Why is OCAP™ important?

The notions inherent in OCAP™ are not new. First Nations have been advocating for these rights over their information for decades, in part because of the breaches they witnessed over the years.

The right of First Nations communities to own, control, access, and possess information about their peoples is fundamentally tied to self-determination and to the preservation and development of their culture. OCAP™ ensures that First Nations own their information: that they are stewards of their information in the same way that they are stewards over their own lands. There is no law or concept in Western society that recognizes community rights and interests in information, which is where OCAP™ comes in.

OCAP™ has been successfully applied in dozens of First Nation communities across Canada, as communities and individuals have increasingly begun to assert jurisdiction over their own data. First Nation communities are passing their own privacy laws, establishing research review committees, entering data-sharing agreements, and setting standards to ensure OCAP™ compliance.

This is why anyone interested in conducting research with First Nations should get fully acquainted with OCAP™ before they begin.

One of the positive by-products of this uptake in the adoption and understanding of OCAP™ has been the trademarking of the OCAP™ logo by the FNIGC. More recently, FNIGC has branched out into other OCAP™ services in response to requests from First Nation communities, researchers and government stakeholders.

OCAMP Workshops

FNIGC offers an OCAP™ workshop — titled "OCAMP" — which offers training sessions in the essentials of the First Nations principles of ownership, control, access and possession. These two-day OCAMP workshops are built around four key objectives:

- To facilitate a comprehensive understanding of OCAP™,

- To demonstrate how a community can manage their information in order to protect their data,

- To develop the knowledge and skills to help a community incorporate OCAP™ principles, and

- To provide examples of a research and data sharing agreement that incorporates OCAP™ principles as its foundation.

OCAMP workshops are currently only provided to First Nation communities.

OCAP™ Online Training

FNIGC is in the process of developing an online training course titled "The Fundamentals of OCAP™" with Ottawa's Algonquin College. This certificate course will be available to anyone with access to an internet connection and is designed to be taken at your own pace. The course is scheduled to be made available in September 2014. Check FNIGC.ca for more details.

OCAP™ Certification

Starting in Fall 2014 FNIGC will offer a new service called OCAP™ Certification. This process will allow researchers and organizations interested in conducting research with First Nation communities to submit their projects to determine if they fulfill the principles of OCAP™.

The OCAP™ Certification program is intended to facilitate ethical research about First Nation people and communities, while helping researchers demonstrate that they value and respect the First Nations principles of OCAP™.

Successful applicants will:

- be sent an OCAP™ Certified letter,

- be allowed to include the OCAP™ Certified stamp of approval in their publications, and

- will have their research project listed on FNIGC's website as a project that meets OCAP™ Certified standards.

OWNERSHIP CONTROL ACCESS AND POSSESSION

PROPRIÉTÉ CONTRÔLE ACCÈS ET POSSESSION

OCAP | PCAP

FNIGC.CA

OCAP™ CERTIFIED
CERTIFIÉ PCAP™

Understanding the First Nations Principles of

OCAP™

What is OCAP™?

The First Nations principles of OCAP™ are a set of standards that establish important ground rules for how First Nations data can be collected, protected, used or shared. Standing for ownership, control, access and possession, OCAP™ reflects First Nation commitments to use and share information in a way that brings benefit to the community, while minimizing any possible harm.

OCAP™ means that First Nations control data collection processes in their communities, and that they own, protect and control how their information is used. Access to First Nations data is important and First Nations determine, under appropriate mandates and protocols, how access to external researchers are facilitated and respected.

It's also important to acknowledge what OCAP™ isn't. OCAP™ is First Nations-specific, and is not applicable as an Aboriginal principle.

OCAP™ is also not a doctrine or a prescription: it respects a community to make its own decisions regarding why, how and by whom information is collected, used or shared.

OCAP™ is an expression of First Nations jurisdiction over information concerning their community and its members.

"We cannot pick and choose which elements of OCAP™ that will be followed. They are one. We cannot ignore ownership or possession any more than the Four Directions can omit the East or the North."

- Bonnie Healy, Operations Manager Alberta First Nations Information Governance Centre

When was OCAP™ established?

OCAP™ originated in 1998 at a brainstorming session held by the National Steering Committee (NSC) of the *First Nations and Inuit Regional Longitudinal Health Survey*. Originally coined as "OCA," the NSC later added a "P" (in recognition of the importance of First Nations' possession of their own data) to form OCAP™ as we now understand it.

In the ensuing years, the NSC became the First Nations Information Governance Committee, which in turn was incorporated into the **First Nations Information Governance Centre (FNIGC)** in 2010 (with a mandate from the Assembly of First Nations Chiefs in Assembly).

FNIGC | CGIPN

The principles of OCAP™ are integral to the work of the FNIGC, Canada's premier source of information about First Nations people living on reserve and in northern communities. FNIGC administers two large-scale surveys, the *First Nations Regional Health Survey (FNRHS)* and the *First Nations Early Childhood, Education and Employment Survey (FNREEES)*, which were designed, shaped and guided by OCAP™.

What are the key components of OCAP™?

OCAP™ has four key components, ownership, control, access, and possession: each of which is equally important to the whole. In order to be OCAP™- compliant, each individual component must be respected and fulfilled.

The Components of OCAP™

OWNERSHIP: Ownership refers to the relationship of First Nations to their cultural knowledge, data, and information. This principle states that a community or group owns information collectively in the same way that an individual owns his or her personal information.

CONTROL: The principle of control affirms that First Nations, their communities and representative bodies are within their rights in seeking to control over all aspects of research and information management processes that impact them. First Nations control of research can include all stages of a particular research project - from start to finish. The principle extends to the control of resources and review processes, the planning process, management of the information and so on.

ACCESS: First Nations must have access to information and data about themselves and their communities, regardless of where it is currently held. The principle also refers to the right of First Nations communities and organizations to manage and make decisions regarding access to their collective information. This may be achieved, in practice, through standardized, formal protocols.

POSSESSION: While ownership identifies the relationship between a people and their information in principle, possession or stewardship is more concrete. It refers to the physical control of data. Possession is a mechanism by which ownership can be asserted and protected.

OCAP™ has become the standard for conducting research with First Nations and has grown beyond research to include the governance of all First Nations information.

Though each of these is essential, OCAP™ as a concept goes beyond the strict definition of each component, as it represents principles and values that are intertwined and reflective of First Nations' world-view of jurisdiction and collective rights.

All First Nations own OCAP™. As such, the interpretation of OCAP™ is unique to each First Nation community or region.