

Mana Wāhine In Information Technology:

Ngā Kaiwhatu Kākahu Me Te Kākahu

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Te Whānau-ā-Apanui, Ngāti Kahungunu, Tūwharetoa

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Karakia Tīmatanga – Beginning Incantation

Me aro koe ki te hā o Hineahuone.

Mai te tīmatanga, ko Papatūānuku te whaea whenua,

ko Hineahuone te ira tangata tuatahi,

he wahine.

Tīhei Mauriora!

Pay heed to the dignity of Māori women.

From the beginning of time, was Papatūānuku the Earth Mother,

then Hineahuone the first human created,

a woman.

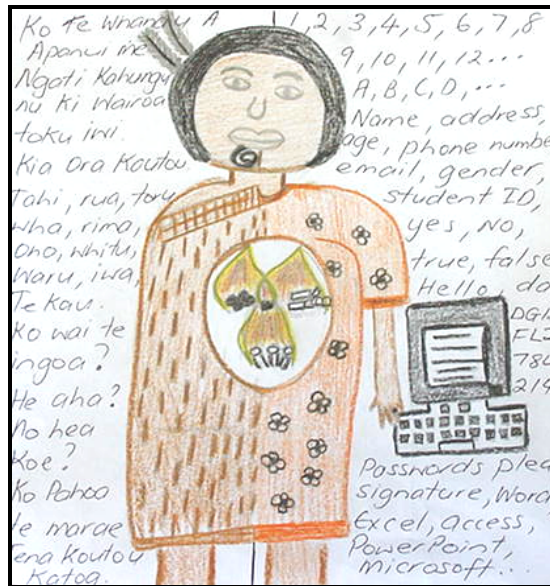
I sneezed and therefore I live!

Ngākau Atu – Dedication

*Tēnā rawa atu ki a koutou katoa,
e ngā rau rangatira o Ngā Kaiwhatu Kākahu Me Te Kākahu,
he putanga tēnei mahi rangahau nā koutou.
Ānei he taonga mā koutou katoa.*

Many thanks to you all,
the Māori women in IT leaders,
this emerging research conducted belongs to you.
Here is a treasure for you all.

Mauri tū, Mauri ora
Stand confidently, live confidently.



This picture was designed by Atareta Wirihana in 2000 to represent cultural identity for a Māori woman in IT.

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Ko Papatūānuku te koka whakaora. Nāna i whakaputa ko ngā kaitiaki o te Ao e. Heke iho i a ratau ko tatau katoa. Ka moe a Tane ki a Hineahuone. Kei Kurawaka raua i hanga te mauri tangata e. Mai i te kopu ki te uha. Ka puta tatau te hunga ora ki te Ao Marama e. Ko te wahine Māori he kanohi ora a Papatūānuku e. Ta Papa te hunga Atua. Ta tatau te hunga tangata. Ka mau oranga roto i te kopu pera ki a ia. Kia mau tonu te mauri tangata mo ake tonu e. Mai i te kopu ki te uha. Ka puta te tangata ki te Ao. Thei Mauriora!

To the many daughters of Papatūānuku whose experiences, pain, joy and dreams follow, this mihi is written for us as Māori women to remember that all life and all that is possible in life, emanates from within our powerful beings. We are powerful, we hold life, we create life, we bring life into the world, we nurture and feed that life and even when that life is no more, our tipuna Hinenuitepō [Great Lady of the Night] is there to care for us, her descendants into the next life. To us rests the power, the joy and the infinite knowing that comes with life itself. I sneezed and therefore I live! (Mihi by Kuni Jenkins and Glenis Philip-Barbara 2001, p. 4).

I wish to thank the many people who have provided their encouragement to complete this thesis. To my wonderful whānau [family] Atareta, Te Pirihi and Grant, thank you for your infinite love and determination. I am grateful to Robyn Kamira, Kerianne Wikitera, Glenis Philip-Barbara, Dr Leonie Pihama, and Dr Jessica Hutchings for your marvellous friendship, ngā mihi mahana ki a koutou katoa.

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I would like to say ka mau te wehi [awesome] to all the Mana Wāhine theorists, academics and researchers who have provided inspirational work for our people. I treasure the foundations provided so that we may stand tall as Mana Wāhine.

Thei Mauriora!

I sneezed and therefore I live!

