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Sharing Community Created Content in Support of Social Justice: The Dakota Access Pipeline LibGuide

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INTRODUCTION Using a known platform to share content that is often overlooked by scholarly communication networks, The Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL) LibGuide from the University of New Mexico Libraries facilitates access to Native American perspectives on the #NODAPL movement through inclusion of social media content and primary source materials. This LibGuide highlights Native American voices and stories, content that is difficult for people outside Native American communities to find, and shares a different view of the protest movement absent from most mainstream media coverage. **DESCRIPTION OF PROJECT** Rather than a comprehensive listing, a majority of the guide content comes from Native American media outlets and Native American–authored social media accounts instead of library resources behind paywalls. Mainstream and alternative media sources are included if authored by a Native American or if the source features a named individual sharing firsthand accounts. The DAPL LibGuide is the most viewed guide at UNM and was replicated at a small number of other academic libraries. **NEXT STEPS** Libraries can support the democratic process by highlighting similar types of community-created content shared outside of traditional scholarly communication networks, giving space to voices regularly disregarded. The DAPL guide may be considered, along with similar social justice and topical guides, as the beginning of a new model for information dissemination in libraries which reimagines the possibilities of the LibGuide resource.

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INTRODUCTION

In the summer of 2016, many Native American¹ users on social media posted about protests against the Dakota Access Pipeline (DAPL); DAPL, an oil pipeline, would potentially run underneath the North Dakota Standing Rock Sioux tribe's main water source. They feared a leak could contaminate the only source of drinking water, affecting not only their people but the surrounding communities. The U.S. Army Corps of Engineers approved the project without consulting the tribe and in August 2016, the tribe sued them (Begay, 2017). To stop the pipeline construction, American Indian youth initially set up camp near the build site (Horse, 2016); eventually thousands of people (primarily Native) occupied three camps over the course of the protest (Wiles, 2017). Rather than protestors, the individuals called themselves Water Protectors because they were protecting the river from the "Black Snake," a description of the oil pipeline that came from Lakota elders who were said to have prophesied the pipeline's arrival² (Nauman, 2016). The phrase *Mni Wiconi* (meaning "Water Is Life" in Lakota) became a guiding principle of the protest (Taliman, 2016). Described as "a crossroads in the battle for social justice" by Anishinaabe activist Winona LaDuke (2016), the NODAPL movement was monumental. It was a resurgence of togetherness by Indigenous people to protect the physical environment and ultimately the traditions and culture that make us who we are.³

As the movement emerged, news coverage was frustratingly sparse outside the few tribal news sources that were reporting on the events. The lack of coverage about this historic, Indigenous-led social justice movement (Clark, 2016; Monet, 2017; "Framing a movement," 2016) was the impetus for a resource to share information centering Native voices. Using Springshare's LibGuides platform, I published the Dakota Access Pipeline LibGuide (Kostelecky, 2018) on August 31, 2016. The purpose of the guide was to lead people looking for Native American perspectives on the pipeline to community-created content to counteract mainstream media outlets and news aggregators which had excluded these Indigenous voices.

I curated the DAPL guide content aware that my experience as a Native American woman

¹ *Native American*, *American Indian*, *Indigenous*, and *Native* are used interchangeably by author choice.

² Prophecies have been central to many Native American resistance movements including (but not limited to) the Pueblo Revolt of 1680 and the Pan-Indian Ghost Dance of the late 1890s. As Irwin (2008, p. 366) explains: "Native prophecy has continued to act as a critique of mainstream non-Native values and cultural practices." Moreover, American Indian Studies scholars definitely link the Black Snake prophecy to the actions at Standing Rock (Rivas, 2017) noting that the Black Snake prophecy is central to the [NODAPL] movement (Brandt, 2017, p. 4).

³ The author defines "we" as the Native American community at large of which she is a member.

and academic librarian influenced the items included and excluded. Also affecting content selection was my campus environment: a Research One, Hispanic Serving Institution with 5.88% Native American students (University of New Mexico [UNM], 2017) where I am one of three Native American library faculty members and also from Zuni Pueblo, a tribe in New Mexico.

