
Focusing on Native Americans: basic Web resources pathfinder

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Abstract

Provides an introduction to basic Web-based resources relevant for locating information and identifying other resources that are useful in addressing frequently asked questions about topics and issues centered on Native Americans.

Electronic access

The research register for this journal is available at <http://www.emeraldinsight.com/researchregisters>

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Introduction

Staff in public and other types of libraries often receive inquiries about topics centering on Native Americans. These queries tend to fall into several frequently-asked question (FAQ) categories that can be broadly designated as:

- contemporary issues;
- genealogy;
- law and government;
- education; and
- culture/history.

This pathfinder provides an introduction to basic Web resources useful for addressing such clusters of questions. It is designed for the practitioner and/or patron who is beginning to delve into these areas of content.

Before accessing basic Web resources that can provide relevant and accurate "starting points" for answers, it is essential to contextualize the resources and the larger issues relevant to topics focused on Native Americans.

As with other areas of inquiry, Web resources about or targeted to Native Americans require the supplement of print and other format library collections. For instance, being able to identify Native American authors via a Web resource does not adequately address the information need of the patron who then wants to read the works produced by those authors. Also, it is vital for library professionals to recognize that Native Americans are not located "somewhere else", and for librarians to make connections within their own communities with the people and organizations and tribal governments representing local Native Americans. Even in an electronic age it remains necessary to devote attention to outreach, networking, and gatekeeping in complement with devotion to collection development. For instance, the most

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authoritative source for potential services available to an eligible tribal member will be a designated liaison within the tribe.

Second, because of historical and social realities, resources that are about Native Americans should be approached with the knowledge that there are long-standing and important issues of credibility and authenticity. Unfortunately, this is one arena in which there has long been and still is much misrepresentation. This article will introduce selected titles and Web sites that provide guidance for evaluating resources. However, as with all Web and other formats of information resources, evaluation is more of an art than a science, and an educated consumer, whether librarian or patron, is the best defense against misinformation. Part of that education necessitates that library staff members who field these questions have a basic understanding of stereotypes about native Americans. A piquant and concise question/answer print format that serves as a basic overview is Mihesuah's *American Indians: Stereotypes & Realities* (1996). Another question/answer format resource that is worth mentioning for its bibliographic citations is the second edition of Utter's *American Indians: Answers to Today's Questions* (2001).

It is necessary to remember that the now-familiar term, "500 nations", is a revealing indicator of the number and diversity of Native American tribes/nations/bands/clans/villages within the USA, and that the boundaries of the USA do not encompass all of the Native peoples in North and South America. It is just as important to note that state and national boundaries have often sectionalized traditional tribal lands. And, because of such events as forced removals, many Native peoples are in geographic locations that do not correspond with traditional homelands, and one nation's original population might now be divided among several locations. Also, the term "urban Indian" reflects the reality that, due to a complex interplay of history and policy, peoples from many tribes are located in metropolitan areas. The bottom line is that there are not "generic" Native Americans or indigenous experiences, contrary to popular stereotypes. Such insight is necessary when evaluating resources that focus on Native Americans.

On the other hand, the advantages of these Web-based resources are the same ones as those in any area of information inquiry: the provision of more current information than that offered by other formats and the ability to inexpensively collocate and navigate large quantities of information. In addition, the Web has now opened access to some valuable resources that, for whatever reason, would not have been previously available in a particular library setting.

Considering credibility and authenticity

As librarians know too well, there are no completely objective information sources, including those that are Web-based. Resources always reflect an orientation, philosophy, and/or agenda. Conversely, Web-based resources can provide a Native perspective that has often been missing from library collections. However, it is also important to remember that declaration of Native American heritage or affiliation, or lack of it, does not guarantee authenticity or credibility.

In her "Evaluation guidelines for Web sites about American Indian peoples" (<http://www.u.arizona.edu/~ecubbins/webcrit.html>), Cubbins has mounted concrete and thoughtful "guidelines useful for evaluating and identifying Web sites" focused on Native Americans. This is an excellent tool for professional use and as a link for patron use.

