Diversifying the Getty Vocabularies: TGN American Indian Reservations

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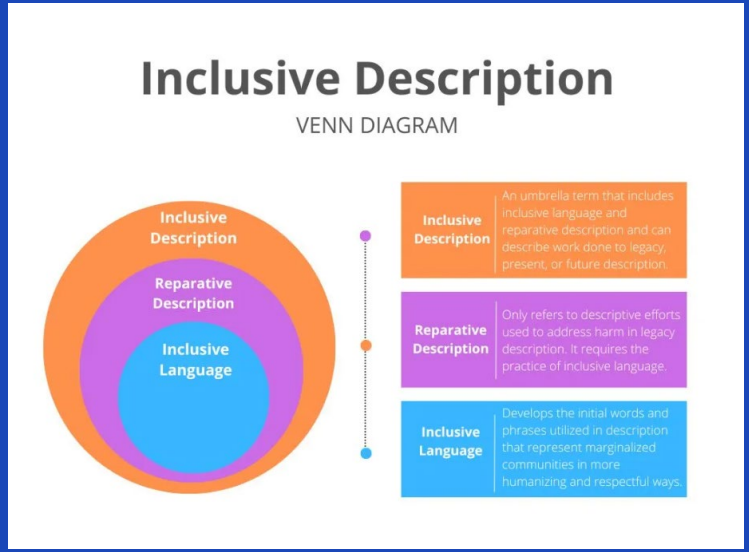
Inclusive Metadata

Building and maintaining standardized descriptive approaches for collection search/discovery that amplify marginalized perspectives, remediate harmful and inaccurate language, and unsettle colonial logics.

- Evaluate, remediate, and expand the Getty Vocabularies to accomplish more multilingual, multicultural, and inclusive terminology
- Deliver accessible and relevant content tailored to diverse users with multiply situated lived experiences and search practices in order to achieve meaningful outcomes (i.e., digital repatriation)
- Build relationships with and seek input from cultural heritage professionals/underrepresented communities



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"It is important to acknowledge that…**taxonomy itself is a problematic enterprise**. Ancient class and caste distinctions, the invention of the concept of 'race,' any system that creates an 'us' and a 'them' that holds people at arm's length because they look/act/believe differently, is the result of a hierarchical organization of knowledge. And that is the definition of taxonomy. It is not difficult to understand how applying a system of classification to groups of people or individuals can be reductive and dehumanizing," (47).

Mizota, Sharon. "Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion Principles for Custom Taxonomies." Journal of Digital Media Management 12, no. 1 (2023): 56-52.

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Diversifying Vocabs: Guiding Questions

- How to represent complex, contested, and taboo histories within structured metadata schemas and controlled vocabularies?
- How to reconcile the complexity of language and its constant evolution over time?
- What constitutes an “authoritative source” for establishing the credibility of information represented in controlled vocabularies/thesauri?
- How to remediate outdated, historically inaccurate, and biased terminology without whitewashing problematic histories?
- How to represent vocabulary concepts as elements of living history rather than representations of the past?
- How to effectively integrate interdisciplinary research protocols, participatory methods, and repatriation regulations into metadata workflows?

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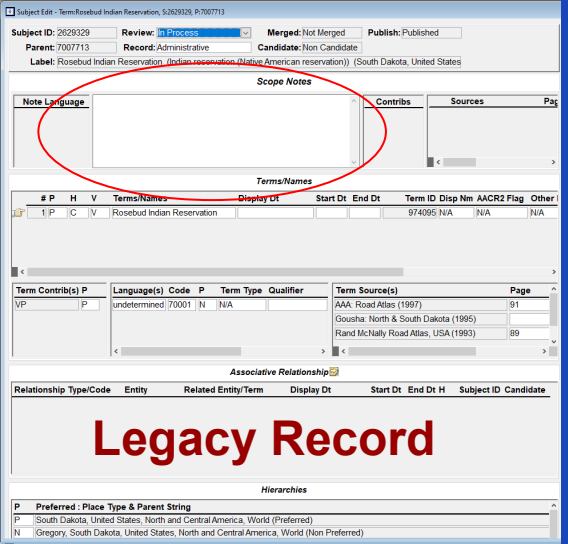
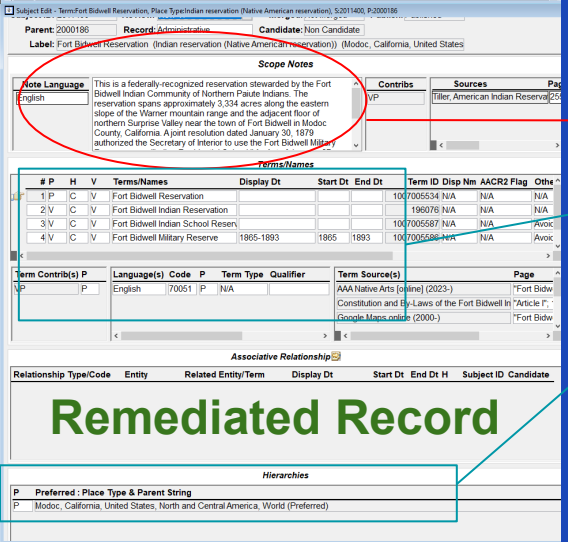
Project Overview: Adding Reservations to TGN

