

It Takes Two to Tangle

Discovering the universe next door

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At some point in 2018 the newly formed Heritage and Research team of seven, surfaced from a meeting room, brains labouring like beached tohorā. Tauranga City Libraries had 18 months to launch what would become Pae Korokī, our online heritage platform. But we were stuck. Copyright, access, Creative Commons (CC) and kaitiakitanga tangled into a stubborn knot behind our eyes.

"We're using old western tools that don't quite cut it for Aotearoa. And I'm worried we're starting to use words like kaitiakitanga to smuggle in even more Pākehā ideas."

I was talking to Elisha Rolleston, our Matanga Taonga Tuku Iho Māori. He nodded slowly at the Pākehā before him, looked at the ceiling and sighed.

"Yep, yep... these meetings go round and round in circles. Can you map that out then, on a piece of paper, how you see all those tools fitting together, so we can see what's missing."

And so began a collaboration over many months, as we each worked to understand the 'universe next door' and the implications that would have on our practices.

We created four things. The first was a visual framework which gave us a way to look at information access with both a Pākehā lens and, to some degree, a Māori lens. With these two lenses, we were able to develop additional tools and practices more aligned to a Māori perspective. We called this our "Kaitiakitanga Framework". The second thing we developed was the "Waka Hourua Model", which presented the worldview and values foundational to the framework and toolset, framing these as a migratory waka. The third was a more detailed case study, requested by staff at the National Library of New Zealand after presenting to them online. The fourth was a 15-minute presentation, "Whoops, I think we're racist", delivered, among other places, at the 2022 National Digital Forum and indicative of how we have presented across a handful of places, locally and online.



Figure 1. Kaitiakitanga Framework. Source: Tauranga City Libraries, Waka Hourua, a model, p 22

In this article I want to briefly introduce the framework, describe the tools developed with some insight into the thinking behind them, and finish with the model that resulted.

The framework, Figure 1, recognises that copyright, licensing, and notions of the public domain, are tools in service of intellectual property and a creator's right to control and profit from their intellectual work. These are arranged on the left-hand side vertically by degrees of openness, anchored by the phrase "it's mine, I made it". Other tools such as an institution's risk posture toward orphaned works, and its access policy regarding practices such as charging for services, also sit here. This left-hand side, the status quo, represents the approaches developed largely from within Te Ao Pākehā. On the right and in contrast, the anchoring phrase "It's ours, we connect to it" is more emblematic of a Māori lens. The tools we developed in service of this orientation are as follows.

A kaitiakitanga statement

This was the first tool we developed and represents our awareness that in Aotearoa, the legal minimums encoded into copyright and privacy law, are too low a bar. This statement below is applied specifically when the item is clearly something of interest to or emerging from Te Ao Māori.

“Please use taonga Māori materials provided by Te Ao Mārama - Tauranga City Libraries appropriately. Ensure to respect and be mindful of the creator/s, and the mana and dignity of personnel, iwi group/s, and environmental subjects within the material used.”

And for more general material:

“We ask that, in addition to normal copyright and privacy considerations, users of our heritage resources uphold the mana and dignity of the people, communities and places depicted within.”

Behind these statements is the recognition that mana, mauri and tapu are guiding principles within Te Ao Māori. Our case study elaborates on these principles.

Whakapapa fields

During the establishment and implementation of Pae Korokī, archivist Abby Wharne joined us from the United Kingdom and was instrumental in setting up the metadata templates underneath the site along ISAD(G) lines.¹ It's by the metadata within these templates that items are described, organised, and made discoverable online. Organisation and discovery are of course also important to our treaty partners, tangata whenua, and we recognised that whakapapa plays a crucial role in this regard. Elisha explains that as “a guiding principle for Māori, whakapapa describes the connection to all things whether physical or spiritual”, indeed the “connection and relationship between all celestial and terrestrial things”.² He developed a group of fields common to pepeha, drawing inspiration from the National Library Iwi Archives register developed by Katrina Tamaira, which itself was built on work by Julie Black of Archives New Zealand.³ We inserted these fields amongst the ISAD(G) fields and elected to consider them core metadata. At the same time, we protected them from overuse by limiting the responsibility for this data to one job description, the Mātanga Taonga Tuku Iho Māori, or Heritage Specialist (Māori).

This was a delicate conversation.

