

# Documenting Cultural Objects and Preserving Digital Heritage: The Importance of Using Indigenous Knowledge Databases

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## The Problem

When creating data entries for materials and information from indigenous cultures, one must have knowledge and understanding of the concepts on which they are based.

This cannot always be achieved with current Anglo-American cataloging standards, as persons of western culture do not have the firsthand knowledge or 'cultural authority' to make assumptions on the meaning of information, objects and their uses.

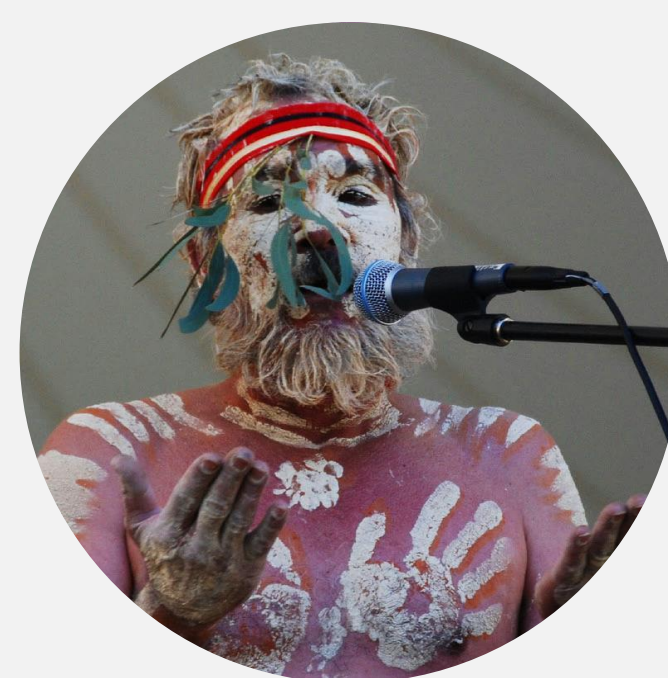
## What is being acquired?

Materials and information are being gathered from firsthand indigenous sources. These resources are being digitally recorded.

Photos & Slides

Movies, Film, &  
Video

Spoken Audio &  
Music



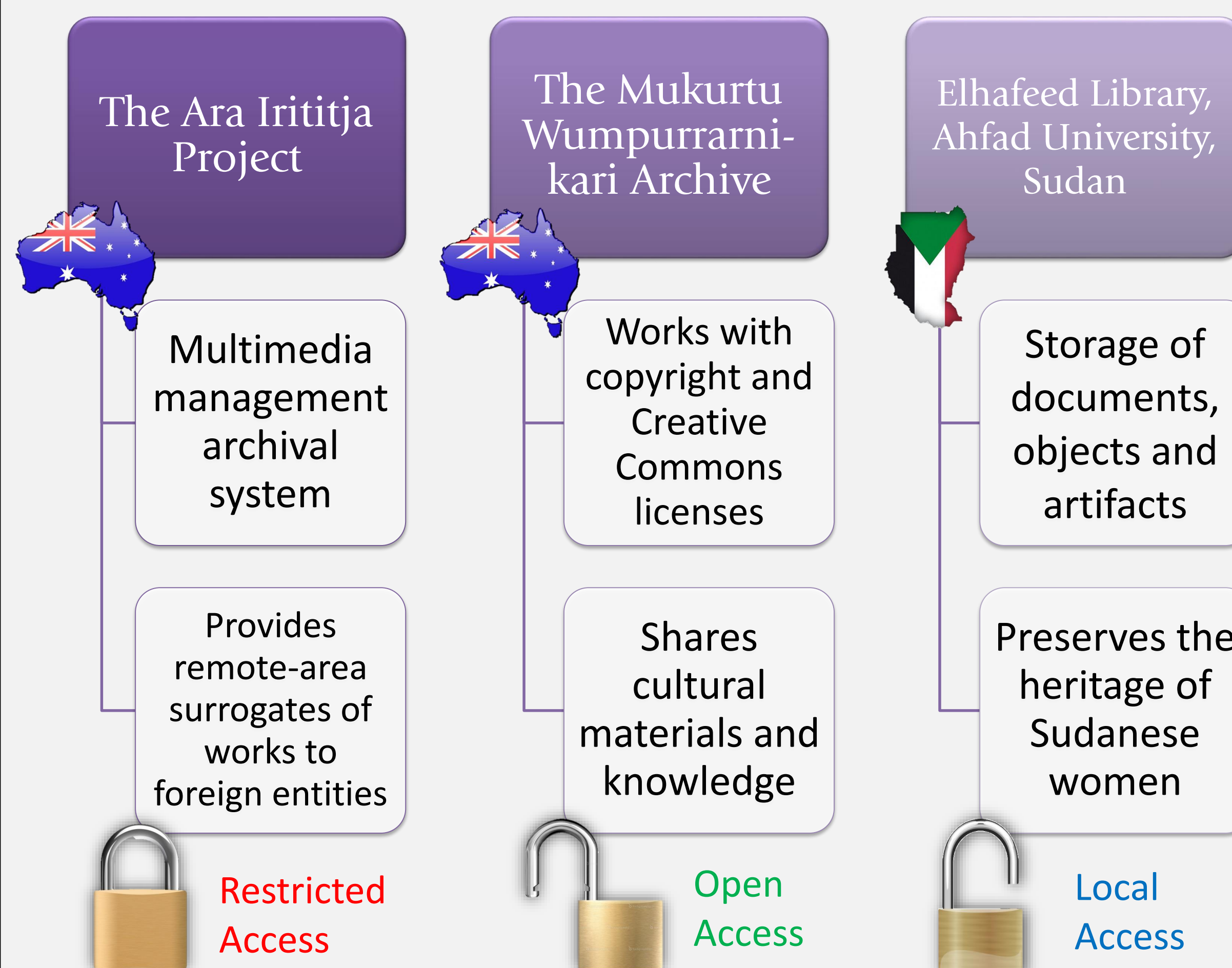
Letters, Books, Etc.

