A Path for Moving Forward with Local Changes to the Library of Congress Subject Heading "Illegal Aliens"

Kelsey George, Erin Grant, Cate Kellett, Karl Pettitt

In 2014, the Library of Congress (LC) rejected a proposal to change headings in the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) that refer to undocumented immigrants as "Illegal aliens." Two years later, a Subject Analysis Committee (SAC) working group submitted recommendations regarding how and why LC should change the LCSH "Illegal aliens."[1] That same year, LC decided to cancel the "Illegal aliens" subject heading, which Congress subsequently sought to block.[2] Congress eventually required LC "to make publicly available its process for changing or adding subject headings . . . [and use] a process to change or add subject headings that are clearly defined, transparent, and allows input from stakeholders including those in the congressional community."[3] In response, LC paused their plan to change "Illegal aliens." In June 2019, a new SAC Working Group on Alternatives to LCSH "Illegal aliens" was convened to survey local institutions implementing changes to the subject heading and to chart a path for librarians to address the subject heading at the organizational level. At the 2020 ALA Annual Conference, the working group presented their report. This paper builds upon that report and details next steps both for the working group and library professionals who plan to implement changes at their own organizations.

Kelsey George (kelsey.george@unlv.edu) is the Cataloging and Metadata Strategies Librarian at the University of Nevada Las Vegas. **Erin Grant** (egrant2@uw.edu) is Director, Cataloging and Metadata Services at University of Washington. **Cate Kellett** (cate.kellett@yale.edu) is a Catalog and Government Documents librarian at the Lillian Goldman Law Library at Yale Law School, **Karl Pettitt** (karl.pettitt@du.edu) is Coordinator of Cataloging and Metadata Services at University of Denver.

In June 2019, representatives from the American Library Association (ALA), the former Association for Library Collections and Technical Services (ALCTS), and representatives from the Library of Congress (LC) met before the 2019 ALA Annual Conference in Washington, DC. During the meeting, ALA and ALCTS representatives requested an update on the status of changes proposed to the authorized LCSH (Library of Congress Subject Headings) "Illegal aliens." LC declined to provide more information or a timeframe for changing this subject heading. The ALCTS board of directors determined their priority would be to help libraries revise their catalogs using alternatives to LCSH while continuing to keep lines of dialogue open with LC. This working group, the ALCTS Subject Analysis Committee's Working Group on Alternatives to LCSH "Illegal aliens," was established to that end under the auspices of ALCTS's Subject Analysis Committee (SAC).

Literature Review

The specific historical circumstances that led to the SAC working group and the report discussed in this paper are covered in the next section. However, a review of the written record during the intervening period between the first SAC working group in 2016 and the current one in 2019 will help to illuminate the discussions in library literature about the terminology used in LCSH, particularly when that terminology does not reflect the personal and institutional values of those who use LCSH.

In a paper written for *Library Journal* by Morales, the issue of the term "Illegal aliens" is viewed through the lens of technology and previous attempts by student activists to change the terminology used in LCSH for marginalized groups. Morales references the movement by Latino students at the University of California (UC) Berkeley in the 1970s who advocated for subject headings that better reflect and represent the Mexican American experience. The UC Berkeley Chicano Studies Library met this request by creating a unique vocabulary that was eventually instituted in the Chicano Database. Morales argues that the issue over the LCSH term "Illegal aliens" reflects this past activism as it turns to technology to help rectify the situation and implement change.[4]

A 2017 interview conducted by Gross with Sanford ("Sandy") Berman provided some interesting insight from Berman, long a proponent of localized vocabulary creation. Berman suggested that there were better alternatives to "Illegal aliens" when the term was first adopted, and that as early as 1981, the Hennepin County Library, where Berman worked, began using "Undocumented workers" instead, based upon the Chicano Thesaurus for Indexing Chicano Materials. Berman further stated that the greatest failure in 2016 was not that LC did not change the heading in LCSH, but that given the work that the SAC working group did regarding suggestions for replacing "Illegal aliens," that more libraries did not then make these changes in their local systems. He believed, that among other reasons, this lack of action can be attributed to "a sickening abandonment of professional judgement and independence . . . and a frankly numbing deference to distant authorities (like LC) and mindlessly imposed standardization (e.g., LCSH) that simply don't deserve such knee-jerk acceptance and embrace."[5] The interview also includes an interesting, unpublished paper that Berman wrote for *American Libraries* on the "Illegal aliens" issue.[6]

Lo's 2019 paper in *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* discussed the issues of classification and indexing systems and using the terms "Aliens" and its variant "Illegal aliens" as examples of the limitations of these systems. She grounded her argument in the legal research process, noting that legal research necessarily mirrors aspects of legal work, namely the concept of *stare decisis*. This concept places special emphasis on following precedent when it exists. Therefore legal research is primarily about finding similar concepts to those being discussed in the current research question. This process of finding similar concepts in previous cases or research is aided by indexing systems such as LCSH. The problem, to which Lo alludes, is that indexing systems such as LCSH try to fit everything into orderly categories that do not always accurately represent the complex realities of legal research. For example, intersectionality can create a dilemma when applying LCSH. Which concept is given precedent and how is the relationship between the two concepts reflected in LCSH? Another issue is that LCSH, and other indexing systems, reify the biases of those who created and apply the system. The subject heading "Illegal aliens" provides a perfect case study in how these issues exist in LCSH. Lo reviewed the historical context surrounding the issue of changing the LCSH "Illegal aliens." Her analysis of the final appropriations bill that was passed into law seems to instruct LC to weigh changes to subject headings in favor of current legal terminology, including the sources that are frequently referenced for that terminology, such as Title 8 of the US Code, *Black's Law Dictionary*, and the *Legislative Indexing Vocabulary* used by the Congressional Research Service. Lo concluded by pointing out that this exemplifies LCSH's inherent shortcomings and the biases that exist in it because of its reliance on literary warrant from legal texts, the difficulty of changing headings, and the need to adhere to political considerations.[7]

There have also been numerous resources that document the historical events surrounding the initial proposal to change "Illegal aliens" in LCSH and the resultant events that led to this effort stalling and no changes being made. The documentary film titled "Change the Subject" tells the story of how Dartmouth College students worked to change the LCSH heading "Illegal aliens" in cooperation with the library staff.[8] Fox has also published a timeline of events surrounding the "Illegal aliens" controversy in *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly*.[9] Ford wrote a similar piece in *American Libraries*.[10] Finally, Cox's paper in the *University of Iowa Library News* also relates the background to the Congressional interference in LCSH.[11] Though these resources relate an historical account of the issues surrounding the heading "Illegal aliens" in LCSH, a brief overview is helpful before moving on to the survey and results.

