“Good for Whom?” Unsettling Research Practice

Full paper

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ABSTRACT

Through this paper, we join others concerned by the rhetoric that research and technology design contribute to a common good. We argue that framings of commonality obfuscate the detrimental effects of accepted research practice, particularly for disenfranchised communities. Claims of a common good are in alignment with a colonial perspective—a single all knowing entity, in this case personified by the researcher, who has the expertise and experience necessary to identify what is of benefit to all. Our argument is informed by our engagement with four Indigenous community|academic partnerships. We describe our efforts to avoid perpetuating problematic (yet common) research dynamics through questioning, critiquing and adjusting our practices as a research team. We offer understandings gained through attempts to unsettle our approach to research, grounded by the diverse experience and envisioned futures of our partners. We argue for the continued need for spaces where the short and longer-term implications of research practice can be articulated, discussed and acted upon.

CCS CONCEPTS

• **Information Systems** • **Human-centered computing** → **Human computer interaction (HCI)** → **HCI theory, concepts and models**; *HCI design and evaluation method*s • **Social and Professional topics** → User characteristics

KEYWORDS

Information Practice, Indigenous Research, Research Methods, Research Practice

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1 INTRODUCTION

Reports on community and technology research projects often begin with claims of participation and empowerment through a scholar-mediated technological intervention. The typical framing moves on to claim that research into the use of __________ digital technology by _________ underserved community contributes in some way to a universally shared (or assumed) common good (as discussed in part by [9]). What is missing from the conversation is fulsome discussion of the longer-term effect of HCI research projects on communities after grant money is gone, research assistants graduate and articles have been published. Stated bluntly, who benefits from Human Computer Interaction (HCI) research when it is framed as community-oriented?

We are not the first scholars to pose versions of this question within the field of HCI (e.g., [7,9]). For years, others have argued that HCI research remains firmly rooted in Western academic traditions and, thus, the value structures of colonization (e.g., [8,13,23]). These origins call into question the ability of researchers encultured to the Western academic paradigm to frame problems, ask questions, set up projects, analyze findings and publish results in ways that avoid perpetuating long-standing bias and inequality.

We can easily find eloquent critiques of the HCI research paradigm written by post-colonial scholars (e.g., [13,23]). We can also point to a robust body of community-grounded scholarship that calls out the damage inflicted by dominant approaches to research (e.g., [4,11,16]) Yet, examples of researchers explicitly trying to *enact* decolonizing research with communities is still

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rare in HCI. Empirically grounded, decolonizing research continues to be difficult to fund, implement and publish. Even when such projects exist [5,6,7,8], it is rare for them to gain much academic currency (i.e., top journal publications or presentations at prestigious international conferences). Outputs for the sake of other scholars are a lower priority for projects deeply grounded by community concerns; other outputs (e.g., community capacity building, community-oriented research reports and presentations) take precedence. It is challenging for other scholars to learn that these projects exist because outputs from the project are not targeted to them and are less likely to be found in scholarly databases or on a conference program (as demonstrated in [10] and [11]).

In the following pages, we present an analysis of our locally grounded efforts to decolonize dominant *research* practices in our work with four Indigenous community|Western academic partnerships.[1]

We argue that framings of a common good perpetuate a colonial point of view deeply engrained in the Western academy. This perspective frames academics as having the expertise and experience necessary to identify what is of benefit for all, or at least what is good for the academy, which eventually will lead to good for everyone. Right? Colonial perspectives underlie the institutionalized processes that make scholarship benefitting a *community* according to the *community* harder to do and easier to dismiss [10]. This position is in alignment with the definition of decolonization put forward by Duarte and Belarde-Lewis:

> *At its most basic, decolonization work is about the divestment of foreign occupying powers from Indigenous homelands, modes of government, ways of caring for the people and living landscapes and especially ways of thinking. For non-Indigenous individuals decolonization work means stepping back from normative expectations that (1) all knowledge in the world can be represented in document form, (2) to some degree, already is, and (3) Indigenous ways of knowing belong in state-funded university and government library, archive, and museum collections, especially for the benefit of society's privileged elite.* [15]

Duarte and Belarde-Lewis's definition of decolonization recognizes that the majority of North American post-secondary institutions fit the description of entities occupying Indigenous homelands (as discussed in [31]). As researchers based in a Western academic institution on unceded Indigenous land, the work described in this paper is, in part, our response to this recognition.

