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# It Takes a Village: Developing Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms

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*The Library of Congress (LC) is in the process of developing a separate thesaurus of genre/form terms, which describe what a work or expression is, rather than what it is about. From the beginning, LC policy specialists realized that to accomplish this undertaking, it would be both necessary and desirable to collaborate with the library community. This article examines and evaluates the various methods of collaboration used by LC in the creation of the genre/form thesaurus.*

KEYWORDS: *authority control, controlled vocabularies, genre/form terms, indexing vocabularies, LCGFT, Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials, audiovisual materials, law* materials

## INTRODUCTION

In 2007, the Cataloging Policy and Support Office of the Library of Congress, now the Policy and Standards Division (PSD), undertook an experiment to develop a thesaurus of genre/form terms in the discipline of moving images (films, television programs, and video recordings). The experiment was successful, and six more projects were added: non-musical sound recordings, chiefly radio programs; cartography; law; literature; music; and religion. Active development of the sound recording, cartography, and law projects is complete and the others are ongoing.

*Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials* (LCGFT), as the thesaurus is now known, is intended to fulfill the need for a unified, cohesive, multidisciplinary list of genre/form terms that provide for enhanced resource discovery. PSD envisions its use in a wide range of institutions, from research and academic to public and school libraries, as well as in archives.

A review of the literature revealed that other organizations that have developed new controlled vocabularies have experienced many of the same challenges that PSD and its partners are encountering. For instance, in their article on the *Kaunokki Finnish Fiction Thesaurus*, Jarmo Saarti and Kaisa Hypén discussed specificity versus depth of terminology. They noted that the context in which the thesaurus was to be used was important, because scholars and public library users have different needs. The thesaurus developers have tried to accommodate those differences. [1] After the first edition of the thesaurus was published, feedback from libraries indicated that the scope should be broadened to include not just "traditional text," but also "movies, comics, and so on,"[2] which was accomplished for the second edition.

When Barbara Brenny, Richard Duncan, and Hugh Kelsey set out to develop a thesaurus for the cataloging of Universal Design images, "they realized the biggest challenge would be keeping their creation simple, straightforward, and easy to understand."[3] This was particularly important because the thesaurus was intended to be applied by Universal Design practitioners, not by librarians. They examined existing controlled vocabularies such as *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (LCSH) and the *Art and Architecture Thesaurus* to find pertinent terms to use as the basis of the new thesaurus. As the Universal Design expert on the team, Duncan reviewed the terms and added terminology and scope notes.[4]

The impetus for the National Indian Law guiding principles of LCGFT development Library's development of a subject heading list to supplement LCSH was the submission of NILL's bibliographic records to a union catalog, which made it necessary to learn to apply LCSH. NILL had a local subject heading list, which was independent of LCSH; an initial review found that many local headings duplicated LC subject headings and could be removed. The staff of NILL then used the local subject headings list as the seed for developing specialized Indian law terminology that is not present in LCSH.[5]

Throughout the process, the NILL project managers consulted with other librarians and also with attorneys. Monica Martens states, "Volunteer Indian law attorneys participated in a brainstorming session about terminology, and library subject specialists gave feedback on the Thesaurus at various stages of its development. NILL librarians needed elaboration on terms related to … esoteric topics. Missing and preferred terms were also identified by consultants. Input from practicing attorneys at this stage was particularly valuable." Martens acknowledged that conflicting advice was sometimes received, at which time the NILL librarians chose the subject heading "perceived to best serve library users."[6]

The common denominator in all of these projects is collaboration with the constituencies for whom the vocabularies were developed. This is also one of the guiding principles of LCGFT development. PSD is actively working with the general library community in order to understand the needs of different constituencies, and has formally partnered with other organizations to develop terminologies and policies to fill those needs. This article focuses on methods of communication and collaboration employed for LC's completed projects. It will address informal outreach efforts such as public calls for comment and examine formal collaboration through a case study of the partnership between the American Association of Law Libraries and PSD to develop genre/form terms for law materials. The article will also address other formal collaborations, including those with other national organizations as well as with various units within the Library of Congress.


COLLABORATION WITHIN THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS


The moving image project was the first and was treated as an experiment through which PSD would determine whether it was feasible to develop a new terminology and policies governing the syntax and application of the terms. This project would also experiment with the methodology for creating the thesaurus, including collaboration.

Initial thesaurus development efforts occurred chiefly within the Library of Congress, and the Library's Motion Picture, Broadcasting, and Recorded Sound Division (MBRS) was closely involved in both the moving image and radio program projects. In the 1990s, MBRS had developed the successful *Moving Image Genre-Form Guide* (MIGFG)[7] and the *Radio Form-Genre Guide* (RADFG)[8] but the thesauri were not updated because there was no mechanism or staff time to do so. MBRS therefore asked whether the Cataloging Policy and Support Office (now PSD) could absorb the thesauri into LCSH, which is updated regularly through a time-tested process.

Although Janis L. Young, the coordinator of the genre/form projects, had extensive experience in cataloging works of criticism about moving image works and radio programs, she had limited knowledge of the cataloging practices for the non-book materials themselves. Therefore, collaboration with others having specialized knowledge was a key element in the process from the beginning.

