Routledge
Taylor & Francis Group

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

BRETT LOUGHEED

Archives and Records Centre, University of Winnipeg, Winnipeg, Canada

RY MORAN

National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation, University of Manitoba, Winnipeg, Canada

CAMILLE CALLISON

University of Manitoba Libraries, Winnipeg, Canada

This article will discuss the history and context surrounding the document collection and statement gathering mandates of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada and the challenges the newly established National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation will face in applying the Commission's metadata set in the realization of its vision. By working respectfully with Indigenous people through the implementation of Indigenous knowledge best practices and the application of contrasting traditional/non-traditional, archival/user-generated, and institutional/Indigenous descriptive elements, the Centre will attempt to create a "living archive" and facilitate Indigenous participation, collaboration, and ultimately, the process of reconciliation.

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

26   INTRODUCTION

27   For over one hundred and fifty years, Canada's landscape was dotted with
28   Residential Schools. Indigenous children were forcibly removed from their
29   homes to attend these schools, which were administered by the Canadian
30   government and various church entities in the goal of assimilating Indigenous
31   language, identity, and traditional culture, customs, and values. Some of these
32   schools provided children with education, while others provided exposure
33   to fatal diseases, such as tuberculosis, or traumatic emotional, physical, and
34   even sexual abuse. Others provided makeshift accommodations comprised
35   of tents, cots, and a lack of running water. All constituted a direct and
36   concerted attack on Indigenous cultures, identities, and families.
37   These schools and residential institutions represent one of the darkest
38   and most shameful undertakings in Canadian history. The societal effects of
39   Residential Schools continue to play out on a daily basis within and amongst
40   Métis, Inuit, and First Nations communities across the country. Over the
41   course of the past five years, the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of
42   Canada (TRC) has toured from coast to coast to coast in an effort to collect
43   the oral and documentary history of these schools. Key within this process is
44   providing Residential School Survivors the opportunity to be heard—for their
45   voice to be respected—and for the challenges they faced before, during, and
46   after attending a school to be acknowledged.
47   Over the course of its mandate, the TRC successfully acquired and de-
48   scribed millions of digital records from across Canada from a variety of
49   sources including government agencies and church-run archives. To do so,
50   the TRC relied on contractors hired by the TRC and the production of records
51   from entities themselves. This varied collection methodology—one driven
52   primarily by budget—means that the data set collected by the TRC was de-
53   rived from multiple sources, often with multiple configurations of metadata or
54   description. In being the agency responsible for the preservation and access
55   to these materials, the National Research Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
56   (NRCTR) will face challenges in optimizing the metadata used to describe
57   the TRC's records in realizing its vision as expressed by the University of
58   Manitoba and its partners in their bid document. By utilizing technologi-
59   cal advances and incorporating Indigenous perspectives on description, the
60   NRCTR will attempt to overcome these challenges to normalize and augment
61   the existing descriptions to create a "living archive" that facilitates Indigenous
62   participation, collaboration, and ultimately, the process of reconciliation.

63   THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION OF CANADA

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

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.

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

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

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:

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

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 expe-
   rience 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 or
   start their statement at any point in time.
d. The well-being of the statement provider was paramount throughout the
   process and the goal was to provide as safe and supportive an atmosphere
   and experience as was possible throughout the process.
e. Anyone, including former staff, Day School Survivors, victims of the "Six-
   ties 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
share a statement with the TRC as much choice and latitude in the process
as possible. As a result, statement providers could offer both public and/or
private statements, which could be given both individually or as part of
a group in their language of choice. Those individuals who gave private
statements were also provided with the additional choice between having
their statement digitally recorded on audio or video, written down, or not
recorded at all. Those individuals who gave statements in a public setting
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
Committee member, or other respected person.

