

Working Group: Classification

Working Group Members: Kelly Buehler, Alonzo Crawford, Marco De Petrillo, Violet Fox, Susanna French, Iris Godwin, Margaret Joyce, Eve Lacey, Amanda Ros, Juniper Starr, Michael Stewart

Group Leader: Amanda Ros

Steering Committee Liaison: Karen Snow

1. Terms and Scope (including definitions)

Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee Mission Statement

[Mission Statement Final](#)

The Classification Working Group “will look at inherent bias in Library of Congress and Dewey Decimal systems of classification, especially in the areas of literature, history, and religion” (Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee). Two main areas were examined by the Working Group: biases in classification and barriers to change.

2. Literature Review

2.1. Understanding Classification

Classification is fundamentally the practice of making distinctions and collocating, or separating and uniting. The Oxford English Dictionary Online (2019) defines a classification as “a systematic distribution, allocation, or arrangement of things in a number of distinct classes, according to shared characteristics or perceived or deduced affinities.” That being so, classification is a natural human capacity and activity that can be developed and applied in diverse ways. As such, it underlies and is fundamental to every (or many) human activity and interaction. One can add that classification is an epistemological skill, meaning that it is a capacity of the human mind. It is therefore linked to our knowledge of things and so to our worldviews. It is also a key means of organizing things; and organized things increase our ability to use them (e.g., Ranganathan, 1951).

The foregoing applies equally to books and other information resources. In this context, classification is “the way in which recorded knowledge and information is organized for retrieval” (Gorman, 2002, p. 2). Or, as Charles A. Cutter put it, “Books are classified by bringing together those which have the same characteristics” (quoted in: Olson, 2001, p. 643). Moreover, “[a] classification system is a structured network of concepts. The structure is essential as it represents the logical relations among the linked concepts” (Zins and Santos, 2011, p. 897).

Hence, classification, which involves the representation and organization of knowledge or information resources, has fundamental implications for access to information. Indeed, it is very difficult (not to say impossible) to find anything--either in a library or in general--that is in disorder. It is a way of “making sense”, so to speak. Hence, catalogers sometimes describe their work as being one of “bringing order to chaos” (Ferris, 2008, p. 178). The cataloger’s role is thus essentially one of bibliographic control (Ferris, 2008, pp. 178-179), which “assures timely access to specific pieces of information being sought by users of the library’s catalog” (Ferris, 2008, p. 178-179). This applies in a special way to the classification aspect of the work of catalogers.

If one of the principal functions of a classification scheme is to provide access, then it must be useful (cf. Gorman, 2002, p. 7; Hoerman, 2002, p. 30; cf. Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 224). We will see below that the intimate link between classification and culture can involve some undesirable implications. For now, however, it is important to acknowledge that if libraries did not “by their very nature shape the ways in which we access information... they would have little use” (Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 230).

Now, to be really useful, classification schemes should reflect the actual information needs of those who would use them (cf. Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 227; Hufford, 1992, p. 27; Hoffmann, 2009, p. 632); and such user needs are by nature diverse. That makes a large part of the difficulty of classification. As Ranganathan (1967, p. 400) put it: “Different readers have different purposes; and even the same reader has different purposes at different times. But the Classificationist cannot provide a different scheme for classification to suit each of the large number of purposes”. Furthermore, as Cutter put it, “the convenience of the user should be preferred to the ease of the cataloguer” (quoted in Hufford, 1992, p. 31; cf. Olson, 2001, pp. 641-642). In the end, “[t]he nature of classification is making decisions, a series of them” (Lee, 2015, p. 305; cf. Intner, 2002, p. 27). Classification work involves, to say the least, a certain measure of responsibility. As Skekel put it, “[t]he decisions of a technical services department do affect how or whether information is accessed, and the results could be seen as unethical or negligent” (2008, p. 21). Finally, Bair (2005, p. 10) said that “without the signposts, or if the wrong ones are in place, computers and searchers get lost in the information wilderness”.

2.2. Relation between Classification and Cataloging

Librarianship is essentially the selection and organization of information (Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 222), and so it is not surprising that many see in cataloging a central dimension of library and other information work (cf. Gorman, 2002; Hoerman, 2002; Hill, 2004 part 2; Bair, 2005, p. 3; Shoemaker, 2015, p. 353). Indeed, according to the ALA Task Force, information organization is the librarian's "unique competency":

"The ability to organize collections of informational materials in order that desired items can be retrieved quickly and easily is a librarian's unique competency. Well organized collections are the foundation for all library service. Competence in organizing collections involves thorough knowledge of bibliographic and intellectual control principles and standards, understanding of how to apply these principles and standards in practical, cost-effective operations; and, the ability to collaborate with those who provide systems for managing organizational functions such as library vendors and institutional computer center staff members" (ALA Task Force on Core Competencies; quoted in Gorman, 2002, p. 8).

The services rendered by catalogers, which support both library users and library staff (Bierbaum, 1994, p. 1), is thus a crucial element in the library ecosystem, for catalogers determining the extent to which anything can be found (cf. Bair, 2005, p. 7). According to Bair, catalogers "are responsible for two powerful areas—access and naming. They analyze content... and translate this into a surrogate—a representation of the information—in the form of a database record. They thus create 'access points' or gates by which the information can be entered" (2005, p. 5). In other words, catalogers are intermediaries (Finks, 1991, p. 88; cf. Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 230) and "build the structure of access and control of information with the use of encoding, hierarchies, and classifications" (Bair, 2005, p. 5). Hence, classification, which "is a structured network of concepts" (Zins and Santos, 2011, p. 897), is an essential aspect of cataloging.

2.3. The Values of Classification

It has been said that the mission of librarians "is essentially to provide members of society with access to the information that they need" (Fallis, 2007, p. 23, 32; cf. Bierbaum, 1994, p. 2; Skekel, 2008; Beghtol, 2008). The CFLA-FCAB and IFLA put it this way: "The core mission of librarians and other information workers is to ensure access to information for all" (CFLA-FCAB Code of Ethics; cf. IFLA Code of Ethics). In the words of the ALA: "We provide the

highest level of service to all library users through appropriate and usefully organized resources; equitable service policies; equitable access; and accurate, unbiased, and courteous responses to all requests” (ALA, Code of Ethics, I). We must immediately notice the role of cataloging and classification in this framework to accomplish these goals. According to Fox and Reece (2012, p. 382), “all of the collective must work to attain the end of benevolent user access, which should be the shared axiomatic starting point of any ethical model of IO”.

