Cataloging & Classification Quarterly, 00:1-19, 2015 Published with license by Taylor & Francis ISSN: 0163-9374 print / 1544-4554 online DOI: 10.1080/01639374.2015.1008718



Reconciliation through Description: Using 1 Metadata to Realize the Vision of the National 2 **Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation** 3

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11	This article will discuss the history and context surrounding the doc-
11 12	ument collection and statement gathering mandates of the Truth
12 13	and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the challenges the
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14	newly established National Research Centre for Truth and Recon-
15	ciliation will face in applying the Commission's metadata set in the
16	realization of its vision. By working respectfully with Indige-
17	nous people through the implementation of Indigenous knowledge
18	best practices and the application of contrasting traditional/non-
19	traditional, archival/user-generated, and institutional/Indigenous
20	descriptive elements, the Centre will attempt to create a "living
21	archive" and facilitate Indigenous participation, collaboration,
22	and ultimately, the process of reconciliation.

Indigenous knowledge, trusted repository, subject 23 KEYWORDS and classification bias, digital archives, Indigenous archives, truth and reconciliation, Residential Schools

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Received August 2014; revised December 2014; accepted January 2015.

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INTRODUCTION

For over one hundred and fifty years, Canada's landscape was dotted with 27 Residential Schools. Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their 28 homes to attend these schools, which were administered by the Canadian 29 government and various church entities in the goal of assimilating Indigenous 30 language, identity, and traditional culture, customs, and values. Some of these 31 schools provided children with education, while others provided exposure 32 to fatal diseases, such as tuberculosis, or traumatic emotional, physical, and 33 even sexual abuse. Others provided makeshift accommodations comprised 34 of tents, cots, and a lack of running water. All constituted a direct and 35 concerted attack on Indigenous cultures, identities, and families. 36

These schools and residential institutions represent one of the darkest 37 and most shameful undertakings in Canadian history. The societal effects of 38 Residential Schools continue to play out on a daily basis within and amongst 39 Métis, Inuit, and First Nations communities across the country. Over the 40course of the past five years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of 41 Canada (TRC) has toured from coast to coast in an effort to collect 42 the oral and documentary history of these schools. Key within this process is 43 providing Residential School Survivors the opportunity to be heard-for their 44 voice to be respected-and for the challenges they faced before, during, and 45 after attending a school to be acknowledged. 46

47 Over the course of its mandate, the TRC successfully acquired and described millions of digital records from across Canada from a variety of 48 sources including government agencies and church-run archives. To do so, 49 the TRC relied on contractors hired by the TRC and the production of records 50 from entities themselves. This varied collection methodology-one driven 51 primarily by budget-means that the data set collected by the TRC was de-52 rived from multiple sources, often with multiple configurations of metadata or 53 description. In being the agency responsible for the preservation and access 54 to these materials, the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation 55 (NRCTR) will face challenges in optimizing the metadata used to describe 56 the TRC's records in realizing its vision as expressed by the University of 57 Manitoba and its partners in their bid document. By utilizing technologi-58 cal advances and incorporating Indigenous perspectives on description, the 59 NRCTR will attempt to overcome these challenges to normalize and augment 60 the existing descriptions to create a "living archive" that facilitates Indigenous 61 participation, collaboration, and ultimately, the process of reconciliation. 62

63 THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA

64 The TRC derives its mandate from Schedule N of the Indian Residential65 Schools Settlement Agreement (IRSSA). The Settlement Agreement gener-66 ally ended the numerous individual litigations that were working their way

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67 through the courts in addition to the widely criticized Alternative Dispute 68 Resolution process implemented by the Canadian government.¹ In addition 69 to creating the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, the Settlement Agree-70 ment also created the Common Experience Payment process (CEP) and the 71 Independent Assessment Process (IAP), the combination of which were the 72 compensatory elements of the Settlement Agreement.

Following a failed attempt at implementing the TRC in 2008, Justice 73 Murray Sinclair (Chair), Chief Wilton Littlechild, and Marie Wilson were 74 appointed as Commissioners in July 2009 to lead the work of the TRC. 75 By January of 2010, the first Directors of the Commission were hired and 76 work commenced in earnest to implement the TRC's mandate. Core to this 77 early period of the Commission's existence was a significant amount of 78 reflection and dialogue over the various elements of Schedule N. With-79 out a doubt, the TRC's mandate was broad, encompassing elements as 80 diverse as national events, community events, document collection, state-81 ment gathering, commemoration projects, a final report, regional liaisons, 82 public education through mass communications, reconciliation, the creation 83 of a National Research Centre, a Survivors Circle, and a final closing event. 84 This scope and mandate was without precedent in Canadian history and 85 would present an enormous operational and financial challenge to the 86 Commission. 87

Of the many areas of the Commission's mandate, the statement gathering and document collection mandate formed the core processes that generated the majority of the records in the possession of the TRC. These same records also form the core collection of the records to be transferred to the NRCTR.

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STATEMENT GATHERING

93 The Statement Gathering mandate of the TRC appears in multiple locations 94 throughout Schedule N with the core obligation reading as follows:

The Commission shall coordinate the collection of individual statements 95 by written, electronic or other appropriate means. Notwithstanding the 96 97 five year mandate, anyone affected by the IRS legacy will be permitted to file a personal statement in the research centre with no time limitation. 98 99 The Commission shall provide a safe, supportive and sensitive environment for individual statement-taking/truth sharing. The Commission shall 100 not use or permit access to an individual's statement made in any Com-101 mission processes, except with the express consent of the individual.² 102

103 Using this paragraph as guidance on the general intent behind the State-104 ment Gathering process, the Commission began to operationalize the pro-105 cess. Core beliefs that were central in the statement gathering process were 106 that: a. Statement providers were free to share whatever elements of their experience they wished with the Commission in as much or as little detail as
they chose.

