

Report of the ALA Core SAC Working Group on \$v Retention

January 29, 2026

**Prepared by the Working Group on \$v Retention,
American Library Association Core Subject Analysis Committee**

Acknowledgements

Working Group members:

Deborah Tomaras (chair), *Marist University*
Jolene Bennett, *Toronto Public Library*
Christina Benson, *Salt Lake County Library*
Bronwen Bitetti, *Clark Art Institute*
Tali Boardman, *Libraries, Community Spaces & Archives | Wellington City Council*
Elaina Brown, *Albany Law School*
Kelly Buehler, *Toronto Public Library*
Maria Cecilia Caride, *Yale University*
Andrea Cawelti, *Harvard University*
Louis Choquette, *Toronto Public Library*
Rebecca Daly, *Northern Michigan University*
Bonnie Dede, *University of Michigan*
Jeanne Enright, *Toronto Public Library*
Maya Espersen, *Aurora Public Library*
Eduardo Fojo, *Florida International University*
Guy Frost, *Valdosta State University*
Maddie Hayko, *Amon Carter Museum of American Art*
Soojeong Herring, *Northeastern University*
Amber Jones, *Virginia Commonwealth University*
Kathleen F. Lamantia, *Stark County Library District* (retired)
Diane Lee, *Toronto Public Library*
Chloe Misorski, *Cleveland Museum of Art*
Nikita Mohammed, *Harris County Public Library*
Timothy Paine, *Toronto Public Library*
Jackie Parascandola, *Harvard University*
Lana Ó Siochfhradha Prešern, *University of Oxford*
Lisa Puhala, *Hutto Middle School*
Karen Richard, *Lithgow Public Library*
Linda Roholt, *Salt Lake County Library*
Zachary Rosalinsky, *New York Botanical Garden*
Ashley Shaw, *University of Utah*
Christopher Thomas, *UCLA Law Library*
Kathleen M. Tobolewski, *Seton Hill University*
Kristen Williams, *Prairie College*

The Working Group appreciates the thoughtful comments from people in the library community who took the time and effort to share their insights via the survey, offer suggestions during the creation of this report, and endorse the Group's recommendations. **Endorsements appear in [Appendix D](#).**

The contents of this report may be used under a Creative Commons [Attribution-NonCommercial-NoDerivatives 4.0 International \(CC BY-NC-ND 4.0\)](#) license.

Acknowledgements	2
Executive Summary	4
Introduction and Background	7
Literature Review	8
Library User Information Needs	9
Patron Subject Searching in Public Catalogs	9
Subject Search Strategies	9
Patron Search Limitations	10
Form Subdivisions and User Needs	11
Faceting, Post-Coordination, and Linked Data User Studies	13
Methodology	15
Questions for LC about \$v Omission	15
Survey Development and Data Collection	15
Data Analysis	16
Results	16
Library Demographic and Informational Questions	16
Public Catalog Questions	19
Library Impact Questions	25
Discussion	42
Library User Information Needs	42
Patron Subject Searching in Public Catalogs	43
Subject Search Strategies	43
Patron Search Limitations	44
Form Subdivisions and User Needs	46
Patron Impacts of Form Subdivision Omission	49
Evaluation of Justifications for Form Subdivision Elimination	52
Are Form Subdivisions Compatible with Subject Faceting?	52
Are Form Subdivisions Compatible with Linked Data?	56
Will Omitting Form Subdivisions Simplify Cataloging?	57
Library Hardships Caused by Form Subdivision Omission	58
Adding Form Subdivisions Within Individual Institutions	58
Public Catalog Access to Genres and Forms	60
Study Limitations	64
Conclusion and Recommendations	65
Recommendations	66
References	69
Appendix A	74
Appendix B	79
Appendix C	84
Appendix D	86

Executive Summary

In January 2025, the Library of Congress (LC; 2025) announced plans to discontinue use of form subdivisions (\$v) in subject headings, in favor of only including separate Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT). A form subdivision is the section of a subject heading that specifies that a topic appears within a specific form or media, for example the ending parts of the following subjects:

- Nightingale, Florence, \$d 1820-1910 \$v Archives
- Berlin (Germany) \$v Guidebooks
- Dinosaurs \$v Juvenile fiction
- Mendieta, Ana, \$d 1948-1985 \$v Catalogs
- Concertos (Violin) \$v Solo with piano
- Miniature books \$v Specimens
- Biology \$v Periodicals

LC's policy change raised questions about potential wide-ranging effects on library patrons and staff worldwide. Would omission of \$v match patron search needs, and improve information retrieval? Are separate genre/form terms an adequate substitute for form subdivisions? Do public library catalogs provide dedicated genre search, faceting, and display options to compensate for a lack of form subdivisions? Could individual libraries feasibly opt out of the change if desired?

In response to library community concerns about the implications of LC's proposed action on library staff, patrons, and information access, the American Library Association (ALA) Subject Access Committee (SAC) formed a Working Group on \$v Retention to investigate whether or not form subdivision omission had broad community support, and what the body of user research suggested about the value of \$v. The Working Group created and distributed a survey to various library organizations, listservs, and social media networks within the United States and internationally, to gauge professional opinion on the proposed change, its possible effects, and their institutions' staff and technical capacity to incorporate workflow and catalog changes. The Working Group also created and sent a set of questions to LC soliciting additional information about \$v omission, and performed an extensive literature review.

This report presents the results of the literature review and the survey, which garnered 699 responses, representing multiple library roles, library types, and library communities worldwide. Both the survey results and literature review indicate that form subdivisions should be retained by LC, to best provide for user needs within library catalogs.

Key patron findings include:

- Patrons' subject information needs for both fiction and nonfiction often **combine elements of topic and genre/form**. Patrons search for these combinations in public catalogs.
- Patrons **examine subject headings in catalog records for context**, to both select and eliminate potential materials. **Glanceability and precision** are valued.
- Patrons primarily **keyword search using the basic search bar, and examine the first few search results screens and individual records** of potential interest. Other catalog functionality is not heavily used, including advanced search and faceting.

- Having once found a record of interest, patrons commonly continue their search by **clicking on subject strings (including those with form subdivisions) in that record** to find similar works.
- Subjects with form subdivisions guide patrons to resources necessary for their **informational and occupational needs, even when base topical headings are similar or identical**.
- 59% of survey respondents report that **omitting form subdivisions would make patron searching more difficult** (as opposed to 14% that say it wouldn't), and 57% assert that \$v omission would **impede access to specific collections and types of material** (versus 12% that say it wouldn't).
- **No user studies to date demonstrate that removing \$v improves patron search or recall.** Multiple user studies show that metadata facilitating multiple access points and methods improves user access, and that subject strings with \$v are used by patrons.
- Frustration at not finding their preferred search combinations in public catalogs leads some patrons to **abandon library catalogs altogether**.
- Missing form subdivisions **disproportionately impact vulnerable library patrons, including children and socioeconomically challenged communities**, who may lack search skills or public catalogs with robust genre display/search options.

Key findings about library catalogs include:

- **60% of public catalogs lack a dedicated search genre/form search option.** Patrons in these systems could not search by form as they would search by title, author, or subject.
- **42% of public catalogs lack dedicated genre/form facets for filtering search results.** Patrons using these systems would be completely unable to narrow a topic by form if \$v were omitted from subject headings.
- **67% of public catalogs include hyperlinked genre/form terms within catalog records, as opposed to 90% that include hyperlinked subjects.** Fewer patrons could search by clicking headings within records to find new materials of interest.
- **20% of public catalogs display no separate form/genre terms at all.** Patrons using these catalogs would be completely unable to discern, or search for, form information if form subdivisions were omitted from subject headings.

Key findings about library staff include:

- **67% of libraries have neither time and/or knowledge to add form subdivisions into their catalogs individually** for all records that might require them, with an additional 5% unsure. Budgetary pressures and severe understaffing are frequently cited as reasons.
- **63% of all cataloger respondents also reported other roles within their institutions**, further exacerbating their ability to engage in additional work.
- **55% of libraries would be unable to request \$v in vendor-provided records**, with an additional 29% unsure. Common reasons include budgetary limitations, issues pertaining to consortial permissions, or concerns about vendor ability to add \$v.
- **55% of libraries cannot or are unsure of their ability to change their public catalog indexes and/or display if needed**, with 24% definitely unable to.
- **55% of survey respondents were unaware that LC planned to omit form subdivisions in new cataloging**, indicating a lack of adequate outreach and input-gathering from LC.

Percentages unaware are higher for certain library types, such as public, school and tribal libraries.

- **67% of respondents to question 3.8 strongly oppose form subdivision omission**, with 71% strongly or generally opposed; whereas only 11% strongly support it, with 14% strongly or generally supportive.
- **Requiring libraries to individually add \$v information or configure catalogs disproportionately impacts lesser-resourced libraries**, who are least likely to have time, knowledge or resources to either individually add \$v or have catalogs with advanced capabilities.

The library community and user research agree that library systems and vocabularies exist to serve patrons needs, and should be developed foremost to benefit patrons. As removing form subdivisions would negatively impact patrons, particularly the most vulnerable, the Working Group's top recommendations include the following (complete Recommendations appear at the end of this report):

- **LC continue providing form subdivisions in all applicable subject strings included in bibliographic records shared with other libraries**, and that they do so as a public service for library patrons and less-resourced institutions.
- **LC continue accepting proposals for new form subdivisions** to allow the growth of the vocabulary for continued patron benefit.
- **LC retain all authority records containing form subdivisions** and all *Library of Congress Subject Headings Manual* documentation pertaining to their use.
- **LC commit to broad-based outreach regarding all future vocabulary decisions.** This includes consulting across all library types nationally and internationally, using multiple communication channels, so that all of the library community (which has a stake in the present and future of LC vocabularies) can participate in decision-making related to changes that impact them and their patrons.

Multiple library codes of ethics and DEI-focused cataloging guiding principles, including those of the American Library Association (ALA) and the Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC), reinforce the concept that libraries exist in order to fulfill patron needs. Library organizations also embrace equity and inclusion as central tenets. Thus any proposed change to library vocabularies or services that run counter to these values, particularly changes that impact lesser-resourced libraries and vulnerable patrons most heavily, should be reconsidered and abandoned. The Working Group recommends that LC and the library community as a whole retain form subdivisions in subject headings; removing form subdivisions should not even be considered until the preponderance of user studies have demonstrated that \$v omission has patron value, and until concrete steps for easing the transition for *all* libraries and their patrons have been both formulated and implemented.

Introduction and Background

In January 2025, the Library of Congress (LC; 2025) announced that their bibliographic records “would not always include” form subdivisions (\$v) in subjects as part of their “Modern MARC”¹ cataloging practice (p. 4). A form subdivision is the section of a subject heading that specifies that a topic appears within a specific form or media, for example the ending parts of the following subjects:

- Nightingale, Florence, \$d 1820-1910 \$v Archives
- Berlin (Germany) \$v Guidebooks
- Dinosaurs \$v Juvenile fiction
- Mendieta, Ana, \$d 1948-1985 \$v Catalogs
- Concertos (Violin) \$v Solo with piano
- Miniature books \$v Specimens
- Biology \$v Periodicals

As “[t]he Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) [is] by far the most widely adopted subject indexing language in the world ... and is used around the world by libraries large and small” (Cataloging Policy and Support Office, 2007, p. 3), this policy change has global ramifications for libraries and library users.

The earliest mention of the omission of form subdivisions known to Working Group members appears during the LC liaison’s update at the 2023 Midwinter and Annual Meetings of the American Library Association (ALA) Core Subject Analysis Committee (SAC). At the Midwinter Meeting in January, LC’s liaison noted that they were “experimenting” with omitting \$v (SAC, 2023a, p. 4). During the Annual Meeting in June 2023, the elimination of form subdivisions was again described as an “experiment” that would begin later in 2023 (SAC, 2023b, p. 4); in the discussion period, LC explained that the project would begin sometime after October and run for six months, with “no preconceived ideas about how it will turn out” (SAC, 2023b, p. 22). Meeting attendees were assured that “LC does want to look at the impact on users of LC records outside of LC,” and that LC would publicly announce the start of the experiment and accept feedback from external libraries (SAC, 2023b, p. 23). No public announcement was ever released; 2024 Midwinter and Annual SAC meetings contained no further mentions of \$v omission.

At a Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC) Joint Operations Committee Meeting in May 2024, Polutta (2024), an LC Cataloging Policy Specialist, still described form subdivision omission among LC’s “preliminary thoughts” (slide 2), and asserted that LC would “create a group to discuss these ideas with librarians and library technologists from all parts of the library community” (slide 16). No public announcements of such a group were ever made; it is uncertain whether such a group was ever formed. No PCC Task Groups from 2024 or 2025 appear focused on investigating \$v omission; specific mention is also absent from the 2023-2025 work plans of the PCC BIBFRAME Interoperability Group. As recently as November 2024, the PCC Task Group on BIBFRAME to MARC Conversion’s (2024) final report still described subject headings as pre-coordinated strings with no specification of \$v elimination:

¹ The phrase has been rendered in multiple ways by LC, including “Modern” MARC (LC, 2025), “Modern MARC” (Ford & Williamschen, 2024), and Modern MARC (Williamschen, 2025). For consistency, this report uses “Modern MARC,” to indicate that the term is an LC coinage.

“For subject access points in MARC, the expectation is for the subjects to be ordered per the Subject Heading Manual” (p. 8).

No further mentions, and no outreach, can be found ahead of LC’s (2025) January announcement described above, where form subdivisions were described as “not linked data compliant” (p. 4). Later in January, an LC presentation by Williamschen (2025) at the BIBFRAME Update Forum suggested form subdivisions would be omitted to provide “[l]ess data duplication” in cataloging (slide 11). By January 2026, instead of “would not always include,” LC via Wiggins (2026) announced that LC “will cease adding form subdivisions,” to “simplify LCSH cataloging” and “facilitate the use of URIs in LC data” (para. 1, 2); additionally, per LC’s (2026) *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT*, \$v omission is occurring because LC is “moving in the direction of post-coordination as the preferred principle for recording metadata” (LC, 2026, p. 3).

Given the absence of public announcements or outreach from LC about experiments or discussion groups related to form subdivision elimination prior to their January 2025 announcement, the broad library community effectively had no venues to submit input regarding this policy change, despite LC’s stated interest in receiving such feedback. This was particularly problematic given concerns raised by library attendees at the SAC meetings, and in AUTOCAT library email list discussions about \$v omission in 2023. Thus, in March 2025, SAC formed a Working Group on \$v Retention to explore the question of form subdivision elimination.

The Working Group investigated whether all sections of the library community had been notified about the proposed change, whether public opinion supported \$v omission, and possible impacts of the elimination of form subdivisions on libraries and library users. To facilitate this information gathering, the Group: 1) circulated an anonymous library worker survey to collect professional feedback; 2) created and sent a set of questions to LC soliciting additional information about \$v omission; and 3) performed an extensive literature review. The Working Group hoped to gain insights into these questions:

- Did libraries know that LC planned to begin omitting \$v from subject headings?
- Did libraries consider \$v duplicative of and redundant to Library of Congress Genre/Form Terms (LCGFT)? Did libraries think \$v specifically served any patron needs in public catalog search and display, or for particular types of materials or collections?
- How did current library catalogs enable (or not) search, facet, and display of separate genre/form terms, and subjects with \$v? Could libraries alter existing catalog configurations if needed or desired? If genre/form search and display moves to faceting and post-coordination, can libraries actually facilitate this?
- Did libraries have the staff and/or technical capacity to absorb or work around metadata changes resulting from form subdivision elimination? Could libraries feasibly continue to utilize \$v if desired, by adding the subdivision into bibliographic records in-house or requesting \$v in vendor-supplied records?

Literature Review

To inform the Working Group’s research, a review of literature on library user information needs and catalog search habits, LCSH, and form subdivisions was conducted.

Library User Information Needs

Research into library patron information needs finds that they are often multifaceted and composite, combining elements of, among other things, subjects and genres or forms. Golub et al. (2022), for instance, observe that LGBTQI fiction readers' "complex information needs often cover 'a combination of different aspects, such as specific genres or plot elements, engagement or novelty'" (p. 466). Readers desire to "find experiences or characters they can identify with (82 or 81.2%); ... subjects and themes they can identify with (74 or 73.3%)," or information about "LGBTQI questions (71 or 70.3%)" (Golub et al., 2022, p. 470). Similarly, Adkins and Bossaler (2007) cite scholarship finding "that readers want a book with the same 'feel' as a book they previously enjoyed," including elements of characterization, setting, atmosphere, and storyline (p. 357). Mikkonen and Vakkari (2016b) also remark on fiction reader interest in "a combination of various similarity aspects [between works], such as a novel with a particular narrative style covering similar topics" (p. 706).

Complex user information needs combining elements of subject and form apply also to nonfiction. As asserted by Miller (2000), "The searcher looking for works about Gertrude Stein may know in advance ... that she wants to read a biography, would like periodical articles about Stein, or would benefit from a production history of Stein's theater pieces," however, the searcher "is not approaching the catalog looking for biographies, periodicals, or theatrical production histories in general" (p. 172). Users' professional needs also influence these blends of subject and form/genre. Engelson (2014) describes and categorizes form subdivisions "according to what use they may have for supporting occupational functions of a minister," such as "preaching and teaching, conducting ceremonies and presiding over sacraments, administration, outreach and evangelism, and pastoral counseling" (p. iii, iv); she remarks that clergy need different forms of resources to fulfill these functions, even when their basic subject search (e.g., Bible) remains the same. Similarly, Crowston and Kwasnik (2003) state:

[A] university professor looking for information about computer database systems for the class that she teaches would most likely be interested in documents of educational genres (e.g. syllabi, assignments, class notes). On the other hand, when working on a research paper in the database area, the same professor would more likely appreciate scholarly work (e.g., papers, annotated bibliographies, calls for papers). The relevant documents for these two searches would be quite different, even though the topic and the query keyboards might be nearly the same. (p. 349)

Patron Subject Searching in Public Catalogs

Subject Search Strategies

User studies find that library patrons bring these complex subject needs into libraries, and into their catalog searches. Mikkonen and Vakkari (2016a) describe several common fiction search tactics within public catalogs, three of which involve subjects:

An analytical search tactic is used when readers wish to access books about a specific topic, such as the French Revolution. A search-by-analogy tactic is generated when readers want something similar to a novel they have read. A browsing tactic is applied in situations when

readers have only a vague idea of what they would like to read. (Mikkonen & Vakkari, 2016a, p. 61)

Whisnant (2003) also states that “[s]earching by subject was the most popular type of unknown-item search. Seventy-one percent of respondents searched by subject in the past month, with 61% searching by subject at least sometimes” (p. 34).

A common user subject search technique noted in multiple studies is “search by analogy.” Mikkonen and Vakkari (2017) describe this as a technique where searchers begin a search by “typing the name of a previously read title as a first entry term ... examine the subject terms in the metadata of the previously read title, and then [use] the subject terms as an entry at the subsequent query” (pp. 2159-2160). Saarinen and Vakkari (2013) remark that this fiction searching technique is also “a known tactic among searchers of non-fiction”; for fiction readers, “[t]his browsing tactic was typically successful producing fiction worthy of reading, whereas choosing search terms without a model novel was perceived as problematic” (p. 750). Users examine subject headings in records not only to find new items of interest, but also to quickly and easily eliminate unwanted items. As noted by Mikkonen and Vakkari (2016b), “an undesired theme or topic was easily detected from the subject headings section and the novel was quickly rejected” (p. 703). In order for users to perform these analyses and search by analogy, they need subject headings that are “contextually relevant” and “easy to use” (Ooi & Liew, 2011, p. 753).

Patron Search Limitations

Researchers detail several limitations in user search techniques within library catalogs. Whisnant (2003) states, for instance, that patrons seldom use catalog functions beyond the search bar. Patrons “heavily used both known and unknown-item searches, with author, subject, and title searches the most commonly used;” however, “other functions of the online catalog were not found to be heavily exploited, even among those readers who acknowledged using the online catalog very often or always” (Whisnant, 2003, p. 41). Both Antell and Huang (2008), and Saarinen and Vakkari (2013), observe the comparative prominence of search result evaluation to other user search techniques, with the latter describing an “emphasis on examining results in fiction searches contributes to finding interesting novels, whereas emphasis on query formulation has no bearing on it” (Saarinen & Vakkari, 2013, p. 740).

When search results, and individual entries within them, lack contextually relevant subject headings, Ooi and Liew (2011) assert that users often become frustrated and turn to the internet instead of library catalogs to find materials of interest (p. 753). Golub et al. (2022) similarly remark that “there were indications that some experiences, such as unsuccessful attempts at subject searching in library catalogs, made some people abandon a particular service altogether” (p. 473). Antell and Huang (2008) describe users’ “search fatigue” ... the “feeling of frustration and dissatisfaction” that could result when “no relevant items are retrieved, or because the user sees no relevant items on the first page or two of results” (p. 68, 70). This frustration is particularly evident in subject searching. A study of readers of LGBTQI fiction finds that they are interested in fiction portraying particular topics, such as “LGBTQI identities,” “queer friendship,” and “same-sex parenting” (Golub et al., 2022, p. 478). When Golub et al. (2022) queried study participants about their experiences searching for fiction in library catalogs, most “cited dissatisfaction with online searching for LGBTQI fiction. The most common reason ... was that

subject searching in library catalogs does not work well or, as one respondent wrote, ‘it is hard to search for LGBTQI works systematically’” (p. 474). Per Mikkonen and Vakkari (2016b), “[t]he richer the metadata on item pages, the easier the decision for selecting a particular item is to make”; conversely, “[t]he outcome of incomplete or missing metadata on an item page is commonly a book rejection, as the user fails in interpreting the possible reading experience” (Mikkonen & Vakkari, 2016b, p. 708). To counter these limitations, Mikkonen and Vakkari (2016a) suggest providing “multiple appealing entry points for fiction collections” to facilitate “successful, serendipitous discoveries” (p. 67). Providing as many access points as possible in support of user searching has also been promoted by Saarinen and Vakkari (2021), Adkins and Bossaller (2007), and Ooi and Liew (2011).

Form Subdivisions and User Needs

Researchers acknowledge the value of form subdivisions in providing this necessary context and metadata richness for searching patrons. Form subdivisions have been included within pre-coordinated subject strings since the formation of the LCSH vocabulary. As related by O’Neill et al. (2001):

Form subdivisions have been a part of LCSH since its inception. Beginning in 1906, the Library of Congress issued auxiliary lists of subdivisions that included a section of “General form divisions under subjects.” Guidelines on the use of subdivisions, such as those published in the introduction to the eighth edition of *Library of Congress Subject Headings* (Library of Congress 1975), instructed catalogers to use individual subdivisions either “as a topical subdivision,” “as a form subdivision,” or “as a form or topical subdivision” under specified types of headings for particular types of materials. (pp. 187-188)

A separate MARC subfield code for form subdivisions (\$v) was created in 1995, after years of consultation with library stakeholders, and after receiving widespread support within the library community as a way to improve subject search and display for library patrons.

LCSH subdivisions, including geographical, chronological, topical, and form, “help bring out attributes or facets of primary headings, narrowing and focusing the meaning of the main subject term” (Engelson, 2014, p. vi). Schymik et al. (as cited by Gross et al., 2015), emphasize user access benefits of the increased precision that subdivisions provide: “Adding contextual information to the search will decrease the number of irrelevant documents without decreasing the number of relevant documents in the result set”; if users “are presented a smaller result set, they are more likely to take the time to review the results and not give up on the search” (p. 12). LC also asserts that pre-coordinated subjects with subdivisions supply necessary details for patrons: “users don’t know the controlled terminology when they begin a search and ... they can recognize better than recall terminology. Pre-coordination can display to users different strings in which their ‘keyword’ terms are embedded” (Cataloging Policy and Support Office, 2007, p. 6). Mann (2001) agrees: “In providing subject access, if there is one thing that library catalogs are good for it is in providing *overviews of search options* through displays of precoordinated subject headings and subject-subdivision strings” (p. 110).

LC’s definition of pre-coordination centers patron search needs in the formation of subject strings with subdivisions, noting that subject heading elements are combined “in anticipation of a search on that compound heading” (Cataloging Policy and Support Office, 2007, p. 5). Form subdivisions, in particular, help “group items of like subject and genre/form apart from those not of such genre” (Newsom et al., 2008, p. 415). They are “helpful in providing additional context to the topical portions of subject access

points. For nonfiction and literary resources, they provide context such as Dictionaries, Textbooks, Fiction, and Poetry”; form subdivisions’ context cues “for non-textual resources might indicate that a resource is not mainly textual, such as audiovisual aids, games, models, and toys” (Williams, 2021, p. 773). This is deemed useful by libraries, since patrons often have complex information needs combining topical and form or genre elements: “One never really wants just any kind of book on a topic ... Providing content descriptions in terms both of topic and kind is simply recognizing the ordinary relevance of information about kinds of books” (Wilson & Robinson, 1990, p. 38). Miller (2000) links the gradual expansion of form subdivisions to “a greatly enlarged, and more explicitly indicated, conception of the forms that library materials may take, in addition to sociological factors such as increased publishing activity in a greater variety of media” (p. 184).

Subject headings containing form subdivisions have been found to facilitate user access to these increasingly complex topic/form combinations of media. Beall (2000) points out that “[f]orm and genre data is particularly important to the special libraries ... and to the undergraduate libraries ... which collect materials in a variety of formats and often get requests for information with format-specific inquiries” (p. 66). Engelson (2014) describes several categories of form subdivisions important for finding resources necessary for carrying out the duties of clergy; a religious topic (e.g., the Last Supper) could be further narrowed by multiple form subdivisions tailored to various ministerial tasks, for example, by \$v Children’s sermons for preparation assistance, or \$v Comic books, strips, etc. to find comics Bibles for classroom study (p. 13, 2). In their *Best Practices for Cataloging Comics and Graphic Novels using RDA and MARC21*, ALA’s Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (2022) recommend liberal subject provision including form subdivision “for all topics, classes of persons, individual characters, and settings that readily come to mind” to enhance user access to comics (p. 60). The best practices guide specifically notes which form subdivisions can or cannot be used in conjunction with the standard comics form subdivision, and includes these in example subject strings on pages 60-66: “Other form subdivisions can be included in subject strings with \$v Comic books, strips, etc., however, such as \$v Biography, \$v Adaptations and \$v Periodicals” (Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table, 2022, p. 60). The *Best Practices for Cataloging Objects using RDA and MARC21*, created by Moore et al. (2020) of Online Audiovisual Catalogers, Inc., specifically recommends the form subdivision \$v Specimens for describing objects in controlled subject strings: “The strongest candidate for expressing objects in LCSH is \$v Specimens. First, it is a genre/form subdivision; second, it free-floats, under limited situations”; the authors infer support for expanded usage of \$v Specimens describing objects via “multiple examples taken from the Library of Congress catalog” (p. 161).

Several authors also point to use cases for further development of form subdivisions within LCSH. For instance, in an article about the increased presence of lendable tabletop roleplaying games within library collections, Smith (2024) asserts that “controlled vocabularies that fail to properly describe subjects can impede discovery” (p. 103); and that, for tabletop roleplaying games, current form subdivisions such as \$v Fiction and \$v Handbooks, manuals, etc. provide inadequate access for patrons searching for those games within library catalogs (pp. 113-115). Similarly, Williams (2021) advocates for increased form subdivisions for curricular materials, such as games, kits, manipulatives, models, puzzles, and toys, to assist educators in finding needed educational materials on various classroom topics. Williams notes that “[t]he addition of appropriate form subdivisions could remedy the

use of topical headings that alone do not adequately represent the described resources,” and “allow subject specificity at individual subject access points” (p. 770).

Faceting, Post-Coordination, and Linked Data User Studies

Choi and Lee (2024) state that for research into knowledge organization “users are a common central consideration” (p. 234). This focus is not new, with Cutter (1894) asserting in the early 1900s that “The convenience of the public is always to be set before the ease of the cataloguer” (p.6). Gazan (2013) agrees, noting that users “are the people you require buy-in from to make the thesaurus a living, breathing, useful document”; those creating and maintaining controlled vocabularies should “[t]ake every opportunity to involve users: Start from user search logs to find commonly used terms; User experience focus groups; Prototyping; Solicit community feedback; Online discussion groups; Surveys; Observation; Term submissions” (p. 7-15). NISO’s (2010) guidelines also forefront the importance of iterative user testing, to make sure that vocabularies meet user information and access needs:

The two major reasons for testing and evaluating controlled vocabularies are: 1) To determine if the controlled vocabulary being used to describe content objects provides adequate search results (i.e., high relevance and recall) for most users; and 2) To determine if the controlled vocabulary matches users’ expectations of the terms contained therein. For example, if the entry vocabulary is not sufficiently rich, users may not discover their desired terms. (p. 94)

Despite this general agreement about the need for user testing, Choi and Lee (2024) note the dearth of such research related to knowledge organization (KO) systems: “While users are a central concern in KO, few KO-related system design projects have engaged users in their development or evaluation” (p. 237). This assertion is borne out in the comparative lack of user studies on the impacts of post-coordination, faceting, and linked data on library patron information and access needs within public catalogs. No studies to date have focused on form subdivisions, or demonstrated that they are detrimental to patron information or search needs.

In 2011, Yale University librarians compared patron subject heading usage between their traditional library catalog and a faceted version. In initial testing, when “participants tried to use subject heading facets the length of the list (more than 30 values listed) and extraneous topics rendered them difficult to navigate”; this led to refinements in the subjects facet to “return less irrelevant results, producing smaller lists of facet values, which were also better related to the original search” (Bauer & Peterson-Hart, 2012, p. 350). Even after this improvement, however, Bauer and Peterson-Hart observe a continuation within the faceted search environment of the patron search-by-analogy technique described above; the authors state that patron usage of subject headings was driven “by patrons following record links in Yufind, more than by selecting subject heading facets” (pp. 354-355).