During the earliest stages of the project, moving image catalogers and PSD staff developed an initial list of moving image genre/form terms by examining LCSH to find existing headings that denote forms and genres of moving images. To that they added selected terms from MIGFG and *Moving Image Materials: Genre Terms* (MIM).[9] Significant decisions about the scope of the new thesaurus had to be made as headings were selected for inclusion. The existing LC subject headings originally had been proposed to describe works about films and television programs. Should all of those headings be included in the genre/form thesaurus, even if purists and scholars do not consider a particular phrase to be a genre or a form? Are language and nationality part of the genre and form? How granular should the terms be? And most fundamentally, what is a film?

Expert catalogers and policy specialists met to discuss these issues many times over the course of several months, and communicated over e-mail between meetings. Some of the questions were answered more readily than others. For instance, the decision to exclude nationality and language from the genre/form thesaurus was relatively easy once the definitions of genre and form were examined.

MIM defines genre as encompassing "any recognized category of fictional works which is characterized by recognizable conventions, i.e., a group of works all of which tend to explore the same themes and use the same plot formulae, character-types, and icons."[10] MIGFG agrees with this definition and expands on it. In its view, genres "contain conventions of narrational strategy and organizational structure, using similar themes, motifs, settings, situations, and characterizations. In this way, the makers of moving image works use recognizable patterns of storytelling that are readily understood by audiences. Typical formulas range from the varieties of Hollywood feature films to modes of nonfictional discourse."[11]

The two thesauri also agree in substance on the definition of form. MIM defines it as "any recognized category of works characterized by a particular format or purpose."[12] MIGFG says further, "Forms are defined as the basic categories indicating a moving image work's original exhibition and release parameters (such as length and medium), and which are separate from its actual content, not necessarily implying a particular narrative construction. Form terms include Feature, Short, Serial, Animation, and Television, and can be associated as needed with any genre…."[13]

The catalogers and policy specialists were able to agree that while works of a particular genre might differ slightly in mood or emphasis from country to country or language to language, the themes, motifs, settings, and so on, generally remain consistent. For example, two unrelated films, one produced in the United States and the other in Italy, could both fulfill MIGFG's definition of espionage film, which is, "Fictional work depicting spies and secret agents seeking to uncover or maintain secrets from each other and for one country or for the benefit of another. Living a masquerade, spies are usually cynical, amoral, deceitful, alienated, and ready to betray another person or cause, although these are often seen as merely the means to achieve a patriotic goal. Although the secrets often have a military application, the setting can be either during wartime or in the Cold War."[14]

Some of the other policy decisions were more contentious and often reflected the differences between the terminology of film scholarship and the terminology of the layperson. The definition of the word film was the first issue to be resolved. Traditionally and in scholarship, films are those works that are recorded on reel-to-reel film. The layperson's definition is often much

broader, particularly in today's digital world. Major motion pictures are now recorded on video tape and on digital media such as DVDs or, in the case of animated films such as *Toy Story*, are created by using computer software on a hard drive. Should LCGFT be strict in its definition, or should it be more encompassing? If the latter, not only LCGFT would be affected, but LCSH would have to be adjusted as well. The broader definition was adopted after much debate, reflecting PSD's desire for the thesaurus to be useful to as many constituencies as possible.

Another controversial decision that reflected the scholarly/lay divide was that of the validity of LCSH headings that film scholars do not consider to be genres or forms (e.g., **Batman films**; **Christmas films**; **Hockey films**).[15] Discussions centered around whether the genre/form thesaurus should represent scholarly views of what constitutes a genre or form, or whether it should be broader in scope and include terms that do not exhibit academic purity, but reflect the terminology that most library users are likely to employ. The decision was made to err on the side of inclusiveness. If an LC subject heading had the syntax of a genre/form term, then it would be included in LCGFT. That policy has since undergone refinement, as will be discussed below.

The project to develop radio program genre/form terms was a logical extension of the moving image project, since radio program genres and forms are similar to those for moving images. The radio program project followed the same trajectory as the one for moving images and was chiefly an effort to create authority records for the vocabulary already defined in the *Radio Form-Genre Guide*. In addition, LC's sound recordings catalogers and PSD collaborated to review terminology that already existed in LCSH. This project involved fewer contentious decisions, perhaps because LCSH includes far fewer headings describing types of radio programs than it does films and television programs; there is therefore less established policy. Using the moving image terms as a model, the sound recording catalogers and policy specialists were able to rather quickly determine what genres and forms should be represented in LCGFT.

In early 2009, PSD began a third project, to develop terminology for cartographic materials. As with the earlier projects, PSD relied heavily on expert catalogers to provide guidance. Catalogers from LC's Geography and Map Division suggested lists of terms, which policy specialists and catalogers researched. They then prepared proposals for inclusion of the terms in LCGFT. PSD also consulted with the catalogers on policies for assigning the terms.