- b. The statement gatherer's primary role was that of a listener and facilitator,and that the process should not be interrogatory.
- c. The statement provider was in charge of the process and could stop orstart their statement at any point in time.
- 114 d. The well-being of the statement provider was paramount throughout the
- 115 process and the goal was to provide as safe and supportive an atmosphere 116 and experience as was possible throughout the process.
- e. Anyone, including former staff, Day School Survivors, victims of the "Sixties Scoop,"³ and Intergenerational Survivors could provide a statement
 to the TRC.

The Commission also felt it was critical to provide those that wished to 120 share a statement with the TRC as much choice and latitude in the process 121 as possible. As a result, statement providers could offer both public and/or 122 private statements, which could be given both individually or as part of 123 124 a group in their language of choice. Those individuals who gave private statements were also provided with the additional choice between having 125 their statement digitally recorded on audio or video, written down, or not 126 recorded at all. Those individuals who gave statements in a public setting 127 128 had the choice of participating in a Sharing Panel session in front of one of the Commissioners, or in a Sharing Circle moderated by an Elder, Survivor 129 130 Committee member, or other respected person.

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DOCUMENT COLLECTION

Just as the Commission was required to collect as much oral history of the 132 Residential School system and legacy as possible, so too was it required to 133 "[i]dentify sources and create as complete an historical record as possible of 134 the IRS system and legacy."⁴ The records collected by the Commission were 135 to be "preserved and made accessible to the public for future study and use."⁵ 136 These short few lines would end up becoming one of the Commission's 137 greatest challenges as it faced obstacles including cost, relevance, reluctance, 138 complexity, logistics, and outright resistance. This is all despite what many, 139 140 including more than one judge, considered to be fairly clear language on the legal obligations of signatories to produce records to the TRC.⁶ 141 Despite the challenges facing the Commission, a number of core princi-142

143 ples underscored the TRC's approach to collecting the records. These were:

a. That the collection should be as full and complete as possible, and that anylimitation of collection to documents where "residential schools" simply

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appeared in the title or naming of the file would fall far short of a full andcomplete history.

- b. That a wide variety of government departments were involved in the
 residential school system including the Department of Defence, Health
 Canada, Aboriginal Affairs, Agriculture, the RCMP, the Department of Justice, and Privy Council Office to name a small selection.
- c. That all media types were in scope, which includes, but is not limited to,
- video, film, audio, photographs, glass plate negatives, maps, and e-mail.
- d. That all record types were in scope including, but not limited to, personnel files, correspondence, memos, official reports, minutes, and health
 records.
- e. There were very few reasons for excluding records from production.
 The acceptable reasons were very narrow and focused primarily on
 solicitor-client privilege and some provisions pertaining specifically to
 police investigation files (i.e., method, confidential informants, young offenders, etc.).
- 162 f. That the provenance and file structures related to a record should be cap-163 tured as accurately as possible with the goal being for future researchers to 164 understand not only the content of the record but also where it originated
- 165 and the context from which it came.

To accomplish these goals, in 2011, the TRC awarded a contract to a con-166 sortium of firms to provide services in the areas of project management, 167 database hosting and software provision, historical research/records review, 168 169 screening and metadata tagging, and digitization. The initial ambition of the TRC was for this team to conduct the vast majority of the document col-170 lection from the church entities while the federal government undertook 171 production responsibilities from its own departments and from Library and 172 Archives Canada (LAC). However, these ambitions were soon presented with 173 174 challenges.

Upon starting the document collection process in a number of the 175 church archives, the TRC quickly realized that the volume of records to 176 be identified and scanned surpassed expectations, resulting in unsustainable 177 costs given the TRC's limited budget. At the same time, the Government of 178 Canada was also experiencing its own challenges funding and initiating the 179 flow of documents from its own archives. By 2012, the document collec-180 tion processes, with the exception of government collection of active and 181 182 semi-active records from government departments, had largely ground to a halt while all parties assessed what their legal obligations were under the 183 Settlement Agreement. For the federal government, the difficulties of pro-184 ducing the records from LAC resulted in a court challenge by the TRC, while 185 for the churches, requests made by the TRC resulted in some entities tak-186 ing on the challenge of identifying, scanning, and producing the records of 187 their archives while others stalled production. By late 2012, all parties were 188

beginning to realize that the success of the document collection effort and the corresponding satisfaction of binding legal obligations were in great jeopardy. Thankfully, despite a number of ongoing challenges, many rose to the occasion and, by mid-2013, documents were again flowing from both church and government archives into the TRC's database.

194 THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION DATABASE195 METADATA SCHEMAS

196 The digital records and accompanying metadata created and accumulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada are stored within seven 197 separate databases that comprise the encompassing "TRC Database."⁷ The 198 seven component databases are the IRS [Indian Residential Schools] School 199 Authority Database; Audio/Video Statement Database; National Research and 200 Analysis (NRA) Database; Church Archival Records Database; Red, Black, 201 and School Series Database; Active and Semi-Active Government Records 202 Database; and Library and Archives Canada Archival Records. Each of these 203 databases is described in more detail below. 204

The IRS School Authority Database includes information about every 205 Residential School documented in the records created or accumulated by the 206 TRC. The authority records contained in the IRS School Authority Database 207 attempt to track titular or geographical changes via the school name vari-208 209 ation field and the opening and closing dates of those variations, as well as by listing all predecessor and successor institutions with a more detailed 210 history attached as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. These "school 211 narratives," originally written to support the federal government's research, 212 CEP claims, and IAP work, were supplied to the TRC by the government. 213 The narratives were to form the government's basis of understanding of 214 Residential Schools and include information on a variety of issues including 215 216 known instances of abuse, identifying information (i.e., opening and closing dates), and references to the records created or obtained by the TRC in the 217 218 creation of the narratives. Multiple versions of these narratives were submitted to the TRC due to the ever-evolving understanding of events at each of 219 the schools.⁸ 220

The content populating the Audio/Video Statement Database consists of 221 the testimonies provided by IRS Survivors, their families (Inter-Generational 222 Survivors), former staff, and other individuals with affiliations to Residential 223 Schools about their school experiences and the long-lasting impacts on their 2.2.4 daily lives and on the lives of those close to them. These statements were 225 recorded and segments comprising the entire recording are made accessi-226 ble to the database user. The metadata elements utilized to describe these 227 statements are divided into three distinct categories: information pertaining 228

to the statement (including whether the statement was public or private), information pertaining to the statement giver (including his or her affiliation with a particular school(s)), and notes about the statement provided by the statement gatherer. In addition, a full transcript of the recording, and the ability for the user to download the full transcript or the statement gatherer's field notes⁹ as PDFs, is available on the site.

