Creating a reparative cataloging community of practice in the WRLC

Potomac Technical Processing Librarians Annual Meeting
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Presenters

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>> Content warning <<

The controlled vocabularies and descriptions we use or encounter in our work contain prejudicial, biased, and/or dehumanizing terms. Our usage of any of these terms today does not reflect our approval of said terms.

Unfortunately, we cannot discuss the need of the work or the work of reparative description itself without acknowledging that these terms exist and may or may not currently be the authorized terms in the controlled vocabularies we use.

Outline

- About Reparative Cataloging
- About the WRLC
- Establishing the Subgroup
- Engagement and representation

About Reparative Cataloging

Definition of reparative description

n.

remediation of practices or data that exclude, silence, harm, or mischaracterize marginalized people in the data created or used by archivists to identify or characterize archival resources

adj.

relating to remediation of practices or data that exclude, silence, harm, or mischaracterize marginalized people in the data created or used by archivists to identify or characterize archival resources

"SAA Dictionary: Reparative Description." n.d. Accessed January 21, 2022. https://dictionary.archivists.org/entry/reparative-description.html.

Why we do the work

Controlled vocabularies & descriptions can contain language that is:

- Demeaning or dehumanizing
- Outdated (but not offensive)
- Offensive
- Not appropriately descriptive
- Not inclusive
- Doesn't exist as authorized heading
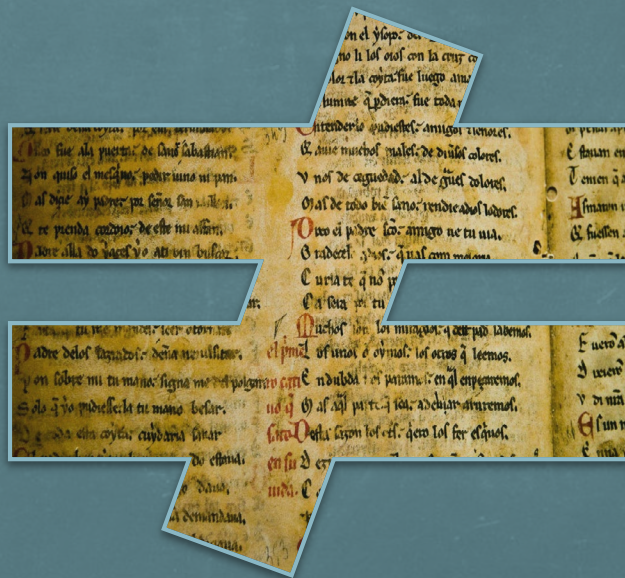
About the WRLC

Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC) Partners

- Comprised of nine universities in DC and Virginia; WRLC headquarters in Maryland
  - 2 public universities (George Mason and the University of the District of Columbia)
  - 2 HBCUs (University of the District of Columbia and Howard University)
  - Gallaudet - university for the deaf & hard of hearing community
  - Religious affiliations (Marymount, Georgetown, Catholic University)
- Libraries include
  - Law, medical, and general education
  - Variety of specialty items and collections
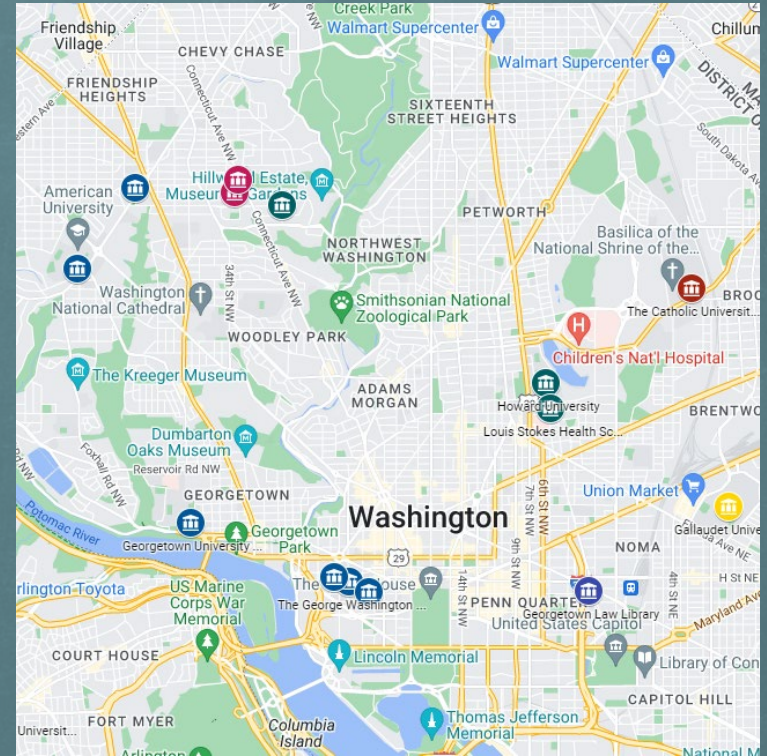
WRLC Partner Staffing Trends

