

RESOURCES FOR ADDRESSING BIAS IN THE LIBRARY CATALOG

COMPILED BY NJLA TECHNICAL SERVICES AND COLLECTION DEVELOPMENT SECTION
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General Info

[Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee](#): “At the request of their membership and for the benefit of all staff creating, sharing, enriching & maintaining metadata, the cataloguing communities of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom are tasked with compiling a Code of Ethics for Cataloguers.”

[Open Cataloging Rules](#): “Open Cataloging Rules is an initiative to create a freely available collaborative cataloging code created by catalogers for catalogers who actually catalog library materials.”

[Institutional Statements](#): “A compilation of statements from libraries and archives on harmful or offensive language in description and bias in cataloging. This list includes statements about problematic language in both description and resources themselves, as statements about resources will frequently discuss the description of those resources.”

[CritCat.org](#): “CritCat is short for “critical cataloging,” a movement of cultural heritage workers who work to bring social justice, radical empathy, and outreach work into their everyday practice. This site aims to serve as a resource for catalogers and the cataloging-curious.”

Subject Headings

[Homosaurus](#): “The Homosaurus is an international linked data vocabulary of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) terms. This vocabulary is intended to function as a companion to broad subject term vocabularies, such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings.”

- [Instructions](#) on how to generate MARC authority files from homosaurus using MarcEdit
- Usage in a public library consortium in IL: technical services librarian Rachel K. Fisher presented on how the Cooperative Computer Services uses homosaurus. You may find a draft of their cataloging rules pertaining to homosaurus [here](#)
- Usage at the University of Kentucky Libraries: a [recording of the project briefing](#) for “Reimagine Descriptive Workflows.”
- Examples of the Schomburg Public Library (IL)’s [subject and genre headings](#) used from the homosaurus vocabulary in their catalog

[List of alternative vocabularies lists](#), compiled on the Cataloging Lab website.

[Library of Congress alerts](#) Sign up for LC alerts, including newly approved LCSH or classification schedules

[How to Propose New Topical LCSH](#) A google doc prepared by Beck Schaefer (Cataloguing Assistant, Osgoode Hall Law School Library, York University, Toronto, Canada) that walks those outside of LC/SACO through the process for submitting new LCSH.

[Cataloging Lab](#) is another great resource for working on LCSH proposals and to find information on LCSH proposals that the SACO funnels have been working on

Classification

[Dewey blog](#) is a good way to keep up with changes being made in DDC (and why). [See this post](#) on a Lawrence (KS) Public Library's reclassification of the 220s using the DDC optional arrangement, which attempts to make the numbers more equitable across religions. *Scotch Plains PL used LPL's crosswalk to convert SPPL's collection to this alternate DDC in early 2022.*

[Removing Bias and Barriers from Your Catalog](#) Meghan O'Keefe from River Forest Public Library presented at PLA 2022 on her project moving select titles from the 300s to the 900s. She has provided links to her presentation slides and handouts *Montclair PL and Scotch Plains PL have both used the handouts from this presentation as a guide to re-assign titles from the 300s to the 900s in their collections*

Genre-fication: [This site has compiled a list of sample library classification models](#), including BISAC, systems such as ShelfLogic (Maricopa Co.) and WordThink (Anythink, CO) which are based on BISAC, and a glade system (Darien PL), which is a hybrid of DDC and BISAC.

Genre-fication in the school library: Kelsey Bogan, MLIS, shares her [10 steps for genre-fying your library in a blog post](#).

She also provides a [follow-up post](#) three years later describing the current outcomes and the changes that she's made since the initial process.

Related Articles

Decolonizing the Catalog: RUSA webinar explores avenues for antiracist description practices. (2021). *American Libraries*, 52(11/12), 38–41.

Engelson, L., Michael, B., Soma, C. (2021). Implementing Anti-racism in Technical Services. *Atla Summary of Proceedings, 75th annual conference*.
<https://doi.org/10.31046/proceedings.2021.2958>

Hardesty, J., & Nolan, A. (2021). Mitigating Bias in Metadata. *Information Technology and Libraries*, 40(3). <https://doi.org/10.6017/ital.v40i3.13053>

Hobart, E. (2020). Anti-racism in the Catalog. *College and Research Libraries News*, 81(8) 378-381. <https://crln.acrl.org/index.php/crlnews/article/view/24596/32393>

Kristick, L. (2020). Diversity Literary Awards: A Tool for Assessing an Academic Library's Collection, *Collection Management*, 45:2, 151-161, DOI: [10.1080/01462679.2019.1675209](https://doi.org/10.1080/01462679.2019.1675209)

Martin, J. (2021). Records, Responsibility, and Power: An Overview of Cataloging Ethics, *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 59:2-3, 281-304, DOI: [10.1080/01639374.2020.1871458](https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2020.1871458)

Watson, B. M. (2020). "There was Sex but no Sexuality*:" Critical Cataloging and the Classification of Asexuality in LCSH. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 58(6), 547–565. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2020.1796876>

Note: This list is not exhaustive. The TS/CD section maintains a section google sheet that is updated by members as they become aware of useful resources pertaining to this subject. NJLA members are encouraged to join the section to participate in section discussions about updating the language in our catalogs, increasing the inclusivity in how we classify materials, and improving the diversity of our collections.