Slide 1

Issues in handling racist or colonial works in our collections

AMIA 2020, session 1043

Fri Nov 20, 10AM PST

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Slide 2

Cultural Institutions and our allied fields have been dealing with racist and colonial practices for years

- 1990 NAGPRA (Native American Graves Protection and Repatriation Act) intent "is to address long-standing claims by federally recognized tribes for the return of human remains and cultural objects unlawfully obtained from prehistoric, historic, former, and current Native American homelands. Interpretation of human and indigenous rights, prehistoric presence, cultural affiliation with antiquities, and the return of remains and objects can be controversial and contested." Wikipedia
- Film distributors have pulled films from circulation because of embarrassment at racism (Song of the South)
- Cinema Studies classes and Cinemathéque screenings often insist on contextualizing a film through an introduction or film notes (Birth of a Nation)

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Slide 3

And media artists have remixed films to comment on their racism
DJ Spooky, 2004, 2015

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Slide 4
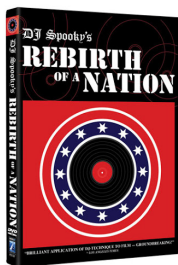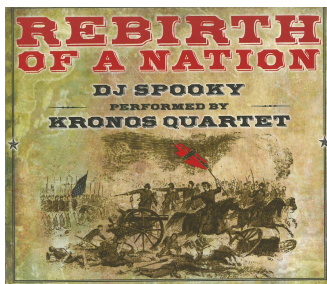
As Moving Image Archivists:

- What are the ways that we can address vestiges of racism, gender bias, and colonialism in our collections?

- This session is just the beginning of a few suggestions of what we could do. It is neither thorough nor comprehensive. And it doesn't deal with some important issues (like developing our collection content to reflect diversity that goes beyond white cisgender males of European ancestry).

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Slide 5

Issues in handling racist or colonial works in our collections

- Jacqueline Stewart, Univ of Chicago
  - *Lessons from* **Gone With The Wind**
- Howard Besser, New York Univ
  - *Making our Metadata & Descriptions less offensive: Lessons from the Library and conventional Archive worlds*
- May Hong Haduong, Academy Film Archive
  - *Description and underrepresented communities: an alternate approach*
- Ryan Lakin, New York Univ
  - *Questions to Panelists*
- Audience response

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Slide 6

Making our Metadata & Descriptions less offensive:
Lessons from the Library and conventional Archive worlds

Howard Besser

New York University

http://besser.tsoa.nyu.edu/howard/Talks/

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Making our Metadata & Descriptions less offensive:
Lessons from the Library and conventional Archive worlds

- Not talking about these (though we can talk about them during the discussion period):
  - Labeling works as homophobic, colonial, racist, etc.
  - Using metadata to filter out offensive works from normal searches
  - Highlighting works that are more diverse and/or less offensive (as May will describe)

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Making our Metadata & Descriptions less offensive:
Lessons from the Library and conventional Archive worlds-

- Why our Metadata and Descriptions matter
- Collective responses to the "awakening" the past summer
- Changes implemented by individual collections (including alternate classification systems)
- Attempts to change more global guidelines and standards
- Guides and public statements on making your collection less offensive
- Readings & Links

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WHY OUR METADATA AND DESCRIPTIONS MATTER

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Archival Description matters

- "Social contexts, individual and institutional biases, and structures of power influence how records are created, maintained, represented, and interpreted. Archival description plays a role in the representation of records – it shapes whether and how collections are discovered, navigated, and understood. Archivists decide, for example, which names and subjects will be included or omitted in description, and what language is used to represent and contextualize those subjects."
  - Guidelines for Inclusive and Conscientious Description Harvard Center for the History of Medicine

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Think carefully about your Archival Description