## INFORMAL COLLABORATION WITH LIBRARY PROFESSIONALS OUTSIDE OF LC

One of the problems inherent in the development of a thesaurus intended for use by a broad spectrum of institutions, from public libraries to archives, lies in formulating policies and terminology that will serve all user groups. In order to make the vocabulary useful to a broad range of institutions, PSD would have to expand its collaboration efforts outside the Library of Congress. For the project to be successful, its goals and objectives, and, eventually, the rules and policies governing LCGFT's development and application, would have to be clearly stated and publicized. As noted by Jill Ellern in an article on successful project management, confusion can be kept to a minimum by keeping everyone informed, by asking lots of questions, and by communicating the answers as they are determined.[16]

To enhance communication, PSD developed a genre/form Web page[17] to serve as an archive of all of the documents that have been publicly released since the project's inception in 2007. It includes an FAQ, announcements, reports, and presentations, as well as discussion papers and links to other documents. According to Ellern, timely notice about changes brought by the project must be provided to stakeholders because, "depending on the project, patrons, vendors, and other libraries might need to have timely notice about the changes a project will mandate."[18] This has

certainly been true for the genre/form project, which has the potential to affect the way that cataloging is done in libraries throughout the world. Therefore, PSD has attempted to provide prior notice by making announcements well in advance of the additions of new vocabularies to LCGFT. For instance, in April 2009 PSD announced that genre/form terms for cartography would be added in May, and that the necessary cancellations to LCSH's form subdivisions would occur no earlier than July, at which point LC would implement the new genre/form terms. This provided three months' notice to those whose catalogs and bibliographic utilities would be affected.[19]

The decision to adjust the MARC (Machine Readable Cataloging) coding for genre/form terms from LCGFT was also announced well in advance of its implementation. The first announcement of this decision was made in June 2010,[20] with a timeline of late 2010 or early 2011. The implementation was delayed to allow OCLC to adjust its programming, and a subsequent announcement was released in May 2011, indicating that the coding would be adjusted later that month.[21]

Outreach and collaboration are not accomplished only through impersonal announcements, but also through presentations and workshops. The first public presentation was a short, informal one about the moving image project at the Online Audiovisual Catalogers' Cataloging Policy Committee meeting at the Annual Conference of the American Library Association (ALA) in 2007. Many more presentations and workshops have followed, including at ALA and elsewhere. Comments and questions from the audience are gathered at each presentation and reviewed by policy specialists. Audiences generally respond favorably to the idea of LC undertaking the project, but there are objections to some of the individual policies, particularly those regarding the scope of the thesaurus and the rules for applying the terms. After much internal discussion, PSD often confirms many of its decisions, such as the policy against including an explicit indication of language or nationality in the thesaurus and the one against subdivision of the terms. However, it continues to investigate adjusting some of its other policies.

The investigation usually includes the issuance of a discussion paper, which is posted on the genre/form Web page and announced through a variety of electronic discussion groups. The announcement is then followed by a public comment period. PSD considers this step to be particularly important since libraries are actively applying terms from the thesaurus. Not only will any changes made to the structure of LCGFT or its terms affect the records in their databases, but their staffs have experience with the terms and understand the positive or negative impact that a change in policy would have on their users.

The first public discussion paper, posted in May 2009, was on the disposition of LCSH headings for video recordings,[22] and other discussion papers have followed. In each case, all of the comments are reviewed by policy specialists and catalogers at the Library of Congress. Many times, the majority of comments are in favor of PSD's proposals, but there are notable exceptions. For example, in January 2010, PSD posted a paper requesting feedback on a plan to explicitly place each moving image genre/form term into either a nonfiction or fiction hierarchy.[23] This would ameliorate the need to include a genre/form term **Fiction films**; **Nonfiction films**; **Fiction television programs**; or **Nonfiction television programs** within each bibliographic record representing a moving image work, a policy that was heavily debated when it was instituted. The responses to the discussion paper made it clear, however, that there was no consensus on the validity or usefulness of this plan. Additionally, most respondents indicated that they would continue to apply one of the four above terms regardless of the hierarchies in LCGFT, thereby negating the perceived benefit. The plan laid out in the discussion paper was therefore not implemented.[24]

More recently, PSD posted a discussion paper entitled, "Cancellation of LCGFT Character- and Franchise-Based Terms for Moving Images."[25] This paper was the outcome of several years of debate over the utility and appropriateness of LCGFT terms such as **Batman films** and **Pink**

**Panther television programs**. As discussed above, PSD knew from the beginning of the projects that the terms were controversial, because they are not true genres or forms. However, the decision was made to approve them and allow catalogers to have an opportunity to experiment with them. If the terms proved useful despite the misgivings, then they would be retained. If not, then they could be considered for cancellation.

During the three years that the terms were in use, PSD received numerous questions on their correct application (e.g., whether **Tarzan films** should be applied only to works starring Johnny Weissmuller, or also to other films featuring the character Tarzan). It became apparent that some libraries were taking a strict view and applying them to "canonical" films only, and others were applying them more broadly. Some libraries also chose not to apply the terms at all. These differences in application are of course problematic in a cooperative cataloging environment, because a controlled vocabulary can exist only insofar as there is agreement on the meaning and application of the terms.

The responses to the discussion paper on character- and franchise-based terms were overwhelmingly positive. Over 70% of respondents, who represented both public and academic libraries and also archives, indicated that they were in favor of canceling the terms. Given this broad-based approval, PSD decided to follow through and the approximately 90 character- and franchise-based genre/form terms were cancelled in February 2012.[26] To assist catalogers in updating bibliographic records in their local databases, the published decision included an appendix of suggested replacement terms.

The discussion paper format has been an effective means for gathering input on major decisions, and it is expected that many more discussion papers will be published before the genre/form project as a whole is completed. As of the time of this writing, for example, PSD has just published a discussion paper related to the terminology for cataloging globes.[27] Most library users associate the concept of globes with spherical depictions of the Earth, but in actuality there are globes of other heavenly bodies, including asteroids, moons, and comets. How, then, should globes be handled in LCGFT? Currently the term **Globes** is used only for terrestrial globes (i.e., of the Earth). Should the definition of the term be expanded to mean a globe of any heavenly body, or should it continue to be more narrowly defined? If the latter, how does this affect faceting? And how does this affect existing headings in LCSH?