Whakarāpopototanga – Abstract

This thesis argues for an Indigenous women's cultural construction of information technology (IT). In Aotearoa New Zealand, Māori women have established Mana Wāhine discourses, principles, theories and practices (Evans, 1994; Hutchings, 2002b, 2005; Irwin, 1990, 1992b; Jahnke, 1997b; Pihama, 2001; Smith, 1992; Te Awekotuku, 1991). Mana Wāhine is the power, legitimacy, authority and spirituality of Māori women as determined by mātauranga wāhine [Māori women's knowledge and epistemology] (Jenkins & Pihama, 2001). Mana Wāhine is about theorising, analysing and conducting research for, by, and with, Māori women (Pihama, 2001).

Māori women have always been IT professionals through Ngā Kaiwhatu Kākahu Me Te Kākahu [The Cloak Weavers and the Cloak]. The overall intent of this research is to develop a Mana Wāhine in IT conceptual framework. The research aim is to identify the key discourses, principles and theories of Mana Wāhine for an Indigenous Māori women's cultural construction of IT?

IT has the cultural constructs of the dominant society, which design and shape it (Dirksen, 2001; Stewart, 1993). The herstories of twenty-four Indigenous Māori women in IT provide lived experiences of colonising, decolonising and indigenising of IT. The colonial oppression within IT education and the workplace underpin the hegemonic 'geek neo-colonial male' culture. Indigenous Māori women's culture is constructed as the 'Other'. The Indigenous peoples' literature disregards gender and white women in IT literature disregard ethnicity, race and colonisation. The joint effects of being Indigenous Māori women are fraught with complexity. For Indigenous women to participate in IT means assimilating into geek neo-colonial and male beliefs maintaining culture-neutral ideology, as a new form of cultural imperialism. Through such power relations, cultural identity is left at the door when entering IT where Māori women define themselves as the only lonely, the only Indigenous Māori woman.

The decolonising and indigenising of IT is where Māori women assert their cultural rights to participate as *Mana Wāhine in IT – Ngā Kaiwhatu Kākahu Me Te Kākahu*. In future, research needs to assert that Indigenous women be first beneficiaries of IT (Kamira, 2000b). *Mana Wāhine* deconstructs colonising and culture-neutral ideologies forming a localised view to indigenise IT for women. IT cannot be at the expense of *Mana Wāhine*. For the benefit of our people, children and ourselves, *Mana Wāhine in IT* will always fight for cultural survival.

Kupu Whakataki – Preface

I te taha o tōku whaea, ko Ngāti Kahungunu me Tūwharetoa ngā iwi. I reira, ko Te Kahu rāua ko Hamilton ngā whānau. Ko Marie (nee Te Kahu) rāua ko Harley Hamilton ōku tūpuna. I te taha o tōku matua, ko Te Whānau-ā-Apanui te iwi. I reira, ko Huritu rāua ko Tangira ngā whānau. I tipu ai au i Mōtuaruhe, i runga i te Paripari. Ko Hema (nee Parekura) rāua ko Wiremu Tangira ōku tūpuna. Ko June (nee Hamilton) rāua ko Niao Tangira ōku mātua. Ko Lillian tōku tuākana. Ko Pearl ratou, ko Allamein, ko Manuera āku teina. Tokorua ngā tamariki, ko Atareta rāua ko Te Pirihi. Ko Grant taku whaiaipo. No reira, ko Janette Hamilton-Pearce ahau.



I am an Indigenous Māori¹ woman, a mother of two, a wife, and an academic determined to shape and produce Indigenous Women’s Information Technology (IWIT). I am the second eldest of five girls raised on our ancestral lands on the East Coast of the North Island in Motuaruhe, Te Whānau-ā-Apanui iwi [main tribe]². I was taught the strength and wisdom of our people and women. Māori women weavers inspired me with their technological, informational and mathematical techniques when producing the woven crafts of our ancestors, especially ngā kākahu [cloaks]. I also enjoy kite [basket], whaariki [mat], and taniko [border] weaving too.

During primary school, I was of the generation where growing up Māori was not encouraged through assimilation policies and practices. Both my parents were strapped at school for speaking Māori and performing the culture, so left at a young

¹ Māori are the tāngata whenua [the first people of the land], the Indigenous peoples of Aotearoa New Zealand.

² Māori terms are defined in English inside [square brackets] or after phrases, therefore no glossary is provided. The macron over the vowel illustrates a long vowel sound for meaning and pronunciation. For more explanations of Māori words refer to the *Dictionary of the Māori Language* by H.W. Williams (2001).

age with no qualifications. Such negativity towards being Māori meant I grew up not being taught te reo [Māori language]. My parents were led to believe that we must 'learn the white man's ways and tongue'. Like many Māori families, assimilating into the Pākehā [non-Māori of European descent] culture was heavily encouraged through government policies, the church, school and work.

