



“About” is what it’s about!

The state of subject access

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she/her/hers





Outline

- **Subject analysis and subject access**
- **“About” and “aboutness”**
- **Types of subject terms**
- **IFLA Library Reference Model and RDA**
- **Ethics, diversity, equity, inclusion, social justice**
- **Subject Analysis Committee**





Subject analysis and subject access

- **Subject analysis**
 - Act of determining the topic of the resource being described.

- **Subject access**
 - Providing the means to discover a resource by assigned subject terms.
 - The intended outcome of subject analysis.





“About”

What is it about? A preposition.

- **Oxford English Dictionary**

- “Concerning, regarding, with regard to, in reference to; in the matter of.”
- “To have as subject matter, to be concerned with.”

- **Cambridge English Dictionary**

- The most common meaning of *about* as a preposition is ‘on the subject of’ or ‘connected with’

- **Merriam-Webster Dictionary**

- with regard to
- concerned with
- fundamentally concerned with or directed toward





“About”

- **“Is”**
 - **Physical characteristic of a work.**
 - **Often form or genre**

- **“Of”**
 - **Information depicted in a work.**
 - **Not necessarily the topic of the work.**





Types of subject terms

- **Controlled vocabularies**
- **Keywords**
- **Natural language**
- **Facets**





Types of subject terms

Controlled vocabularies

- **Familiar controlled vocabularies in MARC bib records**

LCSH Library of Congress Subject Headings

LCGFT Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials

LCMPT Library of Congress Medium of Performance Thesaurus for Music

MeSH Medical Subject Headings (National Library of Medicine)

AAT Art and Architecture Thesaurus (Getty Research Institute)

FAST Faceted Application of Subject Terminology (OCLC)





Types of subject terms

Keywords, natural language


- **Keywords**
- **Natural language**
 - **“Uncontrolled” terms and phrases that are often up to date and nuanced within a discipline or research area.**





Types of subject terms

Facets

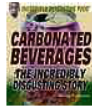





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1.  **Carbonated beverages : the incredibly disgusting story**
by Adam Furgang
 Print book : Juvenile audience [View all formats and languages >](#)
Language: English
Publisher: New York, NY : Rosen Central, 2011.
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2.  **References on bottled carbonated beverages**
by American Bottlers of Carbonated Beverages. Department of Home Economics.
 Print book
Language: English
Publisher: Washington : A.B.C.B., [1928?]

3.  **Delightful recipes with carbonated beverages.**
by American Bottlers of Carbonated Beverages ;
 Print book
Language: English
Publisher: Washington, D.C. : American Bottlers of Carbonated Beverages, [between 1938 and 1940]

4.  **What nationally known authorities on health and dietetics say about**

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IFLA Library Reference Model and RDA

- **IFLA Library Reference Model (LRM)**
 - <https://www.ifla.org/publications/node/11412>
 - FRBR (Functional Requirements for Bibliographic Records)
 - FRAD (Functional Requirements for Authority Data)
 - FRSAD (Functional Requirements for Subject Authority Data)
- ***Resource Description and Access (RDA)***
 - <https://www.rdatoolkit.org>
 - No subject-related guidance, except for Timespan and Place





Ethics

- **Ethics, diversity, inclusion, social justice**
 - Immigration status
 - Race
 - Gender
 - Indigenous/native populations





Ethics

“Illegal aliens”

- **SAC reports**
 - **Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH “Illegal aliens”**
 - <https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/9261> (July 2016)
 - **Report from the SAC Working Group on Alternatives to LCSH “Illegal aliens”**
 - <https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/14582> (June 2020)
- ***Change the Subject* (2019)**
 - <https://www.library.dartmouth.edu/digital/digital-collections/change-the-subject>





Ethics

“Illegal aliens”

- Local remediation:
- OhioLINK
 - Guidelines for Addressing Outdated or Offensive Subject Terms
 - https://www.ohiolink.edu/sites/default/files/uploads/Guidelines_for_Outdated_Terms_FINAL.pdf





Ethics

African Americans (LCSH)

LC control no.: sh 85001932

LCCN Permalink: <https://lcn.loc.gov/sh85001932>

LC classification: E184.5 E185.98

Topical subject heading: African Americans

Variant(s): African Americans --United States

Afro-Americans

Black Americans

Colored people (United States)

Negroes

See also: [Africans --United States](#)

[Ethnology --United States](#)

[Blacks --United States](#)

subdivision African Americans under individual wars, e.g. World War, 1939-1945--African Americans; and headings beginning with African American

Scope note: Here are entered works on citizens of the United States of black African descent. Works on blacks who temporarily reside in the United States, such as aliens, students from abroad, etc., are entered under Blacks--United States. Works on blacks outside the United States are entered under Blacks--[place].

Subject example tracing: Example under United States--Race relations

Note under Blacks--United States

Invalid LCCN: sj 96004705





Ethics

Toward remediation

- **Race (example):**
 - Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia:
https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf
- **Gender, LGBTQ (example):**
 - Homosaurus:
 - <http://homosaurus.org>





Ethics

Toward remediation

- **Indigenous/native populations:**
 - Libraries and Archives Canada:
 - <https://www.bac-lac.gc.ca/eng/discover/aboriginal-heritage/Pages/introduction.aspx>
- **Diversity, equity, and inclusion in metadata practices: the example of Jo Mora's 'Indians of North America' (blog post):**
 - <https://libraries.uta.edu/news-events/blog/diversity-equity-and-inclusion-metadata-practices-example-jo-moras-indians-north>





Opportunities for participation

- **SACO:**
 - Main page: <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/index.html>
 - Funnels: <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/funnels.html>

- **Subject Analysis Committee:**
 - <http://www.ala.org/core/member-center/sections/metadata-and-collections/subject-analysis-committee>





Opportunities for participation

- **Authority Control Interest Group:**
 - <http://www.ala.org/core/member-center/interest-groups/authority-control>
- **Faceted Subject Access Interest Group:**
 - <http://www.ala.org/core/member-center/interest-groups/faceted-subject-access>





Thank you!

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