

# LCSH isn't the Only Option: Controlled Vocabularies for Catalogers to Consider

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## Why Go Beyond LCSH

Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) is the professional standard for catalogers to apply keywords and terminology to library materials; however, it is important for professional catalogers to be familiar with options of other thesauri to use. Not all library materials can be adequately described using LCSH, or its companion, LC Genre/Form Terms that is designed to provide access by what the material *is* and not necessarily *about*. Both of these thesauri are regularly updated and maintained. The Metadata & Cataloging department at UCO's Chambers Library has encountered multiple situations where LCSH or LCGFT have not been the best fit to describe the materials we want our patrons to discover. There are far more thesauri than the four discussed below but they will illustrate how using multiple thesauri sources can be helpful in ensuring discovery of library resources.

## Thesaurus for Graphic Materials

TGM is a thesaurus maintained by the Library of Congress and is specifically designed for visual materials. Per their website, it "includes more than 7,000 subject terms and 650 genre/format terms to index types of photographs, prints, design drawings, ephemera, and other pictures."<sup>1</sup>

### Use Case

Chambers Library's Archives owns the Bob Burke Film & Television Autograph Collection, which contains autographed materials, such as scripts, lobby cards, pictures, etc. LCSH and LCGFT provided limited terminology to describe the contents of this collection; however, LCTGM provided far more options appropriate for this collection.

### LCGFT

Film Posters  
Lobby Cards  
Posters  
Screenplays  
Television Plays

### LCTGM

Advertisements  
Autographs  
Celebrities  
Collages  
Correspondence  
Film stills  
Film transparencies  
Lobby cards  
Motion picture posters  
Publicity photographs  
Television scripts  
Television stills



Autographed *Men in Black* photo from Bob Burke Film & Television Autograph Collection

<sup>1</sup> Thesaurus For Graphic Materials - About the Thesaurus For Graphic Materials.

## Art & Architecture Thesaurus

AAT is one of the Getty vocabularies and is used to "improve access to information for art, architecture, and other material culture."<sup>2</sup> It was created in the 1970s in response to art libraries and indexing services needing consistency in terminology used to describe art resources.<sup>3</sup>

### Use Case

Drama students at UCO needed scripts specifically for assignments and auditions; however, our discovery interface prioritized monologue anthologies, which our students were told not to use. In addition to local metadata added to create a new facet, specific terminology from AAT was added to any bibliographic record representing a play.

### Discovery Barriers

- » No specific class range for plays
- » Homonym problem with "plays" and "scripts"
- » LCSH and LCGFT are too broad

### Drama

UF Dramas  
Filmed plays [Former heading]  
Plays  
Playscripts  
Stage plays  
Stage scripts  
Televised plays [Former heading]  
Theatrical works

### AAT Terms for Plays and Scripts

Plays (Performed Works)  
Scripts (Documents)

<sup>2</sup> About the AAT. <https://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/about.html>

<sup>3</sup> History of the AAT. <https://www.getty.edu/research/tools/vocabularies/aat/about.html>

## Additional Considerations

### Further Training

Implementing use of multiple controlled vocabularies requires training in understanding the purpose of any new vocabulary used along with formatting in MARC records to ensure that terms are indexed.

### Changing Standards

For remediation projects, it is important to understand what standards may have been in place to ensure the right records can be found to add additional controlled vocabulary terms.

### Empathy for the User

Rather than focusing on the correctness of library data, catalogers need to be empathetic to the user's ability to find the resources they need. This empathy can be manifested through conscientious consideration of subject headings and other terminology to use.