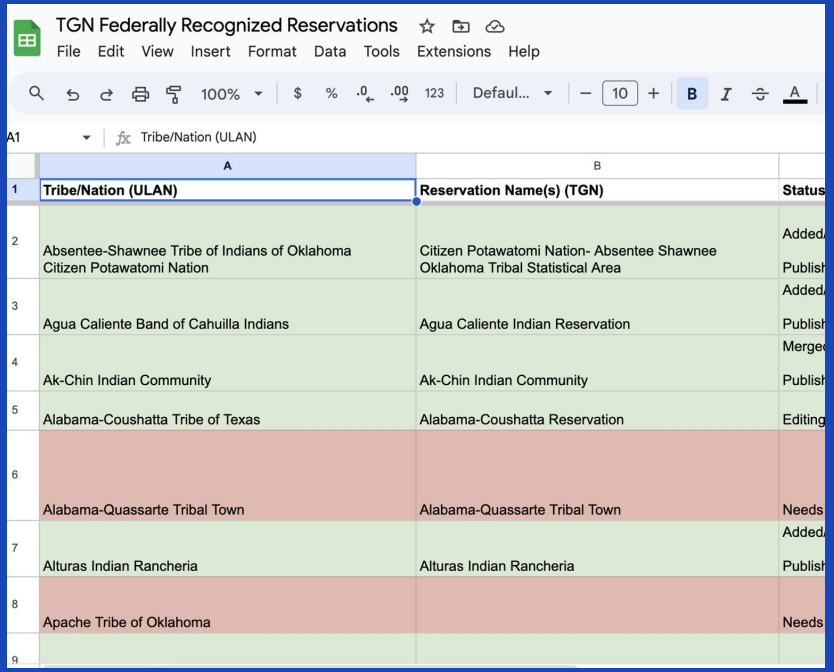




- Led an initiative to remediate and expand a legacy US Geological Survey dataset of North American Indian reservations in the TGN
- Added, enriched, hierarchically organized 200+ Indian reservations and legend, sacred, and historical sites
- Minimally viable metadata elements:
  - Scope notes
  - Terms/names→language/term sources
  - Hierarchies
  - Subject Sources
  - Coordinates
  - Place Types
  - Associative Relationships

Legacy USGS Dataset

- Ingested into the TGN in the 1990s
- Contained many pejorative terms, spelling errors, and failed to represent Indigenous places outside the US reservation system
- Extant place names were not contextualized through scope notes or descriptive metadata
- Potential to advance repatriation efforts (i.e., NAGPRA)



	A	B	
1	Tribe/Nation (ULAN)	Reservation Name(s) (TGN)	Status
2	Absentee-Shawnee Tribe of Indians of Oklahoma Citizen Potawatomi Nation	Citizen Potawatomi Nation- Absentee Shawnee Oklahoma Tribal Statistical Area	Added Publish
3	Agua Caliente Band of Cahuilla Indians	Agua Caliente Indian Reservation	Added Publish
4	Ak-Chin Indian Community	Ak-Chin Indian Community	Merge Publish
5	Alabama-Coushatta Tribe of Texas	Alabama-Coushatta Reservation	Editing
6	Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town	Alabama-Quassarte Tribal Town	Needs
7	Alturas Indian Rancheria	Alturas Indian Rancheria	Added Publish
8	Apache Tribe of Oklahoma		Needs
9			

