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i-*Tjuma*: The journey of a collection – from documentation to delivery

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Abstract

In 2018, a collection of some 60 edited and subtitled films, resulting from a documentation project (2012–2018) in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands on verbal arts of the Western Desert, was ready to be returned to the Ngaanyatjarra community. In this case study, we describe the journey of this return and the cultural, ethical, and technological issues that we negotiated in the process. From the archived collection lodged with PARADISEC (Pacific and Regional Archive for Digital Sources in Endangered Cultures), we developed a workflow that harvested selected media and their associated metadata and transferred them to LibraryBox, a portable digital file distribution tool designed to enable local delivery of media via the LibraryBox wi-fi hotspot. We detail here the return of the curated collection in a series of community film festivals in the Ngaanyatjarra communities and via the delivery of media from LibraryBox to individual mobile phones. We also discuss the return of a digital collection of historical photographs of Ngaanyatjarra people and strategies to re-inscribe such old records for new purposes. These endeavours are motivated by the imperative to 'mobilise' our collection of Western Desert Verbal Arts by making the recordings available to the Ngaanyatjarra community. We anticipate that the lessons we learnt in the process will contribute to better design for local solutions in the iterative cycle of documentation, archiving, and return.

Keywords: archiving, verbal arts, Ngaanyatjarra language, endangered languages, archival access, Indigenous Australia

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Introduction[1]

This chapter is in part an exploration of a collaborative journey, from documentation to delivery, of the Western Desert Verbal Arts (WDVA) audiovisual collection in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands region of Western Australia. At the same time, it is a critical reflection on the 'practice' (Bell et al. 2013) of obtaining and disseminating digital collections, the practice of digital returns, and our own practices as researchers. As anthropologist Fred Myers discussed in his deliberations on the complex issue of returning archival film to a Pintupi community (Myers 2017), we wanted to 'mobilise' our collection of Western Desert Verbal Arts by making the recordings available to the Ngaanyatjarra. The journey was premised on a desire to "engage ethically and properly with people" (Myers 2017: 186) in the process of returning digital material derived from linguistic, ethnographic, and anthropological research (see also Haviland 2016). We also aimed to explore ways of "moving forward with people in tandem with their desires and aspirations" rather than simply "looking back over times past" (Ingold & Gatt 2013: 141). Our interpretation of this challenge was to find a way for Ngaanyatjarra people to gain sustainable access to the films made in the WDVA project, preferably in their homelands. To this end we pursued a number of strategies. In the short term we held a community film festival in October 2018 in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, targeted primarily for a Ngaanyatjarra audience, and we distributed the films on USB bracelets. These were branded with the term 'i-*Tjuma*' (Figure 4). The Ngaanyatjarra word '*tjuma*' means 'story, narrative', and in this context the 'i' signifies the migration of these traditional storytelling practices into the digital domain via our experiment with their narration on iPads. As part of what we hoped would be a long-term solution, we tested the delivery of media via the LibraryBox data dissemination device, which we envisaged being housed in appropriate community facilities. Coupled with this, we were mindful of our obligation to archive this valuable collection *tjitji marlangkatja marlangkatja pirniku* 'for future generations' and for future research pursuits.

A further element in the journey involved consulting with Ngaanyatjarra people regarding a collection of historical photographs to seek consents for these images to be included in a forthcoming publication about changing communication and social interaction in the Western Desert (Kral & Ellis forthcoming). This photographic collection was variously sourced from institutional archives (the Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies, the Berndt Museum, the State Library of Western Australia and the South Australian Museum), as well as community access platforms such as Aṟa Irititja, a digital archive and

1 Firstly we thank all those in the Ngaanyatjarra community who participated in this research over many years. We thank Julia Miller, Nick Thieberger, and Marco LaRosa, who assisted with the workflow from PARADISEC to LibraryBox, Claudia Rowe, and Bergen O'Brien who helped with film editing, Gary Proctor from Warburton Arts Project, and Franco Saliba, Warakurna Community youth worker who assisted with the film screenings, and Christine Bruderlin who assisted with the design and production of the small 2018 limited edition book and postcards. Ellis has been supported by an ELDP (Endangered Languages Documentation Programme) (SG0187) and an ARC (Australian Research Council) Discovery Indigenous Award (IN150100018); Green by ARC Fellowships (DP110102767, DE160100873); and Kral by an ARC DECRA Award (DE120100720). We thank Jane Simpson, Co-CI (IN150100018) and the ARC Centre of Excellence for the Dynamics of Language (CE140100041). We also thank two anonymous reviewers for their constructive feedback on an earlier version of this chapter.

social history project of the Pitjantjatjara Council, and Tjumalampatju, the digital archive of the Ngaanyatjarra Council.[2] We wanted to return these legacy materials to family members and the community, but also to enrich the archival collections by amassing 'genealogical fragments' (Haviland 2016) and adding new dimensions to the metadata for the images. We anticipated that the lessons learnt in the process of 're-animating' these precious collections (Anderson 2018) would inform our current and ongoing practice and give us a much-needed diachronic perspective on the many complex issues involved in the iterative cycle of documentation, archiving, and return. Not the least of these challenges is the dynamic nature of cultural practices, what Myers has termed "circumstances of cultural flow" (Myers 2017: 187), and the difficulty of envisaging future uses of materials enabled by developments in technology that we are yet to imagine. In this respect, this analysis is an attempt to envisage, with the benefit of hindsight, what the future might hold in terms of attitudes to archiving, and digital possibilities.