The research projects we draw upon in this paper involved (re)designing dominant ways of managing information (i.e., information practices) to better support diverse Indigenous initiatives. Over the past two years members of our research team at the University of British Columbia have joined a diverse range of Indigenous community|Western academic partnerships, supporting these collaborations in areas where our partners identified a need for the skills and knowledge of information science graduate student researchers. We work with our partners to (re)design information practices to address inequalities that underlie dominant assumptions (e.g., information ownership and sharing norms or Internet access expectations).

Wary of our deeply ingrained assumptions and biases, we continuously question, critique and adjust the ways we conduct and understand our research (i.e., research practices). Throughout the project, we designed and implemented research practices to push us to question our understandings and better support our relationships with our partners. This included stepping away from claims of academic expertise and cultivating our intellectual and cultural humility. This paper focuses on our attempts to (re)consider and (re)design our research practices.

In the next section, we briefly introduce the socio-political setting that informs our team's positionality and methodology. The middle part of the article consists of descriptions of the distinct partnerships we worked with and broad attributes they share. The paper proceeds with reflections on themes that emerged as we modified the conventional activities of social science research (e.g., setting up research agreements, taking notes, conducting interviews, writing papers). We conclude with ideas for supporting community-oriented HCI researchers working and learning with particular communities on specific initiatives. We propose that those involved in conducting, evaluating and funding community-grounded work need spaces where the short and longer-term implications of research practices can be articulated, discussed and acted upon.

2 CONTEXTUALIZING THE WORK

For more than 150 years Indigenous peoples across what is now the nation-state of Canada have rejected attempts to erase their cultures, languages, spirituality, political processes, land and water stewardship, etc. (for an accessible introduction see [29]; recent examples through [37] and [38]). We claim that the ways people develop and use systems to create, store, access, modify and share information (i.e., information practices) shapes the ongoing development of this work.

The forces of colonialism are entrenched in dominant ways of handling information (e.g., [13,15]), constraining Indigenous resistance and resilience (e.g., [14,19]). When there are fundamental differences concerning what information ***is*** (e.g., material, spiritual), how to ***care*** for information (e.g., open to all or keep it private) and how to ***categorize*** information (e.g., what grouping does it belong to?), fair and just relationships between peoples are difficult to negotiate. The following quotation from Ann Doyle speaks to these issues from the perspective of a librarian who is also based at the University of British Columbia. Doyle reflects on the University's position on the traditional, ancestral and unceded land of the Musqueam people. She describes the influence of organizing our university's library holdings according to a Western classification scheme:

> *The university is built on Musqueam territory. Musqueam people teach and learn at the university as faculty and students, serve as Elders, sit as*

[1] We use the term Indigenous to refer to Inuit, Métis, First Nations and urban Aboriginal communities living in the nation-state boundaries of Canada.

members of the university senate, consult on advisory committees, and act as hosts at international events. However, when a Musqueam person asks me where the materials on Musqueam are located in the UBC Library, I have to say, "There is no word for Musqueam in the library world." There is no place on the library shelves for Musqueam materials; there is no category for library materials about the Musqueam people in the university library. [14]

Doyle's reflection demonstrates how information practices (in this case how information is labeled using academic subject headings) are linked with our ability to acknowledge, nurture, improve and sustain relationships. A Western information practice is disrupting relationships between and amongst Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. These challenges have been acknowledged and discussed in the academic literature across decades [15,19,20,21]. Yet, dominant perspectives and values concerning the mundane, everyday management of information continue to impede and undermine Indigenous initiatives. Recognizing this ongoing issue, the research project described in this paper began with the broad goal of investigating how the ways information is managed can be intentionally (re)designed to better support those working to sustain diverse Indigenous communities as they continue to reject ongoing forces of colonization.

A key aspect of this project is that the research team is conducting inquiries with *ongoing* collaborative projects. Research team members joined *already established* partnerships between Indigenous community partners and folks situated at a Western academic institution. We have learned to make clear for readers that individuals employed by and representing an academic institution, may also be Indigenous. By joining partnerships already established, the research team could learn with and from our partners, but our partners were not reliant on our research project to continue their ongoing work. In other words, we were welcomed to contribute to their efforts, but when we run out of research funding, and our last paper is written, their work will continue.

