

Indigenous Knowledge Governance Framework: Scaffolding Joint ICT Developments in Long Lamai, Malaysia

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Introduction

Indigenous knowledge encompass generations of experimentation and innovation which has been carried over orally through the years and now serves communities as a rich source of tacit and implicit knowledge. This knowledge, which is deeply rooted in the social and cultural context of indigenous communities, can potentially be the key and inspiration to resolve many emerging complex problems. Indigenous knowledge is thus a time-tested hidden treasure of intellectual property, covering all aspects of our life and a basis for context-specific, task centric knowledge management.

ICTs for Indigenous Knowledge Management (IKM) on the other hand have been designed using the conventional approach of creating and manipulating databases and treated in the same way as knowledge management in organisations. Taking such an organisational view relies mainly on the availability and need for explicit knowledge and poses numerous challenges and limitations with regards to IKM. Such concerns include issues of indigenous knowledge governance, de-contextualisation of knowledge, and data manipulation beyond context. We argue that ICT's developed for a specific local context need to be framed within an appropriate Indigenous Knowledge governance framework.

We have developed eToro, a collaborative project of the Institute of Social Informatics and Technological Innovations (ISITI-CRI), UNIMAS, and the local community of Long Lamai, Sarawak. The project goal is to develop an ICT-based platform for indigenous knowledge management based on mutual learning between researchers and community members. With a participatory action approach and guided by the participants from the local community, we developed the indigenous knowledge governance framework.