Mathiesen and Fallis have stated that “the core value of librarianship” is intellectual freedom (2008, pp. 222, 226). The corollary of intellectual freedom is opposition to censorship. This seems to be one of the fundamental points of consensus among library and information professionals (ALA, Code of Ethics, II). Intellectual freedom is related to equitable access to information (Fallis, 2007, p. 24), and the other side of it is resistance to censorship (ALA Code of Ethics: II). Other important values include service to the client (Finks, 1991, p. 85; cf. Bierbaum, 1994, p. 1); cooperation, not competition (Finks, 1991, p. 88); diversity (CILIP Ethical Framework); accessibility; and transparency (CILIP: Catalogue & Index Issue 191, Bullard). Finally, the broad “information rights of both individuals and cultures need to be ethically protected” (Beghtol 2005, p. 904).

Although currently a disputed value, neutrality is also frequently mentioned in the literature. For example, the CFLA-FCAB Code of Ethics states: “Librarians and other information workers are strictly committed to neutrality and an unbiased stance regarding collection, access and service. Neutrality results in the most balanced collection and the most balanced access to information achievable”. Mathiesen and Fallis (2008, pp. 227-228) make the pertinent point that “[i]f being a professional means anything, it means making decisions based on one’s professional judgment...” The ALA also seems to promote neutrality: “We distinguish between our personal convictions and professional duties and do not allow our personal beliefs to interfere with fair representation of the aims of our institutions or the provision of access to their information resources” (ALA, Code of Ethics, VII; cf. Shoemaker, 2015, p. 355). Shoemaker (2015, p. 355) comments on this as follows: “Ideally, catalogers works [*sic*] in an institution that aligns with their personal convictions, thus minimizing the conflict between the two” and that “[t]he aims of the institution trump personal convictions while at work”. While no doubt well intentioned and having a certain realism, this principle, if carried to extremes, can become problematic. In summary, “neutrality” seems to signify respecting all points of view, even those we may personally disagree with.

Because catalogers exert much control over actual access to information and resources, their work is inevitably fraught with ethical implications, for it can impact individuals and society for good or ill. They must therefore “be aware of the ethical implications and responsibilities of

what they do” (Bair, 2005, p. 6). As Mathiesen (2004, p. 1, 5, *passim*.) put it, ethical issues “are fundamentally about who ought to have access to information and under what conditions”.

2.4. Examples of Classification Schemes

There seem to be two broad tendencies in library classification schemes—one emphasizing a theoretical approach of encompassing all possible knowledge (e.g., DDC), and the other emphasizing a more practical approach of working with a particular collection (e.g. LCC). In either case, classificationsists have traditionally conceived their work as being the objective representation of knowledge, disciplines or books. Classification served the needs of the catalog. “Traditionally, librarians have tended to agree that a catalog’s main function should be to enable a user to determine whether the library has a certain item, which works of a particular author are in the collection, which editions of a particular work the library has, and what materials the library has on a particular subject. In short, a record should lead the user to a particular item in the collection, showing the user the location of the item, its physical description, and its subject content. It would seem that consideration of user needs and behavior vis-a-vis library catalogs should be of value in fulfilling these purposes. If this is so, catalog use ought to play a part in the development of cataloging theory and practice” (Hufford, 1992, pp. 35-36; cf. Beghtol, 2002, p. 14).

The Dewey Decimal Classification scheme (DDC), first published in 1876, was developed as a universal scheme to encompass all of knowledge (Miksa, 1998). Dewey was essentially a businessman; his classification bears the stamp of this characteristic (cf. Olson, 2001, p. 647). It became (and still is) one of the most widely used classification systems used around the world, having gone through more than 20 editions and having been adapted to various cultures. The Library of Congress Classification scheme (LCC) “was first developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries to organize and arrange the book collections of the Library of Congress. Over the course of the twentieth century, the system was adopted for use by other libraries as well, especially large academic libraries in the United States. It is currently one of the most widely used library classification systems in the world” (<https://www.loc.gov/catdir/cpsolcc.html>). Another classification scheme is the Universal Decimal Classification (UDC), developed in the late 19th century by Belgian bibliographers Paul Otlet and Henri La Fontaine. It was initially developed as an indexing scheme based off of the DDC and was intended for international use from the start. Because of its intention of functioning as a universal scheme, the UDC, moreover, avoided much of the Anglo-American centrism present in both the DDC and LCC.

Nineteenth century library classificationists like Dewey were practical people. They differed in their approach and in their goals from scientific knowledge classificationists. Classification theory itself developed later on, by librarians such as Ernest Cushing Richardson, Henry Evelyn Bliss, William Charles Berwick Sayers, and Shiyali Ramamrita Ranganathan. In all of these figures, a rational principle predominated in their visions of the method and object of classification (cf. Miksa, 1998; Olson, 1999).

2.5. Description of Current Thought

In the past, classification was largely concerned with discovering or developing 'the perfect system', one that, moreover, is could be given universal application. According to Miksa's study (1998, p. 81), throughout the 20th century, certain assumptions of classification could be discerned: (1) "that knowledge categories are by nature hierarchical and logical in a classical, systematic sense" and (2) "that somewhere, somehow, we can, or should try, to produce the one best classification system that will serve all purposes". More recent thought on the subject, however, has assumed a more relativistic and subjectivistic stance. Hence, Mai (2010, p. 632) argues that "a particular classification is not given by the things classified, it is not enough to analyze the things for their essences and discover the true nature of things. Classifications are built by humans, for specific purposes, in specific contexts..." Thus, "[b]ecause of a changing epistemological landscape, classical and universality epistemologies have suffered a critical beating. The evolution to postmodern thought holds profound consequences for classification, since the idea that no underlying truth exists undermines the bedrock of information organization" (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 378).

According to this new vision, many have pointed out the intimate connection between classification and culture. While classification schemes "are manifestations of culture" (Lee, 2015, p. 304; Olson, 1999, p. 65), the "influence between culture and classification schemes is mutual" (Lee, 2015, p. 303). Now, culture, which, broadly defined, is rather all-encompassing and is a powerful determinant of peoples' perceptions and worldviews (Lee, 2015, p. 304). What this implies for libraries is that "cultural context affects terminology, concept identification and naming, categorization, focus of themes, and citation order. Classification schemes based in different cultures include and exclude different concepts" (Lee, 2015, pp. 302-303). Also, "classification schemes developed and applied in different cultural regions may represent and contextualize the same subject differently" (Lee, 2015, p. 302-303). Furthermore, a classification scheme "frames the context of subject representation, which influences how people perceive a subject or the whole body of knowledge" (Lee, 2015, p. 304). In other words, classification

decisions, though often made individually, change the persons that will interact with a given resource (both users and library staff).

