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From Nunavut to Micronesia: Feedback and Description, Visual Repatriation and Online Photographs of Indigenous Peoples

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Abstract

Two pioneering web projects, *Project Naming*, created by Library and Archives Canada and the Inuit, and the *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection* at the University of Hawaii Library are examined. These sites make direct use of the internet to improve descriptions of their photographic holdings related to Indigenous peoples and to share these images with remote communities and the world. Through the creation of a system of "visual repatriation" and "feedback" and description, the people of Nunavut and the atoll of Satawal (in Micronesia) have the opportunity to view and identify photos of their ancestors, relatives and themselves online while at the same time sharing their knowledge with each host institution to improve the quality and accuracy of its descriptions.

The author concludes that, while challenges remain, these innovative approaches have helped foster meaningful relationships between, and rewards for, the participating host institutions and Indigenous peoples. In addition it is argued that the two projects bode well for: future collaborative efforts between libraries/archives and remote user-groups, understanding of our holdings, and the quality of our services to researchers.

Introduction

Project Naming, hosted by Library and Archives Canada (LAC) in Ottawa and the *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection* of the University of Hawai'i Library in Honolulu are pioneering internet projects. Both sites make direct use of the web to improve descriptions of their photographic holdings related to Indigenous peoples and share these images with remote communities and the world in ways not possible until recently. The initiatives feature resources portraying two very distinct groups of Indigenous peoples living more than 10,000 kilometres apart: the Inuit and the Satawalese.

Project Naming < <http://www.collectionscanada.ca/inuit/index-e.html>> is a reciprocal endeavour by LAC and the Nunavut community, encompassing both "visual repatriation" and the "feedback system." All digitized photographs appearing on the site are of Inuit people. These images date from 1900 to the 1970s and are from public and private collections now held at the LAC. Many of these diverse photographs depicting Indigenous peoples of Arctic Canada were taken by federal government personnel, including: explorers, scientists, engineers, medical staff, RCMP members, navy personnel, topographers, professional photographers (hired to record the life and culture of the Inuit) and other participants on expeditions. Visual repatriation provides Elders and other Nunavut people with the opportunity to view photos (held in Ottawa) of their ancestors, relatives and themselves online that most would otherwise never see. The LAC, meanwhile, relies on information provided by these same Elders through the feedback system to vastly improve descriptions of their holdings.

The University of Hawai'i at Manoa Library has employed a similar approach for its *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection (TMNC)* <<http://digicoll.manoa.hawaii.edu/satawal/index.php>>. This project involves the digitization of photographic slides taken of people, events, places and objects on the island of Satawal (Micronesia) and surrounding areas. The photographer was Steve Thomas, an American who traveled there in the early 1980s to learn about ancient methods of navigation dating back 6,000 years and who came back with a host of images portraying daily life. On this site, a comments field has been set up to collect feedback, creating what the site editor and administrator has described as "a sense of community often lacking in digital projects" (Dawrs E-mail interview).

In the world of libraries and archives, these two projects, arguably, move away from a past relationship where Indigenous place names and those of individuals were often left out or replaced in library and archival descriptions by terms more familiar to the dominant culture. Instead they aim toward a visual repatriation of these records back to the Indigenous peoples themselves. Visual repatriation has been defined as "the use of photography to return images of ancestors, historical moments and material heritage to source communities" (Peers and Brown, back cover). *Project Naming* and the *TMNC* support visual repatriation in a virtual environment first by providing access to the visual record at a long distance and second by working with these communities and individuals to improve our understandings and appreciation of the people, events and places appearing in these photographs.

As two interactive web projects featuring resources related to Indigenous peoples, both *Project Naming* and the *TMNC* have had to grapple with similar issues. These include: the concept and method of obtaining feedback for descriptions; developing clear and achievable goals for these innovative projects; working collaboratively with Indigenous peoples and communities; obtaining and processing feedback from online users to improve the accuracy and depth of

descriptions; selection of images and the handling of issues related to cultural and personal sensitivity; and access to the internet in these two remote regions. The challenges and lessons learned from these initiatives may be of help to other institutions which are considering or have recently initiated similar projects.

