More than "Creoles and Pidgins, Other": Follow up on CRKN Study on Indigenous Languages Collections

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May 14, 2025

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Land Acknowledgement

- We wish to acknowledge this land on which the University of Toronto operates. For thousands of years, it has been the traditional land of the Huron -Wendat, the Seneca, and the Mississauga's of the Credit.
- Today, this meeting place is still the home to many Indigenous people from across Turtle Island and we are grateful to have the opportunity to work on this land.

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Agenda

- CRKN study recap
  - Indigenous language collections at Canadian universities
- Indigenous languages in MARC/LC
- PCC guidelines for ISO 639-3
- Languages in Alma/Primo VE
- Programmatic solutions for implementation
- Q&A Invitation to collaborate

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Surfacing materials in Indigenous languages

- Languages hold within them philosophies, worldviews, culture and identity.

- United Nations acknowledged the importance of Indigenous languages by declaring this decade to be the *International Decade of Indigenous Languages.*

- The role of Indigenous language materials at university libraries continues to evolve.

- Truth and Reconciliation Commission Report and Calls to Action
- The Canadian Federation of Library Associations - Fédération canadienne des associations de bibliothèques Truth & Reconciliation Committee Report and Recommendations
- NIKLA-ANCLA National Indigenous Knowledge & Language Alliance / Alliance nationale des connaissances et des langues autochtones
- University of Toronto committed to a number of initiatives outlined in the Answering the Call: Wecheehetowin
- University of Toronto Libraries Collections Diversity Statement

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Indigenous Metadata Working Group at UTL

Terms of Reference and Goals:

The Indigenous Metadata working group is primarily concerned with improving access to materials within the University of Toronto Libraries collections that relate to Indigenous Peoples and knowledges.

Our goals include:

1. Continue to develop our cultural competencies as they relate to Indigenous Peoples
    a. Note: we used a sharing circle format for part of our learning
2. Consult with our communities, and participate in whatever capacities are needed (such as collaborators, supporters, or mentors)
3. Actively participate on national and international initiatives when opportunities are available (such as PCC, NIKLA, CFLA-FCAB Indigenous Matters Committee, etc.)
4. Use normalization rules to change the display of problematic or offensive subject headings in order to support researchers using preferred terminology in their searches
5. Reclassify existing collections (with particular focus on E class) if preferred by our communities

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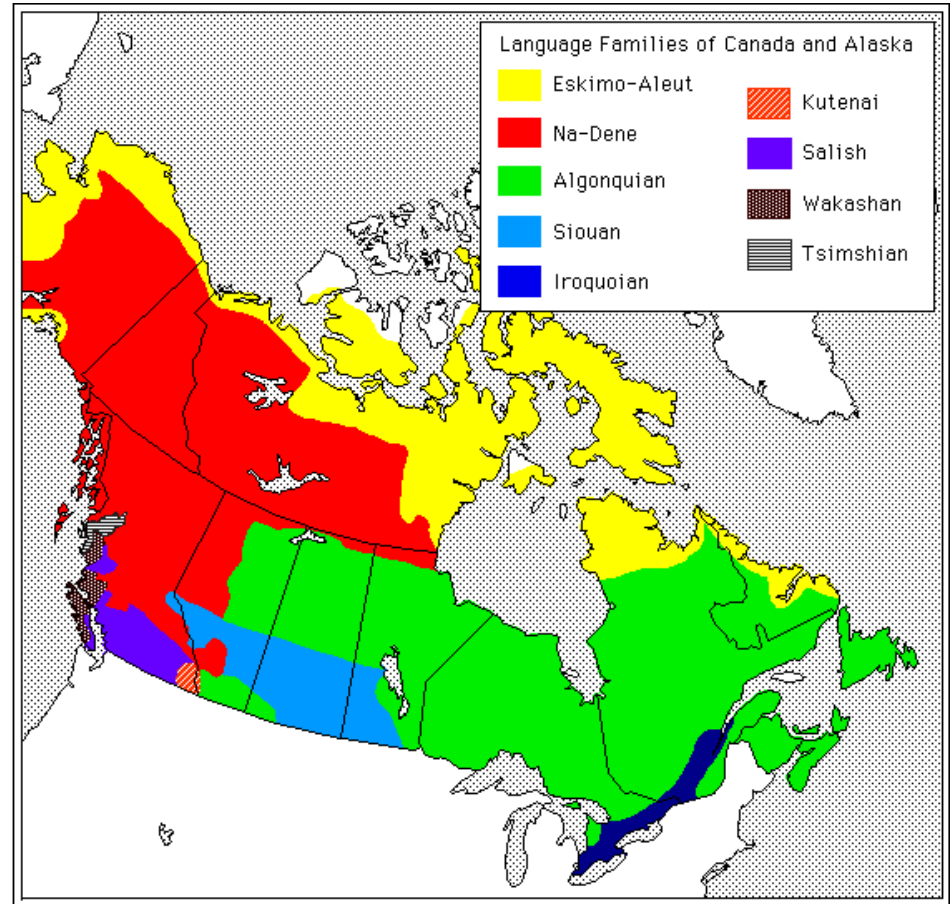LIBRARIES