Background

In 2014, Dartmouth College students Óscar Rubén Cornejo Cásares and Melissa Padilla, and other members of Dartmouth College's student organization, the Coalition for Immigration Reform, Equality and DREAMERs

Table 1. Original Proposed Changes. Table 1 contains a column of the five original Library of Congress Subject headings that have the term "Illegal aliens" and a second column of the 2016 proposed changes to the main entries of these subject headings.

Current Library of Congress Subject Heading	Proposed Replacement Subject Heading
Illegal aliens	Undocumented immigrants
Illegal aliens in literature	Undocumented immigrants in literature
Illegal alien children	Undocumented immigrant children
Children of illegal aliens	Children of undocumented immigrants
Women illegal aliens	Undocumented women immigrants

(CoFIRED), called for a change to the subject heading in the library catalog. Specifically, the students advocated for Dartmouth College Libraries to drop the term "Illegal aliens" from their catalog, and use the term "'undocumented' instead of 'illegal' in reference to immigrants."[12] The students worked with Dartmouth College librarian John DeSantis to submit five proposals in June 2014 through LC's Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO). Table 1 includes the five subject heading changes that were originally proposed.

LC rejected the proposed revisions to the five subject headings in their *Summary of Decisions* dated December 15, 2014. In the decision to reject the proposal, LC stated that "Illegal aliens is an inherently legal heading, and as such the preference is to use the legal terminology," elaborating on this by stating that "mixing an inherently legal concept with one that is not inherently legal leads to problems with the structure and maintenance of LCSH, and makes assignment of headings difficult."[13]

At the 2016 ALA Midwinter Meeting in Boston, Gross submitted a "Resolution on Replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading 'Illegal Aliens' with 'Undocumented Immigrants,'" written in collaboration with others (including input from Berman), to the Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT), which voted to bring the resolution forward for consideration by ALA Council.[14] ALA Council is ALA's governing body and consists of one hundred councilors at large, elected by ALA membership, which "delegates to the divisions of the Association authority to plan and carry out programs and activities with policy established by Council."[15] The resolution gained the support of several ALA groups beyond the SRRT, including the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking (REFORMA), the Ethnic and Multicultural Exchange Round Table (EMIERT), the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM), ALA's Intellectual Freedom Committee (IFC), the Intellectual Freedom Round Table (IFRT), and SAC. ALA Council passed the resolution nearly unanimously, and SAC formed a working group, led by Gross, to review the LCSH "Illegal aliens" and report to SAC with recommendations.[16]

LC's Summary of Decisions, dated March 21, 2016, announced that the "heading Illegal aliens [would] be canceled and replaced by two headings, 'Noncitizens' and 'Unauthorized immigration,' which may be assigned together to describe resources about people who illegally reside in a country."[17] The full decision was outlined in a statement titled "Library of Congress to Cancel the Subject Heading 'Illegal Aliens.'"[18]

In April 2016, US Representative Diane Black introduced H.R. 4926 to the House during the 114th Congress, commonly known as the "Stopping Partisan Policy at the Library of Congress Act," which directed LC to retain the headings "Aliens" and "Illegal aliens."[19] Despite much discussion and debate, H.R. 4926 was not considered for a vote during the 114th Congress. The bill was instead directed to the House Committee on House Administration at the end of the legislative session, which essentially meant the end of it. However, it did not mean that it was the end of congressional interest in the topic.

In May 2016, the House Appropriations Committee, chaired by US Representative Tom Graves, introduced bill H.R. 5325, otherwise known as the "Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veteran Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017." Included within this bill was language related to LC and the management of subject headings:

> To the extent practicable, the Committee instructs the Library to maintain certain subject headings that reflect terminology used in title 8, United States Code.[20]

Several lengthy discussions ensued in the House regarding the inclusion of this language in the bill. Most of the exchanges about the appropriateness of including this provision in the rest of the bill were between Representative Tom Graves, arguing for the inclusion of the language, and Representative Debbie Wasserman-Schultz, arguing against any interference of Congress in LC's work and its subject headings. While the appropriations bill passed the House of Representatives with this wording intact, this was not the final wording of the bill that was signed into law.

The legislation that was ultimately enacted is reflected on page H4033 of Congressional Record, volume 163 no. 76 Book III (May 3, 2017):

> Subject Headings: In lieu of report language related to the Library of Congress' subject headings, the Library of Congress is directed to make publicly available its process for changing or adding subject headings. It is expected that the Library use a process to change or add subject headings that is clearly defined, transparent, and allows input from stakeholders including those in the congressional community. The process should consider appropriate sources of common terminology used to refer to a concept, including current statutory language and other legal reference sources; and other sources, such as reference materials; websites; and, titles in the Library of Congress' collection.[21]

LC stated in May 2016 that they would accept public feedback for the proposal to change the "Illegal aliens" heading. This comment period has remained open, and LC has made no formal public statements regarding revisions to LCSH "Illegal aliens" since 2016.

During this period of debate in Congress, the ALA ALCTS SAC Working Group on the LCSH "Illegal aliens" continued to work. The Working Group reported back to SAC at the 2016 American Library Association Annual Conference, and published the July 2016 *Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH "Illegal aliens."* The Working Group concurred with LC's decision to change the subject heading "Aliens" to "Noncitizens," however, the group recommended replacing "Illegal aliens" with "Undocumented immigrants," except in cases where "Illegal aliens" was assigned to resources about noncitizens who were not immigrants.[22] The report also indicated that "where the subject heading Illegal aliens has been assigned to works about nonimmigrants, more specific terms should be assigned."[23]

Three years later, the 2019 release of the documentary film *Change the Subject* revitalized the conversation around what progress had been made to change the "Illegal aliens" subject heading since 2016. *Change the Subject* focuses on the activism of Óscar Rubén Cornejo Cásares and Melissa Padilla, two Dartmouth University students in 2014 whose passion for rectifying the derogatory language used to describe people led to a movement to change the "Illegal aliens" subject heading. Library staff across the country began to ask what they could do to address the term "Illegal aliens" in their local catalogs as the library community awaits official revisions to the terms by LC.