Challenges related to the ways digital information tools are used to create, store, access, modify and share information are a daily experience for these partnerships. The collaborative nature of these projects—made up of members from Indigenous communities and Western academic units—create circumstances where divergent cultural norms and practices related to how information "should" be managed are noticed, articulated, discussed and addressed.

Members of the research team joined these projects and contributed directly to the work that project partners asked the team to take on. Over a two-and-a-half-year period, team members worked with four different partnerships, which we will introduce later in this paper.

3 POSITIONING & METHODOLOGY

From the start of this project we endeavored to avoid perpetuating the harms of Western academic practice in relation to Indigenous peoples (detailed by many, including [2,18,19,27]). However, the research team is situated within a Western academic body and funded through a federal research program. We are embedded in the norms, expectations, rules and regulations of these institutions (e.g., institutionally defined ethics processes). Additionally, the research team is made up of primarily non-Indigenous scholars, reflective of much of the academy. Through this paper, we reject the norm of framing research as a resource extraction process (mining knowledge from some for the benefit of others). The research team learned with our partners while contributing to their work and improving our scholarship. We were not only learning with our partners; we all learned different things, and learned things differently.

Our methodology is aligned with practice-oriented approaches (e.g., [25]). That is, our focus is on an ever-shifting assemblage of tools, behaviors, norms and expectations around certain activities (i.e., practices). Our approach is participatory and generative rather than purely observational and descriptive, drawing from other participatory and in-situ research approaches (e.g., [3,30]).

Five main research processes and their products inform our work:

*1. **Project Task Note Taking***: Team members documented their tasks on partnership projects during or immediately after work sessions and in summary form for our weekly research team meetings (i.e., recordings of tasks completed and next steps planned);

***2. Interviews*:** For three of the partnership projects, we held at least one discussion (singly or in groups) with members of the partnership that were recorded and transcribed. Partners chose whether they wanted to participate in single, paired or group interviews.

3. Reflective Journaling: Research team members developed written reflections on and across projects and readings, talks, engagements (i.e., regular journal entries);

4. Weekly Team Discussions: Each week team members working on active and approved projects reported and reflected on their work, in conversation with team members who were reporting on their reading and writing of related scholarship (e.g., Indigenous scholarship, community oriented HCI projects, practice theory, decolonizing research texts, auto-ethnography; action-based research);

***5. Partner Reviews*:** Throughout our engagement with partners who formally approved the research aspect of our work, we provided material for project members to review, edit and provide feedback (e.g., transcripts, abstracts, posters and papers).

The first two research activities in the list above are familiar to many partnership-oriented research projects. We found the last three processes challenged our work in generative ways. Each of the latter three activities encouraged the research team to consider: 1) their positionality to the projects and the overall inquiry; 2) who benefits from Western academia's research and learning and how; 3) what constitutes a mutually beneficial partnership; and 4) the forces that swayed their answers to these questions.

The weekly journaling, team discussions and partner reviews not only encouraged team members to reflect in the ways mentioned above, it also led to action such as risk-taking, trying alternative approaches and adjusting decision-making and directions in response to unexpected revelations and questions. In other words, not only did we reflect, discuss and question, the team also developed alternative approaches to project work based on these discussions. Feedback, reflections and thought were not a side-note, but informed how team members decided to shift, adapt, assess and ask new questions while developing and deepening relationships.

To date, research team members have spent over one thousand hours working on the four initial projects. Descriptions of each project are offered below, preceded by Table 1, detailing the number of weeks and hours worked to date for each project. The brief project overviews are followed by our analysis of ways our research processes and products pushed us to question our understandings and better support our relationships with our partners.