The WDVA project fieldwork 'team' consists of an Indigenous researcher (Ngaatjatjarra linguist Elizabeth Marrkilyi Ellis), who is also a Ngaanyatjarra Lands community member, and two non-Indigenous researchers (Green and Kral). Between us we have many decades of shared history, forged since the late 1970s in intercultural projects including language documentation, interpreting, translating, and teaching. Ellis facilitated our collecting processes and gave the non-Indigenous team an intimate proximity to the community. Nevertheless, the multiple layering of interactions with historical and contemporary images of Ngaanyatjarra people brought to the surface myriad complexities and dilemmas associated with consent, copyright, ownership, and ultimately Ngaanyatjarra peoples' relationships with photographic and filmed images of themselves.

Our desire to enable Ngaanyatjarra community control over the direction and dissemination of Ngaanyatjarra cultural collections was set against the emerging contradictory reality of the digital world. As Christen outlines:

> The digital terrain poses both possibilities and problems for indigenous peoples as they seek to manage, revive, circulate, and create new cultural heritage within overlapping colonial/postcolonial histories and oftentimes binary public debates about access in a digital age. (Christen 2011: 185)

It is widely recognised that digital technologies allow for new ways of knowing about cultural heritage, offering opportunities for education, regeneration, and community empowerment (see Were 2014: 133). In Australia, so Barwick and Thieberger state:

> … the importance of providing Indigenous cultural heritage stakeholders with access to the research and documents that record their cultural heritage is widely acknowledged and features prominently in the policies and programs of numerous collecting and educational

2 Tjumalampatju (Our Stories): https://tj.keepingculture.com/welcome; Aṟa Irititja (Stories from the Past): https://www.irititja.com/. Both archives return materials of cultural and historical significance to Aboriginal people by way of the interactive multimedia software known as the Aṟa Irititja Knowledge Management System.

> institutions, as well as in the research aims and methods of researchers. (Barwick & Thieberger 2005: 133)

These factors notwithstanding, the digital world has also unleashed an expectation that digital items will be easy to download and circulate widely, and this is often at odds with the parameters determined at the outset of language documentation projects in remote Indigenous communities. This alerts us to what Myers describes as the potentially fraught environment of "shifting protocols and introduced media forms" (Myers 2017: 172).

The Ngaanyatjarra Lands

The Ngaanyatjarra Lands lie within the Western Desert, fanning out into Western Australia from the tri-state border with South Australia and the Northern Territory (see Figure 1). Approximately 2000 people live in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands communities. Residents are predominantly Ngaanyatjarra speakers, but the speech community also comprises speakers of other mutually intelligible Western Desert languages (including Ngaatjatjarra and Pitjantjatjara). English is also widely spoken (Kral 2012). The 'Lands' population includes descendants of the last nomadic groups of the Western Desert (the first wave came into Warburton Ranges Mission in the 1930s, and the last in the 1960s). As a group, the Ngaanyatjarra have never left their traditional lands, nor has this region been annexed or occupied by outsiders (Brooks 2002, 2011).

Figure 1. Map showing Western Desert languages and some of the communities where they are spoken (map: Jennifer Green)

Early Ngaanyatjarra encounters with photographic images

Our audiovisual documentation of verbal arts in the Western Desert is located within a trajectory of developments in photographic and film recording technologies, altered sensibilities in regard to research and archiving practices, and changing community attitudes to recordings, to images of the 'self', and to archived heritage collections. In order to place the WDVA collection in an historical context, we firstly give a brief outline of the relatively recent dynamic, yet at times fraught, encounter with photographic images and film in the Ngaanyatjarra region.[3]

In the initial encounters with cameras in the mission era, Ngaanyatjarra agency was all but negated, images were seldom returned to Ngaanyatjarra people, and the camera remained in the hands of the outsider, whether missionary or anthropologist (McGrath 2010). Additionally, many of the early images were circulated entirely independently of their Aboriginal subjects and had the effect of projecting a certain view of desert society to the outside world, one predominantly controlled by Anglo-Australians.

Cameras were among the first objects the missionaries brought with them after the United Aborigines Mission (UAM) established a permanent settlement in the Warburton Ranges in 1934. From the 1950s onwards audio recording for Bible translation work also became commonplace (Glass 2019). Anthropologist Pamela McGrath suggests that the images taken reveal an intimacy in the nature of the relationship between the missionaries and the Aboriginal people who were in the vicinity of the mission (McGrath 2010: 91).[4] Nevertheless, the content of the images was determined by the missionaries and often used as propaganda in publications, such as the UAM newsletter the *United Aborigines Messenger*, to illuminate the transformative goal of the mission's evangelising endeavour.

