

Subject Headings & Controlled Vocabularies

Compiled by Brinna Michael

Allison-Cassin, Stacy, Camille Callison, and Robin Desmeules. 2025. "The First Nations, Métis, Inuit Indigenous Ontology and Challenges in the Development of an Indigenous Community Vocabulary in the Canadian Context." *Canadian Journal of Information & Library Sciences* 48 (2): 1–13. <https://doi.org/10.5206/cjils-rcsib.v48i2.19585>.

"Creating and implementing Indigenous-led thesauri and vocabularies for wide adoption by cultural memory institutions is essential to providing respectful terminology to describe materials by and about Indigenous peoples in the territory referred to as Canada. This article details the background, creation, and reflections on the First Nation, Métis, and Inuit, Indigenous Ontology (FNMIIO), up to the release of the first draft in June 2019 as well as more recent initiatives and transformations. Grounded in the recommendations developed by the Canadian Federation of Library Associations' (CFLA) Truth and Reconciliation Committee, the article discusses the creation of the FNMIIO as an important first step in addressing the need for a widely adoptable, Indigenous run and led thesaurus for use in cultural memory institutions." [Abstract]

Alvin, Glenda, Erica A. Bruchko, and Michelle Cronquist. 2025. "The African American Subject Funnel Project: Definitions, History, and Processes." *College & Research Libraries News* 86 (6): 231–36. <https://doi.org/10.5860/crln.86.6.231>.

"The article focuses on the efforts to improve and expand the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) to better represent African American history and culture. Topics include the African American Subject Funnel Project, the process of proposing new subject headings, and the challenges faced in updating established controlled vocabularies." [Abstract]

Blueher, William, host, and Violet B. Fox, interviewee. 2025. *Catapod*, episode 4, "Violet B. Fox." William Blueher, June 3. Podcast, 49 min. <https://pocketcasts.com/podcast/catapod/3c31a5b0-9c5a-013d-f854-0e51c9cdac59>.

"In this episode I speak with Violet Fox who is the Cataloging and Metadata Librarian at Galter Health Sciences Library at Northwestern University in Chicago. She is the co-chair of the SACO Medical Funnel, a member of the PCC EDIBA advisory committee, is involved in the 23 Linked Data Things project, and runs the incredible website Cataloging Lab." [Episode summary]

Dobreski, Brian, and Christopher Hastings. 2025. "AI Chatbots and Subject Cataloging: A Performance Test." *Library Resources & Technical Services* 69 (2): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.5860/lrts.69n1>.

"Libraries show an increasing interest in incorporating AI tools into their workflows, particularly easily accessible and free-to-use chatbots. However, empirical evidence is limited regarding the effectiveness of these tools to perform traditionally time-consuming subject cataloging tasks. In this study, researchers sought to assess the performance of AI tools in performing basic subject heading and classification number assignment. Using a well-established instructional cataloging text as a basis, researchers developed and administered a test designed to evaluate the effectiveness of three chatbots (ChatGPT, Gemini, Copilot) in assigning Dewey Decimal Classification, Library of Congress Classification, and Library of Congress Subject

Heading terms and numbers. The quantity and quality of errors in chatbot responses were analyzed. Overall performance of these tools was poor, particularly for assigning classification numbers. Frequent sources of error included assigning overly broad numbers or numbers for incorrect topics. Although subject heading assignment was also poor, ChatGPT showed more promise here, backing up previous observations that chatbots may hold more immediate potential for this task. Although AI chatbots do not show promise in reducing time and effort associated with subject cataloging at this time, this may change in the future. For now, findings from this study offer caveats for catalogers already working with these tools and underscore the continuing importance of human expertise and oversight in cataloging.” [Abstract]

Guaglianone, Maria Teresa, Giovanna Aracri, and Maria Taverniti. 2024. “Converting and Evolving a Subject Heading List into a Thesaurus.” *Journal of Documentation* 80 (6): 1528–45. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-01-2024-0024>.

“The objective of this paper is to describe the evolution of the available subject heading list, i.e. the CC Soggettario (Carabinieri Corps Soggettario), towards a thesaurus, that is CCThes (Carabinieri Corps Thesaurus), to support subject indexing and retrieval of the documentary heritage held by the Historical Office of the General Command of the Carabinieri Corps. This work follows the need to implement a controlled vocabulary compliant with the state-of-the-art standards. Design/methodology/approach: The methodology implements the practice of reengineering available vocabularies, following standardised guidelines for thesaurus development. The conversion process includes the balance maintenance of what has been achieved in the CC Soggettario and the enrichment of the semantic structure in the thesaurus by using both deductive and inductive methods.” [Abstract]

Hlava, Marjorie MK. 2024. “Updating the ISO 25964: A Core Metadata Standard.” *Information Services & Use* 44 (4): 333–37. <https://doi.org/10.1177/18758789241299011>.