While the DAPL LibGuide may seem similar to other social justice resources such as the Ferguson LibGuide (Pagowsky & Wallace, 2015) and the #CharlestonSyllabus (African American Intellectual History Society, 2018), I suggest the DAPL guide is slightly different and actually a new type of scholarly communication. I draw on Tribal Critical Race Theory (TribalCrit) as a framework (Brayboy, 2005) which validates stories as a type of data. By sharing the firsthand accounts of Indigenous people who protested the pipeline, I argue that this open source data is now available for others to utilize for their own research, thus becoming part of the scholarly communication cycle. This guide is one example of a reimagining of scholarly content.

This resource makes it possible for Native people's perspectives to be included in the scholarly conversation while simultaneously recognizing us as experts on ourselves rather than the outsiders who write about us. When reading about this UNM LibGuide, others may contemplate larger themes in their own libraries such as: 1) how libraries can share information from marginalized communities via members of the communities; 2) how libraries can use tools (such as LibGuides) to share information not easily accessible to people outside these communities; and 3) how libraries might identify opportunities to acknowledge information created outside of traditional scholarly communication networks.

Native American Representation

The Dakota Access Pipeline guide was conceived to highlight Native people's perspectives but also provides an introduction to related issues including representation, authority, and marginalization. Libraries are often repositories of misinformation about Indigenous people and our lifeways (Alexander, 2013; Karuk Tribe et al., 2017; Kostelecky, Hurley, Manus, & Aguilar, 2017; Reese, 2008); libraries often have materials *about* us rather than *by* us. This is perhaps not surprising, when less than 1% of academic librarians (Morris, 2017) and broadly only 1% of full-time professors in the United States are American Indian or Alaska Native (U.S. Department of Education, National Center for Education Statistics, 2017). Because Western education systems have historically been used to assimilate Native people and erase Indigeneity (Brayboy & Lomawaima, 2018; Eason, Brady, & Fryberg, 2018; Lomawaima & McCarty, 2006; Nuby & Smith, 2012), the networks of scholarly communication built on this structure continue to exclude Native people. This is illustrated by the small percentage

of the overall Native American population with college degrees: slightly more than 8% with an undergraduate and 4% with a graduate or professional degree (Ogunwole, Drewery, & Rios-Vargas, 2012, p. 2); therefore we are primarily absent from the scholarly conversation. As part of the small percentage of Native Americans who exist in academia, I embrace opportunities to counter the misrepresentations of us and work to share stories of our lives today. Publishing the DAPL resource is one way to change the common stereotypical narrative.

Regarding the larger cultural landscape of the United States, American Indians are largely invisible except during Thanksgiving and Native American Heritage month (both in November). This pattern of invisibility continued with the events of Standing Rock. In the summer of 2016 when the #NODAPL⁴ movement brought tribes from across the country and around the world together in solidarity, coverage from most mainstream media outlets was sparse, thus continuing their history of ignoring Indian Country (Daniels, 2006; Murphy, 2010; Schroedel & Chin, 2017). In order to find current information from the multiple camps near the pipeline construction, people had to be members of social media networks with users in North Dakota or connected to their friends. These network feeds included the two most important sources about the movement: 1) Native American news articles and 2) photos and videos (including livestreams) posted on social media accounts from individuals on site. Highlighting these community-created sources was a strategy to share information with those interested people outside these online networks. The LibGuide allows users to see a range of perspectives when evaluating the issue.

LITERATURE REVIEW

This review aims to situate the Dakota Access Pipeline LibGuide in context and is not meant to be a comprehensive overview of either the Springshare platform itself or of the content of the LibGuide discussed here, broadly defined as Indigenous knowledge.

