

Using the Homosaurus in a Public Library Consortium

A Case Study

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Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) on LGBTQIA+ topics have not evolved alongside the frequently changing vernacular vocabulary used to access resources on the topics. To rectify this issue, libraries can choose to use an alternative controlled vocabulary, like The Homosaurus: An International LGBTQ+ Linked Data Vocabulary. This case study provides an overview of how Cooperative Computer Services (CCS), a public library consortium in Illinois, made the case to allow the Homosaurus in the CCS catalog, gained approval from the member libraries, and crafted a cataloging manual section. Other libraries can follow the recommendations in this article on how to properly make the case for the approval of a policy to allow an alternative controlled vocabulary in their catalog.

According to a Gallup poll from 2022, the lesbian, gay, bisexual, and transgender (LGBT) population in the United States increased from 5.6 percent in 2020 to 7.1 percent. While the percentage is stable in older Americans, the percentage of LGBT Gen Z Americans has increased from 10.5 percent in 2012 to 20.8 percent, and the percentage of LGBT millennials has increased from 5.8 percent in 2012 to 10.5 percent.¹ Such a large increase means that the LGBT community will become even more visible than in previous generations; more resources will be published on lesbian, gay, bisexual, transgender, queer or questioning, intersex, asexual, and more (LGBTQIA+) topics, and media will feature LGBTQIA+ issues more frequently. This means that librarians will see an increase in the number of patrons that seek access to materials on LGBTQIA+ topics. An important part of this process is ensuring that the bibliographic records are sufficiently cataloged with subject headings that represent the terminology used by the LGBTQIA+ community to describe themselves. Regardless of whether one is a member of the community or not, the vernacular vocabulary to describe relevant topics is used more frequently than scientific or dated terms. If bibliographic records do not include the terms that patrons search for, the materials they need will be hidden and inaccessible when they are needed the most. However, Library of Congress (LC) has not sufficiently prepared for this inevitable need by updating the archaic Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) terms like “Sexual minorities” and “Gays” or adding in appropriate scope notes, so catalogers know how to apply terms to records.² It is time for catalogers to devise their own solution while they continue to lobby the Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO) to appropriately update LCSH.

To make bibliographic records on LGBTQIA+ topics more accessible, the member libraries of Cooperative Computer Services (CCS), a public library consortium in Illinois, approved a policy to allow The Homosaurus: An International

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LGBTQ+ Linked Data Vocabulary in the CCS catalog. The Homosaurus is a controlled vocabulary that has been available for free online at <https://homosaurus.org/> since 2019 but was originally derived from *A Queer Thesaurus: An International Thesaurus of Gay and Lesbian Index Terms*, a Dutch/English thesaurus.³ This controlled vocabulary can be used to supplement the LCSH terms when a term does not fully represent the material being cataloged. This case study documents the research and decision-making process CCS staff and member libraries used to approve the policy for allowing the Homosaurus and the local cataloging practices as documented in the CCS cataloging manual. Recommendations for other libraries and consortiums that are interested in allowing the Homosaurus or other alternative controlled vocabularies are provided that will help librarians gain buy-in from staff and administrators at their institutions.

Literature Review

Prior to LC's distribution of the first printed cards in 1901, cataloging was costly, inefficient, and not standardized. In conjunction with the American Library Association (ALA), LC standardized cataloging rules and the use of LCSH. Due to the costliness of cataloging, libraries of all sizes could not afford subject catalogs until the advent of the distribution program. The printed cards solidified LC's future as the expert on national standards.⁴ In the second half of the twentieth century, LC's efforts to make cataloging more efficient evolved to allow cooperative cataloging with the use of the OCLC database and the creation of the cooperative cataloging programs (PCC, CONSER, SACO, NACO, and BIBCO). Without the national and international standards that Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) participants follow, the quality of records in OCLC would be greatly diminished.⁵

Since the creation of the Subject Authority Cooperative Program (SACO) in 1992, librarians have been able to propose new subject headings and revisions to LCSH to contribute to the evolution of the controlled vocabulary. SACO Funnel, which are groups of librarians that work together on subject heading proposals for specific topics, have been important in the promotion of inclusive subject headings. For example, the African American Funnel Project successfully submitted proposals to add headings like "Black wall streets" and "Afrofuturist fiction."⁶ To facilitate the creation and revision of LCSH for LGBTQIA+ topics, the Gender and Sexuality Funnel was just formed in 2022.⁷

Despite the efforts of the funnels to lobby for more inclusive terms, not all proposals are successful. Such a broad controlled vocabulary, like LCSH, does not meet the needs of all communities. Numerous specialized controlled vocabularies have been created to better represent specific ethnic groups, specialized topics, occupations, and time periods. The list of

subject vocabularies that can be used in bibliographic records in the OCLC database is included on a site titled "Subject Heading and Term Source Codes."⁸ Because LCSH has been known to include out-of-date or infrequently used terms on LGBTQIA+ topics, some libraries and archives have chosen to utilize other controlled vocabularies or local subject headings. Recently published articles on LGBTQIA+ subject headings continue to critique LC or SACO and advocate for updating LCSH. While some articles recommend solutions, few researchers have published practical solutions that can be implemented in public libraries.