In 1935, anthropologist Norman Tindale and his team from the Board for Anthropological Research at the University of Adelaide (Tindale 1936), including photographer Cecil John Hackett (Jones 2011: 100), cinematographer EO Stocker and anthropologist CP Mountford (Mountford 1938, 1939), set up a camp in the Warburton Ranges.[5] For the Ngaanyatjarra this was the first time that they were the subject of long-term ethnographic investigation by outsiders, and "the first time film recordings were taken of their lives" (McGrath 2010: 80; see also McGrath 2015), although at times the cameras did not work, and some early recordings were ruined (Mountford 1976: 63).

In 1953, William Grayden made a journey from Perth to the Rawlinson Range via Warburton Ranges Mission and recorded some of the earliest images of families living around the Rawlinson Range, near what is now the Warakurna Community. In Grayden's later account (Grayden 2002) are numerous images of Rawlinson Range people, mostly unnamed. Grayden returned to the region in the late 1950s, this time as a member of a West Australian Government Select Committee inquiring into perceived bureaucratic neglect of Aboriginal people. In time, his film and photographic images became embroiled in the 'Warburton Range controversy' – a

3 For Australia-wide perspectives on Indigenous encounters with photographic images see Lydon (2014).

4 Collections include photographs taken by Harrie and Marion Green in the 1930s–1950s and held at the South Australian Museum, Adelaide and at the State Library of Western Australia, Perth. Also included are photographs taken by Dawn and Toby Metcalfe held at Aṟa Irititja and the Berndt Museum.

5 Images from this expedition are archived at the South Australian Museum.

fierce national public debate about the health and welfare of desert Aboriginal people. The debate pivoted around the recruitment of images of people in situations of physical distress to illustrate arguments about political neglect and it sparked accusations of propaganda and also disagreement about the norms of Aboriginal wellbeing. Significantly no Ngaanyatjarra people are named in the film, *Their Darkest Hour*, nor in Grayden's ensuing account (Grayden 1957) and no biographical details are included (McGrath & Brooks 2010).[6] Moreover, the perspectives and voices of the Aboriginal people who appear in these images are noticeably absent. The images were not seen in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands until some 50 years later when McGrath embarked on a 're-documentation' project in 2008 and 2009 (McGrath 2010). In another event, a decade after Grayden's encounter, anthropologist Richard Gould and his wife Betty visited Warburton Ranges Mission. Image-making was also central to their ethnographic pursuits. Gould's publication (Gould 1969) of a number of images of men's ceremonies caused a furore in the community. This led to the Ngaanyatjarra community resisting the presence of researchers over subsequent decades.

In retrospect, some Ngaanyatjarra have described how unnerved they were by these early photographic encounters. Belle Davidson (b. 1944), a Pitjantjatjara media worker at Ngaanyatjarra Media, stated in 2013:

> People taking a picture with a camera, that first picture. And we always frightened for that camera. We don't want to be in the camera early days. Nervous I think. Don't like looking at it, it was a strange one. *Ngurrpangkatja*. Don't know nothing.[7]

A shift towards a more collaborative and sympathetic approach to image-making took place in the late 1960s when Ian Dunlop and the Commonwealth Film Unit recorded the 'People of the Western Desert' film series in the vicinity of what is now the community of Patjarr with families who had only recently come out of the desert. Dunlop was to capture some of the last images of desert living (Brooks 2012).[8] His documentation marked a shift in attitude – most noticeably the 'subjects' are all named. Ultimately we need to appreciate the fact that early ethnographers were people of their time. While some of their actions and the mistakes they made would be unthinkable today, the role and power of the ethnographer-photographer, their relationships with Indigenous 'others' and the role of images at large have changed over time.[9]

It was not until the 1970s, with the advent of Indigenous community-controlled media organisations and cheaper cameras, that cameras became more readily available for people in remote Australia. This was a turning point where Indigenous people in remote locations

6 William Grayden's film, *Their darkest hour*, sometimes referred to as Manslaughter, was shown at public meetings in churches, town halls and activist conferences across the nation for years afterwards (McGrath & Brooks 2010: 116).

7 WDVA project file name: DECRA20130702_BD_BLK_02.

8 Between 1965 and 1967 Ian Dunlop of the Commonwealth Film Unit undertook several months of filming in the Western Desert and produced 'People of the Western Desert' (Parts 1–10 and Parts 11–19). See Brooks (2012); Deveson & Dunlop (2012); Myers (2017); Turner (2018).

9 This is not to claim, however, that the current benefit of hindsight will futureproof current ethnographers from critiques some time down the track.

shifted from being "the object of other people's image-making practices" (Ginsburg 2008: 139) to controlling new forms of media cultural production.[10] In 1992, Irrunytju Media (now Ngaanyatjarra Media) was established in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands and has since been responsible for promoting language, culture, music, and stories through analogue (and now digital) media production and broadcasting. It is only since the arrival of digital photography and mobile phones in the 2000s, which did away with the time-consuming and expensive film development process, that Aboriginal people in the Western Desert have started to gain control over capturing and disseminating photographic images for their own sociocultural purposes (as seen most notably on Facebook). Anthropologists Daniel Miller and Heather Horst suggest that world-wide the most astonishing aspect of the digital technologies is not the speed of technological innovation, but rather "the speed by which society takes all of these for granted and creates normative conditions for their use" (Miller & Horst 2012: 28).