The National Research and Analysis (NRA) Database consists of digitized 235 records created by the Government of Canada pertaining to Indian Residen-236 tial Schools accumulated by Aboriginal Affairs and Northern Development 237 Canada (AANDC), as well as church records requested by AANDC, in its 238 efforts to implement the Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement 239 (IRSSA). This database is an amalgamation of several separate issue-specific 240 241 databases created by AANDC as a response to litigation. PDFs of the records accompany the metadata in this database as well as a OR code that links to 242 the record when scanned. In addition to the descriptive and administrative 243 metadata employed in this database, the records also include what are called 244 Tracking Codes, which indicate the presence of subjects of importance to the 245 TRC in carrying out its mandate and in writing its reports (i.e., the mention 246 of missing or deceased children). Unfortunately, due to the low resolution 247 bi-tonal scanning protocols employed by the Government of Canada, these 248 records have not, and likely cannot, undergo Optical Character Recognition 249 (OCR) processing rendering full text search impossible. 250

251 The Church Archival Records Database consists of the digitized records contributed by various church entities throughout Canada to assist the TRC 252 253 in realizing its mandate. PDFs of the digitized records are viewable within 254 the database. The metadata elements utilized to describe the church archival records can again be sub-divided into three categories: Record Details, Con-255 tainer/Citation Information, and OCR Data. During the post-processing phase 256 257 of digitization, the digitized church archival records undergo OCR processing and the output of that data is viewable within the OCR Data category of the 258 document's metadata record. This allows for keyword searchability of this 259 data, consequently improving the discoverability of desired records by TRC 260 researchers. 261

Unfortunately, there is considerable variability in the metadata of the 262 263 Church Archival Records Database. This variability can be attributed to the differences in descriptive practice amongst the close to one hundred indi-264 vidual church archives that were within scope for TRC document collection 265 266 processes. For example, some church archives utilized traditional library classification systems such as Library of Congress, while others utilized archival 267 descriptive standards such as the Rules for Archival Description. In addition, 268 a funding shortfall and the inability for the TRC to cover all costs associ-269 ated with the proper identification, review, scanning, and upload of church 270 documents to the TRC Database meant that unlike the rest of the records 271

in the database, the earliest church records digitized by the TRC were not described at the item level although efforts are underway by the some of the churches to address this.

The documents stored and managed within the Red, Black, and School 275 Series Database consist of three particular series of records within Library 276 and Archives Canada's (LAC) holdings. The Red and Black Series are the 277 results of the Department of Indian Affairs' attempt in 1923 to implement a 278 central registry filing system for incoming and outgoing correspondence at 279 the Department's headquarters. The Red Series consists of records pertaining 280 to the Department's relations with Indigenous people in eastern Canada 281 while the Black Series documents the Department's relations with Indigenous 282 people in western Canada. Within these series of records, correspondence 283 pertaining to Residential Schools was assigned a subject number to ease in 284 these files' reference.¹⁰ The School Files Series is a grouping of records within 285 the Indian and Inuit Affairs Program sous-fonds (part of the Department of 286 Indian Affairs and Northern Development fonds) documenting all aspects 287 of Indian Residential School administration in Canada including attendance 288 and discharge records, inspection reports, and medical records among other 289 types of records.¹¹ 290

Scans of the digitized microfilm housed in LAC are viewable within the 291 database, labeled as "Assets." The metadata used to describe these records 292 include information about the record (Record Details) and about the origi-293 294 nating physical containers at LAC (Container Information). The majority of the records in this database are described at the file level, while some are 295 296 described at the microfilm reel level. Like the first digitized church records, there are very few item-level descriptions available for this series of records. 297 There is duplication of data within certain elements of these descriptions, 298 specifically with reference to location or reference information. As with 299 the NRA records, the Red, Black, and Schools Series of records have not 300 undergone OCR processing. While the images were scanned at higher qual-301 ity than those that are in the NRA database, the presence of many hand-302 written records will make OCR scanning of this collection challenging at 303 best. 304

The Active and Semi-Active Government Records Database includes the 305 records digitized by the Government of Canada pertaining to Indian Residen-306 tial Schools and submitted to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission for its 307 review and retention. These records are considered active or semi-active as 308 the potential for use in executing business functions by the creating govern-309 ment agency is still a possibility. As such, some of these records document 310 the Government of Canada's more recent interactions with Indigenous peo-311 ple with respect to Residential Schools. These records were not yet classified 312 as archival and had not yet been transferred to Library and Archives Canada 313 for permanent retention. Digitized PDFs of these records are viewable within 314 the database. 315

316 Finally, the LAC Archival Records database consists of digitized records within the holdings of Library and Archives Canada, with the exception of 317 318 the Red, Black, and School Series records. The structure and layout of this database is identical to the Church Archival Records Database. Just as in the 319 Church Archival Records Database, PDFs of the records are viewable within 320 the database and the metadata for the LAC records are divided into the cat-321 egories of Record Details, Container/Citation Information, and OCR Data for 322 each item. The data in the LAC Archival Records database is more consistent 323 in its fulsomeness and structure than the data populating the Church Archival 324 Records Database, likely owing to the fact that there is little discrepancy in 325 descriptive practice at LAC. Until September 2014, these records were identi-326 fied, reviewed, and scanned by the TRC using the document collection team 327 and processes utilized in the church projects. As of September 2014, the 328 Government of Canada will be assuming control over these processes. The 329 impact on metadata consistency is not yet known. 330