Discussion papers in particular, and informal public collaboration in general, are not without their challenges. PSD desires input from a wide variety of libraries, but there are times when only a few academic libraries have responded. This unfortunately skews the results. Luckily, the correspondents are becoming more diverse as LCGFT is becoming better known. As mentioned above, a recent discussion paper led to responses from public and academic libraries as well as from archives. This trend will hopefully continue.

When divergent or unanticipated responses are received, it is important to remember that everyone has a distinctive worldview, which is based on institutional needs and also on personal experiences and knowledge. The coordinator needs to respect those views and remain open-minded and flexible, listening to and impartially evaluating all of them, while also keeping the needs and trajectory of the project as a whole in view. Sometimes unpopular decisions have to be made for the good of the project, and the coordinator needs to remember the bromide that you cannot please all of the people all of the time.

The coordinator must also be aware that some of the reactions to discussion papers, and even to announcements, may be emotional and not intellectual in nature. One example is the reaction to PSD's decision to code the moving image genre/form terms as unable to be geographically subdivided (print constant: *Not Subd Geog*). When the first authority records were distributed, there was an almost immediate negative reaction to the policy; some who commented

stated that they would prefer to have the terms marked as "no decision" with regard to geographic subdivision. In LCGFT, as in LCSH, the practical result is the same: authorized terms marked either *Not Subd Geog* or "no decision" cannot be geographically subdivided. But the presence of the print constant generated such negative reaction that PSD has employed the "no decision" option for all succeeding projects.

Also, as noted by a variety of authors in a wide range of forums,[28] today's immediate, often-anonymous, communication can sometimes lead to responses that amount to incivility. One of the most difficult tasks of anyone requesting comments from the public, even in a professional arena, is maintaining both a sense of proportion and a sense of humor in the face of occasionally scathing criticism. Remembering that some of the more acerbic responses may be prompted by a sincere effort to "do right" by a user group can assist in this effort.


## FORMAL COLLABORATION WITH LIBRARY ORGANIZATIONS

Library organizations and associations, including the American Association of Law Libraries (AALL), the Music Library Association (MLA), and the American Theological Library Association (ATLA), are formally collaborating with PSD to develop LCGFT. Due to their involvement, the law, music, and religion projects are exhibiting a different trajectory from the earlier ones. Instead of PSD and a special-format division of LC collaborating to develop the initial list of terms and policies, which are then adjusted based on public input, the terms are being developed in cooperation with a library organization and are then incorporated into LCGFT.

The AALL Classification and Subject Cataloging Policy Advisory Working Group was one of the first organizations to offer assistance to PSD. As soon as LC announced its intention to start developing terms for moving images, the Working Group created a task force to develop a list of genre/form terms for law materials. PSD and AALL agreed that they should partner to develop a thesaurus, which would be incorporated into LCGFT.

The AALL law genre/form project, led by Yael Mandelstam from Fordham University School of Law, was undertaken in three distinct phases: evaluation of terms in William Benemann's *Genre Terms for Law Materials: A Thesaurus;*[29] expansion of Benemann's list; and preparation of the terms for LCGFT. The first two phases of the project involved only occasional communication with PSD, and it was not until the final phase that the two groups started working very closely together to resolve various LCGFT policy issues and fine-tune the law terms to ensure a good fit with the larger thesaurus.

Mandelstam's two main contacts in PSD were Young and Dr. Jolande Goldberg, the law classification specialist at PSD and a long-time, active member of AALL. Dr. Goldberg was a member of the Task Group from its inception, and her encyclopedic knowledge proved invaluable to the development of the law terms. Together with Young, she also provided valuable feedback from the law catalogers at LC and helped keep communication lines open between PSD and the AALL group.


Phase I

The project began in late 2006 with the evaluation of terms from Benemann's *Genre Terms for Law Materials: A Thesaurus*. The thesaurus included some excellent terms, but it quickly became apparent that it could not be incorporated into LCGFT as-is since it was created as a stand-alone thesaurus. There were many non-law terms like *Directories* and *Periodicals*, which were not strictly under the

"jurisdiction" of the AALL group, raising the issue of whether these terms should be qualified in some way (e.g., *Legal periodicals*; *Directories (Law)*); terms for formats such as CD-ROMs and electronic books needed to be removed, since formats are not included in LCGFT; inverted terms like *Bills, Legislative* needed to be revised to direct order to conform to the natural-language rule of LCGFT; and cross-references needed to be re-evaluated in the context of the larger thesaurus. The Task Group also wanted to rethink some fine distinctions that could be difficult for users to understand, for example, the difference among *Codes*, *Compiled statutes*, *Revised statutes*, and *Statutes*; or between *Treaties* and *Compiled treaties*. And finally, the group wanted to examine other sources and see if Benemann's original list of legal terms could be further expanded.

This phase of the project included 11 participants, was conducted via e-mail, and was completed rather quickly. It took place at a time when the development of LCGFT was in its early stages and many policy issues were still unresolved. The Task Group decided to move on to the next phase, with the understanding that many of the terms would have to be revisited at a later date.


