KAREN SNOW

A PRACTICAL GUIDE TO

LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

SUBJECT HEADINGS

A Practical Guide to Library of Congress Subject Headings

Karen Snow

Contents

Preface

The year 1898 is generally recognized as the date that the Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH) emerged as a distinct entity. Using the American Library Association's *List of Subject Headings for Use in Dictionary Catalogs* as a jumping-off point, the Library of Congress sought to build a list of terms that accurately represented the subject matter of its fast-growing collections. Over one hundred years later, the use of LCSH has expanded well beyond the Library of Congress into the catalogs of libraries all over the world. LCSH is a mainstay in a wide range of libraries and information centers. If you use one of these institution's catalogs, you will most likely encounter LCSH. For this reason, having at least a foundational knowledge of how to find and assign LCSH is helpful to effectively utilize the library catalog.

LCSH primarily contains terms that describe the subject matter of a resource—what the resource is *about*. It is a **controlled vocabulary**, which means, at the most basic level, that it is a standardized list of terms, or "headings," that is used to describe something. Controlled vocabularies are often, but not always, used to provide subject access to resources. One could have a standardized list of car models, languages, or candle fragrances. Ideally, controlled vocabulary terms are *unique* (only one heading represents a particular topic) and are applied *consistently* so that all works on a particular topic can be found under one term. For example, if you use LCSH, all resources in a collection that are generally about dogs should be assigned the LC subject heading *Dogs* and not *Dog* (singular)

or *Canine*. If someone is trying to locate all items in a library collection that are about dogs, it would take extra time to search the different ways of referring to that animal. The use of a controlled vocabulary helps to cut down on this labor by choosing one "authorized" term that stands in for all of these different ways of expressing the same concept. In addition, it is common for controlled vocabularies to list nonauthorized variant forms alongside the authorized one so individuals searching under *Canine*, let's say, can still locate works on this topic without having to know before-hand what the authorized subject heading (*Dogs*) actually is.

Controlled vocabularies like LCSH help catalogers overcome common issues with language so that users can more efficiently locate and discover resources. These issues include the existence of synonymous concepts, as in my *Dogs* example above, but also homographs—words that have different meanings but are spelled the same. Examples of homographs include *bat* (animal and sports equipment), *patient* (willing to wait or someone receiving medical treatment), and *mercury* (the Roman deity, metallic element, planet, or car). Even though keyword searching of cata-logs and databases is (and will likely continue to be) popular, the issues described above reveal the limits of keywords. You can certainly find *some* resources on dogs by performing a keyword search of *Canine* in a library catalog, but it will not provide as many relevant resources as a targeted subject search of *Dogs* in a catalog that consistently uses LCSH. Even if you prefer to use keyword searching by default, the inclusion of controlled vocabularies in library catalogs increases your chances of finding resources on that topic. According to one study by Tina Gross, Arlene Taylor, and Daniel Joudrey, almost 30 percent of catalog records would not appear in a search result list if controlled vocabulary terms were not included.[1] As you will see from reading this book, working with controlled vocabularies can be challenging, but they do improve catalog search results if applied correctly and consistently in catalog records.

Whether you are merely curious about LCSH or in desperate need of assistance figuring out the complex rules of LCSH for your work duties or homework assignment, I hope this book can help. As the title suggests, this is a practical guide to locating and assigning LCSH, so I will not delve too deeply into the more theoretical aspects of the standard. None-theless, there are principles of subject analysis in general, and for LCSH specifically, that are important to know in order to use LCSH effectively.

Therefore, I will provide a brief explanation of subject analysis in chapter 2 after I offer an overview of LCSH in chapter 1. I will also thread discussion of subject analysis throughout each subsequent chapter by referring to Library of Congress's instruction manual for LCSH, the *Subject Headings Manual* (*SHM*). I will do a deeper dive into the *SHM* in chapter 6.

In chapter 3 we will explore one of the main tools used to search and browse LCSH, Classification Web. The common use of subdivisions in LCSH can be a major source of confusion and frustration, so I devote the entirety of chapter 4 to this topic, but it will pop up in other chapters as well. Since the Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) standard is, as of this writing, the main encoding standard used in library catalogs, I will demonstrate how to encode LCSH using MARC starting in chapter 5. If you do not use MARC in your work or class, feel free to skip that chapter and subsequent mentions of it.

Chapter 7 will cover the use of geographic places as subject headings and subdivisions, and chapter 8 will guide you through finding and assigning personal name subject headings that are needed when describing biographical material, literary criticisms, and other resources that emphasize a person's life or works. Fiction works are incredibly popular, especially in public and school libraries, so I will cover the ins and outs of assigning LCSH to fiction in chapter 9. Finally, in the last chapter, I will summarize the resources I have used in this book and offer additional advice and resources that I think will be helpful if you want to explore LCSH further.

This book is the next phase of my passion project that began with the publication of *A Practical Guide to Library of Congress Classification*. In that text, as in this one, I explain a rather complicated cataloging standard in a straightforward way, with limited jargon, so that both newcomers and those well seasoned in LCSH can understand the basics and feel empowered to tackle the subject cataloging of whatever resource you encounter. I am also a firm believer in the need to balance theory with practice in cataloging. LCSH is much easier to grasp when you actually work with it as opposed to simply read about it. That is why I included practice exercises at the end of most chapters, with my answers at the end of the book, so you can self-assess your learning each step of the way. Ready? Let's get started!

NOTE

1. Tina Gross, Arlene G. Taylor, and Daniel N. Joudrey, "Still a Lot to Lose: The Role of Controlled Vocabulary in Keyword Searching," *Cataloging and Classification Quarterly* 53, no. 1 (2015): 1–39.

1

Library of Congress Subject Headings in a Nutshell

The Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH) list is a controlled vocabulary that includes terms that primarily refer to the subject matter of a work. LCSH was developed in the late nineteenth and early twentieth centuries by the Library of Congress (LC) for use in its catalog. Over time, and mainly due to the proliferation of Library of Congress cards through the LC card distribution program, LCSH was adopted by other libraries within the United States and around the world. Even though the Library of Congress does take into consideration the wishes of other libraries in its maintenance of LCSH, the vocabulary is tailored largely to the resources that the Library of Congress collects, and the terminology and scope of the list reflect this. The Library of Congress serves many scholars and government officials, so you will notice that LCSH tends to include more scientific and legal terminology than found in popular language.

To a large extent, the Library of Congress uses what is called *literary warrant* to determine what terms to include in LCSH rather than a philosophical framework. **Literary warrant** means that published literature principally determines what subject headings are included in LCSH; if nothing has been published on a particular subject, it is less likely to be added to LCSH. For this reason, the subject headings included in LCSH are more of a mirror of the subject matter presented in published resources rather than an accurate representation of human knowledge.