DOCUMENT COLLECTION

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

Despite the challenges facing the Commission, a number of core princi-
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 any
   limitation of collection to documents where "residential schools" simply

146   appeared in the title or naming of the file would fall far short of a full and
147   complete history.
148 b. That a wide variety of government departments were involved in the
149   residential school system including the Department of Defence, Health
150   Canada, Aboriginal Affairs, Agriculture, the RCMP, the Department of Jus-
151   tice, and Privy Council Office to name a small selection.
152 c. That all media types were in scope, which includes, but is not limited to,
153   video, film, audio, photographs, glass plate negatives, maps, and e-mail.
154 d. That all record types were in scope including, but not limited to, person-
155   nel files, correspondence, memos, official reports, minutes, and health
156   records.
157 e. There were very few reasons for excluding records from production.
158   The acceptable reasons were very narrow and focused primarily on
159   solicitor–client privilege and some provisions pertaining specifically to
160   police investigation files (i.e., method, confidential informants, young of-
161   fenders, 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.

166 To accomplish these goals, in 2011, the TRC awarded a contract to a con-
167 sortium of firms to provide services in the areas of project management,
168 database hosting and software provision, historical research/records review,
169 screening and metadata tagging, and digitization. The initial ambition of the
170 TRC was for this team to conduct the vast majority of the document col-
171 lection from the church entities while the federal government undertook
172 production responsibilities from its own departments and from Library and
173 Archives Canada (LAC). However, these ambitions were soon presented with
174 challenges.
175   Upon starting the document collection process in a number of the
176 church archives, the TRC quickly realized that the volume of records to
177 be identified and scanned surpassed expectations, resulting in unsustainable
178 costs given the TRC's limited budget. At the same time, the Government of
179 Canada was also experiencing its own challenges funding and initiating the
180 flow of documents from its own archives. By 2012, the document collec-
181 tion processes, with the exception of government collection of active and
182 semi-active records from government departments, had largely ground to a
183 halt while all parties assessed what their legal obligations were under the
184 Settlement Agreement. For the federal government, the difficulties of pro-
185 ducing the records from LAC resulted in a court challenge by the TRC, while
186 for the churches, requests made by the TRC resulted in some entities tak-
187 ing on the challenge of identifying, scanning, and producing the records of
188 their archives while others stalled production. By late 2012, all parties were

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

THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION DATABASE METADATA SCHEMAS

196 The digital records and accompanying metadata created and accumulated by
197 the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada are stored within seven
198 separate databases that comprise the encompassing "TRC Database."[7] The
199 seven component databases are the IRS [Indian Residential Schools] School
200 Authority Database; Audio/Video Statement Database; National Research and
201 Analysis (NRA) Database; Church Archival Records Database; Red, Black,
202 and School Series Database; Active and Semi-Active Government Records
203 Database; and Library and Archives Canada Archival Records. Each of these
204 databases is described in more detail below.
205   The IRS School Authority Database includes information about every
206 Residential School documented in the records created or accumulated by the
207 TRC. The authority records contained in the IRS School Authority Database
208 attempt to track titular or geographical changes via the school name vari-
209 ation field and the opening and closing dates of those variations, as well
210 as by listing all predecessor and successor institutions with a more detailed
211 history attached as a Portable Document Format (PDF) file. These "school
212 narratives," originally written to support the federal government's research,
213 CEP claims, and IAP work, were supplied to the TRC by the government.
214 The narratives were to form the government's basis of understanding of
215 Residential Schools and include information on a variety of issues including
216 known instances of abuse, identifying information (i.e., opening and closing
217 dates), and references to the records created or obtained by the TRC in the
218 creation of the narratives. Multiple versions of these narratives were submit-
219 ted to the TRC due to the ever-evolving understanding of events at each of
220 the schools.[8]
221   The content populating the Audio/Video Statement Database consists of
222 the testimonies provided by IRS Survivors, their families (Inter-Generational
223 Survivors), former staff, and other individuals with affiliations to Residential
224 Schools about their school experiences and the long-lasting impacts on their
225 daily lives and on the lives of those close to them. These statements were
226 recorded and segments comprising the entire recording are made accessi-
227 ble to the database user. The metadata elements utilized to describe these
228 statements are divided into three distinct categories: information pertaining

229 to the statement (including whether the statement was public or private),
230 information pertaining to the statement giver (including his or her affiliation
231 with a particular school(s)), and notes about the statement provided by the
232 statement gatherer. In addition, a full transcript of the recording, and the
233 ability for the user to download the full transcript or the statement gatherer's
234 field notes[9] as PDFs, is available on the site.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