Many Pākehā are familiar with pepeha. I myself have used pepeha as part of Te Reo Māori evening classes and occasionally Pākehā will introduce themselves in group settings using pepeha. However, Elisha and I were not entirely comfortable opening up the whakapapa fields on Pae Korokī for Pākehā to create metadata. The whakapapa fields are intended for Mātauranga Māori (Māori knowledge), to the benefit of Māori. When I reflect on my personal background, none of my ancestors are Māori. I grew up in Kirikiriroa Hamilton and lived for a time right on the Waikato

River. I can love this river, swim, and fish from it, write poetry about it, tell stories about it, get married beside it and even describe a spiritual connection to it, but I don't actually whakapapa back to it. To assert that I do, outside of a language learning context, begins in my opinion, to stray into cultural appropriation.

Our decision was also pragmatic. Should our whakapapa fields be heavily used by Pākehā, that metadata would begin to swamp the useful linked data within Pae Korokī – creating too many false positives. Examples of these fields are in the Brad Burch collection “Āku Taumata Kōrero 1989 Book” on Pae Korokī.⁴

Memorandum of understanding

In reviewing our donation forms it became apparent that by and large, for Tauranga City Libraries to invest time and effort into looking after collections, a transfer of ownership needed to have taken place. Such donations had for a long time been made via a simple donation form and receipt book. If we used the term deposit it was most likely understood as a synonym for donation, despite on occasion keeping material on behalf of other organisations.

Upon looking from a more bi-cultural lens, we realised the mana of ownership, and the institutional role in caring for an item, need not be one and the same. In fact, assuming the permanent perpetual and exclusive transfer of ownership has historically been traumatising for Tangata Whenua. How then might we receive content from Te Ao Māori that doesn't replicate, at smaller scale, the very injuries our national history is rife with? Elisha worked with the Tauranga City Council legal team to develop a Memorandum of Understanding (MOU) that would address this.

This MOU is in his words:

“... built on the concept of “takoha”. Tangata whenua might consider “takoha” as an appropriate concept to reflect the entrustment of something. This MOU recognises that though the care and protection might at a point be passed to the Heritage and Research Team for a time, the donor’s rangatiratanga has not been diminished by this deposit or entrustment.”⁵

At this point, our team had some animated debates around whether this MOU should be the norm, or at least available to Pākehā as well. Some of the debate centred around individual positions with some staff considering that they too would like to deposit with TCL (retaining ownership) rather

than donate. Other positions considered the operational practicalities of numerous MOUs for relatively small offerings. Perhaps the most difficult conversations revolved around individual Pākehā claiming they had a Māori worldview when it came to such matters. In the end, we developed a second MOU option that was more standard, English language based and catering for anyone in the community to deposit collections with us for care and access management, while retaining personal ownership. An example MOU – Taonga Māori – can be viewed in Appendix A of our case study on Pae Korokī.⁶

Cultural/Ethical Status

This was one of the most difficult tools to develop and one that underwent several modifications. “Tapu”, like “Kaitiaki”, is a word most Pākehā have heard before and as such featured early in conversations between Elisha and myself. Our initial thoughts were to consider our digital preservation master as tapu, and our access version as noa, but this was eventually abandoned, being mostly an internal matter. At the same time, Abby and I were developing the family of templates that would sit under Pae Korokī with, as mentioned earlier, ISAD(G) gradually taking shape under her direction. As our templates became closer to their current state, we started to think in terms of “Access Status” represented as Tapu and Noa. The three of us wrestled for some time over whether Access Status would be informed by legal matters, material /physical condition, and cultural and/or ethical considerations? Perhaps instead of Access Status, it was Cultural Status? Or Ethical Status? And what about occasions when the access was not entirely closed or open but partially or for a certain period of time? These conversations took place over several months and settled after Abby asked Elisha about other concepts linked to Tapu and Noa and connected to how Māori understand access. Our field became “Cultural/Ethical Status” and rather than two options, we developed four. These states could be understood as similar in function to the open/closed scale, though the states of Rāhui and Aukati are more akin to different applications rather than degrees of openness.