Project Objectives

- Developing a adaptable research methodology and remediation workflow that centers Indigenous perspectives and incorporates repatriation/reparative metadata trends, and decolonial research methods

- Elevate Tribal Traditional Knowledge (TTK) as expert opinion on par with scientific evidence and academic scholarship, particularly in contexts where evidence is contested

- Expanding dataset's focus beyond federally recognized tribes and reservations

- Differentiating between reservation and ancestral lands through scope notes, framing the reservation system as land unjustly lost

- Supporting repatriation efforts and facilitating connections to NAGPRA by providing accurate cultural context for artifacts and remains

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Definitions

Tribal Traditional Knowledge (TTK): knowledge systems embedded and often safeguarded in the traditional culture of Indigenous tribes and lineal descendants, including but not limited to knowledge about ancestral territories, cultural affiliation, traditional cultural properties and landscapes, culturescapes, traditional ceremonial and funerary practices, lifeways, customs and traditions, climate, material culture, and subsistence

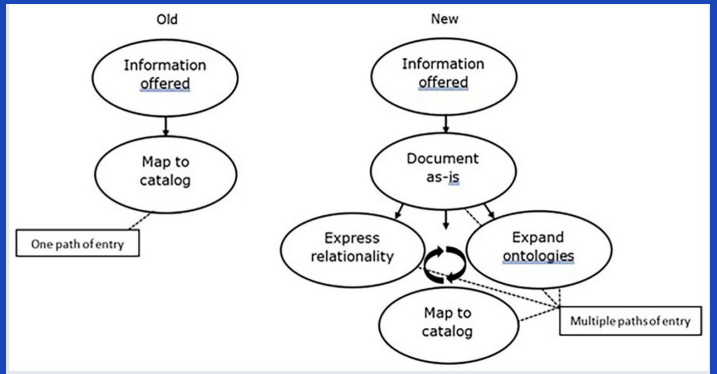
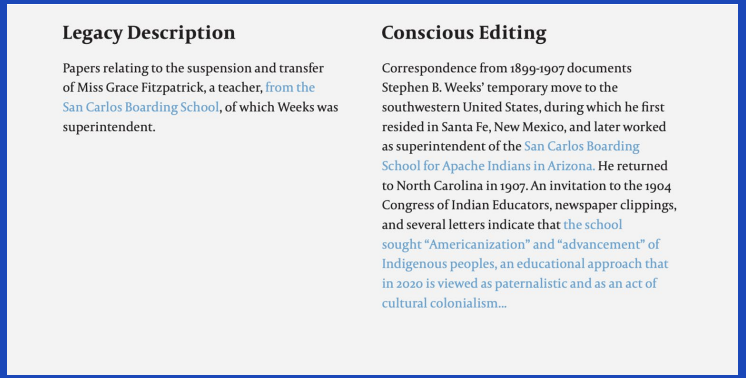


Figure 2. Before and after representation of NMAI's CMS documentation mindset change. Rather than focusing on only one path of entry through a catalog-centric view, additional pathways through narratives, histories, and multiple ontologies will be encouraged.

Image taken from Lewis, Kara, "Toward Centering Indigenous Knowledge in Museum Collections Management Systems" (2024)



Legacy Description

Papers relating to the suspension and transfer of Miss Grace Fitzpatrick, a teacher, from the San Carlos Boarding School, of which Weeks was superintendent.

Conscious Editing

Correspondence from 1899-1907 documents Stephen B. Weeks' temporary move to the southwestern United States, during which he first resided in Santa Fe, New Mexico, and later worked as superintendent of the San Carlos Boarding School for Apache Indians in Arizona. He returned to North Carolina in 1907. An invitation to the 1904 Congress of Indian Educators, newspaper clippings, and several letters indicate that the school sought "Americanization" and "advancement" of Indigenous peoples, an educational approach that in 2020 is viewed as paternalistic and as an act of cultural colonialism...

