



Fast Facts

Project: Cook Islands Maori Database
Lead Organization: Cook Islands Internet Action Group
Country: Cook Islands
Budget: AUD 29,592.00

Situation

The use of Cook Islands Maori and its various dialects is in decline, especially among youth and the large number of Cook Islanders living overseas. Cook Islands Maori is listed on UNESCO’s endangered languages list and there is concern that the language will not survive into the 21st century.

The urgency created by this serious cultural dilemma was the motivation behind the development of the Cook Islands Maori Language Database. In December 2013, the Cook Islands Internet Action Group (CIAG) took advantage of a funding opportunity provided by the Information Society Innovation Fund to contribute towards the preservation of the unique culture, Maori language (and all its dialects) and ultimately the social heritage through the innovative use of internet technologies.

Solution

The project’s overall aim was:

- To build a Cook Islands Maori language resource that was simple and easy to access and use.

The Project objectives were:

- Re-develop online database of Cook Islands Maori words, their English translations with example usage in a sentence in both languages.
- Develop mobile applications for iOS and Android Platforms.
- Develop teaching and learning resources for use in schools using the resources developed by the project.
- Build local capacity among team members.



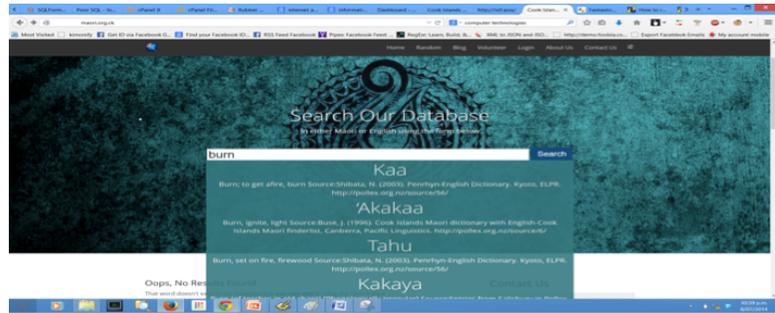
All four projects’ objectives have been met. Secondary project objectives that came about as a result of the project itself were:

- The building of partnerships with various stakeholders who are also interested and concerned about the loss of the language including a group from Niue who are also concerned with the loss of their language.
- Building a social media presence to reach targeted audience members.
- Release of our projects source code on GitHub¹ as open-source software so other Pacific Islands looking to preserve their languages are able to do so without re-inventing the wheel.
- A possible solution for keeping the project sustainable.

¹ GitHub <https://github.com/ano/Korero>

Outcomes

Database and Website: The database was built and populated with words migrated from the old site and a search engine was implemented to make searching in either English or Maori possible. The look and feel of the website was enhanced by the development of the Cook Islands Maori Database logo by Cook Islands tattoo artist Kristopher Williamson.



Engagement: Preliminary work done including online infrastructure (data pipeline, social media etc.) to scale up engagement activities. Community outreach was facilitated on an ad-hoc basis as opportunities arose due to mainly financial constraints. Contacts were made with influential people in New Zealand who were keen to assist as well as those in key public service positions. Although circumstances may have prevented them from assisting us, as they would have liked at the time, the project team envisage that in the future, as funding opportunities become more available, the team's requests will be met from a better informed basis of the team's knowledge and capacity to complete what they set out to do.

Unit Plans and Lesson Plans: teacher workshops to work on the written and audio teaching resources to accompany the mobile application were carried out by the staff of Tereora College themselves.

Project Contact

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