





2023

Proceedings of the
Metadata Justice in
Oklahoma Libraries
& Archives Symposium

Edited by Shay Beezley with contributions from
Misty Long, Brooke Lefler, Tom Steele, and Sana Masood



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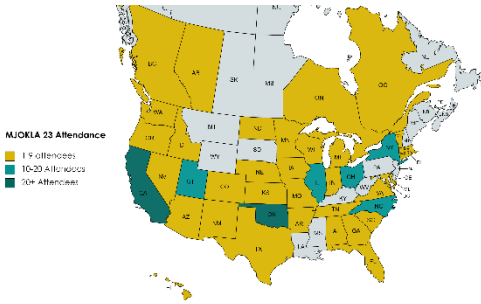
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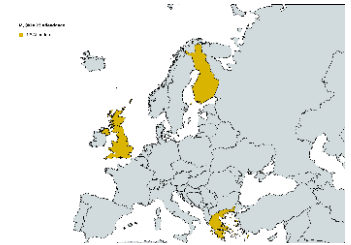
Introduction



Attendee Map – North America

The concept of metadata justice is not regionally limited nor do we try to insinuate it is; the reality is that no matter where you are, your region has its own complex history that librarians and archivists must contend with finding the appropriate description for access. After all, the kernel for this symposium began after the announcement that “Tulsa Race Massacre” was the new authorized subject heading for an event that Oklahoma tried to hide for far too

long—both of my parents were educated in Oklahoma public schools in the 60s and 70s and had never heard of the massacre until recently. The language itself is still under attack with state officials indicating that race was not a factor in this massacre. Using the appropriate and accurate language to describe our history matters.



Attendee Map - Europe

The 2nd Metadata Justice in Oklahoma Libraries & Archives Symposium was a testament to our professions’ interest in accurately describing materials for historically overlooked communities. My colleagues and I are honored and floored to receive a wide-reaching response across our own country and the world—look at the maps showing where our attendees came from! This event started last year out of my desire to bring knowledge and expertise about these matters to the forefront of Oklahoma library and archives workers, but believe me, we’re happy to have everyone with us. Some topics are not strictly Oklahoma-related, such as this year’s panel with SACO Funnel Coordinators, but with limited funding for conferences and workshops, connecting people to these opportunities is critical—no matter where you are.

As we look back on two successful symposia, we remain committed to keep the program focus on Oklahoma while keeping the event open to all. Firstly, to ensure that all library and archives workers in Oklahoma and beyond have this professional development opportunity. Secondly, for those joining us from elsewhere, we hope that you’ll have something to counter any preconceived notions—whether it’s tornadoes, Tiger King, or extremely regressive politics—about Oklahoma. Did the very concept of metadata justice in Oklahoma initially seem preposterous? Rilla Askew once wrote, “Paradox and dichotomy dominate Oklahoma’s character, and this is part of what accounts for our mystery, for why we cannot be classified, categorized.”

I also want to thank all of our speakers from Oklahoma – Michelle, Bailey, Megan, Kaitlyn, Lulu, Heather, and Suzette – for their bravery in sharing the important work you’re doing in the scary climate we are in. For our speakers outside of Oklahoma – Margaret, Maya, Sara, Michelle, Deborah, and Kristen – thank you for joining us and sharing your knowledge and expertise.

And for our attendees near and far, thank you for making the day an engaging opportunity, even if the chat was a little *too* active at times! Maybe you’ll consider starting a similar event of your own? One of our team’s goals in the coming year is developing a planning guide for others to take the groundwork and transform it into an enriching event of their own. I personally can’t wait to see what others do!

-Shay Beezley

Everyone Belongs Here: Creating an Inclusive Public Library Local History and Genealogy Collection

ABSTRACT

The Chickasha Public Library maintains a local history and genealogy print collection that is currently being cataloged and organized. This presentation will give an overview of the process involved in creating original records with accurate and inclusive metadata and descriptions that reflect the history, perspective, and experiences of diverse groups so that all people can see both themselves and others accurately reflected in the collection.

SESSION REPORT

by Misty Long, Tulsa City-County Library

In this session, **Michelle Skinner**, Reference Librarian at the **Chickasha Public Library** discussed the importance of metadata justice and how they are cataloging and organizing their local history and genealogy print collection in a way that gives justice to the people they are serving. Their goal is to create original records with accurate and inclusive metadata and descriptions that reflect the history, perspectives, and experiences of diverse groups so that all people can see both themselves and others accurately reflected in the collection.

The collection consists of approximately 1,000 mostly donated books that are older than the general circulating collection, some cataloged, but many that are not. Included are volumes of census and other official records, state and county histories, biographies, and self-published family histories. They use Dewey Decimal Classification (DDC) for call numbers and Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) for subject headings, which gives them specific parameters, but they are working on ways to update call numbers and subject headings to be more accurate and inclusive. One example discussed was changing the subject heading "Indians of North America" to "Indigenous Peoples of North America." The Dewey call numbers they currently use are the following:

- 970.3 for different nations including the Cherokee Nation, Chickasaw Nation, Choctaw Nation, and Muscogee Creek Nation;
- 976.6 for Oklahoma history, culture, and the state as a whole;
- and 976.6xx for individual county and local histories within Oklahoma.