Feedback and Description in Other Contexts

The solicitation of feedback to improve library or archival descriptions in web projects is not entirely exclusive or new. One of the few websites to employ this approach outside of *Project Naming* and the *TMNC* is the *Northwest Territories Archives Photo Database*

<<http://www.pwnhc.ca/databases/Archives/photodbnew.asp>>

at the Prince of Wales Northern Heritage Center in Yellowknife. The creators of this site seek to identify photographs taken by tourists from the south and others who could not identify their photographic subjects. Unlike the two databases examined in this article, however, the *North West Territories Archives Photo Database* features a "Send Comments" email link and is not related specifically to Indigenous peoples. Most other sites which have employed some form of feedback approach have done so with the goal of correcting errors in online descriptions rather than seeking the identification of the resources themselves. One example would be the "Report an Error" button which has been used with success at the Library of Congress-resulting in the identification of errors in individual catalogue records related to names of individuals, flora and places, etc. (Brown).

Improved technologies and efforts to build better relationships between Indigenous and non-Indigenous communities have brought new opportunities. Michael Eamon, Manager of Virtual Exhibitions at Library and Archives Canada, has commented that the web presents some excellent opportunities to add to, change, or alter what is already there. Eamon offered an analogy:

I'm reminded of the example of when motion pictures first came out on the private side. People would get cameras and they'd turn them on and... [perhaps] because [as] people we're so used to sitting behind, or in front of those big plate cameras, they'd just stand still. So you have a motion picture camera running and people are standing still. And in fact the [person] operating [the] motion picture [would] actually jiggle the camera to make it look like it's moving.... And this reminds me of the net... it has so many possibilities that we didn't have before. We haven't been exploring all the options, we've been just holding... still. Now let's use it for all its possibilities and not be afraid of it....You get a kind of interactivity and connection that you don't find elsewhere (Eamon).

In the field of Indigenous Studies resources, language and cultural differences that have led to a lack of information and misunderstandings in the past demonstrate the urgent need for stronger connections between the library cataloguer and Native communities now and into the future. Fittingly, it was Michael Eamon who first drew the author's attention to *Project Naming*.

Project Naming

The goal of *Project Naming* is to identify Inuit portrayed in the photographic collections of Library and Archives Canada in Ottawa. Through providing a form of visual repatriation of these photographic resources to the Inuit via the Internet and personal interviews, the LAC and its partners also aim at improving our understanding of Inuit culture and bringing an "Inuit voice" to the description of these collections.

Project Naming's origins date back to 1998, a year before Nunavut was created from part of the Northwest Territories. Murray Angus, an instructor with the Nunavut Sivuniksavut Training Program in Ottawa (a college program serving Inuit youth), proposed the project. In the first of the author's interviews with Beth Greenhorn, LAC's manager of *Project Naming*, she explained that when Angus brought his students over to the Archives each November to learn about their history, "the wall we kept hitting on was that people weren't identified in the photos. That they were often just generically labeled as 'Native type', 'Eskimo', or even no ID. White officials in photos often had their names transcribed but Inuit individuals were left anonymous." What began with Angus' students traveling North with CD-ROMs to meet with Elders and seek identifications, would evolve into a trilingual Web exhibition and searchable photographic database available in Inuktitut, English and French.

Through *Project Naming*, the LAC's goal is, in part, to provide item level descriptions for individual photographs previously described only at the collections or *fonds* level. Phase I of *Project Naming* dated from 2001 to the exhibition launch of the site in October 2004. During this first 'CD' phase of the collaborative initiative, photos were digitized and burned onto CDs which were taken north by Inuit students with laptops who showed them to Elders in northern communities. Through this process, almost three-quarters of the individuals depicted in 500 digitized photographs by the renowned photographer Richard Harrington (taken from 1948-1952) were identified. Phase II of the initiative has seen the launch of the new *Project Naming* website itself in October 2004, with its searchable database featuring more than 1,300 images from the Harrington collection and Baffin area photographic research. Since the launch, this second phase has seen the site's scope expanded to include all three regions of Nunavut: Baffin (Qikiqtaaluk), the Central Arctic (Kitikmeot) and Kivalliq (formerly Keewatin) and resulted in the addition of another 1,700 digitized images that can be searched in the database. *Project Naming* currently includes photographs

brought together from such sources as the Harrington Collection, Indian and Northern Affairs Canada, the Department of National Health and Welfare, the National Film Board, and the Donald Benjamin Marsh Collection. These photographs date from the early 1920s through the early 1960s. This year the project has expanded further to include collections that date from 1900 through to the 1970s such as the Royal Canadian Mounted Police collection, and the Geraldine Moodie photographs from a 1904-05 Hudson Bay expedition.