In 2017, the British Library transitioned from LCSH to the largely post-coordinated Faceted Application of Subject Terminology (FAST) vocabulary. In an article discussing the change, Ashton and Kent (2017) note briefly that:

[I]nitial retrievability studies with reading-room users in specific subject areas have suggested that books are found accurately, regardless of whether the system is LCSH or FAST. Key terms

are as successful as strings, and possibly more so when form and genre are part of the search. (p. 554)

However, the article lacks any discussion of study methodologies and other relevant details, such as user sample size, how search accuracy was gauged, whether results were replicated outside the reading-room for remote catalog users, and so on. Ashton and Kent provide no further details about the 2017 studies, nor mention any additional user studies, in their 2023 follow-up article. Cooley and Phillip's (2023) essay, advocating for post-coordination of LCSH on behalf of LC, relies exclusively on Ashton and Kent's (2017) article when asserting that "[f]or end users searching catalog records, post-coordinated subject headings are just as effective, if not more so, as pre-coordinated subject strings" (Cooley & Phillips, 2023, pp. 495-496); no additional user studies are presented as evidence.

Rico et al.'s (2019) comparative study of Biblioteca Nacional de España's traditional and linked data catalogs describes at the outset the continued lack of user studies regarding "semantic and linked data methods and technologies" (p. 1). The authors write, "to the best of our knowledge, little research has been undertaken into the impact of these novel approaches, especially regarding real-world uses and tasks" (Rico et al., 2019, p. 1). This "situation leaves the question of to what extent they may enhance user experiences unanswered" (Rico et al., 2019, p. 12). Subdivisions are not discussed in this study, and no user tasks within the study began with subject searching. Study participants did report issues with the linked data subject facet, however; study authors mention that restricting facet values to controlled subject strings "improved" the facet, although this was not further tested with users (Rico et al., 2019, p. 12). The controlled subject vocabulary within the facet actually contains pre-coordinated strings, including some with form subdivisions; the Discussion section of this report considers this in more detail.

Finally, Kipp and Park's (2025) analysis of user understandings of metadata using linked data asserts that, as recently as last year, "[d]iscrepancies between users' needs and the functionality of linked data systems are frequent" and "little is known about the metadata elements in linked data that [users] find meaningful and appropriate" (p. 366, 367). Kipp and Park's study relies on library school students familiar with the semantic web and library metadata, and not the general public. Even within this cohort, though, the authors describe a "vocabulary mismatch" between the users and the system (Kipp & Park, 2025, p. 381). Further, most study participants "reported that, for them, the metadata in linked data 'does not look like metadata,' 'does not use familiar metadata terms,' and is 'difficult to use.' In fact, only one respondent describes these metadata as 'easy to use'" (Kipp & Park, 2025, p. 379). Subdivisions are not specified or discussed in the context of the study. However, the authors remark on user interest in subjects, and the need for congruence between metadata systems and user warrant related to subjects; their results "support the notions that users appreciate metadata relevant to content (e.g., subject and description) and that the design of metadata is crucial in terms of aligning them with users' understanding and the vocabulary that they use for information" (Kipp & Park, 2025, pp. 375-376).

Given the lack of user studies particularly focused on form subdivisions, the Working Group on \$v Retention created a library worker survey to learn more about whether libraries, in their everyday experiences with patrons and public-facing catalogs, could offer any insights on the comparative utility of subjects with and without form subdivisions for meeting patron's information and access needs. Did broad public opinion within the library community support \$v omission, and agree with LC's justifications

for form subdivision cessation described above? What did libraries perceive the impacts of eliminating form subdivisions might or might not be for their collections, services, and library users?

Methodology

Questions for LC about \$v Omission

The Working Group created a set of questions for LC regarding their January 2025 “Modern MARC” announcement (LC, 2025), as the announcement contained no details elaborating on when \$v omission might begin, how comprehensive or retroactive \$v omission might be, and so on. The Working Group intended to share LC’s answers widely with the library community. However, LC never replied to the Group, thus there are no LC responses to the Working Group’s questions included in this report. However, the Group’s set of questions appears to form the basis, largely verbatim and uncredited, of LC’s (2026) *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT*, issued in January 2026, and sent only to those subscribed to the [Library of Congress Vocabularies Announcements listserv](#) or the PCCList listserv.

The Working Group developed the questions from May through August 2025, drawing the content and wording from questions the Group received from multiple libraries and vendors seeking additional information about LC’s plans. Additionally, the Working Group submitted the proposed questions to several other library organizations, who provided wording suggestions, and contributed additional content. The questions were sent to LC on September 15, 2025. The complete set of questions and signatories appears in Appendix C.

Survey Development and Data Collection

A mixed method approach was used to assess libraries’ knowledge about form subdivision removal, and potential ramifications of the change for library collections, catalogs, staff, and patrons. An anonymized library worker survey using Google forms was distributed using library and library-adjacent listservs, social media (including subreddits, BlueSky, and Facebook), and word-of-mouth. Data collection occurred from August 22, 2025 to September 19, 2025.

The target population for the survey was library workers, archivists, and others in institutions utilizing LCSH in their public catalogs. The survey was purposefully spread as broadly as possible, to discover response trends within and between different types of libraries, and between national and international library communities. Attention was paid to organizations and listservs that might reach specific library populations (e.g., school, public, etc.). Survey distribution was within the United States and other Anglophone countries, including Canada, Australia, the United Kingdom, and New Zealand. The survey announcement and introductory text at the top of the survey provided context about form subdivision omission, particularly for potential respondents unaware of the policy change, including links to sample records and an informational statement created by the Working Group. The solicitation and introduction explicitly noted that results of the survey would be “used to inform the Working Group’s advocacy work” (exact text can be found in Appendix B).

The survey consisted of 21 questions, detailed in Appendix B. It contained a mix of multiple choice, check box and open-ended questions, to capture both qualitative and quantitative data. In most cases free-text options such as “Other” were included, in an effort to avoid forced choices. No personally identifying information was requested or collected within the survey. Respondents were asked broad demographic questions about the type of library or related institution they worked for, their role(s) within the institution, and which staff-facing and public-facing catalogs their institution used. Their sources of library news and information were queried, as well as whether they knew about LC’s planned omission of \$v before taking the survey. Several questions investigated the functionality of respondents’ public-facing catalogs; images were added to four questions to clarify meanings for respondents. Four questions were developed to gauge whether libraries broadly agreed with LC’s assertion that \$v was redundant and duplicative metadata within library catalogs. A final set of questions probed respondents’ and/or their institutions’ capacities to cope with metadata changes in cataloging, vendor record provision, and public catalog functionality.

Data Analysis

Responses to the survey were by self-selected volunteers. For a response to count as valid and be saved all questions marked as required within the Google form had to be answered.

Quantitative responses to questions were tallied against either the number of responses, the number of respondents, or both, and are detailed below.

Qualitative themes within the survey were analyzed using an “open coding” approach to allow themes to emerge organically (Choi & Lee, 2024, p. 239). Coders utilized “constant comparison” analysis for free-text to discover trends within responses (Anderson, 2010, p. 2). Themes were color coded, checked by consensus to ensure agreement, grouped, and tallied. Responses pertaining to public-facing catalogs were checked and verified via the product directory of the [Library Technology Guides](#) maintained by Marshall Breeding (2025). Results are described and discussed below.

Results

Library Demographic and Informational Questions

There were 699 respondents to the survey. Qualitative and quantitative results are discussed below.

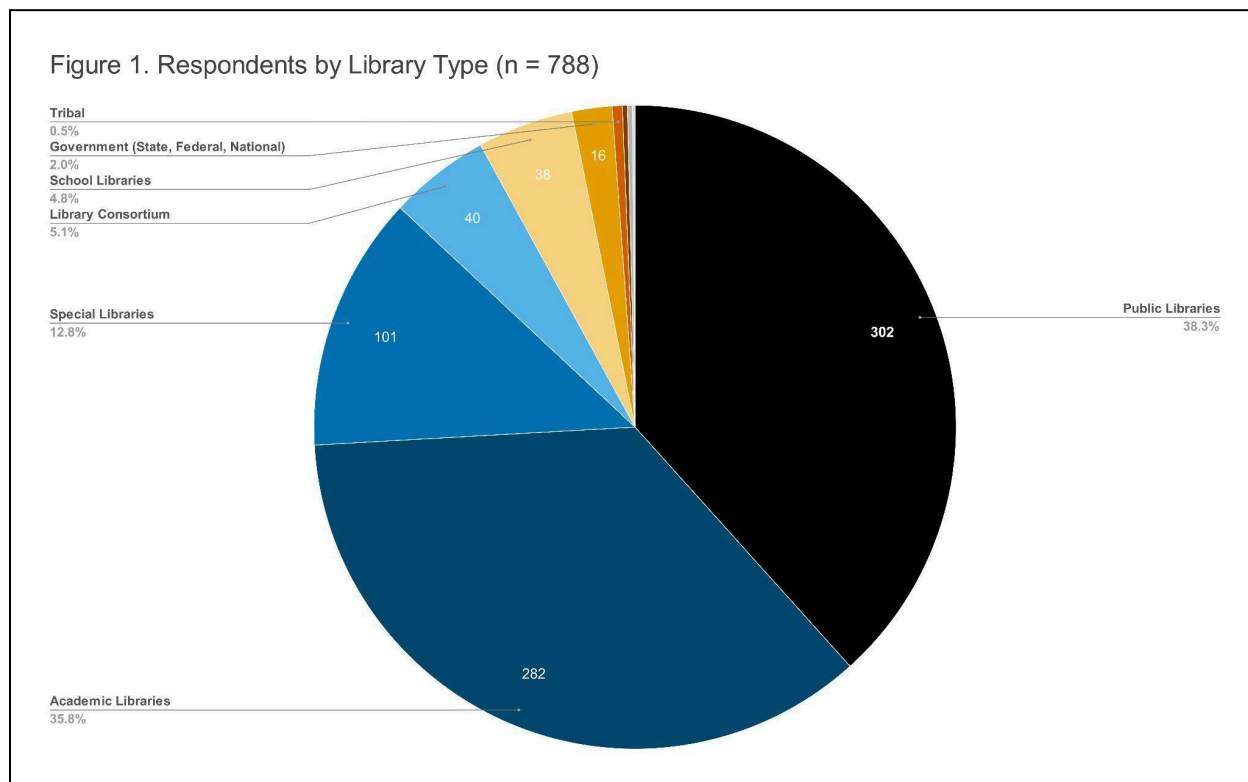
Some notes on statistical reporting:

- The number of respondents from aggregated library types answering questions sometimes deviates from the total number of each library type from question 1.1. This happens either with optional questions (i.e., where fewer than the total number generally respond), or in cases where individual respondents provide multiple codable responses (e.g., question 2.1 contained 306 public library responses, more than the 302 reported public library respondents in 1.1).
- Because some respondents described their library as fitting multiple types, when responses are aggregated by library type, the same response is sometimes counted in two or three categories.

The number of respondents and the total count of responses is noted in each figure where this is relevant.

- Rounding may occasionally render reported totals as 99-101% (e.g., academic responses to question 3.1 actually totalled 54.25%, 13.48%, and 32.27% or 100% collectively; rounding those to their nearest whole numbers means percentages within this report total 99%).
- Responses totaling 1% or less of the survey data were considered not statistically significant enough to report, and have been omitted from Results text below. This may occasionally also make reported totals appear less than 100%.
- The small sample size of some library groups—including government, tribal, archival, and regional—as well as private cataloging companies, means that reported data about those groups may not be generalizable.

Question 1.1 about what kind of institution respondents worked in received 788 responses, representing all named library type selections, plus additional write-in options. The largest percentage of responses (302) were from public libraries (38% of total responses, 43% of respondents). 282 responses came from academic libraries (36% of responses, 40% of respondents). 101 responses indicated special libraries (13% of responses, 14% of respondents), either not further specified or of a particular type, such as museum/art library or law library. 40 responses came from consortial libraries (5% of responses, 6% of respondents). School libraries accounted for 38 responses (5% of both responses and respondents). Other respondents self-labeled as governmental libraries (including state-, federal- and national-level), tribal libraries, archives, regional libraries, and private cataloging companies. Results are visible in Figure 1.



There were 2,096 responses to **question 1.2 about respondents' role(s) within their institution**. Responses included both technical services roles, and public services positions working directly with patrons (such as Circulation, Reference, Readers Advisory, and so on). The largest number self-described as Catalogers (622, 30% of total responses; 89% of respondents). 392 cataloger responses indicated performing multiple roles within their institutions, and not just cataloging (63% of cataloger respondents, 56% of total respondents) also selected other roles. Responses in decreasing order appear in Appendix A, Table A1.

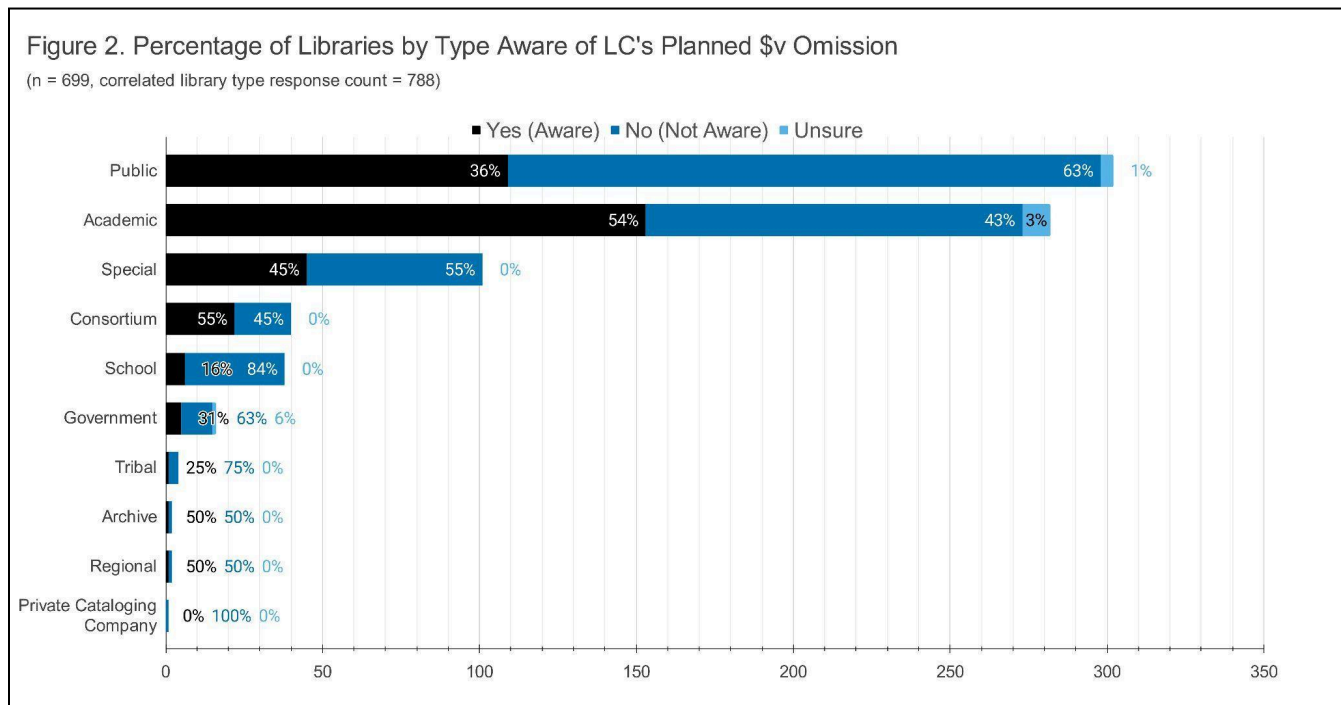
Question 1.3, asking which integrated library system/library-facing catalog respondents used, received 715 responses. At 228 responses, the Alma integrated library system was used by the largest percentage of respondents (32% of total responses, 33% of respondents). No other library-facing catalogs received more than 13% of responses. Systems totaling above 5% of responses included (in decreasing order): Sierra (13% of responses); Polaris (10%); SirsiDynix Symphony (8%); and FOLIO (6%). The list of library-facing catalogs is available in Appendix A, Table A2.

Survey **question 1.4 about which discovery layers or public-facing catalog catalogs libraries utilized** received 728 responses. Primo and Primo VE (Ex Libris) aggregated received 222 responses (30% of total responses, 32% of respondents). No other public-facing catalogs totaled more than 9% of responses. Catalogs receiving more than 5% of responses included (in decreasing order): Enterprise (SirsiDynix) with 6% of responses; Vega (Innovative Interfaces, 6%); Aspen (ByWater Solutions, 6%); and Unknown/Unsure (including responses where only company name and not public catalog were specified, or library-facing catalogs instead of public-facing catalogs were named, 6%). Responses are presented in Appendix A, Table A3.

394 unique or aggregated responses were received in response to **question 1.5, soliciting sources of library news and information**. Responses were received from respondents representing 36 states within the United States (72% of states), as indicated by state-level sources named in responses. International responses were received from Australia, Canada, Europe, Ireland, New Zealand, Oceania, and the United Kingdom. 74% of responses did not include any LC or LC-adjacent sources of information, determined by the Working Group to include: LC, PCC, BIBCO, SACO (the listserv, funnels, etc.), NACO (the listserv, funnels, etc.), CONSER, BIBFRAME, the MARC listserv, or the Federal Librarians listserv. 26% of responses included LC or LC-adjacent sources of information. 8% of responses indicated solely state- or local-level engagement with library news and information, including local consortia, colleagues within their workplace, and so on. Sources of library information mentioned over 100 times in responses were: ALA (aggregated generic), AUTOCAT, OCLC-CAT and PCC-List. Entries with over 50 mentions were: ALA Core, the Alma listserv, OLAC (aggregated generic), RADCAT, and the Troublesome Catalogers and Magical Metadata Fairies Facebook group. Of the sources mentioned over 50 or 100 times, only one (PCC-List) was considered by the Working Group to be an LC or LC-adjacent source of information.

382 respondents (55%) were not **aware before taking the survey that LC planned to omit form subdivisions in new cataloging (question 1.6)**; 303 (43%) were aware of the change before taking the survey; and 14 (2%) were unsure. Representative comments from those unsure about the change included, "Was involved in conversations, did not entirely understand," and "It was my understanding

that this was an optional practice they wanted to encourage. I didn't realize it was the plan for all LOC-created records." When correlated with library types from question 1.1, only two groups of libraries had majorities aware of the change before taking the survey: academic libraries (153 or 54% aware, 120 or 43% unaware, 9 or 3% unsure); and library consortia (22 or 55% aware, 18 or 45% unaware). Other library groupings ranged from 50% (archives and regional) to 100% (private cataloging company) unaware of the pending elimination of form subdivisions. Results can be seen in Figure 2.

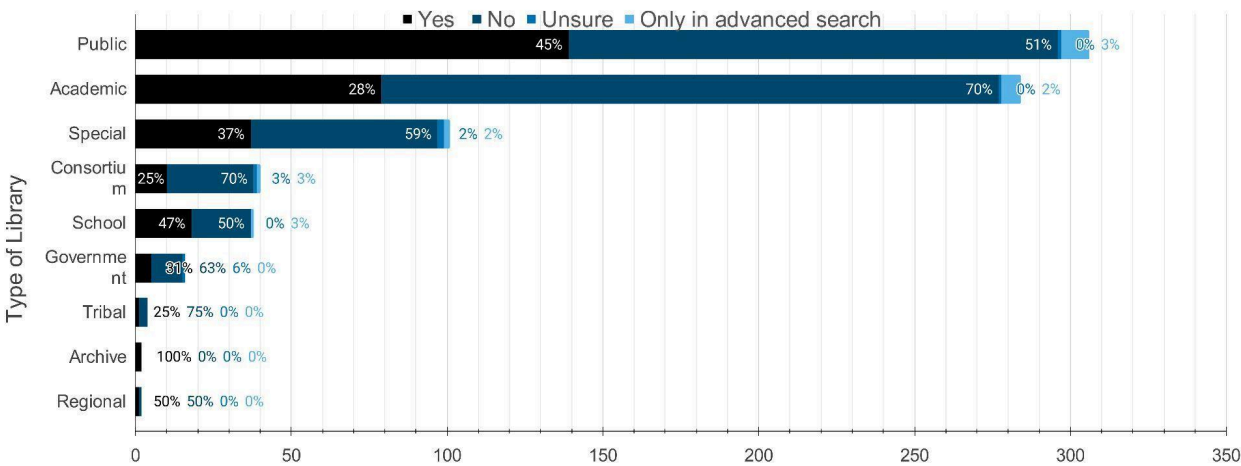


Public Catalog Questions

704 responses were received in answer to **question 2.1 about whether respondents' public catalogs had dedicated genre/form search options**, equivalent to title or author dedicated searches. 260 (37%) of responses indicated that their catalog had this dedicated search capacity; 421 (60%) of responses reported that their catalog lacked this search feature; and 17 (2%) had a dedicated genre/form search only within advanced search options. When correlated with library type, archives were the only grouping with a majority capable of searching via a dedicated genre/form option (2, 100%). Otherwise, 50-75% of libraries within each library grouping lacked a genre/form search, including half of all public libraries, and 70% of academic libraries. As summed up by the private cataloging company, "Some do; most don't (that I've seen)." Percentages are shown in Figure 3.

Figure 3. Dedicated Genre/Form Search Option by Library Type

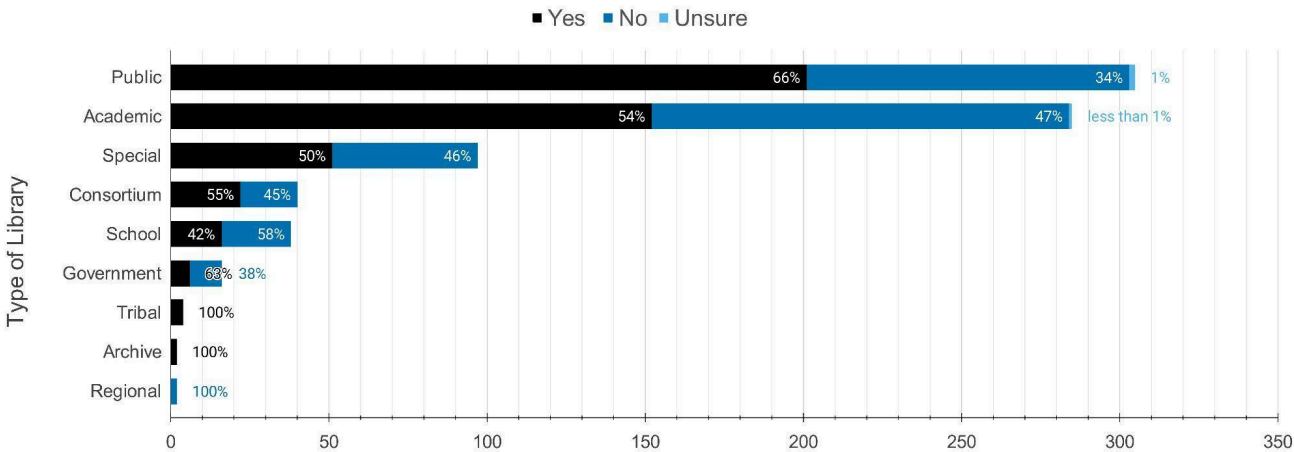
(n = 704, correlated library type response count = 793)



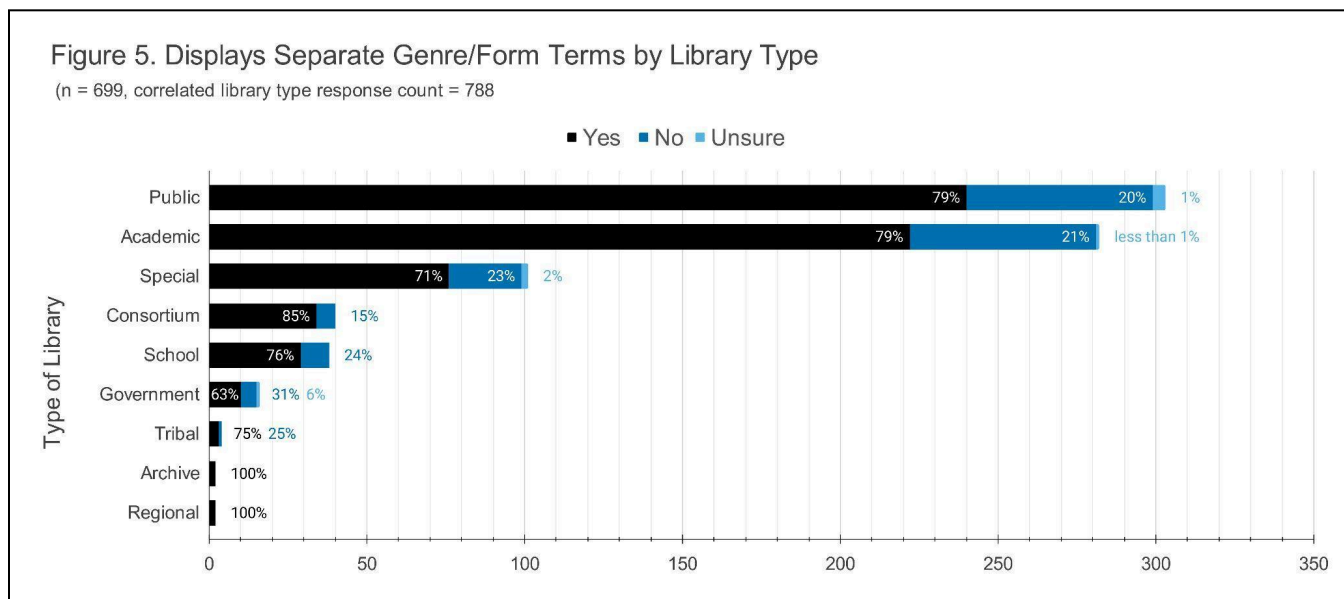
292 (42%) of survey respondents additionally lacked a **dedicated genre/form facet for narrowing search results within their public catalogs (per question 2.2)**. 407 (58%) reported the presence of genre/form facets. Some responses noted that genre/form facets technically existed, but were not activated within their local catalogs. Broken down by library type, respondent percentages lacking genre/form facets ranged from archives (0% lacking form facets) to regional (100% lacking genre facets). Nearly half of academic and special libraries (46% each), and over half of school libraries (58%) had no genre/form faceting capabilities. Per the private cataloging company, “Most do; some don’t.” Results correlated to library type are depicted in Figure 4.

Figure 4. Dedicated Genre/Form Facet by Library Type

(n = 699; correlated library type response count = 789)



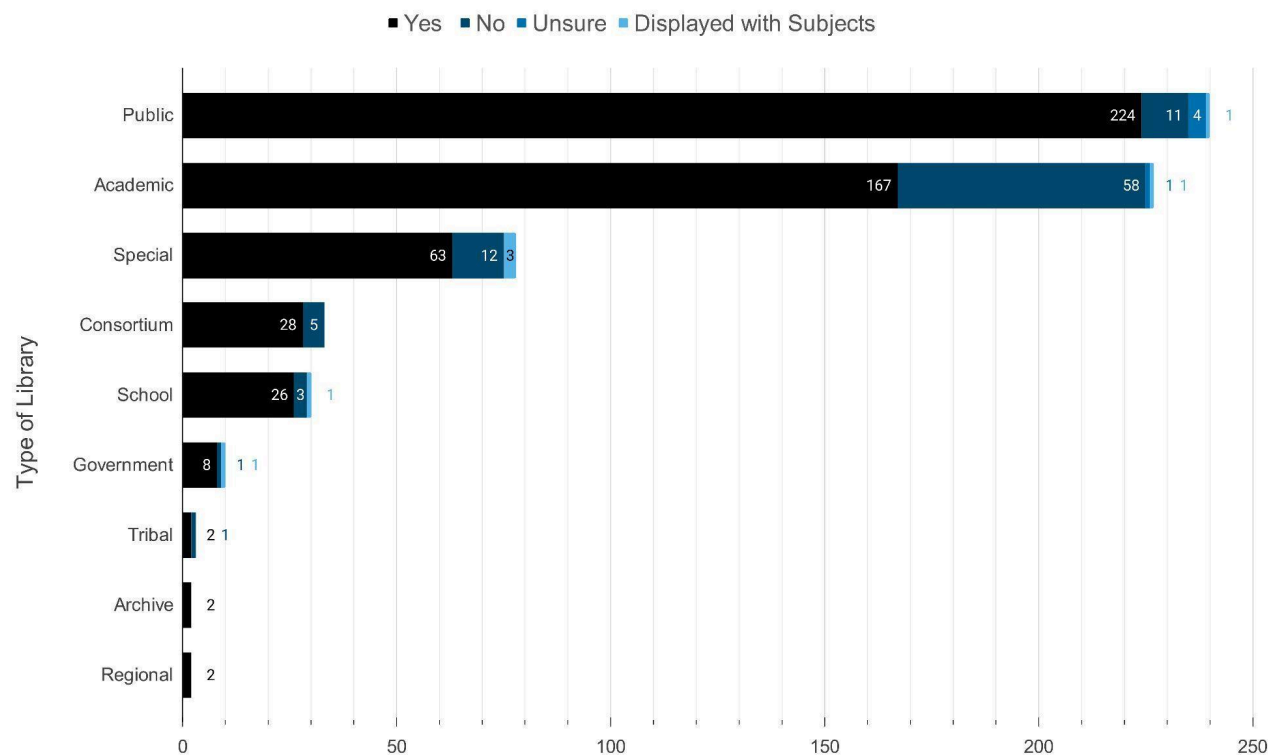
79% (549) of respondents **display genre/form headings if a patron clicked on a search result for more information, examining the bibliographic record related to a work (question 2.3)**. 20% (142) did not display separate genre/form information. Correlated with library type, percentages displaying separate genre/form information in public catalog records range from government (63% displaying separate headings) to regional (100% displaying separate headings); a fifth to a quarter of libraries within most library types do not display separate genre/form terms. Correlations with library type appear in Figure 5.



Within the respondents reporting the display of genre/form headings within the public catalog, 556 answered optional **follow-up question 2.4 about whether displayed genre/form terms were searchable hyperlinks**. Of these, 468 (84% of responses) indicated that their catalogs had hyperlinked genre/form terms; 76 (14%) did not have hyperlinked form terms. Some mentioned that they had hyperlinked terms, but indexed and intermingled with subjects. In all, respondents with hyperlinked genres within their catalogs comprised 67% of the 699 total survey respondents. Broken down by library type, tribal libraries were least likely to include hyperlinked form headings in their catalogs (67% of the 3 responses to question 2.4); regional were most likely to include hyperlinked form headings (100% of 2 responses). Numbers correlated with library type are shown below in Figure 6. Compared to absolute numbers of libraries of each type from question 1.1: 50% of all government libraries have genres displayed and searchable hyperlinks (56% if including ones intermingled with subjects); 50% of tribal; 58% of special (61% with subjects); 59% of academic (60% with subjects); 68% of school (71% with subjects); 70% of consortia; 74% of public (75% with subjects); 100% of archives; and 100% of regional. Comparative absence of genre and subject headings from public catalogs correlated with library type can be found in Figure 16 in the Discussion section.

