Representation of Ethnic Heritage in Cyberspace:
Digital Archives and Community Participation

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This paper focuses on digital archiving and cultural representation of ethnic groups. It explores the relationship between technology and knowledge production and dissemination by examining the archive as a cultural product or a site where the issues of racial and ethnic representation are contested. Throughout history, human beings have always strived to create numerous forms of archives and develop a wide range of tools to organize and navigate their contents. The widespread implementation of digital technologies in humanities had great implications on the field of archiving as the last few decades have witnessed "mass digital migration of physical, on-site materials; preservation of born digital materials; and the development of new standards and practices" (Kim 2015, 2). This is particularly true as more libraries, museums, universities and government agencies across the world are implementing digital technologies to enhance the accessibility of their collections of books, documents and artifacts and to make them available for new and diverse users.

These shifts are not only limited to the form of the archive, but also to what is archive-worthy. For example, new digital endeavors and forms of expression such as codes, video games and social media platforms, to name a few, are nowadays deemed an integral part of the cultural legacy that should be archived. In this sense, digital archives are not seen only as a set of technical specifications and inscribed values but also as an expanding cultural product that greatly shapes people's history, identity and memory. As a result, digital archives have radically "opened up the field to community archives movement, postcolonial archival theory, human rights archives and other archives-as-activism endeavors in the past few decades" (Kim 2015, 3-4).

Traditionally, an archive is seen as a repository "in which public records or historical materials such as documents are preserved" (Merriam-Webster 2018). It usually includes manuscripts, books and other cultural artifacts found in

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libraries and museums. However, the last few decades have witnessed an increasing interest in archiving outside of the archival and library communities as more literary critics, historians, philosophers, sociologists, political scientists, and anthropologists are examining the archive not merely as a repository but as an ideological tool and a powerful cultural product that can shape people's identity, history and memory. Jacques Derrida shed light on this phenomenon in his book, *Archive Fever*.

In his book, Derrida builds on the work of Freud and contends that the process of preserving a nation's history through the construction of an archive involves a negotiation between two conflicting forces: Thanatos and Eros. The increasing archive drive or the desire to document and affirm the past in order to shape the future is linked to the pleasure principle. Whereas the desire to forget, annihilate, or eradicate certain incidents, ideas or artifacts is linked to the death drive (1995, 12). Derrida's words are important particularly from an ethnic perspective because they highlight the power dynamics or what he calls instances of archival violence that are involved in the construction of the archive and hence the perception of history. Far from being an innocent, objective and comprehensive record of the past, the archive is a space of power that involves selective processes that determine what can be told and what is doomed to oblivion. The power to exclude through processes such as omissions and distortions becomes a key aspect of the archive, which eventually results in archival silences or gaps.

Similarly, Michel Foucault in his book *The Archeology of Knowledge* dismisses the traditional definition of an archive. He contends that it is not merely "the sum of all the texts" that a culture keeps to preserve its own past, or an "evidence of a continuing identity"; nor is it the "institutions" which conserve the discourses that people in power wish to retain and keep in circulation" (1972, 129). To him, the archive is "the law of what can be said, the system that governs the appearance of statements as unique events" (1972, 129). He adds that the archive is not the statements/knowledge or the contents of the archive, rather it is the system or the set of relations that ensures that these contents "do not accumulate endlessly in an amorphous mass, nor are they inscribed in an unbroken linearity, nor do they disappear at the mercy of chance external accidents" (1972, 129). The function of the system, in this sense, is to give a sense of coherence to the contents and gloss over instances of archival silence. Thus, the archive becomes a model of knowledge production with operational rules that ensure that the contents are "grouped together in distinct figures, composed together in accordance with multiple relations, maintained or blurred

in accordance with specific regularities; that which determines that they do not withdraw at the same pace in time, but shine, as it were, like stars" (1972, 129).