Table 1: **Team Member Project Hours**

	Weeks	Hours
c̓əsnaʔəm	12	105
Indigitization	88	300
FNIS	41	341
Katiqsugat	46	304

4 THE PROJECTS

c̓əsnaʔəm: We worked with members of Musqueam Indian Band, the Museum of Anthropology and the Museum of Vancouver to support the collaborative curation of three separate but interlinked exhibitions entitled "*c̓əsnaʔəm: The City Before the City"*. c̓əsnaʔəm is an ancient Musqueam village site in what is now referred to as the Marpole area of the city of Vancouver. A member of our research team helped in the management of images between the three entities. These contributions to the c̓əsnaʔəm project, though publically acknowledged by the initiative's partners, cannot be discussed in particulars as we did not receive confirmation from Musqueam Indian Band that review and analysis could proceed.

http://www.thecitybeforethecity.com

First Nations and Indigenous Studies Capstone: The First Nations and Indigenous Studies program (FNIS) at our university includes a capstone project that requires students to work directly with Indigenous communities and organizations. The projects often involve approaching, documenting, presenting and protecting Indigenous information in ways that do not align with the policies and norms of a Western academic institution. A member of our research team conducted an in-depth examination of the various processes, regulations, technology and roles of FNIS in its position as a liaison between the academy and Indigenous community partners. Based on our engagement with the Department, we developed a protocol document, policy documents and a Practicum database to *support* FNIS's information practices and to aid their mandate of ethical research that supports and furthers Indigenous community initiatives. http://fnis.arts.ubc.ca/

Indigitization is a collaborative initiative involving individuals (Indigenous and non-Indigenous) from the University of British Columbia's Irving K. Barber Learning Centre, Museum of Anthropology and the School of Library, Archival and Information Studies. The project assists Indigenous community-led digitization projects through grant funding and training, primarily for audio cassette digitization. The grant is open to Indigenous communities and organizations in British Columbia. Our research team's involvement with Indigitization included *supporting*: 1) the (re)design of the Aboriginal Audio Digitization and Preservation Program (AADPP) application form, guidelines and process; 2) the design of interim and final report templates for AADPP participants; and 3) the planning and implementation of the yearly AADPP Training Week. http://indigitization.ca/

Katiqsugat: This Inuit early learning resource is an interactive digital library of Inuit-specific early childhood education materials under development by Inuit Tapiriit Kanatami (ITK). ITK is the national voice of 60,000 Inuit in Canada living in 53 communities across Nunavut, Nunavik (Northern Quebec), Nunatsiavut (Northern Labrador) and the Inuvialuit Settlement Region (of the Northwest Territories). ITK promotes the interests of Inuit on a wide variety of environmental, social and cultural challenges facing Inuit at the national level. Responding to early childhood educators, ITK developed an online resource (Katiqsugat) for educators, teachers, parents and childcare centre managers living in Inuit Nunangat (the Inuit homeland in Canada). The primary goal of Katiqsugat is to get more materials created by and for Inuit into the digital collection. Through our partnership with ITK, members of our research team investigated different models of digitization and access (e.g., tools, systems, processes) that could potentially be implemented in communities throughout Inuit Nunangat. http://katiqsugat.itk.ca/

4.1 Shared Attributes

Although each project is decidedly unique, a few attributes are shared across our involvement with partnership projects:

1. ***Recognition of Difference****:* Asymmetrical relationships of power and agency between project partners is openly acknowledged, discussed and negotiated. Partners are attuned to matters of difference, recognizing multiple values systems, norms and expectations exist [32,33,34,35]. Similarly, there is acknowledgment that histories of injustice and resilience intimately and intricately shape contemporary relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples. As a research team and with our partners, we approach conflict (or tensions and disruptions) as both inevitable and potentially generative. This does not mean we aim for or encourage conflict. Rather we understand conflict can create space needed to identify and address differences in a constructive manner [35].

2. ***Shared Commitments**:* The research team and our partners are committed to sustaining Indigenous peoples' perspectives, knowledge and capacities, including those that do not fit dominant social science expectations of research outputs [18,27]. This is part of the extensive work required to restructure centuries of problematic relations between Indigenous and non-Indigenous peoples across North America.

3. ***Guided Engagements**:* Despite the research team's commitment to decolonizing practices, we are starkly aware of the constraints and expectations tied to our research funding (e.g., three-year timeframe, federally restricted expenditures, pressures to produce particular types of research products) [11]. By joining partnerships that already have long-standing commitments to Indigenous initiatives, we are contributing to projects that will continue after our funding runs out. Additionally, we are limited in our understanding of our partners' work. Our partners supervise our research engagements in numerous ways, from reminding us to avoid scholar-speak and over-claiming our contributions, to identifying assumptions that underpin our questions [1].

