Ngā Anamata Māori I te Hangarau Matihiko 2024

Māori in DigiTech Futures Report

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Whakarāpopototanga Mātua I Executive Summary

"We determine our future, that's the way it should be."

This powerful statement, voiced by a rangatahi māori participant during one of our recent futures wānanga, encapsulates the heart of our kaupapa: ensuring that Māori futures in the digital world are shaped by us, for us. Our people are speaking, and they are calling for agency, for autonomy, and for a future where we determine our own pathways in the ever-expanding realm of digital technology.

The world is changing rapidly, and technology is at the forefront of this transformation. But for too long, Māori voices have been absent from these critical conversations. Digital futures are being designed and built, often without input from the very communities they claim to serve. The stakes are high: from AI, gaming, to environmental tech, data sovereignty, and so much more - the future of our whānau, hapū, iwi, depends on how we navigate this space today.

At the heart of our futures journey, lies design thinking frameworks, with one grounded in mātauranga Māori by Tokona Te Raki, called Te Korekoreka[1]. This model in particular has guided our discussions, opened pathways to futures thinking, and fostered an environment where rangatahi and hapori could shape their own digital destinies.

This inaugural annual report brings together the voices, aspirations, and concerns of our rangatahi, hapori, and thought leaders in Māori digitech. Through a series of workshops, wānanga, and kōrero, we have listened deeply to our people's visions for the future, and now we present those insights to the wider world. This is not just about documenting our journey - it's about shaping the future of Te Ao Matihiko (the digital realm) in a way that centres our cultural values and ensures a legacy of thriving Māori participation in digital technology.

We invite you to walk with us, to hear the voices of our communities, and to be part of this collective movement. This is our future, and we are leading it.

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[1] https://www.tekorekoreka.co.nz/

Ngā mihi

Ka tuku atu nei i te whakawhetai nui ki a koutou katoa i whai wāhi mai ki tēnei mahi hira.

He mihi motuhake ki a Tonee Kanafakahau rāua ko Amy Knudsen, ngā kaiarataki mai i Tokona Te Raki, mō tō rāua hautūtanga me te tuku mai i tō rāua anga whakamua mō te mahi anamata. Ki a Tokona Te Raki, he mihi nui mō tō koutou tautoko me tō koutou kōtuitui i roto i tēnei mahi hautūtanga.

E rere ana te mihi ki a Vanitha Govini nō Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga, nāna i hautū te rangatahi Māori Anamata o Matihiko Hangarau wānanga i Tāmaki Makaurau. Ki ngā tari e rua - Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga me Hīkina Whakatutuki (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment - MBIE) - he mihi nui ki a koutou mō tō koutou ārahitanga me tō koutou tautoko i roto i tēnei mahi hautūtanga mō te iwi Māori.

Ka mihi hoki ki ngā kaiārahi Māori i te hangarau i tae mai, i whakawhirinaki mai ki tēnei kaupapa hautūtanga mō tō tātou iwi. He mihi motuhake ki a Pera Barrett, nāna i hautū ngā wānanga Māori Anamata o Matihiko Hangarau me Te Hapori Matihiko mō ō tātou hapori, mō tōna manawanui me tōna ngākau nui ki ēnei mahi.

Nō reira, ka mihi atu ki ngā kaiako, ngā tauira, me ngā mema hapori i tae mai, i kawe tonu te kōrero i te roanga o te tau. Nā tō koutou whai wāhi tonu, kua whai whānui tēnei kaupapa anamata, ā, nā ngā whakaaro i kohia i te roanga o te wā kua hua nui tēnei pūrongo.

Ngā mihi nunui ki a koutou katoa, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou, tēnā koutou katoa.

We extend our heartfelt thanks to all who contributed to this important work.

A special thanks to Tonee Kanafakahau and Amy Knudsen, the lead facilitators from Tokona Te Raki, for their leadership and for trusting us with their incredible futures framework. To Tokona Te Raki, thank you for your ongoing support and partnership in this leadership work.

Our thanks also go to Vanitha Govini from Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga (Ministry of Education), who led the Rangatahi Futures in Tech wānanga in Tāmaki Makaurau. To the two ministries involved - Te Tāhuhu o te Mātauranga (Ministry of Education) and Hīkina Whakatutuki (Ministry of Business, Innovation & Employment - MBIE) - thank you for your guidance and support in this leadership kaupapa for Māori.

We also acknowledge the Māori tech leaders who attended and trusted us with this leadership work for our people. Special thanks to Pera Barrett, who co-lead the Rangatahi Futures and online Te Hapori Matihiko wānanga for our hapori members, for his dedication and passion in these efforts. We love you bro.

Lastly, a big thanks to all the teachers, students, principles, and community members who attended and carried on the kōrero throughout the year. Your continued engagement ensured that this futures kaupapa was much broader, with input gathered over an extended period.

Thank you all.

He take mō te mahi anamata | Why futures mahi is important

Futures mahi (futures work) is crucial for shaping the long-term trajectory of Māori within Te Ao Matihiko, ensuring that Māori values, perspectives, and leadership are embedded in the technological advancements that shape our future. This approach centres not only on the innovation of tools and technologies but on weaving together te ao Māori, ancestral knowledge, and cutting-edge digital developments.