Larger universities are understaffed

Smaller universities may be fully staffed, but have small staffs

All are overworked and overwhelmed

No one can focus solely on reparative work

Washington Research Library Consortium (WRLC)

- Steering committee - makes decisions & issues charges
  - Underneath the Steering Committee are various other committees, including the *Metadata Committee*
  - Committee membership = 1 representative per institution OR 1 representative per Institution Zone

WRLC & Alma
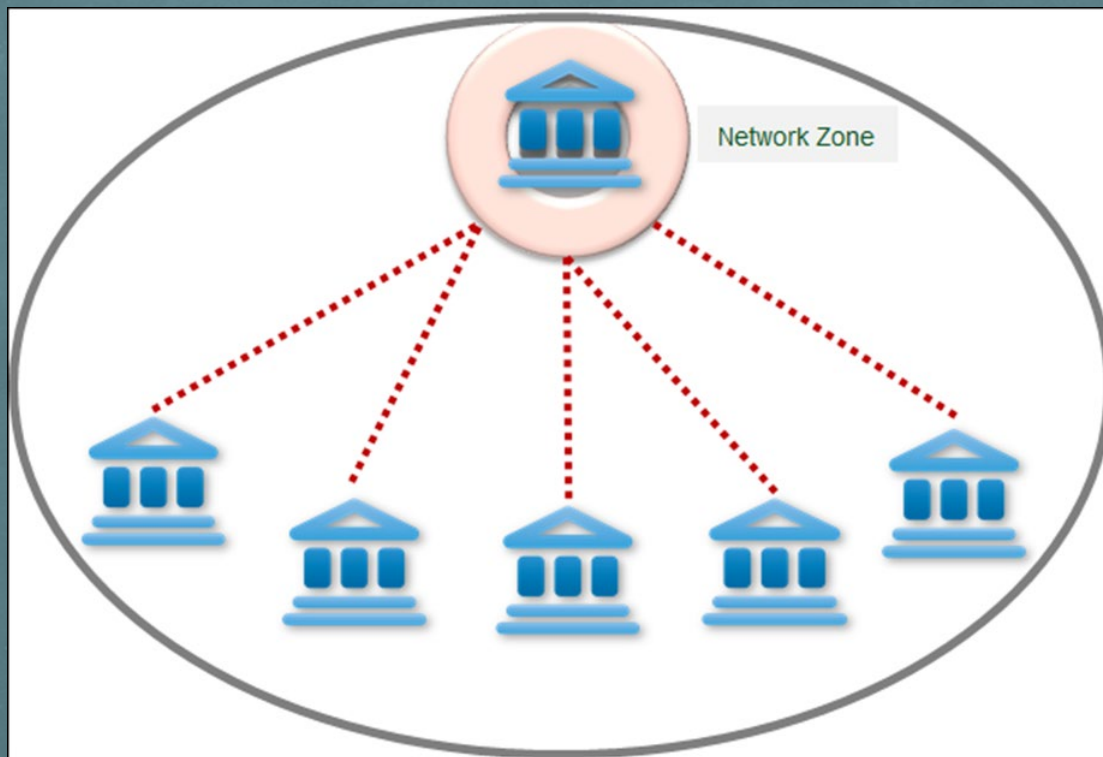
WRLC & Alma

Community Zone (CZ) → **Network Zone (NZ)** → **Institution Zone (IZ)**

Community Zone (CZ)	Network Zone (NZ)	Institution Zone (IZ)
Bibliographic data (primarily electronic resources) Global authority records Managed by Ex Libris	Shared bibliographic records Managed by the WRLC Consortial Network Zone Manager and individual institutions	Inventory, like holdings records, item records, and electronic portfolios Managed by individual institutions

Establishing the Subgroup

Reparative Cataloging in the WRLC

Metadata Committee discussed the LCSH*Illegal aliens*; they voted to add the supplemental heading *Undocumented immigrants*

Wider discussion on reparative cataloging in the WRLC

2020

2021

2020

2021

Each individual institution can decide to display the original heading in the patron-facing catalog

Creation of the Reparative Cataloging Subgroup

Reparative Cataloging Subgroup

- Began with 11 librarians from 7 institutions
- Membership is volunteer, open to all library staff
- Monthly meetings
  - Open to all, not just members
  - Recorded and posted on WRLC's Basecamp
- Chairs selected on yearly term
- No official charge

Engagement
&
Representation

Where do we start?

Let's do a survey!

Questions:

- What work is your institution currently doing?
- What guidance/work do you expect from the WRLC Reparative Cataloging Committee?
- Is there a policy in place to report concerns?

