Subject Analysis

NHLA - Technical Services Committee

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What is Subject Analysis anyway?

Conceptual analysis to determine....

- What a resource is (physical form)
- What a resource is about (intellectual content, subject matter)
- Aboutness statement

After this process, assign

- Terms/subjects from controlled vocabularies (LCSH, MeSH, LCGFT, etc.)
- Classification notation (DDC, LCC, etc.)

Example: Bake: my best ever recipes for the classics by Paul Hollywood

How to determine what a Work is about

- For most Fiction
 - Read the publisher's description for ideas.
- For Non-Fiction
 - Look at the table of contents.
- Are you reviewing a whole set of something, or an analytical part?
 - For example: is it a collected works, or a single item from a collection?
- Finally, remember LC does not assign headings to every work without a clear subject due to their nature, such periodicals or sacred works.

Steps to Subject Analysis

- Subject analysis is the process of organizing information.
 - O How is that accomplished?
- Can you identify the general category of a work, its major focus?
 - Broad versus narrow headings.
 - For example: Sports
- Can the topic be qualified by geographical location?
 - Sports\$zUnited States
- Can the topic be further qualified by timespan or language?
 - Sports\$zUnited States\$xHistory
- So how many headings are needed?
- If there are multiple topics, are there multiple topics of equal weight?
 - The 60/40 rule.
 - Or use the rule of thirds.

Controlled Vocabularies: What are they & Why do we need them?

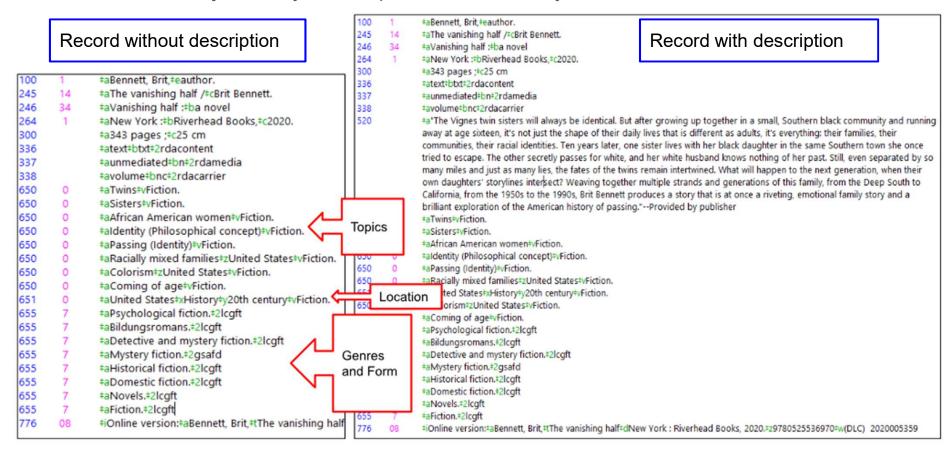
- "A standardized subject language used to describe the contents of resources" arranged to describe hierarchical relationships. (<u>Library of Congress Subject Headings: Online Training</u>)
- Why do we need them?
 - Committees are used to select "preferred" terminology that is consistent, robust, and well-rounded.
- What about keyword searching?
 - Have benefits, especially when they are specific than associated controlled terms, which may increase search results.
 - Limited in areas of complexity and context.

Controlled Vocabulary features

- Controlled vocabularies:
 - Exist to aid access.
 - Can help focus a search in languages with many synonyms.
 - o Provide alternate and related terms for cross-referencing.
- Controlled vocabularies provide tailored terminology
 - In-depth industry terminology [National Library of Medicine (MeSH); Getty
 Research Institute Art & Architecture Thesaurus (AAT)]
 - Additional language access [Répertoire de têtes-matière de l'Université Laval (RVM)
 - Access to, and reducing classification scheme bias for, terms not present in LOC or other major vocabularies [Homosaurus; Indigenous and Northern Affairs Canada Subject Thesaurus (IST)]

Example

Accurate subject analysis is important to discovery.



Cataloger's Judgement and Objectivity

- Recognize that everyone has a point-of-view and bias we are all human after all!
- Although, subject analysis can be subjective, every cataloger should strive for objectivity
- Questions to keep in mind when analyzing an item:
 - O What was the author's intent?
 - o Is this a work of fiction or nonfiction?
 - O What is it for?
 - O Who is the audience?

Resources

- Basic Subject Cataloging Using LCSH Cataloging Skills (CCT)
- Cataloging and Metadata Management: Using Medical Subject Headings
- <u>Library of Congress Subject Headings: Online Training</u>
- Webjunction ABLE 6 Introduction to Subject Headings
- Joudrey, Daniel N. The Organization of Information, 4th ed. Chapter 9, Subject Analysis (pp. 437-473)

Questions?

Have more questions? Contact the Technical Services Committee at <a href="technical-center-uces-committee-uces-