In addition to this preference for terms used in published literature, LCSH contains language that reflects the biases of the creators of the

system. One could easily write a book about bias in LCSH and subject vocabularies generally,[1] so I will not include a detailed discussion of this topic here. Nonetheless, it is important to understand that all cataloging standards, because they are created by human beings for specific purposes, are biased in their representation of the world (cultures, people, professions, ideas, etc.). For example, since the Library of Congress serves the United States government, US legal codes have an outsized influence on the terminology included in LCSH. That is why the Library of Congress continues to use the subject heading *Illegal aliens* (a US legal term that some people find offensive)[2] instead of the more commonly used term *undocumented immigrants*. For this reason, it is imperative to recognize that LCSH is not (and never has been) a perfect standard. It is a dynamic resource that is updated regularly, yet it is still flawed and therefore needs to be continually questioned and revised to more accurately represent resources in a way that does not solely reflect one group's point of view, as LCSH has done historically.

That said, let's return to the nuts and bolts (or, as LCSH would say, *Bolts and nuts*) of LCSH. When applying subject controlled vocabularies such as the LCSH, the cataloger's focus should be on what the work is *about* as opposed to what it *is*, but there will be exceptions to this rule, as we will see. LCSH mostly contains what are called **main headings**— terms that describe what a work is primarily about. In LCSH, main headings are mostly *topical*; in other words, they represent a concept, such as *Love* or *Sadness*, or objects, such as *Cats* or *Trees*. However, you will find the occasional geographic place, format, event, time period, or name (personal, family, etc.) in LCSH as well.

Main headings are not always single words, like *Dogs* or *Art*. They can also be compound nouns or complex phrases, for example. Here is a quick guide to the different forms main headings can take, and some examples of each, from the *Subject Headings Manual* (*SHM*) H 0180 (more about this resource in a moment):

Simple nouns: *Children*; *Dogs*; *Libraries*
Compound nouns: *Bioengineering*; *Electrometallurgy*
Nouns with parenthetical qualifiers: *Seals (Animals)*; *Crack (Drug)*
Nouns with adjectives: *Gifted children*; *Wild dogs*; *Academic libraries*; *Sculpture, American*; *Science, Ancient*

Phrases with prepositions: *Teachers of gifted children*; *Photography of dogs*; *Photocopying services in libraries*

Compound phrases: *Children and animals*; *Bolts and nuts*; *Comic books, strips, etc.*

Complex phrases: *Names carved on trees*; *Infants switched at birth*; *Monkeys as aids for people with disabilities*

LCSH also contains **subdivisions**, terms that add further specificity to main headings, such as a time period, geographic place, or other topics, if needed. A hyphen, either long (–) or short (-), indicates a heading/subdivision relationship in LCSH. For example, LCSH contains the main heading *Dogs* that should be assigned to works that are primarily about dogs. LCSH also contains *Dogs–Housing*, a main heading and subdivision combination that should be assigned to works that are primarily about housing dogs. I will cover subdivisions in more depth in chapter 4.

LCSH contains many types of relationships among terms that can be found in controlled vocabularies generally, such as equivalence relationships, hierarchical relationships, and associative relationships. These are important concepts, so I will discuss each one and provide examples.

Equivalence relationships occur when a preferred or authorized term is chosen to represent a concept and is connected to nonauthorized variant terms that are considered synonymous within the context of the controlled vocabulary. For example, the LCSH *Dwellings* (the authorized term) has an equivalence relationship to nonauthorized variant terms *Domiciles*, *Homes*, and *Houses*. The relationship is reciprocal (works both ways) so that each of the nonauthorized variant terms are connected to the authorized term. The entry for *Houses* in LCSH, for example, will prompt you to use *Dwellings* instead.

Figure 1.1. Dog housing. *Lauren Enjeti.*

Equivalence Relationships

Houses

Homes

Domiciles

(Nonauthorized variant terms)

Dwellings

(Authorized term)

Figure 1.2.   Equivalence relationships. *Karen Snow*.

Hierarchical relationships arrange terms according to where the creator of the vocabulary believes the terms fit in a broader and narrower context. Sometimes these hierarchical relationships are "whole-part"— the narrower concepts represent objects that are often quite literally parts of a broader object. The LCSH entry for *Books*, for instance, lists narrower terms *Colophons* and *Title pages*, both parts of a book. Membership within a particular class constitutes another hierarchical relationship where "types" or "kinds" of the broader term are made into narrower terms. For example, within LCSH, *Bathrooms*, *Bedrooms*, and *Dining rooms* are all narrower terms for *Rooms* because they are all types of rooms. "Instance" relationships are another type of hierarchical relationship that occurs when a narrower term is considered an example of the broader term. *Monopoly (Game)* and *Scrabble (Game)*, both types of board games, are narrower terms under *Board games* in LCSH, for example.

Finally, **associative relationships** arise when a concept is similar to, but does not have an equivalence or hierarchical relationship with, a related concept. For example, *Bibliography*, *Cataloging*, and *International Standard Book Numbers* are related to *Books*, according to LCSH, but are not synonymous with books or broader/narrower terms for books.

Hierarchical Relationships

Buildings

↓

Rooms

Bathrooms   Bedrooms   Dining Rooms
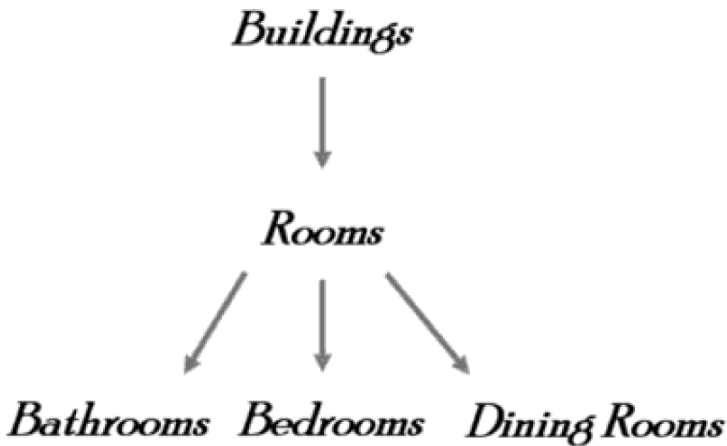
Figure 1.3. **Hierarchical relationships.** *Karen Snow.*

Associative Relationships

Bibliography

Books

Cataloging

Related but
not
equivalent

International
Standard Book
Numbers

Figure 1.4. **Associative relationships.** *Karen Snow.*

If you do not have access to Classification Web, there are other resources on the web that provide access to LCSH free of charge. One of these resources is the set of PDFs provided by the Library of Congress on their website (https://www.loc.gov/aba/cataloging/subject/). It does not have the enhanced functionality of Classification Web, but it is freely accessible.

