VRA EAC Community Hour: **Reparative Metadata Workflows with Cristina Berron**

Monday, February 23rd, at 12:00 pm Pacific / 3:00 pm Eastern

February's Community Hour Guest Speaker is Cristina Berron (she/her), Resident Archivist for the Benson Latin American Special Collections at UT Austin. **Cristina will discuss her work developing a reparative metadata workflow aimed at identifying and remediating harmful, inaccurate, or outdated (H.O.I) terms in the UT Libraries' catalog (ALMA/Primo).** She will also delve into her investigative process, explaining how she conducted an environmental scan of other institutions' reparative workflows and adopted a few of their strategies and methods to help streamline the remediation process, both focused and bulk workflows, for the Subject Standards Group (SSG).

Speaker bio:
Cristina Berron is the Resident Archivist for the Benson Latin American Special Collections at UT Austin, where she focuses on processing both physical and digital archival materials. She is committed to increasing the visibility and accessibility of archival collections related to underrepresented communities. She actively collaborates with colleagues across the libraries, investigating new tools and reparative practices to best describe archival resources. She holds a Master of Science in Information Science (MSIS) from the University of Tennessee, Knoxville.

Moderator: Lael Ensor-Bennett

Notetaker: Devon Murphy

Notes:

- Please keep your microphones muted--please use a reaction, raise your hand, or use the chat to indicate that you would like to speak.

- **Video not required**, virtual backgrounds welcome (be mindful of your virtual background selections). Feel free to add your pronouns to your Zoom name.
    - How to change your name during a Zoom meeting
    - How to provide captions via PowerPoint or Google Slides live captions
        - https://webcaptioner.com/ - Free Captioning Right In Your Browser

- If you'd like to ask a question anonymously, please send your question through a private chat to any moderators listed above.

- **Community Hours are not recorded** for the sake of attendees' privacy and so that all attendees feel safe to express any concerns or questions they may have on various topics.

Attendees are encouraged to take notes under the 'Community Notes' section of this document.

EAC webpage: https://www.vraweb.org/equitable-action-committee
EAC email: ea@vraweb.org
Submit a topic for a future Community Hour: https://forms.gle/cAx7na4FkZSJvHeS7

We have put a CC BY-NC-SA license on the document. Please feel free to copy, re-use, and modify any portion of this document that you'd like for non-commercial purposes. You must give appropriate credit, provide a link to the license, and indicate if changes were made. We're interested in knowing if others have found this document helpful, so we'd appreciate a heads-up if others are using it (ea@vraweb.org), though please don't feel like you need to ask permission in these exceptional circumstances.

Thank you! Visual Resources Equitable Action Committee

`12Discussion Prompts:

- Have you all organized reparative description projects for your catalogs/digital assets/etc.?
    - Have you encountered challenges? If yes, what ways (proposed or implemented) have you discussed to overcome them?
    - What resources would it take to make these projects move beyond one-offs?
    - What differences are there between reparative description work and other metadata processes? (Idea being…if we can identify perceived differences, maybe we can make this more successful)
- How do you approach processes that aren't working as expected?

Community Notes & Resources:

- Research Harmful Metadata Remediation Workflows
- For headings you've modified for PNDR, have they displayed correctly in the facet section in Primo? Or does it revert?
    - No issues yet!
- Thanks for this presentation! Just to clarify (and sorry if I missed this), but is it library users/patrons that are submitting terms for review through your form? vs. staff for example