- What role can your words have in either perpetuating or combating marginalization and archival erasure?
- Who is harmed and who benefits from your description?
- In the interest of clarity and equity, what should be brought to the forefront to appropriately contextualize the records?
- What you might be leaving out (Winston)?
- How have colonialism, racism, sexism, or other forms of hegemony impacted the origins of the records you are describing (Drake)?
  - Guidelines for Inclusive and Conscientious Description Harvard Center for the History of Medicine

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COLLECTIVE RESPONSES TO THE "AWAKENING" THE PAST SUMMER

Besser-Digital Privacy Berkeley 11/13/2020   12

Cultural Objects called out for promoting Racists

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Critical Cataloging discussion group
http://critlib.org/about/critcat/

critcat

recent

#critcat is short for critical cataloging, a group of people interested in discussing the ethical implications of library metadata, cataloging, and classification standards, practice, and in-frastructure.

To sign up for the #critcat Slack, please fill out the form below and you'll be sent an invite to the group (check your spam filter and/or contact @violetbfox if you haven't received your invite within 24 hours).

If you've got an account, visit critcat.slack.com to login.

K
14

Calling o
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DaisyF

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We Here on Critical Cataloging
https://www.wehere.space/shop/p/cs004-101-incorporating-critical-cataloging-into-your-work-social-justice-initiatives-series-sknh5

we here community school
Incorporating Critical Cataloging Into Your Work
with **Treshani Perera & Deidre Thompson**

Social Justice Initiatives Series Webinar

Live Webinar Recording

Recorded Webinar: Incorporating Critical Cataloging Into Your Work - Social Justice Initiatives Series (CS004-001)

from $25.00

Live recorded webinar, originally recorded October 6, 2020.

Important Access Note:
Individual viewing or Group Screening: Materials are shared via Google Drive, so a Gmail account is required (personal or enterprise account via an institution, for example). If you do not have a Gmail account, please contact us at us@wehere.space to make

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Metropolitan NY Library Council Workshop

Critical Cataloging: Revealing and Dismantling Hegemonic Systems

October 21 @ 4:00 pm - 5:00 pm

« BIPOC Community Call   LGBTQ/NTWRKNG 2 »

From Linnaeus to Dewey, people in power have set the standard for the way in which things in the Western world are categorized. These hegemonic systems of classification inform the way in which we in libraries describe materials and, therefore, the way in which they are accessed.

Join Violet Fox and Treshani Perera on Wednesday, October 21 for a conversation about the ethical implications of the way in which we in the library and archives field engage in the work of creating metadata and cataloging materials. This conversation will include discussion about classification standards and the technical systems in which we work.

Register here

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AMIA Cataloging & Metadata Committee (Sept 22, 2020 Agenda)

- Welcome
- conference session support?
- anti-racist cataloging: thoughts? future training?
- resources of interest

  - Thanks to Chloe McLaren/Cornell, Winter Shanck/WNET

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CHANGES IMPLEMENTED BY INDIVIDUAL COLLECTIONS
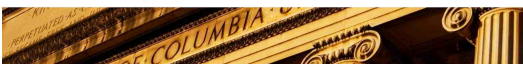
Besser-Digital Privacy Berkeley 11/13/2020   18

Woman Names

https://blogs.cul.columbia.edu/rbml/2020/09/09/eleanor-roosevelt-speaks-for-herself-identifying-1257-married-women-by-their-full-names/

COLUMBIA UNIVERSITY LIBRARIES

Services & Tools ▾   Libraries ▾   Using the Libraries ▾   Collections ▾   About ▾

News from Columbia's Rare Book &
Manuscript Library

RBML Home   Library Alerts   Library Hours

Eleanor Roosevelt Speaks for Herself: Identifying 1,257 Married Women by their Full Names

Posted on 2020-09-09 (2020-09-08) by Celeste Brewer

It sounds like the setup for a magic trick: how can an archivist and a public services assistant, both working from home without access to the Rare Book and Manuscript Library, identify **1,257 (!)** women previously referred to in our finding aids by their husbands' names? Yet it involved no sleight of hand. We used the same research skills we bring to work every day, only a touch of technical wizardry, and a lot of digitized archival materials.