331   ## THE TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION COMMISSION DATABASE
332   SEARCH/BROWSE FUNCTIONALITY

333 Approved users with valid security certificates who are granted access to the
334 web interface of the TRC Database through the graphical user interface have
335 limited options to browse the records and their metadata, although more
336 advanced search options exist via the desktop client, which is primarily used
337 for data input. Upon authentication to the system, the only access mecha-
338 nism available to users is the ability to search across these seven separate
339 databases, either by keyword or in an advanced search. Searches conducted
340 scan a pre-selected number of fields in each database in an attempt to ratio-
341 nalize searches across the multiple datasets.
342   For the keyword search, users have the option of selecting whether
343 they would like the search to include all of their chosen keywords, any of
344 the keywords, or an exact phrase. The user is presented with search result
345 sets listing the number of records containing the search term within their
346 metadata for each individual database. The user selects the result set for a
347 particular database and is presented with a listing of the relevant records,
348 which includes a few descriptive metadata elements for each record.[12] The
349 user can then view a record and its associated metadata by clicking on the
350 highlighted value in the search result set.
351   An Advanced Search option is presently available only for the records in
352 the Church Archival Records Database and the Library and Archives Canada
353 Archival Records database as these are the only two databases employing the
354 same metadata schema. As a result, users can select limits on their searches
355 across these two databases resulting in more refined search result sets.

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

THE CREATION OF THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

369 By 2012, it was becoming clear that the million-plus records and three thou-
370 sand statements collected by the TRC would require an appropriate long-term
371 home. As per Schedule N, the Commission undertook a process to estab-
372 lish the National Research Centre, which included, among other things, a
373 national conference, followed by a national and public call for proposals,
374 lastly followed by an extensive review process by the TRC of the proposals
375 received.
376   On June 21, 2013, the University of Manitoba, in conjunction with its
377 partners, was officially named the host of the NRCTR. For the university,
378 this was the culmination of many years of hard work, which included par-
379 ticipation in the TRC's first National Event in Winnipeg, the hosting of a
380 Statement Gathering program, a historic apology by the president, followed
381 by an extensive consultation and bid-writing process.

DESCRIPTIVE CHALLENGES FACING THE NATIONAL RESEARCH CENTRE FOR TRUTH AND RECONCILIATION

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

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

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

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

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.
440   4. *Respect the First Nations, Métis and Inuit cultural concept of copyright*
441   *with regard to Aboriginal history or heritage, which is often located in*
442   *but not limited to oral traditions, songs, dance, storytelling, anecdotes,*
443   *place names, hereditary names, and other forms of indigenous knowl-*
444   *edges:* Archives play a crucial role in collecting and preserving oral tradi-
445   tions, but there are many sensitive issues involved. Oral histories belong
446   to Nations, bands, families, and individuals and as they were transferred
447   to material manifestations, many copyright and intellectual property issues
448   have developed. Archival and preservation programs that work with oral
449   history collections must incorporate different levels of access for differ-
450   ent user groups and members of the community. In an effort to facilitate
451   education, research and information sharing while maintaining cultural
452   continuity, the NRCTR has gathered together a team of experts and In-
453   digenous Elders to address privacy, access, and copyright concerns and
454   develop an Access Policy. Dialogue has already taken place and will con-
455   tinue until these protocols are in place to address privacy, access and
456   copyright.
457   5. *Provide opportunities and access to training and employment for First Na-*
458   *tions, Métis, Inuit, and non-status people:* The key to empowering Indige-
459   nous people is to educate, train, and equip Indigenous professionals to
460   be the "keepers" and custodians of their own traditional knowledge in its
461   varied forms. Consequently, a process of decolonization takes place and
462   the control and custody of Indigenous knowledges and ways of knowing
463   are reclaimed by Indigenous people.