The rapid take-up of digital technologies and practices in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands is nothing short of breathtaking. It has taken place in a context where photography only recently enabled a form of cultural remembering that was previously unknown. Prior to this, when an individual had passed away personal items belonging to them would be burned because it was considered that a person's *kuurti* 'spirit' still remained in the objects. Until recently images and sound recordings of the deceased were destroyed, printed images were covered over and the term *kunmanarra* was temporarily used as a substitute personal name. These days, however, older people are confronted with the fact that younger people not only retain and display photographs of the recently deceased, but also post condolence messages accompanied by these images on Facebook. Such changes are challenging previous orthodoxies regarding images of the deceased, yet Western Desert people are accommodating these transformations as taken for granted practice.

With the passing of time, the existence of the images taken by outsiders has given Ngaanyatjarra people access to photographic records of family members who have since passed – a source of delight to most. Moves to repatriate the images have led to them being available to a local audience, often through local digital archives and art exhibitions. This is enabling the Ngaanyatjarra to re-engage with images of their forebears, often for the first time.

Revisiting the photographic archive

As mentioned above, many of the historical photographic and film collections have been archived in museums, national institutions such as AIATSIS, or local community access databases such as Aṟa Irititja and Tjumalampatju. The latter community access databases have for some time been repatriating historical images of Western Desert people and recording contemporary images for the future. As researchers, we negotiated access to relevant images and compiled a set of these that would eventually be included in the published volume on changing communication and social interaction in the Western Desert (Kral & Ellis forthcoming).

10 Internationally, by the 1960s, visual anthropologists (Worth & Adair 1972; Turner 1992) had begun to facilitate the provision of cameras for Indigenous peoples to record themselves. In remote Australia, this turn took place in the mid-1980s when film and analogue video production and broadcasting commenced at Yuendumu with the Warlpiri Media Association (Michaels 1986).

Prior to doing this we needed to gain consent from Ngaanyatjarra people for the inclusion of individual images and, in consultation with them, amass information regarding the content of the images, as best we could.

Led by Ellis, interactions with elders were facilitated in the Ngaanyatjarra language, either by viewing digital images on a large computer screen that we take with us on field trips for this purpose or in other cases on paper printouts. Photos from the early mission days were viewed by the very few elders who are able to attribute names to the faces from the past. With failing eyesight themselves, they peered and squinted at images from the 1930s, 40s, or 50s, often only able to approximate the identity of the unnamed people in the photos. At other times people like Norma Giles, whose own parents and siblings were the main subjects in a series of images Ian Dunlop took in the 1960s, could illuminate precise details and contribute anecdotal memories that were triggered in the process of viewing the images (Figure 2). McGrath (2010) also discusses how information recorded in these processes of 're-documentation' can "provide considerable insights into historical sociality and significance beyond the original moment in which the image was taken" (McGrath 2010: ix).

While for Ngaanyatjarra people these photographic images certainly provided a unique window into their past, our project was also concerned with enabling access to more recent recordings made as part of our Western Desert Verbal Arts project. The final phase of the WDVA project focused on how to best return this large corpus of audiovisual documentation of verbal arts to the Ngaanyatjarra community. It is to this process that we now turn.

Figure 2. Norma Giles and Lizzie Ellis discuss an archival image from the Ian Dunlop Collection (AIATSIS: DUNLOP_113_CS-000137776) taken in 1965 (photo: Jennifer Green)

The Western Desert Verbal Arts collection: 2012–2018

Across the Western Desert, oral traditions are central to cultural practice and social interaction. The rich and diverse repertoires of the verbal arts are evident in stories, song, and dance, and embrace respectful ways of speaking, sign language, and the use of graphic symbols to accompany sand story narratives. These multimodal speech arts are a valued part of the traditions of Western Desert people, yet at the same time they are highly endangered.

Between 2012 and 2013 we began to document the verbal arts of the Western Desert, supported by an ELDP (Endangered Languages Documentation Programme) Small Grant (SG0187).[11] Recordings were made with 20 narrators spanning three generations. These included male and female storytellers telling *tjuma* (oral narratives linked to the *tjukurrpa* 'Dreaming', and personal narratives); and women and adolescent girls telling *mirlpa* (sand stories), along with five adolescent girls and young women who transferred this drawing practice to iPads.[12] Also included in the collection are recordings of children's songs and games (Ellis, Green & Kral 2017), and an additional collection of speech styles and respect registers. In recognition of the multimodal nature of these verbal art forms and communicative styles, the majority of the recordings were made with video. In many instances we used multiple cameras to capture different perspectives simultaneously. The success of this project led to Ellis being awarded an ARC Discovery Indigenous Fellowship (2015–2019) and as a team we continued our documentation of Western Desert Verbal Arts. In 2016, a further 23 iPad stories were recorded with 10 young women, as well as more children's songs and games.[13]

Returning the WDVA collection

The WDVA collection designated for return to the Ngaanyatjarra community in October 2018 included a collection of 60 edited films (with English subtitles, and oftentimes both English and Ngaanyatjarra) that were clearly in the public domain. Other films from the final set of 80 films were not distributed, as the storytellers had passed away – emphasising the importance of endangered language documentation work and the critical time frames that much of this work operates within. After consultation, these particular films were given to close family members. The journey to return the collection was not taken lightly and involved a significant amount of planning and coordination. The researchers travelled from Canberra and Melbourne and drove together many thousands of kilometres to the various communities in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands.

