Digital and data sovereignty – Guest Editorial

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Welcome to this, the first Special Issue of Te Mauri Pimatisiwin for 2019, embracing the theme of Digital and Data Sovereignty. The term "data sovereignty" has emerged only relatively recently as a means of describing issues that have been of concern for Indigenous peoples for decades, if not hundreds of years. Kukutai and Taylor, in their seminal 2016 text explain that data sovereignty has been "linked with indigenous peoples' right to maintain, control, protect and develop their cultural heritage, traditional knowledge and traditional cultural expressions, as well as their right to maintain, control, protect and develop their intellectual property over these" (Kukutai and Taylor, 2016, p.xxii). Kukutai continues this as a guest commentator for this special issue.

Five papers are included in this edition which canvas the notion of data sovereignty. Gifford and Mikaere present the results of a Kaupapa Māori research project which sought to identify and address the *iwi* (tribal) data needs of a collective of five iwi in the central North Island of New Zealand. The paper describes the conceptualisation and implementation of an "iwi information framework", *Te Kete Tū Ātea*, which is now being used by iwi leaders to guide

decision-making concluding that increasingly our tribal leaders will demand more robust, and more relevant data upon which to make informed decisions for the future of our people.

The issue of data relevance and applicability is echoed in the next paper, that of Theodore et al. In their paper Theodore et al. outline the utility of a "lifecourse approach" to research, arguing that not only is such research consistent with Māori worldviews but that it provides a sound basis for understanding how the different stages of life a person experiences influences their overall health and wellbeing. The authors highlight the benefits and challenges associated particularly with using longitudinal studies and administrative data and note that lifecourse data is being used by governments as a tool to inform policy and social investment which directly impacts the lives of Indigenous people. Thus, in the New Zealand context, they conclude that more work is needed to both support Māori-led lifecourse research and build Māori capacity in this field.

Johnson-Jennings, Jennings, and Little state rapidly expanding digital ecosystem has placed Indigenous data sovereignty (IDS) in high relief. The context of what, how, when, why, and by whom data is collected and controlled determines social narratives. Colonised data and data over which Indigenous people have sovereignty can produce vastly different results in decision-making, policy development, outcome assessment, and accountability. The authors,

while at the Research for Indigenous Community Health (RICH) center, recognised that while health information is available, it is currently dispersed, disconnected, and difficult to access. Thus, the development of an online Food Wisdom Repository, with support from the Shakopee Mdewakanton Sioux Community (SMSC) is proposed, to provide an abundance of meaningful data, resources, and information sharing opportunities emerging from Indigenous health efforts. The authors proposed the development of an online digital repository of wise food practices that is grounded within Indigenous knowledges and Indigenous data sovereignty.

Two other papers in this edition amply demonstrate Indigenous capability in the collection, analysis, and use of Indigenous owned data. The paper by Paul, Jones, and Jakobi is a compelling summary of research undertaken to understand the contribution to physical literacy of physical activity; specifically, the traditional activity of deer hunting. Physical literacy, comprising motivation, confidence, physical competence, knowledge, and the understanding to value and then engage with physical activity can be used as a springboard to increase an individual's physical activity over time. The study described in this paper sought to provide "proof of concept" and demonstrates that the traditional activity of hunting is indeed an "innovative paradigm" in which to explore improving physical literacy among Indigenous youth.

The final paper by Dallas-Katoa, Varona, Kipa, Dallas, and Leahy is about a *Te Waipounamu* (South Island) study focussed on the collection of both quantitative and qualitative data on Māori suicide. The evidence gained supported the value of a *whānau-focused* (Family focused) approach to suicide prevention and improving mental wellbeing more generally.

Diverse in scope and topic, these papers canvas the notion of data sovereignty in all its myriad forms – from how Indigenous peoples are taking control of generating their own data; to canvassing what data and information is important and why; to reporting on data can be used to improve the health and wellbeing of Indigenous peoples. I hope you enjoy this small taste of the breadth of Indigenous scholarship in the field of Digital and Data Sovereignty.

Ngā manaakitanga

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