“ANOTHER ONE LIKE THIS, PLEASE” HELPING PATRONS GET TO THE KINDS OF MATERIALS THEY WANT FROM THE LIBRARY CATALOG

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LIBRARY CATALOGS – WHAT ARE THEY GOOD FOR?

- As laid out in the *Rules for a dictionary catalog*

  - **Cutter’s objects** (1904) (p. 12)
    - “Finding function”
    - “Collocating function”
    - “Selection function”
Switching gears – and thinking about the content of library collections:

What’s this book about?

Let’s confirm that in Ellis (for an older printing of the same work):

http://207.160.154.35/record=b1185676~S1
What’s this book about?

Vampires?
Romance?
What about this TV show?

What’s it about?
THE STRANGE CASE OF ... FICTION

- Fiction is unlike nonfiction
  - More difficult to say what a work of fiction is about
    - Entire English departments could debate the meaning of Huck Finn for days...
  - Library catalogs focus on aboutness when providing verbal subject access
ONE SOLUTION: GSAFD

Guidelines on Subject Access to Individual Works of Fiction, Drama, Etc
2nd edition, was published in 2000.

Uses: The Guidelines constitute a recommendation for national standard practice in the provision of genre and subject access to individual works of fiction, drama, poetry, humor, and folklore in all formats. The publication is available from ALA Editions through the ALA Online Store.

http://www.alaa.org/ala/mgrps/divs/alcts/resources/org/cat/marc21authority.cfm
GSAFD: BACKGROUND

• In chapter 1 of that Guideline was a list of 153 genre terms, and in 2001 the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS) developed MARC21 authority records for these 153 terms.

• Discussions continue about the formulation of genre terms, and the Library of Congress began their own ambitious project in 2007 to formulate authorities for genre terms. They started with Moving Images, but they have also moved on to additional categories such as: Cartography, Law, Religion, Literature and Music.

• [http://ac.bslw.com/community/blog/tag/gsafd/](http://ac.bslw.com/community/blog/tag/gsafd/)
CURRENT STATE OF GSAFD

• GSAFD Genre Terms: http://alcme.oclc.org/gsafd/OAIHandler?verb=ListIdentifiers&metadataPrefix=z39_19
  • Terminology services from OCLC Research

LIBRARIES USE MARC

Metadata (data about data) describing the individual contents of library collections is currently (usually) in the MARC format (MAchine Readable Cataloging)

- MARC = markup language used by the library community
- tags (composed of numbers and other symbols) designate the meaning of the content so that the “machine” can “read” it
- users then search in the author index, the title index, or the subject index…. (or they do a keyword search and search anywhere in the surrogate record)
From the GSAFD list:
655_7 $aEpic poetry.$2gsafd

From the LC subject headings catalog:
655_0 $aRoad films
[or]
655_7 $aRoad films.$2lcsh

http://ac.bslw.com/community/blog/tag/gsafd/

Also to consider:
• LC employs subject headings for this record for a Harry Potter book: Harry Potter and the prisoner of Azkaban
• OCLC Bib formats and standards specifies encoding for verbal subject access in MARC (6xx)
“Aboutness” is a concept that doesn’t map well to fiction

Users readily identify fiction based on genre

Sometimes it’s possible to find LCSH with the form subdivision “– Fiction”
  • But that’s not a genre!
  • Library of Congress is a research library
  • Fiction and nonfiction are very different beasts

Genre headings are currently the best (formal) bet for getting users to the kind of fiction they desire

Things patrons don’t necessarily know:

• GSAFD aren’t used with nonfiction.
  • Nonfiction is covered by other headings, including LCSH, AC headings, Sears, etc.

• Users may be supplying their own social tags to fiction that focus on genre. These tags can be incorporated into the search of the OPAC!
  • Twilight in Worldcat