Critique of LCSH Terms on LGBTQIA+ Topics

The momentum to update sexist and homophobic LCSH terminology began with a panel discussion sponsored by the Task Force on Gay Liberation at the 1971 American Library Association (ALA) Annual Conference in Dallas.⁹ The publication of Sandy Berman's *Prejudices and Antipathies: A tract on the LC Subject Headings Concerning People* in 1971, as well as his and his colleagues' work at the Hennepin County Library to create local subject headings, were influential in SACO's efforts to update LCSH.¹⁰ Yet lobbying SACO to update LCSH is a time-consuming process that is frequently unsuccessful. LC made several updates to LGBTQIA+ terms in the 1990s and early 2000s. However, some of these changes were viewed as a compromise between the old status quo and the suggested term.¹¹ The current LCSH terms have been described as inconsistent and out-of-date.¹² This can make it difficult for patrons to access material when searching with the currently used vocabulary.

As of 2011, Ellen Greenblatt listed two major points of critique that have not been corrected.¹³ First, the term "Gays" is currently used as an umbrella term for gay men and lesbians. This is not the commonly used umbrella term for LGBTQIA+ individuals. Greenblatt notes that users may not understand the difference between gay men and gays. She states that "by using gays as an umbrella term to encompass both gay men and lesbians, LCSH is contributing to the longstanding issue of lesbian invisibility."¹⁴ This act marginalizes the LGBTQIA+ community. Second, LCSH conflates the meaning of sex and gender. This is evident in the "use for" terms. For example, "Sex" should be used for both "Gender (Sex)" and "Sex (Gender)." "Gender identity" is used for "Sexual identity (Gender identity)," while "Sexual minorities" is used for "Gender minorities." Further conflating the difference between sex and gender are the narrower terms under "Gender identity" which include both intersex, transgender, and transexual terms. This does not consider the contemporary definitions of sex or gender, of which sex is defined as biology and gender as a societal construct.¹⁵

Additionally, several authors have commented on the lack of the subject heading "Queer" to accompany the LCSH

term “Queer Theory.” While the term “queer” is frequently used as an umbrella term for people who are not straight and not cisgendered (identifying with the gender assigned at birth), it has also been used by those who reject labels for gender identity and sexual orientation.¹⁶ However, LC chose to only create the term “Queer Theory” because of the history of the term being used as an offensive word.¹⁷ The stylebook for the *NLGJA: The Association of LGBTQ Journalists* notes that the word “queer” should be used with caution because of the offensive nature of the term. When it is used, an explanation should be provided.¹⁸

The popularity of the term “queer” as a search term can be easily identified by using Google Trends to compare the number of searches to the umbrella terms available in LCSH. From comparing the amount of Google searches using Google Trends for the search term “queer” to “gays” and “sexual minorities,” one can see that the term “queer” is twice as popular on average as the term “gays.” Whereas the term “sexual minorities” is rarely ever searched outside of the more populous states.¹⁹ The usage of “queer” as an identity term has become so prolific that the case for literary warrant can be made. National Public Radio uses the term “queer” when an individual identifies as queer to respect the person’s identity.²⁰ K. R. Roberto postulated, “If there are no queers in LCSH, what does Queer theory study?” Roberto believes the lack of inclusion of the term “queer” is an inherently political act to create a space that only values clearly delineated identities.²¹ J. L. Colbert acknowledged how challenging the term “queer” is for controlled vocabularies. The term’s fluid nature makes it difficult to define and apply scope notes to. It may not be defined in the same manner ten years from now. Without appropriate scope notes, it can be difficult for catalogers to decide how to apply terms. Given this problem and the fact that people do search for the term “queer,” Colbert questioned what librarians should do about the term.²²

The lack of inclusion of the term “queer” as an identity term is just one example of how LCSH does not accurately represent the LGBTQIA+ community and the terms that researchers search with. It is well known that LCSH terms are out-of-date, inconsistent, and updated too slowly or not at all.²³ Although added recently, the term “Gender non-conforming people” represents a bias that depicts the stereotypes of the gender binary system and is not the term most frequently searched for when researching non-binary people.²⁴ The lack of headings for identities like pansexual people make it impossible for library users to search for material on this topic, especially if it has not been included in the summary.

There has been one notable study that compares the vocabulary used by patrons who research LGBTQIA+ topics to LCSH terminology. Colbert studied the searching habits and relevancy of search results from gender and women’s studies professors at the University of Illinois Urbana-Champaign

using a semi-structured interview technique.²⁵ Colbert noted that the participants felt frustrated that they needed to alter their searches with different terms depending on the nature of the research and discipline. While the participants did search for some terms that are included in LCSH, they searched for many terms that are not LCSH, including but not limited to: “fairy,” “men who love men,” “mlm,” “queer,” variations on the LGBT acronym, “women who are only attracted to women,” “trans,” “bi,” “pansexual,” and “queer community” or “LGBT community.” The researchers preferred to begin their search outside of the library catalog while only returning to search in the catalog for a known item.²⁶ As librarians, we would like to train students and patrons to use the library catalog as it was meant to be used, to take advantage of the ability to collocate materials by subject headings. Yet this effort will not provide any benefit to patrons if the controlled vocabulary does not reflect the vocabulary used by the community that it serves.