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION DATABASE SEARCH/BROWSE FUNCTIONALITY

Approved users with valid security certificates who are granted access to the 333 web interface of the TRC Database through the graphical user interface have 334 limited options to browse the records and their metadata, although more 335 336 advanced search options exist via the desktop client, which is primarily used for data input. Upon authentication to the system, the only access mecha-337 nism available to users is the ability to search across these seven separate 338 databases, either by keyword or in an advanced search. Searches conducted 339 scan a pre-selected number of fields in each database in an attempt to ratio-340 nalize searches across the multiple datasets. 341

For the keyword search, users have the option of selecting whether 342 they would like the search to include all of their chosen keywords, any of 343 the keywords, or an exact phrase. The user is presented with search result 344 sets listing the number of records containing the search term within their 345 metadata for each individual database. The user selects the result set for a 346 particular database and is presented with a listing of the relevant records, 347 which includes a few descriptive metadata elements for each record.¹² The 348 349 user can then view a record and its associated metadata by clicking on the highlighted value in the search result set. 350

An Advanced Search option is presently available only for the records in the Church Archival Records Database and the Library and Archives Canada Archival Records database as these are the only two databases employing the same metadata schema. As a result, users can select limits on their searches across these two databases resulting in more refined search result sets.

Advanced search allows users to limit their searches by a number of com-356 mon metadata elements including the originating archival institution, school 357 name, document ID or type, fonds or sous-fonds, language, issues,¹³ priority 358 issues (namely the mention of cemeteries or deceased or missing children), 359 and file name descriptor or title. Users can also limit their search by the 360 name, position/location, ID, or birth or death dates of individuals listed in 361 these metadata records. Finally, within the advanced search, users can limit 362 their search by the actual or estimated cover or document date, or they can 363 limit their search to a full text search of the OCR data in these records. The 364 other five databases are excluded from the advanced search and can only 365 be accessed via a keyword search. 366

THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

By 2012, it was becoming clear that the million-plus records and three thousand statements collected by the TRC would require an appropriate long-term home. As per Schedule N, the Commission undertook a process to establish the National Research Centre, which included, among other things, a national conference, followed by a national and public call for proposals, lastly followed by an extensive review process by the TRC of the proposals received.

On June 21, 2013, the University of Manitoba, in conjunction with its partners, was officially named the host of the NRCTR. For the university, this was the culmination of many years of hard work, which included participation in the TRC's first National Event in Winnipeg, the hosting of a Statement Gathering program, a historic apology by the president, followed by an extensive consultation and bid-writing process.

382 DESCRIPTIVE CHALLENGES FACING THE NATIONAL RESEARCH 383 CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

By becoming the steward for the written and oral histories of the Indian 384 Residential School experiences of Survivors, the NRCTR can play a cen-385 tral role in the preservation, reclamation, and intergenerational transfer of 386 Indigenous knowledge and history. Marie Battiste states that "the task for 387 Indigenous academics has been to affirm and activate the holistic paradigm 388 of Indigenous knowledge to reveal the wealth and richness of Indigenous 389 languages, worldviews, teaching and experiences, all of which have been 390 systematically excluded from contemporary education institutions and from 391 Eurocentric knowledge systems."¹⁴ Today, barriers still exist within libraries 392

and archives for Indigenous users. To combat these barriers, an understand-393 ing of Indigenous peoples' sense of history or worldview, importance and 394 validity of a dynamic culture of oral traditions, and issues of decolonization 395 and re-empowerment are important for archival professionals to understand 396 397 when working with Indigenous communities and/or their archival materials. Indigenous people's valuing and understanding of Indigenous knowledge is 398 often vastly different from the Eurocentric paradigm. In order for the NRCTR 399 to challenge the Eurocentric paradigm that currently exists in the records 400 of the TRC, Indigenous voices need to be acknowledged and respected. 401 402 James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson writes, "One task of decolonization is to replace the sameness of universality with the concepts of diversity, 403 complementarities, flexibility, and equity or fundamental fairness."¹⁵ 404

The NRCTR has committed itself to incorporating Indigenous knowledge
 through the adoption of five best practices:¹⁶

1. Protect and preserve Indigenous knowledge(s) in a variety of mediums
for use by current and future generations in a respectful and sensitive
manner: The University of Manitoba is prepared to steward the Truth and
Reconciliation Commission's archives and provide a secure environment to
make them widely accessible digitally, subject to privacy law and culturally
appropriate access protocols."¹⁷

2. Provide a welcoming environment and assistance for First Nations, Métis, 413 non-status and Inuit people to access this knowledge: Archives open-door 414 policies and use of digital archival technology will facilitate access to the 415 416 archival holdings, promote information sharing and research in an integrated approach with culturally relevant practice with Elders and other 417 health supports. Facilitating ease of access and use becomes a very impor-418 tant part of the reclamation and intergenerational transfer of Indigenous 419 knowledge and history. One way in which this can be accomplished is 420 by incorporating Indigenous perspectives on description. First Nations, 421 Métis, and Inuit people in Canada have been undertaking a process of 422 decolonization. Consequently, many names, both of their tribal groups 423 and geographic locations, have been changed to traditional names and 424 spellings. As author Jenna Walsh notes, it is important to work with user 425 communities, particularly Indigenous communities, in order to select the 426 most appropriate languages for description.¹⁸ 427

3. Seek direction from communities on proper protocols regarding access and 428 429 care of their culturally sensitive information: Survivors and communities are incorporated not only into the governing framework of the Centre, 430 but also need to be consulted on how the records should be cared for 431 and made accessible. Dialoging with community is a highly important 432 element of the NRCTR's development. It is essential the NRCTR listen 433 to the needs of community, solicit input and guidance from community 434 and build bridges with community members. The NRCTR will carefully 435

436 consult with Survivors, Intergenerational Survivors, and communities from
437 across Canada in a respectful process commencing in 2015. By working
438 proactively and respectfully with Survivors and communities the NRCTR
439 will attempt to help in overcoming barriers to Indigenous peoples.