Local to Global Impact

Globally, technology is advancing at an exponential rate. In fields like artificial intelligence, data science, and environmental monitoring, decisions are being made today that will shape the way the world functions in decades to come. Māori, as tangata whenua, must not only be present but lead in these areas to ensure our taonga, tikanga, and te reo are protected and can thrive.

By being part of this global movement, Māori can influence tech developments in a way that ensures mana motuhake (self-determination) and strengthens relationships with other Indigenous nations. It's about ensuring that our voices are heard and that we are active participants in shaping the digital world.

At a national level, futures mahi allows Māori to address inequalities that currently exist in technology access, employment, and participation. Reports such as *Toi Hangarau 2024*[2] show that Māori currently represent only 4.8% of New Zealand's tech workforce, with only less than a third being wāhine māori - despite making up 17% of the total population. This disparity shows that Māori are underrepresented in one of the country's most dynamic and growing sectors.

By actively engaging in futures mahi, Māori can set the agenda to ensure that digital growth and innovation are inclusive and reflect the aspirations of our people. A national vision of Māori leadership in tech must be grounded in both policy changes and industry shifts to foster an environment where Māori participation is not only welcomed but celebrated and prioritised.

At the regional and local levels, futures mahi provides tangible opportunities to empower rangatahi and hapū, ensuring that they can participate in and lead the technological revolutions happening within their communities. It's not just about tech innovation but about creating tech-driven solutions that address the specific needs of whānau and hapū, from environmental monitoring to social services. Regional hubs for tech innovation can be Māori-led and grounded in te ao Māori, ensuring that digital technology aligns

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[2] https://www.toihangarau.nz/

with our values. This can also help local economies grow by fostering Māori-led tech startups and businesses that not only generate income but also keep tech knowledge and skills within the community.

Cultural Impact

Fusion of te ao Māori with technology has the potential to create powerful, culturally rich innovations that benefit all of Aotearoa and beyond. Futures mahi from a Māori perspective is about ensuring that te reo Māori, tikanga, and whakapapa are embedded in the very foundations of the digital systems that are being built.

A significant part of our futures work draws from Tokona Te Raki's *Te Korekoreka* framework, which helped to shape our discussions and scenarios during the wānanga. This futures model pushes us to think critically about the unknown, imagining the farthest possibilities while centring intergenerational fairness. Through the use of their facilitators and methods, we deepened our exploration of what a truly sovereign digital future for Māori looks like, using back casting and scenario development to ensure that our work honours both our past and future.

By infusing technology with the depth and richness of te ao Māori, we utilise something truly unique and of immense value not only for Māori but for the world. This is cultural innovation at its finest - protecting and growing our heritage while using new tools to share it with the world.

Why Futures Work Matters

In summary, futures mahi is crucial at local, regional, national, and global levels. Locally, it connects rangatahi with opportunities. Regionally, it builds hubs for innovation. Nationally, it positions Māori as tech leaders. Globally, it enables Māori to contribute unique knowledge and insights to international tech discussions.

Futures mahi is about recognising that Māori are not just participants in the digital revolution - we are key leaders in shaping it. We must be actively involved in co-designing the future we want to see, ensuring that our mokopuna inherit a world where their culture and identity are strengthened, and where they have every opportunity to thrive in the digital age.

Key Elements of Futures Mahi

- Mana Motuhake - Ensuring Māori self-determination in the digital realm.

- Digital Sovereignty - Guarding and protecting our data, knowledge, and stories.

- Leadership in Tech - Creating pathways for Māori to lead in areas like AI, gaming, and environmental technologies.

- Te Ao Māori and Innovation - Fusing ancestral knowledge with modern tech to create innovations that reflect our values.

- Design thinking at its best - Utilising design thinking tools and methodologies to aid in providing proven frameworks, like the model from Tokona Te Raki (Māori future makers), Te Korekoreka, that help our ecosystem make sense of the futures on our shared horizon.

This work is the foundation for ensuring that the digital future is equitable, culturally inclusive, and aligned with the long-term aspirations of our people. It is both a challenge and an opportunity to shape a future where Māori thrive as innovators and tech leaders, both within Aotearoa and on the global stage.

Ngā mahi i mahi | What we did

In early 2024, Te Hapori Matihiko embarked on a journey of futures mahi through a series of wānanga and engagement sessions with rangatahi, whānau, and key stakeholders across Aotearoa. These wānanga were designed to ground our mahi in the voices, aspirations, and challenges of our people as we navigate the rapidly evolving digital landscape. The intention was to ensure that Māori are not only participants in the digital revolution but leaders and innovators in shaping its future.

Futures design thinking, Te korekoreka, and various other methodologies played a key role throughout this process, using tools such as Causal Layered Analysis (CLA), scenario building, and back casting to broaden perspectives. We also integrated our own methodologies like 'ahī kā' (connectedness to place) and intergenerational fairness exercises to ensure the depth and relevance of discussions. These tools helped participants reflect on what futures are possible and how to best navigate the transition to a digital world.

