

Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Gindaaso-gamik



**Saginaw Chippewa
Tribal Libraries**

**National Leadership Grant:
Decolonizing Libraries to
Foster Community Well-being**



How can tribal libraries use
traditional ways of knowing
and being to break free of
the colonialist library
organizational systems that
reinforce a damaging
worldview?

Brian Deer Classification System

Gilman, I. (2006). From marginalization to accessibility: Classification of indigenous materials. Faculty Scholarship at Pacific University Libraries <http://commons.pacificu.edu/libfac/6>
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Deer_Classification_System
<https://xwi7xwa.library.ubc.ca/collections/indigenous-knowledge-organization/>

Maori Subject Heading Project

Duarte, M. E., & Belarde-Lewis, M. (2015). Imagining: Creating spaces for indigenous ontologies. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 53(5-6), 677-702.
<https://natlib.govt.nz/nga-upoko-tukutuku>

Mashantucket Pequot Thesaurus of American Indian Terminology Project

Littletree, S., & Metoyer, C. A. (2015). Knowledge Organization from an Indigenous Perspective: The Mashantucket Pequot Thesaurus of American Indian Terminology Project. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 53(5-6), 640-657.
<http://www.pequotmuseum.org>

University of Alberta Libraries

Laroque, S., Carr-Wiggin, A., Bigelow, I., Koufogiannakis, D., Farnel, S., Lar-Son, K., & Feisst, D. (2017). Decolonizing Description: Changing Metadata in Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission.
Thomas, T. & Farnel, S. (2019). Email and phone correspondence.

The following assumptions have informed and shaped the project design:

- Existing industry standard systems including DDC, LCC, and LCSH are inherently damaging to Indigenous people through their treatment as historicized, othered, and from a settler colonialist viewpoint which undermines the sovereignty of Native nations;
- These systems are also insufficient for accurately describing and providing access to Native topics;
- It must be up to Native communities to determine what system of organization most closely embodies their ways of knowing and being;
- Incorporating Anishinaabemowin into the new system is critical because the language is inseparable from the culture;
- Because of the trauma created by colonialism, both in the past and the present, decolonizing projects must be undertaken carefully, with a mindful approach to power structures, and with Indigenous direction;
- Local partnerships have value and there is an opportunity to contribute to ongoing efforts to improve LCSH, so the project will maintain use of the Library Solution automation system using MARC records in the IC More Shared Catalog;
- All libraries should interrogate their processes and take necessary measures to ensure that all people are welcome, including and especially those who are and have been marginalized by library systems and society at large;
- In order for a larger, industry-wide change to come about, smaller-scale projects must come first, and those projects must be shared widely;
- This project is a starting point for the Tribal Libraries and will likely evolve as time passes. We recognize that we cannot create a perfect system, so we will strive to do the best we can and provide the best example we can for other libraries.



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- 1) Assess the cataloging and classification systems currently in place through a decolonizing lens,
- 2) Create a system of organization for cataloging and classifying library materials according to Anishinaabe ways of knowing and being,
- 3) Implement this system to decolonize and indigenize the Tribal Libraries collections, and
- 4) Analyze results and share documentation that outlines how this project was conducted, providing a framework that other libraries could use as a template for decolonizing the knowledge organization of their collections.

Miigwetch!

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