Phase II

During this phase, as many terms as possible were compiled and then evaluated to determine which ones should be included in the thesaurus. At this point the group was not concerned with redundancies, currency of terms, relationships between terms, and conformity to LCGFT structure, rules, and practices, since these were to be examined at a later stage. The 22 participants were divided into sub-groups, with each examining different sources for additional law terms. Sources included LCSH free-floating subdivisions, glossaries of legal terms, Indian and tribal law sources, Library of Congress Classification K (Law) form tables,[30] legal dictionaries, legal research material for common and civil law, and various other miscellaneous sources. During this phase the group used e-mail sporadically, but most of the work was done via a wiki. After evaluating various wikis, the group settled on PBworks, which was then known as PBwiki (PB stood for Peanut Butter, stemming from the founders' belief that making a wiki was as easy as making a peanut-butter sandwich). This particular wiki was selected because it was free, easy to use, and was hosted, so the group did not have to install wiki software and manage it on a local server.

The sub-groups posted their terms on specially designated areas of the wiki, and these were later evaluated by the entire group. Terms that passed muster were added to Benemann's terms, which by then were also posted on the wiki. When the Task Group met in Portland, Oregon during the July 2008 Annual Meeting of AALL, a rough draft of the thesaurus was ready, and it was decided that a small editorial group would be formed to carry out the next phase of the project. That same month, the law project was officially included in LC's genre/form development timeline for 2008-2012, with the implementation date set for mid-2010.


Phase III

Soon after the AALL meeting in Portland, the eight-member Editorial Group started tackling the draft thesaurus. The group's charge was to eliminate redundancies, examine currency of terms, build a syndetic structure, and add scope notes and examples. Additionally, the group needed to ensure adherence to the ANSI/NISO Z39.19 standard on monolingual controlled vocabularies[31] and ensure conformity to the structure, rules, and policies of LCGFT.

At that time, the terms were arranged alphabetically on the wiki, making it difficult to identify potential relationships among terms. Before going any further, the terms needed to be sorted in a more meaningful way. Still using the wiki, pages were created for seven broad sorting

"buckets": Legislative (e.g., bills, statutes, regulations); Judicial/Quasi-Judicial (e.g., decisions, opinions); Intergovernmental/International (e.g., congresses, treaties); Legal instruments (e.g., contracts, deeds, wills); Legal finding aids (e.g., indexes, digests, citators); General works (e.g., treatises, law reviews, practice guides); and Reference (e.g., dictionaries, encyclopedias). The alphabetical list of terms was divided among group members and the "buckets" soon filled up with the appropriate terms. Examining terms in the context of a specific category made it much easier to identify redundancies and determine relationships between and among terms. The group continued to use the wiki to consult the compiled terms, but this venue proved too cumbersome for discussions. The group moved its communication to e-mail, and since past experience showed how unwieldy e-mail discussions can become if not properly organized and regulated, the group adhered to the strict rule of maintaining a separate thread for each term, with the term clearly indicated in the subject line.

As the project progressed, the Editorial Group began to formulate principles through trial and error, and through internal discussions and ongoing communication with PSD and the leaders of the other genre/form projects:

## LCGFT Is A True Thesaurus

Unlike LCSH, which was built from the bottom up with cross-references added at a later date, LCGFT is being constructed from the top down. It has a syndetic structure and is hierarchical, with broad "bucket" terms at the top. Thus, it was decided that all the law-related terms were to be gathered under the broad term **Law materials**.

## Terms Should Not Be Overly Granular

Catalogers usually strive for a high level of specificity when assigning subject headings and classification numbers, but slicing and dicing the collection too finely with a high level of genre/form granularity would work against efficient collocation of related materials. The Editorial Group struggled, for example, with many types of congressional/legislative materials like hearings, reports, digests, documents, journals, proceedings, resolutions, and so on. The final decision was to list all of them as "Used For" (UF) references under the single term **Legislative materials**.

One of the most important discussions between the Editorial Group and PSD regarded the question of whether to "legalize" general terms like **Periodicals**, **Dictionaries**, and **Encyclopedias**. The final decision, which was to have ramifications for all future genre/form projects, was to use **Periodicals** rather than **Legal periodicals**, **Dictionaries** rather than **Law dictionaries**, and so on. However, since these terms were to be used across disciplines, they were not strictly under the "jurisdiction" of the AALL group. To avoid having to wait for these terms until other projects were completed, the group approached members of the Subject Analysis Committee, Subcommittee on Genre/Form Implementation, discussed below, and asked them to review a list of general terms for inclusion in LCGFT. The Subcommittee agreed and after some discussion approved the terms.

## Terms Should Reflect Current Usage

Members of the Editorial Group consulted reference librarians, reviewed legal literature, and explored Google and Wikipedia to ensure use of current terminology, meaning, and scope. The group's starting point was often LCSH, although a decision to depart from these headings was made

when another term was deemed to be more current. Thus, rather than using LCSH's heading **Delegated legislation**, for example, the group opted for the more commonly used term **Administrative regulations**.

The Editorial Group tried to avoid U.S.-centric terms where possible. To accommodate different legislative systems, the group rejected the use of "parliamentary" and "Congressional" in favor of "legislative" (e.g., **Legislative bills** and **Legislative speeches**).

