Title: Decolonizing and indigenizing collections at imagineNative by implementing the Indigenous Materials Classification System (IMCS)

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Abstract:

As institutional foundations are being shaken on our path toward reconciliation in Canada so too does our terminology and classification of knowledge need to reflect these integral changes to the way that knowledge is perceived and accessed. The science of classification has traditionally defined what a culture values as knowledge and Indigenous people are reasserting their ownership of their traditional and living knowledge; therefore, libraries, archives and cultural memory institutions need to work with communities to respectfully and properly describe and provide access to Indigenous materials under protocols appropriate to the materials and to the Indigenous community.

It is with this in mind that the Indigenous Materials Classification Schema (IMCS) was founded with the goal of reflecting indigenous worldview and values in knowledge organization and developed as a generic, adaptable and open source classification schema. The IMCS reflects best practices in organizing Indigenous knowledge and to more appropriately meet the needs of those seeking information on Indigenous (First Nations, Metis and Inuit) people.

The IMCS is based on the framework of the Brian Deer Classification system first developed by Kanien'kéhaka (Mohawk) librarian, Brian Deer, in the 1970s. This classification system was further adapted by the Union of BC Indian Chiefs (UBCIC) first in the 1980s then more recently in 2014 and by Gene Joseph at Xwi7xwa Library in the 1990s. The IMCS further was adapted and further developed by Camille Callison (Tahltan Nation), Alissa Cherry and Keshav Mukunda based on the UBCIC 2014 model to reflect a more national perspective.

The IMCS was first implemented at the National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation (NCTR) Reference Library in 2015 and material was catalogued using both the Library of Congress and IMCS classifications in the University of Manitoba Library system. In 2017, Camille collaboration with the National Film Board (NFB) to adapt the IMSC for the NFB Indigenous Cinema digital collection with multiple subject access points to assist users in locating films using an Indigenous worldview.

In 2018 imagineNative, the world largest presenter of Indigenous screen content, asked Camille to work Meagan, to adapt the IMCS for the newly created centre for Indigenous media arts. The project that we will present took shape from this adaption and we believe it will revolutionize and indigenize the film industry's descriptions of Indigenous films. The classification of knowledge using an Indigenous worldview and the use of appropriate and respectful descriptors will help to dispel even further the stereotypical notions of Indigenous people through more accurate portrayal and descriptions of Indigenous people in diverse forms of media.