Figure 1 - From one of *Project Naming's* homepages. The trilingual site offers some wonderful opportunities for partnering with Inuit communities along with new challenges for the staff at Library and Archives Canada. Image courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa.

Ms. Greenhorn states that "our archival institution is certainly benefiting from the information that's been given by the Elders because without their knowledge we would never know who these individuals are." Users of the site who want to participate in improving descriptions are directed to the "Naming Continues" section of *Project Naming* where feedback for individual photographs is invited from users. This page features a dozen selected clickable images which are replaced with a different set on a regular basis. Each image includes what, if any, descriptive information is available, such as date and/or location. If the visitor recognizes anyone in the photos they are asked to complete an online form. The clickable form itself is carefully worded and organized with questions followed by empty field boxes and, where necessary, explanations on how to format answers. Questions include: "Can you name the person(s) in the photograph?...Do you know where the photograph was taken?....Do you know the approximate date of the photograph?...and, Can you describe what is

happening in the photograph?" Next the informant is asked to provide their name, community and e-mail address. To avoid inaccuracies, LAC contacts these individuals directly and confirms all information before the institution's existing online descriptions are added to or altered in any way.

Those searching for photographs shot at a particular place, time period and/or by a specific photographer, however, will want to visit the "Search the Database" section of *Project Naming*. This section requires clicking on three links and includes helpful maps to keep the collections in geographic context. Once the database itself is called up, a user may choose from drop-down menus of dozens of Nunavut communities, nearby non-Nunavut communities, and/or a list of photographers. A date (by year only), keyword, or reproduction number search may also be entered. For further refinement, the database allows users to limit searches to photographs which have or have not been identified through *Project Naming*. For the site user who wishes to search for photographs of individuals in a specific location where they might have lived or visited during a particular time period this is by far the most efficient approach. LAC might improve on this excellent search feature even further by providing a more direct link to the search (for users already familiar with the site) and by increasing the date range beyond one year.

For many Inuit people, the other side of the coin-"visual repatriation"-is the most meaningful aspect of *Project Naming*. Along with improving the quality of descriptions, the site's intention is to improve our understanding of Inuit cultural history and give agency to the people of Nunavut. Unlike past practice, where photographs were catalogued by government agencies and members of the dominant culture, here images are being described by Aboriginal peoples themselves. Through this act they are reclaiming native memory. Onondaga photographer and curator Jeffrey Thomas explains, visual repatriation aims "to find a new agency for the photographs and...uncover the voice of the people posed before the cameras" (Quoted in Payne 13).

Beth Greenhorn describes the impact of the site in straightforward terms: "Before digitization, people in Nunavut or many other places in Canada-unless they had the time or resources to make the trip-never would have been able to get to Ottawa to look at the collections and many of the pictures that are featured on the website." *Project Naming* has helped to overcome this barrier. When asked what kind of response LAC has received about *Project Naming* from the Inuit communities themselves, Ms. Greenhorn responded: "It's been overwhelmingly well received, especially [by] people in the North through e-mails...and through conversations.... People have just been so excited and grateful that they finally found a picture of their family member or someone they knew...it's been really positive" (Greenhorn, Personal interview). Likewise, a student, Matthewsie Ashevak, recalled his experiences with Elders:

It was so exciting showing these Elders the pictures...when I clicked onto each picture, I watched their eyes. As they recognized an individual, they would have a big smile on their faces, and acted as if these pictures were taken just yesterday...before now, I have not talked much with Elders. This experience is new to me, which I really enjoyed. Each time they named a person in the picture it made me want to go back to the time they started to remember....While looking at the photographs, the Elders were smiling like they were back in the old days. Pauta saw his father and two sisters, and Kenojuak was able to see her son and husband. When I saw the happiness in their faces, all I could do was smile back at them and be thankful for doing this (Greenhorn, *Project Naming: Always On Our Minds*)



Figure 2 - New images continue to be identified through online access, online interviews, and the publicity the *Project Naming* site has generated. In mid-August 2007, Project Manager Beth Greenhorn received a telephone call from Betty Lyall Brewster, who identified herself as the baby in this photograph being carried by her older sister Bella Lyall-Wilcox. The photo was taken in Taloyoak (formerly Spence Bay), c1949 and had been mounted in the recent Phase II of *Project Naming*. Photo courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ref. No. 3575.61