From the chat, there was discussion about the use of 970.3 and whether that could be geographically subdivided to include Oklahoma. It was found that 970.3 is only an optional number and the instructions are to prefer 971-979 with use of subdivision 00497 from the table under 930-990. This would allow the cataloger to include both the tribe and the state in the call number. For example, the call number for the Cherokee in Oklahoma is 976.600497557 with 976.6 being for Oklahoma and 00497557 being for Cherokee. Skinner was not involved in the chat discussion as she was presenting at the time and therefore did not address whether they would be updating their call numbers to the preferred call numbers or not.

Challenges they have come across include, a collection that consists of older, mostly donated books with many being unpublished or self-published requiring original cataloging; organization takes time; and the ongoing time constraints that go along with working in a library setting. Skinner gave some

advice on building collections for the future which included maintaining a system that allows for starting and stopping frequently; taking small steps that will lead to big results; creating a list of cataloging resources to stay updated on subject heading changes; examining the collection as a whole to ensure representation for all; and trying to obtain new books by reputable publishers. Her final thoughts for the audience were to make sure that you are able to see yourself and others in the collection so that everyone using the library can learn from and appreciate the experiences and contributions of all groups of people.

Key Takeaways

There are many challenges with working on a project like this, and one of the biggest is time, but you just have to get started. Most of us do not have a lot of time to spend on re-describing materials that have already been cataloged, but we can break it up into small chunks that we can work on as we have time. Also, we must think about our collection as a whole and make sure we are representing everybody fairly and justly. We want people to go to the library and see themselves and others in the collection.

Putting into Practice

I have already begun work on the subject headings in our catalog, which is an important first step to completing reparative work in our collection. Next, I would like to start looking at our Dewey call numbers to see what we could do to correct any problematic classification numbers.

RESOURCES

- [Presentation Slides](#)

Perspectives from SACO Funnel Coordinators

ABSTRACT

Last year's symposium attendees learned from our colleagues at the University of Oklahoma about the work that went into requesting reconsideration of the original LCSH "Tulsa Race Riot" to "Tulsa Race Massacre"; however, return attendees and our newcomers may be wondering more about the kind of work that goes into creating subject heading proposals for terminology that would equitably advance patron access to library materials. Representatives from the African-American Subject Funnel, Comics and Fiction Funnel, Gender and Sexuality Funnel, and the Latin American and Indigenous Peoples of the America (LAIPA) Funnel will discuss their experiences leading these funnel projects and answer questions from the audience.

SESSION REPORT

by Misty Long, Tulsa City-County Library

This session was a Q&A with panelists that are all SACO Funnel Coordinators and was aimed to show attendees the kind of work that SACO Funnels do and how to get involved in them. Panelists included

- **Margaret Breidenbaugh**, Co-Chair of the Gender and Sexuality SACO Funnel;
- **Michelle Cronquist**, Co-Chair of the African American Subject Funnel Project;
- **Maya Espersen**, Co-Chair of the Gender and Sexuality SACO Funnel;

- **Sara Levinson**, Coordinator of the Latin American and Indigenous Peoples of the Americas (LAIPA) SACO Funnel;
- **Deborah Tomaras**, Coordinator of the NACO/SACO Comics and Fiction Funnel.

During the session, a question was asked and then each panelist was given time to answer the question. There was a set of questions to get things started and questions and discussion from the attendees was also encouraged via chat.

Q1: Can you tell us about specific subject proposals for headings that advance inclusion? What were some of the challenges? Did you experience any roadblocks?

Michelle said their work has focused on filling gaps in LCSH and updating existing headings to more inclusive language. Some examples of their work include adding the heading “Racism against Black people,” and changing “Blacks” to “Black people” and “Slaves” to “Enslaved persons.” She noted all change proposals involving multiple headings are complicated, which is a challenge. On the positive side, LC has become more open to changes as she mentioned how “White privilege” was rejected in 2011 but added in 2022. Having an organized group working in a specific area gives them more clout than if an individual was trying to make big changes on their own.

Deborah noted that her funnel is very new so no proposals have been completed yet, but discussed the approach and priorities of the funnel. Their focus is on superhero proposals such as African American superheroes and Indigenous superheroes. Some challenges with this are proposals have had to be made multiple times before being accepted and often still have to come from other kinds of fiction like movies or novels and LC decided only one “demographic” adjective could be used at a time for superheroes. They also focus on proposals for inclusive genres such as “Queer fiction” and “Afrofuturist comics” as well as pattern and proposals for works about comics that promote equity of access between different kinds of media criticism.