Committee Members

Adrianna Lewis
Blair Kuntz (Co-chair May 2023 - May 2024)
Carmen Königsreuther Socknat
Chris Holmes
Claire Wright
Cora Coady
Danielle van Wagner
Desmond Wong
Elizabeth Ridolfo
Gabrielle Fournier
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Indigenous language collections at Canadian universities

Who is collecting what?
How do we know?

CRKN 2024 conference session:
https://vimeo.com/952407013

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Language Families of Canada and Alaska

- Eskimo-Aleut
- Na-Dene
- Algonquian
- Siouan
- Iroquoian
- Kutenai
- Salish
- Wakashan
- Tsimshian

http://individual.utoronto.ca/hayes/indigenous/indigenous2_overview.html

Indigenous languages: Library of Congress vs Statistics Canada

Languages not represented in MARC:
- Dane-zaa (Beaver)
- Gitxsan (Gitksan)
- Inuinnaqtun
- Nisga'a
- Oji-Cree
- Stoney
- Straits
- Wetsuwet'en-Babine

MARC code	MARC name
alg	Algonquian (Other)
ath	Athapascan (Other)
bla	Siksika
chp	Chipewyan
cpf	Creoles and Pidgins, French-based (Other)
cre	Cree
dak	Dakota
den	Slavey
dgr	Dogrib
gwi	Gwich'in
hai	Haida
iku	Inuktitut
ipk	Inupiaq
iro	Iroquoian (Other)
kut	Kootenai
mic	Micmac
moh	Mohawk
nai	North American Indian (Other)
oji	Ojibwa
sal	Salishan languages
tli	Tlingit
tsi	Tsimshian
wak	Wakashan languages

20 most-spoken Indigenous languages in Canada	# speakers
Cree languages	86,475
Inuktitut	40,320
Ojibway languages	25,440
Oji-Cree	15,210
Innu (Montagnais) and Naskapi languages	11,605
Dene	11,375
Mi'kmaq	9,000
Atikamekw	6,740
Blackfoot	6,585
Slavey-Hare languages	2,215
Tlicho (Dogrib)	2,115
Anicinabemowin (Algonquin)	1,925
Michif	1,845
Dakelh (Carrier)	1,530
Dakota	1,505
Mohawk	1,435
Halkomelem	1,335
Gitxsan (Gitksan)	1,110
Nisga'a	1,080

StatCan Indigenous languages in Canada report (2021)

MARC language codes

Issues with Indigenous languages in MARC

- **Outdated, inappropriate, and ambiguous terminology**
  - "North American Indian" (nai) code: outdated & incorrect term
  - "Micmac" (mic) language code: outdated, anglicized term for Mi'kmaw [1]
- **Not all languages are represented**
  - 8 from StatCan list are missing (no individual or collective codes)
  - Ex: Oji-Cree has no code, but is the 4th most-spoken language in Canada
- **Obscuring of language diversity through collective language codes**
  - Over 70 distinct languages in Canada [2]
  - Similar problem has been documented with Pacific Indigenous languages [3] and other North American Indigenous languages [4]
  - "Materials in the collection with less common Indigenous languages are consequently hidden by inaccurate cataloguing. As a result, Indigenous researchers and those researching Indigenous materials are left without their information needs met" [5, p. 100]