4. ***Future Oriented**:* Our project partners are envisioning, designing and enacting a future for Indigenous peoples as defined by Indigenous peoples [15].

Through our engagements with partnerships that recognize the importance of difference, are committed to sustaining Indigenous peoples' perspectives, knowledge and capacities, are willing to guide our research engagements and are oriented to an Indigenous defined future, we were pushed to question our understandings and better support our relationships with our partners. In the following section, we share five themes that developed from our reflections on these engagements.

5 THEMATIC REFLECTIONS

5.1 Ongoing relationships as a metric of success

Relationships with some partners did not develop as we expected they would. For example, while the c̓əsnaʔəm exhibits launched successfully in three locations around Vancouver, the partnership between those putting on the exhibit (Museum of Anthropology, Museum of Vancouver and Musqueam), the Musqueam community and our research team did not develop as we initially anticipated.

In part as an outcome of generations of researchers conducting scholarship that misrepresented and appropriated community knowledge, Musqueam has a research request process in place for researchers to follow. A research agreement needs to be formally approved within the community's governance structure. For our project, a proposed agreement letter was sent as instructed (several times), but there was never an official response from the community. This, however, need not mean the project collaboration failed. A member of our research team spent approximately 100 hours contributing to the exhibit. Members of Musqueam and other exhibit partners have publically expressed gratitude for this work on multiple occasions. All communication with Musqueam members prior to, during and after the project collaboration was positive and supportive of the research team's participation. Yet, the official letter never received a response. Thus, in our writing about the project we will only recognize that our team contributed to the exhibit, as MOA, Musqueam and the Museum of Vancouver partners have done publically. The team member who worked with the exhibit partners destroyed his journals and project notes, never sharing them with the rest of the research team. No interviews, focus groups or other data collection activities took place related to the development of the exhibit.

That is, while the research relationship does not look the way we imagined it would at this point, this does not mean that our partners wanted another relationship or outcome to develop out of our collaboration. Indeed, it may not be appropriate for us to hypothesize what our partners wanted out of the relationship nor how they feel about our relationship as it stands. And, importantly, this is in line with our research team's ethical commitments.

We ask a great deal of our partners when they engage in research with us. Stated bluntly, managing the expectations and demands of a research team is an added burden of time and resources for those we work with. This is particularly true for communities committed to long-standing initiatives addressing issues of stolen children, stolen childhood, stolen land and accessing essential resources for their communities [10]. Although research from Western academic institutions is often framed as being for the common good, there is a long and well-documented history of academic research harming distinct communities (e.g., [11,18,27]), not the least through taking away time and energy from pressing, immediate needs (e.g., potable water, electricity). As we develop/ed more inclusive practices as a research team to ensure our partners were involved (e.g., asking them to review transcripts and our draft publications) we also increase our demands on their time and intellectual labor, taking it away from other projects.

Considerations of whether and how to write about our work with the ***c̓əsnaʔəm*** exhibit involved questioning whom our research was benefitting and required a reorientation of the norms of success in community-oriented research. As mentioned earlier in the paper, we decided to acknowledge our involvement with the exhibits, as Musqueam, MOA and Museum of Vancouver members of the partnership have done in multiple public venues (e.g., spoken and written crediting). Yet, we will not analyze or write about specifics of that project. This does not mean that we did not learn and benefit from the partnership. We value the ongoing relationships we have with members of the partnership. The self-reflection that the research team undertook to reconcile our experience with the partnership served as a disruption to our assumptions, as hard as we tried ahead of time to identify and avoid problematic preconceptions.

Western-trained researchers have a sense of entitlement regarding “research data” directly related to the Western legal concept of intellectual property (further discussed and rejected in [16]). Copyright legislation in Canada and the United States supports the idea that researchers “own” the data they collect because they push the buttons (e.g., audio-visual recording device or keyboard). For communities with decidedly different orientations to whether an individual can even *own* certain types of information [36], the idea that an outsider has control of community information just because they/he/she “hit the button” is problematic and often harmful [27].

