which we’re confronting in our territory now. Having access means we could say, “Here is a teaching that can give us some guidance on how to deal with ecological problems that are happening on the Saugeen Peninsula.” Or here is a teaching, for example, that could be applied to personal injuries and property issues, or even to the way people do business with one another. It's pretty impressive what that kind of access to Indigenous knowledge could do for us. I think it could change the world!

Excited by his enthusiasm, I couldn’t help but think that this is what true sharing is all about – a deepening and widening of community and service to community. The ability to share comes from the principle of Debwewin – heart-based knowledge. When you know and feel something in your heart, it becomes impossible to deny. Dr. Borrows’ passion and enthusiasm to share indigenous knowledge online comes from his heart based-knowledge - debwewin. Debwewin is what makes us fearless in the face of adversity or controversy, which can come from within our own communities or from the outside. Thus, sharing in this context embraces L.T. Smith's (1999) position, in that sharing is a process that is responsive to diverse contexts in which communities exist, whether they are marginalized or entrenched in power.

Conclusion

Debwewin – heart-based knowledge - is attained after a long journey that begins with Biskaabiiyang - to look back. In looking back we pick up our traditional knowledge bundles and begin to unpack them. In unpacking what is there we engage in the process of Naakgonige – to plan, where we consider carefully and reflect deeply on what we have learned. Taking time to plan is a strategy that embraces the process of Aanjigone – non-interference, which ensures that we tread carefully by remembering that change and transformation are possible as long as they
promote indigenous ways of being and prevent assimilation. By moving through these principles and processes we then reach Debwewin – heart based knowledge - where we have integrated all that we have learned, deliberated, and contemplated through Biskaabiiyang, Naakgonige and Aanjigone.

It follows that Debwewin – heart-based knowledge - is not something that is easily acquired. It is attained over long periods of time, first hand experiences, and through what some might call prayer or meditation, where we engage all aspects of ourselves to better comprehend what we are seeing, hearing or feeling. However, once acquired, Debwewin becomes a force to be reckoned with, because once integrated, it becomes a part of you. To deny it would be to deny a part of yourself, which is why so many of the people I spoke to repeated that knowledge has to become something that you feel and not just think, because then it becomes you.

Debwevin – your truth, your knowledge – is what makes us into good mentors. It fosters what Taiaiake Alfred (2005) calls meaningful human development and community solidarity by making each individual confident in their abilities to be indigenous and to act, as Simpson notes, from a premise of love for their communities.

The mantra and pathway “Change Happens one Warrior at a Time” is made possible because of Debwevin – heart-based knowledge. Without it we would lack the faith, trust and ability in ourselves to move forward. In this chapter we have seen how the research participants have engaged with the projects of Reading, Writing, Envisioning, Discovering and Sharing, from within the principle of Debwevin – which has made them fearless, passionate, determined, and visionary in their responses to indigenous knowledge online.

Finally, L.T. Smith (1999) states that sharing is about demystifying knowledge and information and speaking in plain terms to the community. I hope that I have achieved this throughout my analysis of Simpson’s (2011) four tenets: Biskaabiiyang, Naakgonige, Aanjigone and Debwevin. In the following Conclusion chapter, I will explain why indigenous knowledge online is a different kind of social movement and how it involves a cultural shift that will place indigenous communities in a dialogue on the Internet and how to be “Idle No More” in the realm of cyberspace.
Introduction

In a podcast lecture on *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in the Internet Age*, Manuel Castells surmises that the Internet is a transformative communications network for the elaboration of new forms of social movements that challenge structures of power (2013). In discussing indigenous knowledge online as a different kind of social movement, I will speak to Manuel Castells’ (2012) assertion that new forms of social movements are taking root because of access to the Internet. In this chapter I also consider the value of having indigenous knowledge take centre stage, and how that role requires a cultural shift for indigenous communities and indigenous leadership.

These reflections are then juxtaposed with indigenous community fears about cultural appropriation. Such fears are illustrated in my discussion of The Sundance Controversy - a life in two worlds. Having voiced the concerns of the community, I then turn to ways in which we can observe cultural protocol in the production and sharing of indigenous knowledge, with the goal of ultimately validating the knowledge for indigenous communities and thwarting cultural appropriation. In the sections on Resource Mobilization Theory and The Internet – Idle No More, I focus on how we are on the cusp of a successful indigenous social movement that will benefit our communities for generations to come. I end the chapter and the thesis with a conclusion that calls indigenous communities, leaders, and educators to action - to join in a dialogue and effort to take control of the Internet as an opportunity for an indigenous transformative communications network that speaks to and respects indigenous knowledge within indigenous protocols and paradigms.

23 https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8m66tNPUb0
Indigenous knowledge online - a different kind of social movement

In reading *Social Movements* by Suzanne Stagennborg (2008), I was impressed by how the women's movement brought about social change by changing the discourse of rape and domestic violence from private concerns to social concerns. They did this by promoting a collective framework and developing a discourse around the “personal as political.” I was also pleased to see a chapter devoted to aboriginal movements since World War Two, where Howard Ramos notes the many obstacles to recruitment of aboriginal people nationally to social causes because of a general lack of resources and the difficulty of uniting diverse aboriginal groups into a cohesive movement (Stagennborg, 2008). Stagennborg (2008) surmises in the conclusion that:

Social movements have helped to bring about many political and cultural transformations, but they also face numerous challenges in effecting change. Movements typically confront powerful adversaries and long-standing structural arrangements, and they rely on cultural and political openings to afford the possibility of success. (p. 141)

Early in this dissertation I stated that our timekeepers tell us that we are entering into a new era. I believe this to be true, and that this new era entails challenges to long-standing structural arrangements – including how we access indigenous knowledge. The issue of such access is evident in the controversy over the Sundance ceremony being made accessible online, which will be discussed in detail in this chapter, and is present in the ways in which research participants think about indigenous knowledge online. To even discuss indigenous knowledge online from within an indigenous research paradigm using indigenous language and context represents what Stagennborg (2008) would call a "Discursive Opportunity Structure, i.e., factors such as cultural context, and mass media norms, which shape movement discourse" (p.145). In this sense my research is engaged in New Social Movement Theory, which Stagennborg (2008) defines as a theoretical approach that focuses on new types of social movements that differ in structure, type of constituents, and ideology from older movements (p. 145).

