



MRAi Description, Goals and Guiding Principles

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Description

The Making Research Accessible in the DTES initiative (MRAi) seeks to improve access to academic research and community-generated materials with a focus on Vancouver's Downtown Eastside (DTES). It was founded in 2015 in response to consultations with people living and working in the DTES who voiced a need to access high-quality research and information. These groups expressed concern with research projects that extracted information from people in the neighborhood and produced findings unavailable to residents. Members of community organizations also identified a need to preserve community-generated materials.

The MRAi is a University of British Columbia partnership between the UBC Learning Exchange and UBC Library, with input from the UBC Office of Community Engagement, the UBC Knowledge Exchange Unit, UBC's School of Library, Archival and Information Studies (iSchool), Simon Fraser University Library and the Vancouver Public Library.

Goals

1. Increase the accessibility and impact of research by providing easier online access to information about the DTES.
2. Identify community-generated materials (such as program reports, research and evaluation documents, and organizational histories) and increase their availability in and beyond the DTES.
3. Create opportunities for community organizations, community members, researchers, students, and others to share information and learn from one another.

Guiding Principles

What we do

1. We support making research accessible to everyone, to increase their knowledge of the Downtown Eastside and its community.
2. We promote collaboration among groups and members of the Downtown Eastside, regional universities and local libraries, recognizing diverse ways of knowing and forms of knowledge.
3. We encourage continuous respectful communication between researchers and community members.
4. We promote co-created, open access, and mutually beneficial research practices.
5. We continually consult with the DTES community to ensure that the work responds to community identified needs.

What we believe

6. We recognize that not all knowledge should be available to everyone and that some knowledge is sacred or private.

7. We value lived experience, not prioritizing or privileging academic over experiential knowledge.
8. We believe that lots of valuable research has been done in the Downtown Eastside and that it is important to build on that past work.
9. We believe that it is important to respect the time and energy of community members and reduce the burden of research on the Downtown Eastside.
10. We recognize communities and research needs are dynamic, leading us to continually question existing practices, and develop and support improved practices.