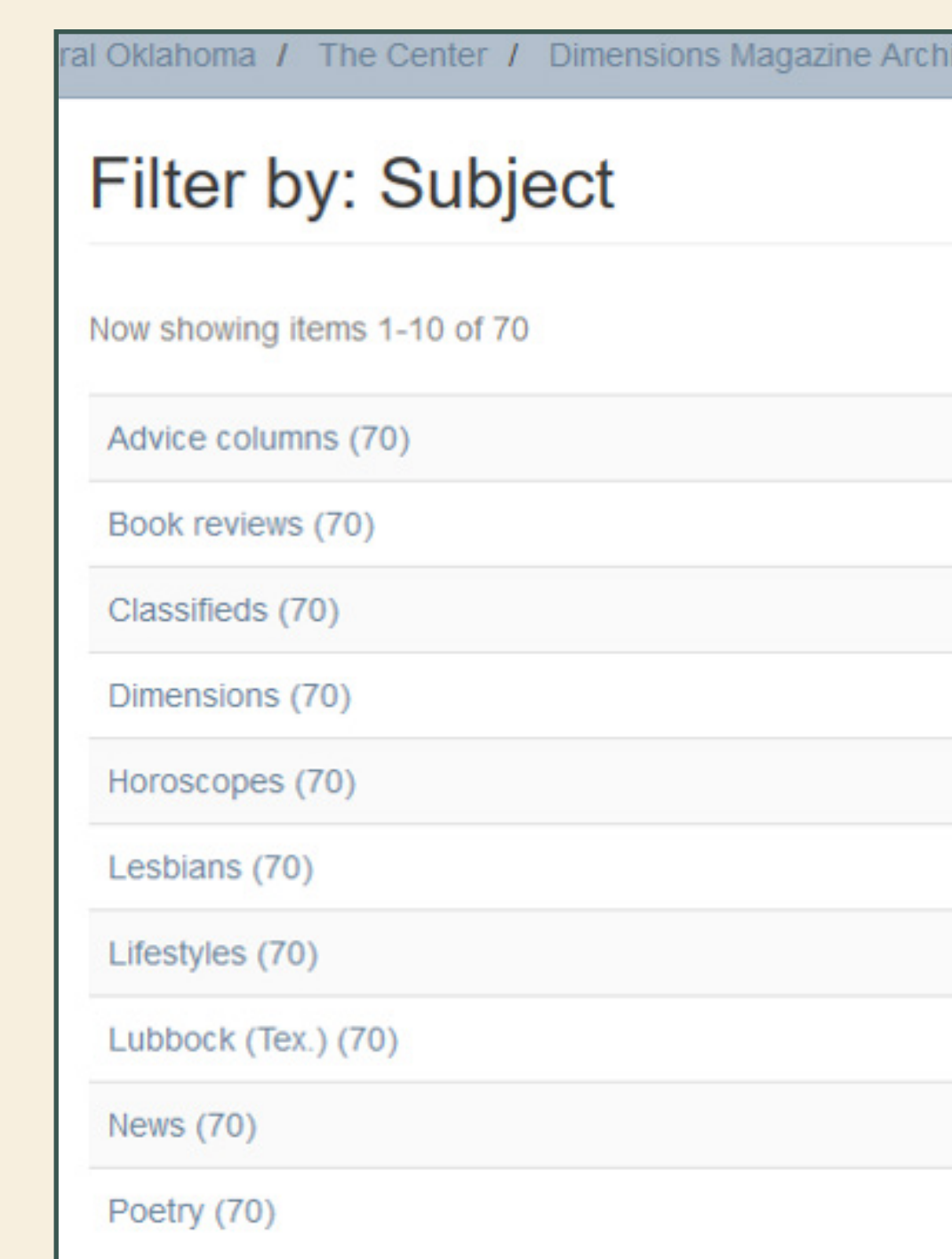
## Faceted Application of Subject Terminology

FAST is an initiative of OCLC and is a derivative of LCSH but broken down into discrete parts (facets). OCLC retroactively added FAST headings to the WorldCat database, and OCLC regularly adds them to newly created records without FAST. A caveat for FAST in standard MARC records is that it can be repetitive of LCSH and may display duplicate keywords.

### Use Case

UCO joined SHAREOK, a joint institutional repository with OU and OSU in 2016 and began to add archival collections for The Vista, Herland Voice Newsletters, and Dimensions Magazine. We wanted to use relatively simple terms for both expediency in metadata creation and ease of discovery due to SHAREOK's interface. Using FAST provides benefits of LCSH while being more discrete to simplify metadata.

### FAST Headings in SHAREOK



## 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."<sup>4</sup>

### Use Case

The Metadata & Cataloging department processed a LGBTQ+ collection for another campus department, and while we restricted use of certain headings ("Sexual minorities," primarily), there was not enough specific terms. We made do with what LCSH provided; however, we are investigating adding Homosaurus terms retroactively. Homosaurus offers more specific terminology than LCSH which in turn would improve discoverability of this collection.

### LCSH

Older sexual minorities

### Homosaurus Terms

Older lesbians  
Older queer people  
Older bisexual people  
Older gay men  
Older (LGBTQ)

Gender-nonconforming people

Agender people  
Non-binary people  
Pangender people

Closeted gays

Closeted bisexual people  
Closeted gay men  
Closeted lesbians

Unlike LCSH, Homosaurus permits the inclusion of "LGBTQ" in keywords.

<sup>4</sup> Homosaurus. <http://homosaurus.org/>