Given that there are thousands of photographs of Inuit people in LAC's collections, the author asked Ms. Greenhorn about the criteria for selection of photographs for mounting on the *Project Naming* site. She indicated that selection has been based on a number of factors including the desire to digitize

photographs in a manner that helped preserve the original collections, the quality of the images, and the amount of context provided in the photographer's notes. Those photos which showed clear images of individuals were much more likely to be selected than unclear or distant images, or those taken of objects. With respect to cultural sensitivity, she noted that few of the photographs in these collections were ceremonial in nature. Images that were considered an invasion of personal privacy, however, or that could be considered degrading (such as one Health Canada photograph of an unclothed boy with scoliosis) were not digitized or made part of the project.

Project Naming's approach has benefited considerably from the work done in recent years to improve internet access in Canada's Far North. Broadband, defined as a "high-capacity Internet connection, capable of supporting full-motion, real-time audio and video applications," is now available in 100% of Nunavut's 25 communities; has close to this usage for its government services, health agencies, and schools; and 38% usage at the level of schools and households (Nunavut Broadband Development Corporation). Greenhorn indicated that there have been no complaints about connectivity to the site in Nunavut or about bandwidth. And Elders, who are not always familiar with the technology, often work with younger members of their community to access images online. But, for its many successes, the *Project Naming* initiative has faced some significant challenges as well.

Early on in the project a decision was made to present the site in Inuktitut, along with the standard LAC requirements for English and French. This presented a number of unforeseen challenges. Working with the Inuktituk syllabics presented difficulties when changing from one font to another, trying to make the site accessible in both the Mac and the PC world, and maintaining a searchable database. In addition, the syllabics for Inuktituk were created only recently and contain different dialects for different regions of the North. In the end, LAC has made an honest effort to balance accessibility and readability but this solution has been less than ideal and has resulted in project delays. The linguistic challenges go far beyond this one project as well. "We have a vast amount of material [at LAC] in other languages" explains Greenhorn, "which don't use Roman characters and this is certainly an issue we're going to be facing more and more."

Another issue of concern has been funding. Heritage Canada, which has provided much of the funding for *Project Naming*, usually only funds one-phase of projects, then leaves it up to the host institution to pay the rest. Of necessity, however, *Project Naming*, has been developed in stages and while it is one of those rare projects to have received funding for its first *two* stages there is no guarantee that this will continue for the third. In addition, Heritage Canada's strict one year window for spending allotted funding and completing all requirements has created limitations on the kinds of features and context that this and many other sites can develop.



Figure 3 - Unidentified couple, unknown location, 1950. One of *Project Naming's* toughest challenges is the identification of Inuit people in thousands of images like this one for which there is sometimes little if any contextual information. Courtesy of Library and Archives Canada, Ottawa, Ref. No. PA-211284.

The vastness of the North and lack of context provided for many of these photographs in LAC's collections presents a final challenge that has become greater as the naming continues. Ms. Greenhorn indicates that, having exhausted its well described photographs, the institution is now going to the copy negatives for new additions to the site. Many of the photographs LAC would like to mount, however, lack textual information, such as date and location names, so important in narrowing the field and assisting in the identification of photographs. It is a challenge very different in nature from those faced by the University of Hawai'i Library in its efforts to describe its collection of images taken on or near Satawal, a tiny coral atoll in Micronesia.

Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection



Figure 4 - From the homepage of the University of Hawai'i Library's *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection* site. Images courtesy of the photographer, Steve Thomas, and the University of Hawai'i Library, Honolulu.

