

Reparative Description Resources for Cataloging & Archives

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LibGuides, Toolkits and other

[Association of Tribal Archives, Libraries and Museums](#). Includes directory of participating institutions, current projects such as the Doris Duke Native Oral History Revitalization Project, Going Home: Returning Materials Culture to Native Communities.

[All Nations LibGuide](#), American Library Association

“Here is historical insight on Tribal librarianship advocacy and significant outcomes. It also contains scholarship on library services, research needs, library associations and organizations unique to tribal libraries and Indigenous librarians and library workers. There is also a bibliography on advancements in decolonizing library knowledge organization systems to meet the needs of the tribal and extended communities.”- from main page.

[American Indians in Children’s Literature](#). Established in 2006 by Dr. Debbie Reese of Nambé Pueblo, American Indians in Children's Literature (AICL) provides critical analysis of Indigenous peoples in children's and young adult books. Dr. Jean Mendoza joined AICL as a co-editor in 2016. (Site redesign on January 8, 2025)

[Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia: Anti-Racist Description Resources](#).

“Archives for Black Lives in Philadelphia (A4BLiP), as part of its commitment to anti-oppression values, especially our commitment to critically examine archival theory and practice, has compiled research and case studies created by archivists across the field into a set of best practice recommendations for an anti-oppressive approach to creating and remediating archival description. While there is no single set of recommendations that can address racism within archival description, we hope that this document will help synthesize and elevate important work archivists are doing surrounding ethical and anti-oppressive description.”-- from introduction of handbook.

[Cataloging Lab: The Cataloging Lab](#) was started to be a collaborative place to draft proposals for additions or revisions to LCSH. Learn more about the origin and impetus of the site in this [Library Journal article](#). Over the years, it’s grown to host a number of crowdsourced lists as well. Some of the most popular lists are the [list of statements on bias in library and archives description](#) and the list of [problem LCSH](#).

[A Code of Ethics for Catalogers, Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee.](#) At the request of their membership and for the benefit of all staff creating, sharing, enriching & maintaining metadata, the cataloguing communities of the United States, Canada and the United Kingdom are tasked with compiling a Code of Ethics for Cataloguers. It will be a dynamic document embodying the collective experiences and wisdom of our community of practice and will consist of a framework, with guidance and examples of best practice, which can be shared across the cataloguing community. The Code will be a collaborative and inclusive project managed by a Cataloguing Ethics Steering Committee directing a number of Working Groups consisting of individuals drawn from diverse geographical, ethnic and library sectors.

[Bureau of Indian Affairs: Tribal Leaders Directory,](#) can find tribal websites and other contact information by BIA region, state or tribe.

[Crash Course in the Brian Deer Classification System, Simon Fraser University Library.](#)

[Disability Language Style Guide,](#) National Center on Disability and Journalism, Arizona State University. “As language, perceptions and social norms change rapidly, it is becoming increasingly difficult for journalists and other communicators to figure out how to refer to people with disabilities. Even the term “disability” is not universally accepted. This style guide, which covers dozens of words and terms commonly used when referring to disability, can help. The guide was developed by the National Center on Disability and Journalism at Arizona State University’s Walter Cronkite School of Journalism and Mass Communication and was last updated in the summer of 2021.”-- homepage.

[Drafting the inclusive metadata statement, ShareOK, advancing Oklahoma scholarship, research and institutional memory .](#)

“Offensive/outdated terminology in library cataloging standards has been discussed for some years now, particularly around the subject heading “illegal aliens.” A recent trend in library cataloging and technical services departments has been to create public statements that acknowledging these problems to their communities and actions that have been or will be taken to address offensive/outdated terminology found in our standards. The professional catalogers at the University of Central Oklahoma teamed up in summer 2021 to create such a statement, and this lightning talk will address why we created this statement, how we structured this statement, and our own steps for transforming words into actions.”-- abstract.

[Full Stack Feminism Toolkit,](#) Irish Research Council: “1) Data and Archives; (2) Infrastructure, Tools and Code; and (3) Access, Experience and Integration. Submissions contain practical advice and reflections on various topics, including AI, inclusive data, digital preservation, and techno-feminist design, among others.”- from homepage.

[A Guide to Conscious Editing at Wilson Special Collections Library,](#)

University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill. “Among other topics, the publication’s table of contents includes discussions of such challenges as:

- Centering Indigenous Epistemologies
- Rectifying Ableist Language
- Rectifying the Erasure and Misrepresentation of People of Color
- Gendering and Misgendering
- Revealing the Woman Behind Mrs. Husband’s Name
- Describing Relationships of Power by Identifying People Claimed as Property in Family Papers
- Removing the Invisible Norm of Protestant Christianity.