Wānanga Overview

Over several months, we convened workshops both in-person and online, gathering insights from Māori across different regions and contexts. Our wānanga took place in diverse settings, including kura kaupapa Māori, local hapori centres, and digitally through virtual hui. These sessions were an intentional space for Māori to reflect on their digital futures, considering what a thriving, culturally rich future looks like for them in the realm of DigiTech.

Each wānanga was structured around several key questions:

1. What does a thriving Māori digital future look like?

2. What happens if we do nothing?

3. What are our hard no's – our dark futures we don't want to see come to pass?

4. How can we bring ancestral knowledge and modern technology together to shape a future that benefits our people?

5. What barriers exist for rangatahi and hapori to access opportunities in the tech sector?

6. How can we create new pathways that support Māori in tech careers and leadership roles?

These questions were at the heart of the kōrero, prompting participants to think deeply about their roles as creators, protectors, and innovators in the digital realm. Participants ranged from rangatahi navigating educational and career pathways, career changers, to experienced practitioners working in DigiTech sectors.

Key Wānanga and Engagements

1. **Whanganui-a-Tara Wānanga**

   This wānanga focused on the intersection of Mātauranga Māori and emerging technologies. Participants shared their insights on digital sovereignty, data protection, and the integration of tikanga in tech development. A recurring theme was the importance of retaining cultural integrity in technological spaces and ensuring Māori-led innovation.

   Te Korekoreka facilitators fostered a safe space where participants could reflect on the barriers they face today, while dreaming about the opportunities that could emerge for Māori in the future. The framework invited participants to consider their roles in shaping these futures.

    A tech business owner and practitioner from this wānanga said,

   "I want a positive economic future for us, so no-one needs to go cap in hand to funders. A future where we have, and actively participate in, a thriving sustainable economy that continues to feed into our communities".

Insight: This speaks to the intersection of technology and economic empowerment. It highlights the desire for economic independence, which can be achieved through a thriving tech sector led by Māori innovators.

2. **Tamaki Makaurau (South Auckland) Rangatahi Futures Wānanga**

   Held in South Auckland, this wānanga was specifically designed to engage rangatahi in futures thinking. The focus was on empowering youth to see themselves as leaders in the digital world, exploring pathways into tech careers, and breaking down barriers to participation. Rangatahi shared their aspirations for the future and discussed how technology can be used to uphold the mana of future generations, ensuring their ability to thrive in an increasingly digital society.

   "I don't really care about the future; I'm just trying to get through today"

Speaking to the immediacy of challenges faced by rangatahi, this wahine māori highlighted the importance of focusing on both present-day needs and longer-term futures, ensuring pathways are accessible and supportive.

*"I don't wanna wake up one day and see my daughter's vagina online, that's why I give a s***".*

After speaking to this bold 15yr tane after he made this highly impactful comment in front of attendees, he was worried about the future of his future tamariki. As a future father he was highly concerned about online safety. These are the real voices we want to amplify āheiha! hardout!

3. **Online Digital Futures Wānanga**

   Recognising the need for accessible engagement, we held an online futures workshop to reach whānau and Māori practitioners across Aotearoa. This session allowed for deeper insights into how digital technologies can enhance whānau well-being, education, and economic resilience. The online platform also provided a space for participants to share their experiences working within the digital industry and the futures they most wanted to see. The online platform itself served as a space for innovation, showing how digital tools can facilitate widespread engagement and knowledge sharing.

4. **Māori Digital Futures Kura Wānanga**

   In collaboration with kura kaupapa, we engaged tamariki and their whānau in a wānanga to explore the role of digital technologies in preserving and revitalising te reo Māori. This session provided a unique opportunity to engage the next generation of Māori digital innovators, with tamariki actively participating in designing their own tech solutions to everyday problems. Futures design methodologies encouraged them to consider the role they could play in shaping this future, fostering a sense of agency and excitement about tech's potential.

"We see you fullas doing great things, just ensure everyone is in the waka, and understands how important hangarau is to whānau."

This comment from a koro of a kura kaupapa akonga speaks to the importance of inclusion and education, not only for rangatahi but for the entire whānau. Our elder's words emphasise the critical role of communication and ensuring no one is left behind in the rapidly evolving tech space. This aligns with our mission of integrating digital solutions across all communities. Inclusivity in tech education and engagement is crucial to ensuring long-term success. This means that Māori of all ages must be included in the digital journey to empower whānau collectively.

"Don't forget about the rest of us, we want our waka connected to yours."

We loved hearing this from a tongan teen, highlighting the interconnectedness between Māori and Pacific communities. There is a strong desire for collaboration and collective progress in the tech space, showing that the challenges faced by one community are often shared by others. This insight is a call for cross-cultural collaboration within the Pacific region and beyond. Māori tech aspirations are not insular; there is a need to foster partnerships and shared pathways with other indigenous and Pacific communities to create a broader network of digital empowerment.

Methodology - Grounded in Kaupapa Māori

Each wānanga was carefully designed using kaupapa Māori principles, ensuring that all discussions, frameworks, and outcomes were culturally grounded and relevant. Tikanga Māori provided the foundation for these wānanga, guiding how we approached decision-making, collaboration, and the way we captured insights.