    - Not a public form for users/patrons right now, though we do want terms to be submitted by others. Terms come from finding aids/DAMS in our local vocabularies, keeping track on large spreadsheet, opening it up to librarians
- how does voting on the adoption of a new term work? How many people vote? Is it by majority? Does it need to be unanimous?
    - Already have list of terms to work thru, all vote collectively on what term to work on from this list, after list, will grow thru submissions, maybe open it to more folks for voting, grow the team or what more opinions we need
- I was wondering what standards or examples you used to replace outdated terms (i.e., standards for what the new terms should be) and who is usually chosen to be on the review committees?
    - Volunteer based, archivists, access systems (alma managers), metadata folks, scholars lab librarian, basically are you willing and do you have time – part n part subject analysis and research, does it make sense to adopt
- Has your committee ever considered using local notes fields in the NZ-linked records for staff to see that decision-making context to changed terms? What kind of preservation do you do for your documentation?
    - Did have discussion about local notes, WRLC did this practice, can't write these local notes right now though…maybe hopefully in the future! So it's all in spreadsheet documentation rn (rationale/reasoning), transition to local wiki soon hopefully too
- Just to clarify, when you said creating authority records are difficult for staff, are you creating records from scratch? I know Alma allows you to copy existing LCSH and work from there for example.
    - Yes it is time consuming! Catalogers don't have the training at all :C need to investigate time to train and then also want to record our local terms themselves, feedback collected from our catalogers reaffirmed this point
- Did you have to advocate to anyone at your institution to be able to move forward with this work, are people supportive, or is this an "do now, ask for forgiveness later" situation? How much of the library is aware of this work?
    - Before SSG, do have another working group "Harmful Language and Content Working Group," discuss the broad scope of harmful material and creating guidelines, didn't want to force a lot of work on this group, so volunteers came from this group too, SSG name also a way to accommodate library policy.
- What has been the most fulfilling aspect of this project for your residency?
    - Love that ppl were open to cold emailing! Open community, not alone! So many ppl are passionate! Happy to share files!
- Fascinated by HOI terminology, would it be helpful if orgs like VRA and ARLIS/NA also adopted terminology like "outdated/dating"
    - Yes, some of these terms are outdated, and also a way to make this work still possible no matter where you are, good way to continue this process
    - Yes – something this is now coming to everyone
    - Document shared above has all research, public wikis, and emails to help with this work

- Strategies to refocus - connect to a broader project
- but I was wondering when you talk about focussing on ALMA sets, does that mean identifying and changing different terms instead of waiting for specific records to be flagged?
    - In alma backend can save queries into lists, “logical sets” so we can filter out institutions that don't want their terms remediated, can export these terms into spreadsheets, each set made for each team member to work on
- Cataloging Advisory group in ARLIS/NA and ArtSACO page have form for ppl to submit, has anyone submitted there? Do ppl have to do themselves instead of waiting for general public?
    - Sometimes it does come through research of other institutions’ work, and also other fields’ resources/changes. Ex. problem children
    - Yes, have also received feedback from researchers using digital collections form on website
    - Sometimes informally from donors
- What differences are there between reparative description work and other metadata processes? (Idea being…if we can identify perceived differences, maybe we can make this more successful) – how do we make this part of regular metadata process! Instead of like these big committees
    - Possibly for newer graduates as part of their group, not separate part of their work if you’re just passionate, so when working on finding aids it’s just part of it, shouldnt just be an extra step, should be done right there with other actions. Training ppl makes it easier to adopt in everyday work
    - How do we work with our system’s limitations, like this workflow is how we can work as a team with ALMA, we try to use their proprietary tools, but you can still try it out and adapt if you don’t have ALMA (ex. OpenRefine). Ex. TRLN had whole diff system but still a helpful example
- in archives and library sciences, how do we create terms for librarians to speak to each other across institutions ?
    - Ex. what can VRA do to help with this?
    - Connecting thru orgs and list servs was really helpful in understanding what reparative metadata was, way to use outside institution resources - first strong step of being able to communicate each other, esp if no resource to attend conferences
    - Great opportunity to try and advocate for this work to be in everyday work
    - Maybe using professional standards to support this work too
    - Join EAC ! ea@vraweb.org
    - Listserv registration - VRA-L — VRA Visual Resources Association
- It seems to me that one of the tricky aspects of this work is that it often implicates extant / legacy records not just new ones, so special projects are often required instead of just another step in the creation of new records
    - Especially true with small staff! Sometimes going forward with newer records is an option

- If you have a positionality to speak more freely, do it, so not burdening shoulders of those most likely to face consequences for this kind of work, use ur position!!
- If you work with digi collections, you are not bound by as many subject rules, even if just 5-20 min, go do it!
- I would also say it's important for us to implement these workflows now so that when folks in library school now/in the future are at these institutions, it's easier for them to keep it going with the training they'll (hopefully!) have
    - And document them
    - Sometimes positions filled by ppl not gone to library school so documentation key also to fill them in
    - Sometimes important too to learn how this work affects others, research it, get that understanding (ex. Understand how a local authority record is made)
    - Give others grace! And yourself
- Could go thru iterative process with slim authority record dont have to use all fixed fields so it can be a bit easier
- And if you do this type of work, share it at the VRA annual conference so other institutions can benefit! https://www.vraweb.org/annual-conference
    - Virtual travel awards for registration is a thing! Applyyyyy