The importance of the relations between classification and culture are brought to light especially in a multicultural world, however broadly or narrowly that is taken. Indeed, "Providing increased access to information on a global scale is a multi-issue, multilevel theme" (Beghtol, 2005, p. 903). That is even more the case when combined with a relativistic philosophy that assumes that language, like knowledge, as well as classification, is a social construct (cf. Olson, 2001, p. 656). For example, a "lack of universal reality" is taken for granted by Fox and Reece (2012, p. 381), which leads them to maintain that "meaning is unstable and created socially". We thus come to understand that "the exclusion of non-mainstream perspectives is an ethical challenge" (Lee, 2015, p. 303). Now, it has been asserted that "[t]he ultimate goal for IO [information organization] is access, through means that do not oppress" (Fox and Reece, 2012, pp. 378-379). Unequal access to information is thus due to classification schemes reinforcing specific cultures at the expense of others (Lee, 2015, p. 305). According to Lee (2015, p. 305), "when a classification scheme is used by people sharing the same culture with which the classification originates, the classification scheme functions and remains invisible. However, when users do not share the same culture with which a classification scheme originates, mismatching may happen, and lead to breaking down of the classification scheme's functions... Unequal access is an ethical issue concerning culture and knowledge organization". At the same time, however, it should be pointed out that Ranganathan, after considering the cardinal difficulty of classification mentioned above, believed that a classification scheme ought to meet the needs of the majority of users (Ranganathan, 1967). Yet, he also emphasized that "[n]o minority group... should be left without help" (1967, p. 407).

In this context, classification, which is epistemological in nature, can contribute to "conceptual violence" (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 378). Conceptual violence is defined as "harm through linguistic or structural misrepresentation and can occur, for example, when topics... are assigned derogatory language or subordinate structure" (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 377). It is a duty of catalogers to protect users from such possibilities of their tools. Various authors have commented on the potentially harmful aspect of classification. Bair (2005, p. 10) writes: "Description, subject analysis, classification, and authority control are all part of the powerful naming or labeling process" and quotes Peter Morville as stating that "there are few things as quietly powerful as labels. We are completely surrounded by them and for the most part their influence is invisible. They are only seen by the people they hurt" (Bair, 2005, p. 10). Sahadath (2013, p. 16) explains that "Making assumptions about appropriate terminology for diverse communities is as offensive as taking no action at all". As Bair (2005, p. 6), again, puts it: "As

the surrogates created by catalogers are used and shared in an increasingly multicultural and global scale, the ethical responsibility for this naming increases”.

Hence, “The question arises if, in the case of IO [information organization], the current system actually works for all users or if minority views and terminology become collateral damage to the greater good” (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 379). In other words, “Every time a constraint is put in place, a door closes for someone” (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 381). Catalogers “decide how to represent subjects and, thus, affect access to and use of information contained in and knowledge derived from the documents we catalog” (Bair, 2005, pp. 5-6). The shortcomings of traditional library classification systems in the contemporary world and the need for better representations of minority subjects and knowledge (such as the indigenous peoples) have been widely discussed in the literature (cf. Swanson, p. 571).

2.6. Classification and Bias

We have seen that classification work is very much a process of making choices. It is this, as well as the human subjective element involved in classification, that gives rise to the possibility for bias to come in. “Bias” can be understood simply as an inclination or slant (cf. *Oxford Dictionary*; cf. Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 227). The implication seems to be that there is a lack of objectivity or accuracy because of some diverting influence. While sometimes equated with prejudice, it seems to be a rather broader concept, so that while every prejudice is a bias, not every bias is a prejudice. Both, however, affect a person’s judgement and leads them to incline either in favour of something or to overlook the needs or experiences of other individuals or groups. “Bias”, in other words, is in many ways analogous to “perspective” (Beghtol, 2005, p. 907), and perspectives are not, in themselves, necessarily negative, violent or harmful. It seems more likely that an exaggeration of a perspective can be detrimental to other individuals and to society.

Be that as it may, there is a certain possible bias of the cultural mainstream which does not account well for, or accommodate, minorities. Also, we can recognize different categories of bias, such as personal bias, institutional bias, cultural and ideological bias. In each case, it can be understood that bias functions to compromise accuracy or objectivity. Now, whether objectivity as such is possible for human beings is a properly philosophical issue. It can be taken for granted, however, that human beings can be more or less objective (if not completely so). Otherwise, there would be no point in trying to improve classification schemes, as contemporary catalogers a wont to do. There are also various types of bias, including gender, sexuality, race, age, ability, ethnicity, language, and religion. Furthermore, Beghtol defines 5 categories of bias: preexisting bias, technical bias, emergent bias, biased representation, and

misrepresentation. (Beghtol 2005, pp. 907-908). In the context of classification (the same can be said in other contexts too), biases “[limit] the expression of diversity in naming information for retrieval” (Olson, 2001, p. 639).

There is an intriguing and instructive parable that seems to communicate something very pertinent in this regard: the parable of the blind men and the elephant. A group of blind men are around an elephant, and each one touches a different part of the elephant’s body. Each one claims to describe the elephant “as it is”, and arguments ensue. Then a man with vision sees the situation as explains to the blind men that they each knew only a part of the elephant. This parable, besides its spontaneous and amusing appeal, has also been widely used and appropriated by different cultures throughout history. (Likely originating in ancient India, it was adopted by Hindus, Buddhists, and Jains, and later spread throughout Islamic cultures, Japan, and eventually found its way to Europe.)

It is well known that there is an intimate relationship between classification and philosophy. For example, in the 19th century, Harris discussed the philosophical basis of classification schemes (Harris, 1870). Figures such as Dewey and Cutter, for instance, assumed a rather rationalistic way of looking at the world, hence one that, for instance, favors reason over emotion (Olson, 2001, p. 649). For Cutter, a classification structure is based either on the logical or the absurd (Olson, 2001, p. 644), and for Dewey, “[c]lassification provides order as well as consistency”, and “it is order that creates meaning out of chaos” (Olson, 2001, p. 648). Similar things could be said about other classification theorists (such as Bliss, Richardson, and Ranganathan). On the other hand, many contemporary classificationists assume a relativistic perspective. The consequences that follow from each position differ according to their premises.