One of the greatest challenges posed by this principle can be demonstrated by the difficulties the group had with terms for codes and compiled statutes. The civil law codes are comprehensive and logically coherent systems of law complete with statements of concepts, principles, rules and ideals of law. In common law countries, codes are often topical compilations of statutes and may be called "compiled statutes," "revised statutes," or "codes."

Various options were discussed at length, including *Codes* and *Compiled statutes; Codes (Civil law)* and *Codes (Common law); Codes (Civil law)* and *Codes and compiled statutes (Common law);* or *Codes and compiled statutes* for both systems. But none seemed to be satisfactory. How do we describe a civil law code that was enacted as a single statute? Do we assign *Codes, Statutes,* or both? And how do we explain to our American users that the *United States Code* is not really a code because it does not adhere to the civil law definition of a code? The problem was finally resolved elegantly with the adoption of **Statutes and codes***,* which was to be used for codes and for single and compiled laws, acts, and statutes of any jurisdiction, as well as for directives of the European Union.

Joint Meeting in Washington, DC

In July 2009, the AALL Annual Meeting took place in Washington, DC, and provided an excellent opportunity for the Editorial Group, policy specialists from PSD, and representatives from the Law Library of Congress to meet face-to-face and discuss the law terms. As July was approaching, the Editorial Group worked hard to tie up loose ends and was able to release a draft to the AALL Technical Services Special Interest Section for comments before the conference. The comments were compiled and sent to PSD before the joint meeting, together with a list of policy questions that had to be resolved before the law terms could be finalized and incorporated into LCGFT.

The meeting in Washington was extremely productive and covered a broad range of issues, from general policies to specific terms. Focusing first on the relationship between LCSH and LCGFT, several policies were discussed and articulated. By that time it was clear that genre/form terms were not going to replace LCSH form subdivisions (MARC 21 tag 6XX $v) in the foreseeable future, but when possible, LC subject headings and form subdivisions should be harmonized with the genre/form terms. The proposals for the LCSH revisions would come from AALL.

One of the more interesting questions concerned subject headings that traditionally functioned as form headings (e.g., **Law reports, digests, etc.**; **Constitutions**; **Law reviews**), and headings that include both topical and form aspects in the scope notes (e.g., the scope note for **Constitutional amendments** reads, "Here are entered collections of texts of constitutional amendments, texts of individual constitutional amendments, and works about constitutional amendments and the amending process."). It was agreed that ideally, the form-only headings should be cancelled from LCSH and the form aspects of scope notes should be removed from authority records for subject headings that are used as both forms and topics, but that this could be done only

if and when the law genre/form terms are consistently applied by the majority of law libraries. Until then, both LCSH and LCGFT would have to be applied. That part of the discussion concluded with the clear articulation that LCSH and LCGFT are separate thesauri and that there will be no cross-referencing between the two.

Once the major LCSH/LCGFT issues were resolved, participants continued to discuss other items on the agenda. It was decided that the law list should include archival terms and that these terms should be coordinated with LC's Rare Books Division. Participants then proceeded to evaluate the balance between terms for civil law and common law systems, and to review currency of terms. And finally, participants focused on some scope notes and cross references that required tweaking.


Preparing the Law Terms for LCGFT

After the AALL conference in Washington, the Editorial Group went back to the drawing board, reviewing and evaluating the comments received from members of AALL and from LC, and incorporating the changes discussed at the meeting with PSD. In October 2009, the revised draft was officially approved by the AALL Cataloging and Classification Committee and forwarded to PSD.

Over the next few months, PSD policy specialists met with stakeholders from throughout LC, including from the Law Library of Congress. They discussed each of the terms included in AALL's thesaurus and made recommendations. The recommendations were then communicated to the Editorial Group and a few more rounds of discussions ensued to fine-tune the terms and ensure a good fit with LCGFT. The discussions focused mainly on the scope notes and the reference structure. For example, there was a question whether **Year books (English law reports)** should remain a related term (RT) under **Court decisions and opinions** or become a narrower term (NT). After some negotiation it was agreed that it should remain a related term. The rationale was that the English year books *are* early reporters of court decisions (ca. 1280-1535) and should have the same relationship to **Court decisions and opinions** as the term **Codices (Law)***,* used for ancient or historical codes, has to **Statutes and codes**. In October 2010, LC officially announced the incorporation of the law genre/form terms into LCGFT, effective in November 2010.[32]

PSD has also formally partnered with the MLA and ATLA to develop music and religion genre/form terms, respectively. To date, these projects have both employed wikis, e-mail, and meetings to develop the vocabularies for which they are responsible, but each project exhibits a different approach. MLA's Bibliographic Control Committee, Genre/Form Task Force has worked closely with Geraldine Ostrove, a PSD senior cataloging policy specialist and the coordinator of the music genre/form project, to develop genre/form and medium of performance terminologies. On the other hand, ATLA, which is coordinating the efforts of other library organizations organized around religion, initially communicated with Young only as necessary for guidance on thorny issues. After the draft thesaurus was presented to PSD, communication became more frequent as individual terms were vetted for inclusion in LCGFT.

Additionally, in 2008 the Subject Analysis Committee (SAC) of the Association for Library Collections and Technical Services, a division of the American Library Association, formed the Subcommittee on Genre/Form Implementation (SAC-SGFI). This subcommittee, which was chaired by Adam Schiff from the University of Washington from 2010–2012, is charged with helping to facilitate two-way communication between PSD and the cataloging communities with an interest in genre/form headings. AALL, MLA, and OLAC (Online Audiovisual Catalogers) have liaisons to SAC-SGFI, and Young serves as LC's liaison to the committee.