Foucault's words emphasize the sheer power of archives because they illustrate how historical data is transformed into historical narratives by certain forces or powers that arrange events in a manner that both shapes posterity's perception of these events and ensures their continuity. This is particularly true in a colonial context where imperial archives served as political tools that served the objectives of colonial administrators. Thomas Richards maintains that the British Empire depended on the archives of data-driven, knowledge-producing establishments such as the Royal Geographic Society, the British Museum and the university to consolidate their feelings of colonial power over the massive stretches of land that they ruled. He contends that colonial archives are a "fantasy of knowledge collected and united in the service of state and Empire" (1993, 6).

The political and cultural implications of this shift in archival paradigms have far-reaching consequences on the field of ethnic and racial studies since the ideological choices regarding what to be included in or omitted from an archive, as well as, how to present and organize material can greatly impact cultural representation of ethnic groups in a digital age. This awareness opens up new spaces of resistance to archival violence. That is why, since their emergence, digital archives have offered an appealing alternative to traditional archives for scholars of race and ethnicity who view them as a measure of resistance against the limitations imposed upon those who have been labeled "minority" in past archival eras. Daniel Ferrer contends that digital collection can offer "an unlimited number of paths through the documents; it allows instant juxtaposition of facsimiles, transcriptions, and commentaries … and it welcomes dialogic readings, with unlimited possibilities of reordering, additions of new documents, and changes of reading" (2002, 92). Ferrer's words are important because the open-endedness of digital archives and the elimination of printing cost enable scholars to update the collections much more frequently as new artifacts, manuscripts and multiple versions of the texts can be always added. The increased possibility of adding, reordering and marking up documents can dismantle canonical hierarchies and empower ethnic groups through giving them agency and control over the representation of their culture and history. The newly founded ease of publication, the promise of the democratization of knowledge and the dismantling of the canon fueled the emergence of a wide range of small scale recovery projects led by museums, libraries and even

individual scholars who aimed to retrieve lost or excluded manuscripts written by and about different ethnic groups.

However, in spite of the hopes vested with digital archives to offer a more authentic and inclusive representation of those who have usually been largely silenced in traditional archives, there are still major concerns that up till now they have not fully succeeded in achieving adequate archival inclusion. Upon comparing and contrasting digital archives of canonical white writers with those of writers of color, the result is not in favor of the latter in terms of number, functionality and sustainability. Patricia Keefe Durso highlighted this discrepancy in a study she conducted in 2005 to compare the number of available digital sources on a number of canonical white American writers and other Native and African-American ones. Her study revealed that the number of sources on African-American writers such as Harriet Jacob (125,000), as well as, Native American figures such Zitkala-Sa (39,600), and Samson Occom (23,100) does not measure up to that on white writers such as Nathaniel Hawthorne (1.9 million), Walt Whitman (7.4 million), or Emily Dickinson (612,000) (2006, 213).

This imbalance in archiving endeavors is not limited only to the number of archives, but also to their functionality and sustainability as researchers usually find themselves grappling with underdeveloped digital archives that are not always well-linked or properly indexed. For example, the digital archive of the African- American author and essayist Charles Chestnutt, which was launched in 1997, features only 63 texts out of more than 140 texts that were published in his life. The manuscripts section has a very limited functionality and content. On the other hand, the Emily Dickenson Archive has a comprehensive manuscripts section that features hundreds of pictures with transcriptions and annotations of several editions, a functional keyword search and a dictionary of over 9,275 words found in her poems (Earhart 2012, 313). The sustainability of the archives is another major problem that scholars and users face. A quick look at "The Minority Studies" section in Alan Liu's digital archive *Voice of the Shuttle* shows that a large number of these archives cannot be located which indicates that they are lost or no longer properly maintained. This illustrates that the authors and texts that are selected for this kind of intensive continuous work even in the digital world depend on "extra-textual debates about value, canon, audience, and even sometimes market that cannot be ignored." (Du Plessis 2002, 56). This, in turn, draws attention to the importance of simultaneous exertion of effort in two directions: setting up new ethnic archives, as well as, maintaining and upgrading the existing ones.