The ALCTS Subject Analysis Committee formed the SAC Working Group on Alternatives to LCSH "Illegal aliens" in June 2019. The Working Group was charged with focusing on identifying and compiling various methods for individual libraries, library systems, or consortia systems to change this subject heading at the local level. The first order of business was to get a sense of what institutions were currently doing to address the continued use of "Illegal aliens" as part of LCSH. The OCLC Research Library Partnership has also provided a synopsis of discussions about this issue held by its Metadata Managers Focus Group in 2019, and strategies for using alternative subject headings on their blog, which provides a more detailed explanation of how to implement changes.[24]

Method

To gain a broader perspective, the working group developed and distributed a survey in September and October of 2019 to gather information from staff across a range of libraries and other cultural heritage institutions regarding how they were addressing the subject heading at their institutions.

Survey Design

The survey was developed and administered using Google Forms. The survey was not anonymous; name, email address, and institution affiliation for the individual who responded to the survey were requested if follow up for details on implementation was necessary. To determine patterns of solutions across library systems, participants were asked to identify which integrated library system (ILS) or library services platform (LSP) and any discovery tools they used. The survey also asked respondents to identify whether the library catalog was used by a single institution, or across a library system or consortium.

Participants were asked if changes were made in their local catalog to the LCSH "Illegal aliens." If changes were made, or if there were plans to make changes, they were asked if the changes were instituted as a one-time global change or were part of an ongoing process (e.g., changes needed as new records were imported). Participants were asked to state which role(s) was responsible for making the changes at the institution and what changes were made to accommodate local headings if local headings were used. Survey participants were asked to estimate how long it took to implement these changes.

Additional questions addressed challenges libraries encountered, what other library personnel participated in the project, whether/how the project was communicated to stakeholders, and if there had been responses to changes that had been made. The survey ended with a request for participants to share institutional workflow documentation created for their project, followed by an open-ended
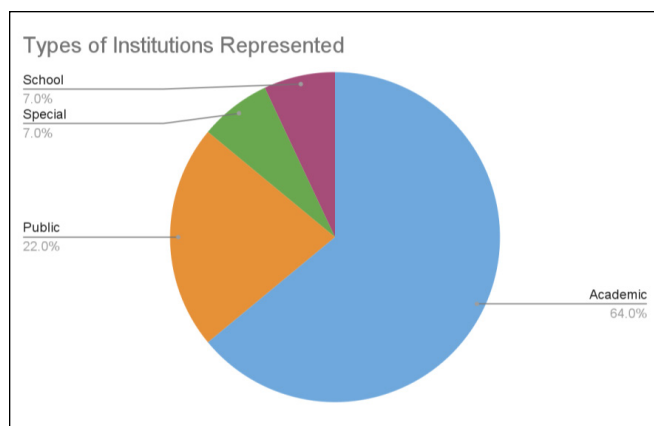
Figure 1. Types of Institutions Represented by Percentage. Chart depicting types of libraries represented in the responses by percentage: academic (64%), public (22%), special (7%), and school (7%).

Figure 2. Types of Institutions Represented by Number. Bar graph depicting types of libraries represented in the responses by number: academic (26), public (9), special (3), and school (3).

question for further comments or questions for the working group.

Survey Distribution

The working group drafted an email call for participation, which was distributed to various email discussion lists plus individuals who were previously identified as having changed the headings at their institutions. The survey was posted to the former Library Information Technology Association's (LITA) discussion list; the Ex Libris' Users of North America (ELUNA) discussion list; the user community discussion list for the Ex Libris' Library Management System, Alma also known as the "ALMA" discussion list; the "AUTO-CAT" discussion list for cataloging professionals in libraries throughout the world; the "PCC-LIST," an e-mail discussion list intended primarily for NACO participants and for Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) participants in general; the "SALALM" discussion list, for the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM); the Online Audiovisual Catalogers (OLAC) discussion list; "MOUG-L," the Music OCLC Users Group discussion list for the dissemination of information and the discussion of issues and topics of interest to music library professionals; the Radical Cataloging discussion list (RADCAT); the National Association to Promote Library and Information Services to Latinos and the Spanish Speaking, "REFORMA," discussion list; the Progressive Librarians Guild (PLG) discussion list; and ALA's Social Responsibilities Round Table (SRRT) discussion list.[25] Additional posts were made on the Open Cataloging Rules Google Group, the Troublesome Catalogers Facebook Group, and via Twitter.

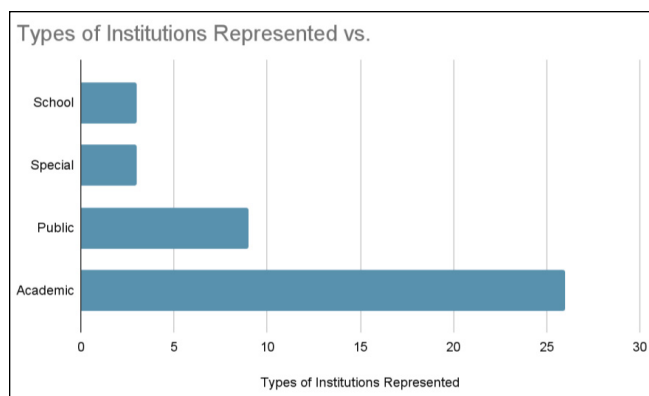Certain libraries were brought to the group's attention as organizations that had undertaken this work and should be asked to participate in the survey directly. These institutions included the University of Colorado at Boulder, Yale University, Denver Public Library, Bard College, Williamsburg Regional Library, Michigan State University, Lawrence Public Library, Regis University, and Hennepin County Library. Working group members reached out to individuals from these organizations and requested their participation in the survey.

Survey Results

Types of Libraries Represented

The survey received forty individual responses in total. The types of libraries represented include academic, public, special, and school libraries. Libraries from across the United States are represented plus one from Canada and one from the United Kingdom. The size of libraries also varied from small, local church collections to K-12 school collections to large universities and entire county library systems.

Library Systems Represented

All the major ILS and LSP systems were represented in the survey. Sierra accounted for 24.4 percent of the responses followed by Alma, Horizon, Symphony, and Millennium with 9.8 percent. Voyager represented 7.3 percent while Destiny and the open source Koha each represented 4.9 percent. Representing 2.4 percent of the total responses is Apollo, the open source Evergreen and OPALS, LibraryWorld, and Polaris. Two respondents listed their ILS as either SirsiDynix or Workflows. A few popular discovery interfaces are represented in the survey, including Blacklight, Primo, EBSCO Discovery, and Summon. The highest number of respondents, 24.4 percent, reported having no discovery system.

Trends in the Results

There were several popular trends, which included

- adding a new heading to the record in a local or MARC field without removing the corresponding "Illegal aliens" subject heading;
- replacing the "Illegal aliens" subject heading in bibliographic records;
- creating a local authority record in the backend library system; or
- creating a local authority record in the discovery system.