LibGuides

Numerous libraries across the country and internationally use LibGuides (Springshare, n.d.); this widespread use is reflected in the sizeable amount of literature about them. Much of the literature focuses on best practices and ways to use guides in multiple facets of librarianship, including engaging with distance students (Gonzalez & Westbrook, 2010; Roberts & Hunter, 2011), in specific courses (Adebonojo, 2010) and to share library tutorials (Baker, 2014; Bowen, 2014) as examples.

⁴ The hashtag #NODAPL is used to refer to the Water Is Life movement in general and reflects the large role social media played in publicizing the movement, as noted throughout this article.

There are fewer published critiques of the format. One author argues that by creating LibGuides using content that has been separated from its context, the user is merely consuming information rather than “problem posing” (Hicks, 2015); as a consequence, LibGuides do not allow users to see the research process as a whole. The same piece raises the issue of guides being used to further the image of librarian as the ultimate authority: by creating a source organized using library specific constructs, such as format, ultimately libraries ignore the users’ individual knowledge strategies for navigation and organization (Hicks, 2015). Another critical reflection on LibGuides highlights the problem of promoting materials that are only accessible to affiliated users and kept behind subscription paywalls (Giullian & Zitser, 2015, p. 173). This inaccessibility is part of the larger problem of restrictive licensing agreements from publishers that inherently limit access to information by the public in general, with LibGuides utilizing a similar “corner on the market” in their business model (177).

Guides with social justice content are fairly recent developments in LibGuide use. Two articles share the stories behind Black Lives Matter movement LibGuides. In one, librarians at the University of Arizona developed their Ferguson guide to support campus information needs about the movement as well as to demonstrate the library’s commitment to students of color on campus (Pagowsky & Wallace, 2015). The authors received positive feedback about the guide, which also led to campus collaborations; they suggest other libraries engage in similar “quick, low-resource efforts” (Pagowsky & Wallace, 2015, p. 199) to sustain a diverse campus and larger community. Ultimately, they raise a bigger issue and challenge the notion of libraries as neutral spaces. The authors advocate for libraries to develop similar resources to support efforts advancing diversity and equality, thereby recognizing U.S. societal injustices. Another Black Lives Matter LibGuide was published by teacher librarians (part of the organization Teachers 4 Social Justice) in the San Francisco Unified School District with two targeted users: students interested in the movement and teachers looking for content for classroom use (Sullivan, Anusasananan, & Ramos, 2016, p. 16). This guide included multimedia sources and once published had great feedback from users. The resource was mentioned on the Huffington Post and featured in the *San Francisco Examiner*, and led to a workshop for school librarians about the guide and its content (Sullivan et al., 2016).

Arguably the most well-known LibGuide is the Beyoncé Lemonade guide published by Jennifer Ferretti at the Maryland Institute College of Art. This topical guide shared content referenced in Beyoncé’s visual album and had a huge impact, with over 17,000 views in the first 24 hours (“Beyoncé’s Lemonade – The LibGuide heard round the (twitter)world,” 2016). The New York Public Library, among many others, shared a link to Ferretti’s guide on their social media accounts (“Beyoncé’s Lemonade—The LibGuide heard round the (twitter)world,” 2016). Ferretti includes multiple types of sources on the guide including GIFs, embedded videos, and library materials. Her ultimate goal for the resource is to illustrate

to students the variety of work done by a team of people to make the visual album a reality (Ferretti, 2016). The guide even led to a new hashtag: #libeyrianship.

Indigenous Knowledge

Regarding the representation of Indigenous peoples within library collections, the literature identifies problems with the classification and organization of Native knowledge, traditions, and culture. Examples include the use of broad classification terms (*Indians of North America*) which ignore the variety of lifeways of the 567 federally recognized tribes (Bureau of Indian Affairs, n.d.) in the United States (Tomren, 2003), or the use of the term *relocation* to obfuscate the real history of removal and genocide (Webster & Doyle, 2008). Cataloging practices that physically place tribal creation stories next to fairy tales rather than with other world religions reflects prejudiced structures in library practices (Kostelecky et al., 2017). This problematic classification and organization of library resources further embeds misinformation about Indigenous peoples, history, and culture within libraries (Aase, 2017; Hajibayova & Buente, 2017).