Nearly most of the critical articles that examine the causes of this archival gap focus on the field's key players, namely the builders/technical developers and the thinkers/humanities scholars. Some views maintain that one of the major reasons of this archival gap is that most of the early projects adopted by major digital humanities centers usually tend to recreate digital copies of works of conventional authors. This, in the words of Amy E. Earhart, made institutions such as the University of Virginia's Institute for Advanced Technology in the Humanities (IATH); Rutgers University's Center for Electronic Texts in the Humanities and libraries such as the New York Public Library contribute to the reinforcement of canonical bias by enhancing critical attention paid to these works. On the other hand, prominent black figures like Claude McKay, Charles Chesnutt and Frances E.W. Harper were generally overlooked by the first wave of digital archiving projects in favor of more canonical authors such as Dickinson, Stowe and Whitman (2012, 313). Of course, one cannot overlook the immense role that these early projects played in legitimizing digital humanities in the eyes of skeptical scholars by illustrating how far digital platforms can extend conventional scholarship and provide new ways of examining literature that would have been impossible without digital technologies. Moreover, they provided researchers all over the world with a fast and cost effective access to rare artifacts and manuscripts while preserving the exhibitions from excessive handling. In spite of the fact that this increased critical attention led to better understanding of these great authors, it reconsolidated their canonicity at the expense of less researched ones. Amanda Gaily maintains that the tendency of early American archiving projects to adopt an author-centered view of literature "has resulted in the digitization of minutiae by a few great authors while the major works of slightly less canonical authors have been altogether neglected" (qtd. in Powell and Aitken 2010, 251).

Unlike Gaily, who attributes this imbalance to a rather ideologically conservative and limited approach that does not effectively expand the canon, Jerome McGann argues that funding is the root cause of this problem. He maintains that "Digital scholarship—even the best of it . . . is typically born into poverty—even the best funded ones. Ensuring their maintenance, development, and survival is a daunting challenge" (2005, 77). McGann's opinion is important because it illustrates why researchers can be tempted to digitize texts that have already been meticulously edited in paper form given the enormous amount of money, time and technical expertise needed to create an advanced and properly maintained digital archive. This, in turn, throws light on the importance of exerting conscious effort on the part of funding bodies and academia to

reallocate resources within the field of digital humanities in a more inclusive and diverse manner. This conscious allocation of resources will not only help in the setup of new ethnic archival projects, but also in the upgrading of the existing ones that suffer from lack of sophistication and clear editorial presence.

This lack of funding does not only affect humanities scholars or thinkers, but also has far-reaching effects on another key player in the field, namely builders of digital tools. In spite of the fact that digital humanities is by nature an interdisciplinary field, the emphasis on the technical side as the field's key defining feature is still dominant. This is clear in the prevalent granting model where funding bodies usually tend to support projects that focus on technological innovation rather than those which address diversity, inclusion and recovery of minority literature. A recent study reveals that out of the 141 Digital Humanities Start- Up Grants awarded by The National Endowment of Humanities (NEH) from 2007 to 2010, only sixteen focused on the recovery or preservation of diverse community literature (Earhart 2012, 314).