Charles A. Cutter, a nineteenth-century librarian who influenced LC, commented on synonyms and the choice of a synonym for a subject heading in *Rules for a Dictionary Catalogue*. Cutter colorfully described the need to look for synonyms when researching a topic as an “evil.” He recommends choosing the synonym that “is most familiar to that class of people who consult the library; a natural history society will of course use the scientific name, a town library would equally of course use the popular name.”²⁷ Recently, Brian Dobreski, Karen Snow, and Heather Moulaison-Sandy compared terms describing LGBTQIA+ identities in LCSH and Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms (LCDGT) to the Homosaurus identity terms to see how representative the LC headings were of the LGBTQIA+ community. The identities included in LCSH and LCDGT overlap with the identities represented by Homosaurus by about 25 percent. This analysis found that traditional controlled vocabularies only represent a small portion of identities that are necessary to fully support the LGBTQIA+ community.²⁸ By not updating LCSH terms to include vocabulary used contemporaneously, the LGBTQIA+ community is being marginalized. Whether one is or is not a member of the LGBTQIA+ community, the materials necessary for research on relevant topics are less accessible or even hidden because of the lack of appropriate subject headings.

Potential Solutions

It is important for libraries to devise their own solutions that meet the needs of their communities to provide easier access to the materials that they need. The recommendations fall into two categories: an educational approach that does not affect the catalog and a hands-on approach to changing the subject headings and how the catalog functions. Sara A. Howard and Steven A. Knowlton, of Princeton University, created a LibGuide of subject headings, classification numbers,

important people, and LGBTQIA+ organizations.²⁹ Since public libraries do not usually use LibGuides, the institutions would have to create a webpage or recommended resources list and market it on their website. Emily Drabinski believes that a queer approach should highlight the problems of the classification and subject headings through a pedagogical approach that engages users in a dialog about the catalog that asks them to consider “how the organization of, and access to, knowledge is politically and socially produced.”³⁰ While this pedagogical technique is a great way to engage students in university classrooms, such an analysis could not be expected at the public services desk in a public library unless a patron specifically asked about the subject headings. Although Drabinski recommends leaving the existing structure of classification and subject headings intact, she supports the idea of a technical solution like allowing user tagging in the catalog.³¹

Melissa Adler compared the use of user-generated tags in LibraryThing to subject headings in WorldCat records for books on transgender topics. The study found very little overlap between the tags, or folksonomies, and the subject headings. Although tags are not controlled and less precise, Adler points out that folksonomies are more representative of minority and marginalized voices. Because of the lack of precision of user-generated tags, Adler recommends the usage of controlled vocabularies and user-generated tags simultaneously.³² Tagging has not become ubiquitous with online public access catalogs (OPACs) yet. Therefore more research needs to be done into the benefits of tagging and the ramifications that the appearance of inappropriate or junk tags could have on library catalogs.

A highly technical example of a solution has been piloted by libraries in Knoxville, Tennessee, and San Francisco, California, in conjunction with Libraries as Models for Building Diversity Achievements (LAMBDA). The researchers created a crosswalk ontology to assist homeless LGBTQ youths when searching the library catalog.³³ An ontology is a way to organize a subject in a manner that depicts the relationship between one topic and another. The goal of the project was to create a more empathetic ontology for OPACs so that the search algorithm could improve the search results related to the terms that the homeless youth search with. By interviewing the community, Frances Nichols and Edwin M. Cortez were able to identify the most used natural language vocabulary. The team created a model that connected that vocabulary to the controlled vocabulary of the library catalog in a way that the catalog could improve the search results and suggest positive references geared towards rehabilitating the community.³⁴ A similar endeavor was recently undertaken at Indiana University for the LGBTQ+ Culture Center with the goal of mitigating the problems that marginalized and potentially harmful language can cause.³⁵ The proof-of-concept retrieval aid was designed by linking the Homosaurus terms to the equivalent LCSH terms. When searching for

a Homosaurus term with an exact match to an LCSH term, the system executed the search for the LCSH term. When an exact match cannot be made, a keyword search is executed. This is an ongoing project.³⁶

These two projects are too technical and time-consuming for most public libraries to endeavor. An open-source integrated library system (ILS) is required to make home-grown changes that alter the ontology and manner that searches are executed. However, additional research into how an ILS can be customizable to meet the needs of the community is warranted. The closest functionality in existence is Ex Libris Alma and Primo’s ability to allow libraries to map LCSH to preferred terms so that preferred terms can appear in the records in the Primo discovery layer to the patrons while either LCSH or the preferred terms can be searched with. Including ILS vendors in this research on ontologies could create much more powerful and inclusive OPACs for public libraries.

The most practical and controlled solution for public libraries is to adopt the usage of an alternative controlled vocabulary to include in bibliographic records alongside LCSH. Inclusion of controlled vocabularies that were created by marginalized groups better represents the community and can improve access to resources that meet their needs. Dobreski, Snow, and Moulaison-Sandy’s research provided evidence that “supplemental controlled vocabularies can help libraries meet the needs of various identity groups.”³⁷ Currently, there are six controlled vocabularies included in LC’s list of Subject Heading and Term Source Codes that are the most relevant to LGBTQIA+ topics.³⁸ The source code is a code that can be added to a bibliographic record that states the vocabulary that a term came from. Catalogers can choose to add terms from these thesauri to records in OCLC and the local library catalog if it has been properly approved by the library’s administration to appear in the OPAC. The controlled vocabularies including LGBTQIA+ topics include the following:

- Gender, sex, and sexual orientation (GSSO) ontology
- Gay studies thesaurus: a controlled vocabulary for indexing and accessing materials of relevance to gay culture, history, politics and psychology
- Homosaurus: an international LGBTQ linked data vocabulary
- International thesaurus of gay and lesbian index terms
- A queer thesaurus: an international thesaurus of gay and lesbian index terms
- Sexual nomenclature: a thesaurus

Other published and unpublished controlled vocabularies that include LGBTQIA+ terminology have been created that are on broader topics, like women’s studies, or have not been assigned source codes.