The systemic and ongoing misrepresentation is not separate from the fact noted earlier that less than 1% of academic librarians are Native American (Morris 2017). These missing Indigenous voices inside the academy are reflected, not surprisingly, by a gap in the scholarly literature written from this perspective. This is changing, however; there are a few pieces sharing the experience of Native librarians navigating library spaces specifically (S. R. Kostelecky, 2016; Lee, 2008). One firsthand account by Deborah Lee (Cree and Mohawk) discusses the “responsibilities common to Indigenous librarians in the academy” (Lee, 2008, p. 150), which includes publishing articles to support in the field. Lee describes her work as an academic librarian—which includes typical duties of teaching, collection management, and engaging in the promotion and tenure process—which she does while simultaneously “caring for Indigenous knowledge” (Lee, 2008, p. 163).

In addition to sharing lived experiences to counter inaccuracies about Native people, Duarte and Belarde-Lewis recommend another strategy for changing some flawed library practices. They invite knowledge organization practitioners to engage in the methodological practice of “imagining” to affirm and value Indigenous ways of knowing within libraries by reflecting on and experimenting with Indigenous knowledge organization (Duarte & Belarde-Lewis 2015, p. 687). Both Native and non-Native people can employ this methodology. However, institutions must first understand and acknowledge why Indigenous practitioners would feel the need to create their own unique strategies and systems of information organization: to deal with the inaccuracies enmeshed in current library systems (Duarte & Belarde-Lewis, 2015).

Indigenous Knowledge and LibGuides

Interestingly, an article from Australia combines both subjects discussed here. “Incorporating Indigenous Knowledge” describes the creation of a LibGuide developed to support both Indigenous and non-Indigenous teachers (Ford, Prior, Coat, & Warton, 2014). Many factors led to the countrywide requirement for all teachers to understand and then teach their students about Indigenous Australians. They included the prime minister’s 2008 apology for Australia’s harsh treatment of the Indigenous people (112) and the fact that the country became a signatory on the United Nation’s Declaration of the Rights of Indigenous Peoples (112). A collaboration between the Charles Darwin University’s School of Education and the library led to interviews with potential users about types of resources to include in the guide; many users asked for more Indigenous knowledge materials with off-campus accessibility (117). When published, the guide included multimedia and publicly available materials as well as subscription sources (117).

DESCRIPTION OF RESOURCE

Selection of Resource Platform

After deciding to create a #NODAPL resource, I evaluated the options available. The requirements guiding the selection of resource format included: 1) ease of organizing and editing items; 2) ability to share the resource quickly and easily; and 3) flexibility to incorporate multiple format types. While LibGuides was the initial software choice, I also evaluated other options. The UNM Library blog (also using the Springshare platform) or Facebook and/or Twitter were the two other possibilities. I decided against using the blog because it is difficult to edit items on a static page. Since much of the information was surfacing from social media, initially it seemed logical to use those platforms to reshare and reorganize the information. But there were drawbacks to using Facebook and/or Twitter, including

- lack of structure to organize sources in one distinct place (items posted individually would likely be lost in the flow of posts, with no comprehensive list to return to);
- requesting permission to post on the library’s centrally controlled social media accounts or sending individual items to colleagues with access (would take time to get access or alternately place workload on others);
- potentially limited impact of sources if using my individual social media accounts (less likely to reach people outside my network);
- limiting the audience to those with social media accounts.

While cognizant of the critiques of LibGuides, the advantages of this format outweighed its criticisms: it met the identified criteria and was easily accessible (library already had a license), and no additional staff time would be required to learn the platform. The software accommodates multiple formats including web links, video, and embedded social media feeds, which represent the vast majority of resource content.