Sara talked about a very problematic heading that they were working on with the African-American Funnel to propose “Afro-Latin Americans,” which LC has so far refused to accept as they won’t do “composite headings for nationalities in countries other than the United States.” LC won’t accept, for example, “Afro-Cubans” but instead want them to use “Black people—Cuba” and Sara discussed the problems that arise from that workaround. Sara gave an example of a heading that was approved in 2018, which was Vigesimal system. This heading is for base-10 mathematics and it is traditionally used by peoples in Africa and the Americas. She also expressed frustration in having to submit proposals such as work they did on scope notes for both Mestizo and Mestizaje more than once in order to get them accepted.

Margaret said they are a relatively new funnel, created in June 2022, so they don’t have any completed proposals yet. They are also focused on filling gaps in LCSH and updating existing headings to more inclusive language. They do have some proposals being discussed by the Library of Congress including the change from “Gender identity disorder” to “Gender dysphoria” and “Sexual reorientation programs” to “Conversion therapy.” Challenges they have faced is misinformation and lack of knowledge in regards to LGBTQIA+ people, literature, fiction, and the need for these headings. Prior to the Gender and Sexuality SACO Funnel, disambiguation of gender and sexuality was rejected by LC, so they are laying the groundwork to propose this change again.

Q2: How do you navigate your positionality when researching topics for communities that may not necessarily be your own?

Michelle said she sees herself as more of a facilitator in leading the group, rather than trying to accomplish her own priorities as her expertise is in the SACO process rather than the subject matter. Her group includes many Black people as well as experts in African American studies, so the work they do is informed by those perspectives.

Deborah said they based the subject headings "Indigenous futurisms comics" and "Two-Spirit comics" on wording and sources from the groups described, that being Indigenous comics artists.

Sara mentioned that her group has been working on a document called "[Best Practices in Authority Work Relating to Indigenous Nations in the U.S.](#)" The document gives guidelines for respectfully approaching Indigenous nations and is geared towards opening a dialog with people who have previously not been consulted as to what they want to be called.

Maya said her group consists of a very diverse group of people who give their perspective on their part of the LGBTQIA+ community and they work with other organizations such as the Trans Metadata Collective to include perspectives they may lack to make sure they are being as inclusive as possible.

Q3: Can you tell us about proposals currently in progress with your funnels?

Michelle said they submitted a proposal to change "Racially mixed people" to "Multiracial people" and are working on a project to change "Black English" to "African American Vernacular English," which has led to working on related headings as well.

Deborah said they have started a few different projects including revisions/proposals for relationship headings, proposing changes to instances where the topic and \$v fiction gets flipped to the heading for the fictional genre, and proposing LitRPG and related genres. Plus, on the NACO (name authority) side, they are working on a project to create best practices for fictional character name authority records.

Sara mentioned the scope notes for Mestizos and Mestizaje that she talked about earlier are currently in progress. They are also currently waiting on specific guidelines from LC as to what they expect with Indigenous headings when the people in question are not able to be reached by the person proposing a heading.

Margaret said they are currently waiting for the acceptance of changing "Gender identity disorder" to "Gender dysphoria," "Sexual reorientation programs" to "Conversion therapy," and changing "Gays" to "Gay people," which would include changing 180+ headings. Next, they plan to propose changing "Bisexuals" to "Bisexual people" and other identity-focused headings to establish a new pattern.

Q4: What's your favorite subject heading your funnel proposed and had accepted?

Michelle said adding a heading for the Great Migration, "Great Migration, ca. 1914-ca. 1970" to LCSH and could not believe it was not there until 2021.

Deborah said "Manga" as subject and genre headings.

Sara said "Vegetal system" of the headings accepted but clarified that some of her favorites have not been accepted yet. She is still hoping to get "Afro-Latin Americans" and others like it accepted as well

as “Good living (Philosophical concept),” which she hopes to propose again as it has given her the most frustration of all the headings she has worked on.

Maya said none of theirs have been accepted yet, but she is very excited about the change of “Gays” to “Gay people,” and the relationship headings project. She also gave the attendees a hint to look into “Love \$v Fiction” and “Love \$v Comic books, strips, etc.” as GF terms for resources that are about many types of relationships.

Questions from the Audience

There was a lot of love in the chat for all of these changes being made as well as a few more questions. One attendee asked, “Curious if there is anyone working on disability and/or neurodivergence subject headings – looks like there isn’t a specific funnel yet?” The panelists answered with the Medical Funnel. There was interest in working to break disability out from medical, so that might happen in the future. Another attendee asked if there was a list somewhere of projects, proposal projects, or funnels? A panelist answered with The Cataloging Lab has some and they are working on creating something like this that non-members can access and there was definite interest in this amongst the attendees and panelists. Another attendee asked how you deal with the frustrations and the challenges that are part of this work, citing the almost 10-year gap between the initial rejection of white privilege and its recent acceptance, and went on to ask how to stay motivated and optimistic? The panelists answered with zeal, caring enough to keep tilting at that windmill, and the fact the LC is opening up a lot more recently, which gives them hope. There was a lot of discussion amongst the attendees and panelists via the chat about some of the specific changes and changes they would like to see in the future as well as where to go to find changes and new headings that have been accepted. Violet Fox let everybody know there are no formal requirements to join a funnel, just time and energy! She went on to add if there’s an area not yet covered by a funnel, consider starting one yourself.