An example of an arena that has long been subjected to misrepresentation is Native American art, especially since it provides an increasingly lucrative market to those individuals who would misrepresent themselves and/or their wares and thus simultaneously defraud collectors and deprive Native artisans of commercial opportunities. Both librarians and patrons will find Prindle's *Contemporary Issues About Native American Art: A Collection of Annotated Links*" (<http://nativetech.org/art/issues.html>) to be a revealing compilation of Web-based articles and statements about fraudulent Native American art, documenting not only occurrences, but exploring larger issues of misrepresentation. These pages also encompass Web sites about the "Repatriation of Native American ritual objects and arts", referencing the federal Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act (NAGPRA),

with which all library and information professionals should be familiar[1]. Also included are sites addressing "The use of mascots and Native American stereotypes", which remains a high-profile controversy. While there are some broken links in this bibliography, it remains a relevant and quickly accessible collection posted on Prindle's Web site on "Native Tech" (<http://nativetech.org/>), which is:

Dedicated to disconnecting the term "primitive" from perceptions of Native American technology and art.

Mounted on the US Federal Trade Commission's (FTC) Web site is a page that details "How to buy genuine American Indian arts and crafts" (<http://www.ftc.gov/bcp/conline/pubs/products/indianart.htm>). Potential buyers will want to read this document. It offers concrete guidance and explains that because of the federal:

Indian Arts and Crafts Act of 1990, any item produced after 1935 that is marketed using terms such as "Indian," "Native American" or "Alaska Native" must be made by a member of a state or federally-recognized tribe or a certified Indian artisan[2].

At the state level, New Mexico's Office of the Attorney General has a Web site that includes a page about "Buying Native American arts and crafts". Within the state, the sale of items marketed as "authentic Indian art or handicraft" is governed by state law. The page is available at: http://www.ago.state.nm.us/Protection/Native_American_Arts/native_american_arts.html

Portals

A pacesetter site for providing a gateway to Web "home pages of Native American Nations and organizations, and to other sites that provide solid information about American Indians" is Mitten's "Native American Sites" (<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/indians.html>). Mitten, who is a librarian, provides a site well-organized by categories that are often requested by patrons, such as:

- information on individual Native nations;
- Native organizations and urban Indian centers;
- Native media; and
- powwows and festivals.

Mitten's category of "Information on Individual Indian Nations" provides a useful distinction in the form of a drum symbol to indicate those home pages mounted by Indian nations or individuals as opposed to those pages that are about Native nations but are not maintained by them. She also provides a category for "the mascot issue", about "Indian mascots used by sports teams". Given the contemporary interest in US participation in the twentieth-century engagements of World War II and in Korea and Vietnam, combined with recent attention about the role of code-talking during World Wars I and II, many patrons will find Mitten's "Indians in the Military" to be relevant/informative. Finally, Mitten's site is distinguished by the practice of providing notations of the dates that sites were added to her compendium and/or were updated.

Another well-organized portal is Strom's "Index of Native American Resources on the Internet" (<http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/>). In addition to expected categories of "culture", "history", and "language", etc., Strom has categories reflecting current issues and areas of popular interest, such as:

- non-profits;
- organizations;
- gaming;
- commercial;
- activist sites; and
- electronic texts.

Serving as lagniappe is the list of "frequently asked questions about this site", located as a link at the bottom of the site's home page. The format is question/answer, and provides a clear picture of the purpose and maintenance of the site. Also, many of the questions are ones that are encountered by librarians when providing reference services centered on Native American topics, and thus they serve as helpful reminders about devising relevant FAQs and policy for library settings.

Because of the unique government-to-government relationship of Native American nations and the USA, another essential portal has been the federal Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) home page (<http://www.doi.gov/>). However, in December of 2001, "access to the DOI Website has been restricted in compliance

with a court order" arising from litigation related to BIA oversight of Indian trust funds. In the past, this site's home page has provided information on a wide range of topics, from the BIA's own mission and history to a page of "BIA Services to American Indians". It was also an easily accessible resource for its listing of federally recognized Indian tribes in the contiguous 48 states and Native entities within Alaska and its directory of tribal leaders. Practitioners should be cognizant of the site and continue to monitor its status.