Guide Organization

Once the format was chosen, organization decisions followed. Many academic library LibGuides are created to help students find resources for their coursework, and the organization reflects this purpose with pages labeled “Scholarly Articles” or “Subject Databases,” terms not in common use outside academia. The DAPL guide does not incorporate academic or library jargon, in an effort to make information accessible to both campus users and the larger community. Two library colleagues from UNM’s Indigenous Nations Library Program⁵ and I composed the initial guide structure. After shaping the layout together, I assumed responsibility for curating content and overall guide maintenance. The DAPL LibGuide pages are: News and Articles, Historical Background, Tribes and Organizations, Cartoons by Ricardo Caté, and Media (more on the cartoons later).



Figure 1. Screenshot of home page of UNM DAPL LibGuide

⁵ The Indigenous Nations Library Program (INLP) provides information services and academic support to the UNM community and engages in library outreach with Indigenous communities. See <https://library.unm.edu/about/inlp.php> for more on this unique program.

Inclusion and Exclusion of Sources

Defining criteria for inclusion and exclusion of content came next. Initially the guide solely incorporated Native American news sources and social media posts of individuals or groups, and mainstream media sources were excluded. However, as the movement continued to grow, the guide content criteria was refined in order to evaluate items by major news outlets as they began to report from the camps. Some mainstream media stories effectively covered the issue and highlighted Indigenous voices, so they were added to the relevant guide page; other pieces reinforced stereotypes about Native peoples or were lacking detail and were not included. The UNM LibGuide features mainstream news items which are Native American authored or which feature quotes and statements by a named Native person.

To stay up to date on the coverage, I reviewed social media accounts daily and conducted web searches for news stories or blogs posts during the height of the protests, which was in late September–December 2016. I also conducted Google and Google News searches for “Dakota Access Pipeline” to find content. Large media organizations’ stories regularly rose to the top of results; because those items were easily found, they were primarily excluded. The goal of the LibGuide was not to be a comprehensive list of all protest coverage but rather a curated grouping of items.

Local Audience

The DAPL LibGuide page “Cartoons by Ricardo Caté” is an example of curated local content. Ricardo Caté, an artist from Santo Domingo Pueblo in New Mexico, is the first Native American to have a daily comic strip published in a city’s print newspaper (Jacobs, 2017). He also traveled to Standing Rock, using his artistic talent to literally paint a picture of events he witnessed, to illustrate the violence the Water Protectors faced, and to depict life at the camps. This content was included to 1) acknowledge a known local expert on the DAPL issue and 2) to share this artists’ work with a larger audience. While people viewing the guide outside New Mexico might not know of Mr. Caté’s work, excluding it would have been a glaring omission obvious to our campus and tribal communities; therefore, the guide highlights his perspective on the movement.

Assessment and Impact

To assess the quantitative impact of the Dakota Access Pipeline LibGuide I reviewed the statistics available from Springshare. The LibGuide is currently the most viewed UNM Libraries guide, since it was published in September 2016 with over 11,800 views. The next most viewed LibGuide at UNM has slightly more than 10,000 views and is a specific course guide.