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

479 archive" that would utilize innovative digital technologies to "enable sur-
480 vivors, scholars and others to use the records to tell many stories: the story
481 of each residential school survivor, of families, of communities, of schools,
482 of regions and of the country."[19] This participatory archive would create a
483 "network of virtual communities of former residential school students, their
484 families and others from coast to coast" and allow users to "shape the archives
485 by adding descriptions, arrangements and commentary to the records."[20] The
486 records would also be made accessible to those individuals who rarely use
487 computers or who use outdated hardware/software, people with limited lit-
488 eracy skills, and people for whom English is not a first language, including
489 those who speak Indigenous languages,[21] in an effort to engage as broad
490 an audience as possible in the spirit of building trust and facilitating recon-
491 ciliation. In its current state, the metadata utilized to describe the records
492 of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission, as structured within the TRC
493 Database, present several challenges to realizing the vision of the NRCTR.
494   The current TRC Database does not include any participatory archiving
495 elements, particularly the ability for users to add descriptions, arrangements
496 and commentary to the institutional descriptions provided to the TRC by
497 the Government of Canada, LAC, and the various church entities. The TRC
498 Database was specifically designed for the ingest of over four million records
499 in three years and robust public access tools were not primary considerations
500 or objectives of the TRC. However, over time, it is clear that the digital asset
501 management system that will host the records of the TRC at the NRCTR
502 will need to incorporate these features in order to allow users to shape the
503 archive as expressed in the University of Manitoba and its partners' proposal.
504 The Reciprocal Research Network and the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal are
505 two excellent models for the NRCTR to follow in establishing a participatory
506 archive that would build on the metadata provided to the TRC through
507 the addition of user-generated content in documenting these records from
508 various perspectives and through numerous contextual lenses.
509   The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN) is a joint project co-developed
510 by the Musqueam Indian Band, the Stó:lō Nation/Tribal Council, the U'mista
511 Cultural Society and the Museum of Anthropology. The RRN is "an online tool
512 to facilitate reciprocal and collaborative research about cultural heritage from
513 the Northwest Coast of British Columbia" by enabling "communities, cultural
514 institutions and researchers to work together."[22] Participatory elements built
515 into the RRN include the ability for authenticated users to create and collab-
516 orate on projects, upload user-generated content, and establish discussion
517 forums and social networks.[23] Mukurtu is open-source content management
518 software that is designed specifically for preserving cultural knowledge and
519 acting as a "catalyst for ongoing dialogue about sharing, making and repro-
520 ducing cultural materials and knowledge."[24] It is designed specifically for use
521 by Indigenous communities. One such instance is employed by several tribes
522 in Washington State in the creation of the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal.[25] The

523   Plateau Peoples' Web Portal allows for tribes, scholars, and originating insti-
524   tutions to upload content, create collections, add metadata/tags/comments,
525   map content, and add audio/video/textual narratives to the existing
526   content.[26] Mukurtu project lead Kimberly Christen Withey notes that in this
527   way, Mukurtu is "a powerful tool in reconstructing family and community
528   histories disrupted by national policies of forced assimilation."[27]
529   The NRCTR may wish to take cues from these projects when implement-
530   ing participatory archive elements to its digital asset management system.
531   Users of the system will want to be able to add comments, tags, or descrip-
532   tions (possibly as text, audio, or video) to digital objects, as long as they
533   are authenticated within the system and are not restricted from accessing
534   the records.[28] Users will likely also wish to create their own collections or
535   aggregations of NRCTR content, and add their own content and metadata to
536   these user-generated collections. It is also likely imperative that users have
537   the ability to interact with one another via commentary, discussion forums,
538   or other social networks to safely engage in moderated conversations about
539   IRS experiences and reconciliation.
540   Survivors, Inter-Generational Survivors, Indigenous communities, re-
541   searchers, the University of Manitoba and its partners, and other stakehold-
542   ers would need to be engaged in conversation to determine how best to
543   incorporate participatory archiving into the system so that it meets the re-
544   quirements of its user communities. The NRCTR will want to ensure that
545   the content and metadata generated by users are preserved and integrated
546   into the official documentary record of the NRCTR in the creation of a "liv-
547   ing archive," which would be continually updated and aggregated to reflect
548   the dynamic nature of Indigenous knowledge. Camille Callison writes, "The
549   dynamic quality of Indigenous knowledge is such that it is sustained, trans-
550   formed and continues to remain dynamic producing 'new' knowledge in
551   new mediums. . . . Indigenous Knowledge is constantly evolving in response
552   to a changing environment."[29] Following the initial dialogues the NRCTR has
553   had with Survivors and Indigenous communities, two dominant messages
554   have been persistent—one, that the Residential School Survivor can never
555   be forgotten in any presentation of the records, and two, that the Centre
556   must be a place where culture and traditional practice lives. In so doing,
557   the Centre must ensure that the records are brought to life and that they are
558   appropriately interwoven with Indigenous cultures.
559   The NRCTR can also learn from the experience of the RRN in terms of
560   metadata normalization and accessibility issues it faces in striving to realize
561   its vision. For example, the metadata that accompanies the digital objects
562   contributed by the RRN's institutional partners is exported from diverse col-
563   lection management systems and imported into the RRN. Consequently, the
564   system had to include the ability to normalize the contributed metadata to a
565   common standard to allow for cross-collection search and browse function-
566   ality. The RRN displays the original metadata provided by the contributing