With reference to the above parable, it can clearly be seen how a rigid, monolithic classification scheme, however, intricate, cannot meet the needs of a multicultural world. It simply does not take into account sufficient points of view or a sufficiently universal perspective to adequately serve its users. “Classifications are being used increasingly across cultures, so if there is a systemic basis for bias we have an ethical responsibility to recognize it” (Olson, 1999, pp. 65-66). The resulting ethical challenges concern “representation and prioritization” (Lee, 2015, pp. 302-303). Thus, while library classifications “have done reasonably well in representing mainstream conceptions of reality” (Olson, 1999, p. 65), they seem to be problematic in a multicultural world where minorities are given more importance. It will readily be seen that there are pros and cons to standardizing classification scheme practices (Lee, 2015, p. 302; cf. Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 379). A certain flexibility is necessary in the present context. Lee (2015, p. 305; cf. Beghtol, 2005, p. 905) makes the point that the “lack of cultural sensitivity of a classification scheme can take different forms. For example, the inability of a classification scheme to accommodate changes to reflect a culture’s particular dynamic can result in

mismatch [*sic*] between the representation of a subject, and the perception of a user. In addition, classification scheme failing to encompass diverse cultural perspectives to represent co-existing cultures can reinforce certain culture(s) and marginalize others. Classification schemes lacking cultural sensitivity can lead to ethical issues". "The influence between culture and classification schemes is mutual" (Lee, 2015, pp. 302-303)

2.7. Ethics and Classification

It is evident that there is a growing recognition that classification, like many library practices, is not neutral. "Metadata is not value-free" (CILIP: Catalogue & Index Issue 191, Haynes). That is why understanding the inherent bias in metadata standards should be "considered a core competency for all metadata work" (ALCTS).

Ethics is understood as "the choice of behaviour that will enhance human good" (Bierbaum, 1994, p. 1). "Seeking the human good", in other words, "is the loadstone of ethics" (Bierbaum, 1994, p. 5). Today, it is generally accepted that ethics are culturally specific, that there is, as Olson stated, "no single universal theory that covers all human values and ethics... every theory has its limits" (Cotterman). Nonetheless, an ethical imperative is in the nature of human life and activities, including cataloging and classification. Thus, cataloging and other tools for the organization of information, the purpose of which is access, "are all subject to ethical decision-making and consequently to ethical lapses, both intentional and unintentional" (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 377).

Koehler and Pemberton "found that consideration of five groups of people was needed to pursue ethically the duties of an information professional: users, employers, practitioners, community, and society at large" (in: Beghtol 2005, p. 905). According to Adler (2013, p. 268), "There are at least three levels on which classifiers bear responsibility: A) to name those conditions that remain unsaid or unnamed, particularly with regard to suffering; B) to recognize their positionality with respect to that being named; and C) to classify with intentionality toward justice and doing the least harm". The ALA acknowledges that "Ethical dilemmas occur when values are in conflict" (ALA Code of Ethics).

Existing classification schemes (such as the DDC, LCC, and UDC) originated in a context that differs from our own, but they continue to be widely used. They enshrine the worldviews of their creators, but have undergone periodic adaptations over time. Catalogers are not in a position, however, to make immediate changes to schemes. They ought, thus, to make ethical policy recommendations as an alternative.

Bullard has noted that "Two approaches have resulted from this understanding: first, to examine our existing systems to identify the types of harmful bias they enact and suggest

revisions to remedy them... and second, to accept the inevitability that our systems will be biased and to establish trust with users through transparency and meaningful choice around what type of bias we enact... A complementary approach... is to look closely at system design and the choices available to workers as they construct, revise, and maintain knowledge organization systems with an aim to inform responsible design practices and training” (CILIP: Catalogue & Index Issue 191).

While the opacity of classification schemes have made them less likely to be criticized outside of the profession, library scholars and professionals have been self-critical. They found many ways in which classification schemes represent culture bias. This is found (1) within the nature of common schemes (for example, in their character as taking a hierarchical and segmenting approach to knowledge and in their over-representation of topics related to the ideas and assumptions of a specific culture) and (2) in the resistance to changing and updating current catalogs. Even when this work is recognized as necessary by cataloging practitioners, they often lack the resources and “pull” within their institutions to dedicate time to making changes to records that are already seen as “done”.

3. Philosophy (how the WG approached this issue [e.g. methodology, how the WG set out about completing this task])

The Classification Working Group of the ALCTS CaMMs, CMSC, and CIG Cataloging Ethics Steering Committee will approach the development of best practices of classification in Canada, the United Kingdom, and the United States by looking at current issues surrounding the ethical creation, maintenance, and use of classification schemes and controlled vocabularies. Through issues recognized by the working group members and a review of the literature (including case studies), the working group will provide an overview of biases inherent in classification, resistance to change, and roadblocks preventing access to resources addressing the needed changes. While endeavoring to acknowledge our own personal and institutional biases, we are dedicated to the useful and positive value of classification. The working group will thus strive to highlight problematic aspects of current classification practices and offer suggestions for catalogers to approach this aspect of their work as ethically as possible.

The Classification Working Group held monthly Zoom meetings between August and November 2019. On these occasions, whether ideas were brainstormed and concerns discussed. The Group determined that organizing two subgroups would facilitate the Group’s work. Members volunteered their subgroup involvement and two leaders volunteered for each

subgroup to help organize and manage the workload. Intra-subgroup discussions took place. Individuals in the group read articles focusing on identifying ethical issues and specific examples of problems in classification. Our aim was not a comprehensive treatment of the subject of the ethics of classification, but rather to offer to Ethics Steering Committee pertinent information that they could then use to formulate the desired Code of Ethics.

4. Examples and Cases

4.1. General Issues from the Literature

It was mentioned above that one of the two fundamental purposes behind classification is access (the other being the theoretical representation of knowledge). Hence, “The ethics of information dissemination is studied in how information is accessed and/or how easy or difficult it is for patrons to find what they are seeking at a library” (Skekel, 2008, p. 22). “These are all issues that have an impact on the result that technical services tasks have on the library community” (Skekel, 2008, p. 23). Bierbaum (1994, p. 7) pointed out that ethical dilemmas are due, in part, to technological developments. Some formal challenges of classification work include the following:

THE CATALOG

- Various difficulties in technical services: access, staff and resources, vendors, catalog maintenance... (Bierbaum, 1994, pp. 11-13)
- Is the use of a classification scheme accurate and consistent? (cf. Skekel, 2008, p. 23)
- Is consistency preferred over perfection? (cf. Hoerman, 2002, p. 32; Bair, 2005, p. 13-14)
- “How clean is the database?” (Skekel, 2008, p. 23)
- The integrity of the catalogue (Skekel, 2008, p. 23)
- Enhanced catalogue (cf. Skekel, 2008, p. 25)

ACCESS

- “do patrons have equal access?” (Skekel, 2008, p. 26)
- Are there ways in which library materials are inaccessible? (Skekel, 2008, p. 23-24)
- “In addition to the unequal access issue, we have the dilemma of standardization and localization” (Lee, 2015, p. 305)
- Some aspects of user information behaviour are beyond the scope of a library catalogue (Skekel, 2008, p. 24)