[1] https://www.cbc.ca/radio/asithappens/as-it-happens-wednesday-edition-1.5806884/mi-kmaw-writer-says-it-s-about-time-halifax-get-rid-of-micmac-on-street-signs-1.5807124
[2] https://www12.statcan.gc.ca/census-recensement/2021/as-sa/98-200-X/2021012/98-200-X2021012-eng.cfm
[3] https://doi.org/10.1353/cp.2018.0005
[4] https://2025.code4lib.org/talks/enhancing-marc-language-metadata-with-ruby-and-indigenous-tenacity
[5] https://doi.org/10.5206/elip.v4i1.13439

ISO 639-3 Language codes

- International standard on language codes
- SIL International, the Language Coding Agency for 639-3
- Provide accurate and granular language information
- Can be particularly useful for Indigenous languages that lack specific MARC language codes
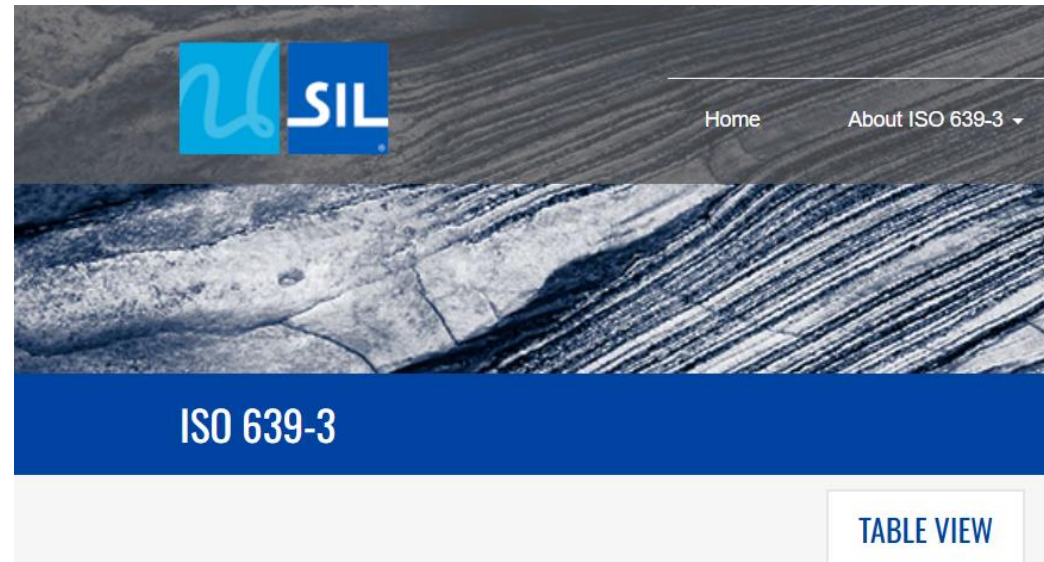
https://iso639-3.sil.org/code_tables/639/data

PCC Guidelines for the use of ISO 639-3 language codes in MARC records (2022)

Recommends using ISO 639-3 codes alongside MARC codes in 041

"Non-MARC language codes cannot be input in 008/35-37" & mapping issues

Main recommendations:

1. **Code both the MARC and ISO 639-3 language codes whenever entering ISO 639-3 code.**

2. **Encourage coding ISO 639-3 codes when they are more specific than the MARC codes and discourage (but not forbid) manual coding of ISO 639-3 codes where we anticipate that they can later be automatically mapped.**

3. **If any ISO 639-3 code is recorded, include the ISO 639-3 codes for all other languages associated with the resource.**

4. **When working with materials in macrolanguages (groups of related languages where collocation is deemed useful for retrieval), code the more specific language when known.**

008 131017t20132013sncc\\\\\d\\\\000\0**eng**\\
041 0\$aeng$acpf
041 17$aeng$acrg$2iso639-3
100 1\$aFleury, Norman,$eauthor.
245 10$aMichif dictionary 2013 /$cNorman Fleury.
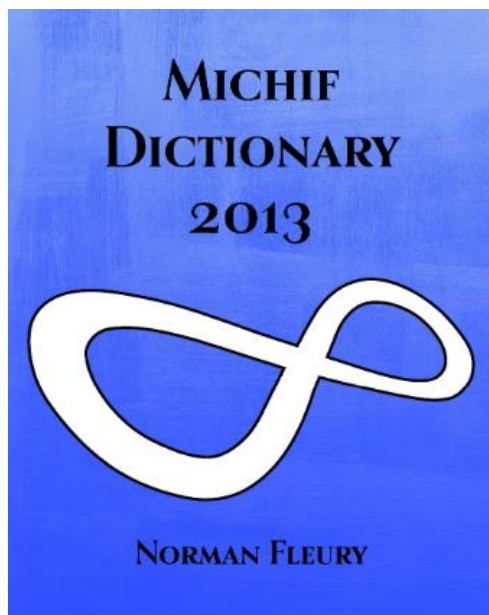264 \1$aSaskatoon, SK :$bGabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research,$eissuing body,$c[2013]
264 \4$c©2013
546 \\$aThe dictionary presents words in English followed by their Michif equivalent. Following the dictionary is a list
      presenting common phrases in English followed by their equivalent in Michif.