In writing about the indigenous movement, L.T. Smith (1999) explains that the movement is far more complex than simply a politics of self-determination. She elaborates:
While rhetorically the indigenous movement may be encapsulated within the politics of self-determination it is a much more dynamic and complex movement which incorporates many dimensions, some of which are still unfolding. It involves a revitalization and reformulation of culture and tradition, an increased participation in and articulate rejection of Western institutions, a focus on strategic relations and alliances with non-indigenous groups. The movement has developed a shared international language or discourse which enables indigenous activists to talk to each other across their cultural differences while maintaining and taking their directions from their own communities or nations. (p.110)

Stagennborg (2008) and L.T. Smith (1999) acknowledge that cultural transformation is a dynamic and complex process that involves an alternative interpretation of issues and events and entails creating new discourses that speak to cultural revitalization and reformulation. In this sense of cultural transformation, indigenous knowledge online - or what I like to call “digital bundles” - are on the precipice of new cultural and political openings that can further perpetuate indigenous resurgence and thereby counteract the impact of colonization.

Howard Ramos' chapter in Social Movements (Stagennborg, 2008) observes that despite diversity among aboriginal peoples, all have in common a long-standing resistance to colonization:

For example, all have struggled against appropriation of land and material property, resisted displacement to reserves (Miller, 1989), disenfranchisement (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, section 9.12), residential schooling (Haig-Brown, 1988: ch.6), the banning of cultural practices (Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, section 9.5), being transferred from state to state without consultation (Grand Council of the Crees, 1998), and discrimination in employment and daily life (Fleras and Elliot, 2003: 175; Langford and Ponting, 1992; Ponting, 2000). Thus, despite differences among Aboriginals, government policy, practice, and social attitudes have created common grievances. (Stagennborg, 2008, p.55)

In considering this barrage of institutional and social oppression, I turn to Taiaiake Alfred (2005), who states:
There is no concise neat model of resurgence in this way of approaching decolonization or the regeneration of our peoples. Nor are there clear and definite steps that we can list for people to check off as milestones on their march to freedom. But there are identifiable directions of movement, patterns of thought and action that reflects a shift to an Indigenous reality from the colonized places we inhabit today in our minds and souls. (p. 612)

These colonized places include how we think and talk about research; the need to decolonize research is the reason why I have chosen to express my research findings through an indigenous discourse and framework while at the same time identifying its relationship to existing scholarship in order to make transparent my approach to the research work. I concur with L.T. Smith (1999), who states, "The field of Indigenous research privileges indigenous concerns, indigenous practices and indigenous participation as researchers and researched" (p.107). I also agree with Taiaiake Alfred (2005) that, while there are no definitive steps to decolonization and resurgence, there are ways to effect and transform our thinking and the discourse we use. In Cultural Anthropology, Audra Simpson writes:

Indigeneity – Indigenous difference – is fundamentally the condition of "before," of cultural, philosophical, and political life that connect to specific territories and of the political exigencies of this relatedness in the present. This present is defined by the political projects of dispossession and settlement, and the difference that is Indigeneity is the maintenance of culture, treaty, history, and self within the historical and ongoing context of settlement (p.208).

For Audra Simpson,

Indigeneity is quite simply a key to critical analysis, not as a model of an alternative theoretical project or method (as interesting and valuable as this is) but simply as a case that, when considered robustly, fundamentally interrupts what is received, what is ordered, what is supposed to be settled (p.209).

I believe that this dissertation has contributed to such critical analysis to some extent, and that the combination of theoretical frameworks that I have used fundamentally interrupts what is received, what is ordered, and what is supposed to be settled.
In bringing together the work of Simpson (2011), Taiaiake Alfred (2005) and L.T. Smith (1999), I have attempted to create a fluid and holistic indigenous paradigm for framing the various research issues for this thesis project. I did this by providing L.T. Smith's Twenty Five Projects as a method for analysis, or what Stagennborg (2008) might call “collective behavior theory. … “A theoretical approach to social movements that focuses on the grievances or strains that are seen as leading to collective behaviours outside of established institutions and politics” (p.144). I wanted to frame the issues and grievances using an indigenous discourse, so I used Simpson's Four Tenets to create what Stagennborg (2008) would call “collective action frames” – that is, the interpretations of issues and events that inspire and legitimate collective action (p. 144). These collective action frames are: Biskaabiyang (to look back), Naakgonige (to plan), Aanjigone (non-interference) and Debwewin (heart-based knowledge). Framing is crucial to mobilization. Stagennborg (2008) defines framing as:

An important activity (for) movement leaders and organizations. The framing perspective emphasizes the role of movements in constructing cultural meanings, as movement leaders and organizations frame issues in particular ways to identify injustices, attribute blame, propose solutions, and motivate collective action. (pp.18 -19)

The research participants have demonstrated that collective action frames have very specific functions that contribute to indigenous resurgence. In my analysis of the research participants’ responses to indigenous knowledge on the Internet, I have shown how Biskaabiiyang (to look back) is an act of decolonization, because in looking back, we are picking up our political, social, and spiritual bundles - all of which contribute to a psychological grounding in indigenous knowledge and worldviews. The process of Naakgonige (to plan) shows how healing is attainable by treading carefully through the physical, spiritual, psychological, social, and collective restoration of our indigenous knowledge and worldviews. To accomplish this aspiration of healing, we must employ Aanjigone (non-interference), which grounds us before leaping into transformation by deeply considering the psychological, social, political, and economic impact of change and what that impact will be for the next seven generations. Finally,
we are inspired to action through *Debwewin* (heart-based knowledge), which is the truth and strength that is required by each of us for mobilization at local, regional, national, and global levels.