EXTERNAL CONDITIONS

- “Many external and internal pressures, including those of finances, personalities, pressure from donors, and simple logistics create ethical dilemmas. Bierbaum (1994, p. 12) has listed many of these ethical considerations for catalogers, including decisions

made by administrators that affect access, decisions made by bibliographic utilities and networks, computer storage and power, local telecommunications, building configuration, cuts in staff and budget, backlog management, use of copy-cataloging, outsourcing, and what she calls 'the librarian/support staff caste system'." (Bair, 2005, p. 8)

- Technical and financial, and human resource difficulties (Skekel, 2008, p. 22)
- Are the cataloging personnel well trained in classification? (cf. Skekel, 2008, p. 23; Bair, 2005, p. 14)
- Cataloguer shortage (Hoerman, 2002, p. 34)
- Budget and time limitations to change (Hoerman, 2002, p. 32, 33-34)

AWARENESS & EDUCATION

- The work of catalogers is often undervalued by other librarians. So: "Justify the costs of cataloging. Show the rest of the library what makes the catalog worth the money that is spent on it. To do this, you may have to improve the catalog" (Hoerman, 2002, p. 37)
- The frequent insufficiency of library school instruction in cataloging. Hence, the need for continuing education: "All practicing cataloguers and cataloguing faculty recognize that the education cataloguers receive as a part of their master's degree program is only the beginning" (Hill, 2004 p. 15)

4.2. Case Studies from the Literature

Among the many case studies that exist in the literature, the following is a suggestive selection:

GENERAL

- Ethical dilemmas may arise because of conflicts of interest (Ferris, 2008, p. 174). For example, "a cataloger might decide that when he encounters a resource he finds personally offensive, he will deliberately misclassify it" (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 379)
- The principle library classification systems generally "[promulgate] a western view of how information is structured" (Olson, 1999, p. 66)
- "Library classifications are linear in that they line books up in order on shelves or in a database so that library users can browse. As a result, it is not possible for a classification system to gather simultaneously all aspects or facets of a work, to represent equally the multiple play of differences" (Olson, 2001, p. 653)
- "Different orders of sorting produce different results" (Olson, 2001, p. 653)
- "The trouble with [classification] schemes is that their shortcomings are often overshadowed by their ubiquity, and in practice this often comes at the cost of flexibility in classification" (Sahadath, 2013, p.15)
- Existing classification schemes are inadequate for Islamic literature (Idrees, 2011)

DEWEY DECIMAL CLASSIFICATION

- Many have pointed out that Dewey's order is somewhat arbitrary, especially with regard to the decimal system: "By 'exclusive' use of Arabic numerals, Dewey creates a limit of ten divisions of the universe of knowledge" (Olson, 2001, pp. 649-650)

- Literature: 810-899 (Olson, 2001, p. 651)
- “Mass production is preferred to made-to-order” (Olson, 2001, p. 652)
- Religion: Christianity predominates, occupying classes 220-280, even with recent attempts by DDC to reduce Western Christian bias. DDC has established options for other countries where a different single religion predominates. “However, these options are not helpful for libraries in countries where no single religion predominates” (Dong-Geun & Ji-Suk, 2001; cf. Gresham, 1994)
- According to Olson, “[p]eople of African descent are diasporized throughout DDC by more than just geographical factors” (2001, p. 655).
- According to Lacey: “Unlike Library of Congress, the Dewey Decimal Classification scheme does not have the conflict of interest of operating under the purview of a government body. Of all the major schemes, it is also the most likely to have the resources and agenda to update regularly.

“DDC is structurally limited by its decimal format: all knowledge is divisible by only ten (where an alphabetical system such as LCC has 26 primary subsections to work with, and the more analytico-synthetic UDC has near-infinite possibilities of combination). In this sense, the decimal structure is the least hospitable, and requires more frequent subordination to classify specificities, resulting in very long classmarks. The Dewey system also restricts the use of tables that denote personal characteristics, which limits the number of deviations from the norm that can be represented in notation.

“As a result of Dewey’s rigid hierarchy of priority, these tables privilege some facets of identity over others. As Olson observes, age takes precedence over race to the extent that ‘material focusing on black youth cannot, according to DDC, be classified with material on black people in general’ and as such ‘[p]eople of African descent are diasporized throughout DDC’ (Olson 2001). A similar hostility to hybrid identity categories with regards to ethnicity can be seen in the 12-digit classmarks for Kurds – migration: [304.808991597.]

“The limited analytico-synthetic structure of DDC means that people-related precision requires varying lengths of notation: Blacks (African origin) can be expressed as the six digits 305.896 whereas Chinese Muslims require twice the number of characters: 305.8951/0088297.

“A classmark can be so long that it hinders access and retrieval, as well as giving the visual impression of an incalculable hybridity or an impossibly laborious deviation from the norm. More often than not, native or citizen groups can be expressed more succinctly than migrants, and classmarks elongated beyond easy legibility are evidence of methodological nationalism in action. They demonstrate a scheme that naturalises the nation and is hostile to human movement, so that migrant groups are forced into the

subordinate position of distributed relatives and denied a primary category of their own in a system that prefers to sort subjects by nation-state”

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS CLASSIFICATION

- There is gender bias in LC: “women as exceptions to a male norm” (Olson, 2001, pp. 645-647)
- The Delta Collection at LC (General/Literature): Adler (2017) discusses in detail the history of this collection, intended for erotica and pornography and more generally utilized to suppress materials related to LGBTQ+/queer people. The materials were all physically separated from the general stacks, and Adler (2017) notes that, due to the collection development essentially consisting of seizures from federal offices (i.e., the Postal Service), The Delta Collection served to “classify works out of U.S. memory and identity” (p. 64). Adler (2017) identifies the practices utilized in the collection as disciplinary as well as conducive to erasure and silencing. Access to the collection, which consisted of large amounts of literature deemed to be pornographic, was extremely highly restricted; approval for access to the collection was made on a case-by-case basis, and even then, was rarely granted. Behind studies in sexuality (class H), literature (class P) was/is the class for the vast majority of the collection. Beyond LC’s own stacks, classification and subject bias were also widely utilized as a suppression mechanism via LCSH and LCC. Adler (2017) traces at great length the historical creation and usage of terms surrounding “paraphilia”, the initial subject term which encompassed both topics of homosexuality and those of bestiality, statutory rape, &c. Additionally, Adler (2017) dissects the history of subclass HQ71, which is used to classify works on “paraphilia”. Adler (2017) considers the ways that this classification not only is inaccurate and harmful, but also in the ways that it leads to Othering of subjects. Should literature by gay authors be placed in HQ, or in their rightful section in class P?, &c.

