



Tō ringa ki ngā rākau a te Pākehā: A Digital Platform for Māori Language Learning

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Abstract

The Te Whanake series of textbooks and resources, by Professor John Moorfield, is the main resource used by teachers who are teaching Māori as a second language in universities. The past five years have seen these resources grow to incorporate a suite of digital resources available free of charge. These include podcasts, an online dictionary (which is also available as an iPhone and android app) and animations with accompanying exercises. The authors have had the privilege of being research assistants for Professor Moorfield and have worked on a number of these resources. As language teachers, the authors have also seen the benefit of the resources to both teacher and student.

This paper will focus on the importance of technology in teaching the Māori language as a second-language and proposes an opportunity to exploit technologies that can contribute to the revitalisation of endangered languages. The paper will begin with a brief overview of the Te Whanake suite of digital resources. This will be followed by a discussion regarding the structure of the language classes and how technology has been incorporated into the programme. There will then be a demonstration of the digital platform used by the language students in Te Ara Poutama, the Faculty of Māori development at the Auckland University of Technology. The digital platform was implemented in 2011 for the management of all of the Māori language courses. The demonstration will include an examination of some of the current functions of the digital platform, as well as introducing some features that will be incorporated into future versions of the site.