Figure 6. Displayed Genre/Forms as Hyperlinks by Library Type

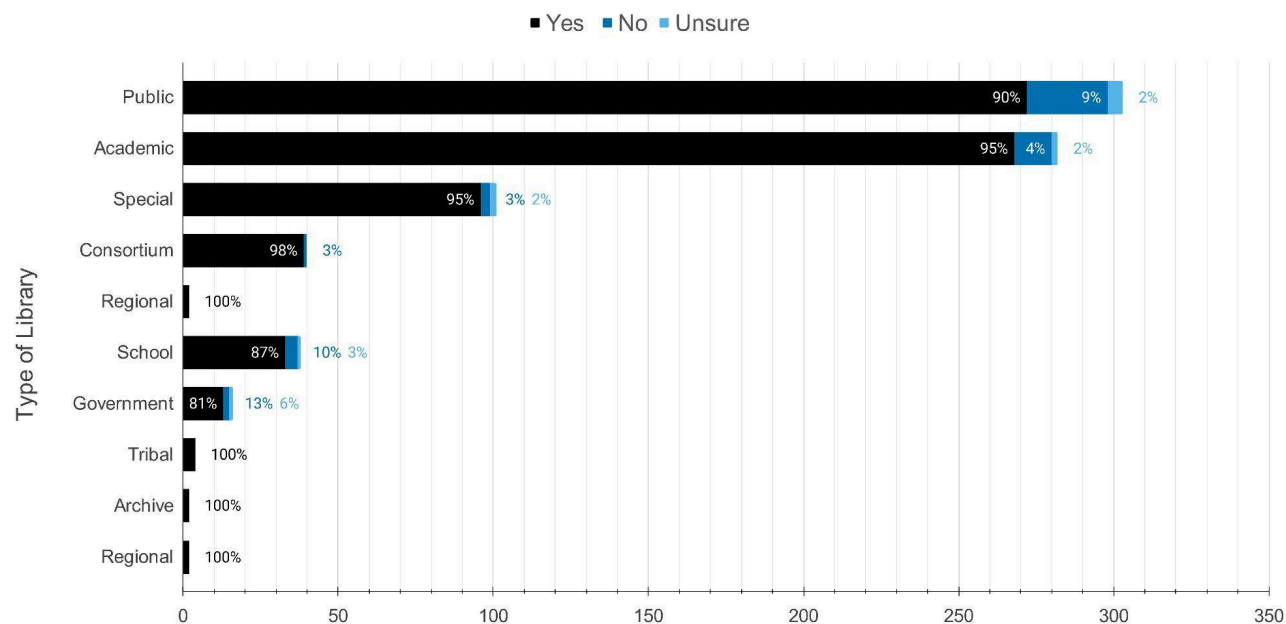
(n = 556, correlated library type response count = 625)



The survey received 700 responses to **question 2.5 about whether the public catalog displayed subject headings if a patron clicked on a search result for more information**. 646 respondents (92%) displayed subject headings; 45 (6%) did not. When correlated with library types, only two groupings had subject heading display rates under 90%: government (81%); and school (87%). Other reported library type totals ranged from public (90%) to regional (100%). Library type results appear below in Figure 7.

Figure 7. Displays Subject Headings by Library Type

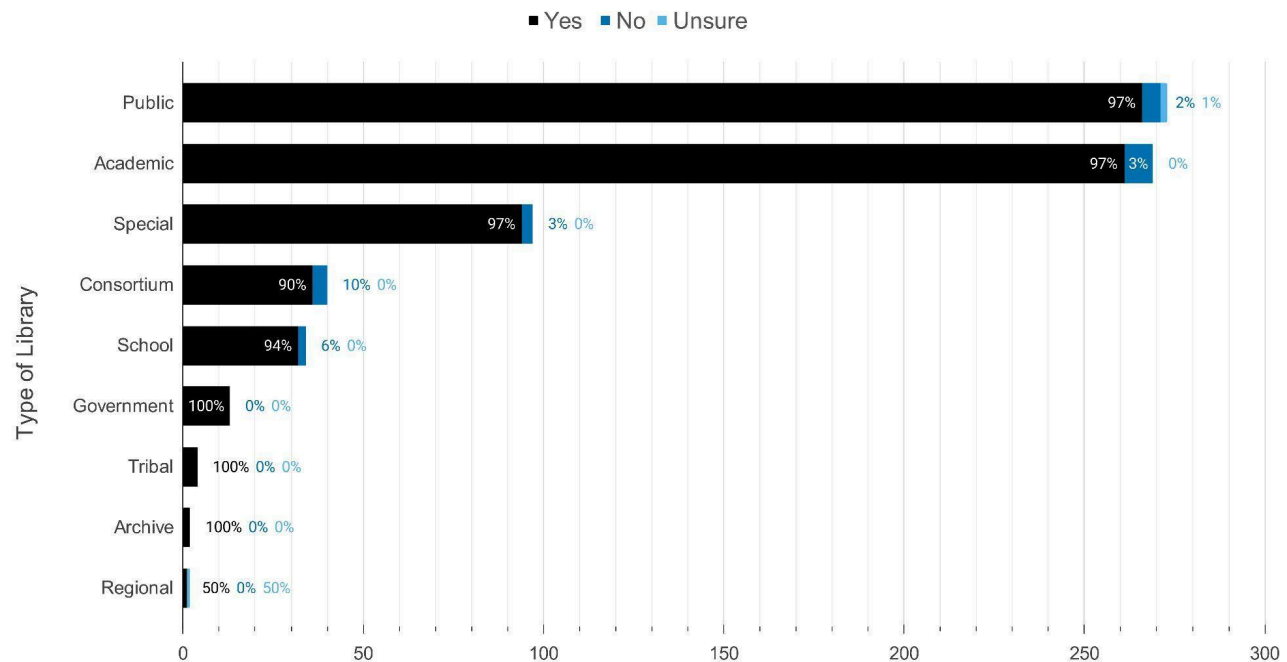
(n = 699, correlated library type response count = 790)



Within the respondents reporting the display of subject headings within the library catalog, 648 answered the optional **follow-up question (2.6) about whether the subjects were searchable hyperlinks**. 629 (97%) indicated that their catalogs had hyperlinked subjects; 17 (3%) did not. In all, respondents with hyperlinked subjects within their catalogs comprised 90% of the 699 total survey respondents. Correlated with library types, regional library percentages cannot be calculated, because two regional libraries reported displaying subject headings, but only one answered the follow-up question. Otherwise, hyperlinked subjects appeared within public catalogs in percentages ranging from consortia (92% of the responses to 2.6) to archives (100% of responses). Compared to absolute numbers of libraries of each type from 1.1: 81% of all government libraries have subjects displayed and searchable hyperlinks; 84% of school; 88% of public; 89% of special; 90% of consortia; 93% of academic; 100% of tribal; and 100% of archives. Results correlated to library type are recorded in Figure 8.

Figure 8. Displayed Subjects as Hyperlinks by Library Type

(n = 648, correlated library type response count = 734)



348 respondents **shared other information about their catalogs in the final, optional question (2.7) in the survey section pertaining to public catalogs.** The most commonly mentioned theme (113 or 32% of responses) was that catalogs indexed and searched genres/forms as subjects, and didn't differentiate them at all; an additional 8 respondents (2%) noted that genres were labeled as such in the public display, but still indexed and searched with subjects. This compares with 33 (9%) of responses noting separate searching and indexing for genres; and 31 (9%) of responses remarking that genres were not indexed, searchable, or displayed at all in their catalogs. 50 respondents (14%) stated that their catalogs had advanced subject searching; and 25 respondents (7%) mentioned advanced genre searching. 36 or 10% of respondents commented that their public catalogs contained a subject browse; and 8 or 2% shared that their catalogs had genre browse capabilities.

Comments from question 2.7 include the following:

- "Our discovery layer integrates a MARC based LMS and a non-MARC ACMS. Subject display and links are 'harmonised'. Removing \$v from the MARC based records will result in a need to re-catalogue all the non-MARC records."
- "Our ILS (Polaris) cannot parse the \$2 of a genre (source) so lcgft/gsafd/olacvsgt/qlsp, etc. end up on the same authority entry if the \$a genre word or phrase match. We cannot use genre headings to their full extent in cataloging or searching because of this known flaw. The company is aware and has not changed any of their structure to allow multiple genre sources to be used. Also, genre is only searchable in the PAC if a person knows to go to advanced search and

select from there or does an initial keyword search, gets results, and then selects the genre from a drop down on the results screen. Not intuitive.”

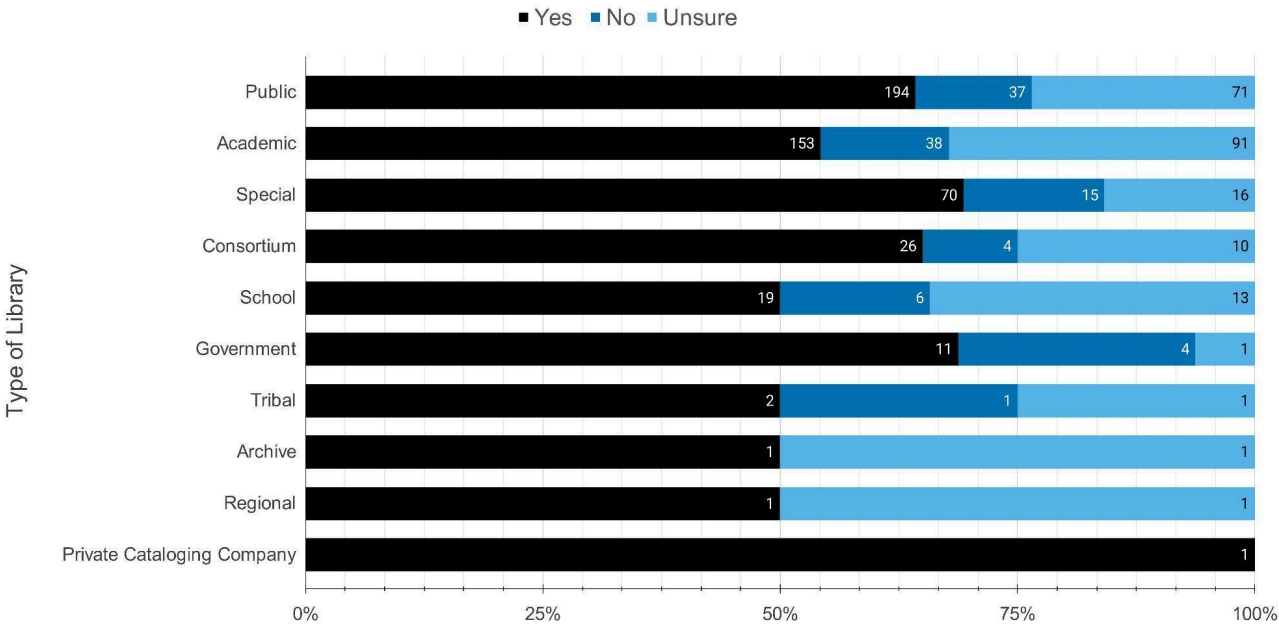
- “Our search includes and displays all 6XX fields in the record. It only separates out LC subjects (6XX_0) from ‘Other subjects’, which includes all other thesauri, including genre/form thesauri, and uncontrolled vocabularies (like 6XX_4 or 653). They are all clickable, linked text. Only LC subjects have an additional link to browse the subject index, which only includes LC subjects (and local subjects that replace LC’s)—that is, no genre/form terms are in browsable list, but do, importantly, appear when they are \$v appended to other LCSH).”
- “No browse search for genre/form; we could have a facet, a browse search, an option for genre as an advanced search, etc., but there are some things holding us back: #1: lack of staff bandwidth to do all the customization required in Primo and the fact that the Primo software completely changes every 2-3 years that require complete reconfiguration; #2: the fact that many older records do not have the data, i.e., separate 655 fields or even \$v subfields in subjects, resulting in misleading search results in a separate genre search/facet; #3 usability studies that suggest users are already overwhelmed by the number of facets and other search options and most often just choose to do keyword.”

Library Impact Questions

Question 3.1 asked whether \$v omission would impact the ability of patrons and library staff to find materials. 416 respondents (59%) indicated that a lack of form subdivisions would impede patron and librarian access to materials; 186 respondents (27%) were unsure; and 97 respondents (14%) believed that \$v elimination would have no impact on access. When correlated with library type, 50-100% of each grouping reported that form subdivision omission would negatively impact their patrons, from tribal (50% impact, 25% unsure, 25% no impact) to private cataloging company (100% impact). Results correlated with library type appear in Figure 9.

Figure 9. Would \$v Omission Impact the Ability of Users to Find Materials

(n = 699, correlated library type response count = 788)



397 responses were received for optional **follow-up free-text question 3.2, soliciting examples of how \$v elimination would impact the ability of patrons and library staff to find materials.** Several themes emerged from the responses. Respondents noted complex patron information needs combining topic and form, such as: teachers and literacy specialists with specialized requests for instructional materials; or librarians pulling together displays on a topic, gathering class materials and lesson planning, performing collection development, etc. One contemporary use case was described—with current book banning threats and attacks on juvenile items in particular, patrons and librarians needed to easily and immediately differentiate between children’s and adult materials. Responses asserted that form subdivisions provided specificity and accuracy for patrons searches (e.g., exhibitions versus catalogues raisonnées versus correspondence for a particular artist); improved speed and efficiency for patrons (no need to look elsewhere in records for context or further narrow/facet to find materials of interest, sift through unwieldy search results, etc.); and provided a more comprehensive recall (such as when genres weren’t present, when \$v to genre/form wasn’t a one-to-one match, and for making connections across subgenres/subforms with a common topic like biographies and autobiographies about an individual or class of person).

Respondents also described different ways \$v omission would impact patron searching. Several stated that patrons don’t heavily use facets or other public catalog functionality; this was particularly problematic for certain patron groups, such as children. Responses asserted that having more access points is better for countering search and knowledge gaps (i.e., it’s “easier to recognize that something you didn’t know existed is interesting” than to come up with the search terms). Many were concerned that patrons would stop using the catalog if search result sets became too large, or more steps were

added to find desired materials. Respondents also reiterated public catalog limitations that would make patron searches without \$v more difficult, including: the lack of ability to do multiple-term searches (so more than one search would be necessary to recreate the search results of a single subject string); the breaking of existing catalog functionality (e.g., hyperlinked subjects, subject browse, “more like this”); split files and lack of connection between older and newer works; and the absence of genre/form-specific search, browse or faceting ability. Some responses commented that these catalog limitations also existed in library-facing catalogs, impeding staff searches as well as patron searches.

Comments from question 3.2 include the following:

- “Omission of \$v headings would force reliance on post-coordination search strategies which the majority of library patrons remain unfamiliar with, & which the current generation of bibliographic interfaces & systems does a poor job of producing (FAST headings remain chiefly unusable for any meaningful bibliographic searches.[1]) ... Speaking more broadly, I find that this proposal follows a disappointing trend of diluting & diminishing the possibilities for granular subject description & access in favor of the promise of linked data, which remains merely a promise, & one whose affordability & practicality for implementation for the vast majority of libraries remains squarely in doubt.”
- “Our patrons depend on this kind of granularity for finding similar items in the catalog through a single click. As a music library with all manner of \$v including most crucially \$v Scores or \$v Scores and parts at the end of our subject headings, we rely on \$v to differentiate recordings or books versus printed music. Likewise, \$v Solo with piano and \$v Instrumental settings have important functions in various subject headings that narrow the ‘aboutness’ and help the patron (and librarian) figure out what an item might be. ... it’s faster to just look at the subject headings rather than try and decipher the instrumentation from the title or notes, which may be lacking.”
- “Taking \$v away would inevitably lead to patrons selecting the wrong material for their needs and result in frustration and possibly abandonment of the catalog. Further, using 655 genre headings won’t replace the function of \$v. When I look at the results using the genre heading ‘Historical fiction’, for example, the OPAC took a very long time to load because of the amount of results. It produced 2,135 items in our collection that use this genre heading. No reasonable patron is going to then sort through that many results to find something they want or need. It is impractical. We need \$v with subject headings in addition to 655s to make the catalog usable. I am all for the progress of linked data, but we are very far from implementing it in my state and region. MARC isn’t going anywhere for some time and we need to use tools like \$v to keep it functioning in the most effective and efficient ways.”
- “We have a very large collection of materials on the Virgin Mary, so we have a very large number of books that have 600 00 Mary, \$c Blessed Virgin, Saint... And searches are conveniently broken down by v subfields such as \$v Biography, \$v Prayers and devotions, \$v Songs and music, \$v Comic books, strips, etc., \$v Juvenile literature, \$v Early works to 1800, etc.”²
- “Firstly, because genre headings are not available to our guests, so they couldn’t see any form information for our items through the online catalog. Secondly, because Sierra does not allow for

² The subfield delimiter within all quotations has been normalized to “\$” for readability. Quotations otherwise remain unchanged.

multiple term searches, so when staff search for a term in [S]ierra, there is no way to additionally limit that term by form unless the form is included in the term itself.”

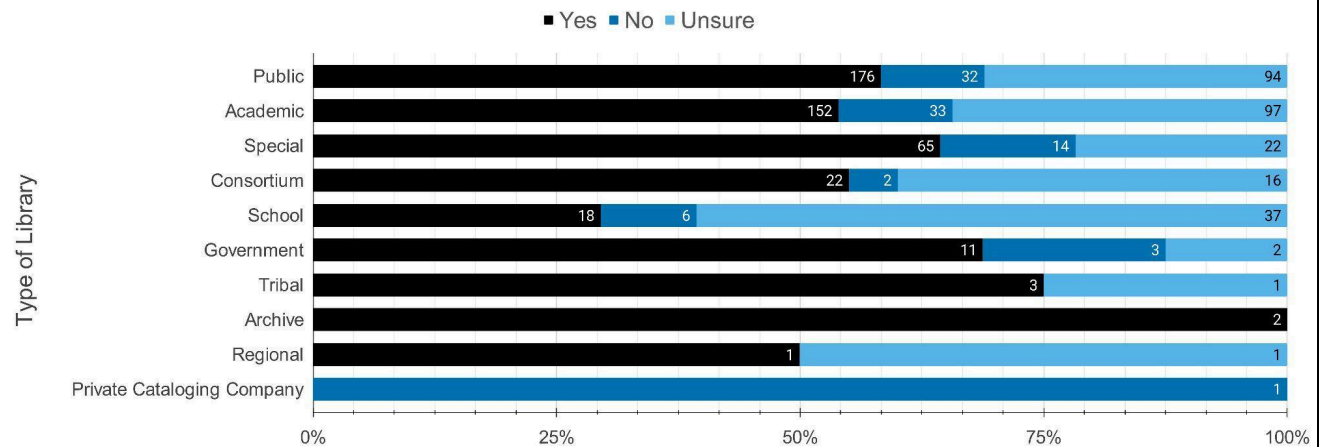
- “The hyperlinked subjects become less useful if the subject does not have subfield information. For example let[’s] say the term Pirates is listed as a subject in a record without any subdivisions, but a staff member or patron is looking for children’s books about pirates. They can click on Pirates, but will need to click additional facets (juvenile audience or maybe a genre term) to find what they are looking for. If Pirates\$vJuvenile [sic] fiction was in the record they could click this term and easily find what they are looking for in basically one click. I also think \$v subdivisions help with general keyword searching since they provide additional information about materials which may not be captured in genre headings. You also have to scan all the 6XX fields to determine if a work is fiction or nonfiction, whereas \$v makes this immediately clear.”
- “[T]he issue is not necessarily finding the item, but more it removes the context of what the item is, specifically when you have material which is not 1:1 relationship, or that is made up of multiple parts, such as manuscript collections.”
- “The lack of \$v information in subjects will make it harder for students to sift through fiction versus nonfiction. For example a subject search for World War, 1939-1945 will produce a very long list of items in my catalog that a student will have to sift through to find a World War II novel. It[’s] relatively easy to tell what something is when you see that ‘Fiction’ subheading visually attached to the subject as in World War, 1939-1945 -- Fiction. This distinction is much less clear if subheadings become separate and wind up looking like another full subject as this will increase the total number of separate headings that are presented to the patron ...often displayed far down the list of displayed subjects and thus easier to miss or ignore. While it may seem like a patron should be able to figure this out from call numbers and such, the reality is that many of my students come to me lacking the basic library skills to make this observation and anything that makes it less obvious what something is will be detrimental to the students that I serve.”
- “One genre term doesn’t always replace a \$v. Often it would take multiple searches to account for all the genre terms that might be used in place of one \$v. So search results might be inadequate. Also, we have a TON of legacy data that doesn’t include any genre terms at all, and we are never going to have time to go back and add them in a way that would thoroughly account for all the possibilities. Therefore if newer records don’t continue to include \$v, we’re going to get split search results.”
- “We hold a lot of First Nations materials. Removing the form heading will mean that so many ‘Indigenous peoples’, ‘Aboriginal Australians’, etc. headings will be returned in result sets, that the sets will be meaningless. We also hold a lot of maps, thus, geo headings searches will be less useful, also thematic maps, etc ... “
- “The lack of \$v in subject strings would impact the specificity and meaning of subject searches for works in which the form applies to one subject or aspect of a subject but not others when multiple subject strings are assigned to a work. For example, records for works with cartographic content on one place but only textual content on another place would come up in searches specifically for maps on the place with only the textual content if cartographic designations can only be specified in the genre/form field and not attached to a particular subject.”

- “It could impact discoverability for items belonging to genres that are currently covered by \$v subdivisions in the subject headings file, but not by established genre form headings. Some genre form headings don't properly map to \$v subdivisions.”
- “Patrons have requested graphic novels/manga on specific topics as well as specific types of audiovisual materials (fictional motion pictures and television programs as opposed to nonfiction films and tv programs). The removal of \$v would compromise searchability.”
- “[U]ser tasks Identify and Select disrupted when \$v is absent by misleading display. \$a [Personal name] \$v Music \$v Manuscripts: resource is not _about_ the named individual, but absence of \$v makes it appear so to user.”
- “[B]ecause we have a children’s library within our academic library, the \$v terms are used to direct students to content specific to children (education students) or the standard academic content (all students).”
- “[C]hanges to searchability impacts our ability to generate personalized recommendations for patrons, for local schools to quickly demonstrate similar interest-driven material at the public library, and staff to complete selection tasks.”
- “[W]e rely on the \$v to differentiate intended audience. Our consortium’s catalogers have for years lamented the lack of authorized \$v Young Adult... subdivision values. We would love to see genre/form subdivisions expanded, not eliminated.”
- “The lack of detail in the subject headings would make finding different types of materials much more difficult, especially for teachers and literacy specialists, who often have very specialized requests for instructional materials.”

In response to **question 3.3, asking whether \$v omission would make certain collections or types of materials harder for patrons or library staff to find**, 396 respondents (57%) indicated that a lack of form subdivisions would impact access to certain types of materials; 218 respondents (31%) were unsure; and 85 respondents (12%) believed \$v elimination would have no impact. Correlated with library type, only one group had a majority asserting that \$v would not impact access (private cataloging company, 100% no impact). Percentages of other library groupings believing form subdivision impeded access to particular materials and collection ranged from school (47% definite impact) to archives (100% definite impact). Correlations can be found in Figure 10.

Figure 10. Would \$v Omission Make Certain Collections or Materials Harder to Find

(n = 699, correlated library type response count = 811)



Optional free-text **follow-up question 3.4** received **381 responses, detailing collections and types of materials \$v elimination would make harder to access**. The mostly commonly mentioned was children's and YA/teen works (129 responses, 34% of responses); many asserted that this category was particularly important, since there were few-to-no LCGFT equivalents for juvenile materials, and the LCGFT manual currently forbids adding new audience-inclusive genre/form terms. Other types of resources described included: all fiction (differentiating from nonfiction); special collections and archival materials (such as facsimiles, manuscripts, early works to 1800); comics; art works (e.g., posters, photographs from space, various catalogs); music (i.e., voice solos, scores, librettos, and so on); biographies and genealogical works; primary source materials (e.g., the correspondence, diaries, or interviews with particular people or groups); reference sources (including indexes, registers, discographies, or handbooks pertaining to particular topics); audio-visual works; guidebooks; specimens and realia; maps and atlases of particular locations; periodicals; theological works (e.g., sermons, prayers and devotions); educational materials (such as topical textbooks, study guides, or laboratory manuals); legal works; and language materials (particularly translations geared toward occupations or from specific languages). Several respondents mentioned a desire for additional form subdivisions not yet authorized, particularly for YA/teen materials.

Representative comments from 3.4 include:

- "We have a large Juvenile collection. The absence of \$v Juvenile literature would lead many people to juvenile works that they don't actually want for their upper level or graduate research papers. 'Police brutality', for example, that does not have \$v Juvenile literature, \$v Poetry, or \$v Fiction among others is misleading to our criminal justice students."
- "As a music library with a large vocal program, many of our materials depend on good application of \$v for vocal music. There is \$v Excerpts which is common for musicals and operas to denote that an item contains certain numbers/selections/arias and is not the whole musical/opera. \$v Vocal scores with piano is something our voice students look for and like to see. Patrons won't be helped by clicking on a genre heading for all vocal scores. That won't even work very well considering many legacy records do not have 655. Patrons want to click on

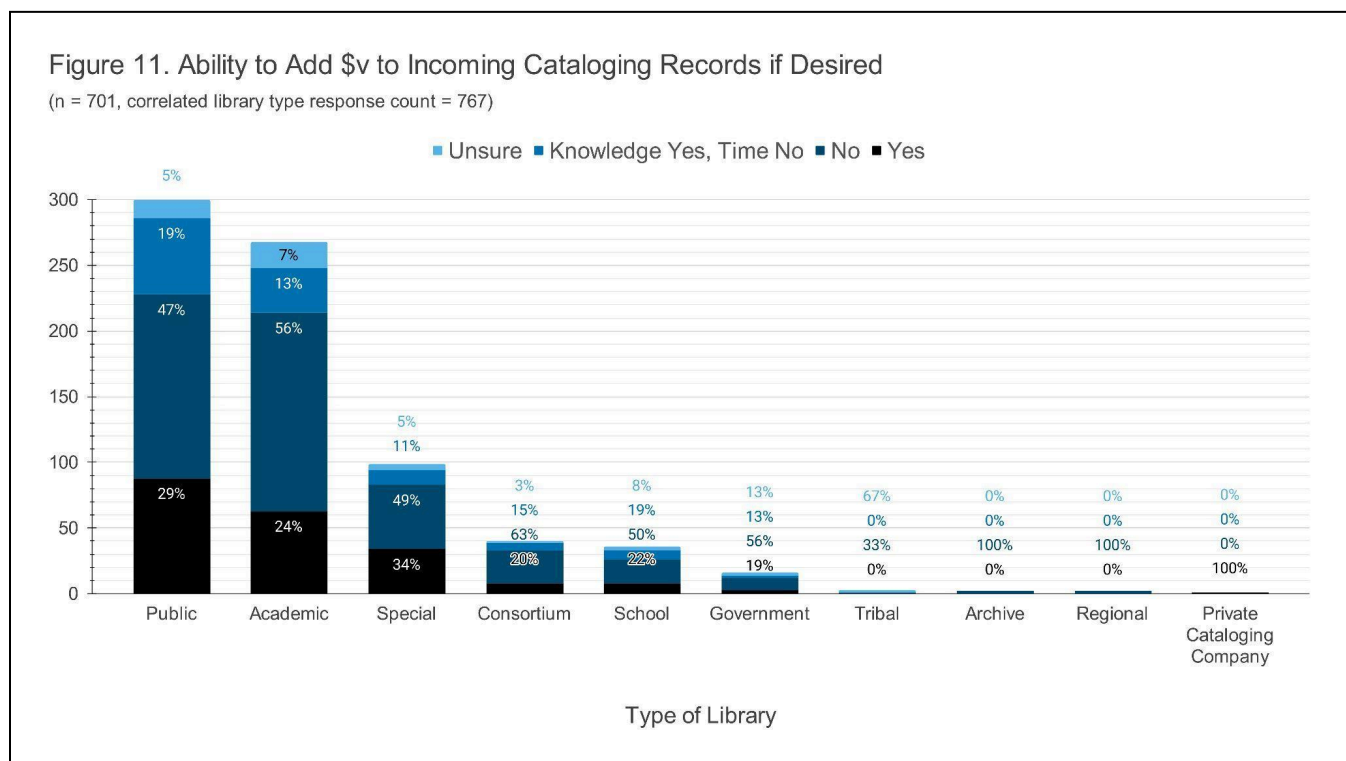
the subject heading for Oratorios \$v Vocal scores with piano and see all vocal scores for oratorios or operas. Another important \$v is Librettos, which our voice students and Theatre & Dance students will search for by subject or click on to find either opera or musical librettos. We have a lot of children's piano literature and rely on \$v Juvenile which is added to the 'Piano music' heading to differentiate piano pieces for children. There is \$v Teaching pieces used in a similar fashion on 'Piano music' to distinguish music composed for purely pedagogic purposes versus concert music. \$v Methods is common for a variety of music pedagogy materials that our patrons click to find all method books for a certain instrument. \$v Studies and exercises serves a similar role when performance majors are looking for etudes. We have begun cataloging a large collection of sheet music from the early 20th century that feature substantial cover illustrations that have interdisciplinary interest for graphic designers and artists. And we routinely apply subject headings with \$v Portraits or \$v Pictorial works to describe the illustrative matter so that someone can search or click on a subject heading to find all sheet music depicting 'Women's hats' or photos of Al Jolson. Additionally, we use \$v Songs and music for topical headings to describe what the song is about or what special topic it relates to, e.g. World War II or songs about various emotional states, situations, types of people etc. We are actually excited about the utility of subject headings with form subdivisions to help researchers discover song subjects and illustrations on the covers based on \$v."

