Subject Analysis Committee

Presentation: “Coming to Terms with the New LC Vocabularies: Genre/Form (Literature, Music, General), Demographic Groups and Medium of Performance”

Janis Young (LC), Adam Schiff (University of Washington) and Hermine Vermeij (UCLA) gave a presentation on the new vocabularies available to catalogers. Young spoke on the overall history of the projects and covered broad concepts underpinning these postcoordinate thesauri. Schiff discussed the history of the general terms and literature terms projects (both coming to fruition in 2015). Lastly, Vermeij covered the music vocabularies: LCMPT (released 2014) and the music portion of LCGFT (released 2015).

Report of the liaison from the Library of Congress Policy and Standards Division (Janis Young)

LCSH updates:

- Instruction sheets H 202 and H 203 in the Subject Headings Manual are being updated to aid catalogers in the proper carrying out and documenting of research for SACO proposals.
- A new instruction sheet (H 1366.5) was issued for formulating headings for undifferentiated choreographic works.
- In February 2015, Bosnia and Hercegovina was removed from the list of exceptions in LC-PCC PS 16.2.2.3. Over 80 subject headings containing “Bosnia and Herzegovina” have been updated to reflect the BGN-approved form of name of this country.
- “Romance literature” and associated headings have been changed to “Romance-language literature” to reduce confusion with the literary genre, which will be changed from “Love stories” to “Romance fiction.” The project to revise these headings is being undertaken in two parts in order to give libraries time to update their bibliographic records for Romance-language literary works before the changes are made to “Love stories.” Since the former heading “Romance fiction” (meaning fiction in Romance languages) will be the same as the revised heading for “Love stories”, confusion could result if both headings were revised at the same time.
- PSD policy specialists have begun to notice a significant uptick in the number of proposals for geographic subject headings that cite http://www.geonames.org. Geonames.org should not be confused with the official websites of the BGN, although the URLs look similar.
LCGFT updates:

**Music terms:** In February 2015 PSD approved approximately 567 genre/form terms for musical works. The terms appeared on Approved List 1514 ([http://classificationweb.net/approved-subjects/1514.html](http://classificationweb.net/approved-subjects/1514.html)). Approximately 100 terms remain from the original working list compiled by the Music Library Association Genre/Form Task Force. Particular categories of terms that have been held over for further discussion include those that overlap into and conflict with other domains (literature and performing arts, mostly), those whose scope notes need clarification, and those whose suitability for LCGFT is in question. These remaining terms are being approved via the regular monthly lists, and it is hoped the project will be completed by the end of 2015. Among these, the term “Librettos” will be expedited, as it is a highly needed term.

**Literature terms:** In May 2015, PSD approved approximately 230 genre/form terms for literary works, which was about half of the proposals that appeared on Tentative List 1515. The list of terms that were approved may be viewed at [http://classificationweb.net/approved-subjects/1515.html](http://classificationweb.net/approved-subjects/1515.html). Review of the remaining proposals was postponed due to staffing and workload levels within PSD. Proposals from Tentative List 1515 that were not reviewed now appear on Tentative List 1516 ([http://classificationweb.net/tentative-subjects/1516.html](http://classificationweb.net/tentative-subjects/1516.html)), and will be approved in September 2015.

**Religion terms:** The religion genre/form project is a collaboration between PSD and the American Theological Library Association. Tentative List 1518, which comprises the initial terms for religious materials, is available at [http://classificationweb.net/tentative-subjects/1518.html](http://classificationweb.net/tentative-subjects/1518.html). It will be approved in September 2015. Comments on the proposals may be sent to Janis L. Young ([jayo@loc.gov](mailto:jayo@loc.gov)) by August 31, 2015.

**Proposals for new and revised genre/form terms:** PSD is not currently accepting proposals for new and revised terms in the areas of music, literature, religion, or the “general” terms (e.g., handbooks, dictionaries), but continues to accept proposals in the areas of moving images, non-musical recorded sound, cartography, and law.

**LC implementation of new genre/form terms:** The Music Division and the Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, which catalog music, books on music, and musical sound recordings, began to implement genre/form terms in new cataloging in April and May 2015, respectively. Library of Congress’ Acquisitions and Bibliographic Access Directorate, which catalogs most of the textual works acquired for the Library’s general collections, has not yet decided when it will implement the “general,” religion, and literature genre/form terms.

**Status of Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms (LCDGT):**
A Tentative List comprising the pilot vocabulary and the guiding principles under which it was developed were made available for public comment in May 2015 (see http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/lcdgt-announcement.html for the announcement). The three goals of the LCDGT pilot were to indicate how LC intends to structure the vocabulary, provide consistent patterns for future development, and generate a discussion that will help inform LC as it fine-tunes the guiding principles. There was no attempt at comprehensiveness within the vocabulary, but representative terms from each category were included. Some terms were incorporated because they illustrate a particular problem (e.g., a conflict situation) and the solution to that problem.

The pilot vocabulary was revised and approved in June 2015, and PSD thanks all those who provided their insights. PSD will now undertake a second phase of development and enhance LCDGT’s scope and coverage. Since the initial development of LCDGT will take place within PSD, proposals for new and revised terms are not being accepted at this time.

PSD recommends that libraries wait until the second phase of development is completed before widely implementing LCDGT in cataloging; the vocabulary is not yet robust enough to support general use. Libraries that choose to implement immediately do so at their own risk.

