Kaitiakitanga with Ahau

What is Ahau?

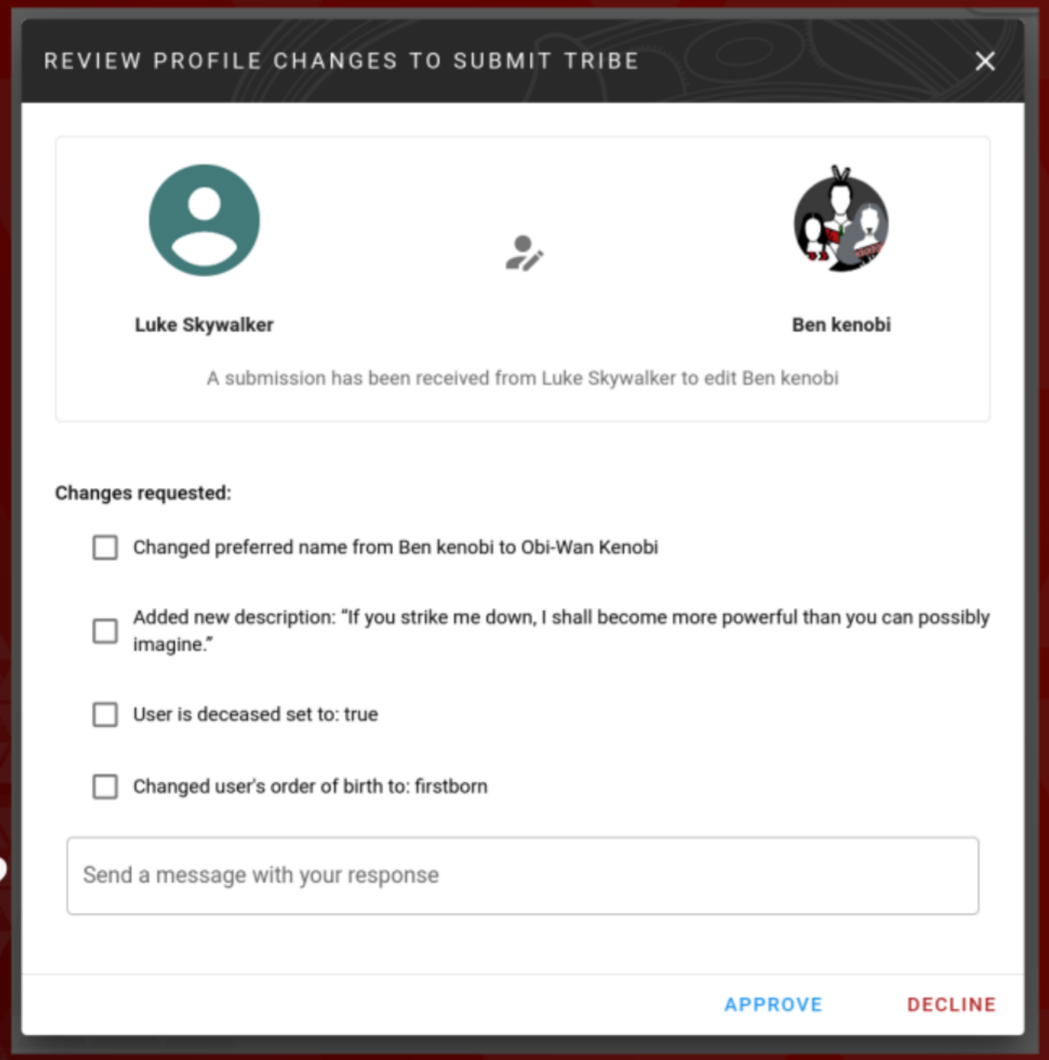
Ahau is an app that enables iwi to share cultural histories, create tribal registries, and network with whanau. But the killer feature is the focus on data sovereingty: data is owned and controlled by the communities that use the app rather than a company!

How does it work?

Ahau allows iwi to create a whakapapa: a group that contains a family tree and allow a tribe to share information. Users known as Kaitiaki act as admins of a whakapapa and can add to the tree, edit and delete profiles, maintain cultural records and more.

How can it improve?

Putting all the control in the hands of the Kaitiaki greatly hinders community engagement, so the app needed a new feature: the ability for users to request changes to the whakapapa, which the Kaitiaki can then approve or decline.



Sounds simple right?

Usually this wouldn't be a tough feature to implement, but to put control of data in the users hands Ahau needed a fairly unusual method of data storage: a distributed database. This added unique and challenging design considerations when trying to add the feature, on top of UI design and usability.

How did it go?

You can see the result on the left! Working together with a fellow Waikato University student, we created a database to store info related to the request, wrote methods to set and retrieve that data, and finally designed and implemented a user friendly UI that allows users to request edits to profiles and Kaitiaki to approve or decline those requests.

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