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**Māori culture at the digital interface:
A study of the articulation of culture in the online environment.**

A thesis presented in partial fulfilment of the requirements for the
degree of
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Nikolas Troy Brocklehurst

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Abstract

Once lit, the digital ahikā have burnt brightly for Māori. With the increasingly multimodal internet arguably becomes the first port of call for students, academics, and the general public alike. How Māori culture is articulated has never had to be considered in the face of such a potential global audience. This thesis examines Māoridom in the digital space, its central question is: *How is the online environment being used to articulate Māori culture?*

Examining three contemporary case studies of Māori online presence on websites that are either created and run by Māori or had significant Māori input and/or content, this thesis questions whether the case studies dispositions toward the online environment manifest themselves within the digital space. And whether this effects their articulation of Māori culture through that medium. With particular attention given to the specificities of the digital environ, as to how it alters or determines the effectiveness of this articulation, this study highlights specific Maori practices and how utilising the digital space in accordance with its own unique attributes is producing certain representations of Māori culture.

Moreover, taonga as uniquely active agents in Māori conceptuality and a common thread that runs across the sites examined, receive special focus with respect to their digital embodiments. Incorporating a comparative approach, attempts are made to explicate the intricacies of particular examples.

This research contends that embracing the specificity of the digital space enables those within it to produce a more effectual articulation of Māori cultural identity. More so, a failure to do so produces a questionable representation of Māori culture.

The results reveal an increasingly dynamic utilisation of digital media within Māori culture. But perhaps most importantly it is a timely reminder that in the rush to digitise and open museum collections to an increasingly skilful and astute online audience, the cultural sector of Aotearoa New Zealand needs not to forgo their intention of being forums of change and substitute quality for quantity.

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Glossary of Māori Words

Note: Translations are provided within the body of the thesis where Māori words appear for the first time.

Translations of Māori terms have either been taken directly from the source discussed or from *Te Aka Māori-English Dictionary*.

ahikā	burning fires of occupation
atua	gods
hapu	kinship group, sub-tribe
hau-ora	breath of the spirit
hei tiki	carved figure, a neck ornament
heke	rafters
ihi	spiritual power
iwi	kinship group, tribe
kaitaka	highly prized cloak
kaitiaki	trustee, custodian, guardian
Kaitiakitanga	trusteeship, custodianship, guardianship
kanohi ki te kanohi	face-to-face
karakia	recitation, incantation, highly ritualised prayer
kaupapa Māori	Māori ideology, incorporating knowledge, skills, attitudes and values of Māori society
kaupapa nui	main purpose
kawanga whare	dawn ceremony
kete	basket
korero	oratory, to speak knowledge, orally transmitted knowledge
koru	coil, spiral
kowhaiwhai	painted scroll ornamentation
mahi	work, practice
mana	authority; power, prestige, status
Māori	indigenous people of New Zealand
marae	ancestral house

Matariki	Pleisades, cluster of stars in the constellation of Taurus. First appearance in the north-eastern sky indicates the beginning of the Māori year
mātauranga	knowledge, wisdom, understanding, skill
mauri	life essence, life force, power of creation from the gods
mauri-ora	life principle
mihi	greeting
mōteatea	lament, traditional chant
Ngā kete o Mātauranga	the baskets of knowledge
noa	free from extensions of tapu, ordinary, unrestricted, profane
Pākehā	non-Māori, foreigner, New Zealander of European descent
pare	door lintels
pepeha	personal proverb
pounamu	greenstone, jade
pōwhiri	welcome ceremony on a marae
rangatahi Māori	youth
raranga	weaving
tāhuhu	carved ridge pole
taiaha	long handheld wooden weapon, used for close-quarter combat
tangata tiriti	people in New Zealand by right of the Treaty of Waitangi
tangata whenua	local people, indigenous people of the land
tangihanga	funeral
taonga	treasure, anything prized
taonga tūturu	authentic taonga
taonga whakairo	carved work
tapu	protect, sacred, prohibited, set apart
Te Ao Māori	Māori world
Te Kete Aronui	the world apprehended by our senses
Te Kete Tua-ātea	the world beyond space and time
Te Kete Tuauri	beyond the world of darkness, the seedbed of creation
te reo	Māori language
tikanga	correct procedure, protocol
tūpuna	ancestors
utu	reciprocation

waiata	song
wairua	spirit, essence of being, soul
wana	authority, class, unquestioned competence
wehi	to strike fear, awe, to excite
whaikōrero	formal speeches
whakaahua	photograph
whakapapa	genealogy
whakataukī	proverb
whānau	family, extended family
whanaungatanga	relationship, kinship, sense of family connection
whare tupuna	marae, ancestral house
wharekai	dining hall
wharenui	meeting house