The US Department of Housing and Urban Development (HUD) home page (<http://www.hud.gov/groups/nativeamericans.cfm>) has been serviceable as a complement to the BIA site, both because housing programs for Native Americans is one frequently requested area of information and because of the clarity of its organization. There are links from the home page to information about the Indian Housing Loan Guarantee Program, the Native American Veteran Loan Program, and other federally sponsored housing services. Also in the arena of federal services to Native Americans, the US Indian Health Service (IHS) Web site (<http://www.ihs.gov/>) offers answers to FAQs about health care benefits (<http://www.ihs.gov/GeneralWeb/HelpCenter/CustomServices/customer.asp>).

The Mitten and Strom portals (and the BIA site if it returns) are recommended as bookmarks to serve as initial comprehensive sources for addressing many inquiries centered on Native Americans.

Genealogy and demographics

There is increasing interest in Native American ancestry, with queries often emanating from patrons with very limited to no experience in genealogical research and resource location. Several sites can provide patrons with the fundamentals of beginning such investigation. When it was available, the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) site provided very useful overviews of how to begin a search for Indian ancestry. The American Indian Library Association (AILA) has a similar introduction (<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/aila.html>), accessible via AILA's home page link for "tracing Native roots" (under the heading "AILA FAQ"). The page of annotated Web

resources is entitled "Finding Your Native American Ancestors".

While there is not a substitute for the assistance of individuals with expertise in the specialization of genealogical research, there are several comprehensive sources that patrons will find informative. A lengthy listing of electronic resources for Native American Genealogy is mounted on "Cyndi's List of Genealogy Sites on the Internet" (<http://www.cyndislist.com/>). It can be accessed from the home page's link to the "Topical Index" and then to the link "Ethnic Groups and People", which includes "Native American" (<http://www.cyndislist.com/native.htm>). Native American sites are categorized by topics such as:

- Native American conflicts and wars;
- publications, software and supplies; and
- records: census, cemeteries, land, obituaries . . . , etc.

The US National Archives and Records Administration (NARA) provides "The Genealogy Page" (<http://www.nara.gov/genealogy>). On that page, the link to "Part 2: Online Information" has a category of "Native American Records", with links for those individuals who need information about such specific records as applications for Indian bounty lands, Indian census data, and those documents emanating from the Dawes Commission.

For addressing queries about demographics, the US Census Bureau (<http://www.census.gov/>) maintains a "Minority Links" page (<http://www.census.gov/pubinfo/www/hotlinks.html>) with "Quick and easy links to the latest data on racial and ethnic populations in the United States". The link to "Facts on the American Indian/Alaska Native Population" includes data categorized by:

- census 2000;
- social characteristics;
- economic characteristics; and
- profiles.

Law/government

When focusing on Native Americans, topics of law and government are characterized by their complexity and detail, but there are Internet resources that can provide documents and authoritative statements to answer FAQs about

legal relationships, treaties, and tribal governments. The Native American Rights Fund (NARF) (<http://www.narf.org>) is a:

Non-profit organization that provides legal representation and technical assistance to Indian tribes, organizations and individuals.

NARF has a home page link to "Publications", which provides access to a link for "Answers to Frequently Asked Questions about Native peoples". There is also a link to "Dispelling the Myths about Indian Gaming", regarding the establishment of Indian casinos. NARF's home page link to its "National Indian Law Library" (NILL) will take a user to a link for its own online "catalog" and to one for NARF's own annual reports, news releases, and publications ("NARF Publications"). Also under "Research Links" are links to two important bibliographies: (1) Native American Law – Primary Sources; and (2) Native American Law – Secondary Sources.