The *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection* hosted by the University of Hawai'i (UH) Library contains approximately 2,200 photographs taken by a young American, Steve Thomas, on Satawal in 1983-84 and 1988. Satawal is one of the most remote islands in the Carolines of western Micronesia with a total population of approximately 500. The atoll is best known for its preservation of traditional navigational techniques without the use of instruments, based on indigenous astronomical and maritime concepts. For this reason, Thomas traveled there with the hope of learning about this 6,000 year old seafaring culture from Mau Piailug, one of the few surviving *palu-a* navigator fully initiated through the sacred ceremony of *pwo*. Ethnographer Eric Metzger describes *Pwo* as "the equivalent to a graduate doctorate degree in knowledge of traditional navigation and involves additional instruction in the more esoteric-related aspects of traditional navigation such as chants for calling upon ancient spirits. The last time a *pwo* rite-of-passage for apprentice navigators had been performed was when Mau Piailug was 'graduated' on Satawal in 1952" (Metzger 297). Thomas and Mau developed a close friendship, and Thomas studied and documented what he learned from his teacher about navigating across hundreds, sometimes thousands of miles of open ocean using only natural signs: stars, ocean swells, and birds. Most of the images in the UH database were taken by Thomas on his first six month visit in 1983 and second five month trip in 1984. Steve Thomas' trips were described in his book *The Last Navigator* and, subsequently, a documentary film produced in 1988 (soon afterward, Thomas would become relatively well-known as the longtime host of the PBS-TV series "This Old House"). He donated his vivid but, for the most part, unlabelled collection of slides along with oral history transcripts to the Pacific Collection at the UH Library after initial meetings in his hometown of Salem, Massachusetts with Karen Peacock, curator of the Pacific Collection who herself grew up in Micronesia. The scanning for this site was completed in July 2007, but the captioning is ongoing, with no set time-limit for completion.

In the author's e-mail interview with Stuart Dawrs, Pacific Specialist and current editor and administrator of the *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection* site, Dawrs summed up the goals of the site as follows:

We are aiming to accurately portray the life of the Satawalese community (and its neighboring islands) as it existed at a specific time in the late 20th century, and in the process preserve the legacy not just of the navigators but of the people in general. As time goes by, these images will be of increasing value to researchers hoping to understand life during this period in history. But just as importantly, given the increasing out-migration of Micronesians to other parts of the world and the various pressures that virtually all indigenous communities face, these images may ultimately help to maintain the collective memory of the region.

Dawrs went on to explain that while the university's primary directive is to serve the campus community in Hawai'i, they have a strong commitment to sharing their resources as widely as possible-"particularly with the communities about which they speak or from which they derive. Given the vast expanses of ocean that separate us from other Pacific Island communities-as well as the large number of Pacific Islanders who are now dispersed throughout the world-digital collections such as this one are one means of accomplishing this goal." The navigation site has also taken on added relevance as Mau Piailug's importance as a traditional voyager now reaches far beyond Satawal and Micronesia. Since the 1970s, his teachings have played a key role in re-establishing the art of navigation throughout much of Polynesia. This is described in Metzger's article and, more recently, in a March 2007 headline article in the *Honolulu Star-Bulletin* (Kubota, 1) which describes the induction of five new Polynesian master navigators.

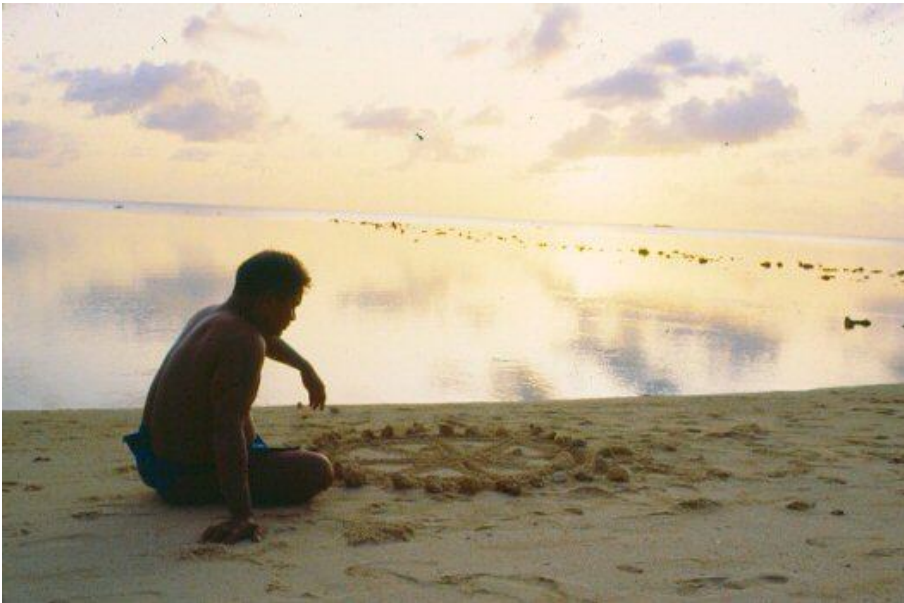


Figure 5 - Mau Piailug on the beach at Satawal, with a star compass in the sand (June 1983). Photo courtesy of the photographer, Steve Thomas. University of Hawai'i Library Ref. No. 1F-025.