Of those who added alternative language to their system, the majority opted to use "Undocumented immigrants" for "Illegal aliens" and all other instances where subject heading included "illegal aliens." For example, "Women illegal aliens" became "Women undocumented immigrants" and "Children of illegal aliens" became "Children of undocumented immigrants." Some of the institutions also opted to add a local heading for "Noncitizens" to use in place of the LCSH "Aliens," and noted that this was to help clarify language across bibliographic records. During record cleanup, they reported that they discovered the "Aliens" subject heading was misapplied to titles about extraterrestrial beings rather than noncitizens.

One subject heading for which there was not a standardized replacement was "Alien detention centers." Some libraries changed (or planned to change) "Alien detention centers" to "Undocumented immigrant centers," and others suggested "Immigrant detention centers," "Detention centres for undocumented immigrants," or "Noncitizen detention centers."
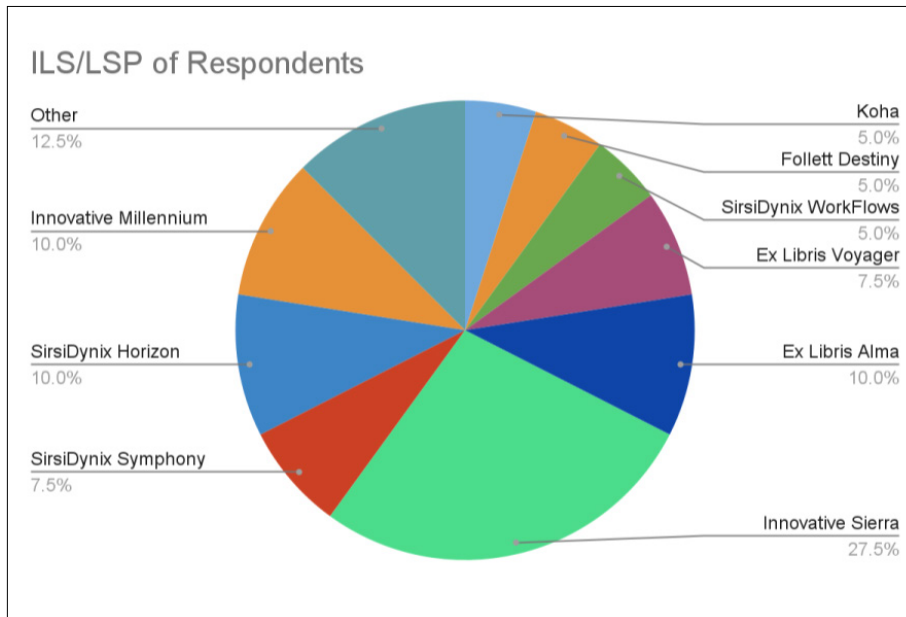

Figure 3. All of the major integrated library systems (ILS) and library services platforms (LSP) systems are represented in the survey. III's Sierra accounts for 27.5% of the responses followed by Ex Libris' Alma, SirsiDynix's Horizon and Symphony, and III's Millennium with 10%. Ex Libris' Voyager represented 7.5% while Follett's Destiny and the open source Koha each represented 5%. Less than 5% of the total responses represented by "Other" are Biblionix's Apollo, the open source Evergreen and OPALS, LibraryWorld, and III's Polaris. Two respondents listed their ILS as either SirsiDynix or Workflows."
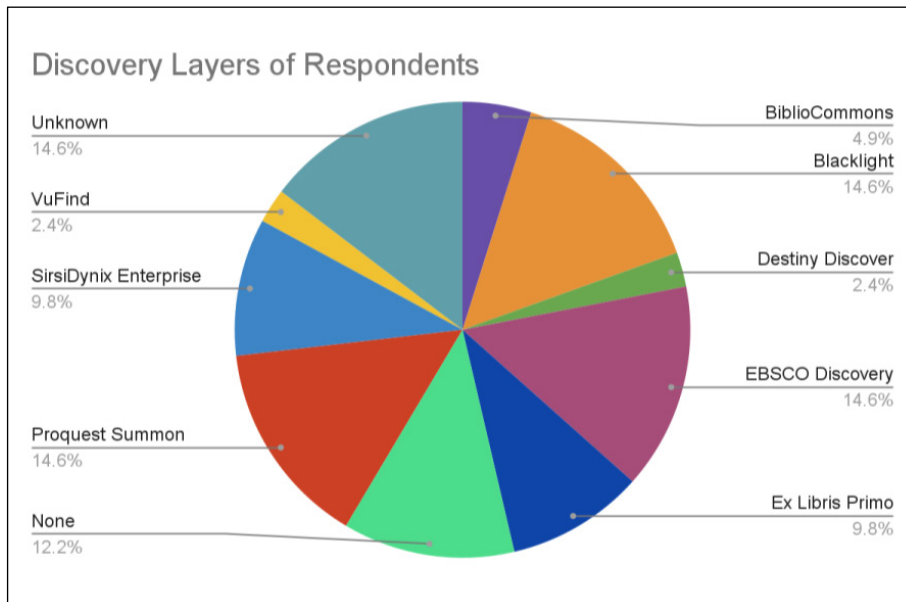

Figure 4. Chart of discovery systems represented. A number of popular discovery interfaces are represented in the survey results including BiblioCommons (4.9%), Blacklight (14.6%), Destiny Discover (2.4%), EBSCO Discovery Services (14.6%), Ex Libris Primo (9.8%), Proquest Summon (14.6%), SisiDynix Enterprise (9.8%), and VuFind (2.4%). Roughly 14.6% of respondents did not include or were not sure of their discovery layer, while 12.2% reported no discovery layer.

Strategies: Adding Additional Access Points

Retaining the "Illegal aliens" LCSH and adding additional terms has the benefits of providing the maximum subject and keyword access to bibliographic records. Libraries noted that simply adding new headings (usually coded '$2 local' or including a project name in the subfield 2) was quicker than revising headings.[26] Adding additional access points as local subject headings prevents these headings from being removed or overlaid when a newer version of the bibliographic record is imported.

In contrast, the January 2016 ALA resolution CD#34 formally recognized the "Illegal aliens" terminology is "dehumanizing, offensive, and inflammatory."[27] Retaining this vocabulary results in harmful and insensitive language continuing to display in library catalogs, thereby minimizing the positive impact of adopting inclusive language for better search and discovery. From a public services perspective, the continued use of problematic language as subject headings may lead to possible confusion among library users and library employees regarding acceptable terminology to search and discover items related to undocumented immigrants.