Image taken from "A Guide to Conscious Editing at Wilson Special Collections Library," UNC (2022)

Conscious Editing: seeks to redress historical inequities and injustices in the ways language is used in contextualizing archives and museum collections; includes removing biased language that assumes whiteness as default and rectifying unevenly described collections

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Project Methodology

- TTK as “authoritative sources” – creation stories, oral histories, tribal constitutions, land litigation records, NRHP/archaeological summaries, etc.
    - Preferred terms aren’t always “official” reservation names
- Transparency and over-description via scope notes as a form of conscious editing
    - Free-text versus controlled fields
    - Ancestral territories and reservation lands are not the same
- Create associative relationships between reservation and sacred/historical places
    - Continuity between past and present

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#	P	H	V	Terms/Names	Display Dt	Start Dt	End Dt	Term ID	Disp Nm	AACR2 Flag	Other Flags
1	P	C	V	Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake				1007005580	N/A	N/A	N/A
2	V	C	V	Upper Lake Rancheria				1007005579	N/A	N/A	Official Name

Term Contrib(s)	P
VP	N

Language(s)	Code	P	Term Type	Qualifier
English	70051	N	N/A	

Term Source(s)	Page
Google Maps online (2000-)	"Upper Lak
Pomo of Upper Lake Habematolel [online] (202	"Who Are
San Diego State University Library [online] (202	"California

Government name is indicated by an “Official Name” flag but not included as the Preferred Name because it conflicts with TTK

Heart of the Monster (geological formation)

Getty Thesaurus of Geographic Names (TGN)®

Coordinates:
Lat: 46 12 48 N *degrees minutes* Lat: 46.2130 *decimal degrees*
Long: 116 00 20 W *degrees minutes* Long: -116.0050 *decimal degrees*

Note: This is a rock formation and sacred Nez Perce site located along the Clearwater River in Idaho County, Idaho. According to the Nez Perce creation story, this site is the location where Coyote killed a large monster, whose parts he scattered across the land to create the regional tribes of the Nimiipuu peoples.

Names:
Heart of the Monster (**preferred**,C,V,English-P,U)
Nez Perce National Historic Park Heart of The Monster (C,V,English,U)

Associative Relationship

Relationship Type/Code	Entity	Related Entity/Term	Display Dt	Start Dt	End Dt	H	Subject ID	Candidate
3510 - historical connection	Physical	Coyote's Fishnet				C	9226904	N
3510 - historical connection	Physical	Heart of the Monster				C	9226905	N
3510 - historical connection	Physical	The Ant and the Yellowjacke				C	9226903	N

Nez Perce Reservation record linked to Nez Perce legend sites

Stat	Mark	.	Place Name (Place Type)	ID
NW			Top of the TGN hierarchy	1000000
IP		+	World (facet)	7029392
IP		+	North and Central America (continent)	1000001
IP		+	United States (nation)	7012149
IP		+	California (state)	7007157
NW		+	Riverside (county)	1002828
NW			Pechanga Reservation (Indian reservation (Native American reservation))	2573561
AC			Pu'$00eska Mountain (mountain) [N]	9226922

Sacred/historic sites nested as non-preferred children of affiliated reservation records

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Scope Notes

ID: 2025941 **Record Type: administrative**
Page Link: http://vocab.getty.edu/page/tgn/2025941

Nez Perce Reservation (Indian reservation (Native American reservation))

Coordinates:
Lat: 46 19 18 N *degrees minutes* Lat: 46.3210 *decimal degrees*
Long: 116 23 26 W *degrees minutes* Long: -116.3900 *decimal degrees*

Note: This is a federally-recognized reservation stewarded by the Nez Perce Tribe. The reservation spans approximately 750,000 acres in north-central Idaho, the majority of which are individually owned by non-Indians as a result of allotment practices codified by the 1887 Dawes Act. Specifically, the reservation lies within the five-county area of Lewis, Latah, Idaho, Nez Perce, and Clearwater Counties, Idaho. Though the Nez Perce Tribe's ancestral territories encompass approximately 13 million acres in present-day north-central Idaho, southeastern Washington, and northeastern Oregon, the Tribe was not granted a federally-recognized reservation until 1855. At this time, the Tribe participated in treaty negotiations to secure the protection of 7.5 million acres of ancestral lands as a reservation. Upon the discovery of gold in the area and increased settler encroachment on reservation lands, the reservation was reduced to its current acreage via a Treaty dated 1863.