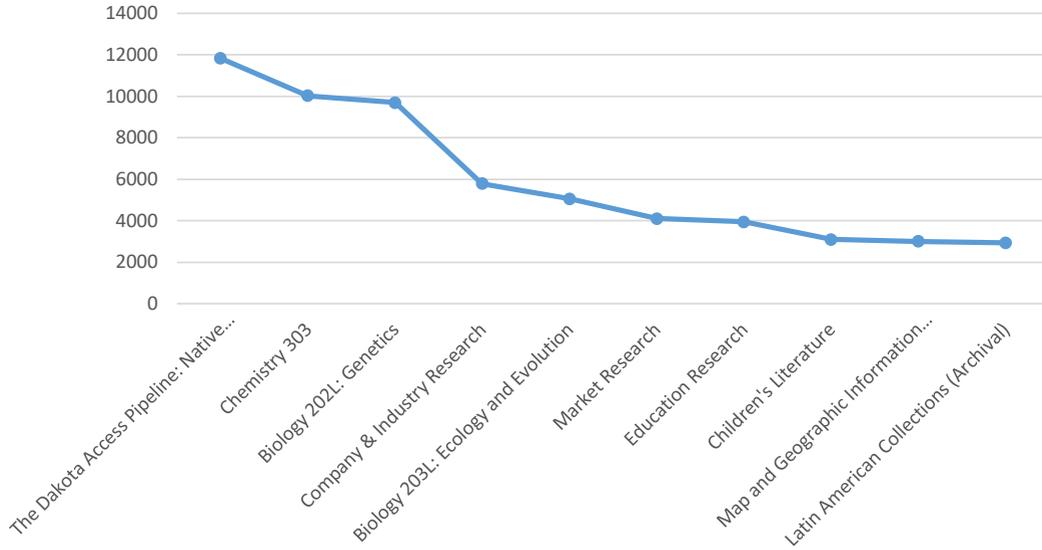


Figure 2. Page views of top ten most viewed UNM LibGuides from September 2016 to March 2018

The DAPL guide had the most monthly views in November 2016, a fact that coincided with arguably the most disturbing event of the movement, when Morton County Sheriff's department officers sprayed the Water Protectors with water cannons in freezing temperatures (Kelly, 2016).



Figure 2. Monthly views of the UNM DAPL LibGuide from publication date of September 1, 2016 to March 1, 2018

Since the guide content includes many social media sources, it was logical to also promote it via social media. The American Indian Library Association (AILA) shared the guide link on their Facebook page, which led to more sharing by friends and colleagues after I was individually tagged on the initial post. Springshare's Twitter account tweeted the guide link mid-September, recognition that was unexpected and another avenue for promotion. I also received emails from librarians who found the DAPL LibGuide a useful resource and wanted to copy or modify the guide at their own institutions. A web search in December 2017 found eight DAPL LibGuides published at other academic libraries, most using the same guide structure and content.

Besides the metrics of page views and shares, the process of developing and (once published) the use of the Dakota Access Pipeline LibGuide by others was rewarding personally and professionally. The resource is an example of an alternative method for organizing Indigenous knowledge within a library, one that was developed by a member of the community and highlights and acknowledges Native people as experts. It may provide a model for other librarians to modify as they make efforts to engage their local Native American users. Personally, I view this resource as my contribution to the movement. The need to be engaged with the #NODAPL effort was felt strongly by most other Native people I know. Family and friends gave support however they could: with solidarity runs, by creating artwork, by protesting across the country and through prayers. It was important to be part of this historic moment and I chose to amplify the stories from Standing Rock through the channels available to me as a Native American library professional.

NEXT STEPS

Recognizing 2017 as a year where many social justice movements gained momentum and recognition, libraries and other cultural institutions must continue to reflect on our roles within these national conversations, identify ways to open dialogue and share content made by and for our diverse users. The positive response to the DAPL guide and similar social justice resources suggests strong interest in more resources that reflect the lives and experiences of our communities.

Libraries can demonstrate support for diverse populations through recasting the purpose of LibGuides, which are primarily used to direct users to library subscription resources using library terminology. Libraries can alternatively use LibGuides to share content generated in marginalized communities, illustrating their commitment to truly being engaged in creating a democratic society via information sharing and acknowledging community-created information and community expertise. Libraries can support the democratic process by highlighting sources constructed outside of traditional scholarly communication networks,

giving space to voices regularly unheard rather than having them “translated” by experts outside the community of creation. By curating and selecting social media sources for guides or other instructional materials, libraries and librarians recognize and demonstrate to others that these formats are another valuable place to gather information.

I share the call of Duarte and Belarde-Lewis who challenge all of us, “as information scientists with advanced methodological training,” to “support the work of designing more sensitive and nuanced systems as a mode of scholarship” (Duarte & Belarde-Lewis, 2015, p. 697). By reimagining the form of scholarly communication and embracing the eighth tenet of TribalCrit, which identifies stories as “real and legitimate sources of data” (Brayboy, 2005, p. 430), the DAPL LibGuide may well contribute an example of this new mode of research.

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