You can also find LCSH in what are called authority records using the Library of Congress's Authorities website (http://authorities.loc.gov/), through the Library of Congress's linked data service (http://id.loc.gov/), or through an OCLC product such as Connexion (if your institution has a subscription). Authority records, which I will discuss in more depth in later chapters, can be more useful than Classification Web as they often include additional background information about a subject heading. Therefore, I encourage you to explore multiple sources of LCSH when assigning headings and subdivisions.

The Library of Congress's *Subject Headings Manual* (*SHM*) is the source of much of the content in this and subsequent chapters. The *SHM* is Library of Congress's instruction manual for creating and assigning LCSH. I will refer to it throughout the book and explore some of the guidance in more depth in chapter 6. Whenever you see *SHM* H[insert number here], know that I am referring to a specific instruction sheet in the *Subject Headings Manual*. You can access the *SHM* through Cataloger's Desktop if your institution subscribes to it, or you can access *SHM* free of charge from this web page: https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeSHM/freeshm.html.

In the next chapter, I will cover the basics of subject analysis, a notoriously fascinating yet challenging process in many cases. I will describe a method (SLAM) that I hope will make the subject analysis process a little easier to absorb. Before you move on, why don't you stay a while longer and work on some exercises to test your knowledge of this chapter?

EXERCISES

Using the information in this chapter, answer the following questions and compare your responses to the answers provided at the end of this book.

1. What does the Library of Congress primarily rely on to determine which terms should be included in LCSH?
2. Name two places on the web where you can find LCSH.
3. Read each explanation below, and identify the type of relationship described as an equivalence relationship, a hierarchical relationship, or an associative relationship.
   a. In LCSH, *Solar system* is a narrower term under *Milky Way* but is broader than *Planets*. What type of relationship do these terms have?
   b. *Buckets* and *pails* are considered synonyms in LCSH. What type of relationship do these terms have?
   c. The LCSH *Folklore* has several related terms, such as *Mythology* and *Storytelling*, that do not have the same meaning and are not considered broader or narrower terms. What type of relationship do these terms have?
4. Using the principle of specificity and the LCSH hierarchy (economics → economic policy → government spending policy → employment subsidies), answer the following questions:
   a. Is it appropriate to assign *Economics* to a general work on economic policy? Explain.
   b. Is it appropriate to assign *Employment subsidies* to a general work on government spending policy that discusses employment subsidies among other government spending policies? Explain.
   c. Is it appropriate to assign *Economic policy* to a general work on economic policy? Explain.
5. Use the principle of scope-match and the above *Economics* hierarchy to determine which response (assign the headings for each type of policy or assign the general topic heading *Economic policy*) is the most appropriate to the scenarios provided in a and b. Explain your choice.
   a. A work on economic policy comprised of three equal parts that cover government spending policy, labor policy, and monetary policy (all types of economic policy)
   b. A work on economic policy with twelve chapters, each covering a different type of policy

NOTES

1. In fact, many people *have* written books on this topic. I recommend the following: Melissa Adler, *Cruising the Library: Perversities in the Organization of Knowledge* (New York: Fordham University Press, 2017); Sanford Berman, *Prejudices and Antipathies: A Tract on the LC Subject Heads Concerning People*, 1993 ed. (Jefferson, NC: McFarland, 1993), http://www.sanfordberman.org/prejant.htm; Hope Olson, *The Power to Name: Locating the Limits of Subject Representation in Libraries* (Norwell, MA: Kluwer Academic, 2002).

2. See Jasmine Aguilera, "Another Word for 'Illegal Alien' at the Library of Congress: Contentious," *New York Times*, July 22, 2016, https://nyti.ms/2k4EsRf.

3. Library of Congress, "Doing Research at the Library of Congress: Three Basic Principles of Library of Congress Subject Headings," last modified December 1, 2016, https://www.loc.gov/rr/main/research/scopematch.html.

4. Library of Congress, "Doing Research at the Library of Congress: Three Basic Principles of Library of Congress Subject Headings."

2

Basic Principles of Subject Analysis

Imagine a table in front of you with the following items: a duck puppet used for a children's puppet show, a DVD of the dystopian science-fiction film *The Matrix*, and a picture book for children that features a school for crayons. If you were asked what each of these items was *about*, you would likely have difficulty answering that question, but for different reasons (assuming you are even familiar with these resources to begin with!).

Is a duck puppet *about* anything?

Sure, *The Matrix* is *about* artificial intelligence and computer hackers, but what about its genre: dystopian science fiction? Isn't that important as well?

The children's picture book is obvious enough, right? It's about crayons! But wait—while browsing through the book, you notice that the main crayon, named Red, despite the clearly labeled red wrapper surrounding him, can only produce the color blue. It takes an insightful crayon colleague to point out that Red the crayon is, in fact, Red the *blue* crayon after all. Is this book still *just* about crayons?

Figure 2.1. What are you about, duck puppet? *Lauren Enjeti.*

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I have taken you through this strange exercise to demonstrate the complexity of subject analysis. **Subject analysis** is the process of determining what a resource is about and, to a lesser degree, its form and/or genre. This process is sometimes referred to as determining *aboutness*, in contrast to determining *is-ness* (the first resource mentioned above *is* a duck puppet as opposed to *about* a duck puppet, for example), but as my definition of subject analysis demonstrates, is-ness may play a role as well. The subject terminology we use frequently contains "form" aspects that emphasize physical characteristics and what the resource *is* and "genre" aspects that emphasize themes in the intellectual content of a resource, such as technique or style. Form examples include dictionaries, diaries, and maps. Genre examples include detective and mystery fiction, war films, and rock and roll music. Resources can be described in terms of both aboutness and is-ness.[1] For example, *The Diary of a Young Girl* by Anne Frank is *about* Anne Frank and her family during the two years they spent hiding from Nazis in the Netherlands during World War II (aboutness), and it is a diary (form) and a memoir (genre). I will delve into form and genre on occasion in this book, but the primary focus will be on determining the *aboutness* of a resource and then assigning subject terminology accordingly.

In library and information science literature, the determination of aboutness and form/genre is often called *conceptual analysis*, and converting the ideas produced through the process of conceptual analysis into controlled vocabulary terms is called *translation*.[2] Both conceptual analysis and translation are usually part of the subject analysis process and can be challenging in their own ways. One major impediment when analyzing the subject of a resource is that those who assign subject terms frequently do not have intimate knowledge of the resource, whether it is a book, a movie, a video game, or an adorable children's puppet. And even if you *have* read the book or watched the film, determining what it is *about* (conceptual analysis) and then converting that into a controlled vocabulary term (translation) is still tricky. For this reason, I recommend Library of Congress's SLAM method to guide you through the subject analysis process.[3] SLAM stands for **S**can, **L**ook for, **A**sk yourself, and **M**entally compose. Let's look at each step of this method:

Scan: The first step of the SLAM method is to scan the parts of a resource that provide the most clues about its subject focus. Which areas

This resource is about Library of Congress subject headings.