Key Takeaways

A SACO Funnel is a group of libraries (or catalogers from various libraries) that have joined together to contribute subject authority records. SACO Funnels often have very specific subjects they are targeting, like gender and sexuality, specific groups of people, or specific genres like comics and fiction. Joining a funnel is a great way to contribute without using all of your time creating subject proposals. You can also start a new funnel if you see a gap in coverage.

Putting into Practice

I recently completed a subject proposal for an Indigenous tribe through the LAIPA SACO Funnel. I would like to continue to create subject proposals for this funnel in the subject area of Indigenous peoples. Oklahoma has a new SACO Funnel that I would like to start contributing to as well. I do not have a lot of time to work on subject proposals, but would like to contribute when something pops up in my work that is needed as a subject heading.

RESOURCES

- [SACO Funnel Directory](#)
- [Monthly Approved LCSH](#)
- [Gender and Sexuality Funnel Mailing List](#)

- [Medical Funnel](#)
- [Subscribe to Critcatenate](#)

Constructing a Values-Based Foundation for Metadata Justice Work

ABSTRACT

In this group activity, participants will have the chance to explore the values and principles that might inform their approach to metadata justice work, cross-pollinate ideas with others hoping to engage in this work, as well as work through key components of a guiding document. Participants will walk away with a framework for building their own values-based foundation for metadata justice work, based on an example of a thoroughly constructed guiding document. Whether you're interested in pursuing this work as an individual, within a group, or more broadly at your institution, this session will help ensure your future work is approached in a values-based and sustainable way. This session will encourage and empower others from across the information professions to not only engage in the work of metadata justice, but to do so in a sustainable way that aligns with their personal, group, and/or institutional values.

SESSION REPORT

Bailey Hoffner guided participants through an introduction to the activity and then split participants into 10 groups. Due to the interactive nature of the activity, there is not a session report. Attendees will have received copies of the Etherpads worked on during the session.

RESOURCES

- [Presentation Slides, Notes, and Sample Document](#)

The Creation of the Tribal Nations of Oklahoma Metadata Database

ABSTRACT

In the closing discussions of last year's symposium, the impromptu creation of the Metadata Justice Collective occurred. Those that volunteered to chair, **Megan Macken, Lulu Zilinskas, and Kaitlyn Palone**, met shortly thereafter about possible projects that could use collaborative work. Megan presented the idea to create a [database of Oklahoma Tribal Nation preferred names](#). The speakers presented on how this work was accomplished, problems encountered, and plans for future.

SESSION REPORT

By Brooke Lefler, University of Central Oklahoma

The Tribal Nations of Oklahoma Metadata Database aims to reflect naming conventions used by the 39 tribal nations of Oklahoma to refer to themselves as well as linking to related current and historic subject headings. Kaitlyn, Lulu, and Megan created this tool to expand terminology for librarians and archivists in order to accurately refer to specific Indigenous peoples. As the database nears completion, users can reference this educational tool to move beyond outdated and anglicized terms to learn Indigenous naming conventions. For example, the term Comanche Nation more accurately reflects tribal views of sovereignty than Comanche Tribe, a term no longer used. Similarly, Comanche Indians refers to all

Comanche peoples, not just tribal citizens. While the database does not explicitly educate users on term definitions and connotations, it clearly identifies sources for each heading and aims to eliminate terms unacceptable in Indian Country.

The database was created with Omeka S, a free, open-source web publishing platform. They mapped metadata to Dublin Core during ingestion. The work began by entering terms for each nation from various sources including the Center for Sovereign Nations at Oklahoma State University, FAST headings, the First Americans Museum in Oklahoma City, the U.S. Department of Interior, and the websites for each tribal nation; linking these to Getty and Library of Congress terms; and creating a searchable map that centers each nation at its tribal headquarters.

Moving forward, Kaitlyn, Megan, and Lulu will connect with tribal nation administrators, archivists, and librarians to seek feedback. They will add links to the tribal treaties database as well as various institutions creating similar resources. They will develop the about page to further explain their goals, progress, and sources. The public may submit feedback and corrections via the suggestions link at the top of each page. The creators appreciate collaboration and the support offered by conference participants and look forward to the future of the database.

Key Takeaways

- The Tribal Nations of Oklahoma Metadata Database fills a need for access to accurate subject headings aligned with Indigenous naming conventions and may contribute to more accurate and expanded Library of Congress terminology.
- Users can locate tribal nation metadata using 3 key features: 1) browse all nations (in alphabetical order), 2) embedded map and 3) search function.
- Users can also suggest updates by clicking on the suggestions label at the top of the page.

Putting into Practice

When cataloging and describing materials related to Indigenous peoples of Oklahoma, choose subject headings from this database. Look [here](#) or [here](#) to reference how the nation refers to itself. Many tribal nations offer language lessons via their websites and apps. It's fun to learn new terms! And better understand Indigenous world views.