Both resources are briefly annotated listings of Internet resources. Similarly useful for collection development, Wisconsin Judicare's Indian Law Office (<http://www.judicare.org/ilo.htm>) has a side frame link to "Indian Law Books", which is an un-annotated:

List of books dealing with Indian law, history, and culture, and which may prove useful to practitioners of Indian law and those interested in learning more about Indian law.

Those same two constituencies will be interested in the Tribal Court Clearinghouse Web site (<http://www.tribal-institute.org/>), which is:

The first Web site devoted to providing information to people working in Native American tribal courts.

One very helpful link is to a page of "Tribal Codes and Constitutions", providing many links under categories of:

- tribal codes;
- sample codes;
- tribal code development resources;
- environmental codes; and
- tribal constitutions.

The University of Oklahoma College of Law (<http://www.law.ou.edu/>) has a home page link to "Native American Legal Resources", which provides a link to the results of a joint project

between the law school and NARF's NILL: the "Native American constitution and Law Digitization Project". This on-going project makes available on-line tribal constitutions and codes.

Another important on-line resource is Oklahoma State University's access to a digitized version of the laws and treaties from Kappler's *Indian Affairs* (<http://digital.library.okstate.edu/kappler/index.htm>), an early twentieth century:

... Seven volume compilation of US treaties, laws and executive orders pertaining to Native American Indian tribes.

A print resource that is recommended for supplementing Kappler's work is Deloria and DeMallie's *Documents of American Indian Diplomacy: Treaties, Agreements, and Conventions, 1775-1979* (1999).

Education: opportunities

Frequently, queries in the realm of American Indian education concern scholarships and other financial assistance. A specialized print resource is the reasonably priced volume, *Financial Aid for Native Americans, 2001-2003* (Schlachter and Weber, 2001), which can be ordered from Reference Service Press (<http://www.rspfunding.com/>). The American Indian College Fund Web site provides information about its scholarship opportunities for students enrolled in tribal colleges (<http://www.collegefund.org/main.shtm>) and also provides a list of other scholarship resources for Native students. The site has a link to a directory of the tribal colleges, with links to their home pages. For students interested in Native American studies programs, ASAIL, or the Association for the Study of American Indian Literatures (<http://www.richmond.edu/faculty/ASAIL/index.html>), provides a link to its "Guide to Native American Studies Programs in the US and Canada". This listing has links to the programs' home pages, many of which will provide guidance on financial support options.

For students considering specializations, there are organizations of Indian professionals that publicize information about those professions as well as information about financial support opportunities. For instance,

the American Indian Science and Engineering Society (AISES) has links for scholarships and internships on its Web site (<http://www.aises.org>). The Association of American Indian Physicians' (AAIP) home page (<http://www.aaip.com/>) has a link to "Student Activities and Information" (including scholarship and other opportunities). Similarly, the Indian Health Service (IHS), which is:

... responsible for providing federal health services to American Indians and Alaska Natives [who are] ... members of federally recognized tribes;

provides a home page (<http://www.ihs.gov>) link to "Jobs and Scholarships". The Native American Journalists Association (NAJA) site (<http://www.naja.com/>) has a "Programs" link that includes information about its scholarship and fellowship opportunities.

Education: stereotypes

Electronic resources that inform about stereotypes can be supplemented with quality print resources that can aid both librarians and patrons who must distinguish between authenticity and misrepresentation. Several books are vital for collection-building activities and for response to teachers, home schooling parents, students, youth leaders, and children's librarians who need guidance in designing lessons, programs, and activities centered on Native Americans. All of these patrons would find the second edition of *American Indian Stereotypes in the World of Children: A Reader and Bibliography* (Hirschfelder *et al.*, 1999) to be valuable as an overview and for its specific guidance. It is formatted to serve as both a reader of essays and a comprehensive bibliography. The essays focus on topics of contemporary relevance, such as terms used for Native Americans, misrepresentations of American Indians and Alaska Natives in textbooks, use of American Indian-themed mascots and symbols, and celebrations of Columbus Day and Thanksgiving. The annotated bibliography covers print and non-print resources. A resource that is an educational experience in itself is Slapin and Seale's *Through Indian Experience: The Native Experience in Books for Children* (1998). Its essays offer a Native perspective on children's literature, and it serves as a reminder of the

importance of cultural awareness in collection development. Designed for librarians, *How to Teach About American Indians: A Guide for the School Library Media Specialist* (Harvey *et al.*, 1995) contains specific guidelines for selecting materials and designing instructional activities, and it provides detailed guidance for teaching about:

- Native American culture;
- literature;
- history;
- spiritual practices;
- sovereignty; and
- contemporary life.

Additionally, there is coverage of ways to address both American and Indian holidays. In a similar vein, *Native Americans Today: Resources and Activities for Educators, Grades 4-8* (Hirschfelder and Beamer, 2000) provides a user-friendly lesson plan format, focusing topically on appropriate and inappropriate terminologies referencing Native Americans, Indian culture and lifestyles, contemporary Native communications such as:

- radio and television;
- arts;
- economics;
- current struggles related to sacred sites;
- repatriation;
- language recorder;
- sports team names;
- mascots; and
- logos representing American Indians.

All of these resources can assist clients and staff who are looking for information on how to move collections, programs, and activities beyond the too-common emphasis on the "vanishing Indian" stereotype. Electronic assistance is provided by the Michigan Humanities Council's Web resource, "Exploring American Indian Stereotypes" (<http://mihumanities.h-net.msu.edu/roads/nativelesson.html>). It is an adaptable lesson plan, appropriate for grades three to 12. Educators will also be interested in the lengthy listing of Internet links of "Teacher's Resources", accessed through the Strom Web site (<http://www.hanksville.org/NAresources/>) home page (click on "Education").

Oyate (<http://www.oyate.org/aboutus.html>):

A Native organization working to see that our lives and histories are portrayed honestly;

addresses its mission through such activities as evaluation of resources by and about American Indians, provision of workshops, and the distribution of children's and young adult and teacher materials and resources focusing on Native Americans. The site's link to "Books to Avoid", captures critical reviews of several high-profile children's and young adult's books, explaining concerns from a Native perspective, and thus alerting users to these concerns. An excellent resource that can be ordered through Oyate's Web site (via the "Our catalog" link) is the poster, "Teaching Respect for Native Peoples". It is available to view on-line on the site under the "Posters" section of the catalog. It is literally:

... A list of how, and how not, to teach about Native peoples in the classroom.

Important as an information resource in its own right, it is also an appropriate permanent display for library walls.

The Alaska Native Knowledge Network (<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/>) home page has a link to its "Culturally-Based Curriculum Resources Database", which offers the ability to search for various guidelines relevant to culture and education. One of the resources is "Guidelines for Respecting Cultural Knowledge" (<http://www.ankn.uaf.edu/standards/CulturalDoc.html>), which can be utilized:

... in address[ing] issues of concern in the documentation, representation and utilization of traditional cultural knowledge.

The document provides guidelines for use by:

- Native elders;
- authors/illustrators;
- curriculum developers;
- administrators;
- educators;
- editors and publishers;
- document reviewers;
- researchers;
- Native language specialists;
- Native community organizations; and
- the general public.

The Educational Resources Information Center (ERIC) (<http://www.accesseric.org/about/>

[about.html](#)), familiar to librarians and teachers for its database of education resources, offers online resources appropriate for a wide range of clientele. ERIC provides full-text versions of its Digests, which are succinct reports averaging around 1,000 words. They are indexed on-line (http://www.ed.gov/databases/ERIC_Digests/index/). Many of the Digests focus on education topics relevant to American Indians, including combating stereotypes. Of potential interest to a broad range of patrons is ED394744, "Teaching Young Children About Native Americans" (Reese, 1996). Of particular interest to educators is ED400146, "Countering Pprejudice Against American Indians and Alaska Natives Through Antibias Curriculum and Instruction" (Almeida, 1996), ED321968, "Unbiased Teaching About American Indians and Alaska Natives in Elementary Schools" (Pepper, 1990), and ED348201, "Using Literature by American Indians and Alaska Natives in Secondary schools" (Grand and Gillespie, 1992).