Artwork & Other Objects



## Solutions

### International Ongoing Efforts

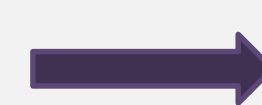


### Cataloging Changes

**The Quinkan Matchbox Project:** developing an innovative cataloging system and metadata model for an indigenous culture in Australia.

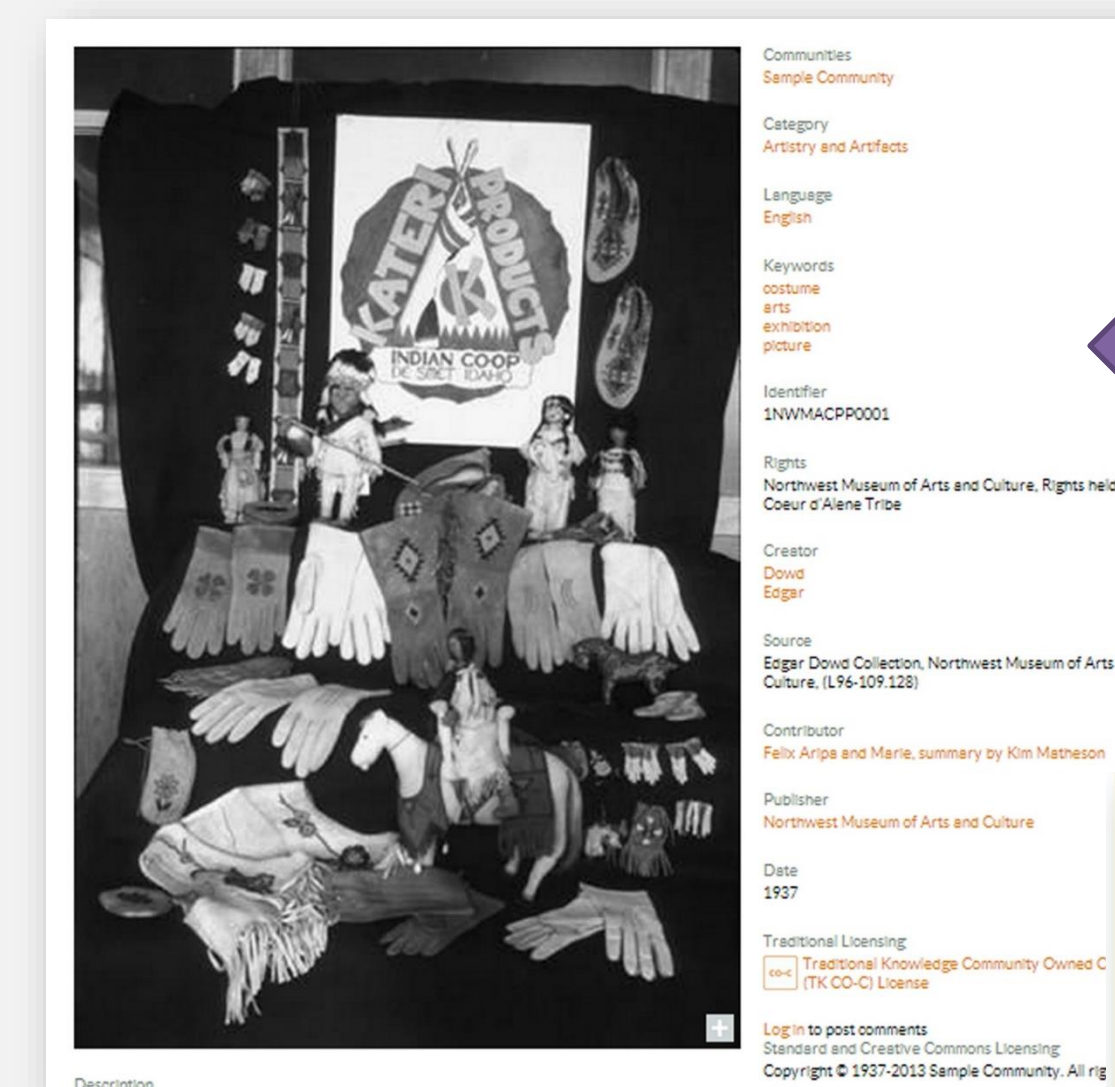
- ✓ Dublin Core structure
- ✓ No MARC fields
- ✓ Extensive fields
- ✓ Localized language