This picture book for children is about a fictional crayon that is confused about his identity.

This dystopian science-fiction film is about computer hackers who discover that the world is not as it seems and fight against an artificial intelligence that has enslaved humans.

This encyclopedia is about different styles of houses throughout history and is geared toward real estate agents.

This book is about the history of higher education in the United States, specifically in the nineteenth and twentieth centuries.

Once you have completed the SLAM method, hopefully you will have enough information about the resource to complete the *translation* part of subject analysis and find appropriate terms in whatever controlled vocabulary you are using. However, keep in mind that the words you use in your statement may not match up perfectly to controlled vocabulary terms. For example, the LCSH for Library of Congress subject headings is *Subject headings, Library of Congress* and the LCSH for houses is *Dwellings*. Try different search strategies and synonyms to locate the appropriate term (assuming there is one to be found).

Let's discuss some additional areas of potential confusion for those new to assigning subject terminology. One area of confusion is the number of subject terms you should assign and, if you need to assign multiple terms, how to determine if they should stay together in one field or be separated into different fields. As for how many subject terms to assign, remember that the Library of Congress does have special instructions for its catalogers on this topic (do not assign more than ten subject headings to one resource), but as a general rule of thumb, you should assign as many terms as needed to cover the main topics of the resource. What to do if you need multiple terms to describe a resource, and whether you keep them together in one string of terms or separate them, depends on a few things.

First, a single term or string of terms may be sufficient to represent a multifaceted topic. For example, in LCSH, the topic of the history of American higher education can be expressed in one string of terms:

Education, Higher–United States–History

A subject heading string can contain multiple topics or forms as long as you follow the rules associated with the controlled vocabulary. In LCSH, for instance, you cannot simply include any term you want in the string. We will discuss this in more depth in chapter 4, "Subdivisions and Free-Floating Subdivisions." Therefore, if one term or string of terms cannot capture multiple distinct topics, you will most likely need to use multiple terms or multiple strings of terms. Resources with more complex themes will likely require the latter since it is important to keep ideas separate for easier retrieval. For example, a picture book for children that is about a fictional crayon with identity confusion is about a crayon but also identity, two very distinct concepts. Unless there is a controlled vocabulary that has a single term for the topic "crayon identity" (very unlikely, but it would be fascinating if that existed!), we will need to include both topics but use separate terms or strings of terms to represent those topics. This way, those looking for a children's book featuring crayons can find it just as easily as those looking for a children's book about identity who may not care if that message is conveyed using crayons, humans, or whatever. In LCSH, we would assign the following subject heading strings to the aforementioned book:

Crayons–Juvenile fiction
Identity (Psychology)–Juvenile fiction

This discussion naturally leads us to the subject analysis concepts of *precoordination* and *postcoordination*. According to Lois Mai Chan and Athena Salaba, these terms "refer to 'when' single-concept terms are combined to form complex subjects."[4]

Precoordination occurs when terms are combined within the controlled vocabulary itself or by someone assigning the vocabulary term(s) to create a complex topic. In other words, precoordinated terms representing a topic are determined prior to a user's search of a system.

Postcoordination, on the other hand, occurs when terms are combined by those searching the system. Even if there are precoordinated terms present in the system, postcoordinated searching will continue to be very common since users may not know what the precoordinated terms are. For instance, a user could perform a keyword search for "crayons," "identity," and "juvenile fiction" and still be able to find the crayon identity book.

No system will rely only on precoordination because there is no controlled vocabulary that is able to capture all complex topics in one term or one string of terms, as I mentioned previously. Precoordination is helpful nonetheless for bringing together topics that are specifically related to the resource in hand for a more efficient search, especially in current library systems. For example, if I am looking for a book on the history of American higher education, a more targeted approach would be to conduct a search for the precoordinated subject heading string *Education, Higher–United States–History*. A postcoordinated search for "higher education," "United States," and "history" would likely produce a long list of search results that will include works on each of these topics more generally. As library systems evolve, perhaps postcoordinated searches using *facets* (distinct and clearly defined categories) will become easier. Regardless, a certain amount of postcoordinated searching will always be necessary, as demonstrated by the "crayon identity" example above.

In this chapter, I covered the basics of subject analysis. It is far from a comprehensive treatment, but I hope that it provides a helpful foundation on which to build your LCSH knowledge. It is one thing to know how to find and assign subject headings; it's quite another to understand how to determine aboutness in the first place. The SLAM method is a solid framework that should help you more easily conceptualize the subject analysis process, regardless of what controlled vocabulary you use. After completing the end-of-chapter exercises below, place SLAM in your shiny new cataloging tool box, and let's move on to learning more about how to search and browse LCSH in Classification Web as well as demystify entries in LCSH (I am looking at you BT, SA, RT, UF, and NT!).

EXERCISES

Answer the following questions using information within this chapter.

1. What does SLAM stand for? What does SLAM help you do?
2. Name two sources of information that you should consult during the first step of the SLAM method.

3. What aspects of a resource should you consider beyond those examined in the first step of the SLAM method when identifying keywords or phrases that describe what the work is about?
4. What two actions typically occur during the subject analysis process, according to library and information science literature?
5. What is it called when single-concept terms are combined to form complex subjects *prior* to the user's search of a system?
6. Besides aboutness, what else might be important to identify in the subject analysis process?

NOTES

1. There is also *of-ness*, a concept that is particularly useful when describing what is depicted in visual resources, such as paintings and photographs.

2. Daniel N. Joudrey, Arlene G. Taylor, and David Miller, *Introduction to Cataloging and Classification*, 11th ed. (Santa Barbara, CA: Libraries Unlimited, 2015).

3. ALCTS/SAC-PCC/SCT Joint Initiative on Subject Training Materials, "Basic Subject Cataloging Using LCSH: Trainee's Manual," last modified July 2009, https://www.loc.gov/catworkshop/courses/basicsubject/pdf/lcsh-trnee-manual.pdf.

4. Lois Mai Chan and Athena Salaba, *Cataloging and Classification: An Introduction*, 4th ed. (Lanham, MD: Rowman & Littlefield, 2016), 477.

3

Searching and Browsing LCSH in Classification Web

Classification Web (https://classweb.org/) is a subscription-based tool from the Library of Congress Cataloging Distribution Service that contains multiple cataloging standards. It contains not only the Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH) but also the Library of Congress (LC) classification schedules, the Library of Congress children's subject headings, and the Library of Congress genre/form headings. To access Classification Web, go to https://classweb.org/. You will see the screen shown in figure 3.1. Click on the "ClassWeb Main Menu" option, and you will see the screen in figure 3.2.