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11 Preliminary documentation of respect registers was undertaken by Kral and Ellis 2010–2011 for a Language Recording and Archiving Project for Ngaanyatjarra Media supported by a Maintenance of Indigenous Languages and Recordings (MILR) Program grant.

12 Introducing new media to Indigenous artists in parts of remote Australia has precedents stretching back at least to the 1930s when anthropologists supplied people with pencils, crayons and paper and encouraged them to draw in order to get a perspective, through the lens of graphic media, on how Indigenous people 'viewed the world' (see Hinkson 2014: 30–35).

13 The full collection will be archived at AIATSIS at the conclusion of the project. The public collection will be available through ELAR (The Endangered Languages Archive), PARADISEC, Tjumalampatju, and Aṛa Irititja.

The i-*Tjuma* Film Festival

The public events for the i-*Tjuma* returns centred on two locations – the first the immaculately curated Tjulyuru Gallery space at Warburton, where the projected films vied for attention with an exhibition of some of the crown jewels of the unique collection of Ngaanyatjarra acrylic paintings, and the second at the Warakurna community hall (Figure 3), a large, airy space used for youth activities such as basketball and film nights. At Warakurna our attempts to screen the i-*Tjuma* collection were thwarted on the first night by a power outage. A group of senior women and a gang of children had already gathered outside the community hall as the late afternoon light faded. The youth worker, who was coordinating the event – setting up the screen and projector, laying out chairs and overseeing the sausage sizzle – informed us that the technician would have to travel from a community a few hundred kilometres away to fix the problem. Reluctantly we re-scheduled the event for the following evening. The next evening an enormous rain storm meant that it would be unwise to show the films, as few people would venture out in the downpour, and the rain on the iron roof of the hall would all but drown out the sound of the audiovisual recordings. Finally, on the third night, we showed the films to an audience of Ngaanyatjarra people, arts workers, and school teachers.

On both film nights, we augmented the program of films with a short introductory talk about the verbal arts documentation project. We also distributed i-*Tjuma*–branded USB bracelets containing the 60 films for home viewing on TVs and play stations; a small book of two transcribed and translated iPad stories with embedded QR codes linked to the edited online films; and postcards depicting images from the iPad stories from each of the 10 younger storytellers (Figure 4). A barbecue meal after showing the film gave us time to demonstrate how to download films from LibraryBox onto individual mobile phones via wi-fi.

Figure 3. Film night in the Warakurna community hall, October 2018 (photo: Jennifer Green)

Figure 4. i-*Tjuma*–branded USB bracelets and the book of iPad stories with embedded QR codes linked to the edited online films (photo: Jennifer Green)

Responses to films

Responses to the films were positive. At Warburton one of the older women affirmed that it was "all good, good to bring it back like this, bringing it back to the people that did it" and that she was "not worried" to see herself in the films. At Warakurna a younger woman said she liked the goanna hunting story the best because it was a story about older women hunting at Pangkupirri near Tjukurla Community.[14] She elaborated further, "My aunty taught me to hunt for goannas … watching the film reminded me of my own goanna hunting experience with my aunties." Moreover, she noted that these films are important because future generations will see them and learn traditions like how to hunt for goannas.[15] These endorsements were reiterated by school staff:

> It had a lovely feeling that night and it really felt like people had ownership of the project and they were really proud of the stories and the filming … Coming back to the community in an appropriate way … Handing back to the people is so important … (Deputy Principal, Warburton School, interview, 3 November 2018)

> To hear the story of the project resonated with me around protocols for language and the whole event highlighted cultural change and how people are dealing with that. Really interesting to see the generational change in the material and practices as well as the content and format of the stories. Revealing so much about what is important to people at that time. To me it is an important bank of material to have. (Principal, Warburton School, interview 3 November 2018)

14 WDVA project-Hunting story *Pangkupirri 1*. PARADISEC: WDVA1-MIR_02.

15 WDVA project-Interviews: Norma Giles-20181022 and Selina Shepherd-20181026.

These responses affirmed that the documentation project was of value to the community and that Ngaanyatjarra people and those who work with them could see the importance of this collection for future generations. The next step would have been simply to archive the collection either at AIATSIS or in a more locally accessible community access database (Aṟa Irititja or Tjumalampatju). Our aim, however, was to explore an interim step that would ensure that the collection was more directly placed in the hands of Ngaanyatjarra people.