4. Respect the First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural concept of copyright 440 with regard to Aboriginal history or heritage, which is often located in 441 but not limited to oral traditions, songs, dance, storytelling, anecdotes, 442 place names, hereditary names, and other forms of indigenous knowl-443 edges: Archives play a crucial role in collecting and preserving oral tradi-444 tions, but there are many sensitive issues involved. Oral histories belong 445 to Nations, bands, families, and individuals and as they were transferred 446 to material manifestations, many copyright and intellectual property issues 447 have developed. Archival and preservation programs that work with oral 448 history collections must incorporate different levels of access for differ-449 ent user groups and members of the community. In an effort to facilitate 450 education, research and information sharing while maintaining cultural 451 continuity, the NRCTR has gathered together a team of experts and In-452 digenous Elders to address privacy, access, and copyright concerns and 453 develop an Access Policy. Dialogue has already taken place and will con-454 tinue until these protocols are in place to address privacy, access and 455 copyright. 456

5. Provide opportunities and access to training and employment for First Nations, Métis, Inuit, and non-status people: The key to empowering Indigenous people is to educate, train, and equip Indigenous professionals to be the "keepers" and custodians of their own traditional knowledge in its varied forms. Consequently, a process of decolonization takes place and the control and custody of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing are reclaimed by Indigenous people.

Several projects are underway within library and archives communities in 464 North America and around the world attempting to better incorporate In-465 digenous knowledge into traditional (i.e., Eurocentric) knowledge systems. 466 The NRCTR may wish to incorporate similar changes into the metadata of 467 the records in its holdings so that Indigenous users might efficiently create, 468 locate, and access Indigenous knowledge within the database. Another way 469 in which Indigenous users might become empowered as "keepers" of Indige-470 nous knowledge is through the NRCTR's inclusion of participatory archiving, 471 whereby the stories, comments, and content created by Indigenous com-472 munities could be given equal prominence to the content and descriptions 473 provided by church and state, and made a part of the permanent archive of 474 475 the NRCTR.

In the successful proposal to host the Centre submitted by the University of Manitoba and its partners, the authors state that the records created and accumulated by the TRC would form the center of "a unique participatory

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479 archive" that would utilize innovative digital technologies to "enable survivors, scholars and others to use the records to tell many stories: the story 480 481 of each residential school survivor, of families, of communities, of schools, of regions and of the country."¹⁹ This participatory archive would create a 482 "network of virtual communities of former residential school students, their 483 families and others from coast to coast" and allow users to "shape the archives 484 by adding descriptions, arrangements and commentary to the records."²⁰ The 485 records would also be made accessible to those individuals who rarely use 486 computers or who use outdated hardware/software, people with limited lit-487 eracy skills, and people for whom English is not a first language, including 488 those who speak Indigenous languages,²¹ in an effort to engage as broad 489 an audience as possible in the spirit of building trust and facilitating recon-490 491 ciliation. In its current state, the metadata utilized to describe the records of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as structured within the TRC 492 Database, present several challenges to realizing the vision of the NRCTR. 493

494 The current TRC Database does not include any participatory archiving elements, particularly the ability for users to add descriptions, arrangements 495 and commentary to the institutional descriptions provided to the TRC by 496 the Government of Canada, LAC, and the various church entities. The TRC 497 Database was specifically designed for the ingest of over four million records 498 in three years and robust public access tools were not primary considerations 499 or objectives of the TRC. However, over time, it is clear that the digital asset 500 501 management system that will host the records of the TRC at the NRCTR will need to incorporate these features in order to allow users to shape the 502 503 archive as expressed in the University of Manitoba and its partners' proposal. The Reciprocal Research Network and the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal are 504 two excellent models for the NRCTR to follow in establishing a participatory 505 archive that would build on the metadata provided to the TRC through 506 507 the addition of user-generated content in documenting these records from various perspectives and through numerous contextual lenses. 508

509 The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) is a joint project co-developed by the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lo Nation/Tribal Council, the U'mista 510 Cultural Society and the Museum of Anthropology. The RRN is "an online tool 511 to facilitate reciprocal and collaborative research about cultural heritage from 512 the Northwest Coast of British Columbia" by enabling "communities, cultural 513 institutions and researchers to work together."22 Participatory elements built 514 into the RRN include the ability for authenticated users to create and collab-515 orate on projects, upload user-generated content, and establish discussion 516 forums and social networks.²³ Mukurtu is open-source content management 517 software that is designed specifically for preserving cultural knowledge and 518 acting as a "catalyst for ongoing dialogue about sharing, making and repro-519 ducing cultural materials and knowledge."²⁴ It is designed specifically for use 520 by Indigenous communities. One such instance is employed by several tribes 521 in Washington State in the creation of the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal.²⁵ The 522

Plateau Peoples' Web Portal allows for tribes, scholars, and originating institutions to upload content, create collections, add metadata/tags/comments, map content, and add audio/video/textual narratives to the existing content.²⁶ Mukurtu project lead Kimberly Christen Withey notes that in this way, Mukurtu is "a powerful tool in reconstructing family and community histories disrupted by national policies of forced assimilation."²⁷

The NRCTR may wish to take cues from these projects when implement-529 ing participatory archive elements to its digital asset management system. 530 Users of the system will want to be able to add comments, tags, or descrip-531 tions (possibly as text, audio, or video) to digital objects, as long as they 532 are authenticated within the system and are not restricted from accessing 533 the records.²⁸ Users will likely also wish to create their own collections or 534 aggregations of NRCTR content, and add their own content and metadata to 535 these user-generated collections. It is also likely imperative that users have 536 the ability to interact with one another via commentary, discussion forums, 537 538 or other social networks to safely engage in moderated conversations about IRS experiences and reconciliation. 539