Short bibliographies accompany each distinct chapter which may prove useful to the reader. In addition, the disparate bibliographies have been compiled in a single segment at the back of the book.”-- homepage.

[Full PDF GUIDE HERE](#)

[Harmful Language in Library Resource Descriptions LibGuide,](#) Michigan State University.

[Full Stack Feminism Toolkit](#). “The FSF-Toolkit contains resources, best practice guides, reflections, and documentation which relate to feminist approaches to research and technology. A major output of the 'Full Stack Feminism in Digital Humanities' project, this toolkit is a collaborative resource which opens up the possibilities of developing technology which is socially aware and responsible. Driven by intersectional feminist principles and values, contributions in the FSF-Toolkit cover topics related to inclusive data practices, feminist listening, and feminist HCI design principles, among others.”-homepage.

[Inclusive Description, Society of American Archivists \(SAA\)](#): “This is an evolving list of resources for archivists seeking guidance on how to describe collections in a more inclusive way. Inclusive description is description which recognizes that no archival function is neutral, including description, but that actions can be taken to remediate and avoid bias and harmful language in finding aids, catalog records, and other description. It is the hope of the Description Section that providing a centralized list of these resources will assist archivists in remediating and avoiding language which harms BIPOC (Black, Indigenous, and People of Color), LGBTQIA+ people, people with disabilities, working class people, and other marginalized groups of people.”-- homepage. [Description Section Documentation Portal](#) (includes guidelines, checklists and templates).

[Indigenous Metadata Resources,](#) Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC)

Created by Matthew Haugen, last modified by Rhea Taylor on January 7th, 2025. From the Advisory Committee on Equity, Diversity, Inclusion, Belonging, and Accessibility (EDIBA). Includes Best Practices on Authority Work Related to Indigenous Nations in the U.S., Global Indigenous Data Alliance (GIDA), Creating Subject Headings for Indigenous Topics, National Indigenous Knowledge and Language Alliance, Collaboratory for Indigenous Collections, and more!

[Indigenous Studies LibGuide](#), Kwantlen Polytechnic University

Extensive collection of libguides on a variety of topics: Indigenous intellectual property, research methods and special topics like Residential Schools, Community Justice, Two-Spirit people, etc.

[Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources](#), Trans Metadata Collective, University of Texas at Austin. “This document is the result of a year of work and collaboration by the Trans Metadata Collective (TMDC; <https://transmetadatacollective.org/>), a group of dozens of cataloguers, librarians, archivists, scholars, and information professionals with a concerted interest in improving the description and classification of trans and gender diverse people in GLAMS (Galleries, Libraries, Archives, Museums and Special Collections). The Collective’s primary goal was to develop a set of best practices for the description, cataloguing, and classification of information resources as well as the creation of metadata about trans and gender diverse people, including authors and other creators.”-- homepage.

[Protocols for Native America Archival Materials](#), working group via Northern Arizona University Cline Library. “These *Protocols* are presented to guide libraries and archives in engaging in culturally responsive care of Native American archival materials and in providing culturally appropriate service to communities. Librarians and archivists should be aware that each tribe, band, and community is unique. The recommended best practices will need to be interpreted and applied by each collecting institution and community.

The *Protocols* address:

- The recognition of the sovereign governments and associated rights of Native American communities.
- Issues in the collection, ownership, preservation, handling, access, and use of American Indian archival resources.
- The importance of building relationships, balancing different approaches to knowledge management, and mutual respect.
- The need to expand the nature of the information professions to include Native American perspectives and knowledge.”- from preamble.

[Reparative Archival Description Working Group LibGuide](#), Yale University. Includes project process for Women's Names, Japanese Americans incarceration during WWII, presentations and publications.

[Reparative description in Archives and Special Collections](#), LibGuide, University of Minnesota. Excellent collection of resources and guidance on harmful language and procedures: Content notice decision tree, digital repositories statement, Anti-racism statement.

[Society of American Archivist Core Values Statement and Code of Ethics](#). The *Core Values of Archivists* and the *Code of Ethics for Archivists* are intended to be used together to guide individuals who perform archival labor or who work in archival environments. These aspirational values and ethical principles help shape SAA's expectations for professional actions and engagement.

[This is America: Creating Anti-Racist Metadata for Digital Collections](#), A. Laura Ramirez, University of Houston. Handout showing examples of how to update legacy metadata such as subject terms, display of original title and alternative title.

[Writing About Slavery/Teaching About Slavery: A Community - Sourced Document](#). P. Gabrielle Foreman, et al. "Senior slavery scholars of color community-sourced this short guide to share with and be used by editors, presses, museums, journalists and curricular projects as well as by teachers, writers, curators, archivists, librarians and public historians."--from homepage.

