An Evolving Approach to Supporting Indigenous Data Sovereignty in an Institutional Data Repository

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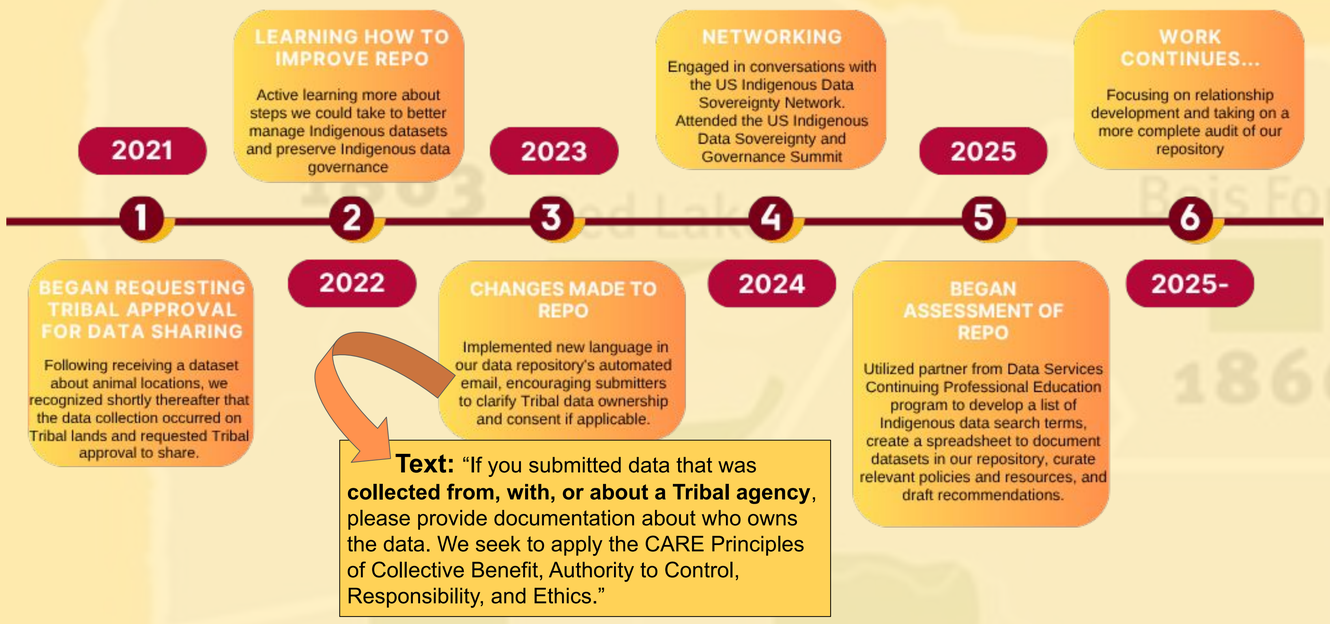
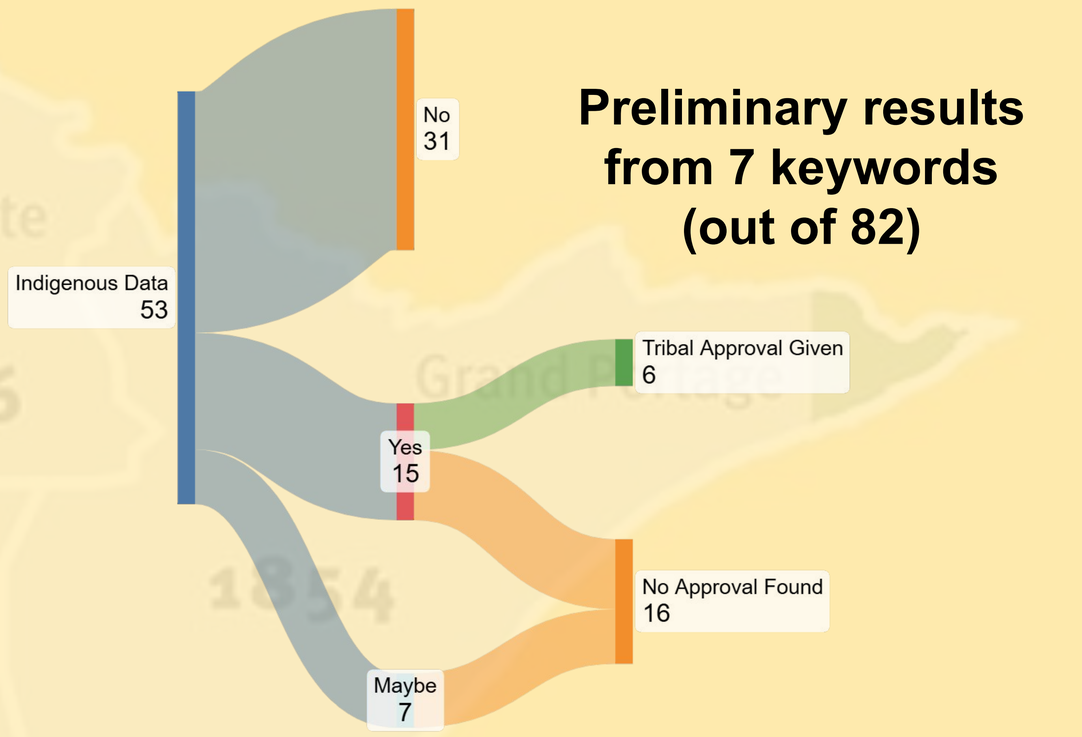
Impetus

The University of Minnesota is built on the traditional and contemporary homelands of the Dakota people, a federally recognized Tribal Nation made up of four communities and their sovereign governments. We recognize the importance of acknowledging the People on whose land we live, learn, and work, but understand that words are not enough. Within our institutional data repository, we seek to improve and strengthen our relations with Minnesota Native Tribal Nations (Dakota and Anishinaabe) by supporting and advocating for Indigenous data sovereignty (IDSov), which affirms the rights of Indigenous Peoples, communities, and Nations to govern the collection, ownership, and application of data pertaining to them, their lands, and their non-human relations.

Timeline of Work



Audit



Preliminary results from 7 keywords (out of 82)

Variables collected included:

- Dataset title
- Dataset URL
- Year dataset was published
- Group / department
- Description of dataset
- Keyword searched
- Indigenous data?
- Reason for decision
- Data sharing permission?
- Permission language
- Permission URL

#1 Challenge

Locating evidence of Indigenous permission to share the data

Sources we tapped into were:

- Digital record metadata
- Readme file metadata
- "Backend" records stored in private, shared Google Drive
- Email exchanges between curator and data submitter (which many have been lost due to curator attrition)

Outcomes

- Email template
- Initial dataset subset collected by co-author Alicia Zuniga
- Development of keywords for discovery, codebook, & data collection protocol
- Established relationship with UMN Office of Native American Affairs who advised on our keywords for discovery
- Data Curation Network presentation (several DCN members looking to conduct their own Indigenous data audits)

Next Steps

- Complete data collection for audit
- Reconvene with the Native American Affairs Office
- Decide if or how to take reparative actions
- Decide what protocols and practices to implement regarding Indigenous data shared in the institutional repository

Resources