Report of the RDA Subcommittee (Robert Maxwell)

The RDA Subcommittee submitted a proposal to SAC to allow coding of subject and genre/form relationships in authority records for works. Currently, the obstacle to putting this in practice is the proscription (in the LC Guidelines Supplement to the MARC 21 Format for Authority Data) from using the necessary 5xx fields, which are defined in MARC. The proposal outlines the changes in the NACO documentation that will be necessary to allow encoding these relationships. With the newly-added RDA Appendix M (included in the April 2015 Toolkit release), the relationship designator “subject” and its narrower terms are now available for encoding subject relationships. The designator “genre/form” could also be used (though it is not included in RDA at this time).

One major complication to this proposal is the requirement that all access points in 5xx fields in NACO authority records have corresponding authority records of their own. Since LCSH headings are built by combining headings and subdivisions, while each component piece of the heading may have an authority record, the string as a whole may not. The coding in the 5xx field could be used to specify whether the entire field is backed by its own authority record, or whether the string is simply constructed according to LCSH policies (currently, coding in bibliographic records denotes the latter).

SAC voted to pass the proposal on to PCC Policy Committee, who will no doubt need to address the aforementioned complication.
As at the past Midwinter meeting in Chicago, significant portions of the SGFI business meetings were devoted to work on the forthcoming LC Genre/Form Terms Manual (working title), which will be scoped to include other non-LCSH vocabularies as well. As a preliminary step of this undertaking, SGFI reviewed dozens of Subject Heading Manual instruction sheets and repurposed them for inclusion in a new G/F manual. This exercise raised many high-level questions about LCGFT practices in general. Many sections will be ported over largely intact while others are not applicable at all. Still others required thoughtful reconsideration. At the Annual meeting in San Francisco, the group took a second pass through the repurposed documents and discussed further edits. A particularly vexing instruction sheet to repurpose is H 180 (“Assigning and Constructing Subject Headings”), as some of its component provisions (e.g., the rule of three, rule of four) are problematic and controversial in the postcoordinate environment of LCGFT. The subcommittee will continue discussions on this topic.

Among the instruction sheets that are new and not derived from the SHM are those treating creator/contributor characteristics, audience characteristics and time period of creation. The first two of these sheets will be finalized after LCDGT has been released and implementation is imminent, while the third awaits the possible development of yet another LC vocabulary, of chronological terms.

Guidance for music resources in the LC manual will be derived from MLA best practices. After MLA has revised the LCMPT best practices this summer/fall, PSD will gather feedback from the LC Music Division and MBRSD on both MLA best practices documents; content in the LC manual will likely be broad and high level, and will be based on those points where there is consensus between LC and MLA. MLA will continue to maintain its own best practices for these vocabularies for the foreseeable future.

Given the timeline for approval of the initial slate of literature terms in LCGFT (see LC report above), the Literature Terms Working Group will now go into a hiatus for the next six months, though they will keep their scheduled meeting time for ALA Midwinter.

After list 1516 is approved, the group will reexamine the approximately 100 terms from the original master list that had been held over while less controversial terms were put through the approval process. Of these, it is expected that approximately 60-70 will be resubmitted. It is also possible that the revised LC definition of “genre/form” will render previously questioned headings suitable for approval.

Proposal for Relator Terms for use with 751 Fields
SGFI Developed a proposal to the LC Network Development & MARC Standards Office for three new relator terms/codes that could be used in conjunction with geographic names in MARC bibliographic field 751:

*Origination place [orp]*
A place from which a work or expression originated

*Capture place [cap]*
A place associated with the capture (i.e., recording, filming, etc.) of the content of a resource

*Discovery place [dvp]*
A place where a natural object or artifact was discovered

After considerable back-and-forth, NDSMO decided in May 2015 to approve these terms. Further information on availability of the terms will be forthcoming.

**Proposal for Updating the Definition of Genre/Form in LCGFT Documentation**

A working group (on which Mullin served) was formed after Midwinter that was charged with consulting reference sources in all of the disciplines covered by (or soon covered by) LCGFT, with a view to offering a more appropriate working definition of “genre/form” across all disciplines. This revision to LC’s definition is needed, as proposals for new terms are evaluated based on the term’s adherence to this definition. The working group’s principal findings are:

- The terms *genre* and *form* are often used interchangeably in authoritative sources, and even when differentiated the resulting definitions are inconsistent and contradictory—formal structure is often cited as a key aspect of genre and intellectual content is considered as a key aspect of form
- There is substantial support among the consulted sources that genre/form types can have a single constitutive shared characteristic, and no consistent expectation that genre/form types must share multiple constitutive characteristics, nor that any specific shared aspect must be present across all genre/form types.
- A successful definition of genre/form for LCGFT would provide guidance to catalogers but remain sufficiently flexible to be applicable across all the included disciplines and consistent with the majority of other published definitions.
- The wording of the legacy definitions of genres and forms in the *Introduction to the Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials* appears to be based heavily on a conception of genre/form inherited from the Moving Image project, but needs updating in order to accommodate the new projects, following the principles stated above.
- With the addition of the Music project terms to LCGFT, and the pending addition of some Literature terms, there are several passages describing completed projects to date that will need to be updated whenever the revised *Introduction* is published.
The proposal then outlined specific wording changes that are needed in LC’s *Introduction*. The proposal was submitted to PSD in May 2015, and SGFI is awaiting a formal response.

Submitted by Casey Mullin, MLA-CMC Vocabularies Subcommittee Chair