I have linked these collective action frames to Taiaiake Alfred's (2005) five mantras. In making this connection, I am partaking in what Stagennborg (2008) identifies as "frame bridging - the extension of collective action frames to connect together the concerns of different groups or movements" (p. 144). I have done this because I find Taiaiake Alfred's five mantras (Land is Life, Language is Power, Freedom is the Other Side of Fear, Decolonize your Diet, and Change Happens one Warrior at a Time) incredibly useful. As he notes, "These are the mantras of a resurgent indigenous movement" (p.613).

I have connected my analysis of the interviews, which included themes of survival, cultural revitalization, and transformation of education, with Taiaiake Alfred's pathways of indigenous resurgence. I have utilized Simpson's (2011) Four Tenets and L.T. Smith's (1999) Twenty-Five projects as a way of contributing to a research perspective that might inspire indigenous community leaders and policy makers to take note of how indigenous knowledge online is contributing in very specific ways to indigenous resurgence. I have attempted to show how the exploration of questions and the conclusions made in this dissertation stand up in ways that correspond to the principles expressed through the overlaid perspectives of three leading indigenous scholars.


The Report includes findings that publicly funded schools are not providing opportunities for students to learn about First Nations peoples and cultures.
The statistics reported on First Nation language programming in public schools provides stark evidence of the need to implement the recommendations of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission around First Nation languages,” said Ontario Regional Chief Beardy. “The Report indicates that although 96% of secondary schools have Aboriginal students enrolled only 11% offer Native language programs.”

The 2015 Report also implies that cultural support programs are lacking in Ontario’s public schools. Currently, 13% of elementary schools provide cultural support programming even though 92% of schools have Aboriginal students enrolled. Chiefs of Ontario Education Portfolio holder Grand Chief Gordon Peters said, “things are improving in the public education system, but the pace needs to be stepped up. We cannot continue to deprive generation after generation of our children of a culturally-relevant education” (Chiefs of Ontario Press Release, June 8, 2015).

Further, the report states that teachers need training on aboriginal issues. Only 29 per cent of elementary schools and 47 per cent of secondary schools offer training on aboriginal issues to teachers despite the fact that according to the province teachers themselves are unprepared or uncomfortable teaching Aboriginal education topics (p.10). Grand Chief Gordon Peters is absolutely correct; we most certainly cannot continue to deprive generation after generation of our children a culturally relevant education. The time has come for indigenous knowledge to take center stage for the benefit of all of our communities.

Indigenous knowledge takes centre stage

Mary Lee, the Cree Elder on FourDirectionsTeachings.com, shares in her teaching on the structure of the teepee that each of the poles has a specific meaning. The way they are tied together also has a meaning attached to it. Similarly, Ms. Monique Mojica (January 25, 2014) notes that Guna houses are built with each post representing a cultural principle. She says, "I don’t have those teachings, but I know the bamboo walls and palm roofs - the way everything is stitched, woven and lashed together - all mean something.” Reflecting upon the teepee pole teaching and Guna houses, Ms. Mojica states emphatically that,
Our architecture is more than a building; it is a sequence, a ritual, a practice, all infused within the structure itself. Understanding this conceptually is what I find so exciting about putting indigenous knowledges in the center of my practice, because it offers a worldview and perspective that is not fixed but adaptable to the fluidity of culture and the arts. So that's really what I'm interested in: how can we privilege that knowledge and those structures and those shapes and those rhythms?

Ms. Mojica's statement captures the excitement involved as we begin to scratch the surface of indigenous knowledge, and echoes the energy of the many research participants who have expressed the significance of indigenous knowledge in their work and in their lives. Indeed, putting indigenous knowledge at the center of their practice is key for the many people involved in this research project, including myself. The challenge is: how do we continue to put indigenous knowledge at the center of our practice in a way that is culturally respectful, responsible and beneficial to all of our communities? To answer this question we need to look at our changing times - or what some are calling a cultural shift.

Cultural shift

During our interview, Dr. Rainey Gaywish (January 13, 2014) discussed how, some years ago, Arvol Looking Horse addressed his concern online about how many non-native people were participating in the Sundance tradition and running their own Sundances. Dr. Gaywish recalls, "He cautioned that we need to take more care because non-native people are distorting our traditions and spiritual teachings." Dr. Gaywish empathized with Arvol Looking Horse. She said,

Over the years, I have witnessed non-native people who are so oblivious to their own white privilege, and the fact that they project a cultural exoticism onto indigenous ways, and end up exploiting the teachings that were shared with them. These people are often individuals who are very hungry for meaning and sense of self in their own lives. However, because they are not in touch with their own white privilege, I have seen these people, within a very short period of time, believe that they are more entitled to a ceremony than the people who taught them.
Dr. Gaywish surmises that the problem with the new age movement is the propensity to the unrestrained audacity of the human ego. “New ageism” in general has very little respect or humility as it appropriates aspects of every distinct culture in the world and distorts it, often on the basis of shallow and selfish preconceptions. Dr. Gaywish believes that Arvol was trying to warn us “that if we don't protect our ceremonial ways, we will lose what we struggled to maintain through the difficult era of history that made it illegal for us to practice our ceremonies and speak our languages.”

Throughout this dissertation, issues around cultural appropriation by the new age movement have consistently been raised as a concern - along with cultural exploitation, which has also been raised with respect to how indigenous people may exploit their own cultures knowingly or unknowingly. These fears and concerns are at the very core of putting indigenous knowledge online and are uniquely captured by Dr. Gaywish and Ms. Mojica when discussing, the Sundance controversy.

The Sundance Controversy – a life in two worlds

Dr. Gaywish (January 13, 2014) conveyed that recently there was a lot controversy among indigenous people when David Blacksmith, a Cree Sundance chief from northern Manitoba, allowed APTN to come in and film his Sundance for the purposes of streaming it online.24 Blacksmith allowed this filming as a way to share indigenous spiritual ceremonies with indigenous people, especially for those people who may be struggling. Dr. Gaywish elaborates,

As Anishnaabe people, it is our rightful inheritance to know who we are, to know where we come from and to practice our teachings and ceremonies. How do we maintain these rights if we don't teach our ways, if they are not transmitted to the younger generation? The younger generation needs to see the value so that they can pick it up and pass it down to the next generation. So it is about providing access to our youth. It is also about revitalizing the language and ensuring that these ceremonies live on. The fear is, how far do we open the door before we begin to endanger the vitality, integrity and rightful inheritance of our people?