This granting imbalance emanates from and highlights a more serious challenge, which is the lack of adequate cultural logic on part of some of the builders that participate in digital archiving projects. The roots of this problem, according to Tara McPherson, go back to the design of early computational systems, developed in a post-World War II era, which did not factor elements like gender, race and class in the design of technological tools (2012, 158). The prevalent notion that technology is a dehistoricized and depoliticized space of objective scientific endeavors affects how issues of race and ethnicity are tackled in digital archiving projects. Alan Liu maintains that builders rarely factor politics, economics or culture into their digital work (2012, 491). Similarly, Earhart contends that if we "do not theorize our technological approaches with a mind toward cultural constructions, we will continue to exclude certain materials from digitization" (2012, 315). This highlights the need to consciously and continuously link technological tools with culture when attempting to construct a digital archive. In order to live up to its interdisciplinary nature, technological and ideological choices should be the result of full partnership and thorough discussions between builders and thinkers. This collaboration can improve the algorithmic and computational literacies of the thinkers, as well as, the cultural logic of the builders. McPherson contends that this might even lead to the emergence of "new hybrid practitioners: artist- theorists, programming humanists, activist- scholars; theoretical archivists, critical race coders" (2012, 154).

Highlighting the importance of enhancing the cultural sensibilities of builders can encourage many of them to question and revise customary technical choices and become more aware of their ideological implications in social, cultural and political contexts. This can help them explore and share innovative and culturally informed technical choices when they deal with matters of race and ethnicity. This was the case with Amanda Gailey who worked on a digital archive of children's literature that was published in postbellum United States. Many of the stories she collected had African-American characters that used language in a way that differs from the standard usage. This prevented the archive's search engine from recognizing these words, which in turn could affect the functionality of the site. She had to find a technical solution for representing these words without giving value to one usage over the other, so she decided to use "the <orig> and <reg> combination instead of the <sic> and <cor> combination (meaning sic and "correction"), as the former pair makes no claim about the rightness or wrongness of the readings, only how standardized their spellings are" (qtd. in Earhart 2012, 316).

From the above, it is clear that there is a critical consensus that the dismantling of canonical hierarchies, the questioning of ideological impact of the design of digital tools and the reallocation of resources within the field are extremely positive steps towards achieving a more inclusive and authentic archival representation of ethnic groups. However, one cannot help but notice that in spite of the interdisciplinary nature of the field, most of these critical articles focus only on one side as being capable in and of itself of remedying this gap. Continuous endeavors are being carried out, but usually separately and in parallel modes rather than in collaborative joint ones. Stephanie P. Browner highlights the importance of increased collaboration between builders and thinkers, "all scholars working in the humanities have to decide what is collected, how it is preserved, what labels it receives, what commentary to offer, what texts and contexts are of study and juxtaposition, what interface or apparatus is appropriate, and a host of other questions" (2014, 212).

The paper aims to go beyond prevalent binary views and argues that, while acknowledging that these are immensely important and indispensable steps towards achieving archival inclusion, the excessive critical focus on only two sides of the issue can actually leave out an equally important element, which is the participation of community members, especially ethnic groups, in archiving their own history. This gives rise to a number of important questions that the paper attempts to answer. First, how can a greater degree of community participation bridge the existing archival gap? Second, how it affects the

ideological and technical choices of builders and thinkers when attempting to construct ethnic archives? Finally, how can this collaboration affect the expectations and the experience of the users as well?

The paper draws upon a successful model of collaboration between builders, thinkers and community members to construct the Gibagadinamaagoom digital archive that aims to preserve the cultural heritage of the Native American Ojibwe tribe. The archive, which is constructed in close collaboration with elders from the White Earth, Leech Lake and Fond du Lac bands, aims at giving the tribe complete control over what should be included and how it should be presented. This desire is clear in the archive's introductory statement, "the site utilizes digital technology to enable the Anishinaabeg to recount their own history, in their own language, and on their own cultural term" (Gibagadinamaagoom n.d.). The paper draws upon this particular archive because it shifts the power of representing the tribe's cultural legacy from scholars and builders to the Ojibwe people themselves and it examines how this kind of close collaboration can affect the experience of the users, builders, thinkers and community members. Derrida contends that "there is no political power without control of the archive, if not memory. Effective democratization can always be measured by this essential criterion: the participation in and access to the archive, its constitution, and its interpretation" (1995, 9). While not talking specifically about digital archives, Derrida's words are particularly important in this context because they highlight the political implications of this power shift on the history and memory of the tribe by counteracting instances of archival violence experienced in past archival eras. This is particularly true since most of the archival work done in the past, in the words of Marlene Manoff, was mainly done by white Western men. She adds that colonial archives usually place colonial administrators at the center, studying and recording their information about the natives (2004, 16). Postcolonial archives, on the other hand, place the natives at the center and expose the distortions that emanate from selective processes that result in manipulation of the contents of the archive.