- "Gives the ability to distinguish between items where the visual and textual content is not perfectly aligned. For example if you imagine a zine with photos of graffiti but poetry about some other topic, the \$v Graphic works allows you to differentiate between the textual and visual content in the subject headings."
- "Fiction, Juvenile fiction, and all non-fiction--in other words, the bulk of our catalog. All of the search terms would get garbled. For instance, I recently cataloged a group of 'Dragon Field Guides' that were juvenile nonfiction. The subject headings included 'Dragons \$v Juvenile literature.' Without that \$v the assumption would be that those were [fiction] books, and they'd be a lot more difficult to find."
- "\$v Comic books, strips, etc. maps to several genre headings that can be inconsistently applied. Using a form subdivision allows all to be brought together without needing to understand the nuances of the various genre headings."
- "Drama and poetry are the first ones that come to mind, but pictorial works or juvenile fiction for picture books, comic books, strips, etc. for graphic novels and manga. \$v Biography is a really big one we use a lot due to curriculum requirements in ACARA AC9 to cover memoir and life writing, where we can use both the personal subject and topical subject clearly marked as biography."
- "Any form subdivision that does not have genre will be more difficult for staff and patrons to discover. Example \$v Archives. ; \$v Specimens. ; \$v Sources ; \$v Observations ; \$v Early works to 1800 ; \$x ... \$v Early. ; \$v Photographs from space."
- "Rare materials, special collections, fiction. Also, the way that the \$v is linked to topical subjects makes it easier for users to narrow down the genre to what they want. Not everyone has systems that support faceting!!"
- "As a theological seminary with a doctoral program in homiletics, the \$v Sermons is essential in support of our research and curriculum. \$v Prayers and devotions is another essential heading we use regularly. \$v Devotional literature is another one."

- “-- Feature Films (e.g., Hawthorne, Nathaniel, \$d 1804-1864 \$v Drama); -- Musical compositions about a subject (e.g., Hawthorne, Nathaniel, \$d 1804-1864 \$v Songs and music); -- Source of text used as lyrics in music (e.g., Hawthorne, Nathaniel, \$d 1804-1864 \$v Musical settings); -- Filmed interviews with a real person (e.g., Hawthorne, Nathaniel, \$d 1804-1864 \$v Interviews)”
- “The core of our research collection are bookseller, auction, and private library catalogs that rely on the \$v for discoverability against the rest of our reference collection. Additionally, our rare collections most used by patrons include specimens of typography versus type specimens, examples of illustrated books, and copies with fine bookbindings, all of which benefit from \$v.”
- “We use \$v Specimens for our large (and growing) non-traditional (Library of Things) collection, which makes searching for physical objects (rather than books ABOUT said objects) much easier.”
- “Juvenile materials vs general audience materials: ex/ Turtles \$v Juvenile literature. I want this to be present in the kids book so that it's easy to find for our youngest patrons. But I also want it present in the records so that titles are omitted from the results I present to most of our adult readers. Those hyper-linked subject headings are used by patrons and staff alike, both as confirmation that they've found an appropriate match for their need and to link to similar items. I don't see anything in the proposed changes that allow this presentation of audience much less the hyper-linking functionality (even if all the bibliographic data in a given catalog were updated to the new standard).”
- “I would have to hope that my keyword search was enough to bring back a book that has poetry about sexual assault, for instance, and not a nonfiction self help guide or fiction book about someone who underwent SA.”
- “Juvenile poetry, Juvenile fiction, Juvenile literature, all of the Juvenile --fill in the blank--- materials and there is no genre for Juvenile print materials. Fiction for adult material is common but also many others such as Pictorial works, Librettos, etc. (SO USEFUL) among many others. We use these especially, but others as well, we use it as a way to presort when using the browse section of the catalog which our analytics tell us is A LOT, not to mention reports and others, Comic books, strips, etc. is critical. \$v Guidebooks used constantly. More and more of them all the time.”
- “[F]iction to nonfiction - e.g. ‘zombies--fiction’ or just ‘zombies’ How on earth are the early years grades going to know what is what?!?!”
- “If collection strategies departments are looking to review (and potentially withdraw or purchase new content for) specific collections, then \$v data would be useful to pull and cull specific types of materials, like reference guides, handbooks, and other content that is not easily found in a genre field (or is unevenly cataloged in records) or for content where the data is not obvious from other fields. It would greatly impact our ability to pull and cull specific materials. The same could be said for the librarian and/or user who is looking for specific types of materials in general collections, particularly as most large libraries have moved away from having extensive reference sections or locations based on genres (atlas locations, etc.).”
- “We are a legal deposit library, so we have a wide selection of similar titles, sometimes in different forms. The \$v is vital for separating out different forms, and easy to find in the subject field, not in a separate field.”

- “How would Artists' books in Australia be found easily and distinguished from Artists' books as a topical heading if the subdivision was removed? This change does not take into account the specialisation of some collections.”

Question 3.5 asked whether libraries had staff with time and knowledge to individually add form subdivision back into incoming bibliographic records, if this was deemed necessary or desirable. 701 responses were received from 699 respondents. 357 responses (51%) indicated no time or knowledge to add \$v. An additional 110 responses (16%) stipulated knowledge but no time. 179 responses (26%) shared that their institutions would have time and knowledge to individually add form subdivisions. 36 (5%) were unsure. If totals with knowledge but without time and totals lacking both knowledge and time are combined, the number unable to add \$v for various reasons equals 467 (67%). Correlated with library type, roughly half to two thirds of libraries within each type cannot add form subdivisions individually within their institutions, including special (59% combined no and knowledge yes/time no) and academic (66% combined no) and academic (66% combined no). Correlations with library type are detailed in Figure 11.



Representative comments from question 3.5 include the following:

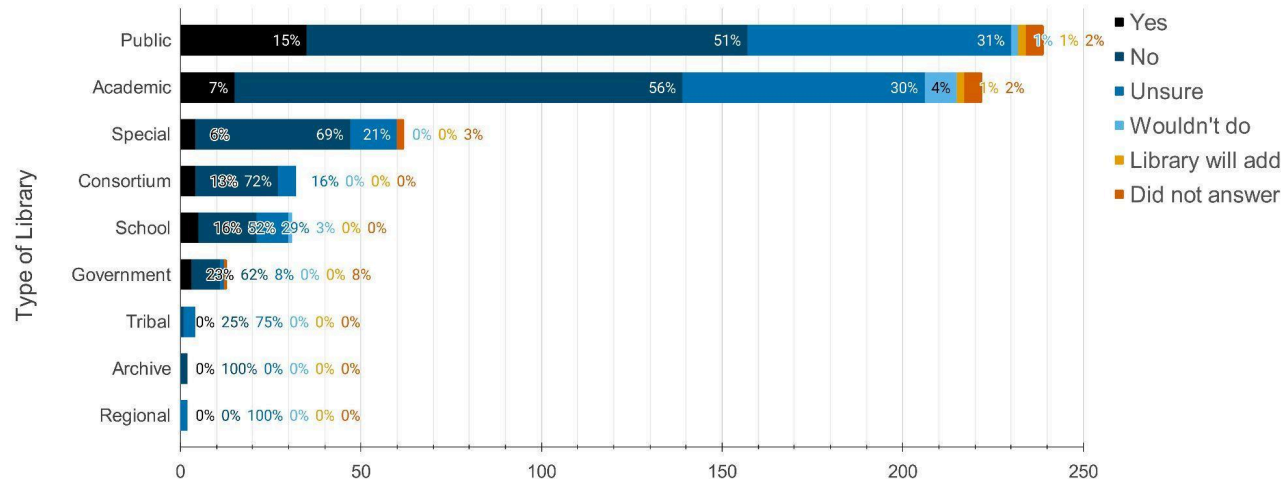
- “No, and we wouldn’t prioritize this work even if we did.”
- “I would make the time.”
- “We’re tied to the OCLC master record. We’re at the mercy of what OCLC does and the ability of us to update OCLC bib records as a non-PCC library.”
- “Hahaha... no way. Special collections cataloging staff at my institution consists of myself, 1 copy-cataloger, and 1 student who works like 9 hours/week. We do the best we can but they are probably never gonna add more staff to this section. Sigh.”

- “In public libraries, our availability to do in-depth cataloging fluctuates with the season and with patron demands. During the summer when Summer Reading is at its peak, we can’t spend time adding such info.”
- “It will fall to me, unless the consortium decides to do this as a unit, and it will be a huge time suck. HUGE!”
- “At this time yes. If staff leave and we must train new hires, no. If funding is cut, no.”
- “For original and complex copy cataloging, perhaps. But 80% of the resources acquired are quick-cataloged in Acquisitions by non-catalogers (mostly students) and these will go through mostly unchanged.”
- “The special collections department has the knowledge but not time; paraprofessional catalogers for the general collections likely do not have the knowledge.”
- “Yes but we have a consortial LSP which would prevent us from adding this information.”
- “I’m the sole certified librarian for two large comprehensive high schools and I do all the cataloging as my staff do not have the skills or experience to do accurate cataloging. Between classes, helping students, managing my library staff ...etc... anything that make[s] cataloging take even longer is detrimental as it increases [the] amount of time that items [sit] in processing.”

Optional question 3.6 inquiring whether libraries that receive cataloging records from vendors had the ability and budget to request form subdivision provision in incoming records received 636 responses. 96 of those indicated that the question was not applicable to their institutions; 540 responses answered the question for those receiving vendor records. Of those 540, 299 (55%) indicated that they did not have time or budget to request \$v from vendors; 154 (29%) were unsure; 62 (11%) reported that they would have time/budget; 11 (2%) would not request \$v; and 10 (2%) did not answer the question. Common themes in response text were budget limitations, issues pertaining to consortial permissions, or concerns about vendor ability to add \$v. 82% of the respondents who would not request \$v came from academic libraries (4% of academic library responses). No library groups had majorities definitely able to request form subdivisions from vendors; response totals ranged from 0% (tribal and archives) to 23% (government). Library type correlations are provided in Figure 12.

Figure 12. Ability to Request \$v in Vendor Records

(n = 540, correlated library type response count = 607)

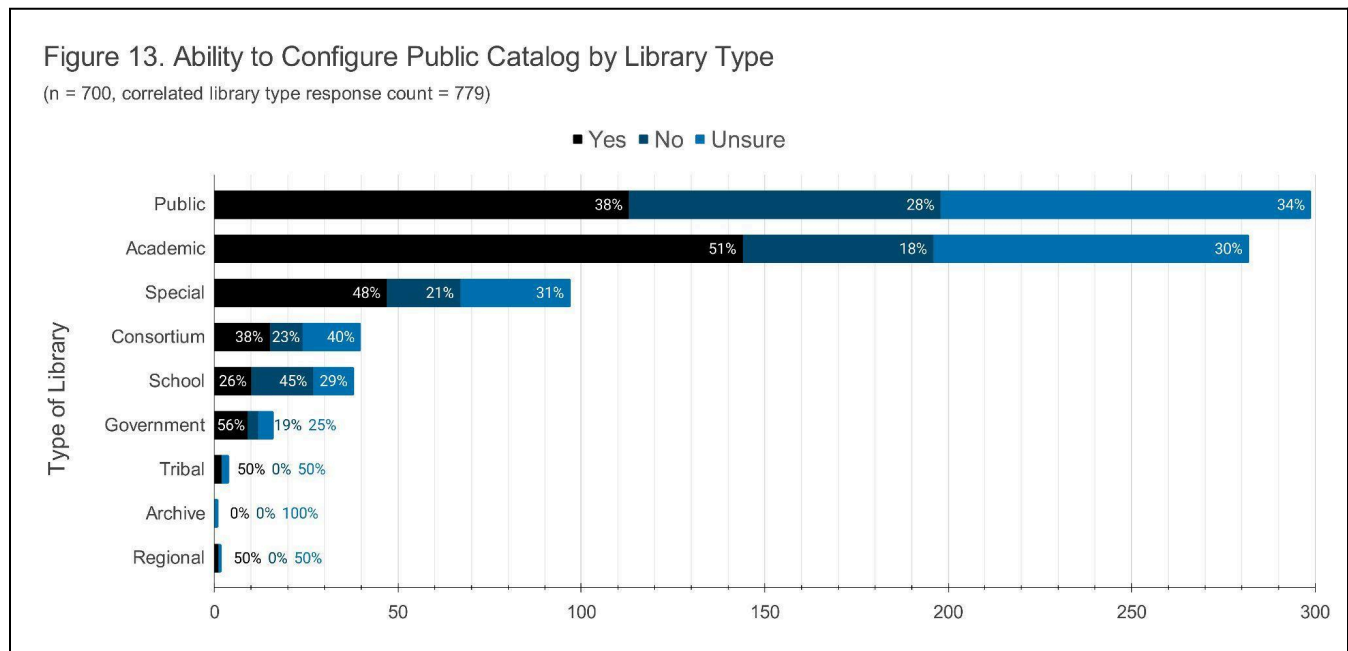


Comments from question 3.6 include:

- “At this time yes but that could change due to budget and staffing at any time.”
- “We can ask, but that doesn’t mean they will.”
- “As a long-time e-resource cataloger, I can tell you that in general vendors are not open to more work for themselves. I suspect that we could have our authority control processor do it for us, but it is unlikely they would do it for free.”
- “[M]aybe, but we wouldn’t have to if it wasn’t removed in the first place.”
- “Maybe? Our cataloging is done by the consortium we belong to; I don’t have a good sense of if they would be able to or not, or how much it would cost.”
- “[N]ot sure. [W]e are in a consortium, so reliant on everyone doing this. With large and small libraries mixed together some may be able to do this while others may experience a heavy burden.”
- “Not until the next contract renewal, and even then it would depend on how that increases the price.”
- “Yes, but we are not interested in adding \$v if it’s missing.”
- “We have the budget to pay a vendor for the service, but lack the staff to make sure that it’s done correctly.”
- “The vendor could add \$v such as fiction, juvenile, comic books based on data in the 008 (as long as the record was coded correctly), but how would they be able to accurately add \$v such as ‘early works to 1800’ or ‘pictorial works’?”

The survey received 700 responses to **question 3.7, asking whether libraries had the ability to configure, or ask their vendor to configure, their public catalogs to display different information for patrons** such as adding genre search options, if needed or desired. 308 (44%) indicated that they could make catalog changes; 169 (24%) were unable to make catalog changes; and 215 (31%) were unsure. Nine respondents noted that genre search and faceting options were already present in their public catalog. Common themes within unsure responses were: consortia limitations (including funding

and permissions); budgetary limitations of the respondents' organizations; staff limitations (time, knowledge, staffing numbers); vendor-dependency (timelines, ability to request); and system limitations of institutions' public catalogs. When correlated with library type, only two had majorities definitely able to configure their catalogs: academic (51%) and government (56%). Other library types ranged from roughly a fifth to half definitely unable to configure their catalogs. Correlations are shown in Figure 13.

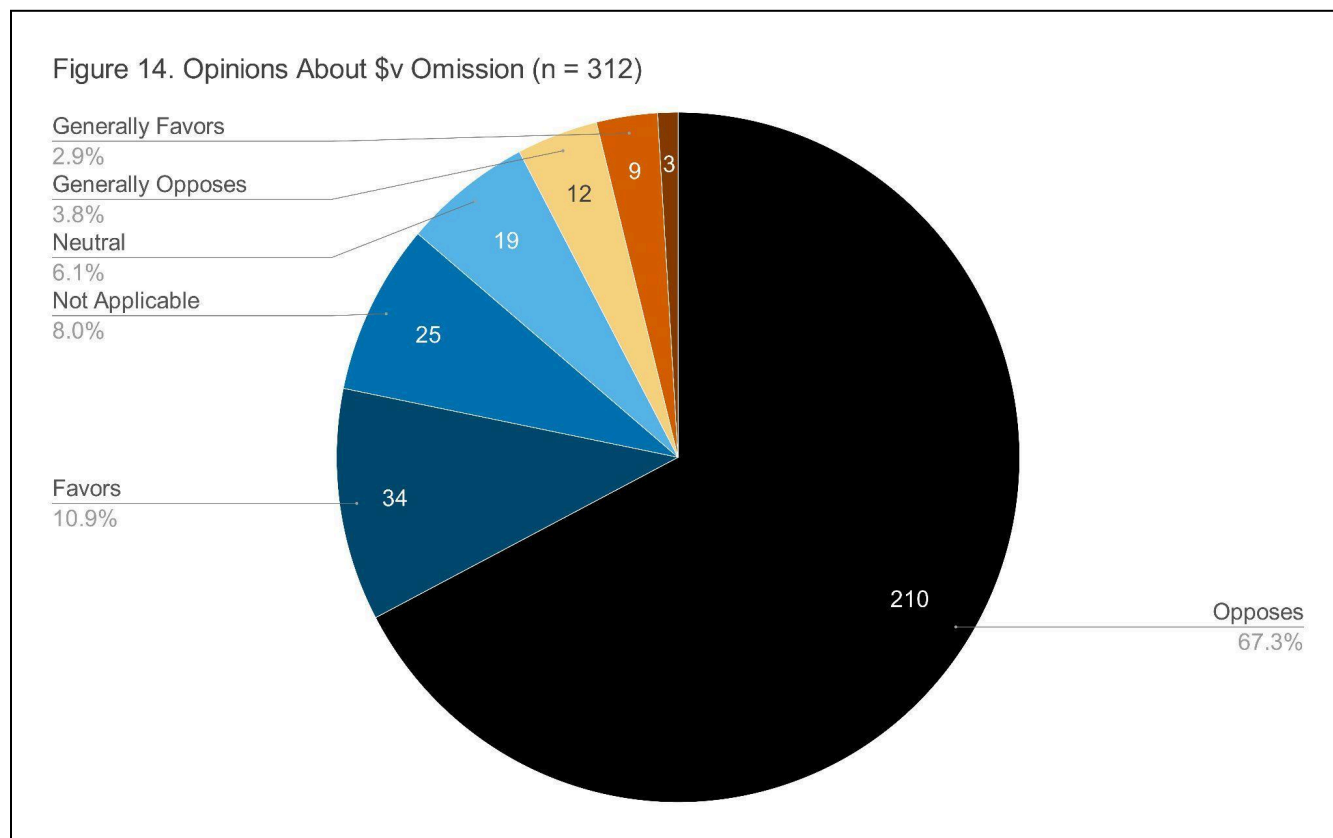


Representative comments from question 3.7 include:

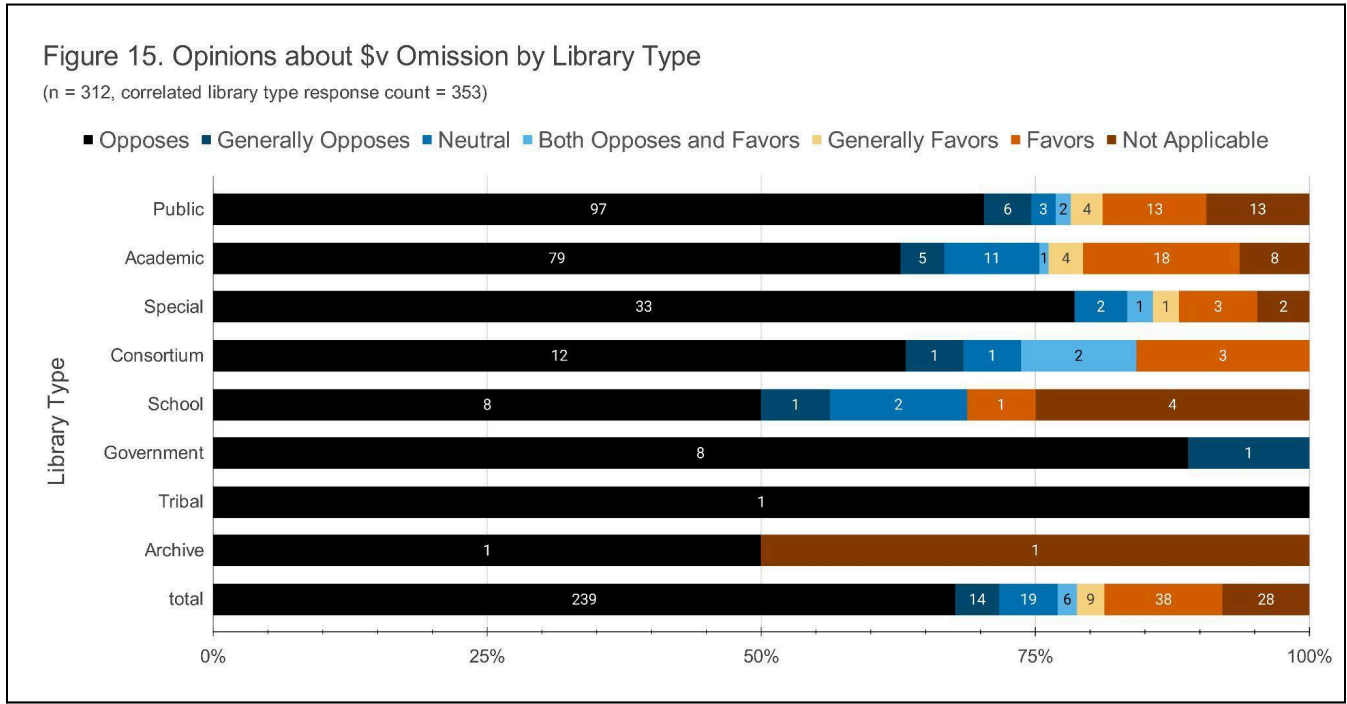
- “Kind of. We have some control, but not much. But the current PAC we use is not being developed further by the vendor. We are looking to move to a modern discovery layer and I don’t know how customizable it would be.”
- “It is unclear if the vendor will prioritize this, even if we ask them to, if we cannot. It is a false assumption to assume that any request we make to a library vendor will actually impact their decisions and actual work—one look at what vendors like ProQuest are doing with e-book perpetual purchases make[s] that obvious.”
- “We do have this, but to expand—we are part of a county-wide consortium with a union catalog, so individual libraries don’t have the ability to make requests like this directly and would have to go through a county technology coordinator to make any changes.”
- “Not currently present. I would love to add it to their list of enhancements but we’re still waiting on language delimiters.”
- “One can configure some display blocks, but not add search options or faceting options.”
- “Yes—but this fix means that the data about the genre/audience resides with the vendor—and does not give local control to local or consortium catalogers about what genre/audience information will display for a particular item.”
- “Yes, we can do this in batches, but these batches are loaded only every few months. There would be a time-lag of a few months waiting for updates.”
- “Yes, we have the ability, but not necessarily the time or expertise due to chronic understaffing.”

- “Not for legacy records. Any records going forward, we can change the profile, but a backfill of 2 million records requires \$20k and a month of cataloging pause.”
- “[M]aybe. [I]t depends on what Primo VE can do. But once I retire in a few years, we won’t have a cataloger or anyone who would understand this work. We need LC to keep in mind that attrition and staffing are major problems and keep the quality of work at a high level.”
- “[N]ot sure for our version of the OPAC, but time would also be an issue, as sysadmin is one of many jobs I do.”

312 responses were received for the final, **optional free-text question (3.8) soliciting any other comments about form subdivision omission that libraries wanted to share**. Of the responses to this question, 210 (67%) were strongly opposed to \$v omission, as coded based on the tone and content of the responses (e.g., “Please don’t do this!”). 12 (4%) were generally opposed; and a combined 71% were either generally or strongly opposed. 34 (11%) were strongly in favor of form subdivision elimination; 9 (3%) were generally in favor; and a combined 14% either generally or strongly in favor of \$v removal. 25 (8%) of responses provided no codable content; and 19 (6%) of responses were neither opposed nor in favor of \$v omission. A number of responses mentioned the desire to expand the form subdivision vocabulary, rather than eliminate it. Several urged a “yes, and” situation; maximizing access by including both subjects with form subdivisions and separate genre/form terms. Results appear in Figure 14.



42-47.5% of respondents within most library types answered question 3.8, from school (42%) to consortia (47.5%). Outliers include regional (0% responding to 3.8) on the low end, and archives (100% responding) on the high end. Within those responses, no library types had a majority of respondents in favor of form subdivision removal. Responses ranged from 50% opposed (archives) to 100% opposed (tribal), including two thirds of academic libraries, and three quarters of public libraries. Library type correlations appear in Figure 15.



Common themes among responses favoring \$v omission included: form subdivisions were redundant to LCGFT, and the latter should suffice for access; \$v omission would streamline headings visually for patrons; patrons did not look at subjects; subjects were moving toward post-coordination and faceting; and \$v elimination was important for the transition to linked data.

Common themes among responses opposed to form subdivision omission included: \$v and LCGFT were not synonymous or one-to-one, and the latter lacked the nuances of the former; legacy records often lacked LCGFT, so \$v omission would cause split results sets and more complicated searching; hyperlinked subjects with \$v were better for searching (easier for patrons to understand, smaller results sets, didn't need advanced search or faceting); patrons did not always use facets or advanced searches, or look beyond subjects for information and subsequent searches; \$v omission would lose granularity in searches and clarity/context in displays; \$v omission would impede discovery and accessibility (particularly for public catalogs lacking faceting or genre display); form subdivision elimination would impede existing public catalog functionality (e.g., subject browse and subject hyperlinks); form subdivisions were useful for reporting and other library functions; \$v elimination would affect item classification and related systems (such as digital collections); linked data would likely not be implemented for some time for many institutions, particularly smaller ones; many institutions did not have staff time or budgets to add \$v individually, particularly less-resourced organizations, and this

would widen disparities between libraries; and why not have both LCGFT *and* \$v (having more information better supported multiple levels of searchability and provided better context for patrons).

Representative responses to 3.8 (in favor, opposed, and neutral regarding \$v omission) include:

- “I’m more concerned about the impact of \$v removal on smaller libraries with more limited resources (especially libraries without dedicated cataloging staff). Writing as an employee of LC (but only in my personal opinion), we shouldn’t have any difficulty in continuing to add \$v subdivisions to our records together with genre form headings.”
- “As a cataloging librarian at a mid-sized public library system, I am strongly against removing \$v form subdivisions. It would be a serious blow to the usability of our catalog, especially for our large collection of children’s materials, for which there is no LCGFT equivalent to, for example, \$v Juvenile fiction or \$v Juvenile literature. We also have other collections, such as graphic novels/manga and guidebooks, that rely heavily on form subdivisions for faceted searching, but the children’s collections would be hit hardest.”
- “Removing \$v is a terrible idea. As a rare books cataloger who also provides instruction for advanced history classes at my university, I rely very heavily on \$v in subject heading strings so I can find specific items across our hundreds of thousands of MARC records that will be most appropriate to show students. Removing these headings would make my work much more time consuming and inefficient.”
- “Removal of \$v would be a counterproductive decision. It would hinder our work and that of both patrons attempting to search for needed resources on their own and reference librarians/staff attempting to help patrons search for what they need. Gaps in established headings for genres that would substitute for \$v (particularly phrase \$v form subdivisions such as \$v Translations into French, (etc)) would make implementation confusing and compromise searchability, specificity and accuracy in bibliographic records and library catalogs as a whole.”
- “It will make it more difficult for our cataloguers to assign the correct Dewey number and copy record location. I think some of them may have the knowledge/skill to tell the difference.”
- “I understand the reasoning and agree with it in theory, but in practice it would be a nightmare for cataloging staff and create difficulties for public services staff.”
- “I am very annoyed that this is the first time I am hearing about this change through a survey when I am a member of many active bodies in various forms and not one has mentioned this change. We are at a particularly crucial stage in changing discovery systems in our institution and cataloguing staff are working on innovative solutions that will allow this important subfield to be searchable and viewable in catalogue records.”
- “I feel, in a vacuum, that the issues boil down to system barriers, and the LCGFT not fully mapping to every \$v subdivision. Now I recognize neither of those are easy fixes, and I am not accounting for the potential of entrenched patron behaviours. Even saying that, however, I have been encountering instances of my own where the \$v presents a different kind of ‘aboutness’ than a 655 may offer. The allowances for accurate specificity in pre-coordinated facets—as I believe the Informational Statement alludes to at some point—are probably a factor in this. I think, ideally, some kind of interoperability should be the goal here. Or perhaps intraoperability? Regardless, I think meeting somewhere in the middle is the only way this problem gets solved.”
- “The amount of recataloging or haggling with mismatched data that will have to be done to keep consistent access is enormous. Also, smaller institutions that do not have dedicated catalogers

to deal with this, who primarily rely on LOC records to be the standard, are often the same institutions without robust catalog platforms that can handle this parsing, so this is just going to widen library disparities. If linked data cannot handle complex subject headings, perhaps the answer is building up linked data, or continuing to hold off further implementation, instead of degrading subject headings at the expense of access and authenticity to the information”

- “So many libraries are under attack for certain materials and I believe the \$v is a further way for us to clearly identify age-appropriate titles and subjects for our patrons of all ages. This subfield is a further layer of protection for the clarity of our records and the usefulness of the catalog for our patrons.”
- “Searching using form subdivisions is something we often recommend to researche[r]s and curators to narrow their searches. We will absolutely be adding them back in, which will likely be time-intensive. I’m the only cataloguer at our institution, so I’m anticipating some extra headaches down the road.”
- “Post-coordination is the direction things are moving in the subjects world. Why go back to pre-coordinated strings?”
- “I thought the \$v removal would happen at some time, but I feel like there needs to be some studies done on the ramifications. Is there someone who can help us fix our legacy records in our catalogs? What about more training on genre headings, including information on why or why not certain headings have never been turned into genre headings?”
- “Perhaps once linked data is set up and dependable, we can make decisions that impact other forms of service in favor of it. (perhaps, not certainly.) But for now, it isn’t usable by the majority of library systems in a way that supports removing useful information many library systems are created to interact with in their existing form. My department is already under scrutiny to remove more staff as I have retirements; I can’t afford to have additional, time consuming tasks added to our plate as this would require.”
- “I remember when the \$v was first added, and thought, what a great idea! Especially when differentiating periodicals with monographs. Removing this takes us back to the days when if a form is added to the \$x, is that \$x concerned with the form, or is it about the rest of the subject heading? It starts getting very confusing... Modern MARC is dumbing down the granularity of MARC to shoehorn it into BIBFRAME. When suggestions for making MARC more BIBFRAME compliant were put to the MARC committees across the world, most of them were either rejected (unsubstantiated subfields, anyone?), or encouraged to really think how this improves MARC. And then the Modern MARC paper was quietly slipped out.... bypassing the MARC update process altogether. (You can see I feel rather strongly about this matter...)”
- “The current systems facilitates the differentiation between genre and form (about-ness and is-ness) very clearly and well. The proposed change to remove \$v would only succeed in making additional work for hundreds of library workers, and making things more confusing for patrons (especially all concerned who are not aware of the proposed change, which also seems to be a significant issue). This change also does not appear to actually improve anything in any meaningful way. And at the very least, the transition process is sure to cause slowdowns and problems for just about everybody involved. So please, please keep \$v so that we can continue to offer our patrons the best quality catalog that we can!”
- “While I recognize the very real challenges many libraries face, we cannot adapt our cataloging practices to our systems; we need to advocate for (and help each other advocate for) our

systems and tools doing what we need with our data. As some of us adopt or move toward linked data, changes such as this will happen and finding ways to make them work will be more effective than resisting the change. Also, our data are already inconsistent enough that I don't believe users can rely on subject strings with or without form subdivisions to retrieve all relevant material. Faceting for format actually gives us more flexibility and our users more options for finding what they need. (I realize that this is a very academic library perspective.)"