We intentionally used a mix of futures methodologies to ensure a robust exploration of what lies ahead. Causal Layered Analysis (CLA) was a key tool, helping participants delve beyond surface-level issues to examine the underlying causes and worldview shifts required for long-term change. Scenario planning and futures forethought provided a structured way to explore different possible futures, while back casting enabled participants to map pathways from their desired futures to the present moment.

We also introduced intergenerational fairness exercises; a futures methodology focused on ensuring equity for future generations. This was particularly important to participants, many of whom emphasised the need to create digital futures that honour the mana of both present and future Māori. Through

these exercises, we discussed how decisions made today can either enhance or diminish the opportunities available to future generations.

These methodologies, combined with our own cultural frameworks, allowed us to generate powerful insights into the digital futures that Māori communities aspire to build. Whether it was rangatahi imagining new tech pathways, or kaumātua reflecting on the balance between digital sovereignty and cultural integrity, the diversity of perspectives was united by a common kaupapa: building a future where Māori thrive in the digital realm.

In every wānanga, participants were encouraged to draw on their own experiences, with the understanding that every voice carries value. Whakawhanaungatanga (building relationships) was a principal component of each session, creating a space where participants felt safe to share their ideas and perspectives. This approach ensured that the insights gathered were not only reflective of the needs of our people but also respectful of their aspirations for the future.

Utilising Mātauranga Māori in Futures Thinking
A critical theme across all wānanga was the merging of Mātauranga Māori with technological advancements. Participants spoke to the need for a dual framework where traditional knowledge systems and digital technologies work together to create solutions that are sustainable, culturally resonant, and future-proof. We found this framework in Te Korekoreka. Whether discussing environmental technologies or digital platforms for education, participants envisioned a future where the wisdom of our tūpuna informs the tools of tomorrow.

The wānanga also revealed a strong commitment to maintaining mana motuhake in digital spaces. Many participants emphasised the need for Māori control over their data and intellectual property, advocating for digital sovereignty frameworks that protect Māori knowledge from exploitation while empowering whānau, hapū, and iwi to use digital technologies for their own growth and well-being.

Collaboration and Co-Creation
Throughout the wānanga, there was an emphasis on collaboration and co-creation. Participants reflected on the importance of building partnerships across sectors, ensuring that Māori voices are central in the development of policy, educational pathways, and tech solutions. The wānanga also highlighted the importance of creating spaces where Māori can collaborate with other Indigenous communities, fostering global networks that enhance Indigenous digital leadership.

The success of these wānanga lies in their ability to bring diverse voices together under a shared kaupapa. They have laid a strong foundation for continued engagement and collaboration, ensuring that the insights gathered will be used to shape the next phase of our futures mahi.

By embedding kaupapa Māori into every part of our process, we ensured that our futures thinking was not only innovative but also deeply rooted in the values, needs, and aspirations of our people. This culturally grounded approach, coupled with futures design methodologies, allowed for a rich exploration of the digital opportunities that lie ahead.

Ngā kōrero mai i te hapori | The voice of our people

The core of our mahi lies in uplifting and activating the voice of our Māori communities, particularly when it comes to shaping our futures in the digital realm. Throughout the series of wānanga and workshops held, one theme was clear: the future is something that we need to actively shape, not passively accept. The voice of our hapori has provided invaluable guidance and direction. It is not just about making decisions for our communities but empowering them to be the decision-makers in their own futures.

The following section captures the voice, aspirations, concerns, and ideas shared during these wānanga and discussions. These are the insights and whakaaro (thoughts) that will drive our collective journey forward.

The insights, aspirations, and concerns shared by our hapori during the wānanga and futures workshops are fundamental to shaping our own direction. This is not merely about what 'we' think should be done; it's about responding directly to the voice of our people. This section delves into the collective kōrero that has emerged from these sessions, highlighting key themes that will shape our pathway forward.

Rangatiratanga i te Ao Matihiko I Sovereignty and Control in the Digital Realm

A powerful theme throughout all our discussions was the concept of rangatiratanga - self-determination and control - in the digital space. Our people expressed an ardent desire to have control over the technologies we create and use, particularly around the management and governance of Māori data. There is a deep understanding that Māori need to maintain control over their data, ensuring it aligns with our values and isn't exploited or misappropriated.

"Kei a mātou te kaitiakitanga o ā mātou kōrero, ā mātou raraunga. Kia noho mātou hei rangatira i roto i ngā hangarau e whakamahia ana e mātou."
"We must be the guardians of our knowledge and data. We must be the ones in charge of the technologies we use."

Data sovereignty is a critical issue, with concerns raised about cultural misappropriation in digital spaces. There is fear that without control, Māori cultural knowledge could be misused, commercialised, or altered without proper respect for its significance. The protection of cultural integrity in the digital sphere is seen as paramount.

Mātauranga Māori and Digital Technologies: Participants also explored how Mātauranga Māori (indigenous knowledge) can shape digital advancements, particularly in emerging fields. These industries offer opportunities for Māori to lead, bringing our knowledge systems into spaces that are currently dominated by Western perspectives.