RESOURCES

- [Presentation Slides](#)
- [Database](#)
- [Center for Sovereign Nations](#)
- [fast.OCLC.org](#)
- [First Americans Museum](#)
- [Tribal Treaties Database](#)

Fus Fixico Classification System

ABSTRACT

Western cataloging systems organize information by subject and are created through a western lens. Indigenous communities organize information according to other factors, notably: cosmology, geography, language, and a sense of being. Our library created and actively uses the Fus Fixico (“Angry Bird” in Muskogee ‘Creek’ Language) Classification System (FFCS). FFCS is named after the Fus Fixico letters, which were written by Alexander Posey, a Muscogee Humorist, who served as secretary at the Sequoyah Constitutional Convention. FFCS borrows elements from the Brian Deer Classification System, Dewey, and Graph Theory to create a more inclusive system that empowers improved metadata and LoC subjects to thrive, while also still providing for user-friendly collocation.

SESSION REPORT

by Tom Steele, University of Oklahoma

Heather D. Hutto presented on the Fus Fixico Classification System (FFCS) for the Choska Talfa Room’s collection at **Bristow Public Library**. Her motivation for creating the system was threefold. First, Hutto wanted to address student education gaps in Oklahoma and Tribal History. Secondly, adults in Oklahoma share these education and knowledge gaps as well. Finally, these gaps have led to misinformation pertaining to tribal nations. Hutto gave the example of a publication calling a territorial schoolhouse in Edmond as “the oldest in Oklahoma.” FFCS was created to address were Oklahoma’s history as a territory, and a state as well as the history of the 39 sovereign tribal nations in Oklahoma.

As a student at the University of North Texas, Hutto worked on her Information Organization Project, which covered resources pertaining to Oklahoma history (tribal, territorial, state) and/or genealogy. The project used a structure of authority control influenced by indigenous ways of thinking instead of traditional cataloging methods. The schema was also intended to be livable and dynamic. This project became the prototype for FFCS, which was also heavily influenced by another indigenous based system, the Brian Deer Classification System.

The authority control used by FFCS is intended to be dynamic and native focused. Hutto and her library are asking for LIS professionals with knowledge pertaining to Oklahoma history and indigenous perspectives, cultures, and histories to contribute to the project. Indigenous opinions are the library’s top priority. Although the system was created for Bristow Public Library’s collections, they hope other Oklahoma libraries will adopt the classification system for their own local history collection.

Key Takeaways

FFCS has a specific focus and intended for arranging collections pertaining to Oklahoma and Tribal history, as well as genealogical collections. Indigenous communities have long been ignored by library information structural systems, and it is hoped the FFCS and other similar systems can address this neglect.

Putting into Practice

While I personally don't have the responsibility of choosing the classification system for University of Oklahoma Libraries' Western History Collections, I do work with these materials often. I plan on using what I learned at this session in being more indigenous focuses when assigning subject headings to relevant materials.

RESOURCES

- [Presentation Slides](#)
- [Fus Fixico Classification System \(Working Document\)](#)

Beyond Exploitation: Metadata Justice and Prison Labor

ABSTRACT

Large-scale digitization projects require enormous amounts of resources and labor, both of which are frequently in short supply in libraries and archives. How, then, has Oklahoma's Yearbook Project been able to scan and process high school yearbooks at no cost for schools, libraries, museums, and historical societies? As a service of Oklahoma Correctional Industries, a state-level prison industry program, the Yearbook Project relied on the penal labor exemption of the Thirteenth Amendment which allows for involuntary servitude to occur behind prison bars. Although the Yearbook Project is currently on hiatus due to an ongoing investigation, metadata specialists, cataloguers, and the wider memory work community must still grapple with the legacy of this and other exploitative and unethical programs that have contributed to the resources and services we offer patrons. This presentation sheds light on the issue of exploitative prison labor on behalf of libraries and archives, and offers a solution grounded in metadata justice: labeling items, collections, and databases that benefit from exploitative labor.

SESSION REPORT

by Sana Masood, Oklahoma State University

The presentation by **Kristen C. Howard** at **McGill University** is based upon research for her recently published article in *Library Quarterly*, "Digitization and Exploitation: Acknowledging and Addressing the Use of Exploitative Prison Labor by Libraries and Archives." If your institution does not have a subscription to [Library Quarterly](#), Howard can be emailed for a copy.

Howard opened by discussing the meaning of "exploitation" and how it pertains to prison labor. The question was posed as to whether all prison labor is inherently unethical. If prison labor might be of value for monetary compensation, enjoyment or satisfaction, or skills for post-incarcerated life, then prison labor might be ethical. There is also the idea of "mutually beneficial exploitation" where both parties benefit, but it is still exploitative. In the current prison context, the incarcerated receive little value from their labor. Inmates make on average \$0.86 per hour, or \$3.46 per day. In Oklahoma, incarcerated persons make \$0.10 to \$0.17, but the state's minimum wage is \$7.25. Oklahoma Correctional Industries (OCI) pay starts at \$0.00, which means in Oklahoma incarcerated persons can be or required to work for no pay. The Penal Labor Exemption, from the Thirteenth Amendment, allows the incarcerated to be punished by involuntary servitude, exempting them from protections against harassment, discrimination, and retaliation unlike with other jobs.

