



Image by Cuyahoga Jco, shared at <https://www.flickr.com/photos/cuyahogajco/6251221084/>. Reused and cropped by CC-BY 2.0 licence, <https://creativecommons.org/licenses/by/2.0/>.

# How do you find kūmara in the library?

**Few information seekers in Aotearoa New Zealand would think to search for kūmara using the Library of Congress subject heading “sweet potato”. Fortunately, some libraries are using our home-grown thesaurus, Ngā Ūpoko Tukutuku, the Māori Subject Headings (MSH), to help their users access information. I asked how they were going.**

## **Potential benefits of using the MSH**

- Improve information equity.
- Support the revitalisation of te reo.
- Promote staff and public understanding of te reo and tikanga Māori.
- Uphold the mana of libraries and our users.
- Assist first language speakers of te reo Māori and New Zealand English to find resources in both languages.
- Promote our information to the world.

## **Demand is growing**

The Māori population and the number of Māori people in higher education are increasing.

## **How are research libraries taking up the opportunity?**

Staff in wānanga, university, public, and special libraries shared their experiences of applying the MSH and offering the MSH to their users.

## **Challenges and successes**

Libraries employed diverse approaches tailored to their specific users, creatively working together to overcome limitations.

## **Research participants shared common hopes**

- More training. The upcoming training scheme is eagerly anticipated!
- More knowledge exchange between libraries.
- More resourcing to develop the thesaurus.
- More expertise in te reo and tikanga Māori.

## **The importance of the MSH, in the words of research participants**

*We know it enriches everybody's life.*

*It's about discoverability.*

*...if you're going to be talking about Māori topics, it's useful to use words and phrases Māori are going to want to use.*

*...being able to describe ourselves, in our culture, from our own perspective and our own viewpoint...*

*Our cataloguers are promoting te reo Māori.*

## **Library users are searching using MSH terms**

I analysed search terms entered into one library's most popular free-text search interfaces over two months.

Many searchers used terms which are included in the MSH but not in the Library of Congress Subject Headings, indicating that the library's application of MSH terms significantly improved the success of those searches.

*korowai hongiri tauparapara Matariki kūmara*

## **Areas for further research**

Actual and potential uptake of the MSH across all libraries and other information/memory institutions.

Library users' opinions and interactions with the MSH.

Development of an information sharing network between libraries.

Appropriateness of terms selected for records - accuracy, specificity, and relevance to user requirements.

Future development of the MSH.

***Whāia te mātauranga hei oranga mō tātou. Seek after learning for the benefit of all.***

