BCC2008/SAS/2

Subject Access Subcommittee
2008 Conference Report
Covering the Program and Business Meetings
Feb. 21, 2008, 12:30-2 and 2-3:30
Submitted by Beth Flood

Genre/Form Project

One of the most prominent topics in both the program and the business meeting was the project to implement genre/form headings for music. Member of BCC and LC-CPSO subject representative Geraldine Ostrove have been in discussion about how to proceed with the genre/form project. The next steps will be determining how much of the conversion work MLA can contribute, and how much work CPSO can take on. Following that, a charge and proposal will be sent to the MLA Board for approval. An advisory group will be formed to set up the project and set up guidelines and processes.

SAS Sponsored Program

The Subject Access Subcommittee (SAS) sponsored a program on Feb. 21 entitled "Music Vocabularies and Subject Access." The program, which had over 75 attendees, featured four presentations: Geraldine Ostrove, speaking on genre/form implementation; a paper by Catherine Kerst (read by Gerry Ostrove) on the American Folklife Center's Ethnographic Thesaurus; Jenn Riley speaking on controlled vocabularies and the ways library systems need to utilize them in new ways; and Stacy Allison-Cassin speaking on social tagging and its relation to library catalogs.

Other topics from the Music Vocabularies program were discussed during the SAS business meeting which immediately followed the program. These topics are presented below.

SAS Business Meeting

Business meeting, Feb. 21, 2008. members present: Stacey Allison-Cassin, Keith Chapman, Patty Falk, Beth Flood (chair), Neil Hughes, Lynne Jaffe, Geraldine Ostrove (LC representative), Jenn Riley, John Wagstaff. Visitors present: 14.

A special thank-you goes to outgoing members Neil Hughes and Keith Chapman for their valuable contributions and time serving on this committee. Discussion during the meeting included the following highlights.

Library of Congress News.
A new LC report on the pros and cons of pre/post-coordination of subject headings has been made available at: http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/pre_vs_post.html.

In September, LC released the first batch of genre/form authority records, which were for moving images. Work is continuing in this area and now includes headings for radio terms.

LC has begun creating "validation records"--subject authority records for subject strings that include certain free-floating subdivisions. The goal of the project is to create records for commonly occurring valid subject strings to facilitate authorities validation in LC's Voyager database.

Genre/Form Headings
How will automated authority vendors (LTI, Marcive, etc.) be notified? How will the new/revised authority records be distributed and how will conversion be triggered in our catalogs? The headings themselves will be updated in Cataloger's Desktop and in other ways.

Regarding validation records, the general goal is that all headings will be supported by authority records, though LC will not be systematically creating headings if they are not needed.

Authority records will be needed more in newer, robust systems, which will rely on controlled vocabularies. More than headings created by strict rules, these systems need relationships between headings, which involve much more effort.

Social Tagging and Music Vocabularies

An important point of social tagging is the way language is changing and relating that language to subject construction. Subject thesauri are highly valued, but what about users who don't want to use terms hierarchically? There is need for a more thesaurus-like list of synonyms, and tagging can often be used to get lists of related terms.

Music vocabularies need to take into account geographic terms. Geographic subjects, while not strictly musical in nature, are particularly important for subject access to ethnographic music materials. If a clearinghouse for music subject vocabularies is created, geographic terms need to be included.

Regarding a music subject clearinghouse, it should be easy to add entries. There may be thesauri for instruments, forms/genres, and sociological terms, and these could be cross-listed. There are sources beyond traditional thesauri, such as Freebase and Musicbrains. Since they are created by enthusiasts, these could be good sources of popular terms in a similar way as social tagging. The most important thing in a project like this would be interoperability.

SACO Music Funnel

A SACO music funnel should probably operate out of MLA rather than MOUG, since it is not OCLC specific. A music funnel will provide a point person or persons for help with the proposal process, allowing individual librarians to go to the funnel coordinator for help and guidance. Also, with a national funnel, there is more incentive for catalogers (and administrators) to recognize the value of the work. Training will enable individual music catalogers who may not otherwise be able to participate to contribute subject terms.

Last updated April 23, 2008