Figure 3.1.   Classification Web homepage. *Library of Congress.*

on the hyperlinked names will take you to those headings within LCSH. Invalid headings and subdivisions are in regular font (e.g., *Fire power*).

As I mentioned previously, LCSH is a hierarchical scheme that arranges terms according to where the Library of Congress believes they fit in a broader and narrower context. Therefore, you will see codes that designate broader (BT) and narrower (NT) terms. In addition, there are associative relationships (RT-related terms), cross-references to terms you should or should not use (used for and use), and suggestions for other headings or subdivisions that might also be useful (SA—see also). Table 3.1 explains the meaning behind the codes that you see throughout LCSH. The [term]–[term] indicates a heading–subdivision relationship, such as *Christmas trees–Fires and fire prevention*, which is a NT under *Fire prevention*. Not all subdivisions that can be used after a main heading will be listed in LCSH. Many are listed in the Free-Floating Subdivisions list, which I will discuss in the next chapter.

The identifier [TH9111-9599] immediately underneath *Fire prevention* is the range of Library of Congress classification (LCC) numbers that are associated with this topic. If you click on the hyperlink, it will take you directly to that entry within the LCC schedules in Classification Web.

The notation *(May Subd Geog)* to the right of *Fire prevention* is LC's way of stating that a subject heading or subdivision can have a geographic subdivision immediately following it. I will provide more details about geographic subdivision in chapter 4, "Subdivisions and Free-Floating
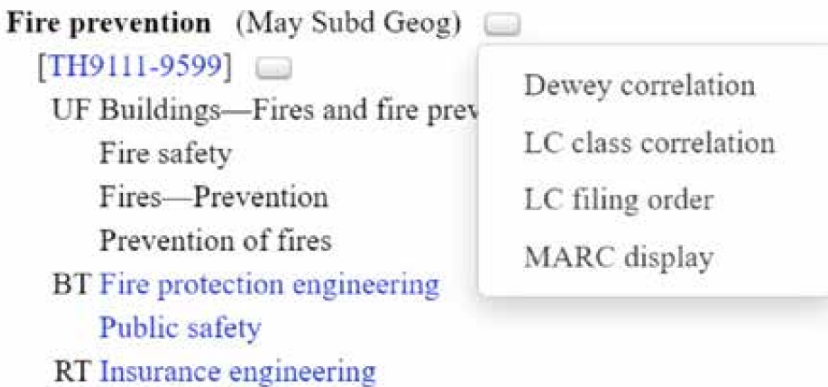

Figure 3.5.   *Fire prevention* in Classification Web. *Library of Congress.*

Subdivisions" and chapter 7, "Geographic Subject Headings and Subdivisions."

If you click on the light-gray rectangle (I like to call it the "ghost rectangle") to the right of *(May Subd Geog)*, you will see a drop-down menu of options that can be changed by an account administrator within the Account settings. My menu contains these options: Dewey correlation, LC class correlation, LC filing order, and MARC display. See figure 3.5.

The Dewey and LC class correlation options provide class numbers from each of these classification systems that have been assigned to resources in the Library of Congress's collection with the same subject

Fire prevention [Topical]
TH9145 (57)
TH9241 (15)
TH9146 (14)
TH9148 (8)
TH9111 (5)
TH9120 (4)
HG9715 (3)
S21 (2)
TH9115 (2)
TH9150 (2)

Figure 3.6. *Fire prevention in bibliographic correlations. Library of Congress.*

heading. For example, if I click on the LC class correlation option under *Fire prevention*'s ghost rectangle, as of this writing ten Library of Congress classification numbers have been assigned to resources that have *Fire prevention* as the subject heading (shown in figure 3.6).

The first class number listed is the one that is associated most often with the subject heading. The number in parentheses next to the class number

Use this ──────

Don't use these!

If the work is about a specific type of horse person, use one of these

Copyrighted image

"—" (long hyphen) indicates a heading/subdivision relationship — narrows the focus

'Ghost rectangle" – provides further options, such as correlations

C class number(s) associated with he subject heading

og = heading/subdivision ided geographically

Horsemen and horsewomen—United States
NT African American horsemen and horse

Horsemen and horsewomen—Wounds and injuries (May Subd Geog)
NT Horse sports injuries

Figure 3.7. *Horsemen and Horsewomen entry explained. Library of Congress.*

Figure 3.8. Classification Web navigation buttons. *Library of Congress.*

indicates how many records in LC's catalog contain both that specific class number and the subject heading in the record. As of this writing, TH9145 and *Fire prevention* are paired in fifty-seven Library of Congress

Classification

Subject headings

Genre/form terms

Demographic group terms

Children's subject headings

Medium of performance terms

Names

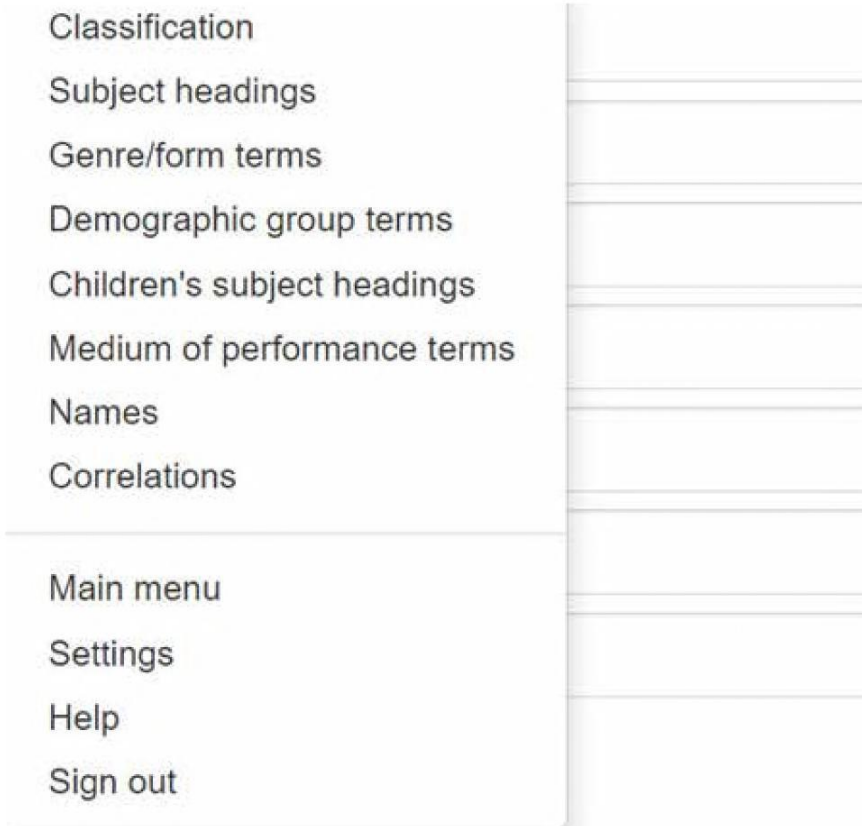Correlations

Main menu

Settings

Help

Sign out

Figure 3.9. Drop-down menu in Classification Web. *Library of Congress.*

records. The numbers you see may be different from what you see here. LC filing order places LCSH entries in the order in which LC files them. Finally, if you choose MARC display, you will see the Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC) authority record for that subject heading.

