

Āhau



**Earth
Defenders
Toolkit**

A project of Digital Democracy

www.earthdefenderstoolkit.com

ĀHAU  I AM

www.ahau.io



What is Āhau?

Āhau is a community archiving platform designed by the Māori people of Aotearoa New Zealand for sharing and preserving culture and identity. It helps tribal and family communities **capture, preserve, and share** important information, histories and media into digital archives and collections that are stored on community-run hardware.

Āhau is FOSS, free open source software. It has been built on top of the Secure Scuttlebutt protocol, an offline first, peer-to-peer protocol for sharing data between devices within a private network that's hosted and managed by members of that community ensuring community information is private and secure.

Āhau was developed to support tribal communities and individuals to maintain their collective identity and connection with their cultural heritage and lands, especially for those communities where large populations of tribal members have migrated into urban areas and even other countries.



Āhau community design session hosted by Ngāti Paoa, Wharekawa Marae

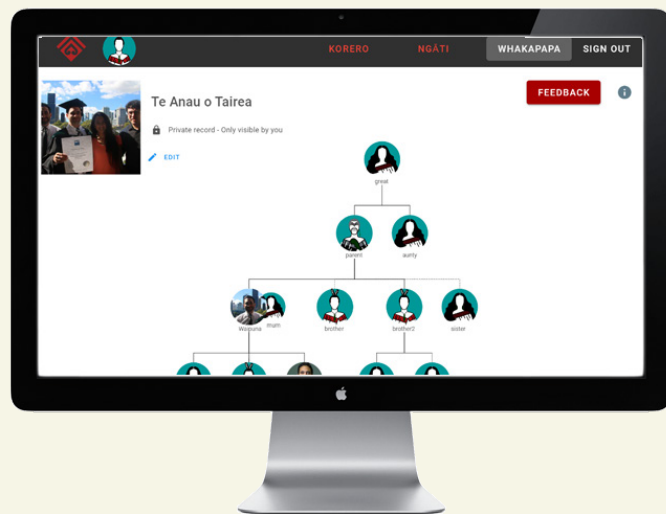
Why you might want to use Āhau

If you are part of a tribe, a family group, or a community that wants to keep a record of its members, their histories and connections, or if you want to create a shared archive to preserve and share your community's stories and cultural practices in digital form, then Āhau could be a good tool for you.

Āhau has three key features of its application;

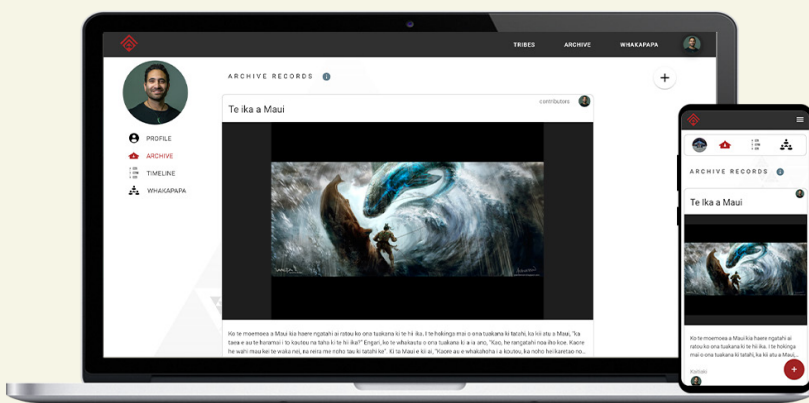
1. Genealogy charts

Using Āhau to build genealogy charts helps tribal communities to better identify, connect and develop the relationships of their community members.