The oldest controlled vocabulary in LC's list of approved vocabularies that includes LGBTQIA+ terminology is *Sexual Nomenclature: A Thesaurus*. This thesaurus was based on the organization of the Kinsey Institute Library in the 1940s and 1950s and gay and lesbian activism in the 1960s and 1970s. It was created by the librarians at the Kinsey Institute at Indiana University in 1976 to make "subversive materials" more accessible, but was not accepted by LC until 2006. However, the thesaurus has not been updated with the most recent terminology and lacks the term "transgender."³⁹

The *Gay Studies Thesaurus* was self-published by Dee Michel in 1985. It was developed using books and periodical resources while the author was in graduate school. This thesaurus was used by the ONE Institute of Los Angeles that was overseen by the University of Southern California.⁴⁰ It is also being used by the Lavender Library Archives and Cultural Exchange alongside LCSH.⁴¹ Although this thesaurus was widely known, the publication is not widely held by libraries. Because it was self-published nearly forty years ago, the vocabulary will not have been updated with the latest terminology. It is not easily accessible for libraries that are interested in using supplemental controlled vocabulary due to its limited availability. *The International Thesaurus of Gay and Lesbian Index Terms* was completed in 1988 by ALA's Task Force on Gay Liberation. The effort to create the Index began in 1986 when the Task Force chose to merge multiple controlled vocabularies into one thesaurus. This controlled vocabulary was never published, so it was not adopted widely by catalogers.⁴² Given its unpublished status it is not held by many libraries, so it is not easily accessible to catalogers today.

A *Queer Thesaurus: An International Thesaurus of Gay and Lesbian Index Terms* is a Dutch/English thesaurus that was developed for the collections of the HOMODOK and the Anna Blaman Huis (now the Internationale Homo/Lesbisch Informatiecentrum en Archief or IHLIA). It was published in 1997 and can still be found in some libraries in the United States.⁴³ Jack van der Well and Ellen Greenblatt initially used *A Queer Thesaurus* to create *The Homosaurus: An International LGBTQ+ Linked Data Vocabulary* in 2013 by expanding the terms. In 2015, K. J. Rawson of the Digital Transgender Archive worked with van der Wel to expand the terms further and turned it into a linked data vocabulary.⁴⁴ It has been online since May 2019 and is updated twice a year by an editorial board in June and December.⁴⁵ This vocabulary is easily accessible online at <https://homosaurus.org>. Catalogers can easily suggest new terms via the Homosaurus website. Because it is so accessible, public and academic libraries have begun to use it to supplement or replace LCSH terms in their catalogs more widely than the other alternative vocabularies. Adrian Williams presented at the 2021 LD4 Conference on Linked Data on the inclusion of Homosaurus terms in the University of Kentucky catalog. They commented that it had a positive effect on the searching experience.⁴⁶

They have already added a significant amount of Homosaurus terms to records in OCLC as part of an enhancement project.⁴⁷ Several Cataloging manuals can already be found online that include policy statements on the Homosaurus. These include, but are not limited to, Harvard University's Schlesinger Library, CCS, and Schaumburg Township District Library in Illinois.⁴⁸

The GSSO is an ontology that bridges the gap between linguistic variations within and outside the health care field. Its focus is LGBTQIA+ vocabulary but also includes broader terms. It was initially published on BioPortal in 2019. The creators of this ontology have included the LGBTQIA+ terminology that members of the community currently use.⁴⁹ Although the vocabulary is regularly updated, its scientific focus may benefit health, medical, or science libraries and archives the most. This ontology can be easily searched online on the OLS Ontology Search website at <https://www.ebi.ac.uk/ols/ontologies/gssso>. This site has useful definitions and links to other sites like the Homosaurus and Wikipedia, which could make it a useful resource for catalogers from all types of libraries. However, the broader, narrower, and related terms are not as comprehensive as Homosaurus.

Because technical solutions, like enhancing the search capabilities of an OPAC with an ontology crosswalk, are not available for all ILS vendors, additional research on ILS customization should be conducted in conjunction with ILS vendors. Public libraries can only benefit from desired customizations if the vendors that public libraries use are willing to incorporate these ideas into the OPAC. In the meantime, it is important for librarians to publish articles on practical solutions for public libraries that can mitigate the problem of biased terms in controlled vocabularies. The most viable solution for public library catalogers is to allow for the usage of the Homosaurus because it is readily available online and regularly updated by an editorial board. This article fills in the gap in the research by documenting how a public library consortium approved the policy to allow the Homosaurus and craft a detailed cataloging manual section for the usage of the vocabulary.