Figure 3.7 highlights the meaning of what you see in a typical LCSH entry in Classification Web. Please take note of the navigation buttons at the top of your screen, shown in figure 3.8. "Refine search" will take you back to the main LCSH search screen and retain your initial search terms.

"New search" will also take you back to the main LCSH search screen, but it will remove search terms used previously. The arrows have the following meanings:

<<   takes you back one full page in LCSH
>>   takes you forward one full page in LCSH

Clicking on the three horizontal bars in the upper left-hand corner of the screen will reveal a drop-down menu with the options shown in figure 3.9. You can choose to go to one of the other resources in Classification Web (the top eight options in the menu), or you can choose "Main Menu" to go back to the main menu. When you are done using Classification Web, it is best to click on "Sign out." However, before we do, a quick note about "browsing" LCSH.

If you go back to the main menu of Classification Web and choose "Browse" underneath "LC Subject Headings," you will see a screen like figure 3.10. When you start typing a term, the helpful list of options in figure 3.11 appears.

Browsing LCSH is not that different from searching LCSH, but it does have the benefit of showing you options for LCSH and subdivisions as you type. You should receive the same results as an LCSH search. Use the drop-down menu to the right of the search magnifying glass to select

Figure 3.10.   Subject heading browse. *Library of Congress.*
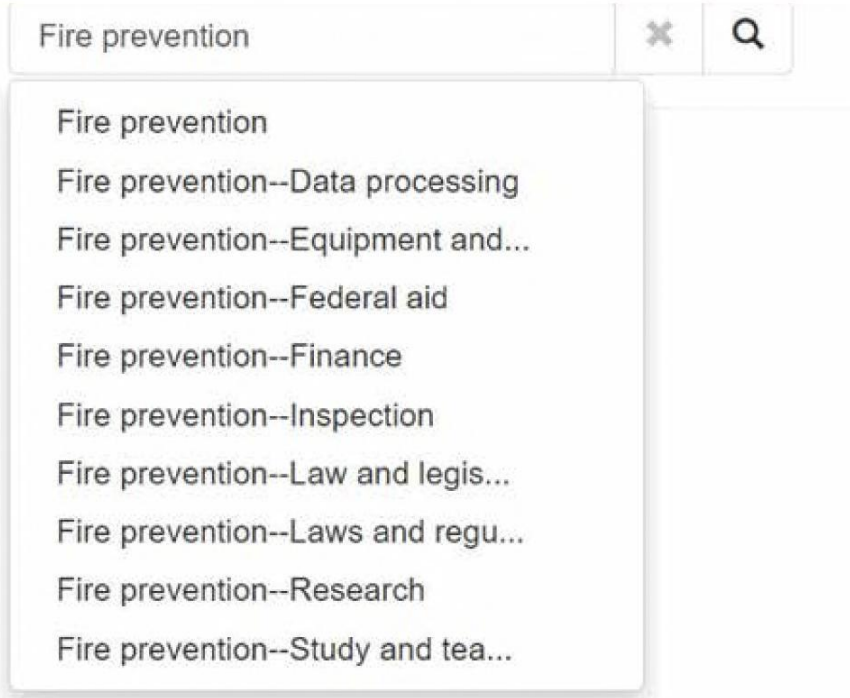
Figure 3.11.   Browsing *Fire prevention. Library of Congress.*

what you want to browse (LCSH, the Free-Floating Subdivisions list, a class number, etc).

   This chapter provided guidance on how to navigate Classification Web to find Library of Congress main subject headings as well as information on how to understand the entries in LCSH. The next chapter will explore an important feature of LCSH: subdivisions.

EXERCISES

Use Classification Web (or another source for finding LCSH if you cannot access Classification Web) to answer the following questions.

4

Subdivisions and Free-Floating Subdivisions

Subdivisions are an important yet complex feature of Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH) that allows you to extend the main subject heading for greater specificity. In fact, when subdivisions are present, it is considered a **subject heading string**—one main subject heading and one or more subdivisions. According to the *Subject Headings Manual* (*SHM*) H 1075—Subdivisions, there are four types of subdivision in LCSH (see figures 4.1 through 4.4):[1]

Topical: "actions, attributes, or aspects" (*SHM* H 1075); concepts, objects (e.g., *–History*, *–Politics and government*, *–Social aspects*)

Figure 4.1. Topical subdivisions.
Lauren Enjeti.

Chronological: time period, "usually associated with a historical treatment of a topic" (*SHM* H 1075) (e.g., *–20th century, –To 500, –1801-1917, –Tang-Five dynasties, 618-960*)

Figure 4.2. Chronological subdivisions. *Lauren Enjeti.*

Geographic: place, "where something is located, or where something is from, depending upon the topic" (*SHM* H 1075) (e.g., *–Florida, –Dallas (Tex.), –Mexico, –Michigan, Lake*)

Figure 4.3. Geographic subdivisions. *Lauren Enjeti.*

Form: what a resource is as opposed to what it is about (e.g., *–Pictorial works, –Dictionaries, –Juvenile fiction*)

Figure 4.4. Form subdivisions. *Lauren Enjeti.*

In LCSH, subdivisions will always begin with a hyphen, sometimes long (–) and sometimes short (-), to distinguish them from main subject headings. Since LCSH was not designed to capture all angles of a topic in one main heading, subdivisions expand the meaning of the main heading, if needed. For example, if I want to make it clear that a resource is about fire departments in Florida, and not about fire departments everywhere in the world, I should include the geographic subdivision *–Florida* after the main heading *Fire departments* in the interest of specificity: *Fire departments–Florida.* You can include as many subdivisions as needed as long as you follow the instructions for constructing subject heading strings as presented in the *Subject Headings Manual.*

Sometimes you need only one subdivision to clearly express the topic, as in the case of the Florida fire departments above. At other times, multiple subdivisions may be needed. For example, if the resource I am cataloging is a directory of fire departments in Florida, and there is a valid subdivision for directories in LCSH (there is) that has a scope that includes this topic (it does—more on this in a moment), then it is fine to include it in my subject heading string as well: *Fire departments–Florida–Directories.*

I will talk more about the order of subdivisions shortly because there is a specific order you need to follow. But first I want to explain how to find subdivisions in LCSH because, just like the main subject headings, you cannot just make up any subdivision term you want!