- "I understand why this change might work for academic libraries where there could be an expectation that their patrons have more library skills and patience and that these libraries can handle the extra work necessary to navigate these changes, but speaking from a school librarian perspective, this does not fit what I see in a public school environment. My district has a grand total of two certified librarians to support sixteen school libraries. Most of our school libraries are run by hard working, but library skill limited educational assistants with minimal support and no cataloging training. Many are also routinely pulled away from their libraries leaving them little time to deal with the administration of their collections. They truly depend on vendor and Library of Congress MARCs to catalog their collections. Switching to this approach to subfields will play havoc with their catalogs as they'll have to endure having most [of] their records in the older but more friendly to student style and no time to deal with adjusting new records even if they have the skills to modify them. This possible change will have a definite negative impact on the thousands of students and staff that are serviced by our district libraries."
- "Don't want to be a luddite but I think that when it comes to messing about with internationally shared descriptive and authority metadata the 'minimum viable product' tech-delivery mentally isn't ideal. Also, this move effectively bins LCSH; thus, any library using LCSH will have to re-train and re-catalogue."
- "To some extent a similar initiative was done by our consortium whereby heading strings were reduced to their base headings, and it was not a good idea and it has since been rolled back. This strikes me as a similarly poor idea that removes some of the granularity in description provided by the genre information included in a subject string."
- "LCGFT guidelines are quite strict as to what can be proposed to that vocabulary. It is important to note that LCGFT is not currently equipped to represent all genres and forms. Positioning LCGFT as an answer to this problem (?) would require a commensurate analysis and reworking of LCGFT to be a more inclusive vocabulary less guided by its own internal logic and more by a duty to represent the world as it is/is perceived."
- "Since OPACs/ILSs are dismally slow to offer next-gen functionality and public display based on the last 15 years of cataloging developments, we depend on robust hyperlinked subject headings to do the nuts-and-bolts job of collating similar materials in a search results list. We may never have a reliable substitute for \$v that doesn't involve massive database maintenance and coordinated cataloging, so it makes no sense to stop using them. Of all the things in MARC that are obsolete, never used, or don't serve a public display function (047/048, 34X, 38X, so many fixed fields, etc), why remove the demonstrably helpful 650 \$v? Our patrons and staff are accustomed to using them. Our local cataloging policy has been to add \$v whenever it's missing in order to enrich a subject heading's specificity. \$v is a unique characteristic of the 650 that empowers the field with extra granularity and should not be jettisoned."
- "What's the purpose of removing it, if you are not going to make sure there are equivalent headings for all \$v's? We already have to do local headings for Young adult fiction, which is

absolutely ridiculous. This is disproportionately [a]ffecting fiction works. It already seems like there is a huge bias against fictional works in terms of Library of Congress subject headings since they will very rarely create one that doesn't have a non-fiction use. Which I have been legitimately told by a LOC member when I submitted an inquiry. Seems very pretentious that LOC makes everything more highbrow instead of making it accessible and [usable] for all users."

- "Yes. I think the reasoning for this is as flawed as faceted subject headings. You just can't get the granularity you're going to need to get targeted search results if the genre/form is decoupled. In ever bigger datasets (more publications, more materials, and sharing with more libraries, or preparing library data to coexist with general internet searches with linked data headings) it's more and more important for the headings to be as specific and granular as possible."
- "In the words of the Ramones, I'm against it."

Discussion

Library User Information Needs

Survey results demonstrate that library patrons have complex information needs, often combining topic and form/genre information. A respondent to question 2.7, for instance, notes that patrons are not only interested in specific fictional genres or forms writ large, but rather in works within certain genres or forms encompassing specific subjects:

Academic Users don't typically search for genres alone. They aren't looking for 'poetry,' they are looking for poetry in relation to a subject. I just checked our searches since 2018, and people literally searched for the literal letter R more than they searched for any kind of a genre in the basic keyword search. (Seriously. The search was 'r' with no quotes. 44 separate, individual searches since 2018... at a major academic university with 26k students).

Survey evidence agrees with user research findings. Lin and Liang (2020), for example, explain that romance readers want not only the romance genre writ large or specific subgenres, but also romance "stories of particular topics/themes, e.g., time traveling, plots and conspiracy, smart and courageous females, the conversion of a previously cold and dominant male protagonist" (p. 5). Patron information needs for combinations of topic and form related to fiction detailed here, and in the Literature Review, run counter to LC's assertion in Phillips and Kurtz's (2025) article that LCGFT is sufficient for patron fiction access in the absence of form subdivisions. Their argument that "an avid manga reader will search the catalog to find all the manga a library holds" and therefore doesn't need subject searches with \$v, compares the LCGFT term with the subject heading describing the medium itself (Phillips & Kurtz, 2025, p. 47). It ignores the far more common scenario, similar to those described above, where manga readers desire titles with particular subjects or character types; according to comics review site No Flying No Tights, as reported by Tomaras et al. (2025), "Fandom vocabulary is huge—to the point that fandom tropes ... are how people look for stories" (p. 328).

Library patrons interested in nonfiction also present with complex topic/form information needs. For instance, an academic library respondent to question 3.4 notes that "As a research library, it is important for our patrons to be able to find primary sources from a variety of locations, time periods,

etc. for comparison and analysis”; and that “the research needs of our Book Arts MFA program” students include interest in specimens of artists’ books from differing geographic locations. This finding also supports user scholarship. *Library Journal*’s (2025) survey of academic collections finds that the most researched subjects for students and faculty include “social issues & representation” within literatures (p. 5). Acknowledgement of the intertwining of subject and form in patron information needs appears hard-coded into LCSH, such as “[Topic] in [Form]” headings (e.g., “[Asian Americans in literature](#),” “[Boating in art](#),” or “[Lesbianism in motion pictures](#)”); combined form and topic also appear in subject headings such as “[Romance fiction](#),” which are used both for works about the genre, and for collections of writings within the genre.

Survey respondents state that both general and specific library populations share these complex information needs. For instance, a special library respondent to question 2.7 asserts, “Our library is subject-specific and our Special Collections cataloging relies heavily on the \$v to differentiate our materials. Our patrons and staff use these subject heading constructions extensively in reference and searching.” Similarly, a public library respondent to question 3.4 describes the complex interplay of topic and form in patron and librarian information needs: “Many of our readers advisory for youth chapter books rely heavily on \$v information.” Further, complex information needs apply both when patrons know their topics of interest, and when they’re unsure of their exact needs; as related by a respondent to 2.7, “Sometimes patrons remember certain details of a book but they can[’]t remember the title. Hav[ing] more defining search subjects attached to an item is my wish.” This also accords with research findings. Beall (2000) indicates, for instance, that library “patrons were asking questions such as ‘I know you have a CD-ROM about Japan, but I can’t remember the title’” (p. 65).

Patron Subject Searching in Public Catalogs

Subject Search Strategies

Survey results show that users bring their complex information needs into their searches within public catalogs, looking for context and relevance within subject headings. An academic library respondent to question 2.7, for instance, notes that within “illustration, children’s books, and comics” curricula, students search for topic/form combinations to be able to “distinguish between a comic book about Warhol, an interview with Warhol, a biography of Warhol, and a children’s book about Warhol” for their various assignments. A response to question 3.2 similarly points to “countless examples” of patron needs for topic/form combinations, “such as fiction films about a subject, songs and music about a subject, and musical settings by a specific lyricist, etc.” A special library respondent to 3.4 also reports that “people only want fiction books for a specific reason. Additionally, it helps when someone is searching for something specific—a researcher recently was only looking for pictorial works on a subject.” A question 3.2 survey response also describes librarian search needs for complex topic/form combinations in the catalog, in order to perform various library tasks: “Also thinking about the amazing analytics that the form headings allow. We use them all the time in reporting.” These match findings from scholars like Mikkonen and Vakkari (2017), who note a mix of topical and form content in “open-ended browsing” by patrons, such as for fiction about “‘friendship’ or ‘universities’” (p. 2160).

Library respondents also report patron interest in searching the catalog via subject. A public library response to question 3.8, for example, asserts that “Library patrons often subject search rather than

title search in our system.” Another 3.8 response recounts patron use of hyperlinked subjects in particular for searching: “Advanced search is not widely implemented or used, whereas strings of subject headings with form subdivisions are easily understood as a clickable link for readers.” These comments also align with user scholarship. Tomaras et al. (2025) report, for instance, that genre survey patron respondents examine subjects second only to summaries within individual item records, and search using subjects “from catalog records of works they previously enjoyed” to find new materials of interest (p. 325). Saarinen and Vakkari (2013) find that avid readers “made a subject search, when they did not have a specific author or title in mind. It was considered as a relatively easy and handy way of accessing interesting novels” (p. 747). Similarly, Mikkonen and Vakkari (2017) relate that 21-42% of fiction reader queries in public catalogs are via subject (p. 2160).

Responses also highlight the importance of contextual subject information for library patrons. A question 3.2 survey response reports that patrons scrutinize subject strings “as a preview of what they expect to find ... e.g. ‘Juvenile fiction’ at the end of the string means they can expect children’s books.” A response to 3.8 also describes “subject headings as evaluation tools,” and states that patrons “review the headings for pertinence.” This context is used both for item selection, and for discarding unwanted items, as stated by a 3.2 respondent; the form subdivision \$v Congresses, for instance, “tells me that the book is a lot of individual essays on a topic, but not necessarily a comprehensive and exhaustive monograph about the topic, which would make a difference to me if the latter was what I wanted to read.” This matches insights from researchers, who find that users examine subject headings to determine whether a particular novel is of interest: “novels’ topical relevance was detected from professional metadata in content description. Emphasis on the content of the novels ... suggest that the selection of topical novels resembles that of non-fiction documents” (Mikkonen & Vakkari, 2016b, p. 708-709). Further, fiction users inspect subject strings within individual records to rule out items, as well as locate them: “when selecting topical novels, the content description influences the selection process as topically non-relevant novels are easily eliminated by examining the subject headings” (Mikkonen & Vakkari, 2016b, p. 702). This runs counter to the assertion made by Cooley and Phillips (2023), writing for LC, that “[i]n our experience, users do not know how to examine a bibliographic record for subject access points unless they are taught this search strategy” (Cooley & Phillips, 2023, p. 497); LC’s article cites no user studies to back up this claim.

Patron Search Limitations

Library survey respondents describe patron frustrations when their needs are not met; these conditions are especially present when subjects lack contextual relevance or are not easy to use in searches. A public library response to question 3.8 asserts, for instance, that “fewer search terms in the field will leave patrons wondering if they’re getting the right book,” and stated “We as librarians proclaim, ‘The right book for the right person at the right time,’ but how can the patron do that for themselves if there are fewer clues to what the book is about?” An academic library respondent to question 3.4 notes similar patron issues with subject context, which would be exacerbated by \$v omission: “Patrons already confuse juvenile materials for sources that could be included in research assignments; this change will make that confusion impossible to avoid.” As summarized by another 3.4 respondent, “Specific details about a topic that is being researched are necessary for understanding and less time spent reading unnecessary information that leads the reader astray.” These concerns about the ramifications of missing content for patrons echo user research, such as Ooi and Liew’s (2011) finding

that patrons lacking “contextually relevant” or easily usable subject headings turn to the internet instead of library catalogs for information about books (p. 753). Antell and Huang (2008) also state that patrons frustrated by irrelevant subject search results might abandon the public catalog: “Some of these patrons then consult librarians and are guided to subject terms and relevant materials. But others, surely, simply give up, concluding that the library catalog contains nothing relevant to their search” (p. 68).

Survey responses also describe various patron search limitations within public catalogs. Patrons don’t necessarily understand metadata structures, and are not always able to piece together disparate parts of a catalog record to create meaning and context. A public library response to question 3.8, for instance, recounts that “many patrons don’t know how to search beyond the subjects, they won’t look under genres and need the subjects to be subdivided to any extent possible”; a 3.2 respondent also asserts that “most of our patrons will not scroll down to find more information.” Another 3.8 respondent states that patrons generally “read the top few subject headings. Genre headings are at the bottom of the list and often get missed ... The most important 600s for a patron is the first one they read (similar to an ingredient list).” An additional 3.8 respondent agrees that subject strings are more useful for providing patron context than “separate heading for genre/form, especially if that separate heading appears at the end of a long list. ... replacing the \$v heading with a separate heading would be taking abstraction too far for human understanding.”

Multiple survey responses highlight that patrons do not use catalog faceting or limiting functionality. A 3.8 respondent asserts that without adequate context within subject headings, patrons “might miss books of interest because they don’t know how to limit a search or know that limiting a search is available to them.” Similarly, a public library response to 3.8 shares that “My library did a study of how patrons do searches in the catalog last year because we were in the process of changing our catalog overlay. We found that only the most devoted library users know how to use the facets properly.” An academic library response to 3.2 also notes that their “patrons largely don’t use facets. Making it impossible to click on a subject heading that includes a \$v means patrons have to wade through more results and makes it much less likely they’ll find what they actually want.” A school library respondent to 3.2 agrees: “It will take more steps to filter results for students and some will get frustrated and give up.”

Several respondents assert that patrons get overwhelmed by large search results sets. A school library response to 3.4, for instance, states that if students “pull hundreds of unsuitable hits in the database” it might leave them “frustrated and potentially walking away with nothing.” Similarly, a 3.8 respondent worries that patrons will be confused if their desired results are intermixed “[o]r grouped with books in the catalog that are unrelated because of fewer defining words in the record.” Other respondents note patron reliance on keyword searching. A respondent to question 3.8 points out that forcing patrons to navigate multiple different vocabularies (subject and genre) within their keyword searches exacerbates potential confusion: “Our customers are primarily using keyword searching, now they’re going to have to learn genre heading terms in order to perform those keyword searches.”

All of these patron search limitations have also been mentioned in library literature. Whisnant (2003), for instance, finds catalog functionality apart from basic searches is rarely used, even by frequent users (p. 41). Other studies report that patrons do not use catalog facets, investing effort “in inspecting search results and book pages instead of querying” (Mikkonen & Vakkari, 2016a, p. 61). Antell and Huang

(2008) describe overwhelmed patrons abandoning searches with “far too many results to be useful,” and only scanning the first couple of pages of search results (p. 68). Cooley & Phillips (2023), writing for LC, acknowledge these patron limitations, noting “In our experience, most users do ‘quick’ searches and do not attempt ‘advanced’ searches as most users are accustomed to interacting with a Google search interface, which requires no understanding of how information is structured” (p. 504). Elsewhere in the same article, LC mentions patrons’ lack of facility with controlled library vocabularies: “Library users expect to find materials quickly and with a low barrier to entry, i.e., with little to no knowledge of controlled vocabularies” (Cooley & Phillips, 2023, p. 495). These findings highlighting patrons’ lack of understanding about information structures or controlled vocabularies run counter to the 2025 claim by Phillips and Kurtz, writing for LC about LCGFT and form subdivisions, that “[i]n theory, users and public-facing library works could recognize mixed practice represented by a \$v in one record and LCGFT in another, or both in the same record, without much concern” (p. 48).

Form Subdivisions and User Needs

As users are the ultimate arbiters of whether a controlled vocabulary is useful, theorists routinely center user understandings and information access needs in vocabulary creation. Gazan (2013) asks, for instance, “Are these terms the ones that users would actually use? If not, then you might want to find out what terms they actually use!” (p. 7-14). Cutter (1894) also asserts that subject forms within public catalogs should be determined by “usage ... not of the cataloger but of the public in speaking of subjects” to improve access (Cutter, 1894, p. 69). Ranganathan (1931) asserts that librarians “should never forget that in libraries books are collected for USE, prepared for USE, kept for USE and served for USE. The endless technical processes and routine ... [including] cataloguing ... all these are carried on only FOR USE”; the way to achieve these goals, and “SAVE THE TIME OF THE READER,” includes facilitating easy and intuitive access to materials (p. 59, 337). LCSH development has followed this philosophy, creating subject headings, including subdivided strings, based on how users think about topics (user warrant) or write/produce works about topics (literary warrant), and pre-coordinating terms in anticipation of user searches using those term combinations.

Pre-coordinated subject headings have proven beneficial in facilitating subject access for patrons. NISO (2010) specifies several advantages of pre-coordination for users. For instance, pre-coordinated terms could “simplify the indexing, browse and navigation process,” making searching easier (p. 37). NISO also indicates that pre-coordinated terms “describe complex concepts that are very frequently used in the domain of reference” (p. 37). This means that pre-coordinated terms could better capture user warrant for complex concepts, and better reflect frequently used and sought search combinations (such as the topic/form information needs mentioned above). Cooley and Phillips (2023), writing on behalf of LC, agree that pre-coordinated subjects provide “context and specificity for the works they describe. The syntax of a subject string suggests relationships between terms and has the potential to provide a more precise description of a resource”; this contradicts a later assertion within the same article that “[r]elationships between terms must be inferred by end-users” within pre-coordinated strings (p. 495, 500). LC’s Cataloging Policy and Support Office (2007) notes several advantages of pre-coordinated subject headings for users, including providing a more complete and nuanced description of the subject of a work for users: “Briefly stated, pre-coordinated strings provide context, which is needed for ‘disambiguation, suggestibility, and precision’ and browsability. Pre-coordinated strings have a sophisticated syntax that can express concepts better than single words” (p. 1). Even for

users employing keyword searching, “[p]re-coordinate indexing is advantageous ... since the pre-coordination provides a proximity feature that can be useful. Terms separated in post-coordinate indexing supply little information about relationships for proximity searches.” (Cataloging Policy and Support Office, 2007, p. 7). Mann (2001) asserts that pre-coordination is particularly important for LCSH, as it, “unlike any other thesaurus, must simultaneously cover *all subject areas—not just one, as other thesauri do—and show relationships among them* that readers could not specify in advance” (p. 120).

Subdivisions, as part of pre-coordinated subject headings, are “appended to a heading in order to modify or delimit the heading by indicating a particular aspect or relationship pertaining to it” (NISO, 2010, p. 9). Thus, both survey respondents and library scholarship generally find that form subdivisions—like geographic, chronological, and topical subdivisions—are not duplicative of separate genre/form terms, but serve a stated purpose within the subject headings vocabulary; they are meant to provide context to, and bring out aspects of, subject headings. A respondent to question 3.2 reports, for instance, that “Subjects are indexed as subjects, and \$v provides genre/form information there.” Another 3.2 respondent highlights the different search functions and results sets facilitated by form subdivisions as opposed to separate genre/form terms, using “\$v Pictorial works” within their graphic arts collection as an example: “While we do use genre terms (from multiple vocabularies) those are more specific, such as Intaglio prints (gmgpc) or Religious art (aat), \$v Pictorial works lets researchers cast a broader search net across all graphic arts formats and genres.” Hovde et al. (2025) relate that “According to the LC Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division, LCGFT differs significantly from LCSH in its scope, format, and application of its terms” (p. 59), meaning that dedicated genre/form terms play a different role in information retrieval than subject headings with form subdivisions. Williams (2021) also states that genre and form terms retrieve different search results sets from subject headings with form subdivisions:

It may seem that form headings and/or LCGFT could be used instead of form subdivisions. While there may be some instances in which that is the case, these vocabularies have different functions; they have limitations in substituting each other; and, in some cases, they work in concert. (p. 774)

Phillips and Kurtz (2025), writing for LC, state that form subdivisions and genre/form terms are not synonymous: “LCSH and LCGFT do not share terminology. Terms from LCGFT cannot be substituted for terms in LCSH \$v and vice versa” (pp. 46-47). This agrees with library researchers, and contradicts LC’s assertion elsewhere that form subdivisions are merely “data duplication” of genre/form terms (Williamschen, 2025, slide 11). Wilson and Robinson (1990) further assert that the *lack* of a form subdivision in subject strings conveys a specific meaning for searching patrons: “If a book is assigned a topical heading without form subdivision, what if anything can one expect it will be? It will be, approximately, a single complete factual discursive work not falling into one of the categories enumerated above” (p. 40). Miller (2000) traces this meaning conveyed by a lack of form subdivision to the eighth edition of the *Library of Congress Subject Headings*, where the introductory matter notes that “In general, a heading without special form subdivision should be interpreted as designating general discussions or treatises on the subject” (p. 182).

Survey responses overwhelmingly agree that form subdivisions play an important role in providing subject context, and making search and access easier and more intuitive for library patrons. This holds true across all library types, and for many different library collections and forms of material. A special library respondent to question 3.2 relates, for instance, that “Our patrons include active state legislators, state agency regulators, academic scholars from a wide variety of fields, and the general public. Each patron group is searching for different types of materials”; form subdivisions facilitate those searches, whereas “requiring an extra search filter step has the potential to add unnecessary friction to the OPAC user experience.” An academic library response to question 3.4 reports that “We catalog a lot of sermons, and it’s helpful to differentiate sermons from books with similar titles and subjects” by using form subdivisions. Other responses within 3.4 describe the utility of \$v for “our curriculum materials, which are for our education students,” and “comics and graphic novels on a specific subject.” A performing arts library respondent to 3.4 details multiple form subdivisions used to facilitate access to different topic/form combinations for searching patrons, including “to identify our scripts about 600/610/650 subjects. We also use the \$vPortraits extensively to identify portrait photographs of 600/610/650 subjects. We also use the \$vFilm and video adaptations extensively to identify filmed versions of plays.” Responses also note the benefits of form subdivisions for library staff (also a user group), including creating topical displays across forms (question 3.2), generating various reports (also 3.2), and performing readers advisory (question 3.4). One respondent to question 3.4 shares that they use form subdivisions to facilitate collection development: “I purchase ESL materials, and have hit a wall in terms of what is available from our vendors. I use the \$v to get creative and find more available items from our vendor’s catalog.” In general for patrons, “The more information they have the easier the search” (3.4 response).

A respondent to question 3.2 states that form subdivisions suggest search possibilities for patrons: “It is easier to recognize that something you didn’t know existed is interesting when you see it than to think up terms to search.” Another 3.2 response agrees, relating that “[m]any patrons may not have specific ideas of what they are looking for,” and that browsing through headings with form subdivisions “can allow them to find new books they might otherwise have missed.” This accords with Bates’ assertion that “patrons can *recognize* information much easier than they can *recall* it. The meaning of a single term is enriched and clarified for [the] user by being placed in the context of related terms” (Bates, 2003, p. 49). Mann (2001) similarly describes this context provision as a particular strength of pre-coordinated subject headings: “subject-string phrases *enable researchers simply to recognize* whole ranges of options that they could never specify in advance through postcoordinate combinations ... The larger the file, the more researchers are dependent on *recognition* of options that they cannot articulate beforehand” (pp. 119-120).

Other benefits of form subdivisions noted by respondents also accord with library scholarship. Engelson (2014) highlights form subdivisions valuable for retrieving different forms of religious materials necessary for differing ministerial tasks even when the base subject is identical (such as the Bible), including liturgical lessons in various languages (p. 13). According to Engelson (2014), form subdivisions ease patron searches without the need for users to “understand how the terms can or cannot be combined” (p. ii). Engelson writes, “In fact, using subdivisions in keyword searches allows for more flexibility than a strict subject search would allow while retaining the precision of the controlled vocabulary; it’s the best of both worlds.” (p. ii)

Zinkham et al.'s (1989) comparison of differing options for recording form information asserts that the version with both form subdivisions in subject strings *and* separate form headings provides the most opportunities for user access (Fig. 1). Survey respondents agree that “[t]he more information we put into the record the better and easier the search” (a 3.8 response). A 3.2 response similarly advocates for more context and access points for users: “I think this should be a ‘yes, and...’ situation, not a ‘no, but...’ situation. Keep both the Form Subdivision *and* the 655 Genre/Form field.” User research also recommends maximizing user access points, which would favor usage of both form subdivisions and separate genre/form terms. Saarinen and Vakkari (2021) note that “differing reader types require indexing of differing aspects of novels for matching their literary expectations and attributes they observe when searching and reading fiction” (p. 752). Similarly, Ooi and Liew (2011) suggest that “no two readers use the same strategy in looking for fiction books. While no public library can please all library patrons all of the time, it is important to please as many as possible” (p. 766).

Far from advocating omission of form subdivisions, researchers and survey respondents recommend additional terms to fill in access gaps for patrons. A respondent to question 3.4 states that “It is already true that it’s harder to identify materials in our YA collections by subject because of the lack of an authorized and age-appropriate \$v. Eliminating the differentiation we achieve with the \$vJuvenile... values will exacerbate the problem.” They assert that “it just doesn’t make sense for all materials on a topic to be collocated under a single heading with no regard for audience when our audiences have such wildly different needs.” Williams (2021) similarly states a need for augmented form subdivisions; they note the prevalence of the term “Kits” within WorldCat as a form subdivision, even without authorized “LC subject, subdivision, or genre/form headings for the term ... This type of usage for a term that has no record in the LC vocabularies may be seen as an indication of its usefulness and its need” (p. 779). Online Audiovisual Catalogers, Inc.’s *Best Practices for Cataloging Objects using RDA and MARC21* includes examples of form subdivisions not yet in LCSH but useful as subject modifiers, such as “\$v Type specimens” (Moore et al., 2020, pp. 80-81). Survey respondents and Williams (2021) both additionally mention the need for a form subdivision for audiovisual aids—a \$v useful for both curricular and accessibility purposes.

Patron Impacts of Form Subdivision Omission

Just as form subdivisions facilitate patron access to desired materials, a majority of survey respondents report that \$v omission would make it harder for patrons to find materials (3.2) and to access particular collections and types of materials (3.4); this includes majorities across all library types. One respondent to question 2.7 details patron frustrations when lacking contextual metadata to fulfill their complex search needs within the library catalog:

Our public library serves a community that uses the catalogue heavily to search and reserve a range of content and media types from across all our branch sites. (We know this from the flood of complaints whenever the OPAC goes down). Anything that stops patrons from quickly seeing the content and intended age audience of a title causes intense dis-satisfaction. The wasted time and bad feeling from getting something they didn’t expect is terrible for the patron and for the staff member they speak to. The OPAC must be as accurate and as concise as possible for end users and for ordinary front-line staff.

34% of responses to question 3.4 (18% of total survey respondents) highlight potential patron difficulty locating juvenile materials without \$v; juvenile materials are also specified within multiple other survey question responses. Per a response to 3.4:

We have a very large curriculum collection for teachers, making it important to separate those juvenile materials from the general collection. The \$vJuvenile fiction and \$vJuvenile literature subheadings make it possible for users to include or exclude works intended for children in their searches, which is crucial because there are only a handful of people at the institution looking for those materials for a specific reason. This kind of granularity is not really possible with genre/form terms alone ... the \$v headings make it possible to, for example, differentiate children's graphic novels from graphic novels intended for adults. Those works often share the same 655 headings but are very much intended for different users.

This is particularly pertinent because, as noted by a 3.2 respondent, “Juvenile literature or Juvenile fiction can not be replicated in current LCGFT searches so will negatively impact search results.” LC (2026) recently confirmed that juvenile genre/form terms would not be added to LCGFT, noting in their *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT* that “audience aspects may be brought out through the use of Library of Congress Demographic Group Terms”; they assert that “[m]any elements currently in the form subdivisions are not actually genres or forms (e.g. –Juvenile literature) and will be better recorded in other elements of the bibliographic record” (p. 3). LC’s planned omission of information about juvenile content both within subject headings and LCGFT runs counter to user warrant and patron needs.³ Limiting information about juvenile content solely to demographic terms within 3XX fields means that this information, sought by both patrons and librarians, will be invisible in most library catalogs—including, as of January 2026, LC’s own. One respondent to question 3.8 describes a particularly fraught consequence of removing easily visible context about juvenile items, in the current national climate of book banning threats:

As a Manager, I often receive questions or complaints about what books children and teens have access to. We rely on clear catalogue information to help patrons and parents make informed choices about the intended age audience of items in our collection. Without seeing concise and complete subject or genres headings which indicate eg “juvenile fiction” in a catalogue entry, patrons and parents cannot make informed decisions. This would be a severe and unacceptable reduction of the service we provide to our community.

Examples of impacted user groups demonstrate the breadth of the negative impacts of form subdivision elimination, particularly for vulnerable patron populations. Multiple respondents point to search confusion “particularly for young children who are learning how to use the catalog alone” (a 3.2 response). A school library respondent to 3.2 also describes impacts for children: “As a school library, we use the v subfield to narrow down searches frequently ... so this would make searching very hard for our students who most often do not know how to properly search a catalog.” Another 3.2 respondent mentions “emergent readers” as an impacted search population. “In an age where we want people to

³ Suggestions for the development of LCGFT are beyond the scope of this report. However the Working Group notes that scholars find strong user warrant for audience-inclusive genre/form terms, and also report library supplementation of LCGFT within catalogs to meet this interest (Tomaras et al., 2025, p. 324, 326). Further, a 2017 study of national genre vocabularies states that “[a]udience/creator characteristics are expressed in almost 2/3 of the responses via terms in one or more genre/form controlled vocabulary” (IFLA Genre/Form Working Group, 2017, p. 2). Thus, reconsideration of the stricture against audience terms in LCGFT is warranted.

have ease in using the library and finding suitable materials to meet their needs,” asserts a public library respondent to 2.7, “removing this subfield would require more clicks to search out the materials they are seeking, particularly in the case of children who are our next generation users”; children in particular “may not know to do the deeper search, which makes these items less discoverable generally.”