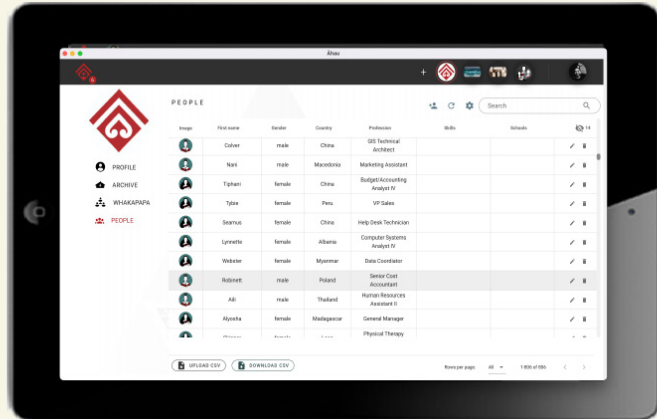
2. Cultural archiving

The Cultural Archiving feature provides community members the ability to share stories and media in a digital repository. Stories can also be sorted into different collections. This is helpful whether you want to share photos, recordings, files, or stories about customs, practices, places, and people.



3. Community database

The community database is useful for tribal administrators to keep a record of their members and some of their contact and personal information. Communities are able to create their own data model which enables them to record the information that is relevant to them.



Āhau is built to address these points.

Preserving cultural heritage.

Colonisation, urban migration and globalization of indigenous communities increasingly threaten traditional knowledge, systems and practices. Āhau has been designed to support the preservation and transfer of traditional information and cultural heritage for current and future generations. Āhau is particularly useful for urban indigenous populations who have been disconnected from their culture and identity and for the purposes of coordinating future collective action as your community continues to grow and develop.



Re-creation of Te Rongataketake from Te Papa Collections by Artist Medhavini Yadav



Ahau workshop hosted by Te Puna o Te Mātauranga Marae

Support community collaboration

Organizing and coordinating a community can be a challenging administrative task. One thing that can help is the development of a list of community members or a tribal registry. Ahau has been designed to make creating your community members list easy. By having your community members contribute their knowledge of family members to genealogy records you can quickly identify your community members' names and information.

Āhau plans to develop more community collaboration features in the future.

Indigenous lead technology

The Āhau application has been developed by indigenous communities (of Aotearoa, New Zealand and the Cook Islands) to address environmental challenges faced by these indigenous communities and reflect the cultural traditions and practices for passing on traditional and sacred knowledge. This is represented in the values and features of Āhau.



Āhau wānanga/training event - Photo courtesy of Jason Taylor

Our values lead us to share this technology. So, we make it available to other indigenous communities globally and invite their collaboration to develop it to meet their needs. This could be anything from translating the language, changing the look, or even building new features. If this is something that you would like to explore please feel free to get in contact with the team at Āhau via the website www.ahau.io

Data Sovereignty

Data Sovereignty refers to a communities ability to own, manage and control their own data. In Āhau your information is protected. The Āhau platform leverages end-to-end encryption and a distributed database model to provide a high level of security and privacy of community information. This means the information is not stored or owned by a company. Instead the information is distributed between community member devices within a closed network. By giving individuals and communities greater control over the network in which the information is stored and shared, communities can then decide who can have access, and how the information will be used.

Offline-first

Āhau works both online and offline in areas where there is limited or no connectivity to the internet. Information is shared between community members that are connected to the same network, much like how stories are shared in person.



How it works

The following steps outline the process for setting up your community server and tribal archive

1. Setup a community server

One piece of infrastructure required to onboard your community to Āhau is a community database server. To set up your community database server you will need to download and **install the Pataka application** on a computer and **set up port forwarding** to the Pataka application by configuring your router.

There is a written [step-by-step guide to help you through this process](#).

2. Download and install

Once you have the community server setup, you can find the links and instructions to download and install the application on a [windows, mac or linux operating system here](#).

This does currently limit Āhau users to those who have a personal computer however more development is underway of the mobile application, and supporting users of shared computers.

3. Creating your profile and syncing with your community server

After opening the application you will be prompted to create a personal profile and connect to a Pataka. This is your community server. This will sync an encrypted copy of your database with the community server and enable sharing information with other community members. [Please follow this guide for detailed instructions](#).



4. Setting up your tribe

Once you have created your profile and connected to your community server you are now ready to set up your Tribe. See these detailed instructions for [creating and setting up your community](#).

Keep in mind that you may want to set up several tribes depending on how you might group your people and what information/stories they might share.

You may also want to have a tribal meeting to help design your data model and tribal archive. The Ahau team has designed [a community setup guide](#) to support you with this process, however, if you would like support or have any questions you can contact the team at Ahau via email info@ahau.io or chat www.chat.ahau.io.