It was once accepted practice to call married women by their husbands' names, with the honorific "Mrs." attached–for example, "Mrs. Franklin Delano Roosevelt." However, doing so is problematic from both an information retrieval and a feminist perspective. Before this project began, 26 files in 10

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Lawrence P.L. Expands Religions

https://ddc.typepad.com/025431/2020/09/reclassifying-the-200s-at-lawrence-public-library.html

meet the
new numbers

220	Religions of East and Southeast Asian origin
221.2	Taoism
221.6	Confucianism
223-225	Hinduism
227-228	Buddhism
229	Sikhism
230	Religions of antiquity and regional origins
231	Celtic religion
232	Classical religion (Greek and Roman religion)
233	Germanic religion
238	Ancient Egyptian religion
239.4	Gnosticism
239.6	Religions originating among Black Africans
239.7	Religions of North American native origin
239.8	Religions of South American native origin
240	Bible
251	Judaism
252-279	Christianity
280-298	Islam
299	[Religions of other origins]
299.1	Babism and Baha'i Faith
299.4	Theosophy
299.6	Scientology
299.9	Modern paganism, neopaganism, wicca

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American U Library on Critical Cataloging as Antiracist Praxis

https://subjectguides.library.american.edu/c.php?g=1025915&p=7749829

AMERICAN UNIVERSITY   W A S H I N G T O N · D C

AU Library Search

University Library / Subject Guides / Subject-Specific / Antiracist Praxis / Critical Cataloging and Classification

Antiracist Praxis

Home	**Critical Cataloging and Classification by Symphony Bruce**
Race	**Critical Cataloging and Race**
Racism	Critical Cataloging, a subset of Critical Librarianship, focuses on mitigating the ways in which classification and the organization of knowledge codify systems and hierarchies of oppression. Cataloging refers to the creation of metadata and description, following established guidelines, that help make items searchable and discoverable. In the U.S., the most common classification systems are the Dewey Decimal System and the Library of Congress Classification System (LOC), which use subject headings to categorize and build connections between content. It is this mixture of metadata and classification that makes items discoverable in library catalogs and databases.
Intersections	
Knowing, Doing, and Being	
Racial Justice in Research	
Critical Library Studies	Critical Cataloging recognizes the ways in which these classification systems (and other facets of metadata creation) standardize and codify long-held prejudices through language and erasure. An example of this codification can be seen in the recent cancelation of the Illegal Alien subject heading in the LOC classification system - a subject heading rife with historically racist and dehumanizing connotations. Through the activism of students, educators, and librarians, this subject heading made national headlines and led to two new headings: Noncitizens and
Critical Information Literacy	

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Oklahoma U changes "tulsa race Riot"

https://libraries.ou.edu/content/ou-librarians-and-archivists-submit-proposal-change-library-congress-subject-heading

OU LIBRARIANS AND ARCHIVISTS SUBMIT PROPOSAL TO CHANGE A LIBRARY OF CONGRESS SUBJECT HEADING

OU Librarians and Archivists submit proposal to change a Library of Congress Subject Heading

A coalition of librarians and archivists across multiple OU Libraries divisions has submitted a proposal to the Library of Congress to change the authorized subject heading for the Tulsa Race Massacre from "Tulsa Race Riot" to the more accurate and currently used "Tulsa Race Massacre."

The group researched current usage of terms in academic, news, and political discourse, compiled historical precedents for similar changes to Library of Congress subject headings, and conducted outreach to Tulsa's Greenwood Cultural Center to ensure that the work was carried out in respect to and in alignment with the work of the Center.

"Authorized subject headings become the way in which researchers find information in libraries," said Bailey Hoffner, metadata and collections management archivist for OU Libraries. "Leading the change to reflect current usage and understanding of what happened in Tulsa in 1921 is important because what we call things matters. This effort is part of OU's larger set of events, exhibits, and a Presidential Dream Course around the centenary of the event."