This kind of close collaboration between scholars, builders and community members posed technical and ideological challenges for them because they needed to formulate new ways "to accurately and artistically represent the indigenous origins and spiritual story lines of expressive culture on these [the Americas] continents" (Powell and Aitken 2014, 253). This necessitated a year-long intense discussion between Ojibwe wisdom

keepers, tribal historians, web designers, videographers, administrators of the Ojibwe Quiz Bowl who use the Gibagadinamaagoom project material to educate Ojibwe students about their own culture and history. The scholars working with the tribe elders maintain that community members were not only enthusiastic about using new tools to preserve the old ways, but were also "quick to grasp digital technology's unique powers" at a time when "cyber theorists seem to be struggling to imagine how digital and cultural codes can be effectively integrated" (Powell and Aitkins 2014, 251).

The careful design of the archive allows its users to be immersed in the Ojibwe culture right from the beginning. At the top of the archive's home page, the users find an audio link that offers the pronunciation of the archive's name Gibagadinamaagoom by a tribe member and explains that it means "to bring to life, to sanction, to give authority." The archive features Ojibwe 'wisdom keepers' or elders who possess power, conferred on them by tribe members, to recount ancient stories, teachings and traditional codes of conduct. Unlike many digital archives that arrange their contents in a way that caters to the users' scholarly interests, the interface and the navigation system were built around the seven sacred realms of Ojibwe cosmology, which means that the users need guidance to navigate their way through the content. The purpose behind this way of organization, according to one of the wisdom keepers, is that the tribe members felt that traditional digital archives "tend to focus too much on content, rather than spiritual context. You need to realize where the content originates. You need to become part of history" (Aitkins 2014, 260).

The archive's home page features introductory videos that guide the users in their journey into the Ojibwe world. The first video depicts Larry Aitkins, a well-respected wisdom keeper, offering respect to the ancestors, who taught him all what he knows, before talking about the important tradition of tobacco offering. By seeing how the elders are indebted to their ancestors, who have passed the information from one generation to another, the users are introduced to the importance of cultural and spiritual continuum in the Ojibwe society. Moreover, they understand how the tribe regards this digital archive as a new medium that preserves the force of the older media and thus becomes part of a cultural continuum. Moreover, talking about the cultural ritual of offering tobacco to the elders before asking questions or hearing them talk about their history enables users to experience a more authentic interaction with the elders because it simulates the actual process of how outsiders are initiated into their culture.

However, the archive is not built on the premise that users should fully grasp all the complex subtexts and connotations of the exhibits. This is clear right from the beginning in the second video which features Jimmy Jackson, one of the tribe's distinguished medicine men, praying to the Creator for guidance and protection. The Board of Permission Givers for the archive decided that this prayer should be offered only in the Ojibwe language without any translation (Powell and Aitkins 2014, 264). This indicates to the users that certain aspects of the Ojibwe culture can be observed, but will not be fully understood by outsiders. This symbolic act empowers the tribe as it gives its members full control over the representation of their culture and history. It can also prompt users to reflect on how their own cultural expectations and geopolitical position affect their experience of the archive. Rather than offering a filtered access to an exotic Other, this intentional de-familiarization invites users to adapt to native epistemologies and thus experience a different system of knowledge circulation, a move that counteracts the tendency of colonial archives to solely address the demands of non-native users.

