



## MEDIA RELEASE

### UBC Press and the University of Washington Press to develop digital publishing platform in Indigenous studies with grant from the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation

**VANCOUVER BC, April 27, 2016** — UBC Press and the University of Washington Press will develop a digital publishing platform in Indigenous studies thanks to a three-year US\$509,000 (CAD\$679,970) grant awarded to the University of British Columbia by the Andrew W. Mellon Foundation. The project responds to the needs of a new generation of readers, scholars, students, and practitioners pursuing Indigenous research and cultural revitalization projects.

“Scholars engaging in collaborative research, writing, and publishing with and within Indigenous communities want to present their research – including multimedia files – in innovative and useful ways.”

—**Melissa Pitts**, director at UBC Press

“Increasingly, research is carried out collaboratively by university scholars, First Nations community members, and academics from the communities themselves that better reflects and engages the communities. It’s important to develop tools and mechanisms in scholarly publishing that support and extend this kind of work. This new initiative promises to do just that.”

—**Bruce Miller**, professor of anthropology at UBC

UBC Press and the University of Washington Press will develop a digital platform for Indigenous multimedia books. Based on Scalar, an authoring and publishing platform, it will offer a suite of tools for linking data and analyses to digital content from around the world and for interacting in culturally sensitive ways with heritage materials, ranging from clothing, beadwork, weapons, and tools to songs, stories, and dances. It will provide authoring teams with customizable methods to label content and inform readers about Indigenous cultural protocols for access and use of specific content.

The multimedia books will incorporate, and offer seamless navigation through, textual, audio, and visual materials and will organize content in different ways for different purposes, offering navigational paths tailored for distinct audiences: scholars, community-based groups and organizations with a stake in Indigenous languages and cultural heritage, and instructors and their students.

“Our project is designed to provide solutions to existing barriers to full participation in the exchange of ideas and knowledge. We will create a digital hub in which Indigenous communities and scholars can work together to create, share, and preserve content and present their findings in ways that combine mainstream academic frameworks and Indigenous protocols.”

—**Darcy Cullen**, project lead and UBC Press editor

**Jill Campbell**, coordinator for the Musqueam Language and Culture Department, applauded the project’s vision:

“We are in full support of this respectful, digital publishing platform, which facilitates collaborative partnerships with the First Nations communities and highlights the scholarship of First Nations language, culture, and history to render it more broadly accessible. It stands to be a transformative part of the current broad-based movement towards the revitalization of the rich linguistic and cultural heritage vested in the First Nations in this region and beyond.”

The project contributes to the digital revolution in scholarly publishing by harnessing technologies to shape content in new ways and disseminate the fruits of research widely and effectively, catering to the specific needs of both academic and public audiences.

“Academic writing uses particular communication strategies that do not always connect well with the needs and expectations of readers outside of, and new to, the university environment. This project provides a wonderful chance to exploit the potential of media-rich digital publication to address multiple audiences – students, lay readers, and academics – at once. Digital publication will also allow these audiences of readers to provide feedback that will be of invaluable help to the coming generations of digital authors, publishers, and readers.”

—**Peter Mahon**, a textual and technology theorist who teaches scholarly communication at UBC

As the leading publishers of Indigenous studies scholarship in the Northwest, UBC Press and the University of Washington Press are spearheading this initiative.

“As publishers with a deep history of supporting knowledge production by and with Indigenous, First Nations, and Native American people and communities, we are grateful for the support of the Mellon Foundation to take this work forward into the digital and multimedia future.”

—**Nicole Mitchell**, director at University of Washington Press

UBC Press and the University of Washington Press have partnered with First Nations communities and organizations, museums, and experts in intellectual property and cultural heritage management in a digital environment, namely:

- UBC Library
- Museum of Anthropology, UBC
- Burke Museum, University of Washington
- Musqueam Indian Band
- Kwagiulth First Nation
- First Nations Technology Council
- Reciprocal Research Network
- Mukurtu and Local Contexts
- Alliance for Networking Visual Culture, producer of the Scalar platform

**John Hepburn**, Vice President Research and International at UBC, expressed his support for the project, stated that “UBC has an enduring commitment to strengthening research partnerships with Indigenous communities and to promoting an understanding of Indigenous culture and history. This initiative – respectful by design and collaborative in scope – offers an avenue for both, using digital infrastructure to provide a uniquely interactive relationship between student learning, scholarship, and Indigenous cultural preservation.”

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**About UBC Press:** UBC Press produces books integral to Canada’s cultural, political, and social fabric and is recognized for its contributions to Indigenous studies, Canadian history, political science, environmental history, law and society, gender and sexuality studies, and transnational studies, among others. Established in 1971, the press publishes sophisticated and transformative works by authors whose thought and research push the boundaries of scholarly discourse and make a vital contribution to the democratic exchange of ideas.

**About the University of Washington Press:** Established in 1920, the University of Washington Press supports the research, education, and outreach missions of the University of Washington by publishing peer-reviewed scholarship for an international community of students, scholars, and intellectually curious readers. The press is known for groundbreaking lists in critical ethnic studies; Native American and Indigenous studies; Asian American studies; Asian studies; anthropology; art history and visual culture; environmental studies; women’s, gender and sexuality studies; and US history, among other fields.

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## **Partners**

### **Alliance for Networking Visual Culture (ANVC – developers of Scalar)**

*University of Southern California, Los Angeles, CA*  
<http://scalar.usc.edu/about/>

### **The Burke Museum**

*The University of Washington, Seattle, WA*  
<http://www.burkemuseum.org/>

### **The First Nations Technology Council**

*Vancouver, BC*  
<http://www.technologycouncil.ca/>

### **Mukurtu Content Management System (CMS) and Local Contexts**

*Washington State University, Spokane, WA*  
<http://www.mukurtu.org/>  
<http://localcontexts.org/>

### **The Museum of Anthropology (MOA)**

*The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC*  
<http://moa.ubc.ca/>

### **The Reciprocal Research Network (RRN)**

*The University of British Columbia, Vancouver, BC*  
<https://www.rrncommunity.org/>

### **The University of British Columbia Library (UBC Library)**

*Vancouver, BC*  
<http://www.library.ubc.ca/>