The subcommittee's role has expanded beyond facilitation of two-way communication. PSD is frequently asked when genre/form terms for "nondisciplinary" works will be approved. These include bibliographies, periodicals, and other terms of general application that were mentioned above. SAC-SGFI reinforced the message to PSD that the terms are needed sooner rather than later, and at PSD's request SAC-SGFI undertook a project to determine which non-disciplinary terms could or should be included in LCGFT.

The subcommittee formed a working group, co-chaired by Mandelstam and Mary Mastraccio from Marcive, to review the existing LCSH form subdivisions and named it the 185/155 Working Group, in reference to the MARC 21 authority format tags for authorized form subdivisions and genre/form terms. The group found that the functionality and hierarchical structure of the discussion board feature of ALAConnect[33] was suitable for the review process. A separate discussion thread was created for each form subdivision, and once all the terms were posted, group members went through them systematically and posted their comments. The discussion focused on appraising whether a subdivision would be useful as a genre/form term, and if so, whether it required modification (e.g., change **Bibliography** to **Bibliographies** to conform to LCGFT syntax). Occasionally there were additional suggestions for cancelling or modifying the existing form subdivision and/or changing its scope. After completing the initial evaluation process, the recommendations were compiled into an Excel document, and the six-member group continued to debate terms that were left unresolved during the earlier discussions.

By ALA's Midwinter Meeting in 2011, the recommendations were submitted to SAC-SGFI. For the following few months they went through a thorough vetting process by SAC-SGFI members and were approved and submitted to SAC in time for ALA's Annual Conference that same year. After several rounds of discussions on the SAC electronic list, the recommendations were finally approved by SAC and sent to PSD in January 2012.

One of the discussions that came out of the 185/155 review process at SAC-SGFI was how to handle various aspects of the work and expression that are often closely related to the genre/form aspect, such as intended audience and categories of creators. Should compound terms like *Children's sermons* and *Mexican poetry* be proposed, or should the group explore other means for expressing the related aspects? After much consideration the group agreed with PSD that, since each genre/form term in LCGFT expresses a single concept, related aspects should be handled separately. Members of SAC-SGFI are currently examining the treatment of these elements in *Resource Description and Access* (RDA) and are exploring various options for defining places in bibliographic and authority records for genre/form-related facets.

## SUMMARY

The Library of Congress's genre/form project is an enormous multi-year undertaking. A project this size can only be accomplished through collaboration with other organizations, since no single person or institution can develop terminology and policies that would be useful to such a wide range of libraries and archives. The partnerships formed by the Library of Congress and expert communities have thus become integral to the success of the project. These collaborative efforts have reinforced the following principles:

1. *Communicate, communicate, communicate.* Make sure that all of the project participants and constituents clearly understand the goals, expectations, and progress of the project. At AALL, effective internal and external communication was instrumental in completing the law thesaurus on schedule. At the Library of Congress, PSD facilitates two-way communication through e-mail correspondence,

discussion papers, announcements, and presentations, and also maintains a Web page dedicated to disseminating information about the projects.

2. *Seek out the right tools and the best method of communication for each stage of the project.* Through trial and error, the AALL group determined that a wiki was useful for some functions, but that e-mail was more effective for others. At ALA, the SAC Subcommittee on Genre/Form Implementation was able to take advantage of the more sophisticated functionality of ALAConnect and used it for the first part of the project, then decided to continue the discussion via e-mail. When making these decisions, keep in mind that there are significant differences among online collaborative tools, so make sure to select the ones appropriate for your needs and your budget.

3. *Encourage constructive critiquing.* When seeking input, encourage stakeholders to offer alternative solutions and refrain from using "I don't like…" statements. This principle was strictly enforced in a potentially volatile meeting at AALL, turning a gripe session into an extremely productive discussion.

4. *Break the project into manageable tasks.* Participants in projects of this scope can easily become overwhelmed and discouraged if they cannot experience progress on a smaller scale. PSD is putting this principle into practice by developing terminology for one or two disciplines at a time, on an announced schedule. The AALL group also made sure to break its project into discrete phases and assign well-defined tasks with clear deadlines at each stage.

5. *Do not assume that a particular outcome is foreordained.* Being open to new ideas and willing to adjust one's own thinking are hallmarks of open communication. Listen to and evaluate others' opinions with an open mind, and be prepared to change course if necessary. For example, when PSD proposed putting each moving image genre/form term into either a fiction or nonfiction hierarchy, it fully expected the proposal to be well received. In light of the mixed response, however, PSD decided not to adopt the proposed policy.

6. *Do not lose sight of the overall goals and trajectory of the project.* Being open-minded does not mean that everyone's ideas can or should be implemented, or that everyone will be happy with the final outcome. Keep in mind that in collaborative projects conflicting viewpoints must often be balanced against the needs of the project as a whole. In the case of LCGFT, some parties have been unhappy with the prohibition against subdivision, but PSD has a vision of the way in which emerging technologies will utilize LCGFT to provide access, and believes that subdivisions would hinder the effectiveness of the thesaurus.