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Alternative Cataloging/Classification schemes

Brian Deer Classification System

From Wikipedia, the free encyclopedia

The **Brian Deer Classification System** (**BDC**) is a library classification system used to organize materials in libraries with specialized Indigenous collections. The system was created in the 1970s by Canadian Kahnawake Mohawk librarian A. Brian Deer, and has been adapted for use by a small number of First Nations libraries in Canada.[1]

Contents [hide]
1 History and usage
2 Structure
3 References
4 External links

History and usage   [edit]

Deer designed his classification system while working in the library of the National Indian Brotherhood from 1974 to 1976; instead of using a standard library classification scheme, he created a new system to organize the library's historic research materials and papers.[2] He went on to work at the Cultural Centre at Kahnawake and the Kahnawake Branch branch of the Mohawk Nation Office, creating new schemes for their collections.[3] The new systems Deer created were designed specifically for the materials in each collection according to the concerns of local Indigenous people at the time (for example, categories included land claims, treaty rights, resource management, and Elders' stories).[2][3] Between 1978 and 1980, the system was adapted for use in British Columbia by Gene Joseph and Keltie McCall while working at the Union of British Columbia Indian Chiefs.[1]

Though the Brian Deer Classification was not created as a universal classification solution for Indigenous resources, the system has provided a foundation for specialized libraries to create their own localized classification schemes.[3][4][24]

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Brian Deer Classification scheme

https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Brian_Deer_Classification_System

- The organizational structure of BDC reflects a First Nations worldview, with an emphasis on relationships between and among people, animals, and the land. Subcategories demonstrate the relationships among First Nations by grouping them geographically as opposed to alphabetically, as is frequently used for specific topics in the Library of Congress Classification.

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Recent Webinar on Brian Deer system

Registration

Oct 22, 11 am-12 noon MDT/10-11 am PST

"Everything's in 300": Moving from Dewey Decimal to BDC at the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council

The session will explore the development of a small Indigenous library through an examination of "lessons learned" during the implementation of the Brian Deer Classification System (BDC) at the Carrier Sekani Tribal Council. The session will include project planning and scoping, appraising the collection, classification development, tools and resources, and developing manuals and teaching guides for cataloguing work.

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ATTEMPTS TO CHANGE MORE GLOBAL GUIDELINES AND STANDARDS

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ALA: Alternatives to "Illegal Aliens"
https://alair.ala.org/handle/11213/14582

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Change the Subject
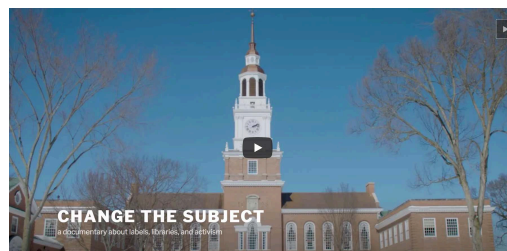
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Change the Subject

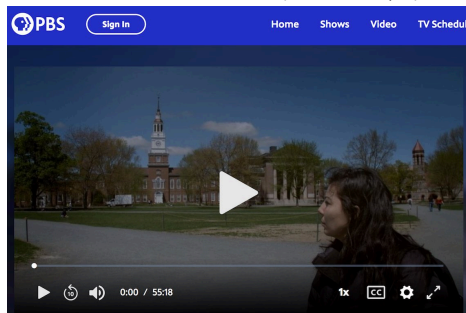Besser--AMIA 2020   29

Change the Subject

- "The story of Dartmouth College students, whose singular effort at confronting an instance of anti-immigrant sentiment in their library catalog took them all the way from Baker-Berry Library to the halls of Congress. This film shows how an instance of campus activism entered the national spotlight, and how a cataloging term became a flashpoint in the immigration debate on Capitol Hill. "

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Change the Subject
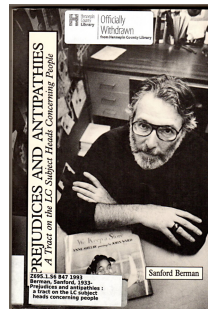available on PBS until 12/19 (Made Here 9|22)