Distribution and ownership

In a tangible sense, individual 'ownership' of the materials rested on the distribution of the 60 films on the USB bracelets, coupled with a small book of two of the iPad films and a set of colourful postcards, in tandem with the film festival. This solution, however, was a short-term one. We hoped that a more long-term solution for the ongoing delivery of the media would be via the LibraryBox data dissemination device. We envisaged this device being housed in an appropriate community access site. We teamed up with PARADISEC to trial the development of a model for repatriating audiovisual language recordings in endangered language communities via wi-fi.

The workflow – from documentation to LibraryBox

At the time LibraryBox was a commercially available 'digital distribution tool' – a combination of a router, a USB drive and open-source software that provided a small, low-powered webserver that is off-line and self-contained. The webserver acted like a captive portal and delivered files that were stored on the USB drive. To use LibraryBox, the user connected to the wi-fi and launched the browser on their mobile phone. Attempting to visit any webpage would push the user to the LibraryBox homepage on the device, thereby linking to the menu for viewing or downloads.[16]

The potential advantages of such devices are that they do not require an internet account or password, they enable users to bypass potentially complicated website interfaces, and downloading media from the device is free. This makes media available to users on their private mobile phones, in a context where access to computers is limited. A potential constraint, however, is the limited storage capacity of the mobile devices themselves. As mentioned earlier, we were confident that all the films destined for delivery via LibraryBox were in the public domain. The self-contained edited films included attributions to storytellers, filmmakers, editors and funding sources as well as links to archival reference numbers for the original media that is archived elsewhere.

Our workflow is illustrated in Figure 5. The edited films were transcribed in Ngaanyatjarra and translated into English using ELAN.[17] From ELAN an .srt file (a captioning file format) of the transcribed/translated text was exported and then imported into the FinalCut (FCPro) film

16 http://librarybox.us/whatis.php (Accessed 12 December 2018.) Note: The LibraryBox device is no longer available for purchase.

17 ELAN is one of a suite of tools that has been developed by The Language Archive at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen, The Netherlands (Wittenburg et al. 2006).

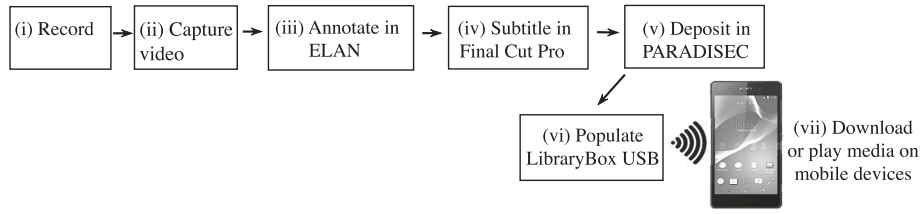

Figure 5. Workflow, from recording to delivery via LibraryBox to mobile devices

editing program to speed up the time-consuming process of subtitling each film. The media and metadata were then deposited in PARADISEC as part of a broader workflow of archiving the high-quality files in safe and secure repositories for the future.[18]

The existing architecture from PARADISEC was used to populate the LibraryBox USBs with our deposited collection of media. A file browser was generated in PARADISEC, based on the WDVA collection metadata in the PARADISEC catalogue.[19] File types/genres, such as sand stories or iPad stories, were grouped together and a link created for users to access media from the file browser. A customised interface was created that allowed organised viewing of the files based on the grouped file types from PARADISEC. In all there were 60 files in .mp4 format. The file sizes were initially too large for the capacity of the USBs so they were compressed to make easily streamable versions. This created a duplicate lower resolution set of the media collection. Once the USB was populated and plugged into the LibraryBox, an offline url was activated. After connecting to the wi-fi 'PARADISEC Catalog' the user would be nudged toward the offline url: catalog.paradisec.offline/static (Figure 6). Films could then be played or downloaded. Although the off-line delivery can be accessed by both Apple and Android devices, we found that downloading the media only worked on Android phones. In the circumstances, this was not a problem, as the overwhelming preference in communities where we work appears to be for Android phones (Carew et al. 2015: 310).

We had high expectations of LibraryBox as a file-sharing device. Its implementation promised to go at least some way toward addressing the problem of how to repatriate a curated set of audiovisual language recordings to the community via wi-fi. However, after purchasing two LibraryBox devices we found that one was defective. When we tried to have it replaced we discovered that LibraryBox devices were no longer available, in itself a lesson in just how short the shelf life of some technical solutions can be. Undeterred, we continued with the trial of the device, in the hope of being able to provide some practical advice for the development and implementation of similar devices in the future.

When we demonstrated the LibraryBox device to Ngaanyatjarra people during our travelling film festival there was initial interest, but this soon led to frustration. What we discovered was that a number of improvements could be made to the delivery of media via devices of this type. In many respects, the PARADISEC architecture was too structured and rigid for our needs. For instance, the file names needed to tally with the PARADISEC standardised format for file names (for example, WDVA1-TJU_01.mp4). Three-part file names are

18 http://www.paradisec.org.au (Accessed 19 December 2018.)