Strategies: Replacing "Illegal Aliens" Directly in Records

For smaller institutions and those lacking more advanced ILS/discovery systems, manually replacing the "Illegal aliens" heading in bibliographic records with alternate terminology may be a viable strategy. This approach has the benefit of being simple to implement, and the problematic language is removed entirely from bibliographic records. One drawback is that manual replacement of this term requires additional workflows and recataloging of materials, which may not work for certain institutions depending on cataloging priorities and staffing support for ongoing record maintenance. Bibliographic-level maintenance for individual records is likely also not sustainable for large collections and libraries with mixed formats (print, electronic).
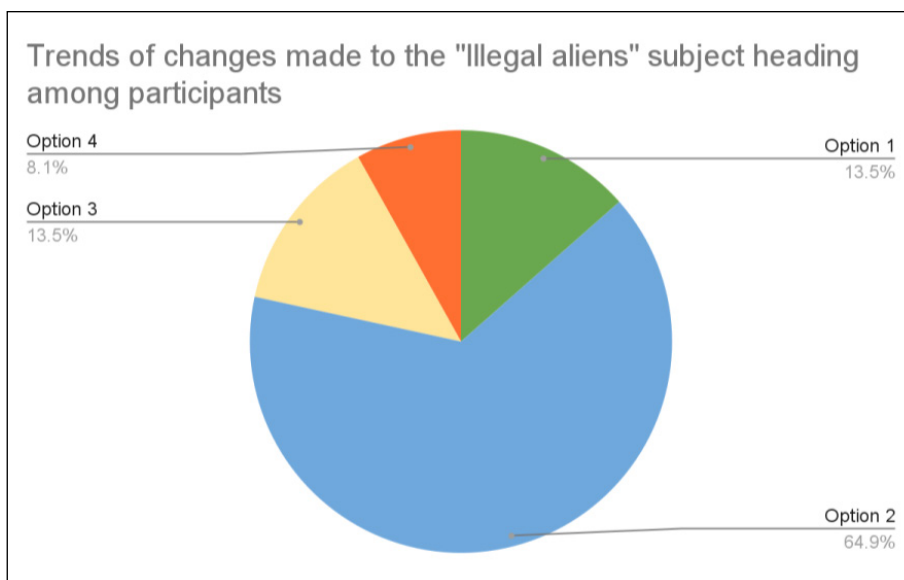

Figure 5. Trends of changes made to the "Illegal aliens" subject heading among participants. There were several popular trends among libraries making changes to the "Illegal aliens" subject heading, which included either option 1: adding a new heading into the record in a local or MARC field without removing the corresponding "Illegal aliens" subject heading (13.5% of respondents); option 2: replacing the "Illegal aliens" subject heading in the local bibliographic records (64.9% of respondents); option 3: creating a local authority record in the back-end library system (13.5% of respondents); or option 4: creating a local authority record in the discovery system (8.1% of respondents)." Trends of changes made to the "Illegal aliens" subject heading among participants. There were several popular trends among libraries making changes to the "Illegal aliens" subject heading, which included either option 1: adding a new heading into the record in a local or MARC field without removing the corresponding "Illegal aliens" subject heading (13.5% of respondents); option 2: replacing the "Illegal aliens" subject heading in the local bibliographic records (64.9% of respondents); option 3: creating a local authority record in the back-end library system (13.5% of respondents); or option 4: creating a local authority record in the discovery system (8.1% of respondents).

Some libraries implemented automated replacement using normalization rules or regular expressions in their system, and catalogers are not expected to manually make this change at the point of cataloging. Systematic conversion of the headings was then undertaken regularly; the survey revealed that once a month was a typical maintenance period. Batch replacement and automation create an efficient ongoing system of reviewing headings in bibliographic records, both for previously cataloged and newly added materials. Since automation or batch replacements still requires some human intervention, staff time for periodic review is part of this methodology to address the subject heading.

Strategies: Replacing Display Terms with Alternate Vocabularies

Some discovery systems can retain the "Illegal aliens" heading in the library's bibliographic data while displaying

a variant phrase in the library's public catalog. This may be the best alternative when it is available. The benefits of this approach are that the integrity of the core data is maintained. This also ensures that when LC revises this heading in the official LCSH, libraries using this approach can use their traditional authority control methods to update bibliographic records as they normally would. However, the problematic language will continue to appear on the staff side within catalog records until this change is made.

An example of this approach was undertaken by Villanova University's Falvey Library, which created mappings in VuFind's MARC record indexing rules and created a custom record driver to display "Undocumented immigrants" where "Illegal aliens" existed within subject fields. Their codes are available on the library's blog.[28] Similarly, the California State (CalState) University Libraries consortium changed the heading display in their discovery layer through a suite of normalization rules in their discovery layer, Ex Libris's Primo.[29] These norm rules transform the display of the text strings "Aliens" to "Noncitizens" and "Illegal aliens" to "Undocumented immigrants" in subject headings in Primo records and the Primo facet *Topics*, resulting in a transformation consisting of twelve subject heading changes. This solution displays the desired LCSH in MARC records yet enables users to search by both terms.[30] The Washington Research Library Consortium plans to implement similar discovery layer-level transformations in Ex Libris's Primo VE.

Challenges Encountered

The most frequently encountered challenges reported by survey respondents included

- deciding how to make changes on a consortium-wide basis;
- deciding on which alternative vocabulary/terminology to use;
- unanticipated bibliographic maintenance, especially confusion regarding terms such as "aliens" versus "extraterrestrials";
- database syncing issues causing a delay in displaying revisions;
- inconsistencies, such as forgetting to revise headings that are not alphabetically near "Illegal aliens" (e.g., "Children of illegal aliens");
- keeping up with revising headings in newly imported bibliographic records; and
- workload/staffing issues.

One challenge reported by many libraries was automated authority programs, such as Sierra's AACP (Automated Authority Control Program), or those undertaken

regularly by vendors potentially overwriting/reverting the manual revisions that had been made to these headings. Many workarounds were created to address this issue, but those strategies varied greatly depending on the systems and vendors involved.

Making Changes in a Consortial Environment

Based on survey results, consortia that have made these changes include the California State University Libraries, the Linn Libraries Consortium (Oregon), the Michigan State University Libraries, the Orbis Cascade Alliance, the SUNY Libraries Consortium, the Tri-College Libraries Consortium (Pennsylvania), the Triangle Research Libraries Network (North Carolina), and the Washington Research Library Consortium (planned as of June 2020). Following are three short case studies of the decision-making process library consortia used to make these changes: the California State University Libraries, the SUNY Libraries Consortium, and the Orbis Cascade Alliance.