The Yearbook Project was started by OCI in 2013. The goal of the project was to have yearbooks scanned and processed for high schools and universities at no cost to the institutions. OCI recognized the value of yearbooks and offered the service for free, including the price of shipping yearbooks across the country for the project. OCI contacted libraries and school boards, offering the free service, which led to word spreading about the project. OCI would cold call institutions until 2022 when the project was suspended. Dozens, if not hundreds, benefited from the project, but the question became how much, if any, those incarcerated who worked on the project earned.

During the project, the incarcerated people doing the work earned \$1.25 per hour while the Oklahoma Department of Corrections made \$7.25 per worker per hour, the equivalent of the state's minimum wage. The Yearbook Project made \$629,740 in revenue. Through a copy of an unsigned OCI service agreement, Howard found a line that stated "OCI may, or may not, choose to distribute them [i.e. digitized images] to other agencies or vendors." Agencies like Ancestry.com might have bought the images since they host yearbooks, so services like this could have been footing the bill for the project. This was exploitive labor taking unfair advantage of incarcerated people and using their vulnerability based on one legal clause.

Howard proposed ideas for library workers on how to acknowledge work done by exploitive labor. One intervention is to label items and collections in databases that have benefited from exploitive labor. Everett Public Library in Washington had their yearbooks digitized via the project, which is known due to local reporting, but there is no mention of the Yearbook Project or OCI on their website. Milvale, Pennsylvania mentions that an OCI project helped digitize their yearbooks, but they do not expand the acronym or who provided the labor. Rock Island Public High School in Rock Island, Illinois explicitly thanks Oklahoma Correctional Industries and the Yearbook Project for providing the digitized editions of their yearbooks, but there is no mention of the labor. A general statement should explicitly state that incarcerated people performed the integral labor in exploitive conditions. Simple and informative statements increase transparency, especially in finding aids or on a website.

Issues of stigma have the possibility of arising with these public statements. Rather than the public becoming enraged over the exploitation of the low labor costs, focus might be placed on incarcerated people handling photos of children. People might boycott and the project suspended. If institutions are against making these statements, then they should not take part in such projects. The statements can be made more neutral but still maintain basic information for transparency. An example statement is "These yearbooks have been made accessible by the exploitive labor of incarcerated people in Oklahoma prisons." The word "exploitive" may be removed for a more neutral statement. It is a moral duty to disclose the use of this labor in memory work.

In conclusion, Howard stated that memory workers should inform users about the use of prison labor and that there is a strong ethical reason to disclose the use of this project to be honest to the public. Memory workers are not in the power to repeal such an amendment, but they can come to terms with how their institutions have used such labor and disclose that information.

Key Takeaways

Exploitive labor from incarcerated people has been used in memory work projects that libraries have benefited from. It is the ethical duty of library professionals to disclose this information if such practices have been utilized. A statement should be placed alongside any materials that were the result of this

exploitive labor. These practices should not be implemented to begin with, and we should use the power we do have to be transparent when they have been used.

Putting into Practice

When exploitive labor was used on a project, a general statement should be added to the website, collection page, or finding aid that discloses this information for transparency to the public.

RESOURCES

- [Presentation Slides](#)

Keynote: Politeness and Executing Inclusive Metadata within Oklahoma Libraries & Archives

ABSTRACT

[As of 2018, Oklahoma ranked as the politest state in the country.](#) This ranking speaks to a powerful intention. Often politeness and respect are defined as synonymous, but these words are not the same. During this humanity driven conversation, Suzette Chang, Founder/CEO of Thick Descriptions an organization that disrupts traditional educational methods with anthropology to help humans thrive where they are building stronger communities, attendees will learn and discuss how politeness can be a barrier to accurately and respectfully describing materials related to underrepresented communities. Participants will laugh/smile/giggle/reflect and strategically think about how to be polite ***AND*** offer inclusive metadata.

REPORT

By Sana Masood, Oklahoma State University

Suzette V. Chang of **Thick Descriptions** led a discussion on what it means to be polite and how that can relate to creating inclusive metadata. This keynote presentation was an open conversation between Chang and the attendees in the chat.

Chang shared a quote from the magazine *Welcome to the Jungle* (October 19, 2019) that explained politeness, with an emphasis on the line in the quote that states “practice and repetition of these natural laws give us a safe space.” The passage also notes that politeness is passed down through generations and is essential to build and maintain a society. Politeness is a cultural phenomenon. Attendees were also encouraged to share what politeness meant to them.

