

Learning and Working Group on Metadata Justice

Guiding Principles and Approach to Work

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Guiding Principles

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Guiding Principles

We are working at times with difficult topics that carry layers of emotional weight and historical trauma. We want to do everything in our power as a group to ensure that our members (and others we interact with outside of this group) are treated with respect and dignity, and that everyone feels themselves to be a valued member regardless of race, ethnicity, sexual orientation, gender, age, or ability.

Our good intentions are not enough to ensure that we create an inclusive and welcoming space for a racially, culturally, neurologically diverse group.

As such, we are committed to:

Learning

Prior to beginning any project, we will assess our own knowledge gaps.

- We will be willing to take on rigorous research to ensure we are informed about the topic.
- We will remain open and thoughtful in our approach.

Listening

We acknowledge that we can only learn so much through our own research, and that learning itself requires a willingness and commitment to listening, especially to underrepresented voices; we are not always (or even often) the topical/cultural experts on every project we pursue.

- We will actively solicit appropriate input from a variety of community members, based on any particular project.
- We will work to appropriately acknowledge and/or compensate individuals and groups that lend their knowledge and experience to this work.

Ex. After an initial learning and research period, we would reach out to our contacts in tribal communities and professional organizations to begin brainstorming about how to approach problematic subject headings related to Native Americans. We might eventually form an advisory council composed of Native American students, and provide a stipend for participation on the council.

Understanding

Our listening will not be merely symbolic: we will take the words and lived experiences of others seriously and allow space for our work to be informed and changed by those words and experiences.

- We will call attention to and work together to resolve problems and problematic behavior.
- We will value one another over the work, and be willing to apologize for mistakes.

Shared Labor

Out of respect for one another and the work we are engaged in, we will share both the labor and recognition that comes with this work.

- We will commit to working collaboratively within the group, our organization, and with outside groups as appropriate.
- We will strive for a sense of mutual ownership and recognition.
- We will share the resources of our time and attention as we are able.

Progress Without Pressure

In respect of the fact that we all have full lives, responsibilities, and varying levels of capacity from week-to-week, and to encourage all members to participate at a sustainable pace in metadata justice activities:

- We will prioritize the mental and emotional health of group members above productivity and progress – “non-productive” time is just as important as time spent actively engaged in work.
- We will cultivate the ability to be honest with ourselves and with one another about what we are able to take on. If we commit to a project, and realize later we won’t have capacity, we will be clear with one another about our needs to step back, and work on finding solutions together.
- We will support and encourage rest, while respecting one another’s abilities to determine what we are able to take on at any one time.

Approach to Work

Bottom-Lining & Shared Ownership

Though this group exists within a hierarchical organization, and cannot fully escape the power dynamics at play in our culture and institution, we will strive towards a sense of shared ownership, recognition, and collaboration by using the “bottom-lining” or “anchoring” approach to leadership. This approach also helps to ensure less frequent burnout, as members share leadership responsibilities, and allows for everyone to have opportunities to invest in the work at varying levels.

Membership:

2 Membership Levels

- Working Members will:
 - Commit to continual learning
 - Adhere to guiding principles, approach to work, and grievance process
 - Attend meetings as capacity and scheduling allows
 - Volunteer to work on and/or bottom-line activities and projects as capacity and scheduling allows
- Affiliate Members will:
 - Commit to continual learning
 - Adhere to guiding principles, approach to work, and grievance process

3 Responsibility Levels

- Bottom-lining the Metadata Justice Group
 - Reporting out every 4 months to the group’s admin team sponsor
 - Beginning of August, December, & April
 - Major Project and Membership Updates
 - Organizing, scheduling, and running monthly meetings
 - Ensuring group adherence to guiding principles, approach to work, and grievance process
 - Being prepared to take on additional responsibilities as needed, based on group capacity
- Bottom-lining on-going activities (ex. Reading Group, Liaisons to other groups, etc.)
 - Reporting out on activities during monthly meetings
 - Organizing/scheduling activity-specific meetings and work, as needed

- Organizing, and maintaining activity-specific meeting notes and documents
- Bottom-lining short-term projects (ex. LCSH proposals, outreach presentation, etc.)
 - Organizing/scheduling project-specific meetings, as needed
 - Ensuring projects make it from start to finish successfully
 - Organizing, and maintaining project-specific meeting notes and documents

New Member Process

- Fill out the New Member Form (link)
- Fully review Guiding Principles and Approach to Work
- Group bottom-liner will:
 - Add new member to distribution list
 - Provide access to Google Drive and Airtable, and provide overview of these tools
 - Share outlook invite for monthly meetings
 - Invite to Slack channel

Communications and Project Management

- Email:
 - Distribution list example@university.edu
 - Main conduit for group-wide information, scheduling in outlook, big and important news, etc.
- Slack
 - #examplechannel
 - Reminders, day-to-day communication, sharing resources, etc.
 - Participation encouraged but optional
- Google Drive
 - Meeting notes, administrative documents, project folders, etc.
- Airtable
 - Projects and Tasks organized into 6 main categories:

■ LCSH	■ Liaisons
■ Outreach	■ Brainstorming
■ Administrative	■ Collaborations
- Zoom Meetings
 - Last Wednesday of every month from 3:00 - 4:00 PM

Grievance Process

A major part of this group's commitment to learning, is a willingness to admit what we don't know, especially as relates to the experiences of others. When certain behaviors are flagged as problematic, we will use the following 3 stage call-in process. Each stage is a "call-in"¹, because of the group's commitment to non-punitive forms of resolution - the call-in allows us to respect one another in community and encourages growth rather than shame.

1. 1st Call-in - Conversation Towards Understanding
 - a. Assume good intentions; assume ignorance over malice
 - b. Reach out directly first, if comfortable, OR reach out to a member of the group with which you are comfortable so that they can help facilitate a conversation.
 - c. With willing compassion from both parties, most grievances will end after this first call-in, in which members have an opportunity to hear and learn from one another.
2. 2nd Call-in - Step Back and Learn
 - a. If the same or similar behavior continues
 - b. Reach out to a trusted member of the group (if not already involved) so that they can be a part of the 2nd call-in; they, and at least 1 other member of the group will support the grievance process by providing resources for learning more, reducing burden on the affected individual to "teach" their experience, and allow time and space for the members to reflect and process.
 - c. All parties will share what they imagine a successful resolution looking like.
3. 3rd Call-in - Step Back from Active Membership
 - a. While we hope this never occurs, any member that exhibits a persistent pattern of disrespectful behavior will be asked to step back from active membership, with an invitation to continue learning and return once the behavior has been addressed.
 - b. At this time the broader group will be notified of the change in membership status, and will re-assess any directly affected projects (will new bottom-liners be needed, etc.)
 - c. The group will undertake a review of the grievance process to investigate ways it might work more effectively in the future.

¹ Brief and excellent blog post on the value of "call-ins" within community:
<http://www.bgdblog.org/2013/12/calling-less-disposable-way-holding-accountable/>