24 http://aptn.ca/news/2013/08/14/the-sun-dance-ceremony/
Indeed, aboriginal youth surf the Internet, travel between urban and rural areas, and are bombarded, like all youth, by popular culture everywhere. The fact that they represent the fastest growing population in Canada has created a cultural pyramid in first nation communities, where the base represents the youth and the pinnacle represents traditional teachers and Elders who can be said to hold Traditional Knowledge. As a result, Marlene Brant Castellano (2000) states that,

Elders are coming together in gatherings such as the annual elder’s conference at Birch Island, Ontario, to talk about how to be an elder in a changing environment, and how to adapt old forms of sharing knowledge to ensure that the next generation benefits from the wisdom of our ancestors.

The fact that these discussions are underway speaks to the notion of a cultural shift amongst our knowledge keepers. Dr. Gaywish shares her understanding of Mr. Blacksmith and his reasons for allowing the Sundance to be filmed:

David says he did this because that's what his vision told him to do. Relating to him as an elder, I have a lot of respect for that. We have visions and we have dreams. David is doing what he believes that the spirit told him to do and he is doing it in the most careful way that he can. He is echoing what all the elders say and that is that no one should come to the door of a lodge without knowing what it is that they're entering. So what I think he was saying, I'll show you what a Sundance is, there's no reason be fearful here.

To be able to come to the door is extremely important for indigenous youth - and yet, as was pointed out earlier by RP, sometimes youth feel discouraged from cultural experiences where they feel belittled or humiliated because they did not know the right approach or how to go about the ceremony in culturally appropriate ways.

Dr. Gaywish states that indigenous peoples are in such a vulnerable position because we live in two worlds:

We live in a Western world where the rules and values are not our own, and we live in our communities where our worldviews and practices are at constant risk of exploitation. …We have a proud and strong tradition, and if somebody's watching the Sundance online, are they going to feel more empowered, more knowledgeable to come to the
door? Are they going to see or feel its healing potential? Or are they going to take that video and build a Sundance lodge somewhere and start running a Sundance? The truth is that some people might.

The notion of some people exploiting or appropriating the Sundance is a huge fear for the indigenous community and was vehemently expressed through many online posts when APTN first released the Sundance series two years ago:

**appalled by religions • 2 years ago**

You are not a traditional walking leader, otherwise you would not allow such disrespect towards our Sacred Ceremony!

**LadyPhoenix • 2 years ago**

How dare you film any part of this sacred ceremony, let alone post it online for all to see? Shameful!

**Ben Carnes • 2 years ago**

I can say that I am very disturbed by this. It is something I would expect from a non-Native news source, but not from one of the very few we have. The sacredness of the ceremony loses its integrity and its intent through the eyes of the viewer. One does not learn or even begin to understand the ceremony without being a part of it. It is not a spectator event, never was. I'm am [sic] just very disturbed and saddened by this.

**Rose Christo • 2 years ago**

You ought to be ashamed of yourself. Ceremony is not supposed to be documented like this. You are stripping it of what makes it sacred, secret and protected. You are commodifying something that has no place being commodified and you are spitting on the memory of the people who died trying to protect our way of life.

**Glenda Sue Deer • 2 years ago**
It so sacred you put it out there for all to see....hmmm yeaaaaah buhdee.....no wonder we have so many white people stealing Indian ways...if Creator wanted them to know ...he would have given it to them ..but he didn't! This is why mother earth is so off balanced! Sickening..seeing Indians condoning this..sad..this is MY OPINION

RTatum • 2 years ago

Many of our people gave their lives to protect these ways and ceremonies. Posting this publicly is just an invitation to exploitation and abuse.

Rosemary • 2 years ago

My aboriginal/FN friends are truly outraged by this arrogant breach of sacrosanctity !! You have tread on a people's inviolable rights to maintain the sacredness of this ceremony....I am NOT FN, but even I can see that apparently NOTHING is sacred anymore. I would expect this of a "whitebread" main stream media source, but...APTN!?!? For shame!

Frank Busch • 2 years ago

The Spiritual Awakening prophesized by the appearance of the White Buffalo is at hand! It is time to reveal the glory of our most sacred ceremony to the 4 Colours of the Earth. No longer will we stay in hiding, no longer will we be ashamed. This is the gift that Creator has given to us. We have been tested, we have been humbled, but we have survived. Any who think our Sundance way off life should remain hidden, has been shamed by the influence of the Church. I will pray for those who are lost that they may find their way out of darkness and into the light of truth, Ekosi.

disqus_Iu9FUgZZER • 2 years ago

This only leads to exploitation and incidents like the sweatlodge incident where people were killed. People who don't know the true meanings of these ways can really hurt people. Pray for these "Sundance Leaders" and their followers not to cause harm to their own and to other people. There is such a thing as "karma" when you play with the
Creator's ceremonies. Pray for the health of our people and for ceremonies to stay alive but with out social media. Take this video down!!

DianaDelilah • 2 years ago

I don't understand why this was recorded and aired. Is nothing sacred anymore? I have no words to express how this saddens me, I can only cry :(

Angel Young • 2 years ago
Wow...Sad and disrespectful... there are somethings that should be left alone.. next thing you know, ya'll will be making posters and selling t-shirts.. Where is the Humility in this????

Darlene O-Sicotte • 2 years ago

Hello Frank, we met in Whitehorse, am disturbed by this support you give to APTN but I kind of notice that people working in business tend to not think of the social ramifications of 'its business as usual' let's have a partnership with so-so-non-native! Sometimes it's just best to leave well enough alone, this new generation of sundancers have never been to a church, learned catholicism, but have been reared in their languages, feasts, fasts, sundance, sweatlodge, rain dance, what have you. The argument that church hurt them is not a given for this new generation. It was on the sacred backs of the people who held the protocols, the songs, the locations away from the rest of society to protect our nations that they are able to FREELY do this journey without interference with the daily mainstream. APTN should be ashamed of themselves, funny how this kind of stuff is aired ONCE they get their license renewed!!!