19 The collection can be found at PARADISEC under WDVA1 – Western Desert Verbal Arts Project Collection: http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/collections/WDVA1

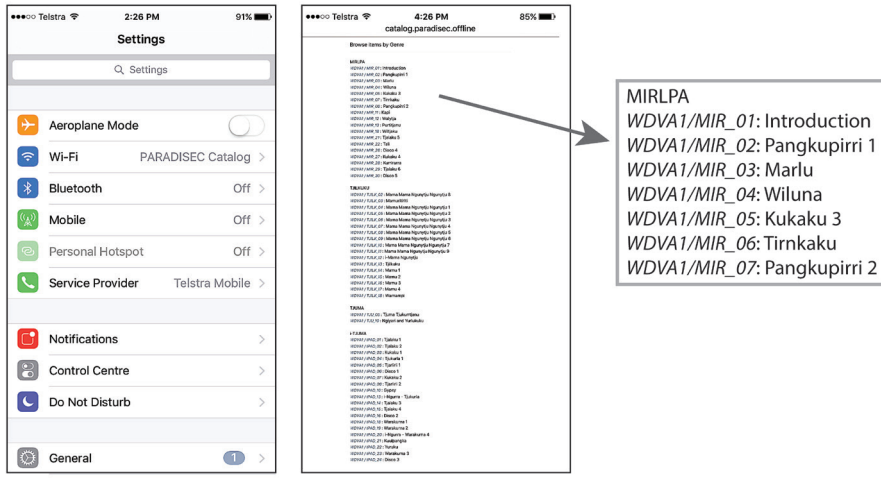

Figure 6. Screenshots showing the 'PARADISEC Catalog' interface and menu on a mobile phone

a PARADISEC requirement, and when combined with our own film titles this rendered overly long file names in the touch screen menu list (Figure 6). The resulting interface was unwieldy, counterintuitive, and not optimal for a stand-alone community delivery device. It required significant literacy skills on the part of the user in order to navigate to target items for download. Given the low-level literacy context, an icon-based interface would be more appropriate, especially when considering the small size of the touch screen buttons on many mobile phone screens. The capacity to browse content by genre would also greatly improve functionality. In addition, we had not anticipated other technological difficulties arising from a context where the models and types of phones most in use were in various states of degradation (with broken screens, insufficient memory, poor volume, etc.). Ultimately, we only succeeded in fully downloading media from our LibraryBox to one iPad mini owned by a community member at the Warakurna film showing.

The LibraryBox was later placed in the art centre at Warakurna, where we did eventually connect the device to several mobile phones. We had hoped that this would generate further interest. We concluded, however, that the LibraryBox device, populated via PARADISEC, was not the best pathway for a stand-alone community repatriation system. This was partly because of constraints in the creation of the interface via PARADISEC. This pathway may work well where heritage materials stored on the device are delivered back to individuals by a researcher who then oversees the wi-fi delivery. However, for stand-alone devices for use in non/semi-literate communities a different approach is needed. It may be that further developments by the PARADISEC team using 'Raspberry Pi' will build on what has been learnt in this trial.[20] After archiving, a less sophisticated repatriation approach may bypass PARADISEC, entailing a simplified workflow from the wi-fi device to mobile phones in tandem with the development of an accessible icon-based interface. A local hard drive repository of the lower-quality .mp4 files could also be left as a backup in the event of the device failing.

20 See http://www.language-archives.services/about/pi (Accessed 23 January 2019.)

Figure 7. Inge Kral and Phillipa Butler experiment with downloading media from the LibraryBox device to a mobile phone, Warburton, October 2018 (photo: Jennifer Green)

This trial reveals much about the volatility of digital technologies and reminds us of the necessity to ensure that high-quality, secure archiving processes are prioritised. This is particularly the case in situations where local archiving solutions are not sufficient, as technologies rapidly become redundant, hard drives fail, and access to and oversight of collections housed in community facilities can be sporadic.

Layered consent

Another issue that has become apparent in our ongoing engagement with the WDVA collection and with its communities of origin is what we term the problem of 'layered consent'. Easy access to media that is enabled by digital technologies is often at odds with the parameters determined in the initial negotiations about consent for uses of research materials derived from language documentation projects in remote Indigenous communities. Roughly speaking, the longer the time frame in the cycle of documentation, archiving, and return, the more acute the problem. In the case study presented here, wide circulation of the WDVA project films led to new opportunities as well as new dilemmas. The popularity of the films following the public display of these aesthetically engaging audiovisual materials catalysed requests for the films to be broadcast on Indigenous Community Television (ICTV), published in a collected volume of iPad stories (Ellis, Green & Kral forthcoming), and potentially displayed in the new Western Australian Museum.[21] While the narrators and authors of these materials were overwhelmingly positive about these new possibilities for their voices and visual artworks to reach wider audiences, such uses of the materials had not been foreseen in the original consent

21 Several of these films can be seen by accessing the Ngaanyatjarra portal through the ICTV language website (https://ictv.com.au/languages) (Accessed 25 January 2019.)