Survivors, Inter-Generational Survivors, Indigenous communities, re-540 541 searchers, the University of Manitoba and its partners, and other stakeholders would need to be engaged in conversation to determine how best to 542 incorporate participatory archiving into the system so that it meets the re-543 quirements of its user communities. The NRCTR will want to ensure that 544 545 the content and metadata generated by users are preserved and integrated into the official documentary record of the NRCTR in the creation of a "liv-546 547 ing archive," which would be continually updated and aggregated to reflect the dynamic nature of Indigenous knowledge. Camille Callison writes, "The 548 dynamic quality of Indigenous knowledge is such that it is sustained, trans-549 formed and continues to remain dynamic producing 'new' knowledge in 550 new mediums.... Indigenous Knowledge is constantly evolving in response 551 to a changing environment."29 Following the initial dialogues the NRCTR has 552 had with Survivors and Indigenous communities, two dominant messages 553 have been persistent-one, that the Residential School Survivor can never 554 be forgotten in any presentation of the records, and two, that the Centre 555 must be a place where culture and traditional practice lives. In so doing, 556 557 the Centre must ensure that the records are brought to life and that they are 558 appropriately interwoven with Indigenous cultures.

The NRCTR can also learn from the experience of the RRN in terms of 559 560 metadata normalization and accessibility issues it faces in striving to realize its vision. For example, the metadata that accompanies the digital objects 561 contributed by the RRN's institutional partners is exported from diverse col-562 lection management systems and imported into the RRN. Consequently, the 563 system had to include the ability to normalize the contributed metadata to a 564 common standard to allow for cross-collection search and browse function-565 ality. The RRN displays the original metadata provided by the contributing 566

institution and the normalized metadata in two separate tabs in order to in-dicate the normalization process and to demonstrate the authenticity of therecord.

The NRCTR faces a similar metadata normalization challenge. The 570 seven databases comprising the TRC Database utilize six different metadata 571 schemas.³⁰ Despite the common elements of many of these schemas, this 572 fact presents considerable challenges to the University of Manitoba and its 573 partners in achieving the goals articulated in their NRC proposal. Readying 574 this sizable collection for public consumption, given the present metadata 575 576 structures, will require an extensive amount of work. For instance, the proposal called for a broad audience being able to easily search and utilize 577 the NRCTR's records online. In order for the NRCTR to improve the dis-578 579 coverability of and accessibility to its records, a common metadata schema, perhaps the one employed to describe the church and LAC archival records, 580 may need to be selected and the existing metadata schemas may need to 581 be normalized to this standard through field-to-field metadata mapping and 582 Extensible Markup Language (XML) crosswalks and managed in a single 583 database. By providing evidence of this normalization process, perhaps as 584 the RRN did with dual tabs, users would be assured of the records' authentic-585 ity and would serve to instill trust. Normalization would enable the NRCTR, 586 like the RRN, to build on the current limited advanced search capabilities of 587 the system and implement a more robust, comprehensive advanced search 588 589 for complex research queries where every element is searchable across the entirety of the holdings. However, as the designers of the RRN have noted, it 590 is equally important to make the search functionality of the system as intuitive 591 as possible to the uninitiated user.³¹ In an RRN usability study, the feedback 592 provided indicated the desire for a central Google-like keyword search box, 593 which would produce a result set that could then be further refined through 594 easy to understand facets,³² namely "Who," "What," "When," and "Where."³³ 595 The TRC Database already features the former but the NRCTR may wish to 596 follow the RRN's example and implement an easily comprehensible faceted 597 search. This approach would lend itself to realizing the NRCTR's goal of 598 broad accessibility. 599

600 An additional metadata normalization challenge that must be faced by the NRCTR is the implementation of name authorities throughout the entire 601 system. The TRC has developed a standardized name authority for document 602 collection that was also circulated along with data input instructions to the 603 church entities responsible for contributing their own records to the TRC. 604 Unfortunately, given the multiple sources of information, many of the name 605 authorities are still inconsistent and will need to be edited and further nor-606 malized by NRCTR staff. The name authority standard has yet to be applied 607 to the metadata in the NRA or Active and Semi-Active Government Records 608 Databases. Also, as noted above, the Red, Black, and School Series records 609 are not described at an item level and do not make references to names 610

611 mentioned in the records. While duplicates of some of these records will 612 be described within the NRA Database given their usefulness in litigation, 613 more research would need to be done into this record set, as well as the 614 recorded statements within the Audio/Video Statement Database, to extract 615 names from these records in order to create a comprehensive name authority 616 list.

For all that a name authority might offer, however, the clear and explicit obligation of the Centre to protect personal identifying information is central. Consequently, the NRCTR must use an abundance of caution in making records containing personal information available to the public. The redaction of records and metadata is but one labor-intensive metadata normalization process that the NRCTR must face in the future.

623 The current TRC Database does not permit the user to browse records. If the NRCTR is to be as inclusive as possible, it may want to incorporate 624 browse functionality as many users prefer browsing to searching as a means 625 626 of access to digital records. Further normalizing the metadata of the TRC would allow the NRCTR to implement browsing. The NRCTR may wish to 627 follow the leads of the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal and Ara Irititja projects 628 629 in empowering Indigenous people to select categories, or arrangements of records, that make browsing as simple, efficient, and meaningful as possible 630 for Indigenous users. The Plateau Peoples' Web Portal allows tribal admin-631 istrators to select categories of importance to Indigenous people in addition 632 633 to the institutionally provided Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) in the classification of the records in the system.³⁴ Indigenous users can 634 then browse the records by topics of relevance to them as well as by tribal 635 affiliation.³⁵ The interface for the Ara Irititja Project, a community-based, 636 multimedia digital archive designed at the request of the Anangi-speaking 637 communities in Central Australia, classify the records in its holdings by me-638 dia format (photos, documents, movies, sounds, and objects).³⁶ Users can 639 browse the knowledge management system created for the project by format, 640 date, gallery albums, or by subjects of relevance to the Anangi-speaking peo-641 642 ple (called profiles), including people, events, mythology, flora, and fauna.³⁷ In both of these examples, Indigenous people were given the authority to 643 select classifications for the records that would aid them in discovering rel-644 645 evant content. The NRCTR may wish to follow suit by consulting its various user communities in selecting classifications for the records that are of value 646 to them (e.g., location, school, Indigenous community, originating archival 647 648 fonds, format) that could co-exist with more traditional forms of classification such as LCSH. Christen Withey astutely asserted that this multilayered 649 approach to metadata challenges the expert authority but does not displace 650 it.38 651