Unlike *Project Naming*, the *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection* is not a direct partnership with the people of Satawal and no formal invitation was issued to provide feedback. Rather the UH Library enabled the public comments field to allow an "unmediated conversation to take place" which, "in the process often deepens the historical value of the site by adding yet another layer of oral history" (Dawrs, E-mail interview). The feedback system on the site is straightforward. When one views the record for a slide from the collection, descriptive information appears above and alongside the slide, including the: slide title, name of the photographer (Steve Thomas), a photo reference number, date, and a list of subject categories. A clickable category for comments is highly visible directly below this description: this feature allows users to view those comments already posted (and, in some cases, confirmed and added to the description by the UH Library) or to add new comments of their own. Sometimes the information sent in the comments field is simply impossible to confirm but remains part of the navigation site for anyone to read. Those comments that are confirmed and included in slide descriptions include clear credits and references to the individual(s) that provided the information.

Fortunately, the project is receiving a great deal of help from a very knowledgeable informant, Thomas Raffipiy, who has provided caption information on names, locations, events, ceremonies and objects. Raffipiy is Mau Pailug's nephew, and at the time of Steve Thomas' initial visits, was a teenager (Thomas Raffipiy himself appears in several photos in the navigation collection). Raffipiy now lives on the Big Island of Hawai'i and voluntarily contributes to the internet site on a regular basis, saving on the time and considerable expense of making repeated flights to O'ahu. The UH Library considers Raffipiy to be the authority on name identification, spelling, etc., and many of the previously unidentified images have been described thanks to him. Among the numerous photos he has identified includes one of the renowned Satawalese Elder, Pwitaq, who was previously unidentified and passed away after Steve Thomas' first visit. The UH Library has indicated that there are other Micronesia-based colleagues and former residents of Satawal who contribute to the site and whose knowledge and authority, like Raffipiy's, are accepted. Days prior to completion of this essay, the author visited the *TMNC* site and viewed the most recent comments which had been posted on December 4, 2007 by Sebastian Marepiy. In the comments field for an unidentified photograph, entitled "Boy with a Toy Canoe in Water," Marepiy comments "This is unreal! This is me during my boyhood. Wow!" He went on to describe individuals and places in eight other photographs as well. Sebastian Marepiy is Mau Pialug's first-born grandson who now lives in Kona on the Island of Hawai'i and, apparently, learned of the site only recently. Within a few days, the information he had provided was confirmed and incorporated into several of the site's descriptions.

As a monolingual database, the UH has not had to deal with the same kinds of linguistic and technical challenges as those faced by LAC. The traditional language of Satawal is Satawalese but, because Micronesia has historic ties with the United States, most Micronesians today are bilingual (at minimum) English speakers. As a result, the decision was made to make English the sole language of the site.

Broadband is not required to run any features on the *TMNC* site; a major challenge that this project faces, though, is that unlike the Canadian far north, less than 3 percent of agencies or households within the state of Yap in Micronesia (where Satawal is located) have internet access of any kind (Federated States of Micronesia: Statistics Unit). As a result it is safe to say that the majority of those responding to the site are not currently located on Satawal. However, Dawrs notes that it is also "clear from reading the posts that many have direct knowledge of the community, and are either former residents living elsewhere, or residents of neighboring islands" (Dawrs E-mail interview).

To date, Dawrs indicates that all comments submitted about the site have been "resoundingly positive" (Dawrs, E-mail interview). Members of the Satawalese and neighbouring communities have expressed their pride in their navigating traditions and the immense role that their navigators have played in the ongoing Pacific-wide revival of traditional wayfinding. Beyond this they also seem appreciative of the site for what it aims to be: an honest attempt to portray a community in images at a given point in its history and to carry that community's memory into the future. On January 6, 2007, the UH Library received this message from sailor Dominic Yangpalu of Ulithi, another atoll in Yap state:

I'm a Ulithian US Navy sailor on a warship floating in the Pacific Ocean...It's very fortunate to find websites like these on the internet and I want to thank the owner [for] portraying such famous relatives doing such extraordinary skills of navigating the world's oceans. There is not a single high tech equipment we have on this modern ship that I would like to trade for this kind of Island navigation skills (Message quoted in Dawrs, E-mail interview).