ISO 639-3 codes added to 041 to supplement MARC collective code cpf

Michif dictionary 2013

Fleury, Norman, author. >

Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, publisher. >

Norman Fleury.

Saskatoon, SK : Gabriel Dumont Institute of Native Studies and Applied Research, 2013
Copyright notice date : ©2013

Creoles and pidgins, French-based
English
Michif

The dictionary presents words in English followed by their Michif equivalent. Following the dictionary is a list presenting common phrases in English followed by their equivalent in Michif.

English language -- Dictionaries -- Michif >

Michif language -- Dictionaries -- English >

Dictionaries

75 pages, 12 unnumbered pages : port. ; 29 cm.

" … nearly 11,5000 words into Michif-Cree … The dictionary was created to bank individual words and is useful for looking up specific Michif-Cree words. The phrases section has been created to demonstrate how the language is used and how its syntax is structured"--Publisher's introduction.

041 0 $$a eng $$a cpf

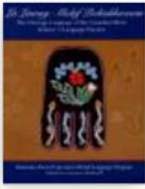041 1 7 $$a eng $$a crg $$2 iso639-3

[Link to the record](#)

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Michif available as a filter and in Advanced search

New College Library (Ivey) (2)

Show More

Subject ∧

- [ ] Métis (11)
- [ ] Canada (9)
- [ ] Métis Juvenile Fiction (8)
- [ ] Legends Prairie Provinces Comic Books Strips Etc (6)
- [ ] Oral Tradition Prairie Provinces (6)

Show More

Publication Date ∧

From 1983   To 2023   Refine

Language ∧

- [ ] English (60)
- [ ] Michif (36)

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[4]

BOOK

La lawng : Michif Peekishkwewin : the heritage language of the Canadian Metis

Winnipeg : Pemmican Publications; c2004

📖 Available at Robarts Library Stacks (PM7895 .M53 L29 2004) >

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[5]

BOOK

The secret of your name : proud to be Métis = Kiimooch ka shinikashooyen : aen kishchitaymook aen li Michif iwik

Bouchard, David, 1952-

Calgary, AB : Red Deer Press; c2010

📖 Available at OISE/UT Library Children's Literature Collection (JUV FIC B752Se) and other locations >

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[6]

BOOK

Li liivr oche Michif ayamiiawina = The book of Michif prayers

Winnipeg : Louis Riel Institute; 2010

2nd ed.

📖 Available at Robarts Library Stacks (BV249 .M53 L55 2010) >

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Languages in Primo VE

- Three tables in Discovery >> Labels
- Language codes Labels/Customized Language Codes: Control the languages that can appear in records/facets
- Advanced Search Language Labels: controls the languages that can appear in the advanced search dropdown list
- Can add/remove/disable individual rows, or export the list and reimport a much longer (or shorter) list
- Dropdown menu options must be added at the View level in the Advanced Search configuration.

Languages in Alma

- Only LC languages will display in Alma facets: other entries will display the code

- There is a plan to change this: https://ideas.exlibrisgroup.com/forums/30817 3-alma/suggestions/46338445-add-iso-639-3- microlanguage-names-to-alma-title-se

Adding Languages to the Alma MDE dropdown

- Controlled vocabulary by default allows you to select only MARC codes (including some deprecated codes preceded with -)

- Can add (or remove) codes/names to the list for your users: Configuration >> Resources >> Cataloging >> Controlled Vocabulary Registry. Edit 041A-OTB

- Can view/remove the controlled vocabulary: Configuration >> Resources >> Cataloging >> Metadata Configuration. Select MARC 21 Bibliographic, select the field

Be very cautious/thoughtful with these changes!

Analytics!