Names:
Nez Perce Reservation (**preferred**,C,V,English-P,U)
Nez Perce Indian Reservation (C,V,English,U,N)

Hierarchical Position:
World (facet)
.... North and Central America (continent) (P)
..... United States (nation) (P)

Counties, Idaho. Though the Nez Perce Tribe's ancestral territories encompass approximately 13 million acres in present-day north-central Idaho, southeastern Washington, and northeastern Oregon, the Tribe was not granted a federally-recognized reservation until 1855. At this time, the Tribe

when the Bureau of Indian Affairs purchased the land for the Cahto Tribe. In an effort to uplift the epistemic authority of Indigenous knowledge systems and engage with Indigenous peoples' Right of Reply, ethical collaboration with the tribal chairperson's office and/or cultural center is highly encouraged for the most authoritative information about tribal reservations.

Laytonville Rancheria (Indian reservation (Native American reservation))

Coordinates:
Lat: 39 40 08 N *degrees minutes* Lat: 39.6680 *decimal degrees*
Long: 123 29 56 W *degrees minutes* Long: -123.4980 *decimal degrees*

Note: This is a federally-recognized reservation stewarded by the Cahto Tribe of the Laytonville Rancheria. The reservation spans over 200 acres of land just west of Laytonville in Mendocino County, California. While the land now comprising the Rancheria was initially purchased by missionaries to house "landless" Indians, it was officially designated as the Laytonville Rancheria on June 21, 1906 when the Bureau of Indian Affairs purchased the land for the Cahto Tribe. In an effort to uplift the epistemic authority of Indigenous knowledge systems and engage with Indigenous peoples' Right of Reply, ethical collaboration with the tribal chairperson's office and/or cultural center is highly encouraged for the most authoritative information about tribal reservations.

ville Rancheria (**preferred**,C,V,English-P,U)

cal Position:
d (facet)
.... orth and Central America (continent) (P)
..... United States (nation) (P)
..... California (state) (P)
..... Mendocino (county) (P)
..... Laytonville Rancheria (Indian reservation (Native American reservation)) (P)

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Project Outcomes

- Added, enriched, and hierarchically organized 250+ reservations and sacred/historical sites in the TGN with thorough scope notes and metadata – published on the public-facing TGN Online
- Developed a tracking spreadsheet that included place names, publishing status, challenges, and tribal contact information
- Created informed scope note templates and documentation to streamline workflows
- Advocated for future sustainability of the project through presentations at Getty and UCLA
- Led trainings with Vocabulary Program staff
- Promote meaningful consultation with tribal communities to uphold tribal sovereignty

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Project Challenges

- Reliance on ad-hoc, project-based diversity initiatives that are not scalable or sustainable
- Limited availability of accessible primary and secondary sources on certain sites
- CMS/DAMS requirements don’t allow for ambiguity and parallel interpretations
- Internationally-recognized metadata schemas do not sufficiently accommodate metadata elements that describe aspects of diversity
- Lack of systemic collaboration with source communities and between institutions at an international level
- Funding, resource, and labor constraints

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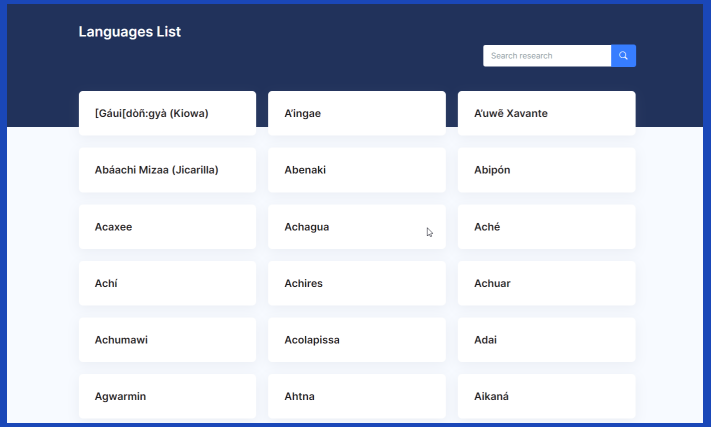
Next Steps

Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries, & Museums

Native Land Digital



- Collaborate directly with tribal nations, especially when no tribal-authored sources are publicly accessible
- Related remediation projects in ULAN and AAT
- Variant naming in Indigenous languages
- Alternative data sets (i.e., Native Land Digital, etc.)

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Thank you!

Questions?
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