The NRCTR will also have to determine what languages to use in the presentation of the records' metadata. Currently, the only language used in the TRC Database descriptions is English, despite the fact that French appears in some of the records. The NRCTR may want to follow the lead of the Ara
Irititja Project, which uses Indigenous language, as well as English, in its
interface whenever possible.³⁹ By doing so, the NRCTR would demonstrate
its willingness to be as inclusive as possible in its attempts to reach all those
affected by Indian Residential Schools.

CONCLUSION

The archives of the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation 661 will be a rich source of Indigenous knowledge pertaining to one of the 662 darkest objectives of Canadian policy. Through the creation of a dynamic 663 "living archive," the NRCTR will assist the nation in overcoming the traumatic 664 loss of language, traditional childrearing practices, sense of identity, and 665 traditional communal value inflicted by the Indian Residential School legacy. 666 Beyond this, the archive presents Survivors who were raised away and apart 667 from their families to reconnect with some of the records of their past. 668 For instance, the NRCTR has heard numerous stories from Survivors of a 669 church archive containing the only known photograph of that person in his 670 671 or her youth. Getting these records back into the hands of Survivors and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis communities will be a powerful act of record 672 673 repatriation.

Although the NRCTR will face challenges in utilizing the metadata set 674 accumulated by the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada in its 675 statement gathering and document collection practices, implementing a di-676 verse approach to description can assist the NRCTR in realizing its vision of 677 a broadly accessible, participatory archive that tells many stories from many 678 perspectives. By working cooperatively and respectfully with Indigenous 679 680 people through the implementation of Indigenous knowledge best practices and the application of contrasting traditional/non-traditional, archival/user-681 generated, and institutional/Indigenous descriptive elements, the NRCTR can 682 facilitate Indigenous participation, collaboration, and ultimately, the process 683 of reconciliation. 684

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NOTES

686 1. The Alternative Dispute Resolution process was "a voluntary and confidential process designed 687 to be a timely, fair and safe way for claimants to resolve validated physical and sexual abuse claims ... 688 outside of the litigation process. ... The Alternative Dispute Resolution process involves an application process and private hearing before an independent adjudicator. The Adjudicator ... is responsible for set-689 690 ting compensation awards within an established compensation framework. The claimant has the option 691 to accept the award, appeal the decision or pursue litigation." Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, "In-692 dian Residential Schools Resolution Canada," http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2007-2008/inst/ira/ira02-693 eng.asp (accessed August 30, 2014). The process was criticized for treating Residential School Survivors 694 unfairly and with a complete disregard for compassion towards these victims of abuse.

695 2. Indian Residential Schools Settlement Agreement—Schedule "N"—Mandate for the Truth 696 and Reconciliation Commission (May 8, 2006), 10, http://www.residentialschoolsettlement.ca/SCHEDU-697 LE_N.pdf (accessed August 30, 2014).

698 3. "The term Sixties Scoop was coined by Patrick Johnson, author of the 1983 report Native 699 Children and the Child Welfare System. It refers to the mass removal of Aboriginal children from 700 their families into the child welfare system, in most cases without the consent of their families or 701 bands." Erin Hanson, "The Sixties Scoop & Aboriginal Child Welfare," indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca, 702 http://indigenousfoundations.arts.ubc.ca/home/government-policy/sixties-scoop.html (accessed August 703 30, 2014). 704

4. IRSSA, Schedule N, 2.

705 5. Ibid., 2. 706

6. See ibid., 10-11, for additional sections on document collection.

707 7. Bronson Consulting, Minisis Inc., THG: The History Group, and Breching, TRC Database 708 *Elements: Definitions and Descriptions*, 2013. The TRC Database is available to authenticated users only.

709 8. This issue came to the fore in the St Anne's Residential School litigation to which the TRC 710 was an intervener, where an omission of known cases of abuse was noted in the version of the school 711 narrative supplied to the TRC. The Government of Canada claimed this was an oversight in the process 712 and was ordered to produce a more accurate version of the document, along with the records of the 713 police investigations of that school, to the TRC.

714 9. The information contained in the statement gatherer's field notes was used to populate the 715 data in the Audio/Video Statement Database.

716 10. The Red and Black Series were named after the color of the letter books used by the Depart-717 ment of Indian Affairs to distinguish between eastern and western Canadian correspondence. Sean Darcy, 718 "The Red and Black Series," http://www.collectionscanada.gc.ca/aboriginal-heritage/020016-2004-e.html 719 (accessed August 21, 2014).

720 11. Library and Archives Canada, "Residential School Records Resources," http://www.bac-721 lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/resources-researchers/Pages/residential-schools-resource-722 sheets.aspx (accessed August 21, 2014).

723 12. The result sets for each database comprising the TRC Database differ in the metadata elements 724 presented to the user. The user is able to sort the result sets by the elements that each database makes 725 available.