A series of statistics from various surveys were shared. People aged 20-30 are about 10% polite and not until the age range of 50+ were people consistently polite. Other studies stated that 60% claimed religion as the primary reason for politeness, 50% are polite due to upbringing, 44% are polite to make a good impression, and 30% choose to be polite to offer a sense of comfort. Based on a survey done by a Canadian organization, Oklahoma was ranked the “most polite” state in the country. Oklahomans take pride in hospitality, and to not be polite is to not be an Oklahoman.

There is a belief that politeness and kindness are the same, but politeness is the surface and kindness is bone-deep and to the core. Kindness is not based in culture, as politeness tends to be, and it is

something that can be shared by everyone. Politeness looks different to everyone, as was evident in the discussion between the attendees and Chang.

It is important to recognize the community and audience that your library serves in order to best serve them. Chang led a scenario where a patron comes into a library to conduct research about Oklahoma being an all-Black state. How would we communicate with that person who came from a rural town? We must understand that for some people, politeness is a barrier. We must remain respectful and be ready to talk to them when they are polite while we might want to be direct. This entire presentation was framed as a question rather than a statement to allow for conversation to make the content accessible. There is a process to find the language to use.

Library professionals have an influential responsibility in shifting how information is made accessible. We are setting the tone and path for the future, and it must be grounded in humanity thinking. We have to be the steady---even when the audience may be doing something different, we must be consistent. It's okay to say that we don't know; we don't have to know everything.

During the Question & Answers portion of the presentation, there was a question about the terminology of "historically overlooked" being used in place of "underrepresented communities." The phrase "underrepresented communities" is from the point of view of a community of power and suggests that certain groups were not present. We must be polite and thoughtful when developing metadata, so think about the position from which you are speaking. Focus on humanity because we are all humans and have different experiences. We want to speak to the human experience and humans, sometimes both, and when you use language with humanity in mind, you are identifying ways for everyone to share a commonality. No matter where you are, you can say we are all human beings and that is a way to unify us.

Key Takeaways

Politeness appears differently to different people. An open conversation about politeness presented just a sample of the wide variety of views people have about what it means to be polite and how politeness is used in society. It is rooted in culture and not the same as kindness. Library professionals should utilize kindness and humanity-first language while thinking about their institution's audience and how best to serve them and approach inclusive metadata and description.

Putting into Practice

When working on creating inclusive metadata and description, there should also be thought placed in the audience being served by the library to help better inform the work. Rather than performative politeness, we should employ a humanity first approach.

RESOURCES

- [Presentation Slides](#)

Speakers

Michelle Skinner is the reference librarian at the Chickasha Public Library in Chickasha, Oklahoma, as well as a piano teacher and pianist and organist at the First Presbyterian Church. She has a Bachelor of Arts from the University of Science and Arts of Oklahoma, where she serves on the Alumni Association Board of Directors, and a Master of Library and Information Studies from the University of Oklahoma. Michelle has written and presented extensively about many of her favorite library topics, including library history, digitization, and history preservation, and she loves all things creative and intellectual.

Margaret Breidenbaugh (she/her), one of three co-chairs of the Gender and Sexuality SACO Funnel, is Resource Sharing Coordinator at Cincinnati State Technical and Community College in Cincinnati, Ohio, and a member of SEIU (Service Employees International Union) Local 1099. Margaret began working with information in academic libraries, public libraries, archives and special collections, and museums in 2014. She earned her MA in Modern German Social History at Miami University in Oxford, Ohio in 2018, and is a current MLIS student at the Luddy School of Informatics, Computing, and Engineering. In May 2023, Margaret traveled to Helsinki, Finland, to participate in a grant-funded DEI seminar which she helped to organize. Her research interests — critical cataloging, women's travel writing, gendered language, and the language of surveys — interrogate the power of words.

Michelle Cronquist is a Special Collections Cataloger at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. She has served as Cataloging Co-chair of the African American Subject Funnel Project since 2021.

Maya Espersen (she/they) is one of three co-chairs of the Gender and Sexuality SACO Funnel and is the Cataloging Coordinator for the Aurora (Colorado) Public Library since November 2021. Maya previously worked in academic libraries for ten years before moving to Colorado and to public libraries. They received their MLIS from the University at Albany, SUNY in 2012. Her interests include reparative cataloging, gendered language, graphic novels and manga, accessibility, sustainable gardening and agriculture, and cats.

Sara Levinson has been the cataloger in Latin American and Iberian languages at the University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill since 2009. As part of her work she creates original bibliographical records and name authority records, and proposes subject authority records to the Library of Congress. She was involved in the creation of, and is the coordinator of the Latin American and Indigenous Peoples of the Americas (LAIPA) SACO funnel which was formed in 2017.

Deborah Tomaras is the Metadata and Resource Management Librarian at Marist College. She's the former co-chair of the ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Roundtable's Metadata & Cataloging Committee, and one of the inaugural coordinators for the NACO/SACO Comics and Fiction Funnel. She enjoys proposing terms to help better depict diversity in comics, including subjects like "Superheroes with disabilities" and genres like "Indigenous futurisms comics."