We assert that a concept that is often framed as being for the ultimate benefit of all (copyright) continues to work to the detriment of particular communities. Our project isn’t going to undo generations of unjust relationships, but through our research practices, we acknowledge that we don’t have the right to use or share information simply because we collected it, nor do the communities and organizations owe us information related to the work that we have contributed to.

5.2 Negotiating expertise and learning

Standard framings of community|academic collaborations in HCI position community participants as experts on the community and researchers as experts in design and research (e.g., [17]). The roles taken up by our research team and the activities and contexts of our partners subverted these expectations of expertise. This issue became particularly salient in our work with ITK, an organization with a research orientation firmly grounded by and for Inuit. Our research and design work was guided by our ITK partner’s explicit requests and instructions. In other words, we do not articulate or give voice to issues for our partners—their voices already exist [28].

As a research team, we can reflect on our own learning during the time we worked with these partnerships, but we have learned to be cautious of offering an analysis of the research, inquiry or learning of our partners. We are not omniscient observers who can make claims of common experience, that all involved have learned (or benefitted) from the research.

5.3 Representation of ownership

All that we do, almost all the time, is design, for design is basic to all human activity. The planning and patterning of any act toward a desired, foreseeable end constitutes the design process. [22].

In reporting on the work of our partners and our team, we are not claiming that the design products (i.e. (re)designed information management practices) are a direct output of the research project. Instead, we seek to describe our contributions to our partners’ work in ways that recognize the ongoing design activities embedded in their work. The research team joined ongoing collaborations that were already engaged in efforts to shift their ways of managing information. (Re)designing information practices was inherent in the basic activity of our partners before we joined their projects.

Team members working directly on projects had to negotiate their role as they moved between the research team and the work they took part in as project assistants with our partners. The multiple “hats” worn by members of the team blurred the boundaries of the research team and the work we conducted with our partners. These fuzzy boundaries raised questions about the ways that the research team could/should describe their roles and their effect on shifting practices within our partnerships.

As one example, Indigitization’s grant application process, including the application form and guidelines, have undergone an iterative process of (re)design to improve the clarity of information and to ensure that the application process itself—which initially privileged the expectations of Western institutional processes and ways of presenting information and legitimizing information needs—is not a barrier to applicants. The intent is that the application process allows for applicants to express their projects in their own words. Over two years, research team members assisted in this process of (re)design, contributing time, ideas and labor to shift the application practices. While team members contributed to (re)designing the application, they were not the catalyst for doing so. Members of the Indigitization steering committee expressed concern that the research team might claim that this work was done because of the research team’s initiative. They did not want the research team to take ownership of efforts guided by the values of the Indigitization steering committee. The impetus for making the change came from the Indigitization team, before, during and after the research team’s involvement with the project.

5.4 What and when is data data?

We join others in recognizing that reflexivity is an ongoing part of the research process [26]. Rather than setting aside time to “do reflexivity,” we strive to embed reflexivity throughout our research practices. As the research team and its partnerships have evolved, reflective writing materials were produced in many different contexts and with varying expectations around what would be shared. We recorded shifts in thinking through documenting comments and tracked-changes during the iteration and revision of research documents, such as the team’s data management plan. Research assistants used reflective journaling to record and reflect on their activities with partners, to mediate between their roles with partners and the research team, to voice tensions and bias and to track changes in approach and perspectives.

Incorporating these materials into research outputs presented questions around when personal reflections become data, what we—as participants in our own research—were comfortable sharing and what was appropriate to share about work conducted with our partners. While reflective writing could be a useful process for self-reflection, team members also had concerns that individual journaling could be "self-indulgent," taking up valuable space in dialogue with our partners. Working to embed reflexive activities into our research practices while also deciding if, when and how reflective writing becomes data is a challenge we continue to negotiate. We provide room for team members to edit, redact and choose which sections of their reflective writing to share before submitting their journals as data. We also send versions of papers to research team members who have graduated or moved on to other positions to review before publication.

Defining, generating, and using data is not neutral. Through these practices, we recognize that research products, often oriented towards the common good, also change the lives of individuals involved. Data from individuals and about individuals shifts how they are represented and whether (and how) they benefit. Research has and continues to harm communities.

