

Discussion on Article1:

A Māori Perspective on Bicultural Software Development

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I would like to congratulate the authors of this article for attempting to undertake software development impact analysis in a bicultural context. This article does raise some interesting issues and I would like to comment on some of them from just one perspective, that of the indigenous Māori viewpoint.

Before I begin I would like to comment on the frequent usage of the word colonisation. I think this is an unfortunate term to use, unless it is well defined, as it can mean quite different things to different people. For example, to the colonisers it is a positive process; to the people being colonised it is usually a negative process. Perhaps this article uses the word colonisation to mean the denial, exclusion and suppression of one culture?

It appears that at the heart of the SoDIS process is the definition of some basic moral rules. These rules carry with them corresponding sets of rights, and these rights can in turn be used to identify the key stakeholders. Once the stakeholders have been identified their rights and obligations can also be identified, and matched with the tasks that the software undertakes to determine risks and issues of concern.

I am surprised that some Māori moral rules were not considered and implemented into the process. I am a member of a Māori tribal organisation that read some basic (Māori) rules before each meeting, examples of two of these rules are:

- manaakitia te tangata i ngā wā katoa (*All people are to be treated with respect and courtesy at all time*)
- he tapu rawa atu te kai, te inu me te momi hikareti (*no smoking or consumption of food or drink*).

While on the surface these two moral rules may appear similar to those espoused in this article however I would like to suggest that they are more involved and can give rise to issues of concern that may not otherwise be considered. For example, manaaki tangata is literally raising the mana and prestige of

(other) people; it's about treating people with respect, of raising their importance and needs above yours, of looking after their health and well being often to the detriment of your own needs. I believe it goes further than the Western notion of 'do unto others as you would have others do unto you,' perhaps it could be elucidated as 'treat others as kings and you will in turn be considered a king.'

One of the most fundamental rules in tikanga Māori (Māori customs) is the notion of tapu (sacredness) as alluded to in the second rule example mentioned above. Defining articles as tapu sets boundaries as serves as a traditional risk management system. The partaking of eating, drinking and smoking while our meeting is in session is prohibited and consequently the treasure of discussion and the dissemination of knowledge is given its due importance and protection.

Whakapapa (genealogy) is defined as a stakeholder in this article so that concerns and issues in its usage can be raised. I question this as I see whakapapa as an intrinsic part of all stakeholders. Moreover if the SoDIS process is able to assert the moral rule of tapu to whakapapa then the apposite concerns and issues will be raised at the appropriate stage in the evaluation process.

When considering stakeholders from a Māori perspective, the most important would be the iwi (large tribal group), followed by the hāpū (sub tribe), followed by the whānau (family group) and finally the tangata (individual). Having all these groups as stakeholders and allocating priorities accordingly would help reduce the individualistic world view mentality that the SoDIS system was developed under.

An important stakeholder that I would not omit is the Māori language. Language and culture are so intertwined that they are inseparable. An impact on the language is an impact on the culture, and vice versa. If the interface of the software was only in English then this would lead to marginalisation of the

Māori language and consequently a suppression of the Māori culture. Māori language as a stakeholder raises potential risks with regard to orthography, terminology, consistency, and the ability to be understood. Further, if the iwi was rated as the most important stakeholder, then the interface would predominantly be in the language of the iwi. The consideration given to tribal members who could not speak the language would rate as less important.

The article suggests that the SoDIS analysis did not impose Western social values. With the examples that I have raised above I would like to suggest that the analysis did not integrate some important indigenous social values either. However what's promising is that the SoDIS process may indeed have the ability to incorporate indigenous values if a critical component is added. There must be appropriate indigenous control in all aspects of the SoDIS process, right from the defining of moral rules and the subsequent principles, the defining of the entities and relationships, the defining of tasks and issues, right through to the final stages of risk analysis and management. If this occurs then I am confident the SoDIS process may be able to identify software development risks in an indigenous context.

If the system is proven in an indigenous context then there is every possibility that it could also be incorporated into a bicultural context.