5. Start your archive by creating stories, genealogy records, and collections

Now that you have your community set up, you can start to record some information into your archive. [See these docs for adding new stories, genealogies, and collections.](#)

6. Invite community members to join your tribal archive

Now that you have some records in your archive it's time to invite your community to read, learn and/or contribute to the tribal archive. [See these docs for inviting community members to your tribe](#)



How to get started

To get started with Āhau visit <https://docs.ahau.io>. Here you will find all the above guides and more, including the download links.

If you have any questions or you would like some support with the setup process please get in contact with the Āhau team via chat channel <https://chat.ahau.io>. They would love to hear from you.

Examples of how Āhau is used

Developing Tribal Archives

In Aotearoa New Zealand a number of Māori communities have engaged their historians, knowledge holders, and community members to develop their digital collections. Digitizing old records, conducting elder interviews, and writing up important histories. They have started a community resource that members can visit and contribute to into the future.

Reconnecting people with their land

Many Māori land trusts have to manage some thousands of shareholders. This creates a number of challenges around maintaining contact information, successions and up-to-date records. A whenua trust in Tauranga is using the genealogy charts to match against their records to help identify lost shareholders and beneficiaries or their living relatives.

Coordinating a community

A community in the Cook Islands is using Āhau's genealogy and community database features to identify and connect with tribal members online, and coordinate land meetings. The stories and research that are arising from the community work are also being recorded into the tribal archive to keep a record of community actions and stories for current and future community members.



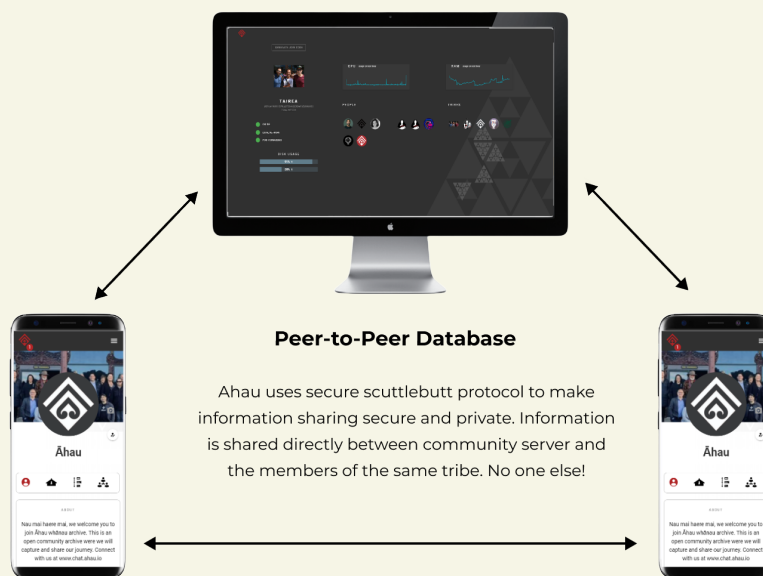
Specs

Software requirements:

Currently only available on personal computers running a Windows, Mac or Linux operating system.

Security:

Uses end-to-end Encryption to keep personal and community information private, and runs on a distributed peer-to-peer database to further restrict access and provide data resiliency.



Main features:

Build tribal genealogy charts, Setup cultural archives, and keep track of community members with a tribal registry.

Languages:

The application is mostly in English but some work has been done to translate into Māori and Portuguese. Translation work is still in progress. If you would like to translate Ahau into your own language, this can be done. Please get in touch with the Ahau team via info@ahau.io and they can support you with this.

Media:

Can add photos, videos, audio and files including but not limited to, docs, spreadsheets, powerpoints, pdf's, and zip-compressed files.

Import options:

CSV for genealogy charts and community database.

Export options:

CSV or SVG for genealogy charts and community database. All information is stored on each user's device (based on their storage settings).

Technology Stack:

Āhau is open source and has been built with Vue, GraphQL, Node, and SSB. If you are interested in contributing to Ahau or making customisations for your community please get in touch with the team via info@ahau.io.





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