LCSH includes quite a few subdivisions in the main LCSH list. If you perform a search in Classification Web for *Cats*, then click forward one page, you will see some main heading/subdivision entries (shown in figure 4.5). As mentioned previously, the entries in bold font are valid; those not in bold are invalid and provide the valid subject heading after *USE* (like USE *Feline diabetes* instead of *Cats–Diabetes*).

Cats—Diabetes
    USE Feline diabetes

Cats—Diseases (May Subd Geog)
    [SF985-986]
        NT Allergy in cats
            Feline diabetes
            Feline heartworm disease

Cats—Equipment and supplies
    [SF447.3]
        NT Cat litter
            Cat litter boxes

Cats—Exhibitions
    USE Cat shows

Figure 4.5. *Cats* **and subdivisions in Classification Web.** *Library of Congress.*

I will talk more about geographic headings and subdivisions in chapter 7, but it is important to mention the presence of *(May Subd Geog)* next to the *Cats–Diseases* entry in the example. *(May Subd Geog)* indicates that you can include a geographic subdivision immediately following this subject heading string. For example, if the item I am cataloging is about behavior therapy of cats in Florida, then I can safely place *–Florida*, a geographic subdivision, after *–Diseases*: *Cats–Diseases–Florida*.

On the other hand, note that *Cats–Equipment and supplies* does not have *(May Subd Geog)* after it. If an entry does not have *(May Subd Geog)* or has *(Not Subd Geog)*, that means that you cannot place a geographic sub-division after it. Chapter 7 will provide further guidance on the complex instructions associated with geographic subject headings and subdivisions.

Even though the main LCSH list contains quite a few subdivisions, it does not include them all. The practice of having a separate list of sub-divisions was formalized in the 1970s, and **free-floating subdivisions** became commonly used with LCSH. According to the *Subject Headings Manual* H 1095—Free-Floating Subdivisions,

> The term **free-floating** refers to a form or topical subdivision that may be used under designated subjects without the usage being established editori-ally, and, as a consequence, without an authority record being created for each main heading/subdivision combination that might be needed.[2]

In other words, you can use free-floating subdivisions regardless of whether or not they appear in the main LCSH list—they "float" from subject head-ing string to subject heading string, depending on need and scope. However, as we will see, free-floating subdivisions cannot be used with just any subject heading. Often there are restrictions regarding the types of subject headings to which free-floating subdivisions can be assigned. I will come back to this idea once we explore how to find free-floating subdivisions.

For many years, the free-floating subdivisions were listed in a separate print volume. Currently, Library of Congress maintains the list entirely online. To access the free-floating subdivisions list in Classification Web, go to the main search page in LCSH and note the option for searching "Free-floating subdiv" (see figure 4.6). The free-floating subdivisions can be accessed free of charge in the LCSH document online: https://www.loc .gov/aba/publications/FreeLCSH/SUBDIVISIONS.pdf.

Figure 4.6.   Subject heading search. *Library of Congress.*

Abbreviated lists are included in the *Subject Headings Manual*—H 1095 (Free-Floating Subdivisions: Form and Topical), H 1140 (Free-Floating Subdivisions: Names of Places), and H 1110 (Free-Floating Subdivisions: Names of Persons). Each of these lists is included at the end of this book, though without the additional scope notes and references to other *SHM* instructions.

As mentioned in the *SHM* definition of "free-floating" above, free-floating subdivisions are primarily topical and form. There are a few chronological subdivisions and no geographic subdivisions. Let's look at an example. Type in the popular free-floating subdivision *Fiction* in the free-floating subdivision search and click on "Search" (see figure 4.7). You should then see a search result screen that looks very similar to what

Figure 4.7.   Free-floating subdivisions search for fiction. *Library of Congress.*

8. A work on dog parties of the twenty-first century
9. A book of poetry that is primarily about the size of raindrops
10. A dictionary of twentieth-century modernist art

NOTES

1. Library of Congress, "Subdivisions H 1075," *Subject Headings Manual*, last modified June 2013, https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeSHM/H1075.pdf.

2. Library of Congress, "Free-Floating Subdivisions H 1095," *Subject Headings Manual*, last modified November 2019, https://www.loc.gov/aba/publications/FreeSHM/H1095.pdf.

5

MARC Coding of LCSH

Let's say you go to your local library's website and search the catalog for the book *Rosa Parks: A Biography*. In addition to the information about the book's title, author, publisher, and number of pages, you should see fields that contain subject vocabularies like we have discussed in previous chapters:

> *Parks, Rosa, 1913-2005*
> *African American women civil rights workers–Alabama–Montgomery
>   –Biography*
> *Civil rights movements–United States–History–20th century*
> *Montgomery (Ala.)–Biography*
> *Biography*

However, behind the scenes of the library catalog, this same information looks a little different:

> 600 10 $a Parks, Rosa, $d 1913-2005
> 650 _0 $a African American women civil rights workers $z Alabama
> $z Montgomery $v Biography
> 650 _0 $a Civil rights movements $z United States $x History $y 20th
>   century
> 651 _0 $a Montgomery (Ala.) $v Biography
> 655 _7 $a Biography. $2 lcgft

The additional numbers, dollar signs ($), and lowercase letters you see above are part of what is called **Machine-Readable Cataloging (MARC)**. MARC is the most commonly used encoding standard in library catalogs. Encoding standards are important because, in order for the catalog to work effectively, the information we create to describe resources needs to be in a syntax that computers understand and can act on. For example, by placing Rosa Parks's name in the MARC field 600, I am making it clear to the computer system that "Rosa Parks" is a person's name and not a geographic place (of course, *we* know this, but we cannot assume our computer systems do).

If your institution does not use the MARC standard or you are not interested in learning MARC, you can skip this chapter. However, I will use MARC coding in examples for the remainder of this book, so it might be worth it for you to read this chapter nonetheless! Classification Web does not contain MARC coding in the Library of Congress subject headings (LCSH) and Free-Floating Subdivisions lists, so you will need to determine what MARC coding is needed.

There are multiple MARC formats, but in this chapter I will discuss only "bibliographic" MARC—the MARC used to construct records in a library catalog. Therefore, whenever I use the term *MARC* in this chapter, assume I mean bibliographic MARC unless I state otherwise. I recommend consulting either the OCLC Bibliographic Formats and Standards website (https://www.oclc.org/bibformats/en.html) or the Library of Congress Bibliographic MARC website (http://www.loc.gov/marc/bibliographic/) to learn more about MARC and see further examples of its use.