The Library Consortium

Cooperative Computer Services (CCS) is a consortium of twenty-eight public libraries in the northern and northwestern suburbs of Chicago. The governing board includes the directors of all member libraries. To represent each of the library departments in the decision-making process, CCS has technical groups and advisory groups. Technical groups have quarterly meetings to discuss and make decisions on policies and procedures as well as provide an opportunity for continuing education. The membership of the technical group consists of staff from all member libraries. The technical group

for cataloging and metadata is called Cataloging and Metadata Management Technical Group (CMM). Advisory groups consist of seven appointed members that research and discuss policies and advise the technical groups on policy changes. The advisory group for cataloging is called the Standard Cataloging Rules and Practice Advisory Group (SCRAP).

The consortium's database has more than a million bibliographic records for physical items. This includes more than 6,000 bibliographic records for physical items on LGBTQIA+ topics. Illinois has a strong history of supporting the LGBTQIA+ population. Just over 4 percent of the population of the state of Illinois is LGBTQ. The Movement Advancement Project (MAP), a nonprofit organization, that rates state laws and policies for equality, rated Illinois's laws and policies on sexual orientation and gender identity as "High."⁵⁰ In 2019, Governor J. B. Pritzker signed a bill requiring schools to teach LGBTQ history. This law took effect on July 1, 2020.⁵¹ This makes CCS a great candidate for implementing the policy to allow the Homosaurus in the CCS catalog.

The Consortium's Research and Decision-Making Process

The consortium's decision-making process began with a research phase into the benefits of the Homosaurus and patron search habits. It was important to prove that the Homosaurus vocabulary was not redundant and that it would enhance the records by making them more accessible to patrons. This research process included comparing trending LGBTQIA+ terms in the Homosaurus to LCSH and search terms executed by patrons. After completing research, the consortium's established decision-making process was followed to pass a motion to approve the inclusion of Homosaurus terms in the catalog. To do so, the research findings were presented to the cataloging advisory group, known as SCRAP, for approval before presenting the findings to the cataloging technical group, known as CMM, for approval. Understanding the research findings and process that this consortium used to approve a new controlled vocabulary, can help others to gain approval for using the Homosaurus at other institutions.

The Benefits of the Homosaurus

The benefits of the Homosaurus can be demonstrated by comparing Homosaurus terms to LCSH, identifying differences in how concepts are represented in the two vocabularies, how the terms could be applied to items in the collection, and then comparing the terms to reports on how patrons search in the OPAC. Gender and sexuality terms have evolved significantly over the last twenty years. While the Homosaurus editorial board has made an effort to include the most current terms as

well as historical terms in the vocabulary, LCSH headings for LGBTQIA+ topics do not properly represent all of the current terms being used.⁵² Many general terms or concepts do overlap between the two controlled vocabularies.

Homosaurus terms can be beneficial when LCSH terms are out-of-date, differ, or when a term for a concept does not exist yet. This article can only include several of the examples of beneficial terms that were identified. One of the LGBTQIA+ topics that is not clearly visible in the library catalog is pansexuality. Without a LCSH, some LGBTQ headings can be left out of the record. Pansexual may be in the summary, but it is not in the summary of all items that include pansexual characters. In *The Ravenous Dark* by A. M. Strickland is a great example of a hidden item. At the time this was written, the OCLC record had no indicator that the book was anything but a romantic fantasy with a love triangle that includes a spirit. The Goodreads.com page includes an additional sentence describing the main character as pansexual.⁵⁵ The book includes pansexual, non-binary, asexual, and lesbian characters.⁵⁶ This is a great example of an item that would benefit from the addition of the Homosaurus subject headings and genre terms so that the item is properly labeled and accessible to those searching for LGBTQIA+ fantasy or romance with pansexual characters.

Although transgender subject headings exist, the current LCSH terms for non-binary people are not the currently preferred terms. These are "Gender-nonconformity" and "Gender-nonconforming people." "Non-binary" is the term that CCS patrons search with the most. Those who are non-binary would prefer to see it in the record because of the inherent bias of the term "gender-nonconformity." An example of a book that could benefit from the addition of the Homosaurus term "Non-binary people," as well as "Gender-queer people" and "Genderqueer comics," is *Gender Queer: A Memoir* by Maia Kobabe.⁵⁷ Additionally, the Homosaurus includes several other gender-related terms that are not LCSH yet and could improve the accessibility of items, like "Assigned female at birth" and "Assigned male at birth."

Numerous other Homosaurus terms that are not included in LCSH but are topics that are important to the LGBTQIA+ community could be beneficial to include in the catalog. Some examples include "Birth certificate amendments," "Corrective rape," "Genderqueer people," "Gender-fluid," "Latinx," and common slang. The Homosaurus also includes terms in other languages that could be important to Northern Illinois, like "Hijra," a commonly used term for intersex and transgender people in South Asia. Additionally, several genre headings that combine terms that would be normally two headings in LCSH, like "Bisexual horror fiction" and "Transgender horror fiction," could be useful for collocating items in the catalog.

Table 1. ILS Setting Changes Authority

	Governing Board	Technical Group	CCS Staff	Advisory Group
No change to workflow AND No financial or HR impact	Informed	Informed	Approve	Recommend
Change to workflow AND No financial or HR impact	Informed	Approve		Recommend
Financial or HR Impact OR Addition of service OR Policy change	Approve	Recommend		Recommend

Source: Cooperative Computer Services.