Other impacted user populations are also named within survey responses. For instance, a public library response from New Zealand highlights issues for their low-income patrons: “We are a low decile population, and this option would make it more difficult for patrons to locate the information that they require.” An academic response to 3.2 asserts that \$v omission would undermine search utility for patrons that search via browse within their catalog: “Even [though] the majority of patrons do not use the browse search option, some do. The discontinuance of the \$v in subject headings FORCES the patron to rely on keyword searching.” A special library respondent to question 3.8 points to detrimental effects for researchers: “Discontinuing use of the \$v would be a disservice to our users. I know they rely on them to locate materials, especially rare materials.” A 3.2 respondent states that form subdivisions ease searching “especially [for] the less tech savvy. The lack of a \$v in our system ... would make things more difficult in general for our patrons to easily browse topics.” Several 3.4 responses emphasize problems resulting from the omission of form subdivisions helpful from an accessibility perspective, such as “\$v Translations into [Language]” for those “not yet fluent in the language.”

Survey concerns about the negative impacts of \$v omission echo library researchers. In an Appendix to LC’s Cataloging and Support Office’s (2007) report, Joudrey and Taylor (2006) assert that the “dismantling of LCSH would destroy the work that has been accomplished in the area of form/genre, an area of particular value in public libraries as well as in special collections”; they state that “Assigning a single heading of Atlases, Dictionaries, Catalogs, or Statistics renders those headings meaningless” (p. 24). In the report, the Cataloging Policy and Support Office (2007) of LC itself notes the “negative impact of ... [a] ‘loss of collocation by form under the topic’ if form subdivisions were removed (p. 12). Similarly, LC’s Policy and Standards Division (2010) observes that “[r]emoving the form subdivisions from headings would weaken the usefulness of subject heading browse displays” (p. 10). This highlights the impact of \$v not just for search, but also for descriptive context within record displays—which patrons frequently examine during catalog searches. Adkins and Bossaller (2007) assert that “retrieval methods that provide more access points are better for helping readers find ‘good’ books” (p. 366); removal of form subdivisions, and the consequent loss of an easily clickable/searchable access point, would therefore be counterproductive to user access. Mann (2001) also points out that a loss of context undermines patron utility in library catalogs:

Let’s keep in mind that the goal of cataloging is not simply to give researchers ‘something.’ ... The goal of cataloging ... is to give researchers an overview of the extent of the relevant resources available for their topics ... Overviews require connections, cross-references, and displays of options that cannot be specified in advance by researchers who literally don’t know the fields they’re getting into, and who often barely know how to phrase their initial questions. Overviews require displays of relationships, not just isolated data. These cannot be achieved without some measure of precoordination. (p. 95)

Even LC’s (2026) *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT* acknowledges a loss of “high-level consistency for many terms” if \$v were eliminated, that will impact

patron access and “change the approach for searching” (p. 2). Breaking with library philosophies centering patron needs in vocabulary development, LC’s response is that “searchers will need to take that into account” (p. 2); no alternatives are suggested for users to access materials fulfilling complex topic/form information needs.

Evaluation of Justifications for Form Subdivision Elimination

Previous sections of this report (e.g., Discussion section “Form Subdivisions and User Needs”) provide evidence countering certain justifications for form subdivision omission provided by LC, such as the suggestion that \$v is duplicative of genre/form terms. User research noted above further emphasizes that patrons require and look for context within subject headings; no evidence to date reports patron requests or need for purported “clean” subjects without form subdivisions (as described but not defined by 3.8 respondents favoring \$v omission).

This section investigates additional rationales put forward by LC for eliminating form subdivisions. It is particularly important to examine these in detail, as the few extant user studies on the impacts of post-coordination, faceting and linked data on library patron information and access needs within public catalogs have not proven, conclusively and in a replicable manner, that subject headings as post-coordinated, faceted linked data omitting \$v benefit users above and beyond pre-coordinated subject strings, including those with form subdivisions. No studies have focused on form subdivisions, or found that they are detrimental to patron searching. On the contrary, repeated user studies have demonstrated that users have complex subject-related information needs intertwining topic and form information, that users look for context within subject strings in catalog records both to select and reject potential items, and that users search using hyperlinked subject strings as an easy way to increase precision searching without needing to know how to construct subject strings.

Are Form Subdivisions Compatible with Subject Faceting?

A complete comparative discussion of pre-coordinated versus post-coordinated subject vocabularies is beyond the scope of this paper. This section will attempt to address the issue as pertains to form subdivisions, particularly LC’s claims that \$v is incompatible with subject faceting, and inferior to post-coordinated subjects omitting \$v for patron access needs.

Phillips and Kurtz (2025), writing for LC, provide the following definitions of faceting and post-coordination:

Controlled vocabularies are often called faceted vocabularies because they are used to describe particular features (i.e., facets) of a resource being cataloged (Mering 2023). Faceted cataloging can be defined as using one or multiple controlled vocabularies by using terms through post-coordination, that is, through “the assignment of subject headings and genre/form terms individually in a catalog record such that terms are not semantically related to one another” (Cooley and Phillips 2023, 491). (Phillips & Kurtz, 2025, p. 42)

These definitions do not match up, however. Facets are, indeed, defined as a “grouping of concepts of the same inherent category,” such as “activities, disciplines, people, materials, places, etc.” (NISO, 2010, p. 159). However, NISO (2010) states merely that facets “assigned to content objects represent

one or more of the attributes that can be used to locate the item by searching or browsing,” and that faceted displays contain headings grouped “into broad classes according to topical areas or other criteria (e.g. genre, format)” (p. 15, 141). Nowhere does NISO specify that facets must necessarily be composed only of post-coordinated terms. Further, it is likely that a majority of the 90% of survey respondents currently providing searchable, hyperlinked subjects in their public catalogs utilize pre-coordinated terms both within individual records and within the topical facets of their catalogs. Pre-coordinated strings also populate the subject facet of the linked data catalog studied by Rico et al. (2019).

In Cooley and Phillip’s (2023) article, advocating on behalf of LC for subject post-coordination and the dismantling of strings containing subdivisions like \$v, they refer to NISO (2010) to justify a push for post-coordination:

The ANSI/NISO Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Controlled Vocabularies makes strong argument for post-coordination, especially when considering users who “are not likely to be experienced in the jargon and complexities of online information retrieval or the conventions of controlled vocabulary notation.” Regarding library catalogs’ discovery layers ANSI/NISO observes: “Computerized retrieval systems often benefit from indexing of compound concepts using separate terms. These can then be combined as needed by the searcher (postcoordination).” (Cooley & Phillips, 2023, p. 496)

However, NISO (2010) never actually argues on behalf of post-coordination at all; their guidelines specify benefits of both pre- and post-coordinate vocabularies, such as in section 5.3.6 on “Controlled Vocabulary Impact on Information Retrieval,” where post-coordination is included among the options that can expand recall, and pre-coordination is among the options that can improve precision (p. 16). NISO highlights the utility of pre-coordinated subject headings elsewhere in their guidelines, stating that they are “very useful in browsing and navigation, especially by users who are not totally familiar with a controlled vocabulary and its structure” (p. 37). As discussed above, library patrons value context and precision in search results, and are relatively unskilled in catalog navigation; as such, pre-coordinate strings as defined by NISO, including those with \$v, would appear to well suit user needs.

Further, the NISO (2010) excerpts cited by Cooley and Phillips (2023) on behalf of LC appear out of context. The first, regarding users, is part of section 9.1.2, describing groups of users whose needs should be addressed when displaying controlled vocabularies. These groups include those who maintain the vocabularies, as well as:

9.1.2.b) Indexers and expert searchers – These users have expertise in indexing, online information retrieval, use of controlled vocabularies, or all of these. ... Sophisticated controlled vocabulary displays and terminology are appropriate for these users.

9.1.2.c) End users – These users are not likely to be experienced in the jargon and complexities of online information retrieval or the conventions of controlled vocabulary notation. They may have expertise in the subject field and understanding of its terminology. The types of displays available to expert searchers can be useful to end users as well, when designed with their needs in mind. End users can benefit from on-screen instructions in addition to any printed documentation that exist. (NISO, 2010, p. 58)

Note that “sophisticated” terminology is recommended both for expert users *and* end users in catalog displays, and post-coordination is not mentioned. Also, NISO suggests that end users might be

unfamiliar with information retrieval systems or vocabulary construction conventions, but *not* the terms within the vocabularies themselves. NISO assumes end user understanding of the terminology being displayed, because elsewhere, as discussed above, NISO advocates that vocabularies should be populated by terms and formulations familiar to users, and iteratively user-tested. As discussed above, user warrant favors complex formulations within subject headings, including combinations of topic and form.

The second NISO (2010) quotation excerpted by Cooley and Phillips (2023) comes from section 7.3, “discussing factors to be considered when establishing compound terms” (NISO, 2010, p. 37). The section quoted (section c), which mentions potential benefits of post-coordination, is actually sandwiched between multiple sections suggesting the value of pre-coordinated strings. Section a) advises that compound terms (i.e., multiword headings) should be used when there is warrant—when pre-coordinated concepts are “employed so frequently within ... the domain covered by the controlled vocabulary that splitting the term into its components would be unacceptable to users who consider it a lexeme” (NISO, 2010, p. 38). As related previously, user warrant contains copious examples of compound topic/form combinations.

NISO’s (2010) Section 7.3 d) states that pre-coordinated terms help avoid “false hits in retrieval” (p. 38) for searching users:

Compound terms often eliminate certain kinds of false hits (content retrieved by unwanted combinations of terms) in retrieval when the same words in a different sequence have a different meaning. For example, if the concept **library science** is represented by the separate terms **library** and **science**, a search on this combination will also retrieve **science library**. (NISO, 2010, p. 38)

LC’s Cataloging Policy and Support Office (2007) acknowledges the value of pre-coordinated subjects for avoiding false hits, noting that “Pre-coordinate indexing enables clearer indications of relationship of topics when that is the point of the work, for example, the commercial relations of France with Germany and Italy”; post-coordinate indexing “would likely display together commercial relations of all countries with relations with either France or Germany or Italy” (p. 7). LC’s (2026) *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT*, issued in January 2026, also notes that “[m]any form subdivisions are extremely useful”—such as \$v Specimens or \$v Early works to 1800—for providing subject context, and “recognizes that some specificity through a pre-coordinated character string will be lost” if subjects were post-coordinated instead (p. 3).

NISO’s (2010) discussion of compound terms above also raises an interesting side point. NISO considers *any* combination of more than one word in an entry to be pre-coordination; examples of pre-coordinated terms in NISO guidelines, for instance, include “Searching, Bibliographic” (p. 8). Therefore, the only way for LCSH to truly become a post-coordinated vocabulary would be to separate *all* word combinations within headings. In other words, post-coordination would not be achieved by removing form and/or other types of subdivisions, but by completely breaking all headings into their constituent parts; if LC wants a completely post-coordinated subject vocabulary, headings like “[Holocaust, Jewish \(1939-1945\)](#)” or “[African American women scientists](#)” would also need to be eliminated.

Among the few published user analyses of faceted catalogs, both Bauer & Peterson-Hart's (2011) and Rico et al.'s (2019) studies find that subject facets which improve precision and relevance of search results and reduce results sets are vital for improving patron utility within library catalogs. Rico et al., for instance, note user reports of "problems with subject-matter retrieval" in the faceted linked data catalog (p. 11); fixing these issues involved limiting the facet to controlled, pre-coordinated subject headings. As discussed above, pre-coordinated subject strings, including those with \$v, provide contextual and precision benefits for searching patrons. Pre-coordinated terms within subject facets therefore appear to meet NISO's suggestions in section 7.3 above, eliminating false hits by populating the facet with headings (potentially including \$v) drawn from user warrant. This runs counter to the assertion, in Ashton and Kent's (2017) article about the FAST vocabulary at the British Library, that subject post-coordination is sufficient for patron access. The British Library's lack of clarity about their study parameters, and their usage of words like "initial" and "suggested" (Ashton & Kent, 2017, p. 554) mean that these assertions are currently unverifiable and not able to be weighed against Rico et al.'s findings.

In fact, as discussed above, post-coordinate subject provision that omits form subdivisions creates patron issues for topical understanding, search and recall. For instance, in catalogs with separate subject and genre indexes, removing form subdivisions such as "\$v Fiction" would omit desired results from patron searches for topic/fiction combinations. Antell and Huang (2008) cite a study "performed by Gross and Taylor [which] shows that keyword searching would become much less successful if subject terms were absent from the catalog," from an average of 36% to over 70% (p. 70). LC themselves acknowledge this potential issue via Phillips and Kurtz (2025): "one potential issue is that with split search indexes, one configured to search for subject strings that include form subdivisions and another configured to search for genre/form terms, users would not find accurate results in their searches" (p. 48). Elsewhere, LC's Cataloging Policy and Support Office (2007) states that "[p]ost-coordinated terms have serious limitations for recall, precision, understanding, and relevance ranking" (p. 1)—all qualities library scholarship has found that patrons value.

Further, post-coordinate *searching* done by patrons does not mandate post-coordinate *construction* of subject headings. LC's Cataloging Policy and Support Office (2007) relates that "Pre-coordinated strings have a sophisticated syntax that can express concepts better than single words, yet also can be faceted by systems to group topics into categories for post-coordinated displays when desirable" (p. 1). Mann (2001) similarly reports that "[t]he presence of such a precoordinated browse display, of course, does not preclude postcoordinate Boolean search capabilities ... We need both browse displays of precoordinated strings and the possibility of postcoordinate combinations of individual elements" (p. 89). This is a reminder that pre-coordinated subject headings, including those with form subdivisions, do not just appear to patrons within subject searches and facets. They also appear as descriptive information in record displays, providing easily glanceable context to library patrons, and serving as springboards for additional subject searching.

If, as posited by Cooley and Phillips (2023) in their article written for LC, library users generally lack understanding of both complex information structures and advanced catalog search techniques (p. 495, 500), it is counterproductive to favor a post-coordinated subject system that places the onus on users to locate and correlate disparate pieces of subject and form metadata to manually recreate meanings and combine terms for searching, and to sift through unwieldy and often unrelated results sets, rather than a

pre-coordinated subject system that provides context and precision in easily clickable/searchable hyperlinked strings for “users who are not totally familiar with a controlled vocabulary and its structure” (NISO, 2010, p. 37). As asserted by Ranganathan (1931), “If the library KEEPS BOOKS FOR USE, the task of the librarian is not to dump down a mass of books and tell readers to help themselves”; metadata that doesn’t convey “a clear enough indication of the nature of the book” wastes the time of the reader (p. 68, 339).

Are Form Subdivisions Compatible with Linked Data?

As recounted at the outset of this report, LC has asserted on multiple occasions that form subdivisions are “not linked data compliant” (LC, 2025, p. 4). Kipp and Park (2025), however, state that user studies of linked data are still largely nonexistent, with resultant knowledge gaps about what users need from functionality and metadata within linked data systems (p. 366, 367). Given the dearth of studies of user vocabularies and understandings within linked data systems, assertions that certain vocabulary elements are or are not compatible must be regarded as preliminary and not definitive.

Further, as described in the section above, both Biblioteca Nacional de España’s traditional and linked data catalogs studied by Rico et al. (2019) include pre-coordinated subject strings, some of which contain form subdivisions. See, for instance, an example book still present in both systems: *Alien, el Vecino del Octavo: En el Espacio, Nadie Puede Oír Tus Risas* in the [linked data catalog](#) and in the [traditional library catalog](#). The pre-coordinated subject string “Alien (Personaje de ficción) \$v Cómics” exists in both databases. As this is one of very few extant user studies of linked data catalogs, this implies preliminarily that both pre-coordinated subjects and form subdivisions are compatible with linked data. Additionally, Rico et al.’s (2019) study results indicate that subject elements improving search precision are vital to the user search experience—which is a noted strength of pre-coordinated subject headings. Indeed, Williams (2021) asserts that “[i]n a linked data cataloging future, form subdivisions will still be useful in providing context to topical headings, as well as indicating what a resource is” (p. 783).

LC via Wiggins (2026) has also asserted that eliminating form subdivisions would “facilitate the use of URIs in LC data” (para. 2). Yet within LC’s linked data service [id.loc.gov](#), there are authorized subject strings containing \$v that have URIs (such as “[Love \\$v Poetry](#)”). There are also valid subject strings utilizing other types of subdivisions that do not have URIs (such as “Detectives \$z Great Britain”). In other words, URI provision for subject headings is not an issue unique to form subdivisions. Indeed, LC’s article written by Phillips and Kurtz (2025) on LCGFT reveals that LC wishes to remove *all* subdivisions, and not just form, from LCSH: “The systematic elimination of subdivisions from LCSH will be a lengthy and complicated challenge faced by PTCP” (p. 50).

It is potentially daunting to consider minting URIs for all possible LCSH strings. However, LC could potentially build off of techniques used in the past, such as automatic harvesting and creation of validation headings, to assist in this task. Remer (2016) notes, for instance, that in 2007 LC “began to create and distribute subject authority records derived from headings found in LC’s bibliographic records. As of March 2012, 78,000 validation records had been created. Such records have been included in LC’s Linked Data Service” (p. 6). Chan & Vizine-Goetz’s (1998), and O’Neill et al.’s (2001),

examinations of subject headings prior to the start of this automatic harvesting both offer some hope that this might be a fruitful path to pursue.

Chan and Vizine-Goetz (1998) find that “a small number of headings accounted for a majority of total use” and “the cumulative error rate was in inverse relationship to frequency of use” (p. 56). Further, “over 70% of the headings in the working file were topical headings, of which fewer than 1% were incorrect and only 2.62% were obsolete, for a total invalidity rate of 3.59%” (Chan & Vizine-Goetz, 1998, p. 51). O’Neill et al. (2001) similarly report that certain form subdivisions are used far more often than others: “the 10 most assigned forms, --Congresses, --Periodicals, --Biography, --Bibliography, --Directories, --Statistics, --Maps, --Handbooks, manuals, etc., --Catalogs, and --Fiction, account for more than half of all assignments. The 100 most used forms account for more than 90% of all assignments” (p. 194). These findings suggest that certain common subject headings including form subdivisions (e.g., “Murder \$x Investigation \$v Fiction” and “Man-woman relationships \$v Fiction”) likely account for a majority of such strings, and that they are likely largely error-free—both of which indicate it might be feasible to, in the words of Chan & Vizine-Goetz, “generate a subject validation file automatically with a relatively low error and obsolescence rate, which could be used to validate a majority of subject headings assigned to bibliographic records” (p. 56). A survey response to question 3.8 also suggests this option: “If LC wanted to make their subject strings with \$v linked data compatible, they could just automate the creation of authority records for them or create URIs for them outside of the standard LCSH/SACO MARC authority world.”

Williams (2021) also points to LC linked data conversion routines that successfully created URIs for “Complex subject[s]” within LC’s Linked Data Service, including “Pets–Juvenile fiction <http://id.loc.gov/authorities/subjects/sh201010597345>” (pp. 783-784). Because of these efforts, they assert that “there is no need to constrain the development of vocabularies out of concern for future viability” (Williams, 2021, p. 785). A respondent to survey question 3.8 expresses similar sentiments:

I think abandoning \$v feels like catering to machines instead of the real information needs of people. We exist to serve the information needs of people, and I think the trend of making data “easier” for the machines is counterproductive to our ultimate goals as a profession. I understand the purported benefits of linked data, but I think energy would be better spent on creating URIs for common subject strings instead of throwing the subfield data out with the bathwater. Simplifying data for the sake of machines undervalues our work as human-centered service providers. Similar to the push towards AI, I believe this is exactly the wrong direction for the LoC, and by extension, our profession to take.

Will Omitting Form Subdivisions Simplify Cataloging?

The final justification cited by LC via Wiggins (2026) for \$v elimination is to “simplify LCSH cataloging” (para. 1). This puts cataloger considerations ahead of patron needs, running counter to library values and ultimately to the detriment of patrons, as recounted by Cutter (1894):

The convenience of the public is always to be set before the ease of the cataloger. ... strict consistency in a rule and uniformity in its application sometimes lead to practices which clash with the public’s habitual way of looking at things. When these habits are general and deeply rooted, it is unwise for the cataloger to ignore them, even if they demand a sacrifice of system and simplicity. (p. 6)

Even leaving aside philosophical considerations, form subdivisions are arguably the easiest part of subject heading provision. LC's Policy and Standards Division (2017) states this in their instructional module about form subdivisions: "there are three standard configurations for subdivisions, and the form subdivisions come last in every one of them. The truth is that form subdivisions are the last element probably over 95 percent of the time" (p. 7). O'Neill et al.'s (2001) examination of subject headings also describes the comparatively uncomplicated assignment of most form subdivisions:

[F]orms with 2 or more subdivisions were rarely assigned. Forms consisting of a single subdivision accounted for almost 95% of all assignments. The longer forms tend to be very specific, greatly limiting their applicability. Forms with a single subdivision were assigned an average of 12,587 times, those with 2 subdivisions were assigned an average of 311 times and forms with 3 or more subdivisions were assigned only an average of 14 times. (p. 194)

They also report that the ten most common form subdivisions accounted "for more than half of all assignments," and that the "100 most used forms account for more than 90% of all assignments" (O'Neill et al., 2001, p. 194). Thus, for a majority of subject strings, omitting form subdivisions would likely save negligible amounts of cataloger time, while sacrificing user information and access needs. Ashton and Kent (2023), writing for the British Library about adopting the FAST vocabulary, concede that time savings do not necessarily result from post-coordination: "It is not possible to easily quantify whether FAST is quicker across the whole department due to the wide variety of workflows with differing levels of granularity and intervention in which FAST is now applied" (p. 531).

Given the potentially insignificant amount of effort saved by omitting form subdivisions, it might be more profitable for LC to consider other methods of subject vocabulary simplification suggested via prior library community input, if that is their goal. For instance, Airlie House and LC staff survey recommendations reported by LC's Cataloging Policy and Support Office (2007) include standardizing the order of subdivisions, standardizing and simplifying subdivision practice, adding more explanatory scope notes to authorities to help guide usage, and so on (p. 5, 47). Eliminating form subdivisions is thus not the best or only method to achieve subject heading simplification, and should not be considered ahead of other methods with the potential for less damaging impacts on public catalogs and particularly library patrons.

Library Hardships Caused by Form Subdivision Omission

Adding Form Subdivisions Within Individual Institutions

Survey results demonstrate that LC's assurance that "[t]here is no requirement for any institution to follow the Library's practice of not using \$v" (Wiggins, 2026, para. 8) is hollow and unrealistic. As reported in the Results, two thirds of respondents have neither the time and/or the knowledge to add form subdivisions into their catalogs individually for all records that might require them. Several respondents describe severe understaffing impacting their ability to do additional cataloging work. Illustrative representative responses from question 3.8 include: "This is an expensive burden for us, with no payback. LC says we can continue using subfield v and they will maintain the authority records, but for how long?"; "We are small, understaffed, and have a limited budget. We do not foresee a move to BibFrame in our future due to these limitations. Forcing a change to all libraries just for linked data does not make sense"; and "We are a seven-branch library system serving 391,000 patrons with a total

of 4 tech services staff, only one of whom is responsible for cataloging. This change would be harmful to our workflow and library services.” Per question 1.2, 63% of all cataloger respondents also reported other roles within their institutions, further exacerbating their ability to engage in additional work. This accords with library research showing that “72% [of libraries] report being understaffed” in 2025, with public libraries “more severely affected” than private ones (Primary Research Group, 2025, p. 18). The same study specifies no or reduced growth of cataloging staff over the past two years, and difficulty recruiting new staff, primarily due to budget limitations and competing organizational priorities (Primary Research Group, 2025, p. 19, 21). Other institutions have editing options severely limited by their library systems; one 3.5 response, for instance, relates that “We’re a WMS [WorldShare Management Services] library but not a PCC library so often we don’t even have permission to change the records we use.”

Over half of respondents would not be able to request form subdivisions in bibliographic records provided by their vendors, either. This stems both from budgetary pressures, and from a sense that vendors might not be willing or able to supply this metadata: “I think it depends on the vendors. We have some pretty thorough specs with Baker & Taylor and they may be willing to add to those, but it seems like it’d be a lot of work for them as well” (3.6 respondent). Another respondent to question 3.6 notes that the possibility of requesting \$v is “doubtful, as our vendor is cutting back on work.”

Individual libraries must be able to recognize that subject headings need form subdivisions, and also know which form subdivisions are needed. However, incoming bibliographic records might not include LCGFT terms providing hints for catalogers about which form subdivisions could be added; Hovde et al. (2025) mention, for instance, that “The subdivision \$v Early works to 1800 has no equivalent LCGFT terms” (p. 64). They report copious other terms lacking LCGFT equivalents, such as:

LCSH form subdivisions: \$v Computer games; \$v Controversial literature; \$v Electronic discussion groups; \$v Interactive multimedia; \$v Juvenile software; \$v Marginal readings; \$v Notation; \$v Online chat groups; \$v Prefaces; \$v Sources. Mixture of LCSH topical and form subdivisions: \$x Committees \$v Rules and practice; \$x Drill and tactics \$v Handbooks, manuals, etc.; \$x Library \$v Marginal notes; \$x Periodicals \$v Abbreviations of titles; \$x Biography \$v Sources; \$x History \$v Sources. Mixture of LCSH topical, chronological, and form subdivisions: \$x History \$y [period subdivision] \$v Sources; \$x History \$y [period subdivision] \$x Biography \$v Sources. (Hovde et al., 2025, p. 61)

The difficulty increases still further for subject headings where two identical strings with differing form subdivisions are needed to convey topic/form content, such as \$v Juvenile fiction and \$v Comic books strips, etc., a pairing described in the best practices guide from the Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table (2022): “For juvenile comics, assign additional heading/s subdivided by \$v Juvenile literature (for nonfiction works) or \$v Juvenile fiction as needed to bring out this audience-specific aspect of the comic.” (p. 60). In these situations, catalogers would need to recognize not just a subdivision that needs input, but an entire extra string. Further, over half of survey respondents were not even aware that LC planned to omit form subdivisions in future cataloging; many others are likely still unaware that they need to change their practices and/or user outreach.

Further, by not allowing future proposals for form subdivisions, as stated in the *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT* (LC, 2026, p. 3), LC is effectively stifling \$v

development and continued utility for library patrons. It has already been stated that libraries desire more form subdivisions than are currently allowable—including for YA/teen fiction, kits, audiovisual aids, and so on. This means libraries will be unable to meet users' complex information needs for topic/form combinations, both for currently used forms and those developed in the future; these also include forms important for accessibility, such as \$v Audiovisual aids.

Disallowing future development also compromises data interoperability between libraries both nationally and internationally, as shared by a library vendor (personal communication, January 11, 2026):

I *expect* that our customers are going to authorize a variation from LCSH standards – and retain these subdivisions. However, that has implications for record sharing (I'm quite sure they won't strip this data out of records as they are loaded to OCLC), and standardization (what happens if they choose to use *different* \$v form subdivisions?)

Researchers also assert that “settling for local solutions for an entire form of material does not ultimately lead to more discoverable records across institutions,” as users cannot reliably search for resources in topic/form combinations in “institutional catalogs or in record repositories like WorldCat if each institution is implementing different techniques to describe them” (Smith, 2024, p. 117). Thus, forcing libraries to develop terms for needed subdivisions at the individual institutional level undercuts the library principle of universal bibliographic control, which relies on “global coordination” to achieve the “timely creation and sharing of essential user-oriented bibliographic information” (IFLA, 2025, p. 1).

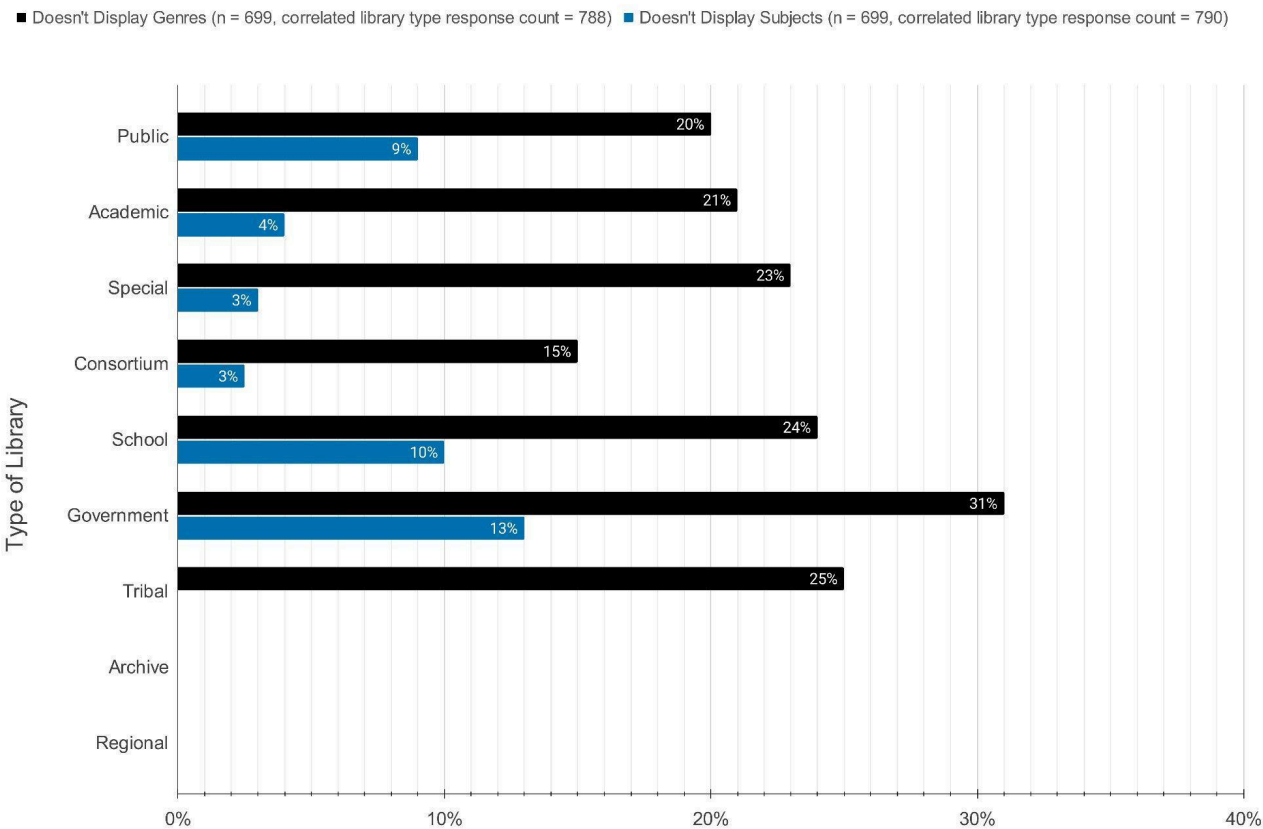
Finally, it must be noted that this pushing of responsibility onto individual institutions is disproportionately problematic for lesser-resourced libraries. Researchers relate that school librarians, for instance, often have less cataloging experience: “According to one school library respondent: ‘In K-12 schools, many of us have minimal cataloging training. It isn't a priority’” (Tomaras et al., 2025, p. 333). Institutions that rely on student or copy catalogers also face knowledge gaps that could impede adding form subdivisions, as recounted by a respondent to question 3.5: “Our acquisitions specialist and student workers do much of the intake work and they might not know which items would benefit from \$v.” Bitter and Tosaka (2020) report that “[c]opy catalogers simply do not have the time or have not undergone the requisite training to take appropriate action when it comes to genre/form headings” (p. 48); evaluating subject strings is likely a task similarly outside of the training and available time of many copy catalogers. The 3.8 response of a concerned staff member within LC similarly highlights worries about the impact of form subdivision elimination for less resourced libraries, and asserts that continued \$v provision shouldn't be difficult for catalogers within LC.