Dara Finlay • 2 years ago

If ceremony like this wasn't filmed and shared, then more customs would be lost. Specials like this help bring ceremonies back into people's lives, it's not shameful or disrespectful, it's celebrating a wonderful and rich tradition.

RTatum Dara Finlay • 2 years ago
Our ceremonies are alive and well, thank you very much. All this does is invite the unscrupulous to exploit and desecrate our ceremonies. 25

The thread was eventually closed down but the sampling of quotes noted here demonstrates the profound outrage and fear from many in the indigenous community, especially with regard to notion that ceremony cannot be experienced online. Indeed, as noted above, ceremony is not a spectator sport, and the intent of ceremony must be experienced in person to truly participate in the sacredness and integrity of the ceremony. While I agree with many of these posts and believe that ceremonies must be attended in person, I also believe that there are teachings and indigenous knowledge that can be shared online as a benefit for indigenous youth and communities everywhere.

I am not alone in this thinking. Dr. Gaywish (January 13, 2014) also expressed the need for connections to be made.

We want to reach out to our people across the country so that they know they are welcome, and encouraged to learn and pick up that knowledge again for the next generations to come. This transfer of knowledge is what we want for our children and grandchildren, so that they will be affirmed by their identity as Anishnaabe, whatever First Nation they may be.

The question then becomes, “How do we protect and transmit our ceremonies and knowledge in ways that maintain their integrity, for the many young indigenous people coming up who may not have direct access in their environment to those who hold that knowledge and conduct those ceremonies?” Today this question is even more poignant, as I reflect upon the release of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission (TRC) 26 report on Indian residential schools. The TRC Report says that the residential schools were set up to “take the Indian out of the child”, but that now education is needed to put the Indian back in the child. Having more access to indigenous knowledge online would certainly support the accomplishment of this task on a national scale. But to accomplish this definitely requires a shift in our thinking.

25 http://aptn.ca/news/2013/08/14/the-sun-dance-ceremony/
In reflecting upon her Sundance experience at a different location, also under the guidance of David Blacksmith, Ms. Monique Mojica (January 25, 2014) shares that, "There is a shift happening and I don’t think this one Sundance camp is the only place where it’s happening." In speaking about her experience, Ms. Mojica discusses how women on their moon time (monthly cycle) were granted permission by the Sundance chief to participate in the ceremony and to even pierce their bodies. Ms. Mojica shares that, in her understanding, this had never been done before. She also noted with great unease that an indigenous film crew was granted full access to tape the entire ceremony and that non-indigenous people were also granted permission to participate in the Sundance. She notes there were a lot of non-indigenous people at that ceremony and states, "I have never been one to happily enjoy the new age trend, because cultural appropriation has been rampant for so long." As a result, Ms. Mojica felt very conflicted about her experience and shared that, "Six months later, I'm still sifting through what I saw there, because the teachings I have received tell me that what happened there should never have occurred."

Nonetheless, Ms. Mojica confides that she also trusts and respects the ceremonial leaders, who she says are greatly concerned with the epidemic proportions of youth suicides in northern communities:

They believe that if we can put the Sundance online and it saves a life, then that justifies doing it, because saving and reaching out to the youth is the intent. I don't have a definitive answer for what should be made available online and I am really glad that I am not the one who has to answer that. I think that those kinds of questions are things that we have to collectively discuss in order to come to a place where we can all feel comfortable and secure with those decisions. Do I want the Sundance to be able to be watched virtually online? Do I think that a youth who's really in trouble is going to be saved by watching the Sundance online?

Ms. Mojica's response:

I don't think that's possible. However, if there was someone who didn't know that there were places to go, and that there are people who have dedicated themselves to creating space for that kind of brokenness, then it may be that this kind of thing does need to be out there. Our communities and youth are struggling. So if there are people who are reaching out and saying, “Come be part of this”, and that there is something else that's being done, that's going on now, other than substance abuse, gangs, endless
consumerism, or aspiring to endless consumerism, then perhaps this is what we need to be doing.

Ultimately Ms. Mojica stresses that we are in a critical time. People are dying. With a great heaviness she states, "We are losing so many of our youth and women that it is truly an epidemic. The new number on missing and murdered women, as of yesterday, has climbed to 824." Reflecting on this crisis, Ms. Mojica states,

I don't think I have a definitive answer. I’m still questioning and feeling out what I am okay with. My suspicion is that we are at a fulcrum, a turning point where in order for these ceremonies to catch the people who are falling through the cracks, we have to - and they have to - change. Everything has to shift.

So, even though, as she admits, she was uneasy about the non-native people participating at the Sundance, she shares that something shifted for her while she was there:

I will tell you that the epiphany that hit me was this: We’ve been ranting, we’ve been praying, we’ve been marching, we’ve been walking, we’ve been doing conferences and panels up the wazoo about how critical it is to start treating the earth differently, and what hit me during that ceremony was that unless non-indigenous people start to feel in their bodies that connectedness that is encapsulated in all my relations, unless they feel it in their bodies why the earth is sacred, why we are related to all of those forces and powers and spirits, then we're doomed.

In that epiphany, Ms. Mojica began to sympathize with the ceremonial leaders, though she still felt uneasy. She shares, "My feeling is that there is a shift happening among the knowledge keepers. That's what I’m hearing anyway." Yet she emphatically states,

But it's not like they're saying, “Watching it online is good enough.” You still have to bring your body into the Sweat Lodge. You still have to bring your body into the Longhouse. You still have to bring your body into the ceremony.

Indeed, watching online is not good enough! I wholeheartedly agree you still have to bring your body into the ceremony. The Sundance controversy captures the tension of a life between two worlds and represents the fulcrum, a turning point, where indigenous knowledge is perceived to be both at risk and salvation or deliverance from risk. For this reason, indigenous leaders,
communities and policy makers need to engage in a dialogue about how we ensure that indigenous knowledge rekindles our hearths and fires in a good way so that we don't choke and become overwhelmed.

