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Review of Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources

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Review of *Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources*

Abstract

The *Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources* is a set of best practices written by the Trans Metadata Collective for describing, cataloging, and classifying information resources about trans and gender diverse people. The document serves as a resource for workers in cultural heritage institutions who create metadata about trans and gender diverse people. This review explores the Collective's efforts to develop an accessible best practices guide that positions users' humanity before machine operability.

Keywords

Classification, cataloging, metadata, usability, trans, transgender, gender diverse, diversity, equity, inclusion, critical cataloging, GLAMS.

Author Bio & Acknowledgements

Briana Meyer is an emerging museum and library professional with demonstrated expertise in special collections, nonprofit organizations, and academic libraries. As an MLIS candidate at Pratt Institute, Briana advocates for policies that support equity and access in order to correct gaps and silences within GLAMS.

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The Trans Metadata Collective (TMDC) developed out of the immediate need for a more comprehensive standard to address, properly represent, protect, and acknowledge trans and gender diverse people. The Collective came to fruition under the guidance of K.J. Rawson, Bri(an) M. Watson, Beck Schaefer, Laura Horak, Magnus Berg, Clair Kronk, and Djaz Zulida in 2021 and expanded to include over one hundred GLAMS (galleries, libraries, archives, museums, and special collections) professionals to ensure diverse and varied perspectives.

Corrective metadata, classification, and cataloging can alleviate inaccessible knowledge. The Collective's mission is to improve the description and classification of trans and gender diverse people in GLAMS collections by determining more accurate metadata for trans and gender diverse people. The Trans Metadata Collective questions hegemonic library classification structures by focusing on descriptive practices, subject headings and authorities, name authorities and access, and ethical recommendations. The Collective thus offers a timely alternative to vocabularies that misrepresent and pose harm to trans and gender diverse community members.

Aiming to be respectful of group's self-identification guidelines and recommendations and individuals' self-identification or preferences, where the Trans Metadata Collective succeeds best is in affirming the individual's humanity. While information practices aspire to create access for the end user, the Trans Metadata Collective aspires to validate users by establishing ethical standards focused on incorporating trans and gender diverse community members throughout the process. This is done with the understanding that where classification and subject language are concerned, corrective measures remain ongoing as identities and language within the trans and gender diverse community are not fixed or diaphanous but align with individual expression and shift over time.

While the document supports both expert and novice users, it assumes the reader understands transness and gender diversity and provides valuable resources within the document for self-education, along with a section on additional cataloging and vocabularies in addition to the best practices outlined by the Trans Metadata Collective. These guidelines continue to operate for and by the community, striving to provide proper representation. The Collective does not claim to be an all-encompassing solution but continues to provide best practices that are fair, accurate, and current.

Traditional cataloging and classification structures and practices often lack the tools to represent gender and sexual identities authentically. The Trans Metadata Collective's best practices remove knowledge and information barriers to construct greater awareness and visibility for trans and gender diverse individuals in a resource for GLAMS professionals. Currently, the organizers of TMDC are developing the Queer Metadata Collective, which is interested in improving the description and classification of Queer people in GLAMS.

Bibliography:

The Trans Metadata Collective, Jasmine Burns, Michelle Cronquist, Jackson Huang, Devon Murphy, K.J. Rawson, Beck Schaefer, Jamie Simons, Brian M. Watson, and Adrian Williams. *Metadata Best Practices for Trans and Gender Diverse Resources* (1.5). Zenodo, June 22, 2022.
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