

GLAM Databases and First Nations Sovereignty in the Age of Artificial Intelligence

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What is the issue?

- The unauthorised extraction of digital records of First Nations' cultural heritage from open online collections is being used to train Artificial Intelligence ('AI') systems.
- These practices risk undermining Indigenous data sovereignty, stripping cultural expressions of context and protocols, and enabling their reproduction or manipulation in ways that are disrespectful, cause harm, and are misleading.
- This project investigates how GLAM institutions (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, and Museums) that create and/or hold such digital repositories can serve as trustworthy stewards of First Nations' knowledge in an era of generative AI.

This project brings together **GLAM institutions** and **First Nations communities** to address longstanding inequalities in the control over digital collections and representations of cultural heritage by **developing a community of practice** and proposing targeted policy frameworks and potential legal reform of the **Copyright Act 1968** to support First Nations data sovereignty. This would significantly **increase trustworthiness in digital society** by creating a mechanism for **empowering First Nations communities**.

The goal is to embed established 'Indigenous governance principles' into metadata structures, access protocols, and rights management -ensuring that trust is built into the very architecture of digital cultural collections.

Legal, technical, and policy research will be undertaken in parallel.

- Current GLAM sector practices will be mapped.
- Legal and infrastructural vulnerabilities to AI scraping will be identified.
- Existing frameworks will be critically analysed to determine adaptation pathways for digital contexts.
- Working with selected institutional and First Nations community partners, we will co-design and develop prototype database standards and supporting governance materials.

Impact:

- Legal and ethical empowerment
 - Sectoral transformation
 - Policy influence

Impact will be measured through:

- Feedback from First Nations collaborators on the cultural appropriateness and effectiveness of the tools and policy recommendations developed.
- Adoption or piloting of our frameworks by selected GLAM institutions.
- Development of a community of practice by the GLAM sector incorporating practical frameworks & policy proposals.
- Engagement with policy audiences (including government) via targeted briefs and submissions to relevant inquiries.
- Publication and dissemination within legal, cultural, and information governance networks.