

**Title:** Taonga Mokemoke: Reconnecting to our Lonely Treasures Overseas

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**Abstract:**

Many of our taonga, our treasures, are scattered across the globe in memory institutions and private collections; how are we to reconnect with them? Within our own homelands we often know where the taonga are; we are able to ensure that the correct context is attached to them and that cultural and spiritual practices for handling and engagement are appropriate.

What does this mean, however, in the context of our taonga abroad? The imperial nations of Europe are home to a large number of institutions that hold our taonga. The context supplied is often insufficient; handling of taonga might be appropriate from a conservation perspective but frequently no allowances are made for their cultural/spiritual needs. A small number of institutions have developed relationships with source communities. Others are interested but are unsure how to go about it.

Staff at these institutions often have questions which might seem to more knowledgeable people quite basic questions, such as, “who do I contact?” While the answers might seem obvious, it is not always the case, especially when provenance is often low. Are we, as information workers, able to facilitate connections, to help resolve these sorts of issues?

This presentation will: outline the context of our lonely taonga. Describe some examples of successful, and not so successful, relationships between institutions and source communities, predominantly Māori, here in the UK and elsewhere in Europe, such as the Georgian Papers Programme and Te Maru o Hinemihi, and open up discussion on how we could, or indeed if we should, facilitate the building of these relationships for the benefit of indigenous source communities and broadening the understanding and receptiveness of host institutions.