In thinking about how we must bring our bodies into ceremony, I will now discuss how we initiated the FourDirectionsTeachings.com project, where we were privileged to witness first hand the cultural shift happening amongst our knowledge keepers.

Observing cultural protocol in the production of a digital bundle

The first person I went to see for the production of FourDirectionsTeachings.com was the late Ojibwe elder Lillian Pitawanakwat (2005, Manitoulin Island, Ontario). I gave her a traditional offering of tobacco and asked if she would share a teaching for the website project. Lillian told me that she had consulted her pipe because she had been asked to do this kind of thing many times before and had refused. But this time she said her pipe told her that this project would be done in a good way and that she could trust in the project. She therefore agreed to share a Medicine Wheel teaching with us. But Lillian did more than this. She spent three days with the Content Producer and myself, teaching, praying and taking us through a Sweat Lodge ceremony. I did not request this. Lillian said that the ceremony, song and prayer were being done so that the project could be undertaken in a good way, and so that we would have the help and guidance needed from the Creator. At the time I thought this was very kind and generous, but would later come to realize how significant it was. The project received its first teaching after several days of meditating on Dreamer’s Rock, receiving teachings, and preparing for and undertaking a Sweat Lodge, a Giveaway and feasting ceremonies.

Several weeks later I was in Blackfoot country meeting with Dr. Reg Crowshoe, a Piikani Blackfoot elder and traditional teacher (2005). After I presented him with tobacco, he asked me under what cultural authority was I presenting the project? I did not know how to answer him. He asked again. I did not know how to respond. He smiled patiently and began to explain Blackfoot cultural processes, and how these processes involve ceremony, and how ceremony represents cultural authority. He articulated Blackfoot processes as a way of demonstrating how cultural and political authority are traditionally recognized and legitimated in Blackfoot societies.
Dr. Crowshoe referred to these processes by the acronym VALS, which stands for Venue, Action, Language and Song.

According to Dr. Crowshoe, these processes are present in all legitimate Blackfoot cultural transactions, and are at the very foundation of Blackfoot cultural authority. He also stated that these processes are not limited to Blackfoot culture, but that they are shared across Aboriginal communities and only need to be drawn out and demonstrated. Amazed, I finally realized why Lillian had done what she did. By conducting ceremonies for the project, she was implementing a process through cultural protocol that gave it spiritual, social and cultural legitimacy. Excited by the realization, I could now answer Dr. Crowshoe’s question. I explained that the project had been initiated with a Sweat Lodge ceremony and that we held a feast and prayed in Anishinaabemowin; and that Lillian had brought out her drum and sung and conducted a pipe ceremony. I explained that all of this was done on sacred ground, at the base of Dreamer’s Rock. Dr. Crowshoe smiled and said that the process had been a good one, and that Lillian had known what had to be done.

Ten years later I am still realizing the significance of Lillian's kindness and insight in initiating the project through ceremonial cultural protocols; her careful actions ensured that FourDirectionsTeachings.com is more than just a website. It can be regarded as a digital bundle because of the cultural protocol and indigenous knowledge built into its creation, and because of the impact it is having for various communities. Digital bundles - or indigenous knowledge online - signify a new kind of tool or resource, and hence, a new organization (Staggenborg, 2008) and a new opportunity to support indigenous resurgence that can be legitimate from indigenous cultural perspectives, if undertaken with care. Ultimately, indigenous knowledge online reflects an indigenous social movement for mobilization and collective action through its contribution to the goals of indigenous resurgence.

In thinking about digital bundles or the potential and opportunities for indigenous knowledge online, I am moved by L.T. Smith (1999), who says:

The strength of the movement is to be found in the examples of how communities have mobilized locally, the grassroots development. It is at the local level that indigenous cultures and the cultures of resistance have been born and nurtured over generations. Successful initiatives have been developed by communities themselves using their own
ideas and cultural practices. Considerable reserves of confidence and creativity within many communities have generated a wide range of social, educational, health, and artistic initiatives. (p.110-111)

From the onset of production to this final phase of research, I have been inspired and humbled by the ways in which indigenous communities have responded to the idea of indigenous knowledge online. Indeed, they have used their own ideas, cultural practices and knowledge from the onset to challenge me on how to produce, develop and think about the work that indigenous knowledge is doing online. Even now I am being asked to think about the role of custodianship and the eventual transference of FourDirectionsTeachings.com as a digital bundle for the next seven generations. These concepts had never crossed my mind, and never would have, had I not engaged in this research project.

I am therefore grateful and humbled by the considerable reserves of confidence and creativity that have been shared with me by the people who have participated in this project from the very beginning. I have shared their insight and considerable knowledge as a way of generating a discussion on the potential for indigenous knowledge online because I believe, as L.T. Smith (1999) says above that "Successful initiatives have been developed by communities themselves using their own ideas and cultural practices." So in that vein I will now discuss the viability of Resource Mobilization Theory, from an indigenous perspective, to open discussion on how the work of presenting aspects of indigenous knowledge online might proceed in the future.

**Resource mobilization theory**

To reiterate, Stagennborg (2008) identifies *Resource Mobilization Theory* as a theoretical approach for focusing on resources, organization and opportunities needed for social movement mobilization and collective action (p.145). If we are to accept, based on the research presented in this dissertation, that indigenous knowledge is doing different work from indigenous information online, can we then differentiate indigenous knowledge on the Internet as “Digital Bundles?” In qualifying indigenous knowledge online as Digital Bundles, we are not only naming a new type of cultural resource based on indigenous values and knowledge, but we are also articulating a specific type of organization of knowledge online that qualifies it as
indigenous knowledge - and hence, a digital bundle. Further, by discussing the culturally respectful production of indigenous knowledge online as a “digital bundle” and using indigenous lenses/frames to present the experiences of indigenous users on the Internet, I am contributing to a new language rooted in indigenous perspectives and values.

