Decolonizing Description
Changing Metadata in Response to the Truth and Reconciliation Commission

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University of Alberta Libraries

Netspeed 2017
“The University of Alberta acknowledges that we are situated on Treaty 6 territory, traditional lands of First Nations and Métis people”.
Setting the Stage
“Education is what got us here and education is what will get us out”

(Justice Murray Sinclair, Chair, Truth and Reconciliation Commission)
The University of Alberta is “committed to respectful relations with First Nations, Métis, and Inuit peoples” and will “develop, in consultation and collaboration with internal and external community stakeholders, a thoughtful, respectful, meaningful, and sustainable response to the report of the Truth and Reconciliation Commission”.

“The CFLA Truth and Reconciliation Committee exists to promote initiatives in all types of libraries to advance reconciliation by supporting the Truth and Reconciliation Commission Calls to Action and to promote collaboration in these issues across the Canadian library communities”

(CFLA Indigenous Matters Committee Mandate)
● First Nations Information Connection
● Personal Librarian Program
● Indigenous Internship Program
● Traditional Knowledge and Cultural Awareness for Library Staff

Photo: Anne Carr-Wiggin
Unsettling our Practice
To investigate, define and propose a plan of action for how UAL can more accurately, appropriately, and respectfully represent Indigenous peoples and contexts through our descriptive metadata practices.
DDWG Membership

- **Sharon Farnel** (Metadata Coordinator, Chair)
- **Ian Bigelow** (Cataloguing Coordinator)
- **Anne Carr-Wiggin** (UAL Indigenous Initiatives, NEOS Manager)
- **Debbie Feisst** (Public Service Librarian, HT Coutts Library)
- **Denise Koufogiannakis** (Associate University Librarian for Bibliographic Services, Access Services, Collection Strategies)
- **Kayla Lar-Son** (Indigenous Intern)
Alberta is home to many diverse Indigenous communities, including Blackfoot (Niitsítapi), Cree (Nêhiyaw), Dene, Nakoda (Stoney), Saulteaux (Anishinaabe). There are 45 First Nations in three Treaty areas (Treaties 6, 7 and 8), as well as other groups who have not signed treaties. The most commonly spoken First Nations languages are Blackfoot, Cree (mainly Plains Cree but some Woods Cree), Chipewyan, Dene, Sarcee and Stoney (Nakoda Sioux). Métis people live throughout the province, including in the Métis Settlements. In Alberta the Indigenous languages spoken by Métis people include Cree and Michif.
• challenges of describing Indigenous materials with existing, inadequate schemas
• foundations of Indigenous knowledge organization compared to current practice
• appropriate subject access and descriptive practices are a social justice issue and a moral imperative
• need for relationship building in the creation of descriptive metadata
Environmental Scan and Consultations

Local/Internal
- UAL: Archives, Digital Repositories, Digitization
- UA: students, alumni

External
- University of British Columbia
- Association of Manitoba Archives
- Library and Archives Canada
- Vendors (OCLC, Proquest)

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<table>
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<tr>
<th>Current LCSH</th>
<th>Change to... OR delete</th>
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<td>Abused Indigenous children</td>
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<tr>
<td>African Americans--Relations with Indians</td>
<td>African Americans--Relations with Indigenous peoples</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Algonquian Indians</td>
<td>Algonquians</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algonquian Indians--First contact with Europeans</td>
<td>Algonquians--First contact with Europeans</td>
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<td>Algonquian Indians--Religion</td>
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<td>Algonquian Indians--Social life and customs</td>
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<tr>
<td>Algonquian mythology</td>
<td>DELETE</td>
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<tr>
<td>Allotting agents (Indian allotments)</td>
<td>Allotting agents (Indigenous allotments)</td>
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<tr>
<td>American drama--Indian authors</td>
<td>American drama--Indigenous authors</td>
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<tr>
<td>American fiction--Indian authors</td>
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<tr>
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<tr>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>American prose literature--Indian authors</td>
<td>American prose literature--Indigenous authors</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
- 5,374,506 UA titles
- 62,459 identified with relevant subjects
- 9149 unique headings identified
Existing Workflows: ILS

Resource description
- Original
- Copy
- Vendor metadata review

Automated control maintenance
- Review
- Automated processes

- 5,000 Peel records identified
- 1,200 ERA records identified
Existing Metadata: Local Repositories

- indian art--north america
- indian dance--north america
- indian reservations
- indians of north america
- indians of north america--alberta
- indians of north america--alberta--residential schools
- indians of north america--alcohol use
- indians of north america--art
- indians of north america--attitudes
- indians of north america--british columbia
- indians of north america--british columbia--languages
- indians of north america--british columbia--residential schools
- indians of north america--canada--newspapers

- Indians of North America--Alberta--Education. 15
- Indians of North America--Canada--Education. 13
- Tlingit Indians 12
- Clothing & dress 11
- People 11
- medicine 8
- Alberta 5
- Indians in literature. 5
- Alberta--Antiquities. 4
- Cree Indians--Education. 4
- infants 4
- Antiquities 3
- Archaeology 3
- Artifacts 3
- Eskimo Prehistory 3
- History 3
- Indian Prehistory 3
- Indian philosophy--North America. 3
- Indians of North America--Alberta--Government relations. 3
- Indians of North America--Alberta. 3
Existing Workflows: Local Repositories

Resource description

○ Original created by UAL staff
○ Original created by content contributors
○ Derived from other sources
○ Small-scale projects with vendors

Quality assurance

○ In-house review and update on a project basis

That UAL take the lead on working with Indigenous communities and partners to develop revised subject headings reflective of the **Alberta** and **appropriate Northern contexts**.

That UAL **engage an individual** to coordinate and conduct consultation and outreach which is groundwork critical to the success of moving forward with this project.

That UAL **retroactively apply** revised subject headings to appropriate library resources, including cataloguing records within the ILS, and metadata applied to the institutional repository, archives, and locally digitized collections.

That going forward, the same approved subject headings will be **applied to new content** added to our library resources.
Decolonizing Description
Current Work

- community consultation
- building new relationships
- strengthening existing relationships
- listening and learning

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Things to Consider

Multiple processes needed
- metadata in different formats (e.g., MARC, XML)
- metadata in different systems (e.g., ILS, IR)

Choice of metadata element for coding
- e.g., 6xx #7 $2

Developing procedures and tools
In-house process or via a vendor service

Image: WInterForce Media (https://goo.gl/images/DzPi3n), Public Domain
Things to consider

- relationship to existing headings
  - keep and display?
  - keep but shadow?
- communication with staff and user communities
- ensuring timely updates to external aggregators (e.g., WorldCat, HathiTrust)

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Things to consider

- required human and financial resources
- staff training
- processes for
  - consultation on and revision of new and changed headings
  - ongoing staff and user community feedback

Challenges

- staff training
- automated system updates and infrastructure
- multiple repositories and user communities
- creator contributed metadata
- developing shareable workflows and tools

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Opportunities

- reconciliation with Indigenous user communities
- more inclusive repository content and services
- cooperation with like minded institutions to create effective approaches
- developing shareable workflows and tools
- being part of a community making positive change

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Parting Thoughts

if you want to see different results, do things differently.

The Alison Show: https://goo.gl/images/wiQDRs
Thank You!

Questions/Comments?

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