The California State University Libraries began discussing this issue after the SAC Working Group distributed its survey in fall 2019. Some technical services staff on the CalState Unified Library Management Systems (ULMS) technical services discussion list raised the question of whether the consortium should act and implied support for doing so. In response, Israel Yáñez and Luiz Mendes prepared a presentation for one of CalState's monthly Tech Services Open Forums about the issue and suggested three potential technical solutions for the changes. Forum attendees were nearly unanimous in their support of pursuing one of the options. The proposal was forwarded to CalState's ULMS Resource Management Functional Committee and the ULMS Steering Committee. It was also shared on the technical services discussion list for comments and feedback from stakeholders, where it received positive comments and support. The Steering Committee approved the recommendation and forwarded it to the CSU Council of Library Deans (COLD), who voted to approve the changes, which went into effect in January 2020. According to Yáñez, "No one voiced any objections, or implied we should not do anything at all, at any step along the way. We are all part of the CSU system. Diversity and inclusion are significant values in the CSU system, so I didn't expect to hear objections . . . I think one of the keys to our success in getting this done lies in the fact that we presented the background of the problem, three options for how to address it, and then began the conversation. The conversation included, of course, 'should we do this?' It's harder to say no to that when you are presented with three possible approaches, each with their pros and cons, of how it could be done."[31]

After the SUNY Libraries Consortium migrated to Alma in July 2019, its Metadata Standards and Procedures

Committee (SMSP) began looking at projects to implement throughout the consortium. Changing the "Illegal aliens" subject headings was discussed at SMSP meetings in fall 2019, and the SMSP agreed that it was a worthwhile project to pursue. After research and testing various options, the SMSP discussed the options and decided not only to use normalization rules to change the subject headings in their display system (Ex Libris's Primo VE), but also to change the subject headings in the MARC records in their library management system (Ex Libris's Alma). Maggie McGee, the SUNY Library Services Network Zone Coordinator responsible for determining how to implement the changes, explained the SMSP's rationale: "We wanted to be inclusive of not only our end users, but of our staff and faculty members working within SUNY."[32]

SUNY's Metadata Standards and Procedures Committee wrote a proposal to make the changes and submitted it to the SUNY Library Consortium, which approved the proposal in January 2020. The initiative was presented at a monthly meeting to the consortia, and a LibGuide was created for reference. SUNY's implementation of the changes began in June 2020, and were executed in three phases. In phase 1, completed in June 2020, normalization rules were applied to omit the term "Illegal aliens" and "aliens" from displaying in the full record display in PrimoVE for physical and electronic records in all three Alma Zones (Institution Zones, Network Zone, and Community Zone).[33] Phase 2 was completed in August 2020, and normalization rules were implemented that replaced LCSH containing "illegal aliens" with "undocumented immigrants," and "aliens" with "noncitizen" for physical and electronic records in each institution's Institution Zone. In phase 3, also completed in August 2020, the same normalization rules for phase 2 were implemented for all physical records in the Network Zone. Unfortunately, system limitations prevent records from Ex Libris's Central Discovery Index (primarily e-books and e-journals facilitating searching at the title, chapter, and article-level) from being affected by these normalization rules.[34]

In fall/winter 2020, the Orbis Cascade Alliance made the recommended changes in member libraries' discovery layers via developing a suite of Primo normalization rules based on those used by CalState. The issue of the offensive LCSH was brought to the attention of the Alliance's Cataloging Standing Group (CSG) in March 2019. Because Alliance institutions represent a diverse range of thirty-seven institutions and share bibliographic records in an Alma Network Zone, the CSG first examined the pros and cons of making these changes locally or at the network level in a discussion paper in December 2019.[35] In spring 2020, the CSG circulated this discussion paper among the Alliance technical services staff community for feedback. Simultaneously, the CSG surveyed the technical services representatives from each Alliance institution on whether

to leave the decision of enhancing bibliographic records up to each library or to create an Alliance-wide policy to add the local subject headings to records at the network level. Twenty-five of thirty-seven technical service representatives for Alliance institutions responded to the survey, with twenty-three supporting creating an Alliance-wide policy.

The CSG contacted the California State University Libraries for the Primo normalization rules that they used to make this change in June 2020. Additionally, the CSG sought input from public services librarians on the rationale and impact of the changes and incorporated this information into a formal recommendation to implement these rules at the consortium level.[36] The CSG sent this recommendation to the Shared Content and Technical Services (SCTS) Team, under which the CSG operates, for approval. The SCTS team approved the recommendation, which then went to the Alliance Council for review, where it was subsequently unanimously approved in September 2020. In the fall and winter of 2020, the Alliance's Norm Rules Standing Group finalized the suite of normalization rules to facilitate these changes in Primo, with changes implemented in January 2021.[37]

Although library consortia differ in organization and culture, library staff interested in making these changes within a consortial environment may benefit from the following strategies:

- working within existing consortial cataloging or technical services groups to discuss and recommend these changes up the chain of command to decision makers;
- partnering with public service librarians and/or institutional organizations that support undocumented students in articulating the need for these changes and their potential impacts on users;
- conducting consortial surveys to gauge stakeholders' opinions on making these changes;
- contacting other consortia who have successfully made these changes for technical support or ideas for reaching consensus; and
- leveraging or referencing existing consortial equity, diversity, and inclusion policies and efforts.

Communicating Changes

Most respondents reported circulating information about changes made only within their institution, often via administrative comments, email, or internal newsletters. Others went beyond this to share information about the changes via communications directly to their larger community (this was particularly the case for academic libraries, who noted sharing the change with their institution, e.g., campus or school), or with the public at large. Examples of public communication about revising this heading include

statements from the California State University Libraries in 2019, the SUNY Library Consortium in 2020, and Villanova University's Falvey Memorial Library in 2020.[38]

Community Responses to Changes Made

The overwhelming majority of respondents reported positive or neutral responses to this change. Of the thirty-four respondents who replied to the survey question "Have you received any response to the changes? If so, was it positive or negative?," twenty-six reported that they received only positive comments, primarily from staff or administration. Very few libraries reported receiving comments from the public.

Six institutions reported that there were no responses to the changes, and three reported mixed results. Comments received about the changes included questions about the scalability of similar projects and finding/prioritizing other offensive LCSH. Negative responses to the changes included one respondent who received communication to their reference department in which a national conservative student newspaper questioned the project. In response, the library gave a brief and factual response including background on the issue. A respondent stated that "some catalogers were less enthusiastic" about the change (though it was not clear whether because of workload issues or ideological disagreements), and another noted that they had made changes consortium-wide without asking permission, so there was discontent about the method but not about the change itself.

