

Jay T. Johnson

Originally from Kansas and of Munsee Delaware and Western Cherokee descent, Jay is currently on faculty at the University of Canterbury in Christchurch, New Zealand teaching resource management and Indigenous studies courses. A recent graduate of the University of Hawai 'i, Jay's interests comprise areas important to Indigenous peoples' self-determination including resource management, international law and cultural politics.

Facing Future: Encouraging Cartographic Literacy in Indigenous Communities

As a Native American academic researching and participating in various Indigenous mapping initiatives, I have begun to perceive that while many Indigenous communities have a long history of using Western cartographic techniques, including GIS, in their efforts to; establish land claims, map culturally important sites and protect community resources, they are not critically aware of the science with which they are engaged. In order to aid the development of this awareness, I have established the goal of assisting and encouraging the development of a critical literacy in cartography within Indigenous communities. When I use the term literacy though, I do not imply an ability to read and write, rather I am engaging the part of the word's etymology which recognizes "having knowledge or competence" in a system of knowledge. Western cartography is itself a complex knowledge system with a long history, much of its last 500 years having been involved in furthering the colonial exploits of European crowns. Using the work of Paulo Freire (2000) on critical consciousness as a foundation, I have taken this concept a step further to describe a critical cartographic literacy which recognizes that as J. B. Harley states, "[m]aps are never value-free images...[c]artography can be 'a form of knowledge and a form or power' (1998)." My proposed paper presentation would explore the development of a critical cartographic consciousness in order to aid Indigenous communities in how they engage with one of the most prevalent informational technologies currently in use in many of these communities, GIS.

Freire, Paulo. 2000. *Pedagogy of the oppressed*. 30th anniversary ed. New York: Continuum.

Harley, J. B. 1988. Maps, knowledge, and power. In *The Iconography of landscape : essays on the symbolic representation, design, and use of past environments*, edited by D. E. Cosgrove and S. Daniels. Cambridge England ; New York: Cambridge University Press.