Many of the videos maintain a careful balance between being informative and being observant of tribal rules of initiation. For example, the video that narrates the Ojibwe story of creation introduces the users to the seven sacred directions of Ojibwe cosmology through presenting a visual narrative that depicts the long journey of animikii, the traditional thunderbird whose stories are usually inscribed on birch trees. The video features an eagle soaring high during the dawn over a lake in the Ojibwe's ancestral homeland and follows his journey to the Creator's world (Ishpiming) to plead for people's lives after they angered the Creator because of their spiritual loss. It depicts the bird's movement from the East to the South to the West in a manner that mimics the direction of prayer of Ojibwe people and invokes their migration from the East Coast to the Great Lakes region (Powell and Aitkins 2014, 264). Initially, many non-specialist archive users might not be able to understand the full connotations and significance of these videos, but this does not detract from the authenticity of their experience which is meant to show cultural sensitivity to the Ojibwe ways of initiating strangers into their language, code of conduct, traditional stories, sacred realms and cosmology. Powell and Aitkins maintain that users should accept the fact that they "cannot own this knowledge, but if they follow traditional codes of conduct, they can stir a wisdom keeper into presenting that body of knowledge" (2014, 265). In this sense, the archive does not only challenge the expectations of the users, but it also enables them to experience a more authentic interaction with the elders.

The collaboration between community members and scholars/thinkers involves another transfer of power and a shift of perspective similar to the one that can be experienced by the users of the archive. Traditionally, scholars are responsible for the editorial choices regarding the addition, omission and arrangement of the contents of digital archives. However, in this particular project, the choice of which artifacts to display was totally controlled by cultural norms of tribe. This transfer of power can be seen as a form of resistance to the unilateral politics of traditional colonial archives, which were usually dominated by the colonial gaze of white settlers and an attempt to create a non-colonial digital space for indigenous communities, where the tribe's own processes of curation, selection, documentation and memory-making are fully respected and enforced. This gives indigenous tribes the chance to assert their sovereignty and depict their own view of their history and legacy which can be quite different from the one expounded by older colonial archives. Moreover, the discussions with the wisdom keepers had a great impact on the experience of the non-native scholars involved in the project. Powell maintains that this experience made him reflect on the nature of his job and altered his perception about his role in the project, "it is a process that begins with a profound sense of humility—the realization that a PhD does not confer an academic with the right to appropriate this knowledge for publication or self-promotion. Understanding requires a sincere willingness to listen and to wait patiently for meanings to unfold" (2014, 257).

Unlike traditional colonial archives that usually propagated a mainly Western interpretation of tribal culture, the Board of Permission Givers for the archive decided to give the largest share of the digital space to indigenous voices by adding videos of wisdom keepers teaching Ojibwe language, narrating traditional stories and talking about ceremonies, gifting protocols, belief system and origins of Ojibwe names from their own perspective. Moreover, instead of merely displaying exhibits without offering adequate cultural context, it allowed the display of images of cultural relics such as carved birch artifacts, wampum belts and rock art that were used as tools of narrating and propagating traditional stories. In this sense, the archive becomes a living museum that recreates to a great extent the conditions of how non-natives are initiated into the Ojibwe culture. However, the tribe refused to display certain objects because of their sacred status. For example, it chose not to display the Midewiwin scrolls — precolonial archives that used indigenous inscriptions (Powell and Aitkins 2014,

257). In spite of the fact that not displaying an item can be seen as a drawback in archives that strive to be comprehensive, the transfer of power of selection from scholars to Ojibwe elders adds to the authenticity of the archive as it reflects how the tribe prefers to be represented and ensures full collaboration of its members. Moreover, it contributes to the integrity of the archive because the members working on the project reject displaying items that are acquired through legally questionable methods. This, in turn, gives rise to another set of questions regarding the meaning of authenticity and the importance of comprehensiveness in archival studies.