OTHER

- According to Beghtol (2005 p. 905), “general classification systems such as the Dewey Decimal Classification, the Library of Congress Classification, and the Universal Decimal Classification have historically catered to Western Christian assumptions and have provided more detailed analysis for these traditions than they have provided for Eastern Hindu traditions upon which Ranganathan’s Colon Classification (Ranganathan, 1963) is based”
- Zins and Santos (2011) have shown that the three great classification schemes--DDC, LCC, UDC--are generally unsystematic and incomplete at the top two levels of their hierarchies. Compared with the scheme developed by Zins (called the Ten Pillars of Knowledge), which aims at being systematic and complete, only three pillars were shown to be complete and systematic (Zins and Santos, 2011)
- Furthermore, they highlighted certain biases of these schemes. For instance, in the context of religion (and always at the top two levels of the classification schemes), the

DDC and LCC allot significantly more space to Christianity than they do other religions (Zins and Santos, 2011, pp. 880-882).

- Zins and Santos (2011) found that, overall, the areas of literature and history were adequately, completely, and systematically covered in the first two levels of the three classification schemes (DDC, LCC, and UDC)

4.3. Barriers to change

Many barriers contribute to challenges in classifying works in ethically appropriate ways, including lack of time and expertise, as well as the high cost in accessing classification schemes. A selection of these barriers are listed below.

RESISTANCE TO CHANGE IN ATTITUDE OR PRACTICE

Professional catalogers have often spent decades gaining experience in their field and rely on their “catalogers’ judgment” to make principled decisions. As cataloging staff are reduced through reorganizations or attrition, catalogers may feel as though their knowledge is no longer valued, and may become defensive about their expertise and the systems they work within, losing the capacity to reflect and respectfully engage with critiques of classification systems.

Duarte and Belarde-Lewis’ approach to change in schemes for Indigenous ontologies suggests change should be a “skillset very much built on patience and an appreciation for long-term strategic incremental change” (p. 146). These skills, along with others listed in the ALCTS Core Competencies for Cataloging and Metadata for Professional Librarians such as recognizing multiple cultures and diverse populations, prioritizing user needs, and valuing diverse viewpoints and ways of doing things, must be seen as essential to classifying ethically.

LACK OF SUBJECT SPECIALISTS

Classification decisions often depend on catalogers’ judgement, which is dependent on the information the cataloger has gathered on the topic through experience and the resource itself. The breadth of material collected by most libraries means that most catalogers must be generalists, and the kind of cultural competence that is required for many sensitive classification decisions is often not reflected in cataloging expertise. When catalogers lack enough context for classification their decisions can result in items being classed inappropriately.

“The lack of cultural sensitivity of a classification scheme can take different forms. For example, the inability of a classification scheme to accommodate changes to reflect a culture’s particular dynamic can result in mismatch between the representation of a

subject, and the perception of a user. In addition, classification scheme failing to encompass diverse cultural perspectives to represent co-existing cultures can reinforce certain culture(s) and marginalize others. Classification schemes lacking cultural sensitivity can lead to ethical issues” (Lee, 2015, p. 305)

This example demonstrates the consequences of insufficient subject expertise by both classification creators and catalogers applying classification standards:

“Māori materials according to Western concepts and terminology: “See in terms of English all of our stories get called ‘Myths and Legends’ but for Māori, that is not a good thing at all because a lot of that is about whakapapa [genealogy; relationships] – that’s right – they’re not myths at all – for Māori they’re not Māori library users would never think to search under the subject heading “Myths and Legends” for information about Maui, because for Māori, Maui is a very real part of their genealogy and history.” (Gilman, 2006, p.28).

COST OF CLASSIFICATION TOOLS

Unlike previous decades which relied on regularly-released print editions, classification now changes on a continual basis. Catalogers are expected to stay abreast of any changes, which requires access to tools on a subscription basis.

- annual cost of Classification Web (access to LCC): from \$525 (single user) to \$1,960 (30 or more concurrent users, + \$135 for each group of 5 additional users)
- annual cost of WebDewey (access to DDC): from \$336.60 (single user) to \$1,115.20 (10 users or more)
- annual cost of Cataloger’s Desktop (access to cataloging standards tools): from \$525 (single user) to \$ 1,645 (29 users, + \$185 for each group of 5 additional users)

Because of the pricing structure of these web-based tools, the cost per user is much higher for smaller institutions. Restrictive budgets mean that these tools may not be available to smaller institutions, who then rely on classification decisions made by other institutions, preventing them from making local decisions in their classification.

LACK OF TRAINING

Catalogers need continuing education in regard to the changing environment within the profession to prevent causing harm in both “access and misinformation” due to “inaccurate labeling in classification, subject analysis, and authority files in library catalogs” (Bair 2005). To

participate in the conversations that incite these changes it is often necessary to join professional institutions and travel to conferences. Without support from one's institution to participate in these activities, it is out of financial reach of many catalogers to engage with changes in classification.

LACK OF TIME

Most catalogers have many tasks, particularly as cataloging departments are commonly shrinking. Many are required to participate in other activities as well as cataloging. In the case of a backlog of materials and competing priorities, it can be challenging to take time to reflect on ethical approaches to cataloging work.

Case study: In *Adapting the Brian Deer Classification System for the Aanischaaukamikw Cree Cultural Institute* Swanson wrote about the time and resources required to organize resources in a classification system developed for first nations libraries. While the classification was more consistent with the resources described, the library still needed to spend significant time learning about the system, and "call numbers had to be invented, a monumental task for the library technician." (Swanson, p. 572) While the creation of a catalog based off an Indigenous-centered classification scheme is a greater challenge than many tasks related to classification, their work reflects the time commitment necessary to reflect and assess classification decisions.

Questioning assumptions and reflecting on the consequences of classification decisions are more time-consuming than following established rules and routines; administration focus on statistics and efficiency can curtail ethical decision making.

LACK OF PROFESSIONAL STAFFING

Cataloging and metadata departments are often a low priority within their institutions, meaning that when a staff member leaves or retires the position may not be filled. This creates additional burdens for remaining cataloging staff or other technical services staff.

"We can contrast this view of bibliography or knowledge organization with other work practices that do not honor skilled labor, apprenticeship, and are absent of aesthetic interest. Some consider bibliography as an act that requires no skill, that can be done by anyone, and is only functional, not a product of labor by a trained and skilled craftsperson. In recent developments in the Hathi Trust project, we have seen how this latter work ethic has resulted in low-quality metadata and a need for more skilled hands

to create more robust and viable representations of the now millions of digitized volumes (York and Downie, 2012).

Some institutions rely on paraprofessional staff to complete much of their cataloging. Choosing untrained catalogers to do professional work can have dire consequences to the quality of an institution's collection (Bair 2005). Although reclassification may be suggested by changes in classification schemes, many libraries lack the necessary staffing to take on projects, leading to outdated and inappropriate classification decisions remaining extant.

