Description

The Rare Books and Manuscripts Section Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging (RBMS CVRMC) is an ANSI/NISO Z39.19 compliant controlled vocabulary that provides terminology designed to facilitate access to special collections resources, especially rare books and manuscripts.

RBMS CVRMC content is maintained by the Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group (CVEG), a committee of the Rare Books and Manuscripts Section (RBMS) of the Association of College and Research Libraries (ACRL), a division of the American Libraries Association (ALA). The committee's charge, membership and administrative documents are available on the ACRL and RBMS websites.

The RBMS CVRMC is made available online via the Library of Congress Linked Data Service (LC LDS) at id.loc.gov/vocabulary/rbmscv.html.

Scope

Scope of Work statement

The RBMS Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging maintains terms specific to the needs of the rare materials community. New terms are added at the request of community members and vetted for inclusion by the Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group. General terms that are already accessible in other equivalent vocabularies will not be added unless a specific, differentiating rare materials definition exists.

Note: This scope applies to the work of the CVEG after the vote passed by CVEG and the Bibliographic Standards Committee at ALA Annual 2018. It is expected that future vocabulary editors will respect this scope, but it is understood that as best practices shift the best interest of the community and description of rare materials resources generally is paramount.

Bias Statement

CVEG acknowledges responsibility for our role in the deeply embedded and systemic racism, both historical and current, that is apparent throughout the RBMS CVRMC. We also recognize that the current and historical membership of CVEG and RBMS is predominantly white. We are

making continuous efforts to improve those biases of which we are aware, and we are committed to the continual reevaluation or redressing of issues within the integrated thesaurus. The editors welcome any and all feedback regarding harm caused or suggestions for term or scope changes or additions.

Furthermore, the six original RBMS thesauri (see the following History section) were developed with a focus on Western book history and traditions, and we wish to acknowledge this shortfall and proceed with transparency in the development and ongoing use of the RBMS CVRMC. While we hope to fill in the gaps of represented book history, we recognize that this will involve expertise and collaboration outside the committee, and change to the thesaurus will be done with care and deliberation.

Guiding principles

- The Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging responds to the needs of the rare materials community and capitalizes on the community's expertise to achieve maximum impact for the rare materials description community of practice.
- The CVRMC is developed in the context of an environment with evolving technological capabilities, companion standards, and numerous other major controlled vocabularies.
- The CVRMC endeavors to retain relevance, longevity and consistency over time.

History

The RBMS CVRMC was originally developed as six separate, print thesauri in response to the creation of dedicated MARC fields for recording the genre and physical characteristics of cataloged materials. The Bibliographic Standards Committee (BSC; originally the Standards Committee) of RBMS was tasked with developing thesauri of terms for use in these fields. The first thesaurus, *Genre Terms*, was published in 1983. It was followed by *Printing and Publishing Evidence* in 1986; *Provenance Evidence* and *Binding Terms* in 1988; *Type Evidence* and *Paper Terms* in 1990; and a second edition of *Genre Terms* in 1991. All six thesauri were migrated to a digital format hosted on the RBMS website in 2005, as the RBMS Controlled Vocabularies for Use in Rare Book and Special Collections Cataloging. Under the aegis of BSC, the Controlled Vocabularies Editorial Group was created in July 2014 for the dedicated maintenance and continued development of the vocabularies.

With the adoption of *Resource Description and Access* (RDA) as a national cataloging standard in 2013 by the Library of Congress, development of cataloging tools has begun to shift away from MAchine Readable Cataloging (MARC) to linked open data. In light of the ongoing development of data models for linked data cataloging, such as BIBFRAME, CVEG recognized that the special collections cataloging community would be best served by publishing the existing thesauri as linked open data. This prompted a reevaluation of the terms across the six

thesauri and the incorporation of these terms into a single, integrated thesaurus: the RBMS Controlled Vocabulary for Rare Materials Cataloging.

For maximum utility and effect, linked open data requires robust and sustainable hosting that can support the maintenance of stable URIs. CVEG made the decision to partner with Library of Congress (LC) to host the thesaurus on the LC linked data service. CVEG maintains intellectual control of the RBMS CVRMC, continuing to provide editorial oversight for the thesaurus, while LC provides searching and access.

Historical Practices

The following practices were valid under the application instructions for the previous thesauri, but are no longer used with the integrated thesaurus:
- All the previous thesauri, except Genre, included instructions to add a parenthetical indicating the thesaurus to the term when used in cataloging, for example Binders' tickets (Binding).
- Terms could be subdivided geographically and chronologically. (See Application Instructions below for more information on current practice.)
- Several terms, such as Watermarks, could only be used with free-text subdivisions.
- Each thesaurus had individual $2 codes for use with MARC.

The previous introductions, application instructions, and archived data of the thesauri are available [here](#).

Application Instructions

The RBMS CVRMC applies a faceted approach to its organizational structure. As such, each fundamental facet, analogous to the top-levels of the hierarchy, represents an intellectually distinct and mutually exclusive category. Within each facet, terms are hierarchically arranged for ease of browsing and discoverability. Although every effort has been made to allow facets to remain distinct, the terms themselves may represent multiple facets and thus be included in multiple hierarchies. For example, armorial bindings are examples of both provenance evidence and bindings, so the term appears in both hierarchies. Because of this, the CVRMC should not be considered purely faceted in its construction or application. For further information on why the faceted approach is important for linked data implementation, see [here](#) and [here](#).

When applying terms in a MARC record, use $2 rbmscv.

Subdivision

The RBMS CVRMC does not maintain chronological or geographical subdivision terms, which are deemed outside the scope of this vocabulary. Terms should not be subdivided. For more

information about subdivision in the RBMS CVRMC, including the linked data reasons for not subdividing terms, see here.

Maintenance of RBMS CVRMC

Updates

CVEG provides updates to the Library of Congress Linked Data Service on a quarterly basis that include all new or updated terms.

Submission of terms

New terms may be submitted to CVEG here. Terms are evaluated by CVEG to ensure they are appropriate according to the established scope of work.

New or substantively edited terms are announced and made available for community feedback. Terms being considered for inclusion or editing are open for comment for a minimum of two weeks.

Warrant for inclusion

The CVEG relies on literary warrant (as defined by the ANSI/NISO Z39.19 standard) when determining the form and scope of terms. However, we recognize that literary warrant can perpetuate harmful language, especially for those terms relating to historically marginalized groups. Thus, when working with such terms, we weigh other factors, such as the preferences of the group being described, when deciding on preferred forms of terms and scope notes.

Additionally, the CVEG may elect to rely on user warrant if literary warrant is unavailable and sufficient need for the term exists within the community.

Definitions

Literary warrant: Justification for the representation of a concept in an indexing language or for the selection of a preferred term because of its frequent occurrence in the literature.[1]

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[1] National Information Standards Organization. *Guidelines for the Construction, Format, and Management of Monolingual Controlled Vocabularies* (Baltimore: National Information Standards Organization, 2010), 6. https://www.niso.org/publications/ansiniso-z3919-2005-r2010

User warrant: Justification for the representation of a concept in an indexing language or for the selection of a preferred term because of frequent requests for information on the concept or free-text searches on the term by users of an information storage and retrieval system.[2]

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[2] Ibid., 9.

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