form that was signed as a necessary component in the process of ethical research. This meant more work for the research team, and a proliferation of layered consents that in the long term will always struggle to keep up with developments in technology, and with dynamic and changing community sensibilities and attitudes to recordings, to images of people, and to archived heritage collections. As recognised by others, the process of negotiating ongoing consent, or 're-consenting' research materials,[22] is both necessary and time-consuming (Janke & Iacovino 2012).[23] We also recognise the need to have processes that enable such updated and reinvigorated documents of consent to be fed back into the archives where the original media are lodged, so that the archives can in turn engage ethically and in an informed way with ongoing requests for the materials they safeguard. Clearly one critical issue outlined in such consent forms is the question of access. Our project also enabled us to confirm, in a safe environment, that the open access conditions originally placed on a selection of the WDVA films by the narrators held true when they actually saw the films (of themselves) on the big screen in a public location. However, the issue of future access to other types of materials, for example the special speech register recordings, is not so straightforward.

Conclusions

Developments towards participatory models for archiving attempt to break down traditional boundaries between depositors, users and archivists and expand the audiences and uses for archives. They try to address the significant problem of what Anderson has termed 'information colonialism' found not only in the legacies of past research practices, but also in the present day where, she suggests, the 'logics of extraction' still prevail (Anderson 2018).[24] One strategy may entail devolution away from the large archival institutions and the formation of smaller, locally based derivative archives. Such models may enable more direct interactions between archives and communities of origin. This reflects an increasing desire to empower communities and allow them a greater role in the direction and management of their cultural collections. As Christen (2011: 185) notes, "In the last twenty years, many collecting institutions have heeded the calls by indigenous activists to integrate indigenous models and knowledge into mainstream practices."

Nowadays there are various options to access materials online, and these bring great opportunities as well as new challenges. Across Australia the advent of digital technologies has introduced a capacity for the storage of memory evident in community cultural archives or content management systems such as Aṟa Irititja (Hughes & Dallwitz 2007; Thorner 2010), Our Story (Gibson 2009), Mukurtu (Christen 2008), and Storylines (Webb 2015), and, in the Ngaanyatjarra Lands, Tjumalampatju. The importance of involving speaker communities in archival processes has gained increasing recognition (Henke & Berez-Kroeker 2016: 428) and this heightened sensibility to 'do the right thing' (see Campbell 2014: 102) does seem to be trickling down, or up as the case may be, and informing the ethical processes of new generations of students, researchers, and all those engaged at the language documentation

22 Diana James pers. comm. to Jennifer Green, June 2019.

23 See also the National Statement on Ethical Conduct in Human Research (2007 [2018]: 17).

24 https://creativecommons.org/2019/01/30/jane-anderson/ (Accessed 21 May 2019.)

interface. Such endeavours are driven by "concerns for social responsibility and cultural equity, community demand and aspirations, efforts to apply research to the task of reviving and sustaining traditions, and safeguarding endangered intangible cultural heritages" (Treloyn & Emberly 2013: 160). In this intercultural domain, balances of power and agency are shifting, but these changes must also contend with the proliferation of digital materials that are being generated. As Christen continues:

> While digital technologies allow for items to be repatriated quickly, circulated widely, and annotated endlessly, these same technologies pose challenges to some indigenous communities who wish to add their expert voices to public collections and also maintain some traditional cultural protocols for the viewing, circulation, and reproduction of some materials. (Christen 2011: 185)

This study has demonstrated clearly that delivery solutions need to be tailored to the technological capacities of particular communities. We have shown how some interactions with digital objects have the potential to empower but just as well to frustrate. However, understanding the fine-grained detail of these interactions and the sources of frustration can assist with envisaging and designing better solutions. What is sorely lacking are metrics and methods to test the efficacy and sustainability of these solutions. In this context, we advocate for a multi-dimensional approach, making paper-based resources that can be held in the hand, distributed to various audiences in art galleries, schools and museums as well as creating modern digital objects that may be disseminated by mobile phones and other devices in ways that appeal and are accessible to a new tech-savvy generation. There are, however, many questions that we do not have answers for. We do not know what the impact of archived heritage materials is on the circulation of verbal arts as dynamic and socially embedded cultural practices, instantiated in the day-to-day interactions of those to whom these elements of intangible cultural heritage belong (see Ahearn 2017; Bialostocka 2017; Kral, Green & Ellis, 2019). Although safeguarding these verbal arts could arguably be perceived as an end in itself, the key to the vitality of these traditions lies in their transmission to future generations. Access to collections, beyond the time frame of research projects such as described in this chapter, is a key issue. We do not know how low-tech recordings made on mobile phones and shared on Facebook are being circulated within communities, and whether or not those who create these records see them as being on a par with high-end recordings of verbal arts practices made by funded research teams. Should such records be archived, or are they properly regarded as ephemera of living language in practice? What our project has provided, however, is a space for the "expert voices" of the Ngaanyatjarra to be heard, and for the sensibilities of changing cultural practices to be considered with respect and attention. What is needed are the means to ensure that this kind of long-term engagement between research teams and the communities they work with is neither a one-off, nor an exception to the rule.

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