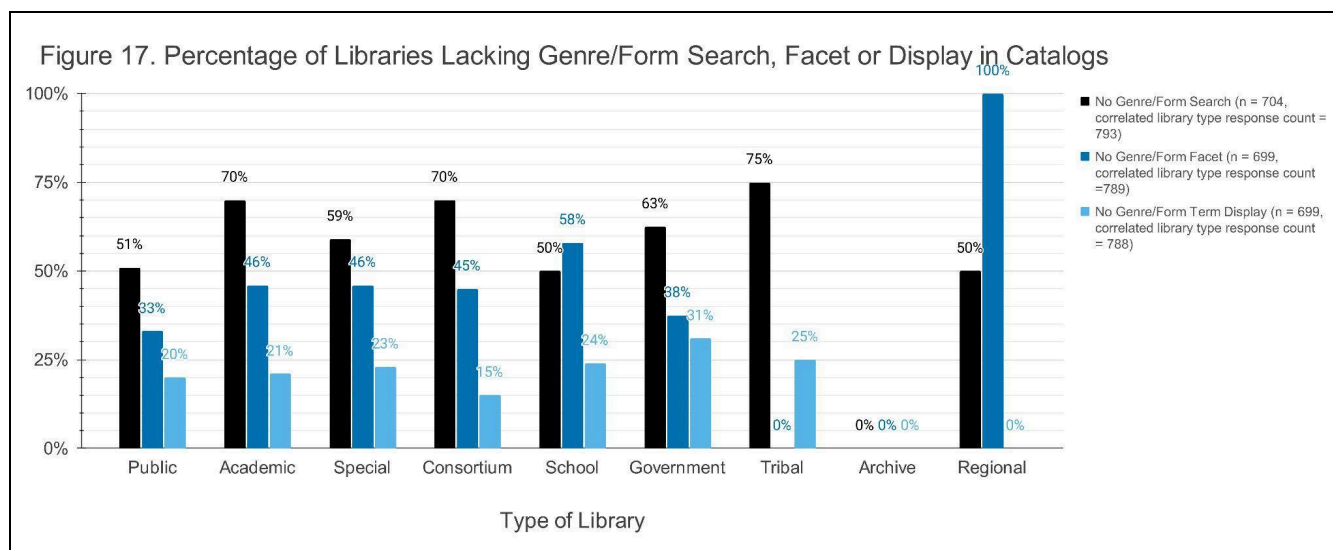
Public Catalog Access to Genres and Forms

Regardless of whether libraries follow LC's lead in including form subdivisions in cataloging records, many public catalogs cannot provide necessary information about genres and forms for patrons outside of subject headings. Insights into public catalogs gleaned from survey results make it clear that the removal of form subdivisions will make it harder—and in some cases impossible—for patrons to find necessary form information in relation to topics. 60% of public catalogs lack a dedicated search genre/form search option; patrons cannot search by genre as they would search by title, author, or subject. Nearly half of libraries (42%) also lack genre/form facets for filtering search results; over half of school libraries do not have this functionality. Patrons using these systems would be completely unable to narrow a topic by form, making it impossible to recreate the functionality of subject headings with

form subdivisions. 67% of respondents include hyperlinked genres within public catalog records, as opposed to 90% who include hyperlinked subjects. This means that significantly fewer patrons can easily search for genres and forms by clicking links within catalog records (a preferred patron search method, as noted above). Across six of the nine survey library types, a fifth or more of patrons would see no visible form information at all for informational or search purposes if form subdivisions were omitted from subject headings. See Figures 16 and 17 below for a visualization of this information. These findings match numbers reported by library researchers. Tomaras et al. (2025), for instance, relate that “62% of library respondents reported that their catalogs lacked a dedicated genre search option in the basic search; 51% had no dedicated genre search options”; and that “nearly half of public catalogs (44%) did not allow narrowing/faceting by genres; 50% did not allow it in the basic search” (p. 325).

Figure 16. Percentage of Libraries Not Displaying Genres or Subjects in Public Catalogs





Phillips and Kurtz (2025), writing for LC, acknowledge several patron search issues arising from eliminating form subdivisions and relying solely on LCGFT terms for access within public catalogs: “One potential issue is that with split search indexes, one configured to search for subject strings that include form subdivisions and another configured to search for genre/form terms, users would not find accurate results in their searches” (p. 48). Bitter and Tosaka’s (2020) study of LCGFT adoption within libraries similarly describes the “very legitimate concern about the impact of the ‘split file’ issue on user discovery” (p. 55). This concern is shared by survey respondents, who worry that “[s]ubject strings using \$v and the new ones without \$v would appear as different hyperlinks (the whole string makes up one hyperlink), so clicking on one would not capture the results from the other” (3.2 response). Conversely, for catalogs that include genres within the subject index, “searching only for genre or form (655) is not possible” (Phillips & Kurtz, 2025, p. 48)—meaning that moving form information would not enable it to be separately searched from subjects, just stripped out of a useful position for providing context. In both of these situations, a completely preventable loss of patron access results, undermining what should be the central reason for public catalog and library vocabulary development.

Survey responses relate additional catalog issues, including the compromising of subject browse and subject hyperlink functionalities: “[o]mission of \$v headings would force reliance on post-coordination search strategies which the majority of library patrons remain unfamiliar with, & which the current generation of bibliographic interfaces & systems does a poor job of producing” (3.2 response). Another respondent notes the importance of “subject headings as evaluation tools—once a patron is in a record, they may review the headings for pertinence” (3.8); removing subject context within records endangers a proven patron search strategy, particularly for the third of all catalogs that do not display genres in catalog records.

LC’s (2026) *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT* similarly concedes that form subdivision elimination will have an “impact on external catalogs” (p. 2). However, as with their assertion that libraries could simply choose to utilize \$v locally, LC unrealistically places the burden on individual libraries to make up for catalog limitations caused by LC practice: “We strongly encourage[s] vendors and libraries to implement genre and form as a search filter to use this to greater effect”

(Library of Congress, 2026, p. 2). Cooley and Phillips (2023), writing for LC, confess that “additional steps need to be taken for the full implementation and success of faceted vocabularies to be realized,” including “the improvement of retrieval mechanisms in OPAC discovery layers” (pp. 493-494); as such, insisting on omitting \$v in current cataloging appears premature, and compromises already-existent public catalog functionality in favor of a future that might not occur. As recounted in a patron response to question 3.7, “This is difficult to implement and a step backwards from the current functionality for readers. This places system implementation ahead of the reader experience.”

As related in survey results, over half of libraries cannot or are unsure of their ability to change their public catalog indexes and/or display if needed, with nearly a quarter definitely unable to. Reasons for this vary; common survey response themes include budgetary and staff time/knowledge limitations. One illustrative response, via question 2.7, states: “Also, all the changes that will have to be made to authority files and the bib records themselves - who has time for that - or time to educate the public as to what is different about their future searches.” This corroborates information gleaned from other sources. E. Grant (personal communication, Jan. 15, 2026) from the University of Washington Libraries shares that updating the public catalog to enable facets isn’t a one-and-done task: “[t]he Library’s current facets have 25 code customizations that have collectively broken 250 times in the past 8 years.” Even leaving this aside, the University of Washington is unwilling to activate the genre/form facet specifically, since a “small user experience survey performed at the University of Washington suggested users were generally confused by the content of facets and how to apply them”; survey results and insights from public services librarians indicated that “patrons were far more likely to try multiple iterations of search terms in basic and advanced searches, accompanied by scanning the initial page of search results, with faceting used as a last resort” (E. Grant, personal communication, January 14, 2026). Further, the number of survey responses specifying public catalogs (728) as compared to total respondents (699) imply that multiple libraries are transitioning from one catalog to another, or using more than one simultaneously for patrons; either scenario compromises the ability of a library to quickly implement changes.

Akin to the outcome of LC pushing responsibility onto individual institutions for \$v provision, the negative impacts of form subdivision elimination in public catalogs are disproportionately borne by lesser resourced libraries and their patrons. Tomaras et al. (2025) find that public catalog issues “are particularly present for disadvantaged libraries, due to limited technical expertise or bibliographic knowledge; most of [library vendor] Wheelers’ customers ‘are not at the bleeding edge of LMS development—and may, indeed, be decades behind the “latest” updates’” (p. 334). User groups reported in survey responses—researchers, college students, legislators, the general public, and so on—further emphasize that form subdivision omission impacts patrons across-the-board, with particular impact felt by the most vulnerable populations. As described previously, these populations include: children (in both school and public libraries, whose catalogs tend to lag behind academic catalogs in functionality); socioeconomically challenged communities; English-language learners; and the non-technologically savvy.

Impeding information access for library populations, especially the most vulnerable, runs counter to library ethical and inclusive values. A respondent to question 3.2 states that this will be the outcome of form subdivision elimination within library catalogs: “Are we creating more work for patrons while trying

to preserve staff time?” Gross et al. (2015) similarly assert that “any economies achieved in indexing or classifying resources are simply moved onto the price of resource discovery for users, since the lack of collocation increases the number of locations that users have to explore before satisfying their information need” (p. 10). As declared by a question 3.8 respondent, library policies should not be furthered at the expense of less resourced libraries or their patrons:

Instead of optimizing for linked data, an endeavor I have yet to see the fruits of after many years now, let's worry more about optimizing for patrons, followed closely by catalogers. A move like this from LC would create additional burdens for libraries that are increasingly strapped for resources and adequate staffing. With budgets stretched this thin, if it ain't broke don't fix it.

Study Limitations

The timing of the survey, August 22, 2025 to September 19, 2025, included potential summer vacations and the start of the school year for academic and school librarians, which possibly limited data collection from those populations. Further, respondents were self-selected volunteers; the comparatively small sample sizes of some library and library-adjacent types (including governmental, tribal, archival, regional, and vendor) mean that results from those populations may be less generalizable.

Survey solicitation was somewhat limited by the venues known to the Working Group, largely composed of librarians within the United States. Some moderators of organizations the Working Group contacted did not confirm whether the survey was shared among their members. Not all states within the United States, or countries where LCSH might be used, were represented in survey data.

The Working Group acknowledges having a specific point of view regarding the value of form subdivisions for library patrons. This perspective was conveyed in the survey solicitation and introductory text, for instance by explicitly noting that survey results would be “used to inform the Working Group's advocacy work.” The Working Group's wording of that sentence was deliberate, as well; we remained open to the possibility that public opinion as reflected in survey results might favor eliminating form subdivisions, which would have led to us reporting this information and discontinuing advocacy on behalf of \$v retention.

Further, as described in the Methodology section above, the Working Group deliberately added “Other” and free-response options within the survey, to avoid forced choices and enable alternate opinions on \$v to be expressed by respondents; and such responses do appear within the survey data, as reported above in the Results. Certain survey questions were framed in such a way to enable quantifiable responses, to help gauge library community opinions related to specific justifications put forth by LC for \$v omission (such as potential redundancy between \$v and LCGFT headings).

Finally, it should be noted that this was a library worker survey, and not a user study; as such, it is more reflective of librarian concerns and difficulties in relation to form subdivision elimination, and their perceptions of their library users' needs and experiences based on experience (even if this experience largely corroborates the body of research on user studies to date). Further user studies are

recommended to confirm trends related herein, and to inform future development of LCSH and its presence within public catalogs.

Conclusion and Recommendations

Gross et al. (2015) relate that some librarians dismissed their research on subject heading utility “based not on criticism of the methodology, but apparently based on viewing the obsolescence of subject headings as a foregone conclusion” (p. 3). The Working Group hopes that decisions pertaining to form subdivision retention can be determined by the body of research into user information and search needs, as expressed within this report, rather than \$v omission being considered inevitable.

As demonstrated within this report, the elimination of form subdivisions from LCSH does not match complex user information needs, or fulfill users search expectations for relevance or precision within public catalogs. On the contrary, for library patrons internationally, and particularly for vulnerable populations, \$v omission is antithetical to user understandings. It creates unnecessary—and in some cases insurmountable—barriers to user access.

In an Appendix to LC’s Cataloging and Support Office’s (2007) report, Chan (2006) describes broad international adoption of LCSH:

Because of its use in cataloging records produced by the Library of Congress and its wide adoption by other libraries, LCSH represents a unique contribution to the library community by the Library of Congress. The impact of LCSH is one of the most far-reaching of all LC’s bibliographic and access services. This is not to say that LCSH as it stands is an ideal or perfect controlled vocabulary, but it is unique in its comprehensiveness and its rich terminology. To abandon the LCSH list would be a disservice to its users around the world, and would amount to dismantling the foundation on which much of the subject access services around the world is built. (p. 15)

This quotation highlights the worldwide significance of any changes made to LCSH. Consequently, it is imperative for LC to consider the impacts of their decisions for the international library community, incorporate community input when making decisions, and avoid, whenever possible, actions that a priori leave out members of this community.

LC’s decision to omit form subdivisions is deeply unpopular with libraries. 59% of survey respondents assert that omitting form subdivisions will make patron searching more difficult, as opposed to 14% saying that it would make no difference (question 3.1), including half or more across all library types. 57% similarly believe \$v elimination would impede access to specific collections and types of material, including majorities within all library types, as opposed to 12% believing it would make no difference (question 3.3). 67% of responses to optional final question (3.8) strongly oppose form subdivision omission; whereas only 11% of respondents strongly support \$v elimination, and only 14% support it at all.

The 2025 *IFLA Professional Statement on Universal Bibliographic Control* centers users in their definition of universal bibliographic control—“the concept of achieving global coordination and access to bibliographic and authority metadata through the timely creation and sharing of essential user-oriented

bibliographic information”—with a goal of providing “free and open access to trustworthy information to library users to meet their information needs” (IFLA, 2025, p. 1). ALA (2021) also forefronts “usefully organized resources,” and, most importantly, “equitable access” to materials, within the first principle of its *Code of Ethics* (para. 4). Libraries exist, as Ranganathan would say, for use—library systems and vocabularies have no value if they do not meet the needs of *all* users, and facilitate access for *all* users to necessary resources. As such, if proposed changes can only be achieved at the expense of users—particularly vulnerable, less-resourced libraries and their patrons—they should be rescinded, even if, as stated by Cutter (1894), this results in “a sacrifice of system and simplicity” (p. 6). Removing form subdivisions should not even be considered until the preponderance of user studies have demonstrated that \$v omission has patron value, and until concrete steps for easing the transition for *all* libraries and their patrons have been both formulated and implemented.

Recommendations

In order to continue providing necessary subject context and search assistance within public catalogs for library patrons, and to best support the needs of international libraries and library communities, particularly less-resourced institutions, the Working Group on \$v Retention recommends the following:

- LC continue providing form subdivisions in all applicable subject strings included in bibliographic records shared with other libraries, and that they do so as a public service for library patrons and less-resourced institutions.
- LC continue accepting proposals for new form subdivisions to allow the growth of the vocabulary for continued patron benefit.
- LC retain all authority records containing form subdivisions and all *Library of Congress Subject Headings Manual* documentation pertaining to their use.
- LC commit to broad-based outreach regarding all future vocabulary decisions. This includes consulting across all library types nationally and internationally, using multiple communication channels, so that all of the library community (which has a stake in the present and future of LC vocabularies) can participate in decision-making related to changes that impact them and their patrons.

Additionally, the Working Group recommends that:

- LC explore other methods for simplifying LCSH that do not impact patron utility, if simplification is their goal. These might include suggestions previously raised via library community forums, such as standardizing the order and provision of subdivisions, adding more explanatory scope notes to authority records to help guide usage, making the *Library of Congress Subject Headings Manual* more easily navigable, and so on. These explorations should be done in concert with the broader library community, to ease the decision-making burden on LC, and help LCSH better reflect library needs internationally and across all library types.
- LC explore methods for improving URI provision for subject strings that do not involve the elimination of subdivisions. These might include automatic harvesting and creation of validation records, particularly for frequently used subject string combinations, building on past validation record creation processes. This could be done in partnership with other institutions, such as OCLC.

- LC solicit input and suggestions from the broader library community about additional LCGFT terms that might augment the vocabulary, with a primary focus on matching library user genre/form understandings and improving patron access. Decisions about future directions for LCGFT should be made in concert with the broader library community, to ease the decision-making burden on LC, and help LCGFT better reflect library needs internationally and across all library types.
- LC allow greater decision-making power to external librarians regarding the future of LCSH and other LC vocabularies. Future decisions about the development of these vocabularies should be made in concert with the broader library community, to ease the decision-making burden on LC, and help LCSH better reflect library needs internationally and across all library types.
- LC consider creating a post-coordinated vocabulary based on and separate from LCSH if that is their goal, so that libraries valuing the current pre-coordinated LCSH can continue to use it.

For organizations beyond LC, the Working Group recommends that:

- Library organizations in concert—such as PCC, OCLC, CILIP, the Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération Canadienne des Associations de Bibliothèque, the Australian Library and Information Association, Library & Information Association New Zealand Aotearoa, ALA, and others—support the recommendations contained within this report, as a public service for library patrons and less-resourced institutions.
 - This accords with the user-focused library values of facilitating equitable access and centering user needs expressed within ALA's (2021) *Code of Ethics*; the IFLA *Professional Statement on Universal Bibliographic Control and Code of Ethics* (IFLA, 2012, 2025); the *Cataloguing Code of Ethics* endorsed by CILIP, Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération Canadienne des Associations de Bibliothèque (CFLA-FCAB) and other library organizations (Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee, 2021); the *CFLA-FCAB Code of Ethics* (CFLA-FCAB, 2018); Library & Information Association New Zealand Aotearoa's (n.d.) *Code of Professional Conduct*; the Australian Library and Information Association's (2024) *Code of Ethics*; and PCC's (2023a) guiding principles for DEI metadata creation, among others.
 - It also matches PCC's strategic goals for 2023-2027, including: a focus on "Incorporat[ing] user experience (UX) and accessibility best practices into PCC metadata policies" and soliciting greater input "from metadata practitioners that have been historically underrepresented in the PCC" (PCC, 2023b, slides 20, 21).
- Library organizations managing bibliographic databases, such as OCLC, maintain all authority records for form subdivisions, and continue to facilitate the linking of subject strings with form subdivisions to authority records. The Working Group also recommends the development of systems and processes to ensure that subject strings containing form subdivisions are retained and not programmatically overwritten within shared bibliographic records.
- Library organizations in concert consider creating a decision-making body for future development of the form subdivision vocabulary, if LC does not allow this within LCSH, to facilitate continued growth and utility for patrons.
- Cataloging communities retain form subdivisions in bibliographic records until such time as the preponderance of user studies have demonstrated that \$v omission has patron value, and until

concrete steps for easing the transition for all libraries and their patrons have been formulated and implemented.

- Library organizations in concert, representing all library types, work with vendors to improve information access and search options within library catalogs.

References

- Adkins, D., & Bossaller, J. E. (2007). Fiction access points across computer-mediated book information sources: A comparison of online bookstore, reader advisory databases, and public library catalogs. *Library & Information Science Research*, 29(3), 354-368.
<https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2007.03.004>
- American Library Association (ALA). (2021). *Code of ethics*. <https://www.ala.org/tools/ethics>
- Anderson, C. (2010). Presenting and evaluating qualitative research. *American Journal of Pharmaceutical Education*, 74(8), Article 141. <https://doi.org/10.5688/aj7408141>
- Antell, K., & Huang, J. (2008). Subject searching success: Transaction logs, patron perceptions, and implications for library instruction. *Reference & User Services Quarterly*, 48(1), 68-76.
<https://doi.org/10.5860/rusq.48n1.68>
- Ashton, J., & Kent, C. (2017). New approaches to subject indexing at the British Library. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 55(7-8), 549-559. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2017.1354345>
- Ashton, J. & Kent, C. (2023). FAST: A journey towards sustainability in subject indexing at the British Library. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 61(5-6), 525-534.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2023.2238701>
- Australian Library and Information Association. (2024). *ALIA code of ethics for the Australian library and information services workforce. Long version*.
https://alia.org.au/common/Uploaded%20files/ALIA-Docs/Research/2024%20ALIA%20CoE_long.pdf
- Bates, M. J. (2003). *Task force recommendation 2.3 research and design review: Improving user access to library catalog and portal information: Final report (Version 3)*. Library of Congress Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control for the New Millennium.
<https://www.loc.gov/catdir/bibcontrol/2.3BatesReport6-03.doc.pdf>
- Bauer, K., & Peterson-Hart, A. (2012). Does faceted display in a library catalog increase use of subject headings? *Library Hi Tech*, 30(2), 347-358. <https://doi.org/10.1108/07378831211240003>
- Beall, J. (2000). Indexing form and genre terms in a large academic library OPAC: The Harvard experience. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 28(2), 65-71.
https://doi.org/10.1300/J104v28n02_06
- Bitter, C., & Tosaka, Y. (2020). Genre/form access in library catalogs: A survey on the current state of LCGFT usage. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 64(2), 44-61.
<https://doi.org/10.5860/lrts.64n2.44>
- Breeding, M. (2025). *Library technology guides*. Libraries.org: A Directory of Libraries Throughout the World. <https://librarytechnology.org/>
- Canadian Federation of Library Associations/Fédération Canadienne des Associations de Bibliothèque (CFLA-FCAB). (2018). *CFLA-FCAB code of ethics*.
<https://cfla-fcab.ca/wp-content/uploads/2019/06/Code-of-ethics.pdf>
- Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee. (2021). *Cataloguing code of ethics*.
<http://hdl.handle.net/11213/16716>
- Cataloging Policy and Support Office. (2007). *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Pre- vs. post-coordination and related issues*. Library of Congress.
https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/pre_vs_post.pdf

- Chan, L. M. (2006). Appendix 1. In Cataloging Policy and Support Office, *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Pre- vs. post-coordination and related issues* (pp. 14-20). Library of Congress.
https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/pre_vs_post.pdf
- Chan, L. M., & Vizine-Goetz, D. (1998). Toward a computer-generated subject validation file: Feasibility and usefulness. *Library Resources & Technical Services*, 42(1), 45-60.
<https://doi.org/10.5860/lrts.42n1.45>
- Choi, I. & Lee, H. S. (2024). Use/user studies in knowledge organization. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 62(3-4), 233-254. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2024.2316319>
- Cooey, N., & Phillips, A. (2023). Library of Congress Subject Headings: A post-coordinated future. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 62(5-6), 491-505.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2023.2193584>
- Core Metadata and Collections Section Subject Analysis Committee (SAC). (2023a, June 14-16). *Core Metadata and Collections Section Subject Analysis Committee: 2023 annual meeting*. Core Subject Analysis Committee, ALA, Chicago, IL.
- Core Metadata and Collections Section Subject Analysis Committee (SAC). (2023b, January 18-20). *Core Metadata and Collections Section Subject Analysis Committee: 2023 midwinter meeting*.
<https://connect.ala.org/core/discussion/2023-sac-midwinter-meeting-minutes-approved#bm82acc216-9006-404f-9ff7-5ab84aa16077>
- Crowston, K. & Kwasnik, B. H. (2003). Can document-genre metadata improve information access in large digital collections? *Library Trends*, 52(2), 345-361.
<https://www.ideals.illinois.edu/items/8492>
- Cutter, C. A. (1894). *Rules for a dictionary catalogue* (4th ed., rewritten). Government Printing Office.
<https://archive.org/details/rulesforadictio06cuttgoog/mode/2up>
- Engelson, L. (2014). *Subdivisions for Biblical studies, theology, and ministry: Making search terms do the work*. American Theological Library Association.
https://digitalcommons.murraystate.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=libraries_book
- Ford, K., & Williamschen, J. (2024, Nov. 7-8). *Library of Congress BIBFRAME update* [PDF slides]. PCC Policy Committee. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/documents/PoCo-2024/BF-update.pdf>
- Gazan, R. (2013). *Cataloging for the 21st century: Course 3, controlled vocabulary & thesaurus design* [Instructor's manual]. Association for Library Collections & Technical Services; Program for Cooperative Cataloging.
<https://www.loc.gov/catworkshop/courses/thesaurus/pdf/cont-vocab-thes-instr-manual.pdf>
- Golub, K., Bergenmar, J., & Humlesjö, S. (2022). Searching for Swedish LGBTQI fiction: Challenges and solutions. *Journal of Documentation*, 78(7), 464-484.
<https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-06-2022-0138>
- Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table. (2022). *Best practices for cataloging comics and graphic novels using RDA and MARC21*. Version 1. American Library Association.
<https://alair.ala.org/server/api/core/bitstreams/11d06f2a-fc38-444d-83d4-f0ed7301cc7e/content>
- Gross, T., Taylor, A. G., & Joudrey, D. N. (2015). Still a lot to lose: The role of controlled vocabulary in keyword searching. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 53(1), 1-39.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/016393741.2014.917447>
- Hovde, S., Deng, S., Li, M., Mullin, C., & Murff, L. (2025). Testing genre and form term mapping between the Library of Congress Subject Headings and Library of Congress genre/form terms

- for automatic metadata enhancement. *Library Trends*, 74(1), 53-78.
<https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/lib.2025.a970677>
- IFLA Genre/Form Working Group. (2017). *IFLA survey on genre form practices in national libraries*. International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions.
https://www.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/assets/classification-and-indexing/ifla_genre_form_survey_report_20171110.pdf
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). (2012). *IFLA code of ethics for librarians and other information workers*.
https://www.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/assets/faife/publications/IFLA%20Code%20of%20Ethics%20-%20Long_0.pdf
- International Federation of Library Associations and Institutions (IFLA). (2025). *IFLA professional statement on universal bibliographic control*.
<https://repository.ifla.org/rest/api/core/bitstreams/a2d2e69a-1c92-43a4-b07c-953142941ca5/content>
- Joudrey, D. N., & Taylor, A. G. (2006). Appendix 2. In Cataloging Policy and Support Office, *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Pre- vs. post-coordination and related issues* (pp. 21-24). Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/pre_vs_post.pdf
- Kipp, M. E. I., & Park, H. (2025). Users' understanding of the metadata elements in linked data. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 63(5), 365-388.
<https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2025.2534990>
- Library & Information Association New Zealand Aotearoa. (n.d.). *Code of professional conduct* [PDF file]. <https://cdn.ifla.org/wp-content/uploads/2019/05/assets/faife/codesofethics/new-zealand.pdf>
- Library Journal. (2025). *Academic literature collections survey: February 2025 report* [White paper]. Library Journal.
<https://about.ebsco.com/resources/academic-literature-collections-survey-2025-report>
- Library of Congress (LC). (2025, January 3). "Modern" MARC [PDF file].
<https://www.loc.gov/cds/downloads/ModernMARC.pdf>
- Library of Congress (LC). (2026, January 13). *FAQ on omission of \$v subfield in LCSH and expanded use of LCGFT* [PDF file]. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/formfaq.pdf>
- Lin, C., & Liang, Y. (2020, March 23). *A model of romance fiction search behavior* [Conference poster presentation]. iConference 2020, Borås, Sweden. <https://hdl.handle.net/2142/106544>
- Mann, T. (2001). Discussion paper: Is precoordination unnecessary in LCSH? Are web sites more important to catalog than books? A reference librarian's thoughts on the future of bibliographic control. In A. M. Sandberg-Fox (Ed.), *Proceedings of the Bicentennial Conference on Bibliographic Control for the New Millennium: Confronting the challenges of networked resources and the web* (pp. 87-134). Library of Congress, Cataloging Distribution Service.
<https://archive.org/details/proceedingsofbic0000bice/mode/2up>
- Mikkonen, A., & Vakkari, P. (2016a). Finding fiction: Search moves and success in two online catalogs. *Library & Information Science Research*, 38(1), 60-68. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.lisr.2016.01.006>
- Mikkonen, A., & Vakkari, P. (2016b). Readers' interest criteria in fiction book search in library catalogs. *Journal of Documentation*, 72(4), 696-715. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JDOC-11-2015-0142>
- Mikkonen, A., & Vakkari, P. (2017). Reader characteristics, behavior, and success in fiction book search. *Journal of the Association for Information Science and Technology*, 68(9), 2154-2165.
<https://doi.org/10.1002/asi.23843>