726 13. The document TRC Database Elements: Definitions and Descriptions does not specifically 727 define Issues but one can determine that Issues are analogous to subject terms of importance to TRC 728 researchers in the completion of their reports. Individuals were asked to review records as they were 729 submitted to the TRC Archives and identify and record issues in the records' metadata. A few of the issues 730 that the TRC were most interested in being made evident in order to simplify the research process were 731 "Abuse," "Cemetery-Site/Location," "Death Child" (as well as the cause and date of the death), "Missing 732 Child,", and "Nutrition." For a complete list of Issue Codes, see TRC Database Elements: Definitions and 733 Descriptions, 26–27.

734 14. Marie Battiste, Indigenous Knowledge and Pedagogy in First Nations Education: A Literature 735 Review with Recommendations, prepared for the National Working Group on Education and the Minister 736 of Indian Affairs, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada (INAC), Ottawa: Apamuwek Institute (2002), 4.

737 15. James (Sákéj) Youngblood Henderson, "Ayukpachi: Empowering Aboriginal Thought, " in 738 Reclaiming Indigenous Voice and Vision, ed. Marie Battiste (Vancouver: UBC Press, 2000), 267.

739 16. Camille Callison, "Canada's New Canoe," in Aboriginal and Visible Minority Librarians: Oral 740 Histories from Canada, ed. Deborah Lee and Mahalakshmi Kumaran (Maryland: Roman and Littlefield, 741 2014), 144.

742 17. University of Manitoba, Proposal-National Research Centre on Indian Residential Schools, 743 February 16, 2012, 2.

744 18. Jenna Walsh, "Collaboration with Indigenous Peoples When Arranging and Describing Indige-745 nous Archival Material," unpublished paper written for ARST 515 class, Dr. H. MacNeil, University of 746 British Columbia, November 21, 2007.

747 19. University of Manitoba, Proposal, 3.

748 20. Ibid., 26.

749 21. Ibid., 40.

750 22. Reciprocal Research Network, "About," http://www.rrncommunity.org/pages/about#about_rrn 751 (accessed August 25, 2014).

752 23. Kate Hennessy, Ryan Wallace, Nicholas Jakobsen, and Charles Arnold, "Virtual Repatri-753 ation and the Application Programming Interface: From the Smithsonian Institution's MacFarlane 754 Collection to "Inuvialuit Living History," *Museums and the Web 2012*, http://www.museumsand-755 theweb.com/mw2012/papers/virtual_repatriation_and_the_application_progr.html (accessed August 25, 756 2014).

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24. Mukurtu, "Mission," http://www.mukurtu.org/#mission (accessed August 26, 2014).

758 25. "The Plateau Peoples' Web Portal is a collaboration between the Plateau Center for 759 American Indian Studies at Washington State University and tribal consultants from the Spokane, 760 Colville, Umatilla, Coeur d'Alene, Warm Springs, and Yakama nations. The Plateau Peoples' Web 761 Portal is a gateway to Plateau peoples' cultural materials held in Washington State University's Li-762 braries, Manuscripts, Archives and Special Collections (MASC), the Museum of Anthropology and national donors including the National Anthropological Archives and the National Museum of the 763 764 American Indian at the Smithsonian Institution." Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, "Project Overview," 765 http://plateauportal.wsulibs.wsu.edu/html/ppp/help.php?topic=1 (accessed August 26, 2014).

766 26. Kimberly Christen, "Opening Archives: Respectful Repatriation," *American Archivist* 74 767 (Spring/Summer 2011), 199.

768 27. Kimberly Christen, "Archival Challenges and Digital Solutions in Aboriginal Australia," *SAA* 769 *Archaeological Record* 8, no. 2 (2008), 23.

28. Data security and access protocols are of paramount importance to the NRCTR in the design of its digital asset management system owing to the extremely sensitive and private nature of the TRC records. Content restrictions embedded into the digital objects' metadata combined with user profiles featuring varying levels of permissions and a required authentication process will ensure that users will only be able to view, create, edit, delete, or use the content for which they have been cleared to access. 29. Callison, "Canada's New Canoe," 141.

30. The TRC was limited in how it could control the document collection process. The metadata that was collected or supplied by the originating archive was generated for multiple uses, ranging from the rapid submission of records to the TRC for research (i.e., Active and Semi-Active Government Records Database), to the frequent use of the records for litigation purposes (i.e., NRA Database), to the legislated submission of large volumes of records from archives, often lacking item-level metadata. The multiple purposes for which the records were accumulated are itself a record of the overall Settlement Agreement process.

31. Lee Iverson, Susan Rowley, Leona Sparrow, Dave Schaepe, Andrea Sanborn, Ryan Wallace,
Nicolas Jakobsen, and Ulrike Radermacher, "The Reciprocal Research Network," *Museums and the Web*2008, http://www.museumsandtheweb.com/mw2008/papers/iverson/iverson.html (accessed August 26,
2014).

32. Susan Rowley, Dave Schaepe, Leona Sparrow, Andrea Sanborn, Ulrike Radermacher, Ryan
Wallace, Nicholas Jakobsen, Hannah Turner, Sivia Sadofsky, and Tristan Goffman, "Building an
On-Line Research Community: The Reciprocal Research Network," *Museums and the Web 2010*,
http://www.archimuse.com/mw2010/papers/rowley/rowley.html (accessed August 26, 2014).

- 33. Iverson et al., "Reciprocal Research Network."
- 792 34. Christen, "Opening Archives," 200.

793 35. Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, "Browse," http://plateauportal.wsulibs.wsu.edu/html/ppp/brow-794 se.php (accessed August 26, 2014).

36. Ara Irititja Project, "The Ara Irititja Approach," http://www.irititja.com/the_archive/index.html
(accessed August 26, 2014).

- 797 37. Ara Irititja Project, *Ara Irititja Project—Software Brochure*, 2, http://www.irititja.com/resources/
 798 Ara%20Irititja%20Brochure%20Sept%202011-print.pdf (accessed August 26, 2014).
- 799 38. Christen, "Opening Archives," 198.
- 800 39. Ara Irititja Project, "The Software History," http://www.irititja.com/the_archive/the_software. 801 html (accessed August 26, 2014).