Prejudices and Antipathies (1971)
https://www.sanfordberman.org/prejant.htm

Prejudices and Antipathies (1971)
https://www.sanfordberman.org/prejant.htm

Table of Contents

GUIDES AND PUBLIC STATEMENTS ON MAKING YOUR COLLECTION LESS OFFENSIVE

List of Statements on Bias in Library and Archives Description
http://cataloginglab.org/list-of-statements-on-bias-in-library-and-archives-description/

- 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.
  - *last updated October 5 2020*

Bias in Description—links (excerpt)

- Australian Institute of Aboriginal and Torres Strait Islander Studies (AIATSIS). [Sensitivity message appears as a pop-up with information about language used in resources]
- Brown University Library. Terminology [statement on African American history description]
- DPLA Black Women's Suffrage Digital Collection. Harmful Language Statement
- Drexel University Libraries. Statement on Harmful Content in Archival Collections.
- Emory University Rose Library. Harmful Language in Finding Aids
- Library and Archives Canada. Historical language advisory
- National Library of Australia. [Statement on the bottom of each catalog page]
- National Library of Australia. Trove [database aggregator]. [Pop up statement with option to "show cultural advice" on materials considered culturally sensitive]
- Philadelphia Museum of Art. Ethical Cataloging Statement
- Presbyterian Historical Society. Digital Collection Offensive Language Policy
- Princeton University Library. Statement on Language in Archival Description
- P.T. Barnum Museum. A Note on Language and Disabilities
- Stanford Special Collections and University Archives. Statement on Potentially Harmful Language in Cataloging and Archival Description

Guidelines for Inclusive and Conscientious Description
Harvard Center for the History of Medicine
https://wiki.harvard.edu/confluence/display/hmschommanual/
Guidelines+for+Inclusive+and+Conscientious+Description

Dashboard / Center for the History of Medicine: Policies & Procedures Manual / Description

Guidelines for Inclusive and Conscientious Description
Created by Charlotte G. Lellman, last modified on Nov 05, 2020

- Introduction
- Guidelines
  - Identity & Naming
  - Recognition, Language, & Power
  - Audience & Accessibility
  - Challenging Content
- References
  - Community Mission & Values
  - Works Cited
  - Additional Resources

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Anti-Racist Description Resources
https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf

ARCHIVES FOR
BLACK LIVES
IN PHILADELPHIA

ANTI-RACIST DESCRIPTION RESOURCES

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Voice and Style (1/2)
Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources
https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf

- Unlearn the "neutral" voice of traditional archival description. Rather than striving for an "objective" voice, which reinforces existing power structures, base description in the question: "Is the descriptive language I am using respectful to the larger communities of people invested in this record?" Decenter "neutrality" and "objectivity" in favor of "respect" and "care."
- Avoid passive voice (or passive language in linked data predicates) when describing oppressive relationships. Use active voice in order to embed responsibility within description. For example, consider the difference between these two sentences:
  - 1) "Four Kent State University students were killed on May 4, 1970, during a clash between the Ohio National Guard and a crowd gathered to protest the Vietnam War."
  - 2) "Members of the Ohio National Guard killed four Kent State University students during a mass protest against the Vietnam War

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Voice and Style (2/2)
Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources
https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf

- Use accurate and strong language such as lynching, rape, murder, and hate mail when they are appropriate. Do not let your discomfort with the terms censor the material. It is okay to be uncomfortable with racist material. It is not okay to privilege your discomfort above accurate description.
- » Describe relationships of power when they are important for understanding the context of records. Racism, slurs, white supremacy, colonialism, and histories of oppression are important context.
  - For example, "Thomas Jefferson was a known enslaver despite his legacy as a supporter of individual rights."