Indexes/Controlled Vocabulary

[African Studies Thesaurus](#), African Studies Centre Leiden. "A structured vocabulary of more than 13000 English terms in the field of African studies, the African Studies Thesaurus is developed and maintained by staff at the library of the African Studies Centre Leiden. It is used for indexing and retrieving material in the library collection and is directly linked to the catalogue."-- from homepage.

[Homosaurus- An International LGBTQ+ Linked Data Vocabulary](#)

"Welcome to the Homosaurus! The Homosaurus is an international linked data vocabulary of Lesbian, Gay, Bisexual, Transgender, and Queer (LGBTQ) terms. This vocabulary is intended to function as a companion to broad subject term vocabularies, such as the Library of Congress Subject Headings. Libraries, archives, museums, and other institutions are encouraged to use the Homosaurus to support LGBTQ research by enhancing the discoverability of their LGBTQ resources."-- homepage.

[Global Library for Antiracism & Digital Citizenship](#), “The *Anti-racism Thesaurus* is an attempt to express the concepts and terms that are the essence of humankind as one global human family. In keeping with the linked data movement, we envision the *Thesaurus* to be a series of small, extensible, controlled vocabularies (e.g. schema.org). Thus, the [Glossary](#), an alphabetical list of terms and their definitions has some of the word stock for developing the hierarchy and relationships. Glossary terms and phrases, when completed, will describe anti-racism policies, strategies, and movements, beyond the context of the U.S.A. but in the global arena.”--homepage

[List of Alternative Vocabularies](#), Cataloging Lab. “Welcome to the Cataloging Lab! This is a place for catalogers and anyone who cares about library metadata to experiment with creating better controlled vocabularies. Suggesting additions and changes to the Library of Congress Subject Headings vocabulary can be an isolating endeavor—it can be difficult to determine if your heading has already been proposed or if someone else is working on a proposal at the same time you are. The Cataloging Lab is designed to be a wiki where folks can collaborate on headings together to create stronger proposals.”-- from homepage.

[Native American Tribes](#), First Nations Development Institute. Directories for Federal Register of tribal names, tribal leader names, non-federal directory on tribe names.

Free Webinars/Videos

[Change the Subject, Dartmouth University](#). *Change the Subject* (2019) is a 54-minute documentary film about a group of Dartmouth students who challenged anti-immigrant language in the Library of Congress subject headings.

[Controlled Vocabularies in Practice: Reparative Description](#), Society of American Archivists. “SAA's Technical Subcommittee on Encoded Archival Standards (TS-EAS) and Description Section hosted a webinar on April 12, 2023 to discuss how repositories select and use controlled vocabularies to meet community needs. The presentations also addressed some of the difficulties presented by these vocabularies when addressing difficult topics, particularly reparative description. Speakers included Ashley Gosselar (moderator), Michelle Cronquist, Rachel Aileen Searcy, and John DeSantis.”-Youtube description. [Slides](#).

[Every Step You Take: Practical Steps for Inclusive & Reparative Description](#) (Video), Betts Coup (October 2021), Houghton Library, Harvard University. “In this talk, Betts Coup will discuss several aspects of creating out inclusive and reparative archival description. From advocacy approaches to carrying out

inclusive and reparative description at accessioning, throughout a large-scale backlog project, and as part of a large-scale reparative reprocessing project, Coup will speak about the reasons why this work is so important and go through practical, applicable steps for improving access to archival materials for a broad range of users.”-Youtube description.

[Implementing Reparative Description for Indigenous Collections](#), (Video) Society of American Archivists. “Hosted by the SAA Native American Archives Section (NAAS), this discussion focused on implementing reparative description practices. Panelists: • defined reparative description, especially as it relates to Native/Indigenous archival collections; • discussed the importance of reparative description, but also its limitations; • contextualized reparative description within broader conversations happening inside and outside of the archives field; • offered real-world examples from their own experiences; and • suggested resources that participants can consult to learn more. The discussion included a Q&A with panelists at the end.”--Youtube description.

[National Indigenous Knowledge & Language Alliance](#), Video Collection.

Using Linked Data to Improve LGBTQ+ Description.

Revising Legacy Vocabulary: Interim updates to Indigenous related terminology in the Canadiana Collections.

Learning from Indigenous Voices.

Subject-headings describing Indigenous Peoples in the RVM: a tailor-made methodology, an extraordinary project.

Respectful Terminology: Creating a National Framework.

[Practical Approaches to Reparative Description Workshop Series](#), Digital Public Library of America.