Child's Boarding School Seasons: American Indian Families, 1900-1940 (1998) is one of several contemporary realistic portrayals of the historic boarding school experiences for Native children. Collectively, these treatments have spurred broader interest in this aspect of Indian education, which has frequently been little understood. Two examples of Web sites recording the experiences at individual boarding schools are the ones for Sherman Indian High School and for Carlisle Indian Industrial School:

The Sherman Indian Museum, located on the Sherman Indian High School grounds in Riverside, California, not only houses traditional Native American collections, it preserves more than a century of the school's student body history, heritage and pride.

Its Web site (<http://www.shermanindianmuseum.org/>) has mounted on it the Sherman Names Project Student Archives, which is:

A searchable index of names of the many students attending Sherman Indian Boarding School from 1890 to 1939.

Landis and Bell are responsible for a site devoted to the Carlisle Indian Industrial School, in Pennsylvania (<http://home.epix.net/~landis/index.html>). The site's purpose is to:

... respectfully honor those students and their descendants who lived the experiment, and to celebrate those who prospered from it, and to grieve with those whose lives were diminished by it.

The site provides information about the school and highlights its more well-known alumni.

Education: pedagogy

Educators and students in teacher training programs often seek information about "best practice" in teaching Native students. *Teaching American Indian Students* (Reyhner, 1992), a print compilation of contributions by 19 educators, is an excellent introduction. More recently, Swisher and Tippeconnic have edited *Next Steps: Research and Practice to Advance Indian Education* (1999), a collection of works by Native authors that addresses historical and contemporary Native education, curricula, and the college/university experience, emphasizing Native-controlled schools.

ERIC's Clearinghouse on Rural Education and Small Schools (<http://www.ael.org/eric/>) has a link from its home page to "American Indian and Alaska Native Education", which has such on-line resources as, "What's New in American Indian and Alaska Native Education". This short list of annotated resources highlights "Best books and resources ... abstracted recently for the ERIC database". "Conferences related to American Indian and Alaska Native education" is a continuously updated list, and it provides on-line and other contact information for each conference, in addition to sponsors, dates, topics, etc. The ERIC/CRESS print publication, *The Native Education Directory* (2001), is now provided as a link to its iteration as an:

... online guide of organizations, agencies, publishers, colleges, and universities involved in American Indian and Alaska Native education;

that "serve a statewide, multistate, or national audience". The on-line directory also provides links to forms for submissions of revisions and additions to its entry listings.

The Journal of American Indian Education is a unique resource now available through the Web (<http://jaie.asu.edu/index.html>). Its articles focus on the education of American Indians and Alaska Natives, and it encourages publication of manuscripts that reflect "research that is initiated, conducted, and interpreted by

natives". This peer-reviewed scholarly journal's home page includes links that enable the user to "Search the journal", and to view the "Full Text of Past Volumes." The latter is currently available for Volume 1 (1961) to Volume 33 (1993-1994).

Literature: authors/producers

With increased popular interest in Native authors and literature, there are more inquiries related to identifying the authors and locating biographical and critical information about them. The bibliographic essay, "Native American Literature: Expanding the Canon" (Kratzert and Richey, 1998) provides an introduction to contemporary Native American authors, and its many citations to print primary sources can be utilized for collection development.

The Web contains resources about Native authors and has the advantage of being easily updated to provide information about authors recently published or of recent popularity. The Internet Public Library's "Native American Authors" page (<http://www.ipl.org/ref/native/>) has:

... bibliographies of their published works, biographical information, and links to online resources including interviews, online texts and tribal Websites.

At the bottom of the site's home page is a link to its "Collection Policy", which is noteworthy in providing background for the database and for exemplifying the type of disclosures that should be part of library Web projects.