"Me whakamahi ngā hangarau hou kia whai hua ai te Mātauranga Māori. Mā ngā mātanga o te ao Māori hei arataki i ngā mahi i roto i ngā wāhi hou pērā i te AI me te tāwhai whakaata (gaming)."
"We must use modern technologies to benefit Mātauranga Māori. Our experts should lead the way in areas like AI and gaming."

Te Ōritetanga Matihiko I Bridging the Digital Divide

Another recurring concern was digital equity. Many within our communities, particularly those from rural areas or lower socio-economic backgrounds, face significant barriers to accessing digital tools, the internet, and education. The digital divide is a real and growing issue, and unless it is addressed, many Māori will be left behind as society becomes more digitised.

"Me pēhea e taea ai e ngā tamariki katoa te whai wāhi atu ki te ao hangarau? Kāore he taputapu, kāore he hononga. Me whakatika tēnei āhua."
"How can all our children access the digital world? There's no equipment, no connection. This needs to change."

Participants called for immediate investment in infrastructure, devices, and connectivity to ensure all Māori, regardless of their location or economic situation, can access the opportunities the digital realm offers. Without addressing these fundamental inequalities, the community fears that digital exclusion will perpetuate existing socio-economic gaps. There was a strong push for policies and initiatives that would close this gap and create pathways for Māori to thrive in the digital space.

Māori Leadership in Emerging Fields I Ngā Hangarau Matihiko

Throughout the wānanga, there was a palpable sense of excitement and hope about the leadership roles that Māori could take in emerging tech fields. We are already seeing incredible examples of Māori leadership in tech. In the AI space, initiatives like the Māori AI Hub are ensuring that algorithms reflect indigenous values, while projects in gaming are telling our stories through immersive, interactive worlds. In environmental technology, Māori values are leading innovations that blend kaitiakitanga with innovative digital tools for land and resource monitoring. These fields are just the beginning of what is possible when Māori lead digital advancements, shaping tech futures that serve our people and protect our world.

Blockchain and Data Security was also seen as a critical technology for securing Māori data and ensuring transparency and sovereignty over its use. The use of decentralised technologies like blockchain aligns with Māori values of whakapapa (genealogy) and mana motuhake (self-determination), making it an area where Māori leadership could be crucial.

Te Ara ki Mua I Empowering Rangatahi for a Digital Future

One of the strongest messages from the wānanga was the importance of empowering rangatahi. The youth in our communities expressed both enthusiasm and apprehension about the future. They are ready to engage with digital technologies but need guidance, education, and opportunities. Rangatahi were vocal about wanting to be involved in decision-making processes that will shape their futures.

"E hiahia ana mātou kia whai wāhi atu ki ngā kōrero, ki ngā mahi e whai pānga ana ki a mātou anamata."

"We want to be part of the discussions and actions that affect our future."

There was a strong call for more education pathways that introduce rangatahi to tech early on, equipping them with the skills they need to thrive. Internships, mentoring programs, and hands-on experience were seen as critical to developing the next generation of Māori tech leaders.

Participants expressed the need for rangatahi to have role models in the tech sector - Māori leaders in DigiTech - who can inspire and guide them. Programs that introduce rangatahi to tech careers at an early age, through school initiatives or community-based workshops, were considered essential.

Mātauranga Māori as a Guide I Aligning Tikanga with Technology

A consistent theme was the necessity for tikanga Māori to guide how we engage with DigiTech. The community made it clear that technology should not just be adopted but adapted to fit within a Māori

worldview. This means ensuring that innovative technologies align with Māori values, tikanga, and whakapapa.

"Me noho ko te tikanga Māori hei arataki i ngā hangarau e whakamahia ana mātou. Kāore e taea e mātou te whiu i ngā uara o ngā tīpuna."

"Tikanga Māori must guide the technologies we use. We cannot discard the values of our ancestors."

Participants also stressed the importance of using technology as a tool for preserving and enhancing te reo Māori, tikanga, kawa, and other aspects of Mātauranga Māori. Many spoke of the need for digital tools that promote whakapapa, connect Māori globally, and ensure that Māori knowledge systems are protected.

Across emerging tech fields, Mātauranga Māori is becoming a powerful guide, driving innovation, and ensuring that technology aligns with Māori values. In AI development, our principles of kaitiakitanga (guardianship) inform how algorithms are designed to protect cultural knowledge. In gaming, Māori storytelling is creating immersive experiences that blend tikanga with virtual environments. This is Mātauranga Māori in action - ensuring that, in every digital advancement, Māori perspectives are present, protected, and celebrated.

Kia Kaha te Hapori I Strengthening Our Communities

At the heart of these conversations was the importance of community-building. While tech offers new tools and possibilities, the wānanga participants emphasised that technology must serve our people and not the other way around. Digital tools should enhance and strengthen the ties that bind whānau, hapū, and iwi, creating new ways to connect, collaborate, and thrive.

The kōrero from these wānanga provides a foundation for future action. The voices of our people don't just guide our thinking - they demand practical steps. As we move forward, these insights become the roadmap that will inform our actions across policy, education, and tech innovation. Each reflection here will directly shape the design of future initiatives, ensuring that our response is as dynamic as the needs of our communities.

