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Svitlana Maluzynsky
Reference Librarian
Albert D. Cohen Management Library
University of Manitoba

Embracing Reconciliation: Integrating Native-Land.ca into Business Research

Reconciliation includes anyone with an open mind and an open heart who is willing to look into the future with a new way.

-- Chief Robert Joseph (as quoted in Reconciliation Canada, Shareable Resources)

Disclaimer: *I am a non-Indigenous person and I did not consult with Indigenous people prior to writing this article. In future, I will do my best to respectfully consult with Indigenous people from the outset.*

Indigenous peoples around the world have survived and continue to survive countless injustices. Colonizing nations still have a lot of work to do to make amends for historical and ever-present wrongs. To be a part of the solution, business librarians can strive to indigenize our work. While not intended specifically for business purposes, Native-Land.ca can be used to both advance business research and to contribute to reconciliation efforts.

When students work on business plans, they know to consider stakeholders. They understand that stakeholders—the very people their decisions will involve and affect—should be meaningfully consulted before any major plans or decisions are made. By ensuring that all relevant parties are supportive of – or not opposed to – proposed plans is a critical step. To illustrate this point, Canadian history has shown time and time again that Indigenous people want, deserve and expect to be respectfully consulted whenever they, their lands and their resources are concerned.¹

Whenever working on assignments that involve colonized lands or resources, librarians can encourage patrons to consider Indigenous stakeholders in their work. In classrooms and during reference appointments, we can help students to determine all the people they might affect if their projects were real. To identify potential Indigenous stakeholders, students need to know whose lands and resources are in question. The Native Land website can help.

Native-Land.ca is a free, Canadian online resource. It features a dynamic world map that depicts the traditional territories of its original peoples in Australia, New Zealand, the Pacific,

¹ To learn more about Indigenous resistance to a lack of consultation, look up the Oka Crisis, Meech Lake Accord, Idle No More, Trans Mountain pipeline and general Indigenous resistance.

North America and South America. Users can easily search by territories, languages and treaties. Post-contact borders and place names are optional.

The map's creators acknowledge that this is not a perfect resource, but they actively make improvements based on community feedback. Slight inaccuracies, however, won't take away from the greater message that we should try to convey, i.e. it is prudent to meaningfully consult and involve Indigenous peoples whenever relevant. By incorporating Indigenous resources into the services we provide, we help to normalize the inclusion of Indigenous affairs in business academia. My hope is that if we successfully demonstrate the importance of indigenizing business practices, our students will continue this work after they graduate.

The traditional saying, "all my relations," conveys that all living things are related and must care for each other (Settee, 2011). Whether we are situated on Indigenous lands or not, may this sentiment guide us in all of the work that we do. After all, every step toward reconciliation – no matter how big or small – is progress.

Further reading on reconciliation in Canada:

National Centre for Truth and Reconciliation
<https://nctr.ca/>

Truth and Reconciliation Commission's Calls to Action:
http://trc.ca/assets/pdf/Calls_to_Action_English2.pdf

References

Reconciliation Canada. Shareable Resources. Retrieved from <http://reconciliationcanada.ca/walk-for-reconciliation-2017/shareable-resources/>

Settee, P. (2011). Indigenous knowledge. In G.J. Sefa Dei (Ed.), *Indigenous philosophies and critical education: A reader* (28). Retrieved from <https://doi-org.uml.idm.oclc.org/10.3726/978-1-4539-0131-1>