In 1983, I was a boarder of Hukarere Māori Girls College and educated at Napier Girls High School. At 15, I attempted to do computing, but failed shorthand and typing. I approached the computing teacher to enter his class through another course. He advised I would be better "to do cooking". I didn't have the confidence to disagree with him, so enrolled in the next home economics course – I accepted as a woman, I could only be a cook. I also experienced oppression over entering university. There was a Massey University careers day, so I asked the careers teacher how to enter. He commented "Māori don't go to university". I believed him for a very long time.

Ten years in fact, but I told myself that I could go to university. I started my academic learning in an accounting degree at Massey University Albany campus, in 1994. I knew I loved to tutu [play] with computers. I went to the Dean of computing to change from accounting to the new Bachelor of Information Systems (BIS) degree. His response looking over the rim of his glasses and stroking his long grey beard, "You should do a psychology degree to help your people". Things had not changed since high school. I ignored him and enrolled.

In 1999, I was happy to have a position as an assistant lecturer within the School of Information and Mathematical Sciences. Dr Kay Fielden was insightful when she challenged me to write my honours assignment on being a Māori woman in IT (Hamilton-Pearce, 2000). I had to learn about my cultural identity and my role in IT. I reflected on the oppressions I had experienced towards entering computing. I realised I could do an IT degree without any acknowledgement of my cultural identity and its spiritual knowledge base. I was to enter IT by leaving my cultural identity at the door when entering.

I was inspired by the benefits of the Tino Rangatiratanga [Māori sovereignty and self-determination] movement through Kohanga Reo [early childhood language nest], Kura Kaupapa Māori [intermediate] and Wānanga [tertiary] education. Māori education transformed and asserted tino rangatiratanga for cultural survival. All over the country, we became proud of our culture, language and 'skin'. Te Reo [the language] had become an official language, alongside English in 1987.

In 2000, I met a very good friend, Glenis Philip-Barbara and other Mana Wāhine³ questioning colonisation. Mana Wāhine asserted the role and status of Māori women in Aotearoa New Zealand as tāngata whenua [the Indigenous peoples of the land]. I knew these women would play a very big part in my life.

I was grateful my Pākehā husband Grant, remained committed. We slowly transformed our whānau [family], reclaiming Māori culture and language. Weaving returned to my life and we produced a Kākahu for my honours graduation. I realised the process to produce a Kākahu was no different from the process to produce information systems and software; however, Māori women were in control of weaving a Kākahu. The powerful process of decolonising IT began.



³ Mana Wāhine is the power, legitimacy, authority, and spirituality of Māori women. Māori women wrote in academic contexts to make visible the herstories and oppression of Māori women (Hutchings, 2005; Irwin, 1992a; Pihama, 2001; Te Awekotuku, 1991). In this research, Mana Wāhine is used as the philosophy (ontology and epistemology), theory, methodology and methods. Mana Wāhine is termed in the collective, but I do not seek to impose Mana Wāhine on Māori women. Māori women are not all the same. We have diverse realities with similarities and differences amongst us. The political processes of assimilation, urbanisation, tribalism and tino rangatiratanga has differentiated cultural identity amongst Māori women (Houkamau, 2006). I also do not impose Mana Wāhine on Indigenous women, I advocate that Indigenous women outside of Aotearoa New Zealand develop analysis and frameworks specific to them. Mana Wāhine is a specific analysis for Māori women within Aotearoa New Zealand (Hutchings, 2002b).

I started looking for other Māori women in IT and met Robyn Kamira. In 2001, we both founded Te Waka Wahine Wa-Hangarau (TWWW) [the Society for Professional Māori women in IT]. From there we connected with other women determined to continue in IT. The women believe the domain of IT cannot be at the expense of being wāhine [women] Māori (Te Waka Wahine Wa-Hangarau, 2004b). We want to pursue a space where being professional wāhine Māori in IT is held first and foremost. This is the stance I pursue with the thesis, I am subjectively connected to this research, using reflexivity to tell my herstory and whole-heartedly disclose it for the readers. My herstorical experiences, cultural survival through Mana Wāhine, the retention of Māori women in IT and future developments of Indigenous Women's Information Technology have motivated the context and intent of this thesis.

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Te Mana O Tōku Mahi Tuhituhi– Attestation of Authorship

I hereby declare this thesis submission is my own work and to the best of my knowledge, it contains no material previously published or written by another person (except where explicitly defined in the in text-citations), nor has any material to a substantial extent has been submitted to any other degree or award of a university or other institution of higher learning.

Nāku Noa,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'JHPearce', written in a cursive style.

Nā,
Janette Hamilton-Pearce