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Community Collaboration (1/3)
Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources
https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf

- Describe records in a way that supports the information-seeking needs of stakeholder communities, not just academic scholars.
  - Develop and maintain relationships with community members/stakeholders in order to learn language that the audience recognizes and uses to refer to itself.
  - Consider the needs of family historians and genealogists who may not be seeking "a fact or date, but to create a larger narrative, connect with others in the past and in the present, and to find coherence in one's own life;" provide opportunities for genealogists and other researchers who may want to "give back" by contributing description or connect socially with one another.
  - Take into account potential human rights uses of records, as well as the interests of survivors of abuses. This involves avoiding the inclusion of information or linkages that could put living persons at risk, providing descriptions in languages used by stakeholder communities, and creating metadata about the intentional destruction or accidental preservation of records, which could be mobilized as evidence in human rights proceedings.

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Community Collaboration (1/3)
Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources
https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf

- When drafting archivist-supplied description and notes, use terminology that Black people use to describe themselves, while recognizing that the Black community is not a monolith, and different people will have different and sometimes conflicting preferences. Be mindful that terminology changes over time, so description will be an iterative process.
  - Observe and take cues from the language of current historians, writers, artists, and others who are from (or descended from), specialize in, and have working relationships with the particular communities you're describing. For older records, this means consulting with experts who are knowledgeable about specific communities existing in a certain place and point in time.
  - If you ask people from marginalized communities to help with description, be respectful of their time/labor and provide compensation. Do your homework first, and don't ask others to provide information you can easily find yourself. Pay them for their work.

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Community Collaboration (1/3)

Philadelphia Anti-Racist Description Resources
https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf

- Make sure institution-created description is assessed by outside communities.
  - Provide a feedback mechanism such as creating a highly visible "Suggest a Correction" button or comment form on online finding aids, and make it clear that you welcome this kind of feedback.
  - Provide mechanisms for users to annotate finding aids.26
  - Organize focus groups with community members and incorporate feedback into archival description.
  - For description to be assessed by outside communities, it must be discoverable. If online finding aids are difficult to locate and access, or if description exists on websites that are hard to navigate, community members may be less likely to interact with them.

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READINGS AND LINKS

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Further Readings on Harmful Language

https://dca.tufts.edu/about/policies/Additional-Reading-Potentially-Harmful-Language-in-Archival-Description

Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia Anti-Racist Working Group. "Anti-Racist Description Resources." October 2019. https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf

Disability History Museum. "FAQs." Accessed October 2019. https://www.disabilitymuseum.org/dhm/lib/FAQ.html

Report of the PCC Ad Hoc Task Group on Gender in Name Authority Records. October 4, 2016. https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/documents/Gender_375%20field_RecommendationReport.pdf

Social Networks and Archival Context. "SNAC Cooperative Demographics Statement." Accessed October 2019. https://portal.snaccooperative.org/node/359

Adler, Melissa. "Case for Taxonomic Reparations". Knowledge Organization. 2016, Vol. 43 Issue 8, p 630-640.

Berry, Dorothy. "Digitizing and Enhancing Description Across Collections to Make African American Materials More Discoverable on Umbra Search African American History." Diversity for Design case study. Accessed July 17, 2019. https://des4div.library.northeastern.edu/digitizing-and-enhancing-description-across-collections-to-make-african-american-materials-more-discoverable-on-umbra-search-african-american-history/

Billey, Amber. Just Because We Can, Doesn't Mean We Should: An Argument for Simplicity

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Links

- http://besser.tsoa.nyu.edu/howard/Talks
- https://wiki.harvard.edu/confluence/display/hmschommanual/Guidelines+for+Inclusive+and+Conscientious+Description
- https://archivesforblacklives.files.wordpress.com/2019/10/ardr_final.pdf
- http://cataloginglab.org/list-of-statements-on-bias-in-library-and-archives-description/
- https://dca.tufts.edu/about/policies/Additional-Reading-Potentially-Harmful-Language-in-Archival-Description
- http://critlib.org/about/critcat/

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