Ngā Maramatanga | Insights

The following insights emerge as critical learnings from our series of wānanga and futures workshops. These encapsulate the voice of our people, their collective aspiration, and the important intersections between te ao Māori and the digital realm.

Mana Motuhake Matihiko I Digital Sovereignty

One of the most prominent themes throughout our workshops was the necessity of Māori to maintain mana motuhake (self-determination) in the digital realm. This insight calls for greater control and governance over Māori data, ensuring that any collection, use, or distribution aligns with tikanga Māori (Māori protocols). Many participants voiced concerns over the potential for data to be exploited or misappropriated when handled by non-Māori entities.

This insight drives the need for Māori to be directly involved in decision-making around data sovereignty, including policy development, data management, and the governance of digital platforms. AI governance, in particular, was highlighted as a key area where Māori should play a leadership role, ensuring that artificial intelligence is not only inclusive of Māori perspectives but actively safeguards our cultural integrity.

Te Huarahi ki te Matihiko I Pathways to Digital Participation

Another core insight was the need for accessible and inclusive pathways into the digital world for all Māori. The conversations highlighted the importance of addressing the digital divide, particularly for rangatahi, rural communities, and lower-income whānau.

Participants identified that for Māori to be fully engaged in the digital age, there needs to be a focus on education, training, and capacity building. This includes developing Māori-led educational programs that introduce rangatahi to emerging fields like AI, gaming, and environmental tech early on, providing firsthand experiences and clear pathways to careers in these industries.

Whakakitenga Hangarau Māori I Māori Innovation in Technology

Participants in our wānanga expressed excitement about the potential for Māori innovation to drive technological advancements, especially in emerging fields. This includes areas such as environmental monitoring technologies, blockchain, gaming, and AI. These fields were identified as spaces where Māori can bring whakapapa-based thinking and tikanga-driven frameworks to shape how these technologies evolve and are used.

This insight emphasises the need for Māori leadership in these areas to guide the development of technologies that not only advance our communities but also uphold the values and principles of te ao Māori. The desire to see Māori at the forefront of innovation was a common sentiment across participants, who believe that Māori perspectives will bring unique value to the global tech industry.

Te Tāhuhu o Te Mātauranga Māori I Embedding Mātauranga Māori

A critical insight from the workshops was the importance of embedding Mātauranga Māori within all digital and technological initiatives. This extends beyond simple representation; participants want to see Mātauranga Māori as a guiding principle in how technologies are designed, developed, and implemented. This includes ensuring that technology aligns with our whakapapa, tikanga, and kaupapa Māori frameworks.

Participants spoke of the potential for tech to act as a vehicle for preserving and revitalising te reo Māori, tikanga, and other aspects of Mātauranga Māori. There was particular interest in the use of digital tools to connect whānau and iwi globally, ensuring that even in a rapidly digitising world, the core values and practices of te ao Māori are sustained and strengthened.

Te Ara ki Mua I Looking Forward Together

The final insight calls for a collective commitment to intergenerational equity and long-term thinking. Our wānanga participants stressed the need for future-focused strategies that consider the impact of today's digital decisions on future generations of Māori. This aligns with the futures thinking methodologies employed throughout our workshops, which focused on back casting, scenarios development, and intergenerational fairness as key tools for decision-making.

This insight underscores the importance of Māori continuing to engage with and influence policy development and digital governance, ensuring that the decisions made today benefit not only the current generation but also those to come. The call for intergenerational collaboration across hapū, iwi, and Māori organisations was clear, with participants emphasising that the future of Māori in the digital realm depends on working together to uphold the principles of whanaungatanga and kaitiakitanga.

These insights reflect the collective wisdom and aspirations of our people and have informed the strategic direction of Te Ao Matihiko moving forward. They remind us of the importance of digital sovereignty, inclusive pathways, Māori innovation, and intergenerational planning in ensuring that Māori continue to thrive in the digital age.

Whakatakotoranga Anamata | The Importance of Futures Work

Futures mahi is about more than just predicting what lies ahead - it's a powerful tool that helps us anticipate, prepare, and shape the future we want for Māori within the digital realm. The rapid advancement of technology presents a unique opportunity for Māori to not only participate but to lead and innovate in the digital space. This is a pivotal moment in our collective journey, and the futures work we engage in today will have ripple effects for generations to come.

Māori futures work is grounded in both a long-term vision of cultural survival and short-term, actionable strategies that help our people thrive in the digital age. It embraces the intersection of ancestral wisdom - knowledge passed down through generations - and modern digital advancements, positioning Māori to respond proactively to both opportunities and challenges in the tech sector.

From a local level, futures mahi allows hapū and iwi to actively shape their communities' digital environments, ensuring that their unique needs and aspirations are considered in technological solutions. At the regional and national levels, it is an essential tool for advocating for Māori interests, such as data sovereignty, digital inclusion, and equity in tech spaces. It ensures that government policies, industry initiatives, and education systems evolve in a way that supports Māori participation and leadership in digital tech.