"'Better and quicker and cheaper' is always at a price, and the price is the violent reshaping of objects to fit the preconceptions of the knowing subject." (Olson, H. A., 2001)

LACK OF TRANSPARENCY IN CLASSIFICATION SCHEMES

The complexity of cataloging structures and classification rules can make the process opaque to both newer library workers and administration. While there are resources available that list every revision, many library workers lack the time to keep up-to-date with the constant changes in systems like LCC or DDC. The process behind making changes to classification systems is not understood by most catalogers.

"To regain trust and authority designers and editors of classification systems must embrace the principle of transparency and explain their decisions and show the conceptual and philosophical foundations for their systems" (J.-E. Mai).

DIFFICULTY IN REVISING ENTRENCHED SCHEMES

LC and DDC are products of a specific society and culture; revisions to these schemes have not kept pace with societal and cultural changes. They are both monolithic international standards; in today's jargon, they are not "nimble." On the one hand, they are reinforced by constant use: "As they become entrenched in information infrastructures, it becomes more difficult to resist or change them. Perhaps more importantly, catalogers reiterate and reinforce the authorized classifications each time they apply them to a bibliographic text." (Adler 2017) On the other hand, even when revision is desired, bureaucracy is a barrier: "It also helps us to appreciate the depth of the hegemonic rules of order that, through the disciplining of knowledge and power, makes it challenging for groups of concerned individuals requesting revisions in cataloging and classification systems to see those changes through." (Duarte and Belarde-Lewis 2015)

Programs like SACO provide the opportunity to suggest new classification numbers and offer suggestions for revision to existing ones, but SACO membership can be challenging for smaller institutions to maintain, as institutional support and resources to devote to this work may be lacking. A dearth of information about opportunities to join SACO funnels and other less intensive ways to participate in classification revision (such as the Cataloging Lab) makes the revision process seem out of touch for library workers in smaller institutions.

4.4. Case Studies from Work Experience

- a. The “N” Problem: While the Subject term “Negroes” has been updated--first to “Afro-Americans” in the late 1970s (Beall, p.38) then to “African Americans” or “Blacks” in 2000 (LCSH Weekly List 47)--the “ N4” Cutter remains. In 2016, Ganin posted a list of “ Every Occurrence of N4 in the Library of Congress Classification Scheme” (Ganin, 2006)
- b. Lack of mentorship (due to lack of funds or personnel) to ensure adequate and effective training for new cataloging staff
- c. Priorities for cataloging work sent by administration; many catalogers have little control over how they allocate their working hours
- d. Lack of collection strength in a given area or lack of the library’s connection with a particular community can lead to “the uninformed leading the uninformed” in terms of appropriate classification for works pertaining to certain groups
- e. Outsourcing of particular cataloging processes can lead to a degradation of internal professional practice
- f. When catalogers are forced to add and edit records in batches or above a particular speed, proper attention cannot be given to intellectual control
- g. The technical side of technical services are often emphasized, leading towards a lack of understanding of the human, failable, and unperfectable aspects of classification
- h. One-time fixes are not long-term solutions; language continues to evolve, and education/training and local changes will always be an ongoing process. When resources are allotted, this is rarely done sustainably
- i. Lack of institutional understanding regarding the contributions of technical services. Often this results in the cataloger becoming an order taker to the other departments without the proper understanding of the cataloging process and little regard for proper procedures. This can compromise the integrity of the catalog.
- j. Lack of support for new catalogers (due to insufficient funds or personnel)

5. Recommendations and Best Practices

5.1. Recommendations for Specific Case Studies (based on section 4.4)

(a) When revisions to classifications are made, libraries should commit to relabeling works in their collections, especially with questions of identification of people of various cultures.

(b) Library workers should have networks of mentors available. Mentorship should be encouraged so experienced catalogers/classificationists coach younger professionals.

(c) Library workers should be given autonomy over classification decisions as much as possible. Library workers should be active participants in their own professional development, working with management to recognize gaps in training and gaining knowledge over time

(e) Outsourcing work should be carefully weighed with the potential losses, including lower quality in metadata and inability to institute or maintain local practices.

(f) The advantages in speed and convenience in batch processes should be weighed against the quality of the metadata gained

(g) Library administrators should be aware that classification is not an exact science and requires consistent training and cultural awareness

5.2. General Recommendations

GENERAL

- The literature highlights two types of codes of ethics: descriptive codes and prescriptive codes. Librarians seem in general to prefer the descriptive type. We would value a code of ethics that provides guidelines instead of prescriptions
- Ethics may be understood as follows: “Ethics is concerned with personal conduct and ethical behavior that defines a high standard of personal responsibility. Acting ethically means making decisions based on principles of responsiveness, fairness, efficiency, expertise, service, and security” (Ferris, 2008, p. 174). A code of ethics should clarify what is meant by “ethical” (cf. Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 378).
- Catalogers have an ethical duty with regard to other catalogers, other librarians, their institution, and library/catalog users (Ferris, 2008, p. 176)
- “Cataloging should identify and make accessible a library’s resources – in all formats. That identification and access should be swift and painless. The language and structure of catalog entries should be familiar and comprehensible. And catalogers should recognize that they do what they do not to please bosses and not to mindlessly adhere

to rules and protocols, but to serve their information desk colleagues and the public. That's whom they're working for" (Berman, 2000; in Shoemaker, 2015, p. 356)

- "The one glitch in considering ethical questions regarding libraries and access to information is that every library is unique and different, and meant to be that way" (Skekel, 2008, p. 21)
- We should seek "creative ways to accommodate context for users while still maintaining bibliographic control. For an individual cataloger, it would be time consuming if not impossible to consider or know all factors of each individual user who might possibly search for the resource" (Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 380)
- "The most important thing about bibliographical control is the *content* and the controlled nature of that content, not the denotations of the content" (Gorman, 2002, p. 4)

CATALOG WORK

- Catalog maintenance to ensure consistency and accuracy (cf. Hoerman, 2002, p. 37)
- Catalogers, librarians, and administration must understand that if the work of information organization is important, then reclassification is as important as the original classification
- Currency of domain knowledge (CILIP: Catalogue & Index Issue 191, Bullard)
- Catalogers employ their own judgement to make decisions about how materials are cataloged and classified with the user in mind
- "Catalogers should be careful not to contribute to the misuse or distortion of information through inaccurate, careless, or minimal cataloging, and they should report and correct errors in the shared databases" (Bair, 2005, p. 7)

VALUES & BIAS

- We recognize that some of the original values and presuppositions in the DDC, LCC and other classification schemes do not reflect those that predominate in contemporary society. However, we also recognize the usefulness of such schemes, the impracticality of completely replacing them (?), and the efforts made by professionals in each context to improve their systems.
- We do not impose our personal ideas about morality or the ideas of a particular ideology.
- We recognize that ideas and values differ and change across space and time, namely from culture to culture, society to society, and individual to individual. However, beyond such differences and changes, we seek to promote the human good through our work.
- There has been an attempt to affirm that librarians (catalogers included) play a "neutral" function (cf. Wilson, 1983, p. 190; in Mai, 2010, p. 633). It is true, however, that "classifications are epistemological statements; they do say something about the world, and they embed politics, religion, and moral [*sic*]" (Mai, 2010, p. 633). While an absolute neutrality is impossible, it seems that catalogers, like librarians, should not necessarily be partisans. The users of their systems must be adequately served. So that is, in a way, the determining factor. Here, we rejoin Mai (2010, p. 634) in emphasizing the importance of trust.
- According to Mai (2010), catalogers need to acknowledge bias while working towards establishing trust through transparency. Beghtol (2005, p. 909) also encourages

catalogers to be aware of biases as a means of mitigating the problems that may arise from them.

