

Notes on Questions asked after the Seminar

ARC Linkage Project: Doing Aboriginal Databases Seminar

Issues on the use of Digital Technologies for the Intergenerational Transmission of Indigenous Knowledges

FIRE Seminar Room
Charles Darwin University
24th September, 2003

1.(Michael Storrs) *Where, from your experience in Arnhemland, would you anticipate these databases to be kept?*

MC: You would ask who wanted them and why and negotiate from there ways of keeping them. Maybe under the auspices of balanda style organisation. Questions of hardware and preservation need to be worked out carefully & will be specific to the purpose for which the database is designed

(M.S) *That's an integral part to any database devel. Collaborative devel. of the location of software and hardware during life of project*

MC: Most important – start off by saying what's it for, who is it for and then think of the other questions.

Need to expect a high morbidity rate for it to work. Too much obsession with workability takes the power out of the hands of people who most likely need to use them. Need to think 1st access and 1st control of the data being with the people that own it.

HV: *Databases are in a sense the sacred object of the 21st century – The notion of the high morbidity rate of databases trying to come to life is likely to be a challenging idea for a lot of people who are heading off into the "sunset" so to speak of data collection*

MC key problem is back-up if you want something really local, for local use way out in the bush. Easy enough to organise something that'll work. But as soon as the computer breaks down you've lost it unless you've got ways of backing up on the internet where you can retrieve it. Then you open quest. with owners if it's ok if the stuff goes "up there somewhere"

Questions of the sustainability of the database Vs the control of the owners –worked out carefully. ARC project will allow the opportunity to share ideas and form connections with database producers in other places & find places for it to be evaluated

Key point :Interaction of the owners of the info with the computer and the way in which it feeds into an integrative process of design is crucial

2.(Jamie) *Have you got any more examples of other databases?*

MC The national museum for the American Indian –Bevan Koopman
Wadeye Knowledge Centre -Ethno botanical knowledge
Herbarium Ethno botany unit –DIPE
Galiwinku Knowledge Centre
NT Information and Library Service committed to developing knowledge centres as part of their responsibility for information services
NLC
Art Centres

3.(Trish): *Do you have ways of dealing with the control of knowledge and access?*

MC: DSTC doing work on this and have developed some very good software already which we are planning to use.