1935, Macassan Period



Long time before Macassan times

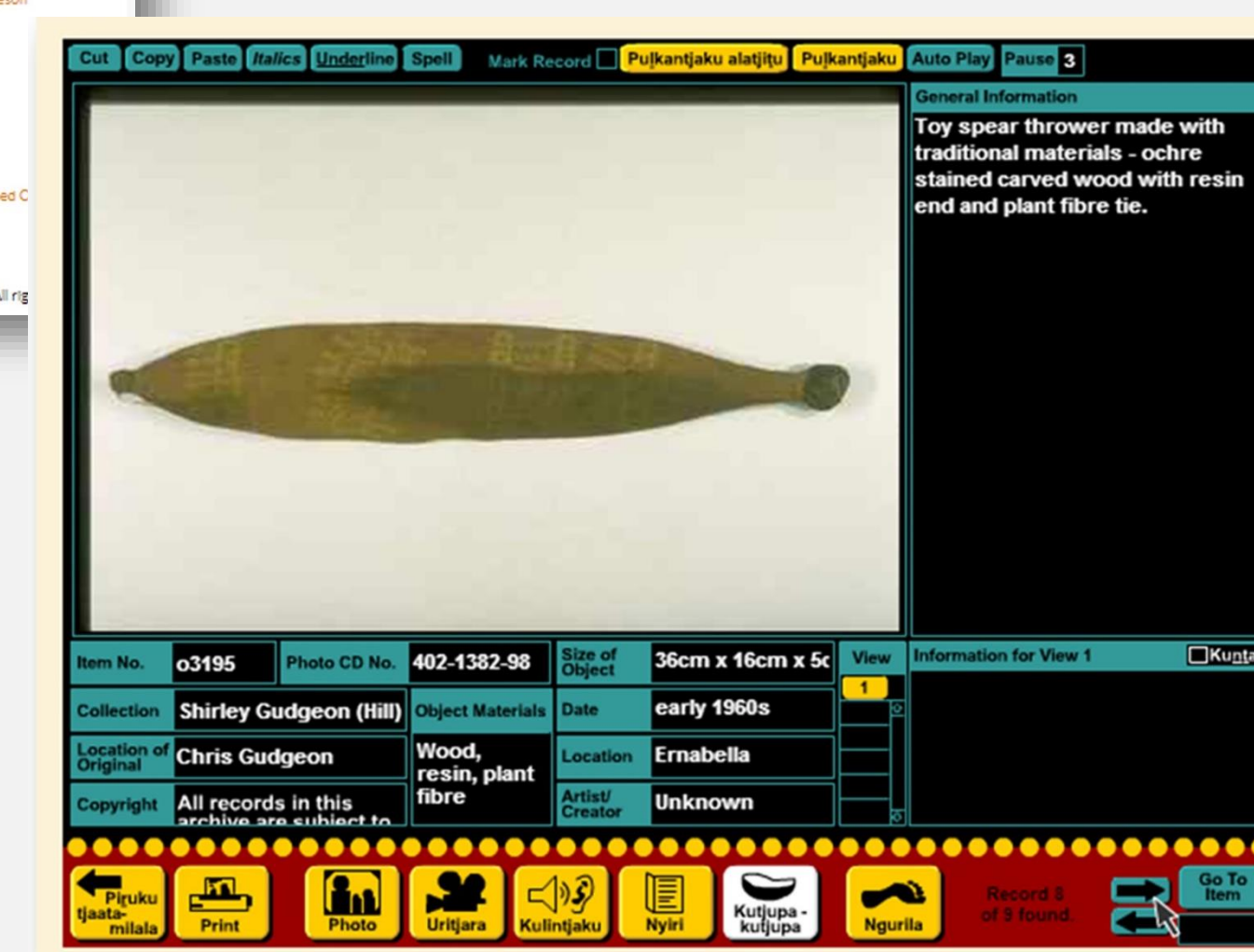
## Database Examples



Example of an entry from the Mukurtu Wumpurrarni-kari Archive.

Includes fields like category, communities, creator and rights.

Example of an artifact entry from the The Ara Irititja Project.



## The Importance of Indigenous Knowledge Databases:

- ✓ Assist indigenous tribes in retaining a sense of cultural heritage
- ✓ Help exchange indigenous knowledge from one community to another
- ✓ Promote integration of indigenous knowledge into library and museum settings
- ✓ Prevent the spread of false information
- ✓ Lower the risk of losing information forever