567 institution and the normalized metadata in two separate tabs in order to in-
568 dicate the normalization process and to demonstrate the authenticity of the
569 record.
570   The NRCTR faces a similar metadata normalization challenge. The
571 seven databases comprising the TRC Database utilize six different metadata
572 schemas.[30] Despite the common elements of many of these schemas, this
573 fact presents considerable challenges to the University of Manitoba and its
574 partners in achieving the goals articulated in their NRC proposal. Readying
575 this sizable collection for public consumption, given the present metadata
576 structures, will require an extensive amount of work. For instance, the pro-
577 posal called for a broad audience being able to easily search and utilize
578 the NRCTR's records online. In order for the NRCTR to improve the dis-
579 coverability of and accessibility to its records, a common metadata schema,
580 perhaps the one employed to describe the church and LAC archival records,
581 may need to be selected and the existing metadata schemas may need to
582 be normalized to this standard through field-to-field metadata mapping and
583 Extensible Markup Language (XML) crosswalks and managed in a single
584 database. By providing evidence of this normalization process, perhaps as
585 the RRN did with dual tabs, users would be assured of the records' authentic-
586 ity and would serve to instill trust. Normalization would enable the NRCTR,
587 like the RRN, to build on the current limited advanced search capabilities of
588 the system and implement a more robust, comprehensive advanced search
589 for complex research queries where every element is searchable across the
590 entirety of the holdings. However, as the designers of the RRN have noted, it
591 is equally important to make the search functionality of the system as intuitive
592 as possible to the uninitiated user.[31] In an RRN usability study, the feedback
593 provided indicated the desire for a central Google-like keyword search box,
594 which would produce a result set that could then be further refined through
595 easy to understand facets,[32] namely "Who," "What," "When," and "Where."[33]
596 The TRC Database already features the former but the NRCTR may wish to
597 follow the RRN's example and implement an easily comprehensible faceted
598 search. This approach would lend itself to realizing the NRCTR's goal of
599 broad accessibility.
600   An additional metadata normalization challenge that must be faced by
601 the NRCTR is the implementation of name authorities throughout the entire
602 system. The TRC has developed a standardized name authority for document
603 collection that was also circulated along with data input instructions to the
604 church entities responsible for contributing their own records to the TRC.
605 Unfortunately, given the multiple sources of information, many of the name
606 authorities are still inconsistent and will need to be edited and further nor-
607 malized by NRCTR staff. The name authority standard has yet to be applied
608 to the metadata in the NRA or Active and Semi-Active Government Records
609 Databases. Also, as noted above, the Red, Black, and School Series records
610 are not described at an item level and do not make references to names