5.5 Team roles and dynamics

The structure and dynamics of the research team was partly shaped by the realities of team member schedules and commitments. As the research assistants are also graduate students with a full load of classes, the division of labor had to recognize that team members could only commit a limited number of hours per week towards the research project. Two primary research assistant roles emerged over time: those who engaged directly on the projects, assisting our partners in information-management related activities, reflected in team meetings and journaled on their experiences; and those who delved into the scholarly literature, listened and reflected on team member experiences at our weekly meetings.

We join others who have dedicated team resources to reflecting on theory, literature and research team practices within collaborative projects [12]. Yet we also recognize that ongoing engagement with scholarship throughout research projects and beyond scoping literature reviews is not common practice. We found that dividing the work in this way, and meeting regularly to share and discuss our experiences as a team was a generative way of informing our reflections. Those facing challenges through their direct experience working on partner projects helped to guide the reading of other team members, and theories and insights from these readings in turn guided team members' reflections on their experiences. While we would have liked the time to engage fully in the information practices of the projects *and* the literature, the experience of not experiencing (or not fully understanding) everything going on in the partnerships proved to be generative. It allowed us to ask questions and bring to light activities or assumptions that might otherwise have gone unnoticed/unvoiced by others immersed in the work. Through our uncommon experiences, we formed a kind of symbiosis that informed our iterative reflections and helped us build new connections in our regularly scheduled meetings.

6 DISCUSSION & CONCLUSION: WHO BENEFITS?

The need to integrate academic and community knowledge has never been greater than it is today as indicated by the driving forces of contemporary public policy, interdisciplinary scholarship, and community activism. Dynamic possibilities for the generation of new knowledge are found in the encounter between culturally diverse forms of knowledge. [24]

The quotation above comes from a grant submitted to the Canada Foundation for Innovation over fifteen years ago. Although the number of partnerships between Indigenous communities and Western academic institutions has increased over the past decade, the need for scholars to *learn* from these relationships has not abated. Partnerships that support an "encounter between culturally diverse forms of knowledge" are well positioned to provide critical insights into identifying and addressing the biases of colonial-based practices. These collaborations can inform understandings of how research practices can be (re)designed, creating space for—at least not hindering—practices that support other knowledge systems (e.g., frank reviews of our work by our research partners; interweaving critical scholarship with weekly project reporting, reflection journals for research team members).

By engaging respectfully with our partners and learning from these relationships, our research practices shifted. These changes influenced how the research team envisaged success, defined data, represented our work and carried out team roles and responsibilities. The issues we debate as a research team bring up uncomfortable questions, poking holes in accepted norms of how rigorous research is conducted. Yet, we are unsure of where to work through these reflections with others and learn from their experiences. Scholarly articles, books and conference presentations primarily address other academics: there are substantial barriers that prevent non-academics from participating (e.g., lack of access to electronic databases or high cost of conference attendance). There is a need for spaces where the reverberations of research practice for all those involved can be identified, debated and reflected upon. What might alternative venues look like that welcome the wide range of stakeholders (direct and indirect) whose lives are affected by the dominant norms of research practice? How might participation in these venues be recognized as an accepted and expected part of "doing research" for scholars?

As our own work continues, ongoing methodological questions include:

1. How do we keep track of our changing impressions/shifts in thinking and identify the catalysts of change across multiple projects and team members?
2. How do we avoid or subvert linear "task-then-reflection" patterns such that reflexivity is a more embedded and holistic element of our research?
3. What capacities, skills or habits of thinking accompany developing decolonizing information and research practices?

Through this inquiry, we join others who question familiar academic|industry rhetoric, epitomized by the pernicious claim that research and technology design contribute to 'the' or 'a' common good [9]. The ideal of a common good obscures differences between us. Framings of commonality risk perpetuating harms, particularly for historically disenfranchised/non-dominant communities. In this paper, we describe our efforts to avoid perpetuating problematic (yet common) research dynamics through questioning, critiquing and adjusting our practices as a research team. We offer understandings gained through attempts to unsettle our approach to research, grounded by the diverse experience and envisioned futures of our partners. We argue for the continued need for spaces where the short and longer-term implications of research practice can be articulated, discussed and acted upon.

Simply stated, we advocate for cultivating humility through posing a simple question of any HCI community-oriented research project: "good for whom?"

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