Another challenge that builders and scholars have faced was the construction of a culturally sensitive metadata that structures how information can be searched and stored in line with the Ojibwe worldview. They were challenged to come up with something different from the Western templates which are derived from print culture because they could not adequately reflect how the concepts of authorship, space and time function within the communal context of oral literature. Powell and Atkins argue that if standard library descriptors are applied to a video recording of a wisdom keeper narrating "The Story of the Thunderbird", the entry would be accurate by Western standards, but would be culturally misleading from the Ojibwe perspective. This corroborates Derrida's view that archives are not merely affected by political and social factors, but also by the technological tools available during the time of documentation. Thus, in his view, "archivization produces as much as it records the event" (1995, 23). In this sense, it can argued that the structure of the archive and the technical aspects of archiving determine what can be archived and, consequently, how memory and history are shaped. For example, the labelling of the digital form of the story as a video recording of a wisdom keeper is accurate from a technical perspective, but it problematically overlooks the history and the depth of the original media, oral tales and inscriptions on birch artifacts, from which the recording is derived. Moreover, it truncates the presence of the animikii, the spirit of the thunderbird, which the tribe views as the originator of the story and it fails to credit the multiple narrators and wisdom keepers that passed on the story from one generation to another. The copyrighting of the video by the company that protects the intellectual property rights of the material created by the Gibagadinamaagoom project in 2008, raises questions about the intellectual ownership of indigenous stories. Moreover, the year of publication disrupts the long history, the line of continuity and the possible changes that characterize oral traditions. The

descriptor "United States" as the place of publication subtly challenges the Ojibwe's sense of sovereignty and enforces a national identity that has its origin in the epistemology of colonialism. Moreover, it does not accommodate the Ojibwe's different sense of place which values the connection between different realms such as Nimaamaa-aki (Mother Earth), Mishomis (Ancestor's Realm), and Ishpiming (Creator's world) (Powell and Aitkins 2014, 266).

Through this example, the need for creating a system that more accurately labels the exhibits in terms of their cosmological origins and tribal genealogy becomes increasingly apparent. That is why, the project members continue to explore different approaches to the writing of the metadata based on the standards of the Ojibwe culture. By doing so, they are challenging the myth of a universal digital language of zeroes and ones and the assumption that all archives should conform to standards created by those outside the culture being digitized. The paper contends that this kind of cultural sensitivity would have been difficult to achieve without the effective collaboration between scholars, builders and tribe members. It maintains that the contribution of the tribe members can greatly affect the cultural logic of the scholars and builders who become increasingly aware of the impact of their technical and ideological choices on the process of knowledge production and dissemination.

In conclusion, the paper aims to prove that the increased participation of ethnic groups in the construction of their digital archives can be seen as a positive step towards bridging the existing archival gap. It maintains that the project can be read in the light of the ongoing decolonizing efforts in the field of indigenous archiving. On the other hand, the researcher believes that the voices of the participating tribe members do not necessarily represent all the different voices within the tribe and that there is not one single "correct" representation of a group's history and cultural legacy. However, the open-endedness of digital archives ensures that there is always room for adding different perspectives. The paper suggests that community participation in archival endeavors is a step that goes beyond binary solutions that focus only on builders and thinkers at the expense of other important players. Moreover, the effective collaboration with community members helps them to reflect more on the ideological impact of their technical and editorial choices during the process of archive construction. The builders are challenged to create innovative and culturally sensitive technical solutions that can best represent the culture they digitize. The scholars can be encouraged to expand their selection criteria, which, in turn, can help in

dismantling the canon. Furthermore, this partnership can offer a more authentic experience for the users and can challenge their expectations regarding the contents that will be included and the manner of their organization. Most importantly, community participation can empower underrepresented ethnic groups by transmitting the power from scholars and builders to community members. This can help in remedying instances of archival violence that they have been experiencing in past archival eras. Consequently, this can lead to achieving a more authentic and culturally sensitive archival representation of their history, memory and legacy in cyberspace.

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