Next Steps

In January 2020, working group members submitted a proposal to the ALCTS board to create a website compiling information about the various changes libraries had made within their catalogs to revise or replace this heading.[39] As of October 2020, the working group is collaborating with the ALA staff to create this website, which will serve as a clearinghouse for members of the library community who wish to share information about their libraries' revisions.

Additional Resources for Institutions Interested in Enacting Changes

Alternative Controlled Vocabularies

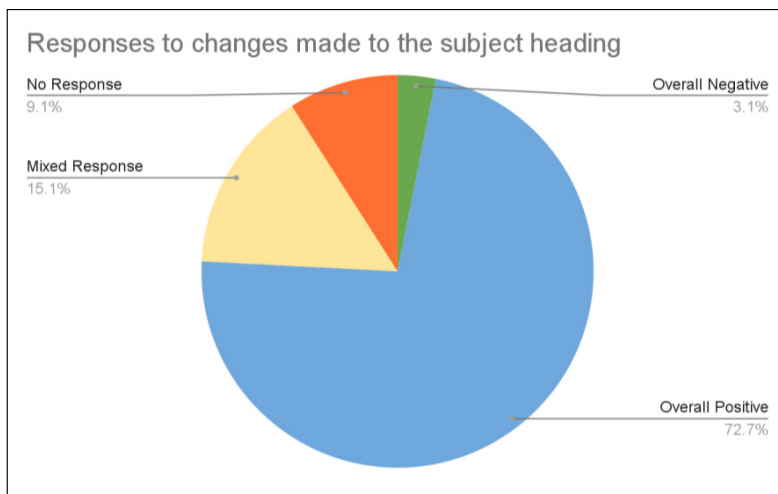A list of alternative controlled vocabularies was originally

Figure 6. Responses to changes made. Figure 6 is a chart that depicts the overall tone of responses to institutional changes made to the "Illegal aliens" subject headings by percentage: Overall Positive (72.2%), No Response (16.7%), Mixed Response (8.3%), and Overall Negative (2.8%).

included as an appendix document titled "ATT-3-other-controlled-vocabularies" of the *2016 Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH "Illegal aliens."*[40] These sources were consulted again in March 2021 to confirm if any change in terminology has occurred since the original list was compiled. One source, EBSCO's Academic Search Premier, has changed its preferred term to "UNDOCUMENTED immigrants" from "ILLEGAL aliens." EuroVoc, the multilingual, multidisciplinary thesaurus covering the activities of the EU and the European Parliament in particular, has changed its preferred term to "illegal migration" from "illegal immigration."[41] From the other sources for which access was available, some have made minor changes; none of them have replaced a term containing "undocumented" with one containing the word "illegal." The alternative controlled vocabularies list from the *2016 Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH "Illegal aliens."* is still a wonderful resource for those looking for documentation to support changes to subject headings containing the phrase "illegal aliens."

Conclusion

Survey participants were asked, "What would you do differently if given the chance to make these changes again?" The most frequent response was "Nothing," with the second most frequent being, "Make the changes sooner." The working group suggests that any change libraries can make to implement less offensive language in their catalogs is better than doing nothing because it is unclear when LC will move forward with changing the LCSH.

Recommendations for the "best" solution for each institution will vary, depending on the community's needs, the organizational structure that governs decisions within their catalog, and the capacity of the system(s) used to display the catalog. This working group has taken a broad approach in attempting to compile options and discussing the pros and cons of each alternative.

Respondents were asked if they had comments or questions for the working group, and many comments were enthusiastic about the group's work and the work that had been done in their library (and others) to make this change. They saw this challenge as a unique opportunity for cataloging and public services personnel to collaborate on an issue

was important to their library's users. Many commented that they were interested in learning more about other LCSHs that might be outdated or disparaging.

LC's delay to revise this heading is unfortunate and the library community should not lose sight of the real pain and alienation that having this offensive terminology in our catalogs can entail for members of a marginalized community. However, one positive of this situation is that it has provided library and other cultural heritage institution personnel with the opportunity to take concrete steps towards ensuring that the terminology we use in our work is inclusive and respectful.

References and Notes

1. The Cataloging and Metadata Management Section (CaMMS) Subject Analysis Committee is part of the American Library Association. More information about the ALCTS CaMMS Subject Analysis Committee, including the charge and membership of the committee, can be found at https://www.ala.org/alcts/mgrps/camms/cmtes/ats-ccssac.

2. Stopping Partisan Policy at the Library of Congress Act, H.R. 4626, 114th Congress (2015–2016), accessed October 27, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/4626/.

3. *Proceedings and Debates,* 115th Congress, 1st sess., *Congressional Record, Vol. 163 No. 76 Book III* (May 3, 2017): H4033, accessed on October 27, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/crec/2017/05/03/CREC-2017-05-03-bk3.pdf.

4. Joseph Morales, "Back Talk: Why LC should Drop Illegal Aliens," *Library Journal* 141, no. 17 (2016), 14-n/a, https://du.idm.oclc.org/login?url=https://www-proquest-com.du.idm.oclc.org/trade-journals/back-talk-why-lc-should-drop-illegal-aliens/docview/1828011106/se-2?accountid=14608.

5. Sanford Berman and Tina Gross, "Expand, Humanize, Simplify: An Interview with Sandy Berman," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 55, no. 6 (2017): 352, https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2017.1327468.

6. Berman and Gross, "Expand, Humanize, Simplify," 347–60.

7. Grace Lo, "'Aliens' vs. Catalogers: Bias in the Library of Congress Subject Heading," *Legal Reference Services Quarterly* 38, no. 4 (2019): 170–96, https://doi.org/10.1080/0270319X.2019.1696069.

8. More information about the documentary can be found on the film site https://sites.dartmouth.edu/changethesubject/.

9. Violet B. Fox, "Cataloging News," *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly* 54, no. 7 (2016), https://www.tandfonline.com/doi/abs/10.1080/01639374.2016.1218707.

10. Anne Ford, "Conscientious Cataloging: Librarians Work to Advance Equity in Subject Headings," *American Libraries*

(2020), https://americanlibrariesmagazine.org/2020/09/01/conscientious-cataloging/.

11. Elizabeth Cox, "Diversity, Equity, & Inclusion in the Library's Online Catalog," *University of Iowa Library News* (2019), https://blog.lib.uiowa.edu/news/2019/06/21/diversity-equity-inclusion-in-the-librarys-online-catalog/.

