Chapter XVI

Cross-Cultural Design and Usability of a Digital Library Supporting Access to Maori Cultural Heritage Resources

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Abstract

Part of the worldwide appeal for digital libraries (DLs) lies in their potential to preserve cultural heritage resources, to expand access to indigenous resources, and to promote deeper understanding among user communities. As cultural heritage resources are being made into a shared worldwide collection of information resources, cross-cultural design and usability issues of DLs supporting access to such resources become critical concerns. This chapter looks specifically at issues concerning supporting access to Māori heritage materials available in New Zealand through DL technologies. The chapter commences with an examination of the Māori culture, the nature and forms of Māori heritage resources and their specific requirements for representation, organisation and retrieval. It then proceeds...
to identify a set of critical research issues crucial to the success of such DLs. For these research issues, challenges are identified and potential strategies to meet these challenges are proposed.

**Introduction**

Part of the worldwide appeal for digital libraries (DLs) lies in their potential to open up new dimension of reaching traditional and new audiences by providing access to cultural heritage resources in ways undreamt of a decade ago, and to promote better understanding of indigenous knowledge. Over the last three decades, cultural heritage institutions including libraries, archives and museums have started to integrate technology in one way or another into various aspects of their mission and services. As cultural and heritage resources are being made into a shared worldwide collection of information resources, the implications of information representation and organisation, and usability practices for the conduct of scholarship and indigenous knowledge sharing will need to be explored and addressed appropriately.

**Digital Libraries and Māori Cultural Heritage Resources**

This chapter looks specifically at issues concerning supporting access to Māori indigenous resources through DL technologies. The chapter commences with an examination of the Māori culture, the nature and forms of Māori heritage resources and their specific requirements for representation, storage, organisation and retrieval in a DL environment. The chapter then proceeds to identify a set of critical research issues crucial to the success of a DL aimed at promoting worldwide access and for the appropriate use of Māori cultural heritage resources.

**Māori Cultural Heritage Resources: Forms and Nature**

In designing DLs of Māori indigenous resources, it is important to consider the forms and nature of traditional Māori heritage resources and to examine the digitisation needs of the material types involved. Traditional Māori knowledge
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