Bailey Hoffner is the Metadata Librarian for Digital Resources and Discovery Services at Oklahoma State's Edmon Low Library. In her own research and creative work, she is interested in investigating ways in which metadata and descriptive practices have the power to uphold or dismantle the structural racism, sexism, able-ism, and discrimination inherent in their creation and use, with a particular interest in the representation of Autistic experience in libraries and library metadata.

Megan Macken is the Assistant Department Head of Digital Resources and Discovery Services at Oklahoma State's Edmon Low Library where she oversees the metadata and cataloging units. Additionally, she serves as the liaison to the departments of Art, Art History and Graphic Design and is a member of the implementation team for Experts Directory, Oklahoma State's research information management (RIM) system. Previously she worked as a digital scholarship librarian and digital archivist and has master's degrees in Library Science and the History of Art from Indiana University.

Kaitlyn Palone received her MLIS from the University of Oklahoma in December of 2016. In January 2017 she began her position at the University of Central Oklahoma as a metadata and cataloging librarian. In her position she enjoys her work with the Oklahoma "Tornado" Funnel, and cataloging scores, but her most favorite is working with the Melton Zine Library. In her spare time, she enjoys embroidery, watching movies, listening to music, and spending time with her family and two bad cats.

Lulu Zilinskas (she/her) graduated in 2021 with her MSLS from UNC Chapel Hill and is currently Archivist I at the National Cowboy & Western Heritage Museum. She is also an early-career member for SAA's Committee on Research, Data, and Assessment. Previously, Lulu was the Graduate Research Assistant at the North Carolina Digital Heritage Center where she completed an equitable metadata research and remediation project for the Center's DAMS.

Heather D. Hutto earned her MSLS from the University of North Texas to address LIS vulnerabilities she recognized in her region after a decade of service in academic, public, and school tribal-rural libraries in northeastern Oklahoma. In her current role as a tribal-rural public library director, she tries to bridge Oklahoma's sizable digital inclusivity gaps, provide equitable representation and access, foster awareness about communities' understanding of libraries' roles in society, and other intersecting issues.

Dr. Kristen C. Howard is the Liaison Librarian for History, Classical Studies, Indigenous Studies, and Religious Studies at McGill University (Montreal, Canada). Kristen completed a PhD in History at the University of Arizona in 2020 and a Master of Information Studies at McGill in 2022. Her research interests include information and archival literacy, library ethics, and researchers' use of digital surrogates.

Suzette V. Chang identifies and executes qualitative and contemporary educational methods. She weaves inquiry, curiosity, examination, and memorization as this collaboration yields humane and sustainable conclusions. A native Californian that calls Oklahoma home since 2002, Suzette is invested in competencies that speak to intra/interpersonal experiences grounded in trust, problem-solving, creativity, technology, observation, reflection, and enhanced learning. She supports lifelong learning for all and has developed and created these spaces in Venezuela, Jamaica, Kenya, Mexico, Canada, and the United States. Suzette has served as an educational team member at the Metropolitan Library System, Sam Noble Museum, University of Oklahoma, the City of Guthrie and is the Founder/CEO of Thick Descriptions, a grassroots organization that disrupts traditional educational methods with anthropology. Suzette is an awarded and inspirational leader, speaker, contemporary education advocate and published author. Her literary contributions include "Nature Swagger," "Black Towns, Black Futures" and several articles. Suzette is the recipient of the 2022 Setha Low Engaged Anthropology Award and the 2021 William D. Pennington Teacher Award. Her biggest and most important investments are Taylor and Robert, her offspring that are currently new-adulting.

Credits

PROCEEDINGS CONTRIBUTORS


- **Misty Long**, Tulsa City-County Library System
 - **Sana Masood**, Oklahoma State University
 - **Brooke Lefler**, University of Central Oklahoma
 - **Tom Steele**, University of Oklahoma
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DAY-OF VOLUNTEERS

- **Karie Antell**, University of Oklahoma
 - **Jenny Bodenhamer**, Oklahoma State University
 - **Melissa Caines**, Canadian College of Naturopathic Medicine
 - **Katherine Chandler**, University of Arkansas
 - **Kirsten Davis**, University of Central Oklahoma
 - **Violet Fox**, Northwestern University
 - **Ginessa Mahar**, University of Florida
 - **Devon Olson**, University of North Dakota
 - **Nicole Sump-Crethar**, University of Central Oklahoma
 - **Liz Wallace**, University of Central Oklahoma
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PLANNING TEAM

- **Shay Beezley**, Assistant Director, Metadata & Cataloging
- **Anona Earls**, Librarian III/Coordinator of Deselection, Metadata & Cataloging
- **Oliver Ellington**, Archives Specialist
- **Heather Scheele-Clark**, Archives Specialist
- **Kaitlyn Palone**, Librarian II, Metadata & Cataloging



The 2nd Metadata Justice in Oklahoma
Libraries & Archives Symposium was held on July 20, 2023
and sponsored by Chambers Library.



To stay current with symposia information,
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