- In the 19th century, Harris emphasized that “[e]very scheme of classification rests upon some philosophical system as its basis” (Harris, 1870). As we saw, the philosophical basis of much 20th century classification (e.g., DDC and LCC) assumed a rigid, almost monolithic form. Today, the relativity or contextual nature of classification schemes and their philosophical bases are being increasingly recognized. Hjørland (in Mai, 2010, p. 633), pointed out that no one mapping is the “true” mapping. That being the case, it is worthwhile to use the insights about the relativity of classification schemes, while recognizing that there may also be a relativistic bias. The adequacy of a classification scheme for a specific purpose would be a good goal to aim for (cf. Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 221-222).
- Both positivist and postmodernist assumptions can be problematic
- Regarding current relativizing thought, it may be worthwhile pointing out that a relativistic bias can exist and is not necessarily desirable. Olson’s work is a prominent example of current thought. Yet, in a review of her work, Miksa pointed out that, although containing salient points, it is not without its own important biases and assumptions. This makes her work less trustworthy than it might seem upon an uncritical reading. As he puts it, Olson “has conducted a rich experiment in the eisegesis of very selected texts” (Miksa, 2007, p. 79).
- Adequacy and realism seem to be better goal to strive for than either a rigid and rationalistic positivism or an exaggerated relativism. As Beghtol (2005, p. 903) explains, “Policultural information retrieval often depends on the adequacy of knowledge representation and organization systems such as cataloguing codes, metadata systems, thesauri, ontologies, taxonomies, and general and special purpose classification systems”.
- We must beware of exchanging one set of biases for another (Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 231-232). Although it is generally agreed that bias is inevitable, catalogers should tread cautiously. Although “neutrality” (as a kind of “valueless value”) is practically impossible, catalogers should carefully weigh the reasons behind their work and establish “a safeguard against the arbitrary manipulation of social structures by one group over and against another” (John Rawls; in Fox and Reece, 2012, p. 380)
- Neutrality is not a good goal to work towards. It is unattainable. We need to understand and work with our biases, and to cultivate self-awareness. We, and our tools, are flawed. (ACTS news blog: CAMMS Forum: Power that is moral, August 19, 2017)
- Neutrality and Adequacy: “ensuring that resources are discoverable and accessible, e.g. cataloguing resources without bias or prejudice when the content may be diametrically opposed to our own culture or beliefs; subject cataloguing using controlled vocabularies whose headings and terminology may not be reflective of modern society; ensuring that we classify and categorise inclusively” (CILIP: Catalogue & Index Issue 191, Daniels)
- Use the idea of “CULTURAL WARRANT” -- Within the context of modern society, “cultural warrant” can legitimize a classification scheme or way of representing the world, thus helping to establish trust for its users (Beghtol, 2005, p. 904). “Cultural warrant

means that the personal and professional cultures of information seekers and information workers warrant the establishment of appropriate fields, terms, categories, or classes in a knowledge representation and organization system... In addition, cultural warrant means that a particular knowledge representation and organization system is more useful for some people than it is for others because each system is predicated on the assumptions made by a particular small or large discourse community, knowledge domain or culture" (Beghtol, 2005, p. 905)

- "One way of resolving these kinds of divergent values among different groups [see discussion on "cultural warrant"] is to adopt a higher level ethical foundation that can bridge the various kinds of cultural differences that have been used to underpin particular knowledge representation and organization systems" (Beghtol, 2005, p. 905) -- Beghtol proposes the Universal Declaration of Human Rights (2005, p. 905). She proposes the idea of "cultural hospitality" (Beghtol, 2005, p. 905)
- "Catalogers should be vigilant in ensuring that they do not purposely or inadvertently "censor" or "lose" information through inaccuracy and the use, misuse, or nonuse of encoding, subject headings, classification schemes, and authority control. Truth is defined as "conformity with facts, agreement with reality," notes Britz, who maintains that "this definition suggests an important norm for information-related occupations (such as librarians, journalists, and information managers) as regards the content and quality of information" (Bair, 2005, p. 7).
- "we are locating harmful actions by looking for cases of exceptionalism, ghettoization, omission, inappropriate structure of the standard, biased terminology, erasure, and pathologization" (Adler, 2013, p.269); "we identify three key actions: bias, erasure, and pathologization" (Adler, 2013, p.271)

POLICIES

- Promote the wider use of local policies in cataloging departments to guide professionals
- Libraries (or cataloging departments) should produce/provide clear policies. Policies can work with existing standards—recognize their imperfect character while making use of them.
- Encourage the development and use of policies (Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 228; Bair, 2005, pp. 8-9)
- Need to "avoid arbitrariness"—"by crafting and abiding by a... policy" (Mathiesen and Fallis, 2008, p. 232-233) [Said about selection and collection development, but may be applied to classification and cataloging]

EDUCATIONAL OUTREACH

- Catalogers need to educate other librarians/public about metadata issues/ethics and concerns
- The importance of educational outreach and promoting peer teaching and mentorship (e.g., on-the-job training, continuing education programs, etc.)
- Advocate for continuing education opportunities

- Raise educational awareness for both library administrators and colleagues, and the public at large: (a) recognition of the value of cataloguing in general (and of classification in particular), (b) telling the technical services story, and (c) explaining why our work is important.
- The work of catalogers is often undervalued by other librarians. So: "Justify the costs of cataloguing. Show the rest of the library what makes the catalog worth the money that is spent on it. To do this, you may have to improve the catalog" (Hoerman, 2002, p. 37)

PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT

- Commitment to professional development: acquire a sufficient knowledge of classification procedures and standards, as well as local community needs.
- Advocate and promote continuing cataloging and classification instruction (cf. Bair, 2005, p. 14; Hoerman, 2002, pp. 35-36)
- Help catalogers to get out of their "provincialism" (cf. Hoerman, 2002, p. 32)

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