Throughout this dissertation, the research has shown that users of indigenous knowledge online have very specific ways of identifying indigenous knowledge via their networks, relationships, and understanding of cultural knowledge and protocol. In this way the design and interface of digital bundles is very specific to addressing and representing cultural protocol through its presence and presentation. The discussion of interface and inclusive design has not been addressed in this dissertation in any detail, due to the focus on how indigenous knowledge online contributes to the social movement of indigenous resurgence. Interface and inclusive design may perhaps be discussed in a later paper. Instead, I chose to focus on the implementation of FourDirectionsTeachings.com through ceremony as a way of connecting it to cultural protocol, and in this way, I have provided an example of an indigenous knowledge project as a digital bundle. Furthermore, in reflecting upon the research participants’ questions and suggestions on custodianship of the project and how it will be transferred and maintained for future generations, I am beginning to see that more cultural care is required for the maintenance of the project. I now see that I will have to seek out Elders and knowledge keepers to advise on how the research participants’ suggestions and questions should be addressed. Digital bundles, then, require specific organization, maintenance and care.

Organization, maintenance and care is especially important with digital bundles, since they create opportunities for indigenous resurgence (social movement mobilization) through the processes of Biskaabiiyang (to look back), Naakgonige (to plan), Aanjigone (non-interference) and Debwewin (heart-based knowledge) – all of which represent collective action. Digital bundles are intrinsically tied to Resource Mobilization Theory, in that they are the resources that propel mobilization. Thus, in reflecting upon this research work I see the digital bundle as being located in the centre of a circle comprised of the collective action frames of Biskaabiiyang, Naakgonige, Aanjigone and Debwewin, where each indigenous tenet becomes a doorway in – indeed, a necessary part of the process - for engaging with indigenous knowledge online.

I agree with Audra Simpson when she writes:
What is needed is, yes, more people, more Native people in all disciplinary locations, of course, but paired with structures, peoples, institutions that labor for a radically different historical consciousness, one that is deeply cognizant of the means of its own societal production so that it may afford Indigeneity (and the conditions of many others) a robust presence as well as vigorous, variegated past and future (p.212).

Therefore I offer this work as an opening for discussion, as a way of considering what kind of indigenous knowledge resources we need online. I have proposed the digital bundle as a starting place where we come together in dialogue and engage in the four indigenous principles of *Biskaabiiyang, Naakgonige, Aanjigone and Debwewin*, in order to forage a way forward that will benefit the next seven generations - because when it comes to the Internet we can little afford to be Idle No More!

**The Internet – Idle No More!**

In reflecting on her feelings about the Internet and how that technology contributes to the degradation of the environment, Cheryl L'Hirondelle (January 21, 2014) urgently states, "I am also concerned for the environment in cyberspace because the question still remains: How do we not become road-kill on the information super highway?" Ms. L'Hirondelle and I attended the *Euphoria and Dystopia* daylong symposium, where we were both privy to the words of Dr. Sheelagh Carpendale from the University of Calgary, who spoke about data barons and data serfs. Ms. L'Hirondelle elaborated on what Ms. Carpendale had said:

> Her point was that there was a time where an application would cost $399.00, but now we’re down to nano-dollars where an application only costs $3.99. At $3.99, making sales in the millions is possible, whereas before only a thousand would sell at $399. So our economy has changed significantly because of usage.

Here, Ms. L'Hirondelle is directly referring to the Internet economy: where millions of dollars are made by brokers like iTunes who can sell a song for one dollar, a million times over. Ms L'Hirondelle elaborates:

> And that was Sheelagh’s point about data barons and data serfs; telecommunications companies are making huge amounts of money because they are the brokers of packets
and parcels, bits and bytes. Ultimately, they're also the ones who are able to make money off of information because they control the networks.

Controlling networks is about ownership and that is what marks the difference between data barons and data serfs. Data barons are the landlords while the data serfs are the renters and hitchhikers of the Internet. For that reason, Ms. L'Hirondelle shares:

What I would like to see is our people actually create our own networks so that we can be part of that economy and have greater control. I would like to see us have our own telecommunications company where we are selling bandwidth. It’s important, because we know that the *Idle No More* movement, at one point, was hijacked. So there are ways that people can infiltrate networks and shut people out. I think for the future, as native people continue to assert their rights, it will be necessary for us to have control over our own networks. It’s the only way we won’t be shut out or shut down, and run over on the information superhighway.

Rob McMahon's (2013) thesis *Digital Self-Determination: Aboriginal peoples and the Network Society in Canada*, offers some important insights regarding the links between networked digital infrastructure development and the autonomy and agency of indigenous people (p.iv). His work presents a cohesive argument for how indigenous people can shape and use networked digital infrastructures to support their self-determination. Like Ms. L'Hirondelle, he sees the power imbalance of data barons and data serfs as embodied in colonial structures and relationships that are surfacing through the development of broadband infrastructure, which all too often bypasses indigenous territories. McMahon and L'Hirondelle’s advocacy for ownership of broadband networks by indigenous communities is prescient, and worth investigating - especially now, as telecommunication giants bully new and independent service providers.

Ownership of the actual network hardware that connects us is worth exploring, but so too are the applications that indigenous communities currently use. Ms. L'Hirondelle alludes to this when she notes how the *Idle No More* movement was hijacked online. For the purposes of connecting, indigenous communities have gravitated to social media sites where they have participated in what L. Lievrouw (2011) calls “mediated mobilization”, through movements like *Idle No More* (2012). However, as noted by Ms. L'Hirondelle these sites are not secure. Indeed, McMahon (2013) cautions that,
A vibrant indigenous social media presence suggests that many indigenous peoples may be bypassing 'Web 1.0' platforms to move directly to easier to use – but less customizable – 'Web 2.0' platforms that are owned and operated by third-party commercial entities. I suggested this lack of control and ownership over such information appliances threatens to constrain the future potential of indigenous peoples to use these platforms to assert self-determination. (p.286)

McMahon warns against these corporate social media sites as he quotes Morozov (2011), who identifies that:

“third-party social media platforms are also used for state surveillance as well as activism (see dean, 2009: Fuchs, 2011). For these reasons, (McMahon) focused on examples of social media platforms that indigenous people have shaped into community-based platforms of engagement. (p.286)

The *Idle No More* movement certainly demonstrated the propensity of indigenous communities for popular social media sites but it also demonstrated the ability of state surveillance to co-opt and infiltrate opportunities for indigenous social activism. Ownership, then, not only applies to the broadband infrastructure that connects us, but to the ownership, design, creation and maintenance of online indigenous projects, whether they are digital bundles, language websites, education portals, or social hubs. Indigenous communities must take control to own, operate and disseminate in ways that suit our own interests, needs and cultural principles.