Elisha⁷ summarises these states as:

- Tapu, to be sacred, prohibited, restricted, set apart, forbidden
- Rāhui, a temporary prohibition/ restriction/ ban. A protocol to separate people from tapu things for a set period.
- Aukati, a partial restriction
- Noa, to be free from the extensions of tapu, unrestricted, unprohibited

criteria for assigning a state are further detailed in the case study. Any status other than Noa, is implemented using whatever site capabilities are deemed appropriate, including redaction, offline status, download limitations, statements and requests within the restrictions field and so on.

The framework enabled us to address intellectual property obligations for material originating from, and of interest to, both Pākehā and Māori. At the same time, the framework gave birth to the tools to address additional needs for Māori, such as a desire to deposit material, or discover material via whakapapa as well as have the cultural/ethical/spiritual state of something expressed clearly in terms of aspects of tapu.

The Waka Hourua model

While the framework is quite practical in orientation, the Waka Hourua Model (Figure 2) roots the behaviours and practices to the very values and principles underneath them. Each hull of the waka hourua is a world, or universe, one Te Ao Pākehā, the other Te Ao Māori. The anchoring phrases emblematic of each world are assigned to each hull, which float upon Te Tiriti and are bound together by the treaty values.

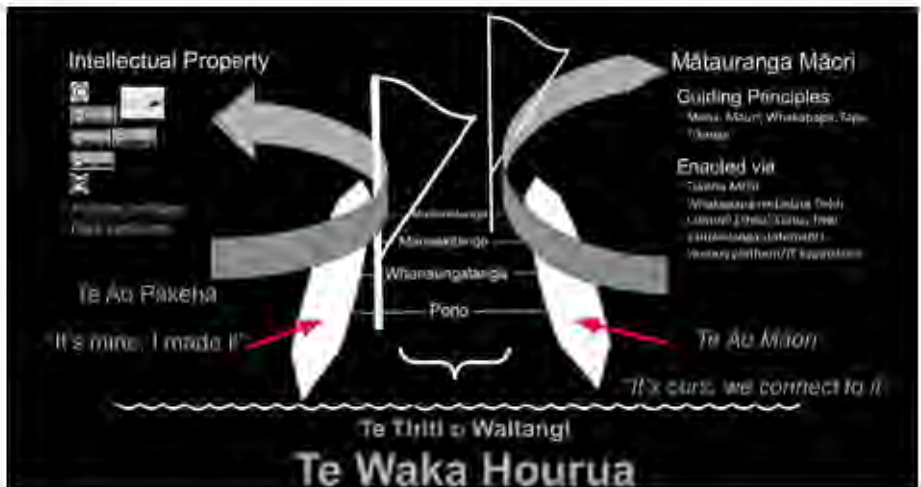


Figure 2. Te Waka Hourua. Source: Tauranga City Libraries, Waka Hourua, a model, p 22

Each sail is trimmed and set according to the conditions necessary and represents the tools that spring out of each world. As such the model could be adapted to other sectors reflecting other partnership approaches between Pākehā and Māori and expressing the tools recognised and developed within those contexts.

To access the case study and view the 15 minutes presentation, please visit Pae Korokī, Tauranga Archives online. The link is under “more”, then “The Waka Hourua Model”. As a memory institution, we want to continue to improve as treaty partners and we hope other institutions will take up and build on what we have begun as well. As such, the Waka Hourua Model, framework case study and presentation are all licensed under a CC BY 4.0 license. Please feel free to contact the Heritage and Research Team⁸ if you have questions or suggestions.

Endnotes

1. 1 International Council of Archives. ISAD(G): General International Standard Archival Description - Second edition. ICA: International Council of Archives. [Online] 2020.
2. 2 Rolleston, Elisha and Couper, Harley. Te Waka Hourua. Pae Korokī, Tauranga archives online. [Online] 2021. P. 7. Retrieved 5 June 2022 from <https://paekoroki.tauranga.govt.nz/nodes/view/53930>
3. 3 Tamaira, Katrina. Ngāti Porou Iwi Archives workshop (Gisborne). 2019.
4. 4 Birch, Brad. Āku Taumata Kōrero 1989 Book (photograph collection). Pae Korokī. [Online] 1989.
5. Retrieved 2022 from <https://paekoroki.tauranga.govt.nz/nodes/view/44040>
6. 5 Rolleston, Elisha and Couper, Harley, p 11.
7. 7 Ibid, p 12.
8. 8 Email the Heritage and Research Team – research@tauranga.govt.nz