How Do Patrons Search?

To identify if the patrons would benefit from Homosaurus terms, a consortium staff member created a report of search terms that included several headings that were not LCSH yet, as well as the equivalent LCSH terms. Many searches were for known titles, so the terms included in this report did not represent the full search that was executed. Since 2018, sixty-five searches included the word “non-binary,” but only eleven included “gender non-conforming people.” While thirty-four searches contained the Homosaurus term “polyamory,” only five searches included the equivalent LCSH term of “non-monogamous” (not including the portion of the term “people”). In the same period more than 1,600 searches included the word “transgender,” and sixty-three searches were executed just for the word “trans.” Similarly, 163 searches included the term “queer,” but only twenty searches included the LCSH term “sexual minorities.” Because many users search for known titles, searches executed by this consortium’s patrons include more commonly used terms than LCSH terms. Including the subject headings that more closely align with the terms that users search with, and those that are commonly part of known titles, are important for improving the accessibility of LGBTQIA+ topics in the catalog.

Passing the Motion

Understanding the process that the consortium uses to approve a new thesaurus may help other librarians gain approval of the Homosaurus at their libraries. CCS members all use the same cataloging manual and local practices. So any workflow changes, like allowing the Homosaurus, need to follow the consortium’s decision-making procedures, as depicted in table 1, to be adopted. The governance structure consists of four tiers. When it comes to cataloging workflow, an advisory group consisting of seven members can pass motions to recommend changes. Consortium staff can advise the library staff on these changes at any point in the approval process. Then a technical group that consists of members from every library needs to vote on the recommendation to approve the policy. If the policy includes a change to the bibliographic input standards, or completely replaces

a subject heading, the officers from the governing board that make up the executive committee need to approve of the change. An example of this would be replacing the “Illegal aliens” subject headings. Any changes in cataloging policy can take two or more months to be approved from the time that an issue is brought to an advisory or technical group.

To get approval to allow Homosaurus terms in the catalog, a CCS staff member presented the findings of their research at the April 2021 cataloging advisory group meeting, which is called SCRAP. SCRAP members stated their concern about homonyms that represent more commonly used meanings as an LCSH term, as well as sexually explicit terms. Some examples of these terms included “Bears,” “Faeries,” and “Slaves.” At the time of the discussion, these terms did not have parenthetical qualifiers in Homosaurus. For example, the Homosaurus term “Bears” would be conflated with the animal. Whereas the LCSH term “Bears (Gay culture)” has a parenthetical qualifier to distinguish between the term for gay men and animals. Since then, the Homosaurus editorial board updated many homonyms by adding parenthetical qualifiers with the June 2022 update.⁵⁸ This update changed “Bears” to “Bears (Gay culture).” At the time, the group was willing to approve a motion to recommend that SCRAP reviews the Homosaurus and selects the most appropriate terms to allow.

However, CCS staff discussed the SCRAP recommendation and had a different opinion. The staff’s preference was for the Cataloging and Metadata Management (CAMM) Technical Group to vote on a motion to allow all terms from the Homosaurus in the catalog. The workload required to review, select, and maintain the list would not be the best use of an advisory group’s time for the long run. After reviewing the vocabulary, the staff believed that any objectionable terms would be more relevant to archives and special libraries than public libraries. CCS staff were able to generate a report comparing the search terms used by patrons to Homosaurus terms. This allowed them to create a solid list of terms with double meanings. The cataloging manual page could then include sufficient guidance on how to best use catalogers’ judgement when selecting Homosaurus terms to apply to a record.

The policy then needed to be brought to the CAMM Technical Group for approval. At the May 2021 CAMM

Technical Group meeting, a CCS staff member presented an updated presentation on the topic which included the advisory group's opinion and CCS staff's opinion. This included an explanation of how reports allowed staff to identify terms to avoid and that the cataloging manual would provide enough guidance on these terms without requiring the advisory group to regularly review the Homosaurus. One concern about the Homosaurus that a CAMM member mentioned at a meeting was the lack of labels for genres. The Homosaurus does not label genre headings as genres in compliance with the Lavender Library, Archives, and Cultural Exchange (LLACE) classification. Genres are considered the same as subject headings. Nor should genres be used as subdivisions of subject headings like genres can be placed in the subfield v to subdivide LCSH. However, CCS member libraries decided that the local policy should place the Homosaurus genre headings in 655 fields as they do with Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT). Given that many of the Homosaurus terms could be new to the catalogers, and some could feel cautious about applying unfamiliar terms, CCS staff also planned to provide a training session with a member of the Homosaurus editorial board.

After the presentation and discussion, the motion to allow the Homosaurus passed unanimously. The next step was to finalize training plans with the member of the Homosaurus editorial board and create a draft of the cataloging manual page. The cataloging manual page needed to be discussed and expanded on at the SCRAP Advisory Group meeting before it could be brought back to the CAMM Technical Group for approval.