"Voices from the Gaps: Women Writers of Color" (<http://voices.cla.umn.edu/>) is mounted by the University of Minnesota. Its home page offers access by a link from "By Racial/Ethnic Background" to a listing of "Indigenous/Native American" women authors. Information provided includes biographical/critical, bibliographic (works by and about the author), and related links. A thoughtful addition at the bottom of each entry is attribution for the researcher(s) who compiled the information.

The American Native Press Archives (ANPA) at the University of Arkansas at Little Rock (<http://anpa.ualr.edu>) has a mission of:

... collecting and archiving the products of the Native press and materials related to Native press history, collecting and documenting the works of

Native writers, and constructing bibliographic guides to Native writing and publishing.

Available on the Web site is a searchable bibliography that includes both writers from past years and contemporary authors. Its present emphasis is on writers from 1772 to 1945. On the ANPA home page is a link for "Bibliography of Native American Writers", containing a description of, and explaining the scope of, the project. From that page and from the home page, a link provides the option to "Search the Bibliography".

A resource that highlights today's generation of Native writers is the Wordcraft Circle of Native Writers and Storytellers (<http://www.wordcraftcircle.org/>), which includes a link to a listing of "Current Members". Provided is access to their Web sites and links for e-mailing them.

The Cooperative Children's Book Center, at the University of Wisconsin-Madison School of Education (<http://www.soemadison.wisc.edu/ccbc>) provides a list of "Small Presses Owned and Operated by People of Color: Publishers of Children's Books" (<http://www.soemadison.wisc.edu/ccbc/pclist.htm>). Included are "American Indian Presses and Tribal Publishers", providing contact information, including hot links to available Web sites. Similarly, AILA's home page (<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/aila.html>) has a link to a directory of producers of "books by and about Native Americans".

Culture

For patrons seeking cultural information about the various indigenous nations, there is often easy access to historical data, but limited knowledge of, or access to information about, contemporary culture. Culture integrates all aspects of life, including recreation, arts, celebrations, music, spirituality, food, etc. The Web has enabled many Native nations to mount their own Web pages (see the previously mentioned Mitten and Strom portals for such links) and to provide information that their people have chosen to share about their history/culture.

One frequent inquiry about Native American cultures regards the occurrence of powwows and other celebrations/gatherings. Mitten's site

(<http://www.nativeculture.com/lisamitten/powwows.html>) is particularly useful for its link to "Powwows and Festivals", which includes many links to specific powwows, as well as regional and national listings of powwows. In addition, various state tourism bureaus have sites that will provide information about tribal events and locations within those states. For instance, the New Mexico Department of Tourism (<http://www.newmexico.org/>) home page has an "Events Calendar" link that has a link to "Native American Events". The "Events" can be accessed by month. The home page also has a link to "Cities, Pueblos, Regions, and Maps", with a link to information about "Pueblos and Reservations" in New Mexico, including contact information. Oklahoma's Tourism and Recreation Department home page (<http://www.travelok.com>) has a link to "Our Heritage" at the top of the page. The "Heritage" page provides a link to "Indian Tribes" in Oklahoma, with links to "American Indian Events" and "American Indian attractions". Also useful to visitors are links to explanations about "What is a Pow-wow?", "Pow-wow Protocol", and "Why Indians Honor Military Servicemen". Alaska's Department of Community and Economic Development has a tourism home page (<http://www.dced.state.ak.us/tourism/>), with a link from "Visitor Information" to "Native Arts and Culture", which includes a link to the Web site of the "Alaska Native Heritage Center". The center is:

A gathering place that celebrates, perpetuates and shares Alaska Native cultures.

Its page has a calendar of events taking place at the center.

Native entities fostering tourism also provide informative Web pages, such as the site for the Great Lakes Intertribal Council (<http://www.glitc.org/>). It has links for Web pages of tribes in Wisconsin and its "pow-wows" link provides answers to FAQs about pow-wow protocol. This Web page also has a link to the Wisconsin Educational Communications Board Web site (<http://www.ecb.org/wisconsin/powwow/index.htm>) where visitors can "experience a Wisconsin pow-wow" through the "Visit the PowWow" link. They can see a slide show, or video clips, of pow-wow highlights.

