Homosaurus Implementation Project

Ally Okun

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Capstone student

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UW MLIS online mode

I chose this project for my capstone because it combines my interests in knowledge organization and gender and sexuality studies. I also wanted to gain hands-on cataloging experience, since that is a career interest of mine.

Crystal Yragui

Sponsor

Science and Book Arts Cataloger

University of Washington Libraries Cataloging and Metadata Services Department; Orbis Cascade Alliance Cataloging Standing Group

Information Problem

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The primary information problem addressed by this project is the need to enhance discoverability of LGBTQ+ resources and information. Library of Congress Subject Headings lack specificity when it comes to LGBTQ+ terms, missing terms that information seekers may use when searching the catalog. The Orbis Cascade Alliance Cataloging Standing Group (CSG) is facilitating this project, open to volunteers within Alliance institutions, to implement terms from the Homosaurus, a controlled vocabulary of LGBTQ+ terms, into records in the Alliance's consortial catalog.

Project Objectives

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- Populate legacy MARC records in the shared Alliance catalog with Homosaurus terms
- Provide hands-on training to catalogers, other library staff members, and students in the Orbis Cascade Alliance
- Contribute to the larger Homosaurus community of practice
- Create additional guidance and documentation with the hope of encouraging further adoption of the Homosaurus by library metadata creators in libraries

My Contributions

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Working as a solo student on my capstone, I was able to shape the direction of my involvement with this project. I chose to focus my efforts on working directly in MARC records. Throughout winter quarter, I met weekly with Crystal on Zoom for cataloging training and other work relating to the project. By spring quarter, I began working independently, performing subject analysis one record at a time and adding Homosaurus terms to records using OCLC Connexion. Additionally, I worked with Crystal and the rest of the CSG to finalize the tracking spreadsheets used by all project participants and create training materials for non-cataloging project participants. I also shared the CSG's call for volunteers with fellow UW MLIS students, increasing awareness of the project within my institution.

Evaluation and Benefits

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Overall, this project was a great way to gain cataloging experience and contribute to meaningful work. While the project is ongoing, I believe that the work I and all other participants are putting into it will make a lasting difference in the discoverability of LGBTQ+ resources and information in the Alliance's shared catalog. In addition, I contributed to the creation of training materials for the project, providing my perspective as a non-cataloger. I also became a part of the Homosaurus community of practice, making use of a valuable knowledge organization tool in service of underserved communities. This project will also serve as an example and resource for other libraries and information institutions about the benefits of implementing the Homosaurus into their own metadata creation.

Next Steps

With the project continuing through the end of Fiscal Year 2024, the work is ongoing. At the end of FY24, a report will be written by the CSG and selected participants to be posted on the Orbis Cascade Alliance website. There will also be opportunities to participate in conference talks and/or papers after the project has concluded. These efforts will contribute to the project objective of creating additional guidance and documentation with the hope of encouraging further adoption of the Homosaurus by library metadata creators in libraries.