- Miller, D. P. (2000). Out from under: Form/genre access in LCSH. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 29(1-2), 169-188. https://doi.org/10.1300/J104v29n01_12
- Moore, J. R., Freeborn, R. B., Dutkiewicz, S., Hovde, S., Janecki, J., Schomberg, J. J., & Soderquist, T. (2020). *Best practices for cataloging objects using RDA and MARC21*. Online Audiovisual Catalogers. <https://cornerstone.lib.mnsu.edu/cgi/viewcontent.cgi?article=1000&context=olac-publications>
- National Information Standards Organization (NISO). (2010). *Guidelines for the construction, format, and management of monolingual controlled vocabularies*. National Information Standards Organization. <https://groups.niso.org/higherlogic/ws/public/download/12591/z39-19-2005r2010.pdf>
- Newsom, C., Lundgren, J., & Poehlmann, N. M. (2008). Genre terms for chemistry and engineering: Not just for literature anymore. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 46(4), 412-424. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639370802323190>
- O'Neill, E. T., Chan, L. M., Childress, E., Dean, R., El-Hoshy, L. M., & Vizine-Goetz, D. (2001). Form subdivisions: Their identification and use in LCSH. *Library Resources and Technical Services*, 45(4), 187-197. <https://doi.org/10.5860/lrts.45n4.187>
- Ooi, K. & Liew, C. L. (2011). Selecting fiction as part of every life information seeking. *Journal of Documentation*, 67(5), 748-772. <https://doi.org/10.1108/00220411111164655>
- PCC Task Group on BIBFRAME-to-MARC Conversion. (2024). *Final report of the PCC Task Group on BIBFRAME-to-MARC Conversion*. Program for Cooperative Cataloging. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/sca/documents/SCA-BF-to-MARC-Conversion-TG-Final-Report.pdf>
- Phillips, A., & Kurtz, D. (2025). Library of Congress genre/form terms: The future is faceted. *Library Trends*, 74(1), 41-52. <https://dx.doi.org/10.1353/lib.2025.a970676>
- Policy and Standards Division. (2010). *The Policy and Standards Division's progress on the recommendations made in "Library of Congress Subject Headings: Pre-vs. post-coordination and related issues."* Library of Congress. https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpso/pre_vs_postupdate.pdf
- Policy and Standards Division. (2017). *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Module 6.16, form subdivisions* [Online training module]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/catworkshop/lcsh/PDF%20scripts/6-17%20Form%20subdivisions.pdf>
- Polutta, M. (2024, May 2). *Library of Congress Subject Headings: Ideas for change* [PDF slides]. Library of Congress: Policy, Training and Cooperative Programs Division. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/documents/OpCo-2024/Polutta-LCSH.pdf>
- Primary Research Group. (2025). *Survey of cataloging & metadata librarians: Outlook for personnel & hiring*. <https://primaryresearch.com/AddCart.aspx?ReportID=865>
- Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC). (2023a, January 19). *Guiding principles for diversity, equity, and inclusion for metadata creation* [PDF file]. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/resources/DEI-guiding-principles-for-metadata-creation.pdf>
- Program for Cooperative Cataloging (PCC). (2023b, February 23). *PCC participants' meeting* [PDF slides]. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/pcc/documents/PCC-Participants-2023-Midwinter-Chou.pdf>
- Ranganathan, S. R. (1931). *The five laws of library science*. The Madras Library Association. [https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.\\$b99721&seq=13](https://babel.hathitrust.org/cgi/pt?id=uc1.$b99721&seq=13)
- Remer, J. J. (2016). *Gravitational pull away from pre-coordinated subject headings. Technicalities*, 36(3), 1-12.

https://escholarship.org/content/qt96z3s6mv/qt96z3s6mv_noSplash_6ae58a8c2fc008731d2a6d729165a168.pdf

- Rico, M., Vila-Suero, D., Botezan, I., & Gómez-Pérez, A. (2019). Evaluating the impact of semantic technologies on bibliographic systems: A user-centered and comparative approach. *Journal of Web Semantics*, 59, Article 100500. <https://doi.org/10.1016/j.websem.2019.03.001>
- Saarinen, K., & Vakkari, P. (2013). A sign of a good book: Readers' methods of accessing fiction in the public library. *Journal of Documentation*, 69(5), 736-754. <https://doi.org/10.1108/JD-04-2012-0041>
- Smith, T. S. (2024). A dicey situation: A study of how controlled vocabularies describe tabletop roleplaying games. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 62(2), 99-123. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2024.2308117>
- Tomaras, D., Bailund, A., Bergmann, J. Dover, A., Holloway, S. W., & Strader, R. (2025). Genre audiences, LCGFT and user warrant: An exploratory study. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 63(5), 315-345. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2025.2521297>
- Whisnant, L. A. (2003). *Search strategies used by fiction readers with emphasis on usage of the online public access catalog: A survey of Wake County Public Library patrons* [Masters paper, University of North Carolina at Chapel Hill]. UNC Index of MS Papers. <https://ils.unc.edu/MSPapers/2863.pdf>
- Wiggins, B. (2026, January 5). *Library of Congress to expand use of LC genre/form terms (LCGFT) and implement subject heading (LCSH and CYAC—children & young adult) cataloging simplification* [Announcement]. Library of Congress. <https://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/form-announcement.pdf>
- Williams, J. (2021). Form subdivisions for curriculum materials. *Cataloging & Classification Quarterly*, 58(8), 769-788. <https://doi.org/10.1080/01639374.2020.1868645>
- Williamschen, J. (2025, Jan. 27). *Modern MARC* [PowerPoint Slides]. Library of Congress BIBFRAME January 2025 Update Forum. <https://www.loc.gov/bibframe/news/source/2025Jan3-ModernMarc.pptx>.
- Wilson, P., & Robinson, N. (1990). Form subdivisions and genre. *Library Resources and Technical Services*, 34(1), 36-43.
- Zinkham, H., Cloud, P. D., & Mayo, H. (1989). Providing access by form of material, genre, and physical characteristics; Benefits and techniques. *American Archivist*, 52(3), 300-319. <https://www.jstor.org/stable/40293360>

Appendix A

Tables and Figures

Table A1

Results for survey question 1.2: What are your role(s) in the library?

Role	Number of responses	Percentage of respondents with this role
Cataloging (includes linked data and database maintenance)	622	89%
Collection Management	239	34%
Acquisitions	215	31%
Reference	200	29%
Management / Administration	167	24%
Circulation (includes Front Desk)	145	21%
Systems	125	21%
Readers Advisory	111	16%
Instruction	89	13%
Interlibrary Loan	84	12%
Archivist	46	6%
Vendor	16	2%
Metadata Management (includes Metadata Guru, Metadata)	6	1%
Programming / Program Management	4	less than 1%
Digital Collections / Digital Resources	2	less than 1%
Librarian	2	less than 1%
Technical services (includes Physical Processing)	3	less than 1%
Preservation	2	less than 1%
Youth Services / Youth Programming	3	less than 1%
Discover / Discovery Layer	2	less than 1%
Electronic Resources	2	less than 1%

Digitization	2	less than 1%
Rare Books	1	less than 1%
Records Management	1	less than 1%
Privacy	1	less than 1%
Genealogy	1	less than 1%
Web development	1	less than 1%
Exhibition, Curation	1	less than 1%
Artist Files	1	less than 1%
Special Collections	1	less than 1%
Digital Services	1	less than 1%

Table A2

Results for question 1.3: Which integrated library system/library-facing catalog do you use?

ILS name	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Alma	228	32%
Sierra	96	13%
Polaris	73	10%
SirsiDynix Symphony	57	8%
FOLIO	40	6%
Koha	27	4%
Destiny	24	3%
Evergreen	24	3%
Horizon	20	3%
WorldShare Management System (WMS)	18	2.5%
SirsiDynix Workflows	13	2%
SirsiDynix undefined	12	2%
Spydus (Civica)	9	1%
The Library Corporation (TLC) LS2	8	1%
Apollo	7	1%
Atrium (Atrium)	7	1%
Voyager	5	1%
Book Systems	4	0.5%
Verso	4	0.5%
Insignia	3	less than 1%
Aleph	2	all ILSs with 2 responses = 2.5% collectively

Axielle Collections	2	
Bibliovation	2	
Libero	2	
LibraryWorld	2	
OPALS	2	
SirsiDynix Connection	2	
ArchivesSpace	2	
Polaris Leap	2	
Accessit	1	all ILSs with 1 response = 2.5% collectively
Aspen Cat	1	
Aurora	1	
Carl-X	1	
EOS	1	
Liberty	1	
Mandarin	1	
Minisis	1	
SAGE	1	
Softlink	1	
TIND	1	
unknown	1	
Wise	1	
Vernon	1	
CollectiveAccess	1	
Enterprise	1	
V-Smart	1	
Polaris Tech Client	1	

Table A3

Results for question 1.4: Which discovery layer/public-facing catalog do you use?

Name of public catalog / discovery layer	Number of responses	Percentage of responses
Primo/Primo VE (Ex Libris)	222	30%
BiblioCommons (BiblioCommons)	62	9%
Enterprise (SirsiDynix)	44	6%
Vega (Innovative Interfaces)	44	6%

Aspen (ByWater Solutions)	41	6%
Unknown/Unsure [includes also responses for companies and ILSes, also response 0]	41	6%
None [includes n/a responses]	28	4%
Blacklight (open source)	25	3%
Destiny/Destiny Discover (Follett)	23	3%
Homegrown [includes ScholarSearch/Scholar Search, Quicksearch from Yale]	20	3%
EBSCO Discovery/EDS (EBSCO Information Services)	18	2%
VuFind (open source)	18	2%
Encore (Innovative Interfaces)	16	2%
WorldShare Discovery [i.e., WorldCat Discovery]/WMS (OCLC), also WorldCat Local (OCLC) as the last doesn't exist anymore	15	2%
WebPAC/WebPAC Pro/Sierra Web (Innovative Interfaces)	14	2%
Pika (Marmot Library Network)	10	1%
PowerPac (Clarivate)	10	1%
Evergreen (open source)	8	1%
Spydus (Civica)	8	1%
Apollo (Biblionix)	6	1%
Atrium (Book Systems, Inc.)	6	1%
FOLIO (Open Library Foundation)	5	1%
Summon (Ex Libris)	5	1%
LS2PAC (The Library Company)	5	1%
Koha (open source)	4	less than 1%
Verso (Auto-Graphics, Inc.)	3	less than 1%
Insignia (Insignia Software)	2	all public catalogs with 2 responses = 1% collectively
LibraryWorld (LibraryWorld)	2	
LOCATE (EBSCO Information Services)	2	
OPALS (Media Flex)	2	
Portfolio (SirsiDynix)	2	
Accessit (Accessit Library)	1	all public catalogs with 1 response = 2% collectively
Alexandria (COMPanion Corporation)	1	
Arena (Axiell)	1	
Aurora (Aurora Information Technology or	1	

Axiell?)	
Bibliovation (PTFS)	1
CARL-Discovery (The Library Corporation)	1
eLibrary (ProQuest?)	1
Horizon (SirsiDynix)	1
Iguana (Infor Library and Information Solutions)	1
Libero (Libero)	1
Liberty (Softlink International)	1
Mandarin (Mandarin Library Automation)	1
OliverV5 (Softlink International)	1
Onesearch (EBSCO Information Services)	1
Voyager (Ex Libris)	1
Wise (OCLC)	1
WordPress (WordPress)	1

Appendix B

Survey Text

The text below reproduces the Working Group on \$v Retention's Google survey instrument, including the introductory section and question images.

The Library of Congress [announced in January 2025](#) that as part of a linked data-friendly "Modern MARC" cataloging practice, they will no longer include form/genre subdivisions (e.g., 600 \$v, 650 \$v, 651 \$v) in subject headings in their records.

For example, they would omit the \$v subfield at the end of subject headings like these:

- Nightingale, Florence, \$d 1820-1910 \$v Archives
- Paris (France) \$v Guidebooks
- Werewolves \$v Juvenile fiction
- Mendieta, Ana, \$d 1948-1985 \$v Catalogs
- Concertos (Violin) \$v Solo with piano
- To convey form and genre, Library of Congress will instead use only LCGFT genre/form terms in separate fields (MARC field 655).

For more examples of what such records might look like, click [here](#).

For a more detailed explanation of the change, a periodically-updated informational statement can be found [here](#).

The American Library Association Core Subject Analysis Committee Working Group on \$v Retention has prepared this survey hoping to collect feedback from library workers, archivists, and others using lcsh about potential impacts of the change on your collections, catalogs, staff, and patrons. (Responses from multiple people at the same organization are welcome.)

This survey contains three sections and takes approximately 10-20 minutes to complete. It contains questions related to genres and form subdivisions (\$v) in your catalog and library processes. You will also be asked to identify the kind of library you work for and your role(s), your institution's ILS (integrated library system) and discovery layer/public-facing catalog, and the library information networks you utilize. The survey is anonymous and does not collect personal information of any kind.

Survey results will be used to inform the Working Group's advocacy work.

The survey will close on **Friday, September 19, 2025**.

If you have questions about the survey or the Working Group, please email Deborah.Tomas@marist.edu.

Thank you for contributing to the conversation!

Section 1, Informational Questions

1. What kind of library do you work in? (Check all that apply) [Required]

- Public library
- School library
- Academic library
- Special library
- Library consortium
- Other: _____

2. What are your role(s) in your library? (Check all that apply) [Required]

- Cataloging
- Acquisitions
- Reference
- Circulation
- Readers Advisory
- Interlibrary Loan
- Collection Management
- Management/Administration
- Vendor
- Systems
- Instruction
- Archivist
- Other: _____

3. Which integrated library system/library-facing catalog do you use? (e.g., Alma, Sierra, Symphony, Polaris) [Required]

- _____

4. Which discovery layer/public-facing catalog do you use? (e.g., Primo/Primo VE, BiblioCommons, Enterprise, Vega) [Required]

- _____

5. How do you stay connected and find out about new library information? (Please list the names of the listservs, social media groups, American Library Association groups, state library-sponsored groups, etc. that you use.) [Required]

- _____

6. Were you aware before taking this survey that the Library of Congress plans to not use form subdivisions (\$v) in subjects as part of "Modern MARC," and include only genre/form terms? [Required]

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

Section 2, Public Catalog Questions

1. Does your public catalog have a dedicated genre/form search option? That is, can patrons search by genre as they would search by title or author? [Required]

Find [Reset All](#)

 Keyword
  Title
  Author
  Subject
  Series

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

2. Does your public catalog have a dedicated genre/form option for faceting/narrowing search results? That is, can patrons filter search results by genre as they would by date or subject? [Required]

Limit Search Results

> Collection

> Publication Date

> Format

> Subject

> Author

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

3. Does your public catalog display genre/form headings if a patron clicks on a search result for more information? [Required]

Genre/Form	Humorous comics
	Graphic novels
	Humorous comics
	Comics (Graphic works)
	Graphic novels
	Shōnen manga
	Comics (Graphic works)

- Yes [Continue with question 4]
- No [Go to question 5]
- Other: _____

4. If you answered "Yes" to the prior question, does your public catalog display those genre headings as searchable hyperlinks? [Optional]

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

5. Does your public catalog display subject headings if a patron clicks on a search result for more information? [Required]

SUBJECT

Dogs — Comic books, strips, etc.

Police — Comic books, strips, etc.

Cats — Comic books, strips, etc.

Adventure and adventurers — Comic books, strips, etc.

- Yes [Continue to question 6]
- No [Go to question 7]
- Other: _____

6. If you answered "Yes" to the prior question, does your public catalog display those subject headings as searchable hyperlinks? [Optional]

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

7. Do you have any other information you would like to share about your catalog? (e.g., Does your catalog have a subject and/or genre browse search? Are genres in your catalog indexed and searchable as subjects, instead of separately as genres? Does your catalog have advanced subject and/or genre search options?) [Optional]

- _____

Section 3, Library Impact Questions

1. Would the lack of \$v information in subjects impact the ability of patrons and library staff to find materials? [Required]

- Yes [Continue to question 2]
- No [Go to question 3]
- Unsure [Go to question 3]

2. If you answered "Yes" to the prior question, please give examples. [Optional]

- _____

3. Are there specific collections or types of materials that would be harder for patrons and library staff to find without \$v information? [Required]

- Yes [Continue to question 4]

- No [Go to question 5]
- Unsure [Go to question 5]

4. If you answered "Yes" to the prior question, please give examples. [Optional]

- _____

5. Does your library have staff with the time and knowledge to add back \$v information into incoming records for all items that would need it? [Required]

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

6. If your library receives cataloging records from a library vendor, do you have the ability and budget to request that they add back \$v information into incoming records for all items that would need it?

[Optional]

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

7. Does your library have the ability to configure (or request your library catalog vendor to configure) your public catalog to display different information for patrons (such as adding genre search options, or narrowing/faceting by genres, if not currently present)? [Required]

- Yes
- No
- Other: _____

8. Do you have any other questions or comments about \$v removal that you would like to share?

[Optional]

- _____

Appendix C

The text below reproduces the Working Group on \$v Retention's list of questions for LC regarding form subdivision omission. The questions were created with feedback from the signatory organizations below, and sent to LC on September 15, 2025. The questions appear largely unchanged in LC's (2026) *FAQ on Omission of \$v Subfield in LCSH and Expanded Use of LCGFT*.

To: The Library of Congress, Policy, Training, and Cooperative Programs Division

From:

- The ALA Core Subject Analysis Committee Working Group on \$v Retention
- The ALA Core Subject Analysis Committee
- The Cataloging Advisory Committee of ARLIS/NA
- The Comics and Fiction Funnel
- The ALA Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table
- The SALALM Cataloging Committee
- The LIANZA Cataloging Special Interest Group
- With feedback from the RBMS Bibliographic Standards Committee

Date: September 15, 2025

Subject: Questions about not including form subdivisions (\$v) in “Modern MARC”

The ALA Core Subject Analysis Committee Working Group on \$v Retention has received multiple requests from libraries and vendors for additional information about the Library of Congress' [stated plans](#) to not include form subdivisions in bibliographic records in “Modern MARC.”

In the interest of transparency and openness, we are hoping the Library of Congress will provide answers to the questions below, so that we can share them with the library community. Please send answers to the Working Group via chair Deborah Tomaras at Deborah.Tomaras@marist.edu; they will be shared broadly with the other signatories and beyond. Thank you in advance for your information and assistance.

Questions on the proposed change (timeline, effects, scope of changes):

- When does the Library of Congress anticipate ending the inclusion of \$v in bibliographic records?
- Will this only be done for new records, or will it also be retroactive?
- Will this be done for all new records, or only records for certain types of materials? If the latter, which ones?
 - Will this extend to records coded with rare materials standards, such as 040 \$e dcrmr?
- Will the omission of \$v in Library of Congress-created records affect existing versions of those records in OCLC?
- Will omission of \$v in bibliographic records just impact the Library of Congress Subject Headings (LCSH) vocabulary? Or will the Children's and Young Adults' Subject Headings (CYAC) vocabulary also omit \$v from their subject headings?

- Could you please provide us with example records from the Library of Congress' database where you did not include \$v information?

Questions related to cataloging procedures, principles, and documentation:

- Will the Library of Congress continue to retain authority records for form subdivisions in the LCSH (per the June 2025 report submitted by the Library of Congress to the ALA/CORE Committee on Cataloging: Description and Access)? (example: sh 99001562 for "\$v Fiction")
 - If they will be retained, is this a temporary measure; or will the authority records for form subdivisions be maintained long-term?
- Will the Library of Congress still accept proposals for new LCSH strings including \$v?
- As of April 2025, the Library of Congress has updated several Subject Headings Manual instructions (such as "H 1100, Free-floating Subdivisions: Classes of Persons") to separate information about form and topical subdivisions. Is this separation a preface to complete removal of information about form subdivisions from the SHM, or will form subdivision guidance be maintained? If form subdivision information will be removed, when would that be done?
 - If CYAC is also not including form subdivisions, will CYAC Manual instructions (such as "C 1430, Comics and Comic Characters") also be updated?
- Referring to the ALA report mentioned above: does "ensure there are appropriate replacements in LCGFT for all subdivisions and prepping the Subject Headings Manual" mean that LC plans to create new LCGFT terms to fill in for the form/genre subdivisions that currently have no equivalent?
 - Is there a chance of allowing multiple levels of LCGFT terms, for example allowing both "Fiction" and "Historical fiction" in the same record?
 - What will be done about form subdivisions that include audience components (e.g., "\$v Conversation and phrase books (for school employees)")?
 - Who will be consulted when determining which terms to create, and creating new LCGFT terms?
- Has the Library of Congress considered the principle of subject heading specificity and the effect on patron searching of \$v removal (for example, the difference between the subject heading "Smith, John" [which is about John Smith] and "Smith, John \$v Archives" [which is about his records and materials instead]; or the difference between works about "Paris (France)" generically versus the tourist focus of "Paris (France) \$v Guidebooks")? This is particularly pertinent for combination topic/form subdivisions, such as "\$v Dictionaries \$x French, [Italian, etc.]" or "\$x Biography \$v Sources."
 - "\$v Specimens" and "\$v Early works to 1800" are particularly useful for rare materials and unique object cataloging. How does the Library of Congress plan to replicate this functionality without \$v?
- Has the Library of Congress considered the impact of \$v omission on other systems like ArchivesSpace, and vocabularies such as FAST?

Appendix D

Organizational Endorsements of the Recommendations

- Van Wagenen Library, SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech
- White Pine Library Cooperative
- Thomas J. Watson Library, Metropolitan Museum of Art
- Eastern Shore Regional Library
- The Grolier Club
- Barrie Public Library
- Dallas Theological Seminary
- Mildred F. Sawyer Library, Suffolk University
- Western Bay of Plenty District Libraries
- Christchurch City Libraries
- Chicago Public Library
- Minnesota Genealogical Society
- Poudre River Public Library District
- Aurora Public Library
- James A. Cannavino Library, Marist University
- Cataloging & Bibliographic Technology Committee of the Seminar on the Acquisition of Latin American Library Materials (SALALM)
- Harris County Public Library
- U.S. Department of the Interior Library
- Fleet Library at Rhode Island School of Design
- Chippewa River District Library System
- Brigham Young University Library Cataloging & Metadata Department
- Indian Trails Public Library District (Wheeling, Illinois)
- Denver Public Library
- New Hampshire State Library
- Graphic Novels and Comics Round Table of ALA
- Ramapo Catskill Library System
- American Association of School Librarians
- CRTS (Canadian Reformed Theological Seminary)
- Metadata & Resource Management Community of Interest, Boston Library Consortium
- Chicago History Museum
- Occult/Esoteric SACO Funnel

Individual Endorsements of the Recommendations

- Grisham Langston, Wellington City Libraries
- April Davies, Director, Van Wagenen Library, SUNY Cobleskill Ag & Tech
- Claire Wright, E.P. Taylor Library & Archives, Art Gallery of Ontario
- Alison Blattner, Coordinator of Cataloging & Technical Services for White Pine Library Cooperative

- Steven W. Holloway, James Madison University Libraries
- William Blueher, Thomas J. Watson Library
- Anne Bittner, Northampton Community College Library
- Leslie Engelson, Murray State University
- Christine Schroth, Kenton County Public Library
- Jean L. Cooper, University of Virginia Library
- Julie Huskey, Tennessee State University
- Donna Daniel, Dallas Baptist University
- Carla Lindenmuth, Cataloging and Serials Specialist, Lafayette College Libraries
- Brian Tervo, Lafayette College
- Sarah Corvene, Tufts University
- kalan Knudson Davis, University of Minnesota
- Chris Fox, BYU-Idaho
- Julie Renee Moore, California State University, Fresno
- Dana Van Meter, Institute for Advanced Study, Princeton, NJ
- Joshua Zink, Washington University Law Library
- Alex Audziayuk, Rare Books Curator, The Theosophical Society in America
- Soline Holmes, School Librarian
- LJ Jennens, Cataloguing Services Librarian
- Anchalee Panigabutra-Roberts, Head of Cataloging, The University of Tennessee Libraries
- Theresa Baker, Catalog Supervisor, Kenton County Public Library
- Liz Bodian, Brandeis University
- Emily Crawford, State Library of Massachusetts
- Meghan Bergin, Special Collections Metadata Librarian, University of Massachusetts Amherst
- Duncan Lyle, Cataloger, Four County Library System
- Amanda Bullington, Hesburgh Libraries at the University of Notre Dame
- Lynda W. Wright, Randolph-Macon College, Ashland, VA
- Allison Badger, Idaho State University
- Rebecca Tanriverdi-Klein, Clinton-Essex-Franklin Library System
- Shana Novak, Chicago Public Library
- Harmony Croft, Cataloger at Douglas College Library
- Allison McCormack, University of Utah
- Dr. Megan Smith, academic librarian
- Alli Angell, Benicia (Calif.) Public Library
- Kiersten Honaker, Salt Lake County Library
- Rachel Shaevel, Chicago Public Library
- Tina Gross, University of Minnesota
- Ann Kardos, Rhode Island College
- Colleen Fedewa, MLIS, CWRU Kelvin Smith Library
- Lisa K. Hauner, Cataloger and Technical Services, Oregon Trail Library District
- Jessica O'Neil, Mandel Public Library of West Palm Beach
- Lena Safi, Mandel Public Library of West Palm Beach
- Jeff Edmunds, Digital Access Coordinator, Penn State University Libraries
- Kelsie Merritt, David O. McKay Library

- CJ Williams, Harris County Public Library
- Mary Cornell, Illinois Heartland Library System
- Kate Spalding, Waltham Public Library
- Angela Sun, Tufts University
- Tia Haycock, Spanish Fork Public Library
- Carlos Lopez, Dalton McCaughey Library
- Jordan Goffin, Special Collections, Providence Public Library
- Allison Bailund, San Diego State University
- Bobby Bothmann, Catalog & Metadata Librarian, Minnesota State University, Mankato
- Kira Riddle, Cataloging Librarian, Downers Grove Public Library
- Leigh Billings, Metadata Management Librarian, University of Michigan
- Irina Gankin-Segal, Tisch Library
- Sharon Cornwall, Principal Librarian: Collection Services, HB Williams Memorial Library, New Zealand
- Linda Beck, Harney County Library, Burns, OR
- Mark K. Ehlert, Cataloging & Metadata Librarian, University of St. Thomas (St. Paul, MN)
- Leah McCoy, Technical Services Manager, Marysville Public Library
- Emily Ender, school librarian, South Paris, Maine
- Alison Harris, Tufts University
- Sara Fillbrandt, Augsburg University
- Gabriella Di Filippo, St. Catharines Public Library
- Cheryl Hollingsworth, University of Dallas
- Bryce Kieren Healy, Boston Public Library
- Paula Abisognio, Cold Spring Harbor Laboratory Library
- Robert Hammonds, Alvernia University
- Polina Vendrova, Metadata Creation Specialist, University of Toronto Libraries
- Valerie Gaylard, Staunton Public Library
- Maurine McCourry, PhD, MILS, Library Director/Head Librarian, Hillsdale College
- Sarah Edwards Obenauf, New Mexico State Library
- Shanna Hollich, Independent Librarian and Cataloger
- Jennifer Hadley, Olin Library, Wesleyan University
- Stephen Arnold, Bibliographic Maintenance and Authority Control, Bodleian Libraries, Oxford
- Sarah Imholt, Oregon State University Libraries and Press
- Jeannie Luu, Assistant Librarian, Univ. of AR Community College at Morrilton
- Ris Labib, Collection Development Manager, Portage County District Library
- Georgina Shomroni, University of Oxford, Bodleian Libraries, English Cataloguing
- Michelle Paquette, Smith College
- Rebecca Sage, Vendor Librarian
- Marcy Strong, SUNY OLIS
- Angel Phipps, Metadata Librarian at the Art Institute of Chicago
- Aliza Leventhal, Director, Fleet Library at RISD
- Andrew Wang, North Carolina Museum of Art
- Kate Meador, Dallas Public Library Cataloger
- Jaylyn McCoy, Bemis Public Library

- Michelle Speed, Metadata Librarian, Baylor University
- Anne Deutsch, Director of the Library, Dutchess Community College
- Jeni Delfs, Westlake Porter Public Library
- Stacie Murry, Ingalls Library, The Cleveland Museum of Art
- Jay Sheldon, Warren-Trumbull County PL
- Tracy Dalton, Johnson City Public Library
- Chad Germany, Miami-Dade Public Library System
- Desiree Campos, El Paso Public Library
- Katie Szafarz, MLIS, Mount Prospect Public Library
- Hallie Oines, University of Maryland Eastern Shore
- I-Chene Tai, Le Moyne College Library
- Mary Greci, Electronic Resources Team Lead, University of Oregon Libraries
- Mary Yacovone, Massachusetts Historical Society
- Carol Ellison, Sno-Isle Libraries/NWCATS/WLA
- Melissa D. Davis, Regis University, Denver, CO
- Rachel Sykes, Catalog Librarian, Cleveland Public Library
- Madeleine Sardina, Aurora Public Library
- Michelle Austin, Sr. Library Tech/Cataloger, Los Alamos Public Library, NM
- Yuji Tosaka, Cataloging/Metadata Librarian, The College of New Jersey
- Kelsey Geller, Cataloging Librarian at UNT
- Mackenzie Johnson, University of Saskatchewan
- Bro. Andrew J. Kosmowski, SM, North American Center for Marianist Studies
- Adam, Mount Royal University
- Kat Balek, Mayo Clinic Libraries
- Malani LaCoste, Irving Public Library
- Patrick Harrington, Hennepin County Library
- Caroline Clavell, Kimbell Art Museum
- Dan Lipcan, the Ann C. Pingree Director of the Phillips Library, Peabody Essex Museum
- Ellen Corrigan, Eastern Illinois University
- Chip Halvorsen, Westlake Porter Public Library
- Autumn Richards, MacEwan LIT Student
- Cindy Bowen, Georgetown University
- Jude Romines, Emory University
- Marty Grande-Sherbert, Cataloguing, University of Alberta Libraries
- Alex Chappell, Los Angeles Valley College Library
- Jessica C. Williams, Cleveland Public Library
- Allison Benkwitt, Cataloging & Technical Services Librarian at a public library
- Jo Williams, Cataloging Librarian, Middle Tennessee State University
- Alex Kreuzkamp, Surrey Libraries
- Clara Riga, public librarian and MLIS student
- Temmo Korisheli, UC Santa Barbara Library, Dept. of Special Research Collections
- Naomi Skulan, University of Minnesota Morris
- Rosanne Malowany, MacEwan University LIT student
- Steve Silver, cataloging and collections specialist, Linfield University

- Shirley J. Martyn, library volunteer Fox C-6 Schools (Arnold, MO)
- John Elliott, Tennessee State Library and Archives
- Tom Manning, Westlake Porter Public Library
- Daniel N. Joudrey, Professor, Simmons University School of Library and Information Science
- Wendy DeYong, Westlake Porter Public Library
- Debbie Hall, Map Room, Bodleian Library, Oxford, UK
- JFabian Pimentel, Rancho Mirage Library & Observatory
- Denee Phillips, Technical Services, Rancho Mirage Library & Observatory
- Roberta Chapman, Library Technician, River East Transcona School Division