The Cataloging Manual Section on the Homosaurus

After passing the motion, the cataloging manual page needed to be drafted. A CCS staff member created the initial draft of the page based on the recommendations of the SCRAP Advisory Group and the discussion from the CAMM Technical Group meeting, as well as instructions for requesting the creation of authority records. The SCRAP Advisory Group reviewed the page and discussed additional points that could be added to the page. This included when it would be unnecessary to apply a Homosaurus term, such as one that represented the exact concept of the LCSH term, using the same words in the same order or a different order.

Homosaurus utilizes both "LGBTQ+" and "queer" as adjectives that modify nouns, e.g., "African American LGBTQ+ people" and "African American queer people." According to the hierarchy, queer is a narrower term of LGBTQ+ and should only be used when a person self-identifies as queer.⁵⁹ After receiving training on the Homosaurus, and thoroughly researching the usage of the term "queer" as

an umbrella term, SCRAP decided to recommend a local practice to apply queer and LGBTQ+ terms simultaneously due to the increasing amount of LGBTQ+ individuals that self-identify as queer, use it as an umbrella term, search for it in the catalog, and use it as a search term for identifying useful online resources.

The final draft of the Homosaurus guidelines was then brought to the CAMM Technical Group for approval. The motion to approve of the guidelines passed on November 17, 2021.⁶⁰ The consortium's guidelines for applying Homosaurus terms consist of the following:

- Genre headings are placed in a 655 field.
- Homosaurus headings are not added when the terms are the same as LCSH or use the same words in a different order as LCSH.
- Terms that include "queer" or "LGBTQ+" should be added to records simultaneously when both versions exist, e.g., "Asian LGBTQ+ people" and "Asian queer people."
- Avoid using terms lacking a parenthetical qualifier that have a more commonly used meaning, like "Dark rooms" and "Faeries." A broader term can be used instead. The list is included in the manual.
- When adding a new heading, request the creation of an authority record from the helpdesk.

Since using the Homosaurus is not a requirement, the catalogers are welcome to use cataloger's judgement when choosing to add Homosaurus terms to the records. An example of a record that follows these guidelines is for the book *Never Silent: ACT UP and My Life in Activism* by Peter Staley (figure 1). This is an autobiography of an AIDS activist. The record includes the LCSH terms for the author's name, "ACT UP (Organization)," "AIDS activists-United States," and "AIDS (Disease)-United States." The cataloger then added the Homosaurus subject heading "LGBTQ+ activists." There is no equivalent Homosaurus term for queer activists. Other Homosaurus subject headings, like "AIDS Activists," use the same terms as LCSH headings, so additional Homosaurus subject headings were not added. However, three Homosaurus genre headings were included. The record includes the LCGFT heading of "Autobiographies." The Homosaurus genre headings for this record include "LGBTQ+ biographies," "Gay biographies," and "Queer biographies." This case demonstrates the usage of the queer and LGBTQ+ headings to support the patrons who search with these terms.

One Year Later

It has been more than one year since CCS member libraries began to include Homosaurus terms in the catalog. As of November 2022, 296 authority records had been created

050	4	1A643.831b.5825 2022
082	04	1A62.19697920092:23
100	1	1AStaley, Peter, fauthor.
245	10	1ANever Silent :1bACT UP and my life in activism /1cPeter Staley.
264	1	1AChicago, Illinois :1bChicago Review Press,1c[2022]
264	4	1c@2022
300		1Axiii. 269 pages :1billustrations ;1c23 cm
336		1Atext:1rdacontent
337		1Aunmediated:1rdamedia
338		1Avolume:1rdacarrier
520		1q"Never Silent tells previously untold stories of the life of the leading subject of David France's <i>How To Survive A Plague</i> , Peter Staley, including his continuous activism to find treatments and public health interventions. The previously untold stories of the life of the leading subject in David France's <i>How To Survive A Plague</i> , Peter Staley, including his continuing activism in 1987, somebody shoved a flyer into the hand of Peter Staley: massive AIDS demonstration, it announced. After four years on Wall Street as a closeted gay man, Staley was familiar with the homophobia common on trading floors. He also knew that he was not beyond the reach of HIV, having recently been diagnosed with AIDS-Related Complex. A week after the protest, Staley found his way to a packed meeting of the AIDS Coalition To Unleash Power--ACT UP--in the West Village. It would prove to be the best decision he ever made. ACT UP would change the course of AIDS, pressuring the National Institutes of Health, the FDA, and three administrations to finally respond with research that ultimately saved millions of lives. Staley, a shrewd strategist with nerves of steel, organized some of the group's most spectacular actions, from shutting down trading on the floor of the New York Stock Exchange to putting a giant condom over the house of Senator Jesse Helms. Never Silent is the inside story of what brought Staley to ACT UP and the explosive and sometimes painful years to follow--years filled with triumph, humiliation, joy, loss, and persistence. Never Silent is guaranteed to inspire the activist within all of us." --1cProvided by publisher.
600	10	1AStaley, Peter.
610	20	1A ACT UP (Organization)
650	0	1A AIDS activists:1United States:1Biography.
650	0	1A AIDS (Disease):1United States:1History.
650	7	1A LGBTQ+ activists:1homoit
655	7	1A Autobiographies:1lcfgt
655	7	1A LGBTQ+ autobiographies:1homoit
655	7	1A Gay autobiographies:1homoit
655	7	1A Queer autobiographies:1homoit
700	1	1A Cooper, Anderson, fewriter of added commentary.