With respect to selection, Steve Thomas donated roughly 6,800 slides to the library, of which 2,402 are currently online. Some were not included on the site because they essentially duplicated images already scanned and mounted online. Others do not appear for reasons of cultural sensitivity. While Thomas himself had permission to attend and photograph all of the scenes depicted in the slides certain images depicted rites and ceremonies which were not intended for worldwide dissemination on a website. "This is a question we take very seriously in any decision to mount images online," Dawrs wrote in his E-mail interview. "The photos that were mounted depict day-to-day community life, rather than sacred rites or ceremonies that might be considered by the community itself to be

private property, or in any other way an invasion of privacy." To date the UH has had no negative feedback regarding the display of any of the photographs online.



Figure 6 - *Girl in Formal Graduation Attire*. This photo of an, as yet, unidentified young woman was taken at the Outer Islands High School graduation ceremony on Satawal Island in June 1984. Photo courtesy of the photographer, Steve Thomas. University of Hawai'i Library Ref. No. 1-A-02-04.

Funding for the navigation site was not provided directly by a granting agency but instead through the UH's own Center for Pacific Island Studies in recognition of the integral ties between Pacific scholarship and Pacific librarianship. Dawrs noted that the project has required a strong commitment from the university and its library in terms of staff hours but "we strongly believe [that] the long-term benefit to the Micronesian community and researchers throughout the world justifies the expense" (Dawrs E-mail interview). Whether or not the oral history transcripts that were also donated by Thomas will be mounted online with his photographs has not yet been determined. Before this could happen the project would require: more staffing and fiscal resources; the appraisal of culturally sensitive material (such as genealogical information) in order to remove them from documents selected for digitization; and the full processing of the series of historical transcripts.

Conclusion

As *Project Naming* and the *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Collection* web projects have both shown, interaction with patrons to improve collection descriptions can reap valuable rewards for both the institution and community members viewing the digitized images online. Photo archivist Andrew Rodger, who was on the reference desk when Murray Angus began paying visits to LAC in 1998, points out that *Project Naming* has developed into a system which could be used elsewhere in archives and on websites, both at LAC and beyond. "The part I'm talking about," says Rodger, "is the feedback system that they've built-in, where people can identify photographs" by reporting this information. "They would then be able to assist us in identifying perhaps previously unidentified or misidentified images." (Rodger). The UH Library reached similar conclusions soon afterwards when establishing its project.

Project Naming's flexibility in being able to arrange meetings between Elders and students and post online images for northern community members with access to the internet has played an important role in the success of this project. The *TMNC*, while lacking some of these advantages, has made good use of key informants to help overcome the relative internet isolation of Micronesia. The UH Library's use of photographs from a more recent era also make them more readily identifiable to visitors and volunteer informants who have had close connections with the Satawalese over the past three decades. Geographically, while the vastness of the north has created real challenges for those attempting to identify *Project Naming* images which lack place name information, this has not been an issue for describing the Satawalese related images.

Both the LAC and UH Library have recognized the importance of cultural sensitivity and privacy issues when dealing with Indigenous resources. Because of the differing nature of the photograph collections themselves, this appears to have been a bigger issue with the Micronesian navigation site. Steve Thomas had access and permission to photograph a number of ceremonies and events, some of which were not intended for a site with worldwide access and, as a result, do not appear on the site.

Project Naming's efforts to create a trilingual site including the Inuktituk language, while very well received, have also proven to be much more complex and costly than initially thought. It may be well advised for other institutions, especially small to medium sized ones, to think through budget and time commitments before considering such an ambitious task. Securing ongoing funding for both projects would also enable them to reach their full potential. In the case of Canadian Heritage, improvements to the manner in which funding is dispersed would, arguably, help resolve some of these challenges.

The enthusiastic responses from Inuit and Satawalese people to LAC's *Project Naming* and the UH Library's *Traditional Micronesian Navigation Project* attest to the value which community members and others attach to this innovative practice of "visual repatriation." While the UH site is still in its early stages, both initiatives also appear to be meeting their goals of relying on feedback to significantly improve the quality of their item-level descriptions. Though challenges remain, in a world of blogs, wikis and increased interactivity, libraries, archives and Indigenous peoples in different parts of the globe are finding effective new ways to forge meaningful relationships with each other while improving our understanding of resources and the quality of our services to researchers.

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