“The ISO 25964-1 Thesauri and interoperability with other vocabularies—Part 1: Thesauri for information retrieval, creation, management, and use standard is undergoing a significant revision from the 2011 edition. The use cases for thesauri (or taxonomies) have expanded, considerably driving the revision. Thesauri are no longer solely used in learned publishing and libraries. This paper provides a brief history and discusses the new needs, the use cases, and then the actual changes to the standard. The data model is updated to include support for web navigation, chat boxes, online shopping, knowledge graphs/maps, artificial intelligence, among other use cases. Content is now digitized or born digital, and its distribution is virtual. Thesauri have always supported search and indexing/tagging of content. They are now the preferred alternative to traditional subject headings. This paper outlines the revision process and provides an overview of the specific revisions and additions. For example, the inclusion of Global Uniform Identifiers (GUIDs), list of connected standards, expanded examples in many non-Latin languages, guideline references for Diversity, Equity, and Inclusion (DEI), addition of concept and concept term, substantial updates to the Annexes, references, and much more. The revision was made available for comment and Vote July 30, 2024.” [Abstract]

MacLeod, Kaia, Susan Dahl, and Ingrid Reiche. 2025. “Inching Forward in the Face of Hegemonic Factors: Examining Metadata Contradictions Across University Indigenous Collections.” *Journal of Library Metadata*, August, 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19386389.2025.2547151>.

“Changes to terminology take time and heighten tensions in language description, in preference of naming conventions, and institutional practices. External forces like the mandates of the United Nations Declaration on Indigenous Peoples, and the Canadian Federation of Library Associations (CFLA) recommendations for the Truth and Reconciliation Calls to

Action, influence the actions taken by organizations and move us forward. However, other structural and systemic forces can impede these efforts. At the University of Calgary, decisions about which vocabularies to use are further muddled by different practices across our units, and the methods available to make updates to our systems. Our Library Management [sic] System (LMS) needs to wait for updates from the vocabulary authorities, while our digital collections does not, allowing them to make big changes faster. By examining the applicable vocabularies in Canada, we can surface the hegemonic forces at work, that exist internal and external to the institution. For instance, while standardization aids in discovery, it also drives a hegemonic use of language which does not describe Canadian content such as Indigenous names. In grappling with these forces, we confront and oppose them as we work through the process of updating subject headings and descriptive language for Indigenous content within our systems.” [Abstract]

Roy, Aditi, and Saptarshi Ghosh. 2024. “Freedom Versus Standard in Article Keyword Generation: An Empirical Study.” *Journal of Library Metadata* 24 (4): 291–305. <https://doi.org/10.1080/19386389.2024.2395198>.

“This study compares the overlap among author-furnished keywords, Library of Congress Subject Headings and a consolidated controlled vocabulary for articles published in *Annals of Library & Information Studies*, published by NISCAIR from 2018 to 2023, India. The study focuses on the effectiveness of controlled vocabulary for keyword generation. The work is intended to contribute to the literature on author keywords versus keyword standardization in measuring information retrieval efficacy in real-time. The aggregated controlled vocabulary constructed for this study provided a positive result, showing the usefulness and requirements of such a robust controlled vocabulary. The study reflects the extended views of thesauri for a standard author keyword suggester or recommender system.” [Abstract]

Strickler, Christa M. 2025. “Questioning ‘Illegal Aliens’: The Christian Theological Concept of the Imago Dei as a Foundation for Promoting Human Flourishing in Library Metadata.” *Theological Librarianship* 18 (1): 1–14. <https://doi.org/10.31046/yqx4p610>.

“Debates about problematic language in metadata abound in the library profession, and the now-deprecated Library of Congress Subject Heading “Illegal aliens” has been a major flashpoint, but the Christian library community in the United States has been silent in these debates. Using the “Illegal aliens” subject heading as a focal point, this paper contends that the dignity and responsibility inherent in the Christian concept of the imago Dei require that Christian librarians identify and remove language that does not promote human flourishing in library metadata. To care for the migrant is to reflect God’s image in the world, and the language we use has the power to uphold or diminish the dignity of others. The term “Illegal aliens” exemplifies a broader problem in the profession that requires more reflection and engagement from Christian librarians, so the paper concludes with practical recommendations for further engagement.” [Abstract]

Task Group for Metadata Related to Indigenous Peoples of the Americas. 2025. “Final Report of PCC Task Group for Metadata Related to Indigenous Peoples of the Americas.” PCC Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/taskgroup/Metadata-Related-to-Indigenous-Peoples-Americas-TG-final-report.pdf>.

“[T]he task group has identified vocabularies to describe Indigenous groups and topics as alternatives to the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) as well as both national and international groups working with library metadata related to Indigenous peoples...the task group has authored several statements and recommendations regarding potential revisions to the E75-E99 Library of Congress Classification (LCC) range, the impacts PCC standards and classification more broadly have had on Indigenous Peoples’ rights to self-determination in naming, and the encouragement for institutions to employ reparative metadata practices.”
[Report summary]