**Conclusion**

The goals of Indigenous Resurgence are focused on reclaiming what Taiaiake Alfred (2005) calls our “indigeneity.” This dissertation uses L.T. Smith's (1999) Twenty-Five projects as a way to reflect on indigeneity and the Internet. Using this multifaceted reflection process demonstrates how indigenous knowledge on the Internet contributes specifically to the goals of Indigenous Resurgence in a myriad of ways that relate to Taiaiake Alfred's five mantras.

Further, I have demonstrated how utilizing indigenous principles and values for analysis, based on Simpson's (2011) Four Tenets, is ideal for explaining and capturing what I believe is the social movement work that indigenous knowledge is doing online. I have also made the
distinction between indigenous knowledge and indigenous information projects online by qualifying online indigenous teachings as “digital bundles” because they adhere to, embrace and reflect indigenous cultural protocols. In doing all this, I hope to engage in a conversation with indigenous leadership, indigenous activists and educators about how we can continue to stake out a distinct claim in cyberspace that marks digital bundles as respected indigenous knowledge resources that are supported and vetted by indigenous communities. In so doing, it is hoped that the cultural appropriation efforts of new agers and plastic shamans will be thwarted - leaving indigenous communities and settler allies with access to valuable online resources that can continue to contribute to indigenous resurgence, education, and community building.

In *Networks of Outrage and Hope: Social Movements in The Internet Age*, Manuel Castells (2012) looks at how mass self-communication supports the ability for the social actor to be autonomous via networks of the Internet. He states,

This is why governments are afraid of the Internet, and this is why corporations have a love-hate relationship with it and are trying to extract profits while limiting its potential for freedom (for instance, by controlling file sharing or open source networks) (p.11)

In a podcast, Castells defines the networks of the Internet as a new social structure that has transformed communication networks and socialization. This transformation of communication is a great threat to the dominant hegemony because it circumvents the ability of those in power to control communication.27

Autonomous social actors now have access to one of the most powerful communication tools in society. In writing about social movements, Castells notes that they have common traits that seek to resist economic and political oppressions and reject the political arrogance of the elites. Persuasion and the ability to shape minds is the greatest power you can have because, for Castells, it is harder to control through fear and violence when a large number of people are independently changing the way they think. The loss of persuasive influence over peoples’ minds is what arrogant governments and elite institutions fear the most; a lot of centralized

27 [https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8m66tNPuB0](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=X8m66tNPuB0) Posted by the RSA
institutional control is lost when alternative notions of social change arise independently. Ideas related to the recognition and valuing of indigenous knowledge in education and community building certainly do not arise from Canadian governments at any level, but rather from various indigenous people who have been historically disconnected from one another. While of course such people have always striven (against great odds, and often at great personal cost) to maintain contact with one another – and nothing can replace the need for real human interaction and knowledge transmission, especially when it comes to indigenous knowledge - the Internet contributes to broader cultural movements like Indigenous Resurgence by serving as a tool that (ideally) helps important ideas act on and connect the minds of many more people than was previously possible. Castells is right when he notes that the most important thing about a movement is not the impact it has on institutions, but rather what it does in peoples’ minds.\textsuperscript{28}

The construction of protective space on the Internet where aspects of indigenous knowledge can thrive can accomplish a powerful reassertion of what it means to be indigenous, and can support a powerful refusal and resistance to colonized discourses that seek to obfuscate indigenous history, languages, political processes, social organization, and the simple dignity of being indigenous. I see the work of FourDirectionsTeachings.com as being in alignment with Sandy Grande's work \textit{Red Pedagogy}. Grande writes that,

The basis of Red Pedagogy remains distinctive, rooted in indigenous knowledge and praxis. Though a "tradition based" revitalization project, Red Pedagogy does not aim to reproduce an essentialist or romanticized view of "tradition" (p.81).

Indeed, Grande points out that,

Sovereignty becomes a project organized to defend and sustain the basic right of indigenous people to exist in "wholeness" and to thrive in their relations with other peoples. Local (tribal) and global aims come together in solidarity around the shared goal of decolonization. (P.171)

\textsuperscript{28} Ibid.
Throughout the thesis we have seen examples of how indigenous people from distinct communities are relating to the diversity of indigenous knowledge on FourDirectionsTeachings.com - and how, in so doing, they feel connected to other diverse indigenous nations by recognizing their shared solidarity as communities involve in the process of decolonization. In addition, I see how the stories of the research participants relate to what Grande calls “survivance narratives.” To quote Grande,

The survivance narratives of indigenous people are those that articulate the active recovery, reimagination, and reinvestment of indigenous ways of being (p. 175).

Grande states that these narratives form the basis of Red pedagogy. These are but some of the many connections that I see between Grande's articulation of a Red pedagogy and the work of FourDirectionsTeachings.com.

In continuing to create digital bundles and to come together as communities to decide on the future of an indigenous presence on the Internet, indigenous people will control communication information that will enable them to connect and shape the minds of their people, in ways that support healing and regeneration. They will be better equipped to counter and resist domination by educating Canadians on what really occurred in this country. Very significant knowledge of history and treaties, practices of genocide, assimilation tactics, colonization, and the ongoing quest to live with dignity as an indigenous person in this country, can all be conveyed to the broader public using the Internet. Our timekeepers have said that we are entering into a new era. Perhaps now is the time to bring aspects of our knowledge out into the light - in ways that are defined and supported by our own knowledge keepers - so that we can guide our people and transform the world.
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