Response themes:

- "Not sure"
- Collaboration on work
- Centralization on work
- Clarity on what's going on elsewhere

Collect and archive DEI statements

- American University Library Diversity & Inclusion
- Catholic University of America mission statement
- Howard Law Social Justice Guide
- GW Libraries & Academic Innovation
- Georgetown University Library SMR: Racial Justice
- George Mason University Libraries: Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion

"The need for this [Social Justice] guide was determined by HUSL Library in response to the Spring 2020 international protests for justice and equality, and ongoing conversations of diversity, implicit bias, and inclusion in the legal profession and legal education."
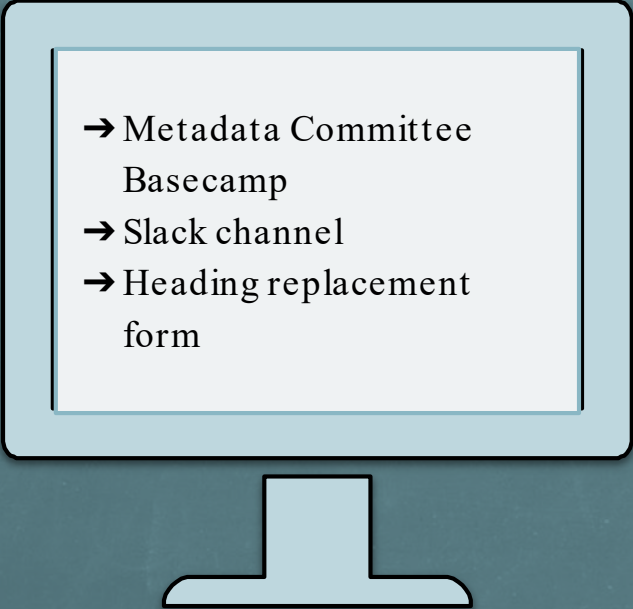
- HU Law Social Justice Guide

"Georgetown University Library …is committed to embracing the broader goals of racial reconciliation and healing across our nation, and affirming in word and deed the transcendent dignity and worth of every human person."

- GT Library's Statement on Racial Justice

"We recognize that this is an ongoing process and aim to engage in diversity and inclusion as more than just numeric representation. We will continue to work on intentionally diversifying our personnel, services, and collections in meaningful ways."

- American University Library's Diversity Statement

Ways we communicate

➜ Metadata Committee Basecamp
➜ Slack channel
➜ Heading replacement form

➜ WRLC Newsletter
➜ Google group
➜ Meeting recordings & minutes

➜ Our own institutional channels
➜ Peer to peer

Newsletter Updates

Reparative Cataloging at the WRLC

June Updates

Each month, members of the WRLC Reparative Cataloging Subgroup take turns sharing news related to reparative cataloging and recent updates to the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSHs). The Library of Congress does not have any updates or changes to LCSH for June 2023. However, the Subgroup has a couple of subject heading updates for our consortial catalog:

- Last month the Subgroup reviewed a proposal to change the subject heading "Problem children" to "Children with behavioral problems" as this is more respectful language and follows the person's first language principle. This proposal was accepted by the Metadata Committee at their May 2023 meeting. A local authority record for "Children with behavioral problems" has been created and will be updated where possible in the consortial catalog

➜ Sent out monthly by WRLC HQ.
➜ Subgroup members volunteer to write update

Update includes:
➜ LCSH/LCGDT heading updates
➜ Work around the profession
➜ Workshops, presentations, etc

Adding a controlled vocabulary
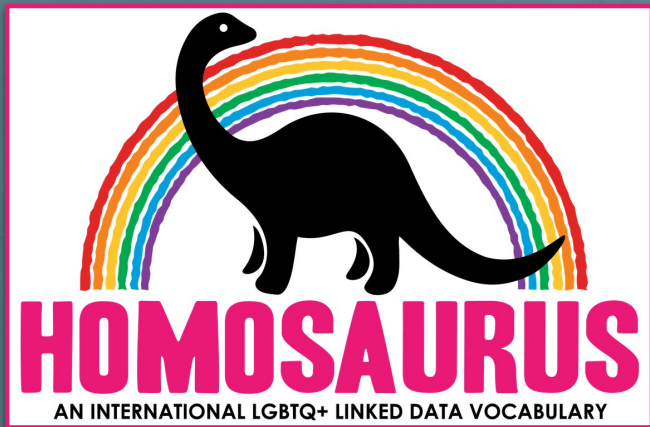
International linked data vocabulary of LGBTQ terms

Local practices: (WRLC)