Another frequent question in relation to Native culture is the query about details of traditional clothing or ceremonial regalia. Some nations, such as the Seminole Tribe of Florida (<http://www.seminoletribe.com/>), have mounted information about clothing on their Web sites. The home page's "Culture" link leads to multiple links, including one describing "Seminole Clothing". There are also producers of various media products that provide instruction about apparel design and construction. For instance, Full Circle Videos (<http://www.fullcir.com/>) markets its video productions about "traditional Native American crafts, art and artists", with the intent that they:

... Will build a bridge of understanding and will show traditional Indian arts in a respectful manner.

The enterprise also provides patterns and books to accompany its videos about beading, shawls, moccasins, etc.

Museums have traditionally focused on historical indigenous cultures, but have increasingly begun to highlight contemporary Native culture, too. They have also moved to virtually extend exhibits beyond museum walls. The Canadian Museum of Civilization (<http://www.civilization.ca/cmcc/cmce.asp>) has links to "Exhibitions", which includes those about first peoples of the area. There are links for virtually touring the exhibits. Pertinent for collection development are the links to resources, such as books and Web sites, provided at the bottom of the pages featuring the exhibits. Similarly, the Smithsonian Institutions have a page listing "Native American Resources" (<http://www.si.edu/resource/faq/nmai/start.htm>), with links to Web sites, bibliographies, and directories. The National Museum of the American Indian (NMAI), part of the Smithsonian Institution, has its own home page (<http://www.nmai.si.edu>). The left frame provides a link to "Exhibitions", providing access to virtual exhibitions that are part of NMAI's CONEXUS pilot project.

Often consumers think of Native American music as being fixed in past time. A site that illustrates the diversity of music produced by current artists is maintained by the Native American Music Awards (NAMA) (<http://www.nativeamericanmusic.com>). Artists and

their works are illustrated in award categories from blues to pop to flutist, as well as historical. This site also provides "Links", which takes the user to a directory of producers/distributors of Native recordings and related organizations. Included is contact information:

- address;
- phone;
- e-mail; and
- URLs.

Native culture and history, both historical and contemporary, is also recorded and distributed via media such as newspapers and telecommunications. For example, *Indian Country Today* (<http://www.indiancountry.com/>) is "the Nation's leading American Indian news source", and it spotlights news and features, editorials, cartoons, etc., from the print version. Native American Public Telecommunications (<http://www.nativetelecom.org/>), or NAPT, is dedicated to "Empowering, Educating, and Entertaining Through Native Media". Its Web site highlights this producer of educational programs for television and public radio. A link at the top of the home page is for "Indian Radio". This page provides information about, and audio access to, American Indian Radio on Satellite (AIROS), which distributes Native radio programming nationally. The programming includes "AIROS's flagship program", "Native American Calling", a live one-hour call-in show, available on Native radio stations and national public radio.

Conclusion

A final reminder about site evaluation: A perusal of these Web sites centered on Native American people and topics will remind the user that repeated linkages by credible sites is one potential indicator of quality for individual Web sites.

Notes

- 1 Librarians who are unfamiliar with NAGPRA will find this article to be a clear overview of its implications for the information professions: Grose, T.O. (1996), "Reading the bones: information content, value, and

ownership issues raised by the Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act", *Journal of the American Society for Information Science*, Vol. 47 No. 8, pp. 624-31.

- 2 As noted in this paper in the "Portals" section, the US Bureau of Indian Affairs (BIA) Web site has been a rich source for information relevant to the Federal Government's relationship with Native Americans. Previously, that Web site, which falls jurisdictionally under the Department of the Interior (DOI), included valuable information about the Indian Arts and Crafts Act and the Indian Arts and Crafts Board. The site is currently not available because "access to the DOI Website has been restricted in compliance with a court order".

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