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.
617   For all that a name authority might offer, however, the clear and ex-
618   plicit obligation of the Centre to protect personal identifying information
619   is central. Consequently, the NRCTR must use an abundance of caution in
620   making records containing personal information available to the public. The
621   redaction of records and metadata is but one labor-intensive metadata nor-
622   malization process that the NRCTR must face in the future.
623   The current TRC Database does not permit the user to browse records.
624   If the NRCTR is to be as inclusive as possible, it may want to incorporate
625   browse functionality as many users prefer browsing to searching as a means
626   of access to digital records. Further normalizing the metadata of the TRC
627   would allow the NRCTR to implement browsing. The NRCTR may wish to
628   follow the leads of the Plateau Peoples' Web Portal and Ara Irititja projects
629   in empowering Indigenous people to select categories, or arrangements of
630   records, that make browsing as simple, efficient, and meaningful as possible
631   for Indigenous users. The Plateau Peoples' Web Portal allows tribal admin-
632   istrators to select categories of importance to Indigenous people in addition
633   to the institutionally provided *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH)
634   in the classification of the records in the system.[34] Indigenous users can
635   then browse the records by topics of relevance to them as well as by tribal
636   affiliation.[35] The interface for the Ara Irititja Project, a community-based,
637   multimedia digital archive designed at the request of the Anangi-speaking
638   communities in Central Australia, classify the records in its holdings by me-
639   dia format (photos, documents, movies, sounds, and objects).[36] Users can
640   browse the knowledge management system created for the project by format,
641   date, gallery albums, or by subjects of relevance to the Anangi-speaking peo-
642   ple (called profiles), including people, events, mythology, flora, and fauna.[37]
643   In both of these examples, Indigenous people were given the authority to
644   select classifications for the records that would aid them in discovering rel-
645   evant content. The NRCTR may wish to follow suit by consulting its various
646   user communities in selecting classifications for the records that are of value
647   to them (e.g., location, school, Indigenous community, originating archival
648   fonds, format) that could co-exist with more traditional forms of classifica-
649   tion such as LCSH. Christen Withey astutely asserted that this multilayered
650   approach to metadata challenges the expert authority but does not displace
651   it.[38]
652   The NRCTR will also have to determine what languages to use in the
653   presentation of the records' metadata. Currently, the only language used in
654   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 will be a rich source of Indigenous knowledge pertaining to one of the darkest objectives of Canadian policy. Through the creation of a dynamic "living archive," the NRCTR will assist the nation in overcoming the traumatic loss of language, traditional childrearing practices, sense of identity, and traditional communal value inflicted by the Indian Residential School legacy. Beyond this, the archive presents Survivors who were raised away and apart from their families to reconnect with some of the records of their past. For instance, the NRCTR has heard numerous stories from Survivors of a church archive containing the only known photograph of that person in his 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 repatriation.

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

NOTES

1. The Alternative Dispute Resolution process was "a voluntary and confidential process designed to be a timely, fair and safe way for claimants to resolve validated physical and sexual abuse claims . . . 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 setting compensation awards within an established compensation framework. The claimant has the option to accept the award, appeal the decision or pursue litigation." Treasury Board of Canada Secretariat, "Indian Residential Schools Resolution Canada," http://www.tbs-sct.gc.ca/dpr-rmr/2007-2008/inst/ira/ira02-eng.asp (accessed August 30, 2014). The process was criticized for treating Residential School Survivors unfairly and with a complete disregard for compassion towards these victims of abuse.

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

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

4. *IRSSA, Schedule N,* 2.

5. Ibid., 2.

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

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

17. University of Manitoba, *Proposal—National Research Centre on Indian Residential Schools*, February 16, 2012, 2.

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

19. University of Manitoba, *Proposal*, 3.

20. Ibid., 26.

21. Ibid., 40.

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

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

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

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

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

27. Kimberly Christen, "Archival Challenges and Digital Solutions in Aboriginal Australia," *SAA 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."

34. Christen, "Opening Archives," 200.

35. Plateau Peoples' Web Portal, "Browse," http://plateauportal.wsulibs.wsu.edu/html/ppp/browse.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).

37. Ara Irititja Project, *Ara Irititja Project—Software Brochure*, 2, http://www.irititja.com/resources/Ara%20Irititja%20Brochure%20Sept%202011-print.pdf (accessed August 26, 2014).

38. Christen, "Opening Archives," 198.

39. Ara Irititja Project, "The Software History," http://www.irititja.com/the_archive/the_software.html (accessed August 26, 2014).