MARC—THE BASICS

In MARC, there are multiple fields that can be used to convey subject information. Here are some common MARC subject field codes, always three digits in length:

600—personal name subject access point
610—corporate name subject access point
630—uniform title subject access point
650—topical subject access point

651—geographic access point
655—form/genre access point

MARC fields also contain two character positions immediately following the MARC field code, which are called indicators. If a MARC field contains values in the indicator spots (sometimes they do not), the value will be a single digit that has a different meaning depending on the field. In addition, each indicator is independent of the other—the meaning of one indicator does not influence the other. If you use LCSH to populate a MARC subject field, the second indicator will always be zero (0).

MARC fields also contain subfields that begin with a delimiter symbol (such as $, |, or ‡) and end with a lowercase letter (b, c, f, etc.) or a number (2, 4, etc.). Subfields will be particularly important in LCSH subject fields that contain subdivisions. Let's look at the most popular subfields within a MARC subject field.

$a contains the main subject heading and will have a different meaning depending on the field. For example, if a topical subject heading, such as *Dogs*, is in $a, use the MARC 650 field. When a person's name is in $a, such as *Washington, George, 1732-1799*, use the MARC 600 field.

$c designates titles and other words associated with a name. For example, the term of address *Jr.* is placed in $c ($a Connick, Harry, $c Jr., $d 1967-) and other words or phrases that provide more information about a name ($a Kermit, $c the Frog).

$d contains dates associated with what is in $a, such as birth and/or death dates or when a person was active (typically used when birth and death dates are unknown). These dates can be ascertained from an authority database. For example, in $a Shakespeare, William, $d 1564-1616, the years in $d state his birth year and death year.

$t provides the title of a work. For example, if a resource is about Shakespeare's play *Romeo and Juliet*, include both Shakespeare's name in $a and the title of the work in $t: $a Shakespeare, William, $d 1564-1616. $t Romeo and Juliet. This information can also be found in an authority database.

$v is used for **form subdivisions**, which are added to show that the work is in a particular physical or intellectual form, such as $v Maps or $v Fiction.

$x is used for **topical subdivisions** (concepts or objects), such as $x History or $x Collectibles.

$y is used for **chronological subdivisions**, which are added when a work is about a topic within a certain time period, such as $y 20th century.

$z is used for **geographic subdivisions**, which are added when a work emphasizes a particular geographic location, such as $z Texas.

Below, I will go through each of the common MARC subject fields as well as their respective indicators and subfields and provide examples. A word of caution: most of these MARC subject fields are populated using sources other than LCSH. For example, personal name, corporate name, conference title, and uniform titles (preferred titles of works) can be found using authority files, such as Library of Congress's authority file or OCLC's authority file. Form/genre headings, though still present to a certain extent in LCSH, are now mainly in the LC Genre/Form Terms for Library and Archival Materials (LCGFT), which is accessible via Classi-fication Web, the LC Authorities website, or the LC Linked Data Service website. I will provide reminders of websites you should consult through-out my discussion of the different MARC subject fields below.

600—Personal Name Subject Access Point

Let's start with the 600 field. This field should be used if the resource is primarily about a person, like a biography or autobiography, a specific aspect of a person's life, or materials associated with a person. Addi-tionally, the 600 field may be used when a resource features a real or fictional person as a main character or if a resource discusses the work(s) of a particular author. Chapter 8, "Personal Name Subject Headings and Biographies," will provide a more in-depth discussion of personal names as subjects.

It is good practice to use a personal name authorized access point in this field so that catalog users can find resources about a person consistently under one form of that person's name. For example, the authorized access point for the American author and poet Edgar Allan Poe is *Poe, Edgar Allan, 1809-1849*. His birth and death years are included to distinguish him from other people with the same name (and there are a few!). Many personal name authorized access points are documented in records within what are called authority files. Many libraries have their own authority

Title: *An Inside Look at OCLC Online Computer Library Center*
Subject: OCLC
In MARC:
610 20 $a OCLC

Title: *The United States Supreme Court: Its History, Function, and Structure*
Subject: United States. Supreme Court
In MARC:
610 10 $a United States. $b Supreme Court

630—Uniform Title Subject Access Point

The 630 field should be used if a work is the subject of a resource but only when there is no name associated with the preferred title (see the 600 field if there is an author name as well). The first indicator tells the system how many nonfiling characters to skip (0—nonfiling characters; 1-9—number of nonfiling characters), and the second indicator specifies the controlled vocabulary used (0—Library of Congress subject headings). Nonfiling characters frequently refer to initial articles, such as *a*, *an*, or *the*, that should be ignored by the system for indexing purposes.

The subfield codes will be the same as what is included in an authorized title access point ($a, $b, $d, etc.). Additional subfield codes may be included if a topical or form subdivision is needed.

Title: *The Real Mother Goose*
Subject: Mother Goose
In MARC:
630 00 $a Mother Goose

Title: *Creating the World of Harry Potter*
Subject: Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone (Motion picture)
In MARC:
630 00 $a Harry Potter and the sorcerer's stone (Motion picture)

650—Topical Subject Access Point

The 650 field should be used if a topic (object or concept) is the subject of a resource. The first indicator explains the level of the subject—if the subject term in the field is the primary subject of the work or the secondary subject. The first indicator in the 650 field is usually left blank if LCSH is used, but you may see a value in this indicator when other subject vocabularies are applied, such as the Medical Subject Headings. The second indicator specifies the controlled vocabulary used (0—Library of Congress subject headings).

Common subfield codes in the 650 field are $x (topical subdivision), $y (chronological subdivision), $z (geographic subdivision), and $v (form subdivision). You can have more than one type of subdivision in a subject heading string if it applies. For example, if a resource is both a pictorial work and a dictionary (both form subdivisions), you could assign this: $v Pictorial works $v Dictionaries.

In most cases, the preferred order of the subdivisions is as follows, if more than one subdivision is assigned, with $a first and $v (usually) last: 650 _0 $a [topic] $x [topic] $z [place] $y [chronological period] $v [form].

The order may shift around depending on what you are trying to convey or limitations presented by headings or subdivisions that cannot be subdivided geographically (more about this in chapter 7). In the *Subject Headings Manual* H 1075, the following example is provided:

650 _0 $a Hospitals $x Administration $x Data processing $x Evaluation
[Evaluation of the application of data processing to the administration of hospitals]
650 _0 $a Hospitals $x Administration $x Evaluation $x Data processing
[Application of data processing to the evaluation of the administration of hospitals]

Even though each of the above subject fields contains the same main heading and subdivisions, the slight modification of the order of the subdivisions changes the meaning of the field.