7. *Maintain a sense of humor and a sense of proportion when encountering setbacks.* Keep in mind that setbacks may be inevitable when coordinating the work of many people and institutions. Wanting to get everything right the first time is natural, but setbacks can be turned into opportunities for learning. It may be painful at times to change course, as PSD did with the character- and franchise-based terms, but approving the terms helped PSD understand how catalogers and users were approaching genre/form terminology.

8. *Most importantly, do not shy away from attempting complex projects.* As the genre/form project demonstrates, what seems barely possible—or perhaps even impossible—when seen from the perspective of one organization can be attained when the work is spread over many interested and committed persons and organizations.

NOTES

[1] Jarmo Saarti and Kaisa Hypén, "From Thesaurus to Ontology: The Development of the Kaunokki Finnish Fiction Thesaurus," *The Indexer* 28, no. 2 (2010): 53.

[2] Ibid., 54.

[3] Barbara Brenny, "Building a Thesaurus from the Ground Up: Cataloging Universal Design Images," *Visual Resources Association Bulletin* 36, no. 2 (2009): 54.

[4] Ibid., 55, 56.

[5] Monica Martens, "Creating a Supplemental Thesaurus to LCSH for a Specialized Collection: The Experience of the National Indian Law Library," *Law Library Journal* 98, no. 2 (2006): 287-297.

[6] Ibid., 292.

[7] Brian Taves, Judi Hoffman, and Karen Lund, *Moving Image Genre-Form Guide* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1998), http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/migintro.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

[8] Recorded Sound Section, Motion Picture, Broadcasting and Recorded Sound Division, Library of Congress, Radio Form/Genre Terms Guide (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1998), http://www.loc.gov/rr/record/frmgen.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

[9] Martha M. Yee, *Moving Image Materials : Genre Terms* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 1988).

[10] Ibid., 11.

[11] Taves, Hoffman, and Lund, http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/migintro.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

[12] Yee, *Moving Image Materials*, 11.

[13] Taves, Hoffman, and Lund, http://www.loc.gov/rr/mopic/migintro.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

[14] Ibid.

[15] Genre/form terms based on names of specific sports (e.g., **Hockey films**; **Golf television programs**) were cancelled in June 2012 after PSD and MBRS determined that the depiction of a sport by a film or television program is better expressed by assigning a subject heading for the sport (e.g., **Golf—Drama)** along with the more general genre/form term **Sports films** or **Sports television programs**, if desired. See "Library of Congress to Cancel LCGFT Sport-Specific Terms

for Moving Images," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/genre_form_sports_terms_cancellation.pdf (accessed May 25, 2012).

[16] Jill Ellern, "How to Successfully Survive a Mandated Project," *Computers in Libraries* 31, no. 9 (2011): 19.

[17] "Genre/Form Headings at the Library of Congress," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/genreformgeneral.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

[18] Ibid.

[19] "Library of Congress to Approve Genre/Form Headings for Cartographic Materials," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/cartographic3.pdf (accessed February 4, 2012).

[20] "Library of Congress to Formally Separate LC Genre/Form Thesaurus from LCSH," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/genreformthesaurus.html (accessed February 4, 2012).

[21] "Library of Congress to Reissue Genre/Form Authority Records," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/gf_lccn.html (accessed February 14, 2012).

[22] "Disposition of LCSH Video Recording Headings in the New Genre/Form Environment," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/videorecheadings.pdf (accessed February 14, 2012).

[23] "Proposed Revision to the Hierarchies of Moving Image Genre/Form Headings," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/movingimagehierarchies.pdf (accessed February 4, 2012).

[24] "Decision Regarding the Proposed Revision to the Hierarchies of Moving Image Genre/Form Headings," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/movingimagehierarchiesdecision.pdf (accessed February 4, 2012).

[25] "Cancellation of LCGFT Character- and Franchise-Based Terms for Moving Images," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/character_franchise_disposition.pdf (accessed February 4, 2012.

[26] "Library of Congress to Cancel LCGFT Character- and Franchise-Based Terms for Moving Images," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/character_franchise_disposition_112211.pdf (accessed February 4, 2012).

[27] "Proposed Treatment of Globes in the LCGFT Environment," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/genre_form_globes.pdf (accessed May 31, 2012).

[28] See for example: Robert McCartney, "One Family's Unusual Story Unleashes the Internet's Dark Side," *Washington Post*, January 15, 2012, C1; Patrick Seitz, "The Scourge of Online Incivility," *Tech-Media-Tainment* blog, March 29, 2011, http://techmediatainment.blogspot.com/2011/03/scourge-of-online-incivility.html; Robert Eisinger, "Internet Incivility: Possibilities for Engaging Students?," *Education News*, October 21, 2011, http://educationviews.org/2011/10/21/internet-incivility-possibilities-for-engaging-students/ (accessed August 24, 2012).

[29] William Benemann, *Genre Terms for Law Materials: A Thesaurus* (Buffalo, NY: William S. Hein, 2006).

[30] *K Tables: Form Division Tables for Law: Library of Congress Classification* (Washington, DC: Library of Congress, 2010).

[31] *Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Controlled Vocabularies: ANSI/NISO Z39.19-2005* (Bethesda, MD.: National Information Standards Organization, 2005).

[32] "Library of Congress to Approve Genre/Form Terms for Law Materials," http://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/genrelaw.html (accessed February 6, 2012).

[33] ALAConnect is the collaborative online workspace for members of the American Library Association. The site is powered by Drupal, an open source management platform.