- Added local fields (041 and 546) to be able to find materials in Michif as 008 is coded as eng

Michif language   DV   Home   Catalog

Michif language

MMS Id	Title	Language Code	041 - Local Param 11	546 - Local Param 12
991105871280406196	The secret of your name : proud to be Métis = Kiimooch ka shinikashooyen : aen kishchitaymook aen li Michif iwik /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf $$h eng; $$a eng $$a crg $$h eng $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text in English and Michif.
991105888586506196	Michif dictionary 2013 /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$a eng $$a crg $$2 iso639-3	$$a The dictionary presents words in English followed by their Michif equivalent phrases in English followed by their equivalent in Michif.
991105913007406196	Manny's memories /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf $$h cpf; $$a eng $$a crg $$h eng $$2 iso639-3	
991105993025306196	Pierriche Falcon, the Michif rhymester : our Métis national anthem : the Michif version /	eng	$$a eng $$a fre $$a cpf $$h eng $$h fre $$h cpf; $$a eng $$a fre $$a crg $$h eng $$h fre $$h crg $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text chiefly in English; lyrics of songs in French, Michif and English.
991105994983606196	The Michif dictionary : Turtle Mountain Chippewa Cree /	eng	$$a crg $$2 iso639-3	
991105995230906196	The giving tree : a retelling of a traditional Métis story about giving and receiving = Laarbr kawmaekit : aen kiitwam achimook aen histwayr chi maykik pi aen ootistikook /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$a crg $$a eng $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text and CD narration in English and Michif.
991105995238406196	Relatives with roots : a story about Métis women's connection to the land = Lii Peraantii avik la Rasin : Eñ Nistwaar Taanishi lii Faam di Michif E'ishi Kisheyitakik li Tayraeñ /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$e ng $$a crg $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text in English and Michif-Cree.
991106056311506196	Remembering my Métis past : reminisces of Edwin St. Pierre /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$a crg $$a eng $$2 iso639-3	$$a Includes text in Michif.
991106057421606196	Roogaroo Mickey /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$a crg $$a eng $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text and CD narration in English and Michif-Cree.
991106075465006196	Dancing in my bones = La daans daan mii zoo /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$a crg $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text and CD narration in English and Michif-Cree.
991106085641806196	Medicines to help us : traditional Métis plant use : study prints & resource guide /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf $$a cre $$a oji; $$a crg $$a cre $$a oji $$a eng $$2 iso639-3	$$a Includes text in Cree, Michif, and Ojibway.
991106159817106196	Nêhiyawêwin Masinahikan = Michif*/Cree dictionary /	eng	$$a eng $$a crp $$a cre; $$a crg $$a eng $$a cre $$2 iso639-3	
991106163315406196	Métis Christmas mittens = Lii mitenn Michif di Nowel /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf $$h eng; $$a crg $$a eng $$h eng $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text in English and Michif.
991106230271906196	Nêhiyawêwin Mitâtaht : Michif ahci Cree /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$a crg $$a eng $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text in English and Northern Michif.
991106250647006196	Lii yiiboo nayaapiwak lii swer : l'alfabet di Michif = Owls see clearly at night : a Michif alphabet /	eng	$$a eng $$a cpf; $$a eng $$a crg $$2 iso639-3	$$a Text in Michif and English.

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Exploring programmatic solutions for implementation

- In Alma: Normalization rule to add 041 for Michif (crg) Oji-Cree (ojs)

```
when
not exists "041.a.ojs"
then
addField "041.{1,7}.a.ojs"
addSubField "041.2.iso639-3" if (exists "041.a.ojs")
end
```

- Outside of Alma: can AI assist in these efforts to bring up to PCC best practices?
  - Enhancement to Normalization rules not actionable in Alma
  - AI cannot search external databases, such as ISO 639-3 Tables or MARC language code list
  - Can be helpful in analyzing metadata (for example, identifying records that use nai language code and/or Inuktitut materials that are coded with obsolete language code (esk))