- All Homosaurus subject headings linked to their respective Authority Record in the Alma Network Zone
- Institutions are already adding in Homosaurus terms
  - So is OCLC
- Identifiable by $$2 homoit in the subject field
- Display is optional, search is always functional

https://homosaurus.org/

Adding a controlled vocabulary: Results

Subject

> -monogamous relationships >
> Lesbians >
> Love -- Psychological aspects >
> Homosexuality, Female >
> Jealousy >
> Polyamory >
> Consensual non-monogamy >

Catalog display

024	8_	a homoit0001123	0 https://...
040	__	f homosaurus	c CAO
150	__	a Polyamory
550	__	a Polyamory	0 https://homosaurus.org/v3/homoit0001123
550	__	a Consensual non-monogamy	0 https://homosaurus.org/v3/homoit000
667	__	a Homosaurus v.3.3 (December 2022)
680	__	a Practice of engaging in romantic, sexual, or play relationships with mo

Local authority record

| 650 | _7 |a Polyamory. |2 homoit |0 https://homosaurus.org/v3/homoit0001123 |
| 650 | | 2 homoit |0 https://homosaurus.org/v3/l |

Bibliographic record

Subject Heading Replacements

Librarians/Staff/Users submit replacement suggestions

Reparative Cataloging Group and Metadata Committee decide on action

Reparative Cataloging Group and WRLC staff implement

Heading Reporting Form

- We don't have to choose what is important to the WRLC, WRLC members can identify to use what's important or what they see

- Reported so far:
  - Problem children -> Children w/behavioral problems
  - Miscegenation -> Interracial relationships
  - Women in STEM -> ????

WRLC Reparative Description

This is to collect information for any subject headings that appear in the WRLC shared catalog that should be updated, revised, and/or added to the catalog. This form may be submitted multiple times to report multiple headings.

Please provide a valid email if case we need to contact you for clarification, and to provide follow up if requested.

There is a note below to sign in to save your progress, you do not have to sign in to a Google account in order to submit a response.

jfroetschel@email.gwu.edu Switch account

Not shared

Next   Page 1 of 3   Clear form

Subgroup puts together proposals to the Metadata Committee that include:

- What was reported
- The authorized LCSH heading
- Preferred supplemental and/or replacement heading(s)
- Records impacted
- Proposed local authority records

Example of a proposal available: https://go.gwu.edu/PTPLrepcat

Local authority records

➔ Created as part of proposal
➔ Approved by Metadata Committee
➔ Added to NZ Local Authority list in Alma
➔ 16 local records added so far

LDR	00922nz##a2200169n##4500
005	20230608124727.0
008	230608|||ac|nnbabn|||||||||||a||na||||#d
001	9813666156904101
040	$$a CAO $$f WRLC local LCSH
150	$$a Children with behavioral problems
450	$$a Problem children
450	$$a Difficult children
450	$$a Maladjusted children
550	$$w g $$a Children
550	$$a Behavior disorders in children
667	$$a Local WRLC heading approved by the WRLC Metadata Committee on May 26, 2023. The Library of Congress subject heading "Problem children" is changed to "Children with behavioral problems" by the daily Preferred Term Correction job. For more information, see the "Local WRLC Subject Headings" section of the Network Zone Bibliographic Record Policies document.
667	$$a At the time this local authority record was added "Problem children" was the authorized Library of Congress Subject Heading.

Headings Handled

Original Heading	Replacement Heading	Replacement or Supplemental
Noncitizen detention centers	Immigrant detention centers	Supplemental
Foreign property	Noncitizen property	Supplemental
Noncitizens	Undocumented immigrants	Supplemental
Noncitizen children	Undocumented immigrant children	Supplemental
Children of noncitizens	Children of undocumented immigrants	Supplemental
Women noncitizens	Women undocumented immigrants	Supplemental
Noncitizens in literature	Undocumented immigrants in literature	Supplemental
Problem children	Children with behavioral problems	Replacement
Church work with problem children	Church work with children with behavioral problems	Replacement
Parents of problem children	Parents of children with behavioral problems	Replacement
Teachers of problem children	Teachers of children with behavioral problems	Replacement
Physical education for problem children	Physical education for children with behavioral problems	Replacement
Miscegenation	Interracial relationships	Replacement
Miscegenation in art	Interracial relationships in art	Replacement
Miscegenation in literature	Interracial relationships in literature	Replacement
Miscegenation in motion pictures	Interracial relationships in motion pictures	Replacement

Improvement & future work

- Tech services heavy, area we could improve
  - We make an effort to reach out to our non-tech services colleagues to get input
- SACO funnel to make LCSH heading changes to headings to topics important w/in WRLC
  - They report it using the form, we make a proposal to the metadata committee, etc
- Get an official charge

Photo by Tim Mossholder on Unsplash

Thank you!!

Contacts:
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Jen - jfroetschel@gwu.edu

Slides and other resources:
https://go.gwu.edu/PTPLrepcat