

From Pathfinder to Indigenized: An Assessment of LibGuides for Indigenous Studies by ARL Member Institutions

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Abstract:

The historical underpinnings of Indigenous Studies (IS) and its inherent interdisciplinary nature require that libraries and archives represent in their collections past and contemporary experiences of Indigenous peoples. LibGuides is a popular web platform to thematically curate and promote research collections and information sources. While guides bridge curricular and research objectives to collections, there is little discussion about Indigenizing content and design as a decolonization strategy. This study identified and evaluated 357 guides for Indigenous Studies (IS) created by members of the Association of Research Libraries (ARL). “Indigenous Studies” or “IS” is used in this research as an umbrella term to represent many interrelated academic fields and subfields including First Nations Studies, Métis Studies, Native American Studies, American Indian Studies, Inuit Studies, Polar Studies, and Hawaiian Studies. Data compiled from Springshare’s LibGuides Community and ARL member webpages was analyzed for Indigenous representation, content, and user experience (UX) against a rubric of Indigenous critical pedagogical practices and protocols. The findings reveal variety in vocabulary terms to describe Indigenous peoples and subjects, organization, and topics and foci, as well as a lack of interdisciplinarity. The discussion highlights opportunities for libraries and archives to reimagine guides as Indigenized and decolonized information sources that validate Indigenous ways of knowing.

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Indigenization of GLAM web presences.