The Main Takeaway

We are sharing specific projects, but the most important thing to know is that this work requires learning and relationship building, which takes time. It's from there that work can be undertaken - sometimes the work will be technical, sometimes social, sometimes a combination.
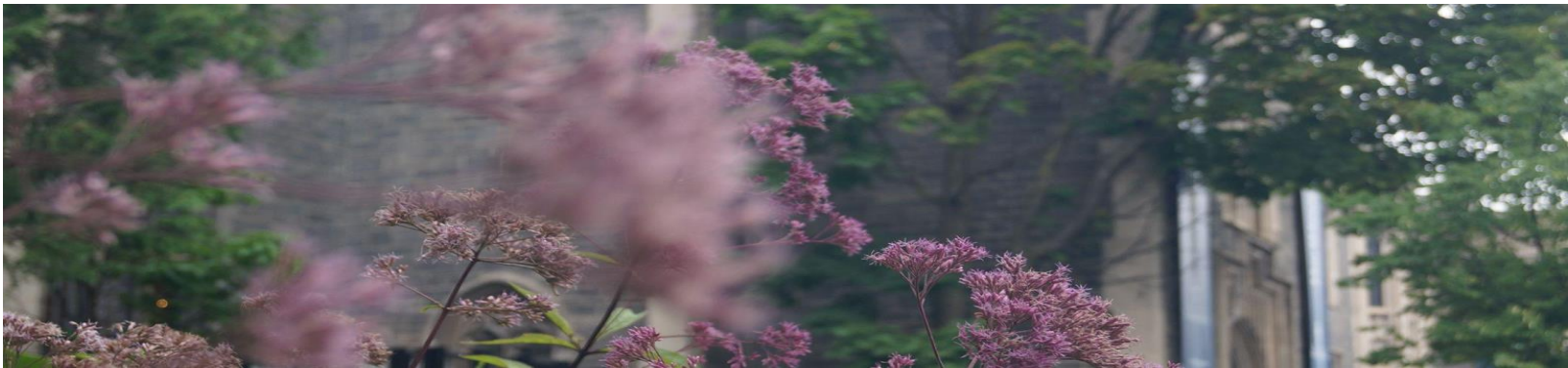
Accountability and Relationship-building with Indigenous Peoples

"Relational accountability is a cornerstone of work with Indigenous communities to ensure that trust and agency are built into the research project... moving forward in a better relationship, with more accountability, would see libraries move towards a more consultative focus and shift the scope of metadata work to include relationship-building with Indigenous Peoples."

Desmond Wong, Indigenous Studies Librarian,

OCUL Collaborative Futures (CF) Decolonizing Descriptions Working Group Final Report

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Resources

- University of Toronto.(2017) Answering the Call Wecheehetowin Final Report of the Steering Committee for the University of Toronto Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission of Canada https://www.utoronto.ca/news/truth-and-reconciliation-u-t
- Bennett, K. & Jurczyk, E. (2024, May 22) Connecting to Collect: Strengths in Indigenous Language Collections in Canadian Libraries and a Collaborative Path Forward. Presented at Canadian Research Knowledge Network (CRKN) Virtual Conference. May 2024. Online https://vimeo.com/952407013
- CFLA-FCAB Truth and Reconciliation Report https://cfla-fcab.ca/en/indigenous/trc_report/
- Kleiber et al. (2018) Making Pacific Languages Discoverable: A Project to Catalog the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library Pacific Collection by Indigenous Languages
- NIKLA Respectful Terminology Platform Project (RTPP) https://www.nikla-ancla.com/respectful-terminology
- OCUL Collaborative Futures (CF) Decolonizing Descriptions Final Report https://digitalcommons.osgoode.yorku.ca/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1053&context=librarians
- SCS (Standing Committee on Standards) Task Group on Developing Guidelines for Using ISO 639-3 Language Codes for Library Cataloging. (2022). PCC Guidelines for the Use of ISO 639-3 Language Codes in MARC Records

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Resources for learning about ISO 639-3 language codes

- [PCC Guidelines for the Use of ISO 639-3 Language Codes in MARC Records](#)

- McGrath, Kelley. PCC Guidelines for the Use of ISO 639-3 Language Codes in MARC Records. [PCC Joint Operations Committee Meeting (May 4-5, 2023)](#) (passcode is A!UqAC80)

- Kleiber et al. (2018) Making Pacific Languages Discoverable: A Project to Catalog the University of Hawai'i at Mānoa Library Pacific Collection by Indigenous Languages.

Resources from the Ex Libris Knowledge Center

- [Editing Alma Metadata Profiles](#)
- [Configuring Alma Controlled Vocabulary Registry](#)
- [Configuring Display Labels for Primo VE](#)
- [Configuring Advanced Searches for Primo VE](#)
- [Ideas exchange entry to add iso 639.3 microlanguage names to Alma](#)

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Thank you!
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