At a global level, Māori have an opportunity to influence and collaborate with Indigenous peoples worldwide. Futures mahi creates pathways for shared learning and technological advancements that honour Indigenous worldviews and practices. This work extends beyond Aotearoa, highlighting our role on the global stage and showcasing how Māori can lead in developing ethical, sustainable, and inclusive tech solutions.

Incorporating futures methodologies has been instrumental in these wānanga, giving our people the tools to think expansively and critically about the future. These futures frameworks ensure that our work remains connected to the aspirations of our people whilst equipping us to navigate the complexities of the digital world.

Whakatutuki i ngā Anamata | Continuing the Futures Journey

The future is not static - it is ever-evolving, shaped by the actions we take today. Through our mahi in the Māori Digitech Futures workshops and wānanga, we have laid the foundation for a long-term, futures-focused strategy that will continue to grow, adapt, and respond to the changing digital landscape.

Our commitment to running tech futures wānanga every year is central to this strategy. These annual wānanga will act as a cornerstone of our ongoing work, ensuring that Māori voices remain at the forefront of digital advancement. The aim is to continuously engage with hapori Māori, rangatahi, and diverse stakeholders, enabling us to collect fresh insights, identify new challenges, and co-create solutions that keep our communities ahead of the curve in tech innovation.

These wānanga will not only gather insights but also track progress against our vision for digital equity, excellence, and enrichment. As the digital world evolves, we will ensure that our mahi remains relevant by adapting our focus areas each year. Whether it's addressing latest developments, our annual wānanga will serve as a platform for both reflection and forward-thinking.

Furthermore, our work doesn't end with these wānanga. We are committed to turning the kōrero, ideas, and aspirations shared by our people into tangible actions. Following each futures year, we will release a comprehensive report to ensure that the insights gathered are shared with a wider audience, including government agencies, the tech sector, educational institutions, and community leaders. These reports will be a key tool for advocacy, policy development, and the shaping of future digital landscapes where Māori are both leaders and beneficiaries.

Next Steps include:
- Continuing to host annual tech futures wānanga with a focus on emerging tech trends and their intersection with te ao Māori. Moving forward, the annual Tech Futures Wānanga will serve as the cornerstone of our ongoing mahi. Each year, we will bring together thought leaders, rangatahi, hapori members, and tech experts to continue the discussion, assess progress, and set new targets. These wānanga will be a space where we can revisit the futures we are building, ensuring that the strategies remain dynamic and responsive to the needs of our people. With each passing year, our commitment to listening, learning, and evolving will strengthen.

- Strengthening partnerships with our Māori tech community, industry leaders, ngo's, and government agencies to support ongoing research, policy, and pathway development.

- Building community-led digital initiatives that respond to the insights shared by our people, ensuring mana motuhake in the digital space.

- Expanding our network and reaching more hapū, iwi, and Māori communities across Aotearoa to ensure their perspectives and needs are integrated into the national digital strategy.

Through the voices of our hapori, three key initiatives have emerged as priority areas for real-world impact:

1. **Woven Cultures Events** - Creating spaces where Māori and other indigenous communities can come together to exchange knowledge, culture, and tech advancements.
2. **Matihiko *100*** - Bringing tech education, our business hapori, and omni-culturalism, directly to kura and schools, focusing on practical, hands-on learning.
3. **Te Ao Matihiko Strategy** - Developed in response to the needs expressed in our wānanga, this strategy will guide our efforts across policy, education, and tech development to ensure Māori leadership in digital futures.

These initiatives are the embodiment of our people's voices, and through them, we will continue to build a future where Māori thrive in the digital realm.

Our vision for Māori in the digital age is long-term and intergenerational. Each step forward brings us closer to a future where Māori are fully immersed and influential in the digital realm, shaping technologies that enhance whānau, hapū, iwi, and the wider Aotearoa community.

We extend an open invitation to all hapori Māori to stay involved in this journey. As we continue this work every year, your voice, your aspirations, and your expertise are crucial to shaping the future we seek. Together, we can co-create a digital future that reflects our values, preserves our cultural heritage, and empowers future generations.

Ngā Mahi o Mua, Ngā Mahi o Nāianei, me ngā Mahi o Muri | Legacy of the Future: Ongoing Community Engagement

The work we have started through the Māori Digitech Futures wānanga is only the beginning. As we look ahead, it's clear that the role of our hapori in shaping the digital future is critical. This journey will be sustained by continuous engagement, learning, and collaboration across generations. As we envision the future of Māori in the digital realm, we remain grounded in the values that guide us - whanaungatanga, manaakitanga, kaitiakitanga, and rangatiratanga.

The Commitment to Annual Futures Wānanga

The core of our long-term approach lies in our commitment to holding annual futures wānanga, engaging with hapū, iwi, and Māori tech leaders to keep their voices at the forefront of every conversation about technology and the future. By doing so, we ensure that each year brings new insights, fresh thinking, and a reaffirmation of our collective vision. These wānanga will create space for community members to contribute to shaping the future, offering their wisdom, aspirations, and practical knowledge.