Figure 1. Image of the bibliographic record for *Never Silent: ACT UP and My Life in Activism* by Peter Staley. The subject headings with the source code homoit in the subfield 2 are the Homosaurus headings.

for Homosaurus headings. Catalogers added Homosaurus headings to 2,439 bibliographic records. This consists of about a third of the bibliographic records for physical items on LGBTQIA+ topics in the CCS catalog. Some of the cataloging librarians have helped to increase the number of Homosaurus headings in the records by adding them as a bulk change. Catalogers employed by the member libraries and CCS staff monitor Homosaurus for new releases and inform the CCS Data Services Librarian of changes. Since CCS began using Homosaurus, the editorial board released updates that revised existing headings.⁶¹ The Data Services Librarian was tasked with updating authority records and bulk updating headings that required updating.

Only one major challenge has been discovered in the year since catalogers began to add Homosaurus terms to the bibliographic records. A cataloger discovered that a full level record with Homosaurus terms had been overlaid by one without Homosaurus terms, thus undoing their work. This is an inevitable problem for a consortium. CCS staff included several reminders at the CAMM Technical Meeting with the hope that this will improve the situation. These reminders included the following:

- How to identify the Homosaurus headings in the records.
- That it is acceptable to add Homosaurus terms to records in OCLC Connexion so they are retained in the OCLC record.
- To change the record level to full level so that final records from vendor provided cataloging services would not overlay the record automatically.

Since this reminder, additional problems have not been reported. Catalogers regularly request the creation of new

authority records from the CCS Data Services Librarian and have been consistently adding the terms to new bibliographic records.

Recommendations for Getting Buy-In

When adopting innovative practices, it is important to get buy-in from the administrators and librarians from a library or all members of a consortium. To do so, librarians need to demonstrate its value in presentations to the administrators or governance groups. When planning to present on the topic it is important to demonstrate how beneficial the Homosaurus is with a dynamic presentation. Topics to include in the presentation can consist of a comparison of subject headings between LCSH and Homosaurus, examples of records in catalogs that include Homosaurus terms, user statistics, and potential cataloging guidelines.

Presentations can include examples of problematic subject headings and specific titles that would benefit from the addition of Homosaurus terms in the records. Examples can also include authority records for Homosaurus terms. The CCS catalog (<https://ccs.polarislibrary.com/polaris/>) can be searched for examples of bibliographic records that include the Homosaurus terms by utilizing the list of terms that is linked to on the Cataloging Manual page.⁶² Using examples from a library that has already approved the Homosaurus and is actively cataloging with it provides proof of its efficacy and demonstrates a valid use case.

Generating reports of the actual searches that are executed in your catalog for Homosaurus terms and LCSH can provide you with evidence of the terms that your patrons utilize when searching for items in your catalog. By comparing

terms that are used to search with to the Homosaurus and LCSH, you can demonstrate which vocabulary is kept up-to-date with the most widely used search terms. These statistics can also be compared to internet search trends using Google Trends (<https://trends.google.com/>). The searches executed on Google should be the most representative of those currently used by researchers of LGBTQIA+ topics. When subject headings match search terms, items will become more accessible to the patrons.

It is also helpful to include an explanation of what should be included in the cataloging manual for your library or consortium. The CCS Cataloging Manual page can again serve as an example. However, these guidelines do include a significant number of local practices. Crafting your own guidelines that meet the needs of your library's local practices is important for gaining approval. Since some people are not familiar with LGBTQIA+ terms, it is also beneficial to create a plan for training. This training plan can include the cataloging guidelines but should also include professional development like a webinar.

Presentations that touch on all these bases should be thorough enough to educate the decision makers at your library or consortium on the Homosaurus in a manner that will make the issue understandable enough to hopefully gain the support needed to allow Homosaurus terms as CCS did. For this consortium, this process included two similar presentations that evolved as decisions were made as well as additional discussions on the cataloging guidelines. Planning for a similar timeline of presentations and discussions can help the decision process proceed smoothly.

Conclusion

It is important for public libraries to implement policies that are inclusive and supportive of all members of the communities that they serve. This includes supporting those that are actively searching for LGBTQIA+ topics. The work that catalogers contribute help to ensure that patrons can access the resources they need by adopting a subject heading policy that is inclusive of the language most familiar to the community. A practical way to enhance subject headings in records is by allowing the use of an alternative controlled vocabulary, like The Homosaurus: An International LGBTQ+ Linked Data Vocabulary, as a supplement to LCSH. Allowing an additional controlled vocabulary in the catalog that is regularly updated by experts from the LGBTQIA+ community will enhance access in a way that is preferable to adding a public tagging function to a catalog. Homosaurus is controlled by catalogers in the same way that LCSH is and accordingly does not require the same review for problematic tags that crowdsourced tagging might. Unlike the technologically advanced backend enhancements of open-source ILS systems, the inclusion of Homosaurus in bibliographic records is practical, affordable, and easily accessible to the technological capabilities of public libraries. Ensuring that administrators and staff are willing to approve a policy to allow an additional controlled vocabulary is important when adopting innovative practices. If other libraries follow the recommendations to present administrators and staff with the research that proves the value of improving discovery and access, plans for creating a cataloging manual section, and plans for training and maintenance of the vocabulary, achieving the approval of the new policy will be within reach.

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