12. Fox, "Cataloging News," 508.

13. Library of Congress, "Summary of Decisions, Editorial Meeting Number 12," Library of Congress, SACO (2014), https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/cpsoed/psd-141215.html.

14. American Library Association Council, "Resolution on Replacing the Library of Congress Subject Heading 'Illegal Aliens' with 'Undocumented Immigrants,'" ALA Council (January 12, 2016), http://hdl.handle.net/11213/1301/.

15. American Library Association, "Council Composition and Charge," accessed October 27, 2020, https://www.ala.org/aboutala/governance/council.

16. Fox, "Cataloging News," 508.

17. Library of Congress, "Summary of Decisions, Editorial Meeting Number 03," Library of Congress, SACO, (March 21, 2016), https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/saco/cpsoed/psd-160321.html.

18. Library of Congress, "Library of Congress to Cancel the Subject Heading 'Illegal Aliens,'" March 22, 2016, https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/illegal-aliens-decision.pdf.

19. Lisa Peet, "Library of Congress Drops Illegal Alien Subject Heading, Provokes Backlash Legislation," *Library Journal* (2016), https://www.libraryjournal.com/?detailStory=library-of-congress-drops-illegal-alien-subject-heading-provokes-backlash-legislation.

20. Continuing Appropriations and Military Construction, Veterans Affairs, and Related Agencies Appropriations Act, 2017, and Zika Response and Preparedness Act, 114th Congress (2015–2016), accessed October 27, 2020, https://www.congress.gov/bill/114th-congress/house-bill/5325/.

21. *Proceedings and Debates,* 115th Congress, 1st sess.

22. Tina Gross, Subject Analysis Committee Working Group, "Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH 'Illegal aliens,'" accessed on January 4, 2020, http://hdl.handle.net/11213/9261.

23. Gross, Subject Analysis Committee Working Group, "Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH 'Illegal aliens.'"

24. Karen Smith-Yoshimura, "Strategies for Alternate Subject Headings and Maintaining Subject Headings" (Hanging Together, the OCLC Research blog, October 29, 2019), accessed November 12, 2020, https://hangingtogether.org/?p=7591.

25. The discussion lists are lita-l@lists.ala.org; eluna-announce @exlibrisusers.org; alma@exlibrisusers.org; autocat@discussion list.syr.edu; lala-l@discussion list.l.fiu.edu; olac-l@oclclists.org; moug-l@oclclists.org; radcat@discussion list.uga.edu; REFORMANet@googlegroups.com; progressivelibrariansguild@lists.sonic.net; and srrtac-l@lists.ala.org, respectively.

26. In OCLC MARC records, 650 $2 should only contain a valid MARC source code, as listed in the Library of Congress *Subject Heading and Term Source Codes* at http://www.loc.gov/standards/sourcelist/subject.html. Adding local subject headings in a 690 field to indicate a local heading directly into the imported record is an alternative method to contributing an ill-formatted correction to the OCLC record.

27. American Library Association Council, "2015–2016 ALA CD#34_11216_FINAL.2016 ALA Midwinter Meeting," ALA Council, January 12, 2016, https://www.ala.org/aboutala/sites/ala.org.aboutala/files/content/governance/council/council_documents/2016_mw_council_documents/cd_34_Resol_on_LC_Headings_11216_FINAL.pdf.

28. The codes can be found at https://blog.library.villanova.edu/2020/01/13/changing-the-subject-with-vufind/.

29. Luiz Mendes, Israel Yáñez, and Marcus Jun, "Transforming Subjects: Solving a Terminology Problem" (presentation, 2020 eCAUG Virtual Conference, June 25, 2020, virtual conference), https://sites.google.com/view/ecaug/ecaug-2020-presentations.

30. The Primo norm rules affect only MARC records native to the LMS (Alma) but cannot alter subject headings in records from Ex Libris's knowledgebase (Central Discovery Index).

31. Israel Yáñez, email message to author, February 24, 2020.

32. Maggie McGee, email message to author, November 10, 2020.

33. "Introduction to Metadata Management," Ex Libris, accessed March 29, 2021, https://knowledge.exlibrisgroup.com/Alma/Product_Documentation/010Alma_Online_Help_(English)/Metadata_Management/005Introduction_to_Metadata_Management.

34. "SLC Guides: Alma Resource Management: Resource Management in Alma: Change the Subject Project," SUNY Libraries Consortium, accessed November 4, 2020, https://slcny.libguides.com/c.php?g=986218&p=7623203.

35. Orbis Cascade Alliance Cataloging Standing Group, "Providing Alternative Subject Headings for Controversial Subject Headings in the Alliance Shared ILS," December 2019, https://www.orbiscascade.org/programs/scts/technical-services/csg/.

36. Orbis Cascade Alliance Cataloging Standing Group, "Recommendation to Implement an Alliance-wide Alternative to the LCSH 'Illegal Aliens' Subject Terminology," June 2020, https://www.orbiscascade.org/programs/scts/technical-services/csg/.

37. "Orbis Cascade Alliance Changes to 'Illegal Aliens' Library of Congress Subject Headings," January 15, 2021, https://www.orbiscascade.org/changes-to-illegal-immigrants-subject-headings/.

38. CSU Libraries, "California State University Libraries to Change the Display of the Subject Heading 'Illegal Aliens' in Joint Public Catalog," CSU Libraries, December 2, 2019, https://libraries.calstate.edu/csu-libraries-change-subject-heading-illegal-aliens/; "SUNY Library Consortia Announcement About the Local Subject Heading Initiative," accessed November 4, 2020, https://public.3.basecamp.com/p/DmvTAZQzrJ4nNPpL2wJuwVTH; Deborah Bishov and Shawn Proctor, "Falvey Staff Members Work Together to 'Change the Subject' on the Term, 'Illegal Aliens,'" Villanova University Libraries, January 13, 2020, https://blog.library.villanova.edu/2020/01/13/falvey-staff-members-work-together-to-change-the-subject-on-the-term-illegal-aliens/.

39. Since this SAC Working Group report was presented to ALCTS, ALCTS has since combined with the Library Information Technology Association (LITA) and the Library Leadership and Management Association (LLAMA) to form the new ALA subdivision, Core.

40. Gross, "Report from the SAC Working Group on the LCSH 'Illegal aliens.'"

41. Publications Office of the European Union, "EuroVoc," accessed March 31, 2021, https://op.europa.eu/en/web/eu-vocabularies.