Extending the Conversation to All Māori

One of our key objectives moving forward is to extend this conversation far beyond the immediate tech ecosystem. We are calling upon whānau Māori across Aotearoa to become involved, not just as participants, but as leaders, innovators, and contributors to the future of Māori digital sovereignty. We know that the digital age offers an opportunity to rewrite the rules, and it is essential that we embrace this moment to embed Te Ao Māori into the core of Aotearoa's digital economy and infrastructure.

We invite all members of hapori Māori to step forward, contribute their voices, and actively engage in shaping the future of technology for our people. This is not just about preserving our heritage but also about creating new futures that honour our past while embracing the innovations of today and tomorrow.

Partnering for Collective Impact

Our futures work is also about partnerships - both within Aotearoa and globally. The establishment of the Indigenous Global DigiTech Leadership Council (IGDLC) will further extend this work by creating networks and relationships with Indigenous tech leaders from around the world. Through the IGDLC, we aim to connect, learn, and collaborate on key initiatives that will elevate Māori tech leadership on a global scale. Together, we will forge new pathways that reflect the unique perspectives, knowledge systems, and innovations of Indigenous communities.

We also remain committed to building partnerships with government agencies, education institutions, and industry leaders, ensuring that our futures work is supported, amplified, and actioned at every level.

Our Invitation to Te Hapori Matihiko

Our message is simple: We want you with us. Whether you are a rangatahi with dreams of working in tech, a kaumatua with wisdom to share, a career changer, or a tech leader eager to contribute to this kaupapa, your voice matters. Our work will only be successful if it remains true to the voices of our people - voices that demand mana motuhake in the digital age.

We will continue to create spaces where Māori can come together to share ideas, build relationships, and drive collective progress. Together, we will move towards a future where Te Ao Māori is fully woven into the digital landscape, and where our people are thriving as digital innovators and leaders.

Let this report be a reminder that our futures are within our grasp, and we have the tools, knowledge, and power to shape them. Each year, we will come together in wānanga, build upon the learnings from the past, and set a new course for the future - one that centres our values, our aspirations, and our people.

Together, we can ensure that Māori are not only part of the digital future but are leading it.

Whakapaunga me Wero I Conclusion

As we draw this kaupapa to a close, we are reminded that the future of Māori in the digital realm is not a distant vision - it is unfolding now. The voices, insights, and aspirations shared in our wānanga demonstrate an undeniable truth: Māori must be at the forefront of this digital transformation, leading with purpose, innovation, and cultural integrity.

"We determine our future, that's the way it should be."

This sentiment is not just a rallying cry; it's a challenge.

Now is the time for action. The insights shared in these wānanga are not just ideas - they are imperatives for the future of Māori in digital spaces. We call on the DigiTech ecosystem to:

- Partner with Māori-led initiatives in AI, gaming, and environmental tech to foster true co-governance in digital innovation.
- Invest in infrastructure and tools to bridge the digital divide for Māori and other underserved communities, ensuring equitable access to opportunities.
- Support Māori rangatahi with targeted educational pathways, internships, and mentoring programs to grow the next generation of leaders in tech.

These are not challenges for tomorrow; they are tasks for today. We invite you to step forward and work with us in realising this vision for a thriving digital future where Māori lead and innovate for the benefit of all.

How will you contribute to an inclusive future where Māori are not only participants but leaders, innovators, and decision-makers in the digital age?

1. *Commit to Co-Creation*
   Ensure that the design, development, and governance of digital technologies in Aotearoa are done with Māori, not for Māori. Co-create pathways that uplift Māori aspirations, ensuring our voices are heard, valued, and implemented.

2. *Invest in Equity, not just Access – this ensures shared Excellence*
   Digital equity goes beyond providing access to technology. It means creating opportunities for Māori to thrive in every aspect of the digital world—whether it's in AI, gaming, environmental

tech, hard tech, or many other subsectors. This investment is about nurturing talent, supporting rangatahi, and ensuring a future where our tamariki have what they need to succeed.

3. *Honour Data Sovereignty*

   The control and protection of Māori data is critical. We challenge the ecosystem to adopt and embed practices of data sovereignty, ensuring that our stories, knowledge, and identities are safeguarded for future generations.

4. *Design Systems Futures Thinking and Activation*

   Our final wero is to embrace futures thinking models like Te Korekoreka, which invite us to think deeply and collectively about where we are headed. This is not just about immediate gains but about laying the foundation for a digital realm that reflects Māori aspirations and serves future generations.

The time for action is now. The path ahead is clear, and it requires all of us to rise together, to commit to our shared kaupapa, and to ensure that the future we are building is one where Māori can stand tall, not as beneficiaries, but as leaders of the digital world.

Let this report serve as both an inspiration and a call to arms. Let it galvanise the DigiTech community to stand with Māori, to collaborate, to innovate, and to ensure a future where Te Ao Māori and the digital realm are seamlessly interwoven, for the benefit of all.

Futures Workshops 2025 – See you there !

- Feb 2025
  - Tamaki
    - Rangatahi
    - Te Hapori Matihiko
  - Whanganui-a-tara
    - Rangatahi
    - Te Hapori Matihiko
- March 2025
  - Ōtautahi
    - Rangatahi
    - Te Hapori Matihiko
  - Online

Let's walk this path together and ensure that no one is left behind. He Wero ki a koutou katoa!