[Representations of Gender and Sexuality in Metadata](#), “Capturing information about gender and sexuality in descriptive metadata often surfaces questions and unique considerations about how to effectively maximize exposure of diverse collections without mislabeling or putting members of vulnerable communities at increased risk. Presenters shared a variety of perspectives on strategies for how to approach the capture of this information, as well as how to implement existing resources to help enhance collection metadata.”--description from homepage.

[Local Contexts: Tools for Supporting Indigenous Rights and Interests in Collections](#), “Every Indigenous community has cultural and biological knowledge within educational systems, archives, libraries, and museums that they do not own, do not control, and cannot govern circulation over. Local Contexts is a global nonprofit organization that was founded to address the needs of Indigenous communities and local organizations who wanted a practical

method to deal with the range of intellectual property issues that arise in relation to managing cultural heritage materials. The Local Contexts Traditional Knowledge and Biocultural Labels and Notices are tools for Indigenous communities and collections- and research-based institutions to support Indigenous cultural authority and data sovereignty. In this webinar, hosted by the DPLA Rights Statements Working Group, the Local Contexts team introduced the Labels and Notices and how they can be used to support Indigenous rights and interests in collections and data.”--description from homepage.

[Special Projects in Reparative & Inclusive Description](#), “In this final workshop of the series, presenters shared how they approached description projects for special collections at their universities. Projects included: reparative description for Nazi publications identified in the collection, expanding access to electronic agricultural extension reports through non-English language subject headings, and applying content statements and strategies for graphic images/thumbnails.” --description from homepage.

[Redescription as Restorative Justice](#), (Video) Tonia Sutherland, University of Hawai’i. “Dr. Tonia Sutherland is an Assistant Professor in the Department of Information and Computer Sciences at the University of Hawai’i at Mānoa. She gave this talk on Nov. 19, 2020 as part of the LDL as Data Online Speaker Series. In this talk, Dr. Sutherland addresses the growing complexities that have arisen at the intersection of description and digitization, speaking to questions such as when and why redescription practices are engaged; whether improved access as a result of digitization has a role to play in redescription; how mass digitization results in automated standardization of harmful description at scale; and the ways that aggregation amplifies and legitimizes problematic description. She begins by considering the actions taken by four college and university archives after racist materials, specifically yearbook images of students in black- and brownface, were publicly uncovered. She then addresses concerns around digitized slavery era archives that reproduce the destructive practices used by enslavers and colonizers. Sutherland also identifies developing redescription practices that model archival harm-reduction such as community-centered archival description and pre-digitization descriptive remediation.”-- YouTube description.

[Righting/Writing the Wrongs in Archival Description](#) 3 part webinar series, Conservation ConneCTion: “This 3-part [FREE] webinar series will help archivists identify and correct outdated and harmful language used in archival descriptions and finding aids. Presenters are archivists currently engaged in this work and will help participants identify harmful terms, use inclusive descriptive language, and involve community groups in the process. While this program is open to anyone responsible for archival collections, the webinar series is directed to those who write finding aids and archival collection descriptions. Presenters include archivists from Yale University Libraries, Connecticut Museum of Culture & History, and the Connecticut State Archives.”-- homepage.

Articles

July 23, 2015. Sullivan, Doreen. [A brief history of homophobia in Dewey decimal classification](#). Overland literary journal.

August 18, 2021. Joseph, Christina. Move Over, Melvil! [Momentum Grows to Eliminate Bias and Racism in the 145-year-old Dewey Decimal System](#). School Library Journal.

May 22, 2015. Baumann, Jason. [LGBTQ Publishing: File Under Queer, a look at how readers have found LGBTQ literature, from the 1950's to today](#). Publishers Weekly.

November 20, 2018. Nunes, Zita Cristina. [Cataloging Black Knowledge: How Dorothy Porter Assembled and Organized a Premier Africana Research Collection](#).

Frizzell, Sasha, "[Classification from the margins : three alternative classification systems, 1930-1975](#)" (2023). Library Scholarship. 75. https://orb.binghamton.edu/librarian_fac/75

[Brochure for Maawn Doobiigeng \(Gather Together\)](#) About the new organization system at the Saginaw Chippewa Tribal Libraries.

[Notes on the Dewey Decimal System](#). Hazal Hurman and Angelika Joseph, Princeton University. "This virtual exhibit explores the deaccession of outdated language from the library catalogs in the Princeton University and beyond, the introduction of more contemporary and progressive language, and what remains after the wake of these changes finally settle. All catalog items listed in the Princeton University Library now feature a [statement](#) informing users of the deaccession of certain words from the library search in an attempt to list "materials in a manner that is respectful to the individuals and communities who create, use, and are represented in the collections," and what to do if the users would like to deaccession another word or phrase from this